



Governors' Monthly Update

March 2019

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Welcome to the seventh edition of the Governors' Monthly Update

School News

Congratulations to all at Ryecroft Primary Academy for their recent Good Ofsted judgement and to all at Lidget Green and Blakehill Primary Schools for their retention of their Good judgements.

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 service are not updating us on changes to governor information.

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 provide the privacy notice on request.

Training Courses in March and Early April 2019

All courses may be attended by governors of any schools in the District, although there is a charge for attendance if your school does not subscribe to the training programme. Please note that the new Pay as You Go system will not be introduced until after the Easter holiday so all training courses in April are included within current subscriptions.

Eastwood Community School is in Keighley and Margaret McMillan Tower is in Bradford

Effective Financial Governance on Monday 11 March, 6.00-8.00pm at Eastwood Community School

Ensuring the effective use of the funds available for the benefit of its pupils is one of the most important tasks of any governing board. The strategic management of the school is dependent upon this, and this course will explain the governor's role in agreeing financial priorities, medium term financial planning, monitoring expenditure against the budget, variations to spending plans including virements, financial systems and procedures, delegated authority to the head teacher, and financial benchmarking.

School Visits on Tuesday 12 March, 6.15pm-8.15pm at Margaret McMillan Tower

School visits can be an effective contribution to triangulation of the information needed by governors. Governors do not monitor the quality of individual teaching and so visits need to have a clearly structured focus. This session will give governors a template for their visits; discuss ways the outcomes can be used as part of monitoring and evaluation and look at instances of good practice.

Safeguarding on Wednesday 13 March, 10am-12noon at Margaret McMillan Tower

Or

Monday 8 April, 6.00-8.00pm at Eastwood Community School

Ensuring the safety of pupils is a vital aspect of schools' responsibilities. Governors need to be effective in their monitoring of this area and the course will give governors the latest information on their duties.

Prevent on Thursday 14 March, 4.30-6.00pm at Eastwood Community School

This is an important aspect of the work of all schools and this course will explore what Prevent means in relation to leadership and management in your school. It will give governors information about different pieces of legislation that impact on this area of work, focusing on the Prevent Strategy and also look at practical ways in which schools can meet their statutory responsibilities

The New Ofsted Framework - Monday 18 March, 4.30-6.30pm

Or

Tuesday 19 March, 2.00 – 4.00pm both at Margaret McMillan Tower, Bradford

Or

Monday 1 April, 6.00-8.00pm at Eastwood Community School

The draft handbooks have now been published for consultation and, subject to any amendments, will form the basis for all inspections from September 2019. Governors need to ensure that their strategic planning takes account of the new framework and that their schools are well prepared to meet the changed criteria for judgements. This course will look in detail at the new draft framework and explore what it will mean for schools.

RE and Collective Worship on Wednesday 20 March, 4.00-6.00pm at Margaret McMillan Tower,

RE and Collective worship are a compulsory part of the school curriculum for all maintained schools and academies. This course gives governors information on ways to promote the best outcomes for pupils by ensuring that the school takes advantage of the excellent opportunities offered within the RE curriculum and collective worship to promote personal development and character.

Understanding Performance Data, Monday 25 March, 6.15-8.15pm at Margaret McMillan Tower,

There is a range of data on pupil performance which is now available to governors. This course will look at the School Performance Tables and Analyse School Performance Tables and explain the ways governors can use this data when monitoring school progress and performance.

Generating & Managing Grants & Funds, Tuesday 26 March, 12.30-2.30pm at Margaret McMillan Tower

As a result of the recent increases in costs many schools are now looking to raise additional funding. This session will assist governors in considering ways to generate income, looking at funding applications and effectively monitoring the use of any funds raised.

Chairs' Update, Thursday 28 March, 4.30-6.00pm at Eastwood Community School**Or****Tuesday 2 April, 6.15 -7.45pm at Margaret McMillan Tower**

These sessions are held on a termly basis to ensure that Chairs have the opportunity to discuss any pressing issues and look at areas which may have an impact on their role over the next term.

