

# THE WILTSHIRE GOVERNOR

Newsletter

February 2020

*Wiltshire School Governance Service – helping governors and trustees become more effective*

## Growing Our Service

Since joining the School Governance Service Team, I have been fortunate enough to lead 2 New Governor Induction courses. As I am preparing for the next one on the 27 February in Trowbridge, I am reminded of how fortunate we are in Wiltshire to have such a committed group of volunteers who freely give of their time to support their educational community. I have also been inspired by the amount of schools that are working hard and collaborating to support each other in this ever-changing educational environment.

One project that I have been fortunate to be part of has been the Small Schools' Project. This has helped me to gain a greater understanding of the challenges, benefits and radical approaches that these schools are facing. We will be looking more at the Small Schools' Project later in the year.

Remember, please contact me if you want to share any of your governance challenges, highlights or celebrations, as we can learn and support each other on our governance journey. You can contact me on [amanda.cripps@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:amanda.cripps@wiltshire.gov.uk)

In the last Newsletter, I talked about my ethics being very much aligned with the 7 principles of public life set out by Lord Nolan, and in addition to those, that governors should be committed, curious, confident, challenging, collaborative, critical and creative. I talked about being a curious governor last month – and I have even changed our Essential Updates course for Experienced Governors to Essential Updates for Curious Governors (next training for this course running on Thursday 21 May at the Diocesan Centre in Salisbury). We don't need to be experienced governors to be curious and ask key questions. The next principle I would like to look at in this edition is **Committed** and what this looks like and feels for us, as governors, in the ever-changing educational environment.

## Committed Governor

What does a committed governor look like and why is it important for driving forward school improvement? A few good questions to ask ourselves as governors: who are we governors for? - and why are we doing this?

It is so important to remind ourselves that our role as a governor is to make sure that all children get the best outcomes and life chances. Even though we wear many hats as different governors, e.g. parent, foundation, staff or whatever category of governor you are, it should be all about all of the children in your educational context.

As a governor we are committed to making sure that our attendance at meetings is regular and that reports and notes are always read in advance so that we can review and monitor the operational aspect in a timely fashion.

I know many of you are so busy with work, families and other commitments, therefore the effective use of meeting time is paramount. With reports pre-read, key relevant strategic questions (e.g. What was the purpose of this? What was the outcome of this? How can we review the impact of this?) can be asked and the impact of that questioning monitored at the following meeting and linked to the School Development Plan (SDP). This saves us from using meeting time to read reports and going through the documents word for word; instead it becomes a much more strategic conversation and process, with leaders being held to account for relevant operational aspects of the SDP.

Often commitment and capacity go hand in hand and this is key within governance. A well-focused agenda and meetings leads to greater capacity for strategic direction discussions and oversight. All governors need to be active governors, participating in the work so that we don't get a disparity between work-loads and commitment. With the 'right people around the table' and all pulling in the same direction with the same level of commitment, the capacity for time to be focused on the outcomes and life chances of all children will be increased.

If governance is about ensuring that all children get the best outcomes and life chances, maybe something for our agenda next meeting is SEND. The DfE recently published the following article.

## SEND

The governing board is responsible for the culture and ethos of their school(s). An effective governing board is one that sets a culture and ethos which is welcoming and provides an environment in which all pupils can thrive and reach their full potential.

In order to do this, each governing board needs to know that pupils with SEND are getting the best possible opportunity and that outcomes reflect this. It is imperative the full board see SEND as their collective responsibility, not leaving it just to a SEND link governor or trustee.

SEND was a key feature in Ofsted's **annual 2018-19 report**, which emphasises flaws in the quality of education and support being provided to pupils with SEND.

The report found that "pupils with SEND in mainstream schools can also struggle to access good-quality education" and that pupils with SEND are five times more likely to have a fixed-term exclusion compared to pupils without SEND. The governing board has an essential role in driving the inclusion of SEND within the organisations culture.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofsted-annual-report-201819-education-childrens-services-and-skills>

### Hot off the press: New SEND training for Governors

- 1) SEND Link governor training – by Tim Morgan and Team, dates for term 5/6 TBC
- 2) General overview for all governors – by Matt Sambrook and Team, dates for term 5/6 TBC

## 2020/2021 Annual Subscription Offer

Our new annual subscription is now available and is similar to last year's, but we are looking to improve the way we offer it. There has been slight increase in price which is in line with Wiltshire Council's policy.

