

Note Pad

A regular news sheet for
Governors of Schools
throughout the Bradford District

To achieve school improvement through the effective governance of schools

December 2013



The Engaging Families Award

The Engaging Families Award is a quality mark for schools and other educational settings that engage families in supporting children's development and learning outcomes. It provides a detailed – yet easy to follow framework that can be used as a self-evaluation tool, allowing the school to audit current practice.

There are many benefits to schools in completing the award, some of which are briefly listed below:

- To demonstrate and celebrate success in engaging families
- To evidence the impact of work with families
- To develop and improve work by identifying areas for development
- To embed and sustain work with families
- To support schools in the self evaluation process and in providing inspection evidence for outstanding leadership and management
- To provide evidence for the use and impact of the Pupil Premium

Several schools in Bradford have achieved this award, and many

more are currently working towards it. Below are comments from a school that has recently achieved the award.

Parkland Primary School - Head Teacher Reflections

“As Head Teacher, I feel the award process has given us the opportunity to carefully audit our practice, target areas for development and celebrate our achievements. It gave us the framework to discuss our ethos and approach in staff meetings, with governors and with our parents and to embed our practice in the curriculum. Parental involvement has been key to our school improvement over the last four years. Gaining the Engaging Families Award has provided external moderation and validation of the impact this approach has had on families, pupils and achievement. We are very proud to have met the criteria.”

Timescales for completing the award are flexible, although there is an expectation that the award will be completed within one year of starting the process. The award validates the achievement for three years from the date of assessment.

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If you are interested in finding out more about how the award can support your school improvement goals, please contact admin@engagingfamiliesaward.co.uk

You may also like to look at our website www.engagingfamiliesaward.co.uk which is currently being developed.

Better Governance Conference 2014

“ Without strong and effective governance, our schools simply won't be as good as they can be. ”

Sir Michael Wilshaw June 2012.

Ofsted are running a number of 'Better Governance' conferences, which aim to support the improvement of school governance, so that leadership is strengthened and more schools can provide their pupils with a good or better education. Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) will share evidence of what works well and also provide you with an opportunity to share ideas and strategies for improvement. The conference will offer head teachers and up to four members of their governing bodies insight into how to improve governance, strengthen accountability and promote better achievement for pupils.

The conference programme has been designed to provide opportunities for delegates to learn more about the key functions of school governance and understand where governors can get further advice, training and support. Delegates will be able to explore how governors can get to know their schools well, ask the right questions and consider the robustness of their own school improvement plan. Delegates are requested to bring a copy of their own school improvement plan to the conference.

The details of the events are as follows:

14 January 2014 – 10.00am to 4pm in Norwich

18 March 2014 – 10.00am to 4pm in York

20 March 2014 – 10.00am to 4pm in Manchester

25 March 2014 – 10.00am to 4pm in Warwick

The conference is free to attend. Lunch will be provided, but travel costs are at the attendees' expense.

You can take a maximum of five people from your school; the event is aimed at headteachers and non-staff members of the governing body. You can book online via the booking website:

<http://ofstedimprovementevents.eventbrite.co.uk/>

If you have any queries about the seminar, please contact Alex Wozniak, Conference and Seminars Administrator on Tel: 03000 130 856, or improvementevents@ofsted.gov.uk





Maintaining curiosity is key to science teaching

A survey by Ofsted shows that the most successful science teaching sparks pupils' curiosity and inspires them to study science subjects further. The survey of 180 schools looked at science teaching in both primary and secondary schools.

Although the majority of lessons observed as part of the survey were good or outstanding, a significant minority were not. The key issues identified in secondary schools were teachers and leaders being too preoccupied with exam results, not providing enough practical science lessons, and uninspiring teaching. In particular, pupils said the latter put them off studying science further.

In half of the primary schools visited, school leaders were not setting targets for science nor tracking pupils' progress in the subject. Many did not see science as a priority, despite it being a core national curriculum subject. In some primary schools, science was taught irregularly on "science days" or similar. Most primary teachers had not

received science specific training, and many subject leaders in both primary and secondary schools had not received leadership training that was specific to science.

Ofsted recommends that school leaders and governing bodies:

- provide sufficient weekly curriculum time and, in secondary schools, laboratory space so that individual pupils develop good scientific enquiry skills as well as the knowledge they need to pass examinations
- provide subject-specific continuing professional development for subject leaders and teachers that improves the quality of assessment and feedback for pupils in science

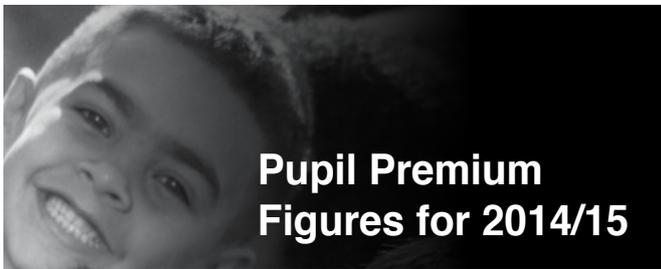
The full report can be found at <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/maintaining-curiosity-survey-science-education-schools>

Top Tip from National Governors' Association (NGA)

Do you use a governing body skills audit?
The skills audit is a valuable tool for governing bodies. It allows you to see what skills you have but may not have known about, and also gives you ideas about what you might be missing. You can then use this information to direct your governor training, or to advertise a position next time you have a vacancy. Don't just fill in the skills audit; make sure you make use of the results!