Introduction to Governance, Tuesday 2 and Tuesday 9 April 6.00-8.30pm at Margaret McMillan Tower

These two evening sessions cover the basic information that all governors need when they take up their important roles as part of the leadership and management of a school or Multi Academy Trust. The course includes information on finance and HR responsibilities as well as looking at the strategic and monitoring aspects of the role.

Broad & Balanced Curriculum, Wednesday 3 April, 4.30-6.30pm at Eastwood Community School**Or Tuesday 9 April, 6.15-8.15pm at Margaret McMillan Tower**

Governors have a responsibility to ensure that the curriculum delivered within their school meets the statutory requirements and is tailored to the needs of the pupils. This session will look at the breadth of the curriculum and ways in which governors should be involved in monitoring its planning and delivery.

Preparing for Ofsted, Thursday 11 April, 6.00-8.00pm at Eastwood Community School

Whether your school is expecting an inspection during this academic year under the current framework or at the start of the next year under the new one, governors still need to consider ways to ensure that their school is well prepared for the visit. This session will assist governors in checking that all is in place and in considering their role during the visit.

If you wish to attend any of these courses then please email school.governor@bradford.gov.uk to book a place.

2019/20 School Funding Arrangements - Update

Academy Governors and Trustees need to be aware that Good Practice Guides for academy trust financial management were published by the ESFA on Friday 1 March and the 2019-2020 academy general grant allocations are currently being uploaded to the Document Exchange tab of ESFA Information Exchange – this will be completed by the end of March so information about anticipated income should be readily available to governors and Trustees over the next few weeks.

The following information was prepared by Andrew Redding and circulated at the recent Governor Forums, but, because of its content, is being included here as well.

Introduction

The briefing note presented to the Governor Forums held in October 2018 summarised the Authority's consultations on proposals for formula funding arrangements for the 2019/20 financial year for primary and secondary schools and academies, high needs providers and early years settings.

These consultations have been completed and the Schools Forum made its final recommendations on 9 January 2019. These were presented to Council on 21 February. The detailed budget

information for each maintained school, with guidance, is now published on [Bradford Schools Online](#). Additional guidance is also published to aid schools in their budget setting, which accompanies the template that maintained schools are required to use to submit their approved budgets for 2019-2022 to the Local Authority by 15 May.

2019-2022 Budget Challenge

The vast majority of schools have taken positive action to manage their budget positions. However, schools may find that the action they have already taken and / or have agreed to take based on their previous indicative 3-5 year planning is not sufficient to deliver a balanced budget across 2019-2022. Critically, schools must look again in detail at their budgets, focusing especially on their 'in year' positions i.e. the extent to which their expenditure in year may exceed their income in year.

Financial pressure across all sectors has been driven primarily by salary costs rising whilst values per pupil of formula funding, high needs funding, and other grants such as Pupil Premium have remained broadly static ('cash flat'). This is a pressure that school budgets must absorb before responding to other changes, such as changes in pupil numbers, the impact of national funding formula and early years funding reform, and the growth in the needs of children. This is also a pressure that is expected to continue to increase across 2019-2022 as salary costs continue to rise.

Critically, there are a number of uncertainties that add to the challenges that schools face in their budget planning. It is important that schools retain an awareness of these going forward:

