



To Achieve School Improvement through
the Effective Governance of Schools

Governors' Advisory Group and Governor Forums

A process of School Governor Forums was established some years ago to enable discussions to take place between Education Bradford, Bradford Council and school governors; a process which benefits all parties, allowing governors to question Education Bradford and Bradford Council on their planned initiatives and proposals and enables governors to request information on matters of concern to schools and governing bodies.

Schools are invited to appoint up to two Forum members to attend and represent their Governing Body at their local School Governor Forum. These governors should also be given the opportunity to feedback to their colleagues at a governing body meeting shortly after each Forum meeting.

We currently have three Forum groups, based on geographical areas:

Bradford South/West
Bradford North/Shipley
Keighley/Ilkley/Bingley

Governor Forums are held once a term, with dates and venues advertised through Notepad. Each Forum appoints their own Chair and Vice Chair and the

meetings are supported by a member of School Governor Service and a Clerk, and attended by a member of the Education Bradford Leadership Team.

The Governors Advisory Group (GAG), meets more regularly and comprises of the Chair and Vice Chair of each Forum and two additional representatives from each Forum. This Group also has a representative from BBAG, who represent Black and Asian governors in the District. GAG is supported by a member of School Governor Service to agree Agendas for Forum meetings and to be able to discuss in greater detail the issues raised by governors, Education Bradford and Bradford Council and to determine how governor views are included in decision making.

Governors also have the opportunity to request Agenda items for subsequent Forums. The common factor to the success of both groups is the attendance and participation of governors.

Please check that your governing body has appointed 2 forum representatives. If you would like to attend the forums please get in touch with School Governor Service on (01274) 385629 who will arrange this.

THE ITEMS COVERED IN THIS ISSUE:

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Governing Body Self Review

As a governing body it is useful to review from time to time how effectively you are working together as a team. This also links into the section on governance in the Leadership and Management part of the school's Self Evaluation Form (SEF): "the extent to which governors and managers discharge their responsibilities". There are a number of checklists available to help you in this task; training can also be provided for your governing body. Please contact us at the School Governor Service on (01274) 385629 for more information.

Learning Outside the Classroom Manifesto

Buckden House Outdoor Education Centre is delighted to support the Learning Outside the Classroom Manifesto, launched by the Secretary of State for Education and Skills on 28 November 2006.

The Manifesto is a 'movement' or joint undertaking that many different stakeholders have helped to create and to which anyone can sign up. We have endorsed the Manifesto because we believe it will help to ensure that all children and young people have a variety of high quality experiences outside the classroom environment, as an essential part of their learning and development.

We will therefore be working with schools, local authorities, parents, carers and the many other organisations committed to providing an exciting range of teaching and learning opportunities outside the classroom.

To download a copy of the Manifesto, or find out more, visit:
www.teachernet.gov.uk/learningoutsidetheclassroom

Fixed-term & Temporary Employment: *Dismissal Procedure for Staff Employed in Schools, Contract Renewal Guidance & Employment Rights*

Education Bradford in conjunction with Bradford Council has produced a procedure for schools concerning the expiry (termination) of fixed-term and temporary employment contracts. The procedure has been subject to full consultation with all the recognised Trade Unions and Professional Associations.

A copy of the procedure, within a guidance pack on renewing and terminating fixed-term or temporary contracts and the right to permanent employment, has been sent to schools addressed to the Chair of Governors and Headteacher.

Bradford Council and Education Bradford would recommend that governing bodies adopt this procedure at an early opportunity, and in so doing, ensure that staff are aware of the new procedure, and that it is accessible to all.

If you or your Headteacher has any queries in relation to the procedure, please get in touch with your schools' HR Adviser. You can access the procedure at www.bradfordschools.net

School Profile – Update

The School Profile caused a great deal of consternation amongst governing bodies and schools during the summer term 2006. Schools had difficulty accessing their profile, the data was not loaded by the promised dates and in some cases the information relating to schools was inaccurate. National Governors Association (NGA), along with the headteacher unions and others made a series of representations to the DfES. As a result DfES agreed to revise the School Profile, sent a letter to schools apologising for the problems and suspended the School Profile site.