For governing bodies of schools who subscribe to Governing Schools we have a model skills audit available for governors to use.

Please contact School Governor Service for information on school.governor@bradford.gov.uk



Pupil Premium Figures for 2014/15

In the 2014/15 financial year, the national pupil premium budget will be £2.5 billion, compared to £1.875 billion in 2013/14.

The premium for children of primary school age (4-11) will rise from £900 to £1300 per pupil; while students of secondary school age (11-16) will attract £935 per pupil.

Furthermore from April 2014, pupil premium funding of £1900 will also be extended to children who:

- have been looked after for 1 day or more;
- are adopted; or
- leave care under a Special Guardianship Order or a Residence Order.

Governors must now review the impact of the last year's spend of pupil premium ensuring this information is posted on their school's website.

Petition to reverse term-time holiday rules

Over 126,000 people have signed a petition demanding that the government reverses their decision to count term time holidays as unauthorised absences. Previously head teachers were able to authorise up to ten days leave of absence per year, but modifications to the Attendance Regulations have meant that since 1 September 2013 head teachers have been unable to grant any absence outside school holidays except under "exceptional circumstances". Campaigners argue that some families are unable to afford a family holiday during the school holidays and their children will miss out.

The Department for Education has responded by saying it was giving schools more freedom to set term dates which might mean parents could book cheaper holidays. This is a reference to the draft Deregulation Bill, which would give all governing bodies the power to set their own term dates, something which academies, free schools and voluntary aided schools are already able to do. If the Bill comes into force, governing bodies will need to consider whether changing term dates would be in the best interests of pupils, especially those with siblings in other schools.

Bradford Achievement Service EAL Practices



Bradford Achievement Service is excited to support the visit of a Swedish teacher, as part of the European Union's In Service Training programme, to see Bradford's EAL practices in action.

She will be hosted by Neeta Kapur at Oasis Lister Park, as well as visiting Feversham, Belle Vue Boys, Laisterdyke and Thornbury Primary school. A Swedish Head Teacher will also visit in March 2014.

Vanessa Wears, Secondary Teaching & Learning Consultant – Mathematics

Brent Fitzpatrick MBE – Congratulations!



We are pleased to announce that Brent, one of our most experienced school governors, has been appointed as National Governors Association (NGA) Regional Director for Yorkshire and the Humber. He took office on 16 November 2013.

Brent has been a school governor in a wide range of schools, including secondary, primary, special, and academy schools as well as pupil referral units, and he sits on his local schools' forum. He has developed his skills with a diploma in school governance from Bradford University. With a particular interest in finance and experience being a member of the Audit Committee Institute, Brent sits on the finance committee at each of his schools.

In the 2012 Queen's Birthday Honours, Brent was awarded an MBE for services to education.

Educational Psychology Team

The Educational Psychology Team (EPT) aims to promote positive child development and successful learning through the application of psychology. Educational Psychologists work with children and young people (from 0-19 years old), and with the adults who are involved with them (school staff, parents, carers and other professionals). The EPT is able to provide expert guidance and advice on all aspects of child development and learning. They can also provide advice and support in relation to wider school or setting issues where a psychological perspective can add value, for example:

- Learning and development issues
- SEN / disability issues
- Friendships and bullying
- Behaviour difficulties at school or home
- Managing critical incidents and bereavement
- Exam stress

Currently all schools receive a core allocation of Educational Psychology time which is free at the point of delivery. It is also now possible to purchase additional educational psychology time in order to meet your school's specific needs. Prices are based on a cost of £250 per 3 hour session, although discounts are available for bulk buying / early purchase. Full details of the pricing structure are now available on Bradford Schools on Line Directory of Services.



For further details please contact:

Ruth Dennis, Acting Principal
Educational Psychologist,
01274 385788 or e-mail
ruth.dennis@bradford.gov.uk

Changes to Early Entry at GCSE

From 29 September 2013, only a student's first entry to a GCSE examination will count in their school's performance tables.

The Secretary of State for Education has announced that, with effect from 29 September 2013, only a student's first entry to a GCSE examination will count in their school's performance tables.

For those who have already completed a GCSE, the performance tables will still record their best result from either their previous attempt or from the next time they sit that GCSE. Those who have not yet taken a GCSE will have their first GCSE taken after 29 September 2013 count in performance tables.

The full report can be found at
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/changes-to-early-entry-at-gcse>



Consultation on proposals for children's centres

A consultation began on Monday 25 November into proposed changes to Bradford District's children's centres.

The consultation will gather opinions and views from parents, carers and centre users as well as staff and partner organisations. Events are planned across the District until mid January.

The proposals set out how the centres will operate in the future to meet the need for a proposed budget reduction of £2.4 million by 2016.

