

Governors' Monthly Update

February 2019

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Welcome to the sixth edition of the Governors' Monthly Update

School News

Congratulations to all at Southfield School for their recent retention of a Good judgement by Ofsted and to Trinity All Saints CE Primary for their achievement in also securing a Good judgement,

Request for updates

The School Governor Service (SGS) are still receiving messages that governors are not receiving training information and these updates directly. Unfortunately some schools which do not subscribe to the clerking programme do not provide us with updates when new governors are appointed or when a governor changes an email address.

This does mean that those governors cannot receive the training programme or this update directly but it also means that it is much less easy for a governor to book a place on a training course as that governor has to return some basic information in order for the booking to be processed. If you are not receiving this update directly please send an email to school.governor@bradford.gov.uk and the team will update your details.

If you have any concerns about GDPR please be assured that the team will supply the privacy notice for you.

Training Courses in February and Early March

Courses in February and early March 2019:-

Wednesday 13 February - Cyber Awareness, Trafalgar House Police Station, BD5 0DZ, 6.00-8.00pm

West Yorkshire Police are offering this specifically designed workshop to improve the awareness of e-safety for governors.

Governors will learn more about the latest ways in which on-line social media is being misused and how children can both be drawn into this misuse and put at risk by other users. This will enable them to look at the systems and policies used by their schools with greater knowledge and understanding. The course is regularly updated to enable governors to learn about new developments.

Monday 25 February - Asking effective questions, Eastwood Community School, 4.30-6.30pm

It is sometimes difficult to secure a clear understanding of the information that is being presented at meetings or to draw out the additional details needed.

Effective questioning enables governors both to gain this understanding and to fulfil their roles of

- Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the performance management of staff; and
 - Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent.
- Governance Handbook 2017*

This course will show governors ways in which they can fulfil these roles and ensure that their minutes reflect the level of challenge presented.

Tuesday 26 February – Effective and Strategic Chair, Margaret McMillan Tower, 6.15-8.15pm

'The importance and significance of outstanding governance and leadership across our education system, in every school in England, has never been greater. The role of governing boards in defining and implementing strategy whilst holding the leaders of schools and trusts to account has to be the foundation upon which a world class education system is built.' *Competency Framework 2017*

An Effective Chair is responsible for leading this work including maintaining a focus on the strategic direction of the school. This course gives an opportunity for existing and aspiring Chairs and Vice Chairs to look at the requirements of the role

Thursday 28 February – SEND, Margaret McMillan Tower, 6.15 – 8.15pm

SEND, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, is the term used for children who need some form of additional support to enable them to progress in their learning.

Additional funding is received specifically for children with needs above a certain level and there is also a portion of the school's base budget allocated to SEND. Much of the funding is often spent on staff salaries.

All governors need to have an understanding of SEND to ensure that they can effectively monitor the progress and achievement of SEND children in their school and the impact of spending. This course aims to give governors the information that they need to undertake these tasks. It will also explore the role of the Named Governor

Monday 4 March – Governor Forum, Margaret McMillan Tower, 6.30-8.30pm and repeated**Tuesday 5 March, Eastwood Community School, 6.30-8.30pm**

An opportunity to share concerns, raise topics of interest, share good practice and discuss areas for development. An agenda for these sessions will be circulated nearer the date and all governors are welcome to attend one of the sessions. **These sessions are free for all governors even if their school does not subscribe to the training programme.**

Wednesday 6 March - Pupil Premium and Other Premiums, Eastwood Community Primary, Keighley, 6.00-8.00pm

Governors are tasked with monitoring the use and measuring the impact of the use of Pupil Premium, Y7 catch up spending and the Sports Premium if their school is in receipt of any of these grants. This course will help governors to understand and effectively perform this role.

Friday 8 March – Introduction to Governance, Margaret McMillan Tower, 9.30am-3.00pm

This is an essential course for new governors, giving them the information and skills needed to start acting as effective governors. It looks at the role and its responsibilities as well as imparting some knowledge of financial matters and human resources.

To book on any course please email school.governor@bradford.gov.uk. There are no additional charges for all governors or associate members at schools which subscribe to the training programme but they are charged on a course by course basis for other governors.

Ofsted – The New Framework Consultation

The new framework has been published for consultation and is available [here](#). As mentioned previously there is now a focus on the overall quality of the education being delivered to children.

'The proposed 'quality of education' judgement therefore brings together the essential ingredients of education: the curriculum; the teaching, and the assessment that provides the feedback loop; and the resulting outcomes. This judgement is intended to restore curriculum – largely 'missing in action' from inspection for more than a decade – to its proper place, as an important component of the quality of education.'