The School Profile site reopened on 12 December 2006 and DfES has written to all chairs of governors and headteachers. The main changes to the profile are:

- A new pictorial format for expressing pupil progress at Key Stages 2-4. DfES believes that this will be more accurate than the previous 'big arrow' display.
- Date last published – this will now appear in the heading of the document. The previous version included a reference to the academic year which was felt to be confusing.
- An ability to update the Profile during the year. This will not be compulsory.

Guidance on completing the School Profile can be found at:
<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/newrelationship/schoolprofile>

Performance Management Arrangements

The DfES has announced the final decisions in relation to performance management. Most importantly the new Regulations will not come into force until September 2007. This means that the new planning and review statements will have to be completed by 31 October 2007 for teachers and 31 December 2007 for headteachers.

The headteacher's performance review will still be conducted by two or three performance management governors together with the School Improvement Partner (SIP), or where no SIP is yet in place, an external adviser appointed by the governing body. Unlike at present, the Regulations allow for the governing body to scrutinise and suggest amendments to the headteacher's review statement. Guidance recommends that this is the Chair of Governors or where the Chair is already a member of the performance review panel another named member of the governing body. This governor should also undergo performance management training.

Training on Performance Management Updates is still available on the following dates – Tuesday 27 February, 7.15pm at Crossflatts Primary School or Tuesday 6 March, 9.30 – 11.30am at Future House. If you would like to book a place please ring School Governor Service on (01274) 385629 or e-mail school.governor@educationbradford.com

Governing Bodies can Acquire a Trust

In November, the Education and Inspections Bill 2006 was enacted. This May, a key part of the Act will come into force – the provision for schools' governing bodies to acquire a 'Trust' made up of external partners that they feel will help to raise standards and create more opportunities for their pupils. Schools will be able to choose whether the Trust has a majority or minority representation on governing bodies, and will be protected by safeguards in the Act that prevent unsuitable organisations from becoming involved in schools.

While remaining part of the local authority family of schools, Trust schools will have a number of flexibilities including owning their own assets, employing their own staff, and setting their own admission arrangements (in accordance with the Admissions Code). For more information go to <http://trustschools.ssatrust.org.uk>

Promoting Disability Equality in Schools – Guidance

New guidance materials explain how the Disability Equality Duty (DED) can be implemented by schools.

The Disability Equality Duty does not bring in new rights for disabled people, but it does require schools to take a more proactive approach in promoting disability equality and eliminating discrimination.

The guidance on disability equality in schools addresses pre-existing duties to bring greater benefits to disabled pupils, staff, parents and others by considering disability equality from the start and at every level of the school. The duty requires schools to take a more proactive, explicit and comprehensive approach that involves not only disabled pupils, but disabled staff, parents and other users of the school.

The materials are designed to be used by school staff, governors and those

working with them. The materials can help schools to:

- Understand their duties under the different Parts of the DDA (Disability and Discrimination Act)
- Raise awareness of the Disability Equality Duty (DED)
- Develop their scheme through a staged approach
- Develop their accessibility plan to meet the requirements of a scheme
- Provide training and development activities on the Disability Equality Duty

The general Duty applies to schools from 5 December 2006. Secondary schools in England should have published their disability equality schemes by 4 December 2006 and primary schools must publish by 3 December 2007. For further information and to download or order a copy of the publication, visit www.teachernet.co.uk

School Improvement Through ICT – guidance for governors

At a conference in November, Niel McLean (Executive Director for Education Practice – Becta) launched the new joint NGA/Becta publication School Improvement through ICT – guidance for governors. Spending on ICT is often the second highest call on the budget after staffing costs, but the

most recent research shows that few schools use ICT effectively. This short publication provides guidance for governing bodies on the questions to ask in relation to ICT spending and use in schools.