The proposals have been drawn up following a detailed review and consultation that took place in June and July this year. This earlier consultation was made up of workshops with children's centre providers and partners, a series of events with centre users, along with the views of 600 parents and carers and more than 100 staff. The following key themes emerged:

- To keep accessible local delivery by keeping all existing children centre buildings operational. The proposal is to re-categorise 27 centres as 'core' centres which would serve the most disadvantaged areas of the District, with five 'satellites' and nine 'outreach' bases in the less disadvantaged areas.
- To keep a balance of universal services for all parents alongside targeted services that help families most in need.
- To promote greater community involvement in the running of children's centres. Some centres could be available for community use to help contribute to the services delivered.

- For centres to work together to help deliver services more cost effectively, for example in delivering debt and benefits advice.
- To work closely with partner organisations in delivering services.
- To minimise the impact of any necessary changes on the families who benefit from children's centre services.

The feedback from users also acknowledged the excellent work done by children's centres over the past decade and the role they play in families' lives.

George McQueen, Bradford Council's Assistant Director of Access and Inclusion, said: "The Council is experiencing unprecedented pressure on its budgets so we have to be realistic about what we will be able to provide in the future.

"The proposals we have now developed, building on the earlier consultation, will provide a more focused service with greater community involvement and would mean that all children's centre buildings across the district would be used.

The feedback we have had from staff and parents over the summer has been invaluable in developing these plans. I'd urge everyone with an interest in children's centres to look at the proposals and let us know your thoughts."

Details of how people can be involved in the consultation will be published widely in children's centres, and are on the consultation pages of the Council's website.



Feedback from Clerk's Briefings and Training November 2013



Clerks drew on their wisdom and experience to feedback about School Governor Services at their Autumn Term briefings. Their observations will assist service development and will be fed into Local Authority discussions.

Key messages include:

- Positives included staff expertise and knowledge, speedy response to inquiries, mentoring, and high standard of communication. It was suggested that more training could be offered in localities and that consideration is given to ways in which independent clerks are supported.
- Suggested areas for development focused on the enhancing 'clerk to clerk' support and extending training and information opportunities.
- Clerks were agreed that governors' ability to challenge and support senior leaders required development. Training and informal opportunities to share good practice e.g. the annual conference were suggested ways forward.
- Additionally, commissioned governing body audits and action plans were commended in facilitating governing body development.
- The need for adequate safeguarding training and attention to the needs of vulnerable groups were highlighted as areas for special focus.
- Relationships with chairs of governors and schools were seen as positive but it was suggested that governors themselves needed further encouragement to attend training.
- The 'huge knowledge' of officers drew respect but it was suggested that this expertise is more widely broadcast e.g. in briefing events.
- Training opportunities, assistance with policies and advice at governing body meetings were positively regarded, as were assistance in keeping abreast of good practice and statutory requirements in equality and diversity, community cohesion, and ethnic minority achievement.
- Finally, clerks praised the service for responsiveness to governor and governing body feedback.

So, many positives but also much to do; our thanks to clerks who gave of their time and knowledge in helping us to think of ways to improve governor services.

PTA-UK Gold Star Awards



PTA-UK Gold Star Awards are your chance to win up to £1,500 for your PTA.

Gold Star Awards highlight and reward PTA success and celebrate the great things PTAs do to support and transform schools. Interest in the awards has grown year on year since they were first launched in 2005 and the 2013 Gold Star Awards scheme was our biggest and best yet. Why not get involved in 2014, encourage your committee members to get ahead of the game and start thinking about your entry into one of the following categories:

- PTA Fundraising Achievement
- Changing the Life of the School
- Achievement in Parental Involvement
- Working with the Local Community
- New PTA of the year
- PTA Volunteer of the Year

PTA-UK Gold Star Awards will be opening for applications in 2014. To register pre-interest please email goldstar@pta.org.uk and they will inform you when applications start.

Parent Governor Representatives on Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Parent governor representatives (PGRs) are parent governors elected by other parent governors to represent the views of all parents, in an apolitical way, on local authority (LA) overview and scrutiny committees and sub-committees dealing with education.

The Government has identified parent governors as having an important role to play in improving standards of education at council level. As a governor who has been directly elected by other parents, you would represent all parents in the Bradford area.

There can be between two and four parent governor representatives for Bradford. Four is the maximum number permitted where there is only one committee dealing with education. This committee is currently the Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

The Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committees' main area of consideration is education. Under Council Standing Orders, in addition to nine politicians the Committee

provides for two Church Diocesan members who have full voting and speaking rights and two Parent Governors who have the same rights. The Committee also has non-voting members.

The Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee currently has pre-arranged formal meetings approximately once a month normally on a Tuesday at 5.30pm. Parent Governor representatives on the Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee currently receive a co-optee's allowance from the Council of £578 per year.

How Do I Go About Making A Nomination?

If you are interested in standing in the election and would like further information and a nomination form please ring School Governor Service on (01274) 385629 or e-mail school.governor@bradford.gov.uk.

Interested parent governors should contact us no later than 4pm on Friday 10 January 2014.

The wording in this publication can be made available in other formats such as large print and Braille. Please call 01274 385629.

City of Bradford MDC

www.bradford.gov.uk