- Two key matters, which are expected to quite significantly affect school spending in 2019/20, are still to be confirmed. Firstly, the pay award for teachers at September 2019 (estimated at 2%). Secondly, the final confirmed rate of employer's contribution to teacher pensions from September 2019 (indicatively to increase from 16.48% to 23.60%) alongside the details of the DfE's additional grant to be allocated in support of this cost. Schools will need to review their budget assumptions, when these two matters are confirmed during 2019, and take necessary action to manage any adverse impact.
- Looking slightly further into the future, the support staffing (NJC scale) pay award at April 2020 is not yet known nor is the extent of any change in employer's contributions to the Local Government (West Yorkshire) Pension Fund for these staff, which is anticipated from April 2020.
- Education and school funding nationally from April 2020 is to be determined by the Government's spending review at autumn 2019. At this time, we have no confirmed insight into how school funding will develop; this includes the further transition to National Funding Formula, the continuation of existing grants including Pupil Premium Grant, early years and high needs funding, and the Minimum Funding Guarantee for primary and secondary schools. The autumn 2019 spending settlement could result in quite significant changes in the funding framework. For example, Pupil Premium could cease as a separate grant and be merged into formula funding from April 2020.
- A critical uncertainty for maintained nursery schools is whether the protection that they currently receive through the DSG (protecting on average a 1/3rd of their funding for the 3&4 year old entitlement delivery) will continue after 2019/20. The Authority has begun discussions with the maintained nursery schools on this issue.

- The DfE has announced that two additional grants will be allocated to schools in 2019/20 to support staffing cost increases a) the Teacher Pay Grant, which is already confirmed and is allocated purely to support the full year cost of the September 2018 teachers' pay award and b) an additional grant to support the increase in the cost of the employer's contribution to teacher pensions from September 2019. This latter grant is still to be confirmed. We do not currently know whether these two grants will continue after April 2020 or, if they do, the form they will take.

Schools should take the time now to assess the implications of different scenarios, for example, to identify how much an additional x% in pay award or pensions would cost, and should begin to explore options for managing variations where the assumptions made about costs in 2019/20 and beyond may need to be revised.

For example, how would you manage the scenario during 2019/20 where your cost of teachers increases at September 2019 by 1% or 2% more than you have originally planned for?

What action would you take within your 2020/21 budget where your cost of support staff increases at April 2020 by 1% or 2% more than you have originally planned?

Maximising the Practice of Teaching Assistants

Governors are probably aware that there has been criticism of the practice of many schools in the deployment of and support for Teaching Assistants. As a result the Education Endowment Fund has funded a project to help schools transform the way they use teaching assistants, with the aim of increasing their positive impact on pupils' progress and attainment. One outcome of the project has been the production of a licensed training programme.

MPTA (Maximising the Practice of Teaching Assistants) trained schools report that, by making TA deployment a focus of attention, they have raised their TAs' profile and lifted their confidence and sense of value. They have seen more effective classroom partnerships with changes to interactions consistent with one of the training aims of moving TAs' talk from task completion to developing pupils' independence.

Governors may wish to consider whether the training would be of benefit to their school's effective use of TAs as part of their drive to improve progress and outcomes for all children.

Further Information

Skills 4 Bradford within BMDC hold a license to provide this training, so if you are interested in more information either for a school or a MAT, cluster, LAP etc., please contact mpta@bradford.gov.uk

DfE Data Guidance Update

On the 6th March DfE released updated guidance on understanding data, which is specifically aimed at school governors and academy trustees. This is an update to the guidance first released in August 2018 and it includes reports templates and an anonymised example of a report. There are suggested areas for questioning on the different types of data that governor should receive and ways to analyse the data by requesting exceptions reports from staff to explain any areas where the data reveals areas of weakness.

This document covers topics such as safeguarding in addition to achievement and progress data. The SGS are looking at ways in which the guidance can be used to support governor training and development. It is available to download by using the link below

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/understanding-your-data-a-guide-for-school-governors-and-academy-trustees?utm_source=esfa%20update%20la%2006%2003%2019

Pilot programmes to share early learning APPs with disadvantaged families

On average, disadvantaged children are 4 months behind in their overall development at age 5. It grows by an additional 6 months by the age of 11 and by the time they take their GCSEs they are, on average, 19 months behind their peers in overall attainment.

