

WHAT GOVERNING BODIES SHOULD EXPECT FROM SCHOOL LEADERS AND WHAT SCHOOL LEADERS SHOULD EXPECT FROM GOVERNING BODIES

In spring 2008, the National Governors Association, the Association of School and College Leaders, and the National Association of Head Teachers agreed the following document

1 Ways of working

The way that the governing body operates and the way that it organises itself should be related to the nature of its work. Governing bodies have considerable freedom regarding the delegation of work to committees or individuals (including the chair and the headteacher) and they should carefully consider the tasks to be undertaken before making decisions on the delegation of responsibilities. Governing bodies should keep their working practices under review.

Governing bodies are required to act in accordance with the provisions of the workforce agreement and must have regard to the work-life balance of school leaders when arranging meeting times.

School leaders should have regard to governors' work and other commitments when meetings are being arranged.

It should be the joint responsibility of school leaders and the governing body to ensure that meetings are well planned, at appropriate intervals, with agendas that are appropriate to the remit and that are manageable. Business should not be repeated in different forums, and matters discussed by committees should be consistent with their terms of reference.

2 Governance and management

The distinction between governance and management needs to be clearly understood by all involved, so that governors are not asked to, and do not try to, involve themselves in day to day management.

The governing body expects to be able to monitor the work of the school and to hold the headteacher to account for the performance of the school. It is vital that the headteacher is present or is represented at full governing body meetings. However, other school leaders may represent the management of the school at other meetings. For example, the school business manager may be the appropriate person to attend budget monitoring meetings.

School leaders should not be micro-managed, and the governing body should concentrate on matters related to strategy and school effectiveness, delegating those tasks which are deemed to be managerial rather than strategic (for example the deployment of staff below leadership team level). School leadership teams should be fully involved in discussions of strategic issues.

3 Supporting the governing body

In order to manage its workload, it is vital that the governing body is properly supported and serviced.

a) Clerking

Even in the many schools where the clerk to the governing body is also employed to carry out different duties under a separate contract, resources should be made available for the clerk to be properly qualified and capable of servicing and advising the governing body with independence. The clerk should have a job description and pay grade appropriate to the post.

The governing body should use the clerk to manage the business of the governing body, and should not make unnecessary demands of other school staff.

b) Expenses

Governors' out of pocket expenses should be reimbursed as per an agreed policy on governors' allowances. There should be adequate allowance in the budget for governors' expenses.

4 The role of the chair

As the principal link between the governing body and the headteacher, the chair of the governing body bears additional responsibilities. The headteacher and the chair of the governing body should meet regularly at mutually convenient times to discuss school matters.

The chair should be prepared to undertake any necessary additional training, and to attend local authority (or other locality) briefing meetings in order to fulfil her/his role. This expectation should be underpinned with the appropriate budget commitment for training and expenses.

The chair must have regard to the limitations stipulated in government guidance when exercising 'chair's action': *The chair or vice chair has the power to carry out functions of the governing body if a delay in exercising a function is likely to be seriously detrimental to the interests of the school, a pupil at the school or their parents, or a person who works at the school. This power excludes matters related to the alteration and closure of schools, change of school category, change of school name, approval of the budget, discipline policies and admissions. Any action taken under this power must be reported to the governing body.* (Ch 3 Para 48, A Guide to the Law for School Governors, DCSF, 2008)

5 Information

The governing body is reliant on the school to provide it promptly with the information that it needs to carry out its role. In addition to documents they are required by law to approve (such as the School Profile), governing bodies should expect to receive:

- school improvement partner reports
- any local authority school improvement visit reports
- the RAISEonline report (in full to at least one governor)
- budget reports presented in an appropriate format
- self-evaluation form (SEF)

Sensitive information must be kept confidential.

NEWS ROUND-UP - COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL GOVERNORS ASSOCIATION

Primary National Curriculum Goes Online

The new national curriculum framework is now available online at <http://curriculum.gcda.gov.uk> with guidance and a range of tools and case studies to help schools prepare for its implementation.

Wear Fair

The school clothing market is worth £1 billion per year, but very little of it is made with Fairtrade cotton, and may have been produced by children for as little as 5p per hour for an 80-hour week. People and Planet's Wear Fair campaign aims to create a national movement in schools and colleges to ask retailers to source clothing that will improve the lives of millions of cotton farmers. <http://peopleandplanet.org.wearfair>

Exam Cheats Caught

More than 4400 people were caught cheating in last year's GCSEs and A-levels in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland, a six percent increase on the previous year. Cheating is still very rare, affecting 0.03 percent of exams taken. The main way pupils cheat is by using mobile phones or other technology. Every exam centre must now display a warning poster telling students about strict rules on not bringing mobiles or other electronic equipment into exam halls. www.ofqual.gov.uk

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6 Active governance

Like all responsible and professional bodies, the governing body should commit to its own professional development and training should be seen as an entitlement. Visiting the school provides important opportunities for governors to better understand both the strengths of the school and the working environment. All visits should be arranged by appointment in accordance with an agreed protocol.

a) Training

Governing bodies should make it clear that there is an expectation that all new governors (including staff governors) commit to undertake both school based induction and professional induction training. All governors should commit to specific issue based training as it arises.

