

WHAT GOVERNORS MUST DO

This is from 'The Essential Guide for School Governors in Gloucestershire', but we thought Greenwich governors might find it useful.

To answer the question is yours a 'good' school educationally, there are three specifics you must know and be involved in:

1. **The School Self Evaluation Form (SEF):** School self-evaluation is a crucial activity which all governors should be involved in – 'where are we now, where is the evidence that supports this, and what do we have to do to improve further' – judgements agreed by the Governing Body and recorded in a standard (Ofsted) format. You must be thoroughly familiar with your SEF, usually through regular reviews at Governing Body meeting. **Expect to see this document regularly, and be thoroughly involved in keeping it updated.**
2. **School Improvement Partner (SIP) Targets:** Each year your SIP (a serving/recently retired Head or equivalent appointed by the LA) meets with the Head and representative Governors to agree a set of specific targets for that academic year, and then reports on the achievement of these targets. **Ask for a copy of the last SIP report. Ask for the current list of targets and be thoroughly familiar with them – and ask regularly to monitor progress/achievement.**
3. **Ofsted Report.** Ofsted will also inspect your school at least every 3 years (sooner if it has had problems) to provide an independent report on overall performance. **Ask for and read thoroughly the latest Ofsted report – and regularly question progress in addressing any weaknesses identified in the report.**

If all the school targets are being achieved, continue to support and enjoy the school and push to make it even better (the best it can be!). Celebrate the successes, and consider if your good practices might be useful to other schools (collaboration between adjacent schools is growing and benefits everyone).

If targets are consistently not being achieved, your Governing Body should consider bringing in LA advice and support (your SIP or the LA will advise on who is available). Not to do so is to ignore the best interests of your local children – the very reason you became a governor. Have no doubts about taking positive action if it is necessary.

The AGG is already a member, but governing bodies and individual governors can join too. For details visit www.nga.org.uk, email governorhq@nga.org.uk or ring 0121 643 5787

Don't forget to look at *Updates* on the NGA website for information, as well as reading the Bulletin Board. The Bulletin Board and Updates can both be found in the briefing section of the website www.nga.org.uk/updateandbulletin.aspx

HELP IN FINDING GOVERNORS

Are you having trouble finding governors? Try the One-Stop Shop! This is a charity that 'recruits volunteers to be governors in schools in England'. It has recruited over 10,000 people over the past six years, including many young volunteers, and many from minority ethnic groups. It briefs volunteers on what it means to be a governor. The Head at Stockwell Primary School reports that, through the One-Stop Shop, her school has recruited 'a range of talented people who have all turned out to be very willing to offer their own time to support the governing body'. More details can be found on their website: www.sgoss.org.uk

The easiest way to access the One-Stop Shop is through **Howard Burton** at Greenwich Governor Services: howard.burton@greenwich.gov.uk He keeps the details of volunteers who are interested in Greenwich schools.

If Howard has no suitable names, the One-Stop Shop will actively look for potential governors for you. Contact them through their website or on 0870 241-3883 or info@sgoss.org.uk

HELP FROM THE WEB

THE CAMPAIGN FOR STATE EDUCATION is just what it says – a campaigning organisation dedicated to good state education. They produce excellent briefing papers – currently, for example, there are (among others) 'A Voice for Parents', and 'Ofsted's New Inspection Framework'. Their website is www.campaignforstateeducation.org.uk; and their phone number is 07932 149 942

• **NATIONAL GOVERNORS ASSOCIATION**
The London branch of the National Governors Association has its own website: <http://www.ngalondonregion.btik.com> and the website of the NGA itself is www.nga.org.uk

KEEPING THE DISAFFECTED AND EMOTIONALLY NEEDY CHILD IN MAINSTREAM SCHOOLING

Ours is a one form entry primary school in an area of high deprivation. Children arrive in school with a myriad of issues and we see it as our responsibility to provide the infrastructure of support to enable them to thrive. We believe that it is the acquisition of skills both in terms of learning outcomes and social and communication skills which will have the biggest influence on these children's futures. We work hard as a team to make a difference.

Our pupils are often two in one. One child is the youngster living with economic deprivation and family breakdown who needs to be brave and strong enough to cope at home and in the community. This child develops coping mechanisms. He has bravado. He can survive in the street culture of today. He has no consistent and secure family structure so he has to make decisions for himself. There are no clear boundaries or expectations. Bed is when he is tired. Meal times are whenever anyone is hungry. He has no clearly defined personal space at home. Dad is someone he sometimes sees or stays with.

The other side of this is the child we expect to see in school where there are clear boundaries, where there are high expectations and where there is a need to be part of the 'team'. This child has to wear the school 'strip' and cooperate and have self confidence to have a go without fear of making a mistake. This child has to share and take turns. He has to be polite and respect others attitudes and opinions. This child must make the right choices or accept the consequences.