Two copies of the publication were sent to the Chair of Governors of every

school in early January. If you would like additional copies please contact NGA by email at: Gillian.windass@nga.org.uk or by phone at 0121-643-5787. Copies are free of charge. You can also download a pdf version of the document from the NGA website at www.nga.org.uk/

CONSULTATIONS

Making Good Progress

Making Good Progress, a Department for Education and Skills consultation document published 8 January 2007, acknowledges the enormous improvements in school standards since 1997. However individual pupils do not progress equally and many still get left behind. The document asks what more we could do, without compromising improved standards, to help schools, parents and pupils to focus even more on individual progress. The document proposes piloting four new approaches:

- (a) Changes to educational assessment, including options to take an externally-marked test whenever the pupil is ready. This will imply more frequent, shorter tests which can help shape the child's future learning.
- (b) Individual tuition for pupils not making enough progress.
- (c) School progress targets (alongside existing targets).
- (d) A progression premium – payable for success in achieving progress targets, and used to support a richer curriculum.

Closing date for responses is 2 April 2007.

Consultation on Three Year Budgets

The Government is proposing some key changes to the way the funding arrangements work, ready for the move to three-year school budgets from April 2008. These will cover issues such as the Minimum Funding Guarantee, and how schools and local authorities are funded for deprivation. Consultation on these proposals will be launched in February, but ministers have already decided not to proceed with academic year budgets for schools, as schools must continue to account on a financial-year basis.

For more information look out in February for details of the consultation on the schoolfunding pages of TeacherNet at www.teachernet.go.uk/schoolfunding

Education and Inspections Act 2006: Statutory Guidance on Schools Causing Concern

This consultation relates to Part 4 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006: the provisions relating to schools causing concern in England. Many of the provisions in Part 4 are re-enactments of existing legislation, but there are some significant new measures to ensure that fewer schools become a cause for concern, and that those which do get in difficulty are supported to recover more quickly. This guidance helps local authorities, governors, schools and others with an interest in school improvement to interpret and make full use of the powers provided by the Act. Guidance is also given for proprietors of non-maintained schools.

Closing date for responses is 29 March 2007.

Statutory Guidance on Section 6 Education & Inspections Act (Positive Activities for Young People)

Section 6 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 introduces important new duties on local authorities regarding positive leisure time activities for young people; including the duty to secure access for young people to sufficient positive activities. Statutory guidance covering these duties has been produced and the DfES would welcome your views.

Some respondents will have previously submitted evidence to the joint DfES/HMT review of youth services, influencing the shape of the review. The DfES is therefore also seeking comments that reflect this evidence, where relevant to the guidance.

Closing date for responses is 30 March 2007.

All the above consultations can be viewed by visiting www.dfes.gov.uk/consultations

Governing Body Checklist

The Governing Body checklist is sent to all clerks early in the autumn term each year so that it can be completed as the year progresses. A second copy is sent to clerks during the summer term for completion and return to the School Governor Service by the end of the academic year. The checklist provides a record of tasks which are the statutory responsibility of governing bodies.

By the end of December 2006 we had received checklists from 74% of schools in Bradford – thank you to those who completed and returned theirs on time.

Results show that out of the 74% of schools who returned their completed checklist:

- Governing bodies hold on average 6 meetings per year;
- Only 3% of all meetings across Bradford were inquorate;
- The majority of governing bodies operate a committee structure;
- Apart from the Staff/Pupil Discipline committees the most common committees are Finance & General Purposes; Curriculum; Staffing/Personnel;
- Although committees are in place, not all follow the legal requirements of having agreed terms of reference or following the required procedures for the meetings (see the Guide to the Law chapter 3 paragraphs 75 – 88);
- 71% of schools say they have a Freedom of Information Policy in place; this is a statutory requirement for ALL schools;
- More than 50% of our schools did not manage to complete the School Profile for 2004-05 – this should be much easier this year after the DfES has ironed out some of the original problems;
- The most popular way of taking account of the views of parents is through a questionnaire – 30% use this method;
- 36% of schools have not appointed representatives to the School Governor Forum meetings.