There are hundreds of educational apps for phones or tablets on the market that parents can choose from to support their child's early learning, but there is little reliable information about which are the best or most effective. So the Department for Education is going to buy subscriptions to high-quality early learning apps and provide access to some of these free of charge to disadvantaged families with children aged two to four, in up to 12 pilot areas across the country.

Education Secretary Damian Hinds said:

No parent has all of the answers. Being a parent is like learning to drive: wonderful, full of new discovery, but at times challenging, with plenty of obstacles to swerve. Our children are growing up in a constantly changing world and it is hard to keep up.

Mr Hinds also confirmed that nearly 6,000 families in the north of England will also take part in four new programmes that provide practical tools and advice, such as parenting group sessions, educational toys and books or text message tips sent directly to their mobile phones. Up to 375 schools and nurseries will be recruited for the projects, run by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) and Leeds-based education charity SHINE – building on the Education Secretary's 10-year ambition to halve the proportion of children leaving Reception without the communication skills needed to thrive

In our region the trial will be 'Making-it-REAL: '960 families in 120 schools in Greater Manchester and Yorkshire will trial a successful National Children's Bureau programme that trains early years professionals to visit families at home, getting parents more involved in drawing, singing songs and counting with their children, as well as encouraging them to use everyday activities to boost learning.

The plans set out build on the Government's work, announced last month, to appoint a new advisory [panel](#) to assess existing apps and produce tips and guidance for all parents to help them make informed decisions about which apps to choose for their children.

The expert panel, chaired by Professor Jackie Marsh of the University of Sheffield, will draw up a set of criteria for assessing an app's quality, which will also help decide which apps the Department will provide to families free of charge.

Local areas will be chosen based on factors including the proportion of children achieving below the expected level of development in communication, language and literacy at age five, as well as a focus on some of the most deprived communities. If any part of Bradford District is chosen then governors will be informed of the opportunity.

Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education

The draft Regulations making these subjects compulsory have been laid before parliament but not yet passed. Governors will have heard of the concerns expressed by religious groups and others about the content. Information on this topic was included in the recent Governor Forums and governors will be able to access the presentation and supporting information by visiting Bradford Schools Online looking for the Governor Forums information in the School Governor section of the website. The notes of the meetings, including the questions raised, will also be uploaded shortly.

The regulations state that in September 2020:-

- Health education will become compulsory in all schools,
- Relationships Education will be compulsory in Primary Schools
- Relationships and Sex Education will be compulsory in Secondary Schools.

Parents will still have the right to withdraw children from Sex Education but not from the relationships part of the curriculum. A child can inform the school that they wish to receive sex education three terms before that child's 16th birthday and that request **must** be responded to by the provision of sex education to that child during one of those three terms.

The Draft Guidance has been published by the DfE and is available [here](#). Governors are urged to consider their new responsibilities as schools are obliged to consult upon the policy that each school will need to put in place. Although the legal obligation to deliver these subjects will begin in September 2020 a draft policy, which schools can adapt, is being prepared by the LA after consultation with many faith and community leaders. As soon as this is available governors and school leaders will be informed.

Schools willing to pilot the delivery of the Relationships or Relationships and Sex Education programmes in 2019 are being sought by the LA. If your school is interested please email school.governor@bradford.gov.uk and this will be passed to the relevant team.

Call for Evidence from the Independent Malpractice Commission

The Commission was established by the Joint Council for Qualifications in June 2018 to consider malpractice in both general and vocational qualifications. A final report is expected later this year. The commission has called for evidence, details available [here](#) and governors and school leaders are invited to contribute to this call with any experience they may have of the 'nature, extent and drivers of malpractice'. Contributions can also be made by emailing commission@jcq.org.uk. All responses should be submitted by Monday 18 March 2019.

The aim of the Commission is to 'future proof' the system. Sir John Dunford, Chair of the Commission, explained earlier this year the areas that the Commission aims to cover. More details available [here](#).