It is essential to have a properly trained governing body and appropriate budget allocations should enable this to happen.

Effective training should be planned to include both internal and external providers and should consist of a manageable programme combining activities for individual and small groups of governors and occasional activities for full governing bodies working in partnership with leadership teams.

b) Visiting the school

Visits should be planned in advance and agreed with the leadership team.

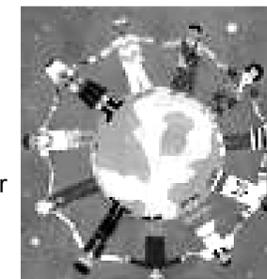
Governing bodies should expect school leaders to welcome governors to visit the school, both formally to monitor agreed priorities and developments, and less formally to broaden their knowledge of the school.

School leaders should expect governors to adhere to visiting protocols, to be professional in their monitoring role, and to be sensitive to the pressures of the school calendar.



GREENWICH CHILDREN'S TRUST BOARD

Greenwich Children's Trust was set up to establish and maintain high quality services that enable the children in Greenwich to achieve our locally agreed cross cutting outcomes and the requirements of the National Service Framework.



The Children's Trust Board comprises: 3 Greenwich Council Cabinet Members, 3 NHS Greenwich Board members, a representative from the Police Authority, one member of the Board of London East Learning and Skills Council, a representative from the Multi-Faith Forum, a representative from the Voluntary Sector. As a result of a decision made towards the end of last year, the Chair of the Schools Forum was added to represent the schools sector.

I have now attended two meetings of the Board. The priorities in the Children and Young People's Plan are the cornerstone of the work of the Trust. Raising achievement is central to delivering all of the priorities in the Plan, and I was pleased to note in the performance monitoring report encouraging improvement in achievement in Early Years and Key Stages 1 and 2, particularly in Language and Literacy skills. Strong anecdotal evidence indicated that forest schools had encouraging results, particularly for boys.

Safeguarding Children arrangements obviously form an important part of the Board's work, but other areas recently considered include Teenage pregnancy, Maternity Services and the Health of Looked After children.

Any Governor wishing to know more about the work of the Children's Trust, please contact me.

Roy Moore
Chair, Schools Forum

Governors often ask two questions in relation to community cohesion. What is it and what is my role in promoting it?

GOVERNORS & THE PROMOTION OF COMMUNITY COHESION

The school's duty in promoting community cohesion came into place in England from September 2007 but previous legislation including The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 had placed particular duties on all public bodies, including schools, to promote race equality.

The Community Cohesion Education Standards (CCES) were produced in 2004 and provide a framework for schools to promote community cohesion and identifies them as being central to breaking down barriers between young people and helping to create cohesive communities.

In the CCES a cohesive community is identified as one where:

- there is a common vision and a sense of belonging for all communities;
- the diversity of people's different backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and positively valued;
- those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities; and
- strong and positive relationships are being developed between people from different backgrounds in the Workplace, in schools and within neighbourhoods.

When Ofsted inspectors consider community cohesion they look at it from a number of angles. They look at how well school leaders including governors have analysed their community in respect of the religious, ethnic and socio-economic context. Inspectors will expect the school to have conducted an audit of its provision in respect of promoting a school, local, national and global perspective across the three strands and that governors have monitored that all the strands and perspectives have been covered appropriately. They will also expect school leaders including governors to have a view of what impact the school's promotion of community cohesion is having.

What kind of impact may the promotion of community cohesion have?

Community cohesion is linked to a number of strategic aims:

A. Narrowing the attainment and achievement gap. Governors should be looking at whether all groups of pupils are doing equally well and making good or at least expected progress. Where groups are not making expected progress or underperforming, governors should be asking the headteacher/senior leaders what is being done to reduce/eliminate the gaps.

B. Developing common values of citizenship based on dialogue, mutual respect and acceptance of diversity. Governors should encourage a dialogue of what constitutes good citizenship in 21st century Britain and what are the traditional British strengths which should be promoted. These could include the positive impact of the rule of law, the UK's tradition of tolerance and the traditional sense of enterprise and inventiveness that has contributed so much to Britain's material wealth.

C. Contributing to building good community relations and challenging all types of discrimination and inequality. Schools are often beacons in their communities and governors should review how the school's actions are benefitting the community and helping to remove impediments to good community relations, for example, working on reducing the negative impact of gang culture.