### Helping governors, trustees and clerks become more effective:

**The School Governance Service** seeks to help governing boards to fulfil their responsibilities and to provide appropriate support and training for governors, trustees, headteachers, clerks and company secretaries as

they work together to create the best possible learning opportunities and best outcomes for pupils in their schools.

We offer the following - **core services through an annual subscription package:**

- Fully subsidised up-to-date training and development courses and events including specific training for chairs, induction for new governors and clerks, and governors with specific roles on the GB, including an online course booking system
- Access to online learning modules provided by the NGA with Virtual College
- Governors' cluster training and development delivered in your local area/school
- Information update briefings on relevant topics
- Support for your clerk/company secretary, including induction training, conferences and skills workshop sessions
- A range of support services including: fast and accurate information by email and telephone; termly newsletters keeping governors and trustees up-to-date with new initiatives; weekly mailings via your clerk/company secretary; a range of relevant guidance documents and toolkits, and a dedicated resources page on our website for subscribers

**The core offer price is now £1,126.**

## Benchmarking tool - looking at Secondary and MAT League tables 2018/2019

Benchmarking has become a crucial tool for governing boards when assessing a school's performance in relation to other schools across the country and last Friday, the Department for Education (DfE) published the 2019 update of its key stage 4 league tables which shows how secondary school pupils performed across England in the last academic year (2018/19).

This resource not only provides those governing in secondary schools with information about their own school's ranking in comparison with schools but it also provides insight into the performance of certain groups of pupils nationally, revealing that little progress has been made in closing the attainment gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils, which has increased 0.4% from 2017/18.

The DfE has published two webpages with information to accompany the release of the tables, one for all [key stage 4 performance](#) and another specifically outlining [the performance of MATs](#). A headline [document](#) outlining the key findings and differences in performance between groups of pupils has also been released.

When analysing data, governing boards need to ensure that they are assessing corroborating information from several sources. For more information on analysing school data.

**Information for schools about secondary school accountability measures, including Progress 8 and Attainment 8.**

Further guidance for secondary schools on understanding measures such as attainment 8 and progress 8.

[https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/progress-8-school-performance-measure?utm\\_source=becdc63f-eb9e-4928-aac7-401d6bcd0092&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm\\_content=daily](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/progress-8-school-performance-measure?utm_source=becdc63f-eb9e-4928-aac7-401d6bcd0092&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=daily)

## DfE Publishes Recommendations for Teacher Pay: September 2020

Governors also need to have their attention drawn to the fact that the Department for Education (DfE) has proposed a pay increase for all teachers in [its submission to the School Teachers' Review Body \(STRB\)](#), which makes recommendations on the pay, professional duties and working time of School Teachers in England.

It is proposed that starting salaries for teachers should increase by up to 6.7 per cent and that experienced teachers (those on the upper pay scale), heads and school leaders receive a pay increase of 2.5 per cent.

The DfE has stated that the proposed pay increases are affordable to schools given the level of investment in the education system.

What does this mean to us as governors? One of our 3 core functions from the Governance Handbook 2019 is: **Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent.**

Therefore, seeing the big picture of this recommendation is important, as it attempts to position teacher pay amongst the most competitive in the graduate labour market. However, it has also questioned whether additional funding for schools promised by the government is enough to both support governing boards to reverse the real terms cuts many have experienced to their budgets since 2010, and allow them to manage the increase in teacher starting pay and the likely increases in upper and leadership pay to keep them in line.

The STRB will make its recommendations later this year, but the final decision lies with the DfE.

## Head Teacher Performance Management (HTPM) Mid-Year Review

It is really important that all Head Teachers have a timely and meaningful mid-year review on their HTPM and it is good practice to be fitting that in around February/March. An External Advisor doesn't need to be present in the mid-year review. However, it still needs to be a professional review where their targets are discussed so that any support and/or training can be offered to help them to achieve their targets. This documentation will then feed into the end of year review process around July.

## New course available: Structure and Change Management – Using a Primary School Case Study

Many schools are facing challenging times with budgets and pupil numbers. To support governors with their understanding of their role on the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), with questioning and understanding the process, we have put together a new course.

**Structure and Change Management – the Strategic Role of Governors** – led by Kate Wilkins and AJ Cripps. It will provide an opportunity for governors to understand the operational process and activities/actions required by a school when reviewing its structure and re-organisation, including the strategic role of governors in this process.