Monday mornings arrive and the child has to become his or her 'school self'. In a busy primary school this is so hard to do easily and when Friday comes again it is the tougher and resilient child they need to be to survive. At our school we operate a policy of positive behaviour management. These children can shout louder than any one of us and are often more practised at it. There are only losers in a shouting match. We work hard to develop strategies to nurture and listen to the angry and disruptive child. Our patience is unending and a mark of our commitment to seeking a brighter future for all.

Staff appointments include a skilled learning mentor who will intervene in difficult situations and who will provide a safe and secure space for an angry child to calm down. This appointment has enabled children otherwise in danger of exclusion to continue in mainstream schooling. She has worked closely with all staff involved with a difficult and needy child, offering strategies to meet their many needs.

Establishing a positive relationship between home and school has been paramount in helping these pupils able to access all learning opportunities. We work very closely with parents, keeping them informed, setting targets and offering support. We contact them with good news as well as more difficult incidents. We monitor and record incidents and how they have been dealt with to seek best results. A trained counsellor is available one day per week to work with both adults and children. Children know that parents will be involved from an early stage. Letters are sent through the post and meetings arranged to discuss concerns and consequences. Parents will now contact us to seek a meeting and will keep us informed about any important changes or incidents outside school and in the family which may impact on behaviour at school.

The key message is that with a shared ethos, trust and respect between all parties, schools, pupils and families can work together to support children through difficult times. Clear expectations, a consistent approach, patience and understanding can make the difference for a child. At Cherry Orchard we really do believe that every child can be the person they need to be and can reach higher than they dreamed.

Jan Beames
Headteacher
Cherry Orchard Primary School

AN ANTI-BULLYING POLICY FOR STAFF?

An interesting point was raised at the last National Governors Association conference. We all have anti-bullying policies for students, but do we have one for staff as well? Staff can be, and unfortunately sometimes are, bullied – by fellow staff members, by students, by parents, even by school leaders. We of course have a duty of care to our staff as much as to our students. So, does your anti-bullying policy apply to staff who are being bullied?

DO YOU HAVE BASIC COMPUTER SKILLS AND A BIT OF FREE TIME? WOULD YOU BE WILLING TO HELP THE AGG SET UP A WEBSITE?

Since the AGG is a member of the National Governors Association, we are entitled to set up our own website, piggy-backed on theirs. We understand it is very easy to do – that it's just a matter of uploading any Word documents we want, and that the directions are very straightforward. We'd like to do this, so we can have articles from back issues of **Voice** permanently available, plus the leaflets we have published.



Would you be willing to help? If so, contact Margery Nzerem – margery@nzerem.com or 0208 858 3544

EXPERIENCES OF USING A CONSULTANT TO APPOINT A NEW HEADTEACHER

Appointing a new Head is one of the most nerve-wracking jobs any governing body ever has to undertake. Recently, the governing bodies of four secondary schools used consultants to help them choose. Their Chairs have written up their experiences.

**BLACKHEATH
BLUECOAT**



knowledge and even

Learning of the spectacular success secured by John Roan in appointing a substantive Head led the governing body (GB) at Blackheath Bluecoat C of E School (BBCS) to a simple conclusion. We wished to emulate The Roan's achievement, therefore we would duplicate their process! Liz Gardiner (CoG) was incredibly generous in sharing tips, documents. These were key to our engagement with the process.

The NCSL Urban Leadership Diagnostic Tool formed the backbone of our self-analysis as a GB. The eighteen (yes, EIGHTEEN) detailed questions to which governors responded, provided us with an invaluable profile of Blackheath Bluecoat. Forming a distinct focus regarding our needs and expectations ensured that, when coupled with the excellent advice and direction supplied by Liz, our GB was best placed to maximise our usage of extremely expensive consultants.

My summary of dos and don'ts would be:

- * do use the diagnostic tool
- * do allocate the day-to-day co-ordination of information, consultants, the budget, visits, paperwork etc...to a school-based individual (We used our Business Manager.)
- * do set aside a large amount of co-coordinating governors' time for the early stages of the process
- * do proof read everything twice - EVERYTHING
- * do persist and accept that there will be "ups and downs"
- * do decide to enjoy the process
- * don't accept anything less than the best for your school - your pupils, staff, parents, community and GB deserve the best

Although our package of consultants was identical to John Roan's (TES Prime and ASCL), we were unable to appoint.

The process though, was robust and effective; I would recommend it, with my best wishes, to any GB searching for a headteacher.

Carrie Palmer

JOHN ROAN

The responsibility of possibly the most important decision we'd take as Governors weighed heavily. Even with a recruitment consultant on the Governing Body, we wanted all the expertise we could get. We needed to be sure that we'd cast the net widely, and had rigorously tested all the candidates' skills, particularly as we had an internal candidate.



To attract candidates we used the services of TES Prime. We were impressed with the careful attention they paid to our requirements, the glossy promotional materials they produced, and the 26 candidates they found for us to shortlist. The benefits are that the one-off cost (£12,000 for the Selection Campaign) covers as many advertisements as you need, including pride of place in the front page of the TES advertisements, all the production and administration costs, and the services of an recruitment manager.