Governors will be expected to be aware of what the school itself is saying about its effective promotion of community cohesion. A section of the school's self-evaluation form (SEF) is devoted to the effective promotion of community cohesion. One of the associated areas that is considered is the impact of the school's work in this area on outcomes of the pupils in respect of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Governors' high expectations for the promotion of community cohesion should be reflected in the school taking 'vigorous' actions which are very successful and recognized as having had an exceptional impact. Governors should find out from the pupils and their parents /carers whether they view their school as a cohesive community and that they know what to do to keep it that way or improve it. Governors should help to find out from the school's immediate community and, where appropriate, from further afield how the school's pupils are helping to make the locality a better place.

Tim Feast,
SIP

Quote: Good teaching is one-fourth preparation and three-fourths theatre - **Gail Godwin**

NEW DCSF GUIDANCE ON EXCLUSIONS

In September 2008 the DCSF issue new guidance on exclusions, but it has not been widely circulated. If you want a copy, you can order one from DCSF publications, at www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications or on tel. 0845 60 222 60. The name of the document is 'Improving behaviour and attendance: guidance on exclusion from schools and Pupil Referral Units'. ref 00573-2008DOM-EN

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE ASSOCIATION OF GREENWICH GOVERNORS?

The Association of Greenwich Governors (AGG) is run by a small Executive Committee which is elected at our AGM. It aims to act as a conduit between Greenwich governors and both the National Governors Association and the Local Authority.

The Association has three main functions, these are:

As mentioned above to act as a central point of contact between Children's Services and school governors on matters of common interest. A simple example of this area would be improving the information to schools on who does what within children's Services so that we know who to contact with problems. A more complicated example would be the ongoing dialogue between the AGG and the Director as to how governors assist in improving the outcomes of our pupils. Governors who have attended the training provided by Chris Banks will know that a great deal of effort is being put into improving the ability of governors to act as 'critical friends' but as a governor there is also a work/life balance to be struck otherwise we will find we are losing governors.

Again as above to be a member of and disseminate information from the NGA plus responding to their surveys of members. The NGA has an important role in ensuring that central government acknowledges to role of governors and responds to their views. Unfortunately national government although it may good at acknowledging the service of governors when attending governors conferences has the bad habit of not consulting governors unless firmly prodded.

An important method of communication between the AGG and governors is the newsletter 'Voice'. This produced termly and aims to keep governors up to date with what is happening in the wider world of governance at both local and national level. Contact between AGG and chairs of governors is maintained by email with the AGG attempting not to deluge chairs with emails but making certain that the important emails get through.

I believe very strongly that the AGG performs an important role in the governance of Greenwich schools although like an iceberg most of it does not come to the notice of the general membership.

Jim Draper
Outgoing Chair, AGG

QUESTIONS OFSTED MIGHT ASK GOVERNORS

The following is from the OfSTED briefing notes for inspectors. The full document re governors, 'governance – the effectiveness of the governing body briefing for section 5 inspectors' can be downloaded as part of a zip file from the OfSTED website (search for Supplementary Guidance and Resources). In addition, the full evaluation schedule, that 'sets out the judgements inspectors will make and report on', can be downloaded from the OfSTED website (search for evaluation schedule)

Inspectors may find the following questions useful when talking to governors. The questions *are examples only* and will clearly need to be tailored to the individual school and linked to the pre inspection briefing.

- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the school and how do governors know?
- What are the strengths and areas for development of the governing body?
- What are the main barriers to learning and what action has been taken to overcome them? How successful have the actions been?
- What contribution does the governing body think it has made to improving provision, especially teaching, and outcomes for pupils?
- To what extent is the governing body involved in the school's processes for self-evaluation and improvement planning?
- How do governors monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the school improvement plan?
- Can governors give examples of how they have supported and challenged the school?
- What are the procedures for safeguarding pupils and how have training needs been met?
- How are governors involved in the life of the school?
- Do governors have specific areas of responsibility and/or links with school classes/form/tutor groups/subjects/departments? What is the impact of these links?
- How do governors consult parents/the local community?
- Can governors give examples of when parental/community views have been sought and acted on?
- How are the training needs of governors identified and addressed?
- What training have governors undertaken recently and what has been the impact of this training?

Association of Greenwich Governors' Newsletter

Voice

SPRING 2010

HOW THE POLICE WORK WITH SCHOOLS

At Greenwich we have a **Safer Schools Partnership**. In an effort to deliver a consistent approach to personal safety messages, I decided to adopt an educational resource called www.missdorothy.com. I am glad to say that nearly all of Greenwich's Primary Schools are now signed up to the programme and if they are not already using it they will be by Sept '10. I am very grateful for the support shown by our Primary Schools to this programme and I look forward to working with our schools to assist in the roll out of this programme through the coming years.

Des Murphy
Greenwich Police
Youth Partnership