In restoring the curriculum to its proper place, we have done much work to make sure we pitch our criteria at the right level. Too weak, and a poor curriculum that leads to little learning, and to the most disadvantaged making the least progress, would go unscrutinised. Too strong, and the diversity and innovation that are an important aspect of our education system would be hindered. The criteria draw on the academic evidence that exists around curriculum quality, and do not extend beyond what we have found that evidence justifies.'

The draft handbooks are available on the same page of the website and outline the systems and the criteria for judgement which are to be used. If governors have not already started to consider how their schools may be affected by the changes then it is recommended that this should be a priority.

DfE Consultation on Changes to Teacher Pension Contributions

The DfE has announced it is proposing to 'provide funding towards' the £830 million cost of the increased school contributions to teacher pensions incurred in 2019/20.

According to a recent report in FE Week (As the FE sector is also affected by the change) any further funding beyond 2020 would rely on the government's spending review which is scheduled for next year.

The DfE is currently running a public consultation on the changes and on the plans to provide 2019/20 funding towards contribution costs. To participate in the consultation click [here](#).

School Snapshot Survey

The Department for Education (DfE) has released its [report on the school snapshot survey](#) which was conducted last summer. The survey consisted of 758 interviews with school leaders and 1,040 interviews with classroom teachers. The aim was to uncover respondents' views on a number of topics affecting the education sector today and find out how their school has responded to changes in the sector.

Respondents covered a wealth of issues in their responses, including:

The curriculum;
Teacher workload,
Retention and recruitment;

Student support provision;
Careers.

Amongst the findings, the report covers some of the steps schools have taken to reduce teacher workload, which included updating policies (92%) and altering how marking was carried out (93%). The survey also revealed the extent to which schools are meeting pupils' basic needs, with 83% of secondary schools providing "free sanitary products" and over half raising concerns that some pupils in their school do not have access to a nutritious diet in the school holidays.

Many of the issues covered in the survey are relevant to governors and trustees.

Section 128 Checks for Maintained School Governors

As a result of the September 2018 update to Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance from the DfE explained that S128 checks now needed to be made for maintained school governors. A S128 check reveals whether a person has been barred from working with children.

The checks must be done for new governors and for governors when their terms of office are renewed. Several requests have been made by schools as to how this should be done. On enquiry the advice received is as follows:-

S128 checks will only show on an enhanced DBS for an independent school, and only if the school put a certain sentence onto the initial DBS application. S128 checks will never show on a DBS for maintained governors.

Therefore a separate S128 check needs to be made.

Schools can carry out section 128 direction checks through the [Teaching Regulation Agency](#) (TRA). This can be done by logging onto the DfE's [Secure Access Portal](#). Secure Access is a free service available to all schools and colleges.

National Strategy to Boost Teacher Numbers

The Department for Education has released its [Teacher Recruitment and Retention strategy](#) which aims to "make sure a career in teaching continues to be attractive, rewarding and sustainable."

There are four key barriers and four strategy priorities identified:-

Barrier: The wider context in which headteachers operate can create pressure that leads to excessive workload that distracts teachers from teaching

Priority: We (DfE) will help to create the right climate for headteachers and other school leaders to establish supportive school cultures. At the heart of this will be reforming the accountability system.

Barrier: Not enough early career teachers receive the high quality support they need to build the foundation for a successful career.

Priority: We will transform support for early career teachers, introducing the most significant reform to teaching since it became a graduate only profession – backed by substantial extra investment.

Barrier: A career in teaching does not always adapt to the expertise and lives of teachers.

Priority: We will build on the foundation of the Early Career Framework to support teachers – whatever their expertise or circumstances – to pursue the right career opportunities for them.

Barrier: The process to become a teacher is too complicated and burdensome.

Priority: We will radically simplify the process for becoming a teacher, introducing new digital systems designed to make application much easier and more user-friendly.

Governors will want to look at the strategy and see if it could be used to improve the support for teachers and senior leaders within their settings.

Importance of Character and Resilience

On 7 February Dominic Hinds (Secretary of State for Education) stressed the importance of building character and improving the resilience of children and young people.

Mr Hinds laid out the 5 Foundations for Building Character and pledged to work with schools and external organisations, including membership bodies and charities, to help every child access activities within each of those foundations.