The disadvantage was that the actual assessment of candidates was very much in our hands. The consultant's support extended to guidance on short listing and feedback to candidates, but we would be on our own on the day. So we added the services of the National Educational Assessment Centre to run an in-school assessment as part of our two-day interview process.

Three experienced headteachers put our short listed candidates through their paces, with in-tray exercises, group discussions and other real life scenarios that a headteacher may face. By the end of the day we received detailed reports on each candidate's leadership, judgement, sensitivity, organisational ability and problem analysis skills. The reports proved to be revealing and insightful, and we were reassured when our instincts were supported by independent experts.

I am pleased to say that we recruited a fantastic headteacher to our school.

Further details are available from TES Prime at <http://www.tesprime.com>
From National Educational Assessment Centre Director, Tony Tuckwell at tony@tuckwell.eclipse.co.uk

Liz Gardiner

**ELTHAM
GREEN**



At Eltham Green it was decided that we should use a recruitment agency, Arete, to assist in finding a new headteacher. This decision was taken with reservations on the part of some governors who felt that the use of 'head hunters' was not in accordance with the education ethos of not poaching staff. However, the school's needed to attract a good level of applicants to a

post where there had been a number headteachers over a relatively short period. It was thought the post would be hard to fill it and in terms of time the school could not afford to have to re-advertise the post. It was agreed that the school approach Arete, who are part of Select Education plc which deals with senior appointments.

The selection panel met with Arete and set out their requirements for the post in terms of what was wanted from the new headteacher. Salary was also discussed and both Arte and the LA agreed that the pay range needed to be at the top of the Leadership Pay Spine. It was decided that the school would commission Arete to manage the recruitment process from Job Description and Post Specification to the short-listing meeting with the full involvement of the school at all times. As part of the process to get as large as possible field of suitable candidates two advertisements were placed prominently in the TES plus Arete used their contacts. Arete managed this process and provided the initial contact point for responses to the advertisements. At this stage it was clear that the school needed some additional skills for the short-listing and the final interview days, a consultant from Arete was asked to provide guidance. At the short-listing meeting there were 23 application and while only a small number came directly from 'head hunting' by Arete it is difficult to tell how many responses to the TES advertisements were encouraged to stay the course by their contact with Arete. A short list of 6 candidates was formed and from then on the final selection took place over two days, a short, short list of three being decided at the end of day one. I am pleased to say that on the final day the panel were able to recommend a candidate to the full governing body.

Costs, the school used Executive Search option from Arete. This is costed at 24% of the starting salary and is paid in three instalments. An initial 8% (non returnable) on placing the contract, 8% on job offer and 8% on placement. There is a rebate period if the appointed candidate is not satisfactory. The use of a consultant for the short listing and final interview was additional. A further selection option is the use of psychometric testing but this was not used by the school.

Jim Draper

ELTHAM HILL



Over two years ago our headteacher, who had been with us for 7 years, announced that she was retiring soon. As Chair of Governors I was immediately flooded with mixed feelings – joy for her that she would be able to take life more leisurely; loss that I would no longer be able to work closely with her; worry about the future of the

school without her excellent leadership – but the most dominant emotion was one of dread about the whole appointment process. It has been said that the selection of a new headteacher is the single most important task that governors face – and getting this wrong can be disastrous for a school.

Nine years ago the school had used the contribution and advice of a Consultant from SHA (Secondary Heads Association) to help with the selection process. Therefore at a full meeting of governors, just days after the announcement of the headteacher's retirement the governors discussed whether or not to appoint a consultant to assist us in the whole process and agreed to go ahead. SHA had become ASCL (Association of School & College Leaders) and we were very fortunate to gain the services of the same consultant (an experienced retired headteacher), who had worked with us 9 years ago.

The Consultant worked with us over a 4 month period and guided us through:

- An initial session of all governors where we (together with members of the Leadership Group) undertook a SWOT analysis of the school and then went on to look at the qualities and attributes we would want in the new head. At the end of it we made a group decision on which governors would be on the appointment panel – we chose nine.
- Help in putting together the job description and person specification.
- Suggestions on placing the advert (including the size of it & its position in the TES)
- Help in the short-listing process as well as guidance & advice on the whole interviewing process.

We had over a dozen applications; long listed six who we saw over a whole day and then finally shortlisted four. The quality of the candidates was excellent and we were able to appoint an excellent new headteacher. The services of the consultant certainly made a difference and although the cost was £10,000 the governors agreed that it was money very well spent. Information on the ASCL can be obtained from their website or from emailing: consultancy@ascl.org.uk. They currently charge £575 + expenses + VAT per day – but will come and talk to your governing body on an expenses only basis to explain the service and the school can decide how many days' consultancy is required.

Another website that we found very useful and is available free is the National College for School Leadership (NCLS). Under the heading 'Recruiting headteachers & senior leaders' there are a series of excellent 'Tools' that can be used by the appointment panel to guide you through the whole process with or without an external consultant.

Do not hesitate to get in touch if you want more information or to discuss any of the issues on appointing a head.

Margaret Wasdell