**Dates: Tuesday 17 March, 6.00–8.00pm at Town Hall, Devizes**

**Tuesday 24 March, 12.30–3.30pm at Stones Hotel, Salisbury**

**Wednesday 25 March, 9.30am–12.00pm at Chippenham, Golf Club**

To book a place on any course or to find additional information please go to Right Choice.

## Disadvantaged Attainment Gap

Raising the attainment of disadvantaged pupils is an essential part of the governing board's role. Part of this is oversight of the school's pupil premium spending, but those governing should be considering the needs of disadvantaged pupils when carrying out all their duties.

Demonstrating again the importance of supporting disadvantaged pupils, the Sutton Trust has this week released an analysis of the impact of the new reformed GCSEs on the attainment gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils. While only small changes were calculated, the report found

that, after accounting for a variety of factors, “test scores for disadvantaged pupils fell slightly compared to non-disadvantaged pupils, by just over a quarter of a grade across 9 subjects”.

Adding to this, new [research](#) from FFT Education data lab has found that, by factoring in the effect of pupils leaving before the end of year 11, the gap in attainment between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils was even greater than suggested by a simple comparison of GCSE results. The report also drew attention to the significant number of pupils who are leaving state education at some point between year 7 and year 11; highlighting the danger of pupils falling through the cracks. Those governing need to be attentive to their pupil numbers to ensure that practices like [off-rolling](#) are not taking place.

### Free school meals

Schools get £1,320 for every primary age pupil, or £935 for every secondary age pupil, who claims free school meals, or who has claimed free school meals in the last

#### From April 2020

- £1,345 per primary-aged pupil
- £955 per secondary-aged pupil

### Looked-after and previously looked-after children

Schools receive £2,300 for every pupil who has left local authority care through adoption, a special guardianship order or child arrangements order. Local Authorities receive the same amount for each child they are looking after; they must work with the school to decide how the money is used to support the child's Personal Education Plan.

**From April 2020**, the new rate will be £2,345 per eligible pupil.

#### Service premium:

Schools receive £300 for every pupil with a parent who:

- is serving in HM Forces
- has retired on a pension from the Ministry of Defence

This funding is to help with pastoral support: **from April 2020** the new service premium rate will be £310 per head.

Being better informed to ask key strategic questions by looking at additional research on this topic. A good place to go to look up further research can be the EEF.

**Education Endowment Foundation guide to Pupil Premium 2019.** The EEF produce such useful documents that give governors a clear and detailed view on topics and therefore supports their understanding and their strategic questioning. Click on the link below to review the document.

### New course available: Disadvantaged Learner Lead and DL/pupil premium governor

These network meetings will help to strengthen the working relationship between DL leads and governors and examine different approaches to monitoring and evaluation.

#### Dates:

**Monday 8 June, 13.30–15.30 at Stones Hotel, Salisbury**

**Tuesday 9 June, 13.30–15.30 at Cleeve House, Seend, nr. Devizes**

**Wednesday 10 June, 13.30–15.30 at Marlborough Golf Club**

*Please note that these courses will not incur a charge for subscribing governors booked.*

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/evidence-summaries/pupil-premium-guide/>



In many of their research documents the EEF use a simple but effective way to encourage school review and implementation process and the diagram below gives governors a clear understanding.

This tool can then be used to ask effective strategic questions on new systems or initiatives that are put in place.

The diagram splits into 4 clear sections. Good questions to ask - **Explore** – why did you make these changes? **Prepare** – How did you prepare for these changes? **Deliver** – How were the changes delivered? **Sustain** – How do we sustain these changes, and have we learnt anything from the process? **Most importantly, what was the Impact?**

## Curious Governors

Ofsted have just published a Commentary on school funding. Amanda Spielman provides more information about what they found in their research into school funding and its impact on education. I have included the link for all those curious governors for additional reading:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/commentary-on-school-funding?utm\\_source=a52d4522-2636-4462-addd-075c34d1233f&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm\\_content=daily](https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/commentary-on-school-funding?utm_source=a52d4522-2636-4462-addd-075c34d1233f&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=daily)

I hope we have given you food for thought and remember if you want to do anything in governance, then make sure that it is having a positive impact on all children's outcomes and life chances.

Thank you for taking the time to read our Newsletter.

From the School Governance Service team:

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# Right Choice