As soon as the report is published more information will be circulated to governors. One of the roles of governors is to understand performance but they also have a duty to ensure that schools behave ethically and so governor views would be extremely useful to the Commission.

Education Secretary's Vision for Character and Resilience

In a speech to the C of E Foundation for Educational Leadership Conference Damian Hinds laid out the '5 Foundations for Building Character' and pledged to work with schools, charities and external bodies to help every child access activities within each of those foundations.

He 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.

He referred to the new Relationships, Relationships and Sex Education and Health education curricula and stressed 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 that curriculum.

The 5 foundations are:-

1. Sport – which includes competitive sport and activities such as running, martial arts, swimming and purposeful recreational activities, such as rock climbing, hiking, orienteering, gym programmes, yoga or learning to ride a bike.
2. Creativity – this involves all creative activities from coding, arts and crafts, writing, graphic design, film making and music composition.
3. Performing – activities could include dance, theatre and drama, musical performance, choir, debating or public speaking.
4. Volunteering & Membership – brings together teams for practical action in the service of others or groups, such as volunteering, litter-picking, fundraising, any structured youth programmes or uniformed groups like Beavers, Brownies, Cubs, Guides, Scouts, Cadets and Duke of Edinburgh.
5. World of work – practical experience of the world of work, work experience or entrepreneurship. For primary age children, this may involve opportunities to meet role models from different jobs.

Governors may wish to ensure that they have an overview of the provision within their school and ensure that they take advantage of any information provided about the new framework.

Identifying Schools for Support

The Government is consulting on proposals for a clearer, simpler approach to identifying schools that may benefit from an offer of support to help improve a school's educational performance.

'The proposal is that all schools judged as 'Requires improvement' by Ofsted will be eligible for support, and that schools with 2 consecutive 'Requires improvement' judgements will be eligible for more intensive support. To simplify accountability we are also proposing to remove floor and coasting data standards.'

To access the consultation, which closes on 25 March, click [here](#) There is a link to the consultation document at the bottom of the page. The plans are to introduce the changes from 1 September 2019.

Checklist on Indicators of Potential Fraud

Governing Boards are tasked with overseeing the financial performance of schools and making sure that money is well spent. The Education and Skills Funding Agency has compiled a checklist for education providers which is aimed at both maintained schools and academies. This gives an opportunity for schools to ensure their systems have in place checks to identify or prevent fraud. The checklist is quite detailed and organises risk factors into areas:

- personal motives for fraud
- organisational motives for fraud
- weaknesses in internal controls
- transactional indicators
- the methods used to commit or conceal fraud
- and record keeping/banking/other

Some of the identified risk factors which relate specifically to the remit of the governing board include:-

- related party transactions;
- conflicts of interest;
- lack of an appropriate organisational and governance structure with defined lines of authority and reporting responsibilities;
- management demonstrates lack of attention to ethical values;
- lack of personnel policies and recruitment practices;
- accounting systems are inadequate;
- no mechanism exists to inform management, directors, trustees or and governors of possible fraud.

The guidance can be accessed [here](#).

Changes to Post 16 Funding

Changes have been made by the Education Skills and Funding Agency (ESFA) to the conditions of funding for those 16-19 year old pupils who are retaking maths and/or English.

The update means that, instead of all pupils who attained less than a level 4 in either subject having to retake that subject until they achieve a level 4, pupils who achieved a grade 2 or below (or are studying part-time post-16 and achieved a grade 3 in their GCSEs) will be able to:

1. either resit their GCSEs or
2. "study towards a pass in functional skills level 2".

Those who achieved a grade 3 in their year 11 maths and/or English GCSE, and are studying a full-time post-16 course, will still be required to re-sit their GCSE(s) until they achieve at least grade 4.

Afterword

The next edition of the update will be sent out during the first week of April. This will include more details of the changes to the School Governor Service offer to schools alongside the national and regional updates. 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.