To make this happen the Education Secretary announced:

- Plans for an audit of the availability of out of school activities across the country, to help understand where more focus is needed to increase access and choice. The Government will also work with organisations to look at how it can support greater provision in areas where it is limited.
- A call on businesses and charities to offer more work experience and volunteer placements to young people.
- Re launching the Department for Education's Character Awards, which highlight innovative or outstanding programmes that develop a wide variety of character traits including conscientiousness, drive and perseverance, as well as virtues, for other schools to learn from.
- A new advisory group, led by Ian Bauckham - who led the work to update the Relationships, Sex and Health Education guidance for schools - will now develop a new framework to help teachers and school leaders identify the types of opportunities that will help support their pupils to build character. The framework will also provide a self-assessment tool for schools to check how well they are doing.

Alongside this work Mr Hinds also underlined the significance of pupils learning about the importance of positive personal attributes – such as self-respect and self-worth, honesty, courage, kindness, generosity, trustworthiness and a sense of justice - as part of the new Relationships, Sex and Health Education curriculum.

Public Accounts Committee Report on Academies and the wider school sector

The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) have released a report, available [here](#) looking at academy governance and making recommendations for its improvement.

Concerns raised included:-

Governance and oversight failures were identified when academy trusts had failed and stressing that the DfE and ESFA needed to ensure that their monitoring improved and trust governors needed to be more vigilant in their supervision.

Parents and local people had to fight to obtain even basic information about their children's schools and academy trusts did not do enough to communicate and explain decisions that affect the schools

they are responsible for and how they are spending public money. The accounts of individual academy trusts, and for the sector as a whole, were not yet as useful and accessible to users as they should be.

Concerns about the whole school sector included:-

- Despite the funding pressures the sector is facing, neither Ofsted nor the ESFA was assessing the impact of these pressures on the quality of education and the outcomes schools achieve.
- Almost a quarter of schools had still not provided the information that the Department needed to understand fully the extent of asbestos in school buildings.

Governors should consider asking whether their schools have completed the asbestos report and monitoring the impact of straightened budgets on the quality of education in their settings.

Academy Pay

Lord Agnew, Schools Minister, has written to the Chairs of 28 academy trusts on 5 February to ask for more details on the pay of executives earning six figure salaries. This forms part of the government's requirement for academy trusts to publish high salaries in their accounts. This is less than 1% of academy trusts nationwide. Fewer than 4% of trusts pay 2 or more salaries between £100,000 and £150,000.

On a related topic the NGA has produced new guidance to support academy trusts in setting a framework for the pay of their executive leader.

Trustees have the direct responsibility of setting the pay of senior executive leaders (the principal of a single academy trust or the CEO of a multi academy trust). The guidance presents a range of considerations that trustees can draw upon to help them set the framework for their trust and the remuneration package for the senior executive leader, including:

- Benchmarking
- Pay ratios
- Comparing to other sectors
- Recruitment and retention

Principles of ethics, public service and fairness should be the foundation of trustees' decision.

Trustees must be conscious that it is public money that they are spending and therefore that executive leadership roles cannot attract the same premiums as they would in the corporate sector. Those governing academy trusts should have a rigorous justification for their decision to ensure that it is accountable to stakeholders including parents and the taxpayer.

The guidance can be accessed on the NGA website.

Best Practice Guidance for School Complaints Procedures

The DfE have recently produced excellent updated guidance, including templates and a policy which has been reviewed by governance professionals across the region and appears to be a good system to follow. The guidance can be accessed [here](#), please do read it and consider if your policy and procedures could be improved.

National Leaders of Governance (NLG) Deployment

As from 1 February 2019 a new system for the allocation of NLGs is being put in place. The sub regional networks and system leader meetings have been revived to support this and schools wishing to access NLG support will need to complete a proforma and contact Baljit Birring, the TSC Project Lead Adviser for Lancashire and West Yorkshire. The TSC team in our sub region will contact NLGs accordingly to allocate a best fit deployment. They will aim to do this within ten working days of receiving your request and put the NLG directly in contact with you and the school / academy once agreed.

Jackie Nellis is leading on support for NLGs in West Yorkshire and has arranged the first network meeting on Tuesday 26th February at the Maypole Centre, Gawthorpe Community Academy, Ossett from 3pm until 4.30pm. The meeting will be an opportunity for an update from a DfE/TSC perspective, including NLG brokerage and policy headlines.

Afterword

The next edition of the update will be sent out during the first week of March. If you have a topic for the Governor Forum, for the Chairs' Update or for the training programme then please email school.governor@bradford.gov.uk and the service will endeavour to assist.