If your governing body would like to receive further help or information in meeting its statutory responsibilities please contact the School Governor Service on (01274) 385629.

Health & Safety Updates for Schools

Fire Safety Order

All schools and Council Building Custodians have been invited to training sessions on The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 at Flockton House. The Order defines new responsibilities and the 'Responsible Person' from each school should attend. The Council Health and Safety Policy (available on the Occupational Safety Unit website at www.bradford.gov.uk/scsafety username SOS - password lookout) has been reviewed to reflect the requirements of the new Order.

Infection Control Guidance

The revised Infection Control Guidance is now available on the Occupational Safety Unit website. In view of the recent winter vomiting outbreaks it offers essential information and advice, with contributions from a range of specialists.

Working at Height

Half day Working at Heights training is now offered at the Councils Centre for Learning priced £28. This is for any staff who are required to undertake work at height as part of their duties. To reserve a place please contact Judith Bennett on 01274 437694. For further information see flyer on Occupational Safety Unit website.

CLEAPSS

The CLEAPSS Schools Science Service provides excellent support and safety guidance for the delivery of science and technology curriculum activities. All Bradford schools have had membership for many years which provides them with termly publications, Guides, the Helpline and access to their excellent website. A guidance document explaining their services to Primary and Secondary schools can be found on the Occupational Safety Unit website. As the Occupational Safety Unit still receive many calls from schools who are not aware of CLEAPSS, could Governors ensure that their Headteacher and Science Coordinator are aware and make use of this excellent service.

For further information on any of the above please contact: **John Binns, Occupational Safety Adviser** Tel: 01274 431772, Fax 01274 722495
<http://hr.bradford.gov.uk/occhelsafety/occsafety/occsafety.html>

School Governor Forums

The Spring Term School Governor Forums will take place as follows :

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| Keighley / Ilkley / Bingley | Thursday 15 March 2007, 7.15pm at Riddlesden St Mary's CE Primary School |
| Bradford West/ South | Monday 19 March 2007, 7.15pm at Future House |
| Bradford North / Shipley | Wednesday 21 March 2007, 7.00pm at Wycliffe CE Primary School |

Clerks to Governors Spring Term Briefings

will take place as follows:

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| Monday 12 March 2007, 1.00 - 3.00pm at Future House or Tuesday 13 June 2007, 7.00 - 9.00pm at Wycliffe CE Primary School, Shipley |
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To reserve your place on the Clerks Briefing please ring School Governor Service on (01274) 385629.

School Governor Training

The following courses are still available for governors to attend:

Induction for New Governors – 21 & 28 February and 7 March, 7.15pm @ Future House
Heads Working With Your Governing Body – 21 February, 9.30 – 11.30am @ Future House
Common Assessment Framework – 22 February, 9.30 – 11.30am @ Future House
Role of the Foundation Governor in a Church School – 26 February, 7.15pm @ Future House
Performance Management Update – 27 February, 7.15pm @ Crossflatts Primary School
Role of the Staff Governor – 5 March, 7.15pm @ Future House
Governing School Through Policy – 22 March, 7.15pm @ Future House

If you would like to book a place on any of these courses, or any other course advertised in the Spring Term Prospectus please contact School Governor Service on (01274) 385629, e-mail school.governor@educationbradford.com or fax your booking form to (01274) 385624.

Notepad is a regular news sheet produced for all governors of schools throughout the Bradford District. It is intended to be a brief and cost effective way of providing all school governors with up-to-date information about services, local and regional activities, and training opportunities.

Notepad is compiled and produced by School Governor Service, Education Bradford, Future House, Bolling Road, Bradford, West Yorkshire, BD4 7EB. John Hesketh, Linda Townsend, Diane MacBairdy, Geoffrey Green and Jean Jordan are happy to provide any further information you may need about any item appearing in this issue. We can be contacted at the above address, Tel 01274 385629, Fax 01274 385624, e-mail: school.governor@educationbradford.com