

## WHAT DOES CHAIR'S ACTION MEAN?



This is the advice of Gillian Allcroft, policy manager of the National Governors' Association, in response to a question about chair's action.

The School Governance (Procedures) (England) Regulations 2002 (as amended) set out the way in which governing bodies should conduct their proceedings, what is quorum, who can attend meetings, and who can take decisions. In general, the governing body must decide each year on the level of delegation (e.g. delegating the approval of relevant policies to a staffing committee). Without such formal delegation no individual has the power to act on behalf of the governing body – *except* the chair (and in some cases the vice-chair) acting in cases of urgency (Regulation 6).

The Regulations allow for the chair to exercise any function of the governing body, whether or not in usual circumstances such power can be delegated to an individual. The power can be exercised where not to act would be detrimental to an individual pupil, a member of staff or the school as a whole and it would not be practicable to call a governing body meeting before action needs to be taken.

Most chairs try not to use the power because they prefer decision to be made in tandem with their fellow governors, not least because the burden of decision making is then shared. But even within the ranks of governors there is the odd incipient megalomaniac (my all-time favourite being the appointment, albeit a temporary one, of a headteacher) who wields chair's action at the drop of a hat. Sometimes this behaviour is encouraged by a headteacher who prefers sheep to governors. If a chair is using the power willy-nilly then he or she needs to be challenged – in reality there are very few cases where decisions are so urgent it would not be possible to get together a committee or the full governing body.

The power is meant to be used sparingly – the key is in the title of the Regulation 'cases of urgency', not 'cases of convenience'.

If chairs are in doubt they should themselves how they would feel as a member of the governing body if a chair took this action without consultation. If the answer is they would be extremely miffed it probably doesn't qualify as 'urgent'.

The Review set up by the Department for Education and Department for Culture, Media and Sport reported on 7th February. It made 36 recommendations, for central and local government and the wider music sector. In relation to music provision in schools the Review recommends that:

## HENLEY REVIEW OF MUSIC EDUCATION



- The provision of Music Education should remain a statutory requirement as part of the National Curriculum.
- Schools should provide children with a broad Music Education, which includes performing, composing, listening, reviewing and evaluating
- Singing should be an important part of every child's school life from Early Years through until at least Key Stage 3.
- All children at Key Stage 2 should have the opportunity to learn an instrument through whole class ensemble teaching. Ideally, this would be for a period of one year, but at the barest minimum, one term of weekly tuition should be offered.
- Music should continue to be offered by schools at Key Stage 4 and beyond, allowing pupils to gain GCSE, BTEC and A level qualifications in the subject.

*(This article is from the National Governors Association's news briefing)*

# THE ROLE OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN EDUCATION – THE NATIONAL VIEW FROM THE NGA

The diminishing role of local authorities in the current tight financial situation is causing NGA members to express their concerns about the impact on schools.

Much concern has been expressed about less strategic co-ordination, for example in planning school places to make sure there was one for each child, and reduced services for schools. One member asked: “Who, with local insight, will ensure that the weakest have access to the best? Taken to an extreme, if Las go, someone in the course of time will reinvent them to ensure equal opportunity, moderation between schools and quality education for all children.”

Jeff Allinson of the Wakefield Association reported: “It has been made clear after the recent freeze-up how important the LA can be in disaster management. Some schools lost all internal ceilings and were severely flooded. The LA co-ordinated contractors and arranged for alternative venues so the children’s education could continue. I have seen the same process after major fires; governors have said the service was excellent. I don’t know how we would manage without this service.”

A consistent theme was the challenges presented to schools by the need to procure – and pay for – services which Las currently provide. Angela Dunkerley, chair of the North Lincolnshire Association, felt that: “The statement in the schools white paper that ‘governors will be better equipped to challenge’ seems laughable in the circumstances as every support for governors seems to be disappearing at an alarming rate.”

The implications of the removal of the universal school improvement partner (SIP) also prompted a lot of concern. A new chair from North Yorkshire reported: “I have found our SIP a really positive supplement to the senior leadership team within our school. She enquires and challenges how we self-assess, is willing to listen to explanations from the senior leadership team and take these on board, she helps to formulate clear targets for moving forward and makes suggestions on how we can continue to challenge ourselves.”

**Roy Moore**  
*Chair, Association of Greenwich Governors*

## ARTICLES & LETTERS WELCOME

We always welcome hearing from governors, especially with regard to sharing good practice. If you have anything you think other governors might be interested in, please contact us on [voice@associationofgreenwichgovernors.org](mailto:voice@associationofgreenwichgovernors.org)

**Quotation: Sooner or later people will learn to recognize your worth - Paul Gauguin**

## SOCIAL INEQUALITY: CAN SCHOOLS NARROW THE GAP?

The British Educational Research Association (BERA) published a review of research into social equality and educational achievement.

Its key findings were that although schools can lessen the impact of deprivation on children’s progress, this effect is limited by factors outside the school’s control. It goes on to note that although schools may only bring about modest improvements these positive impacts are worth having. In relation to school improvement strategies it says that those which take into account previous evidence of ‘what works’ can help schools to narrow the gap, but those which lead some schools to improve at the expense of others do not and that such strategies should be linked to wider efforts to tackle inequalities in the local community.

It concludes that policy-makers should be realistic about what schools can achieve, and allow schools to manage such interventions in the most appropriate way for their pupils, staff, parents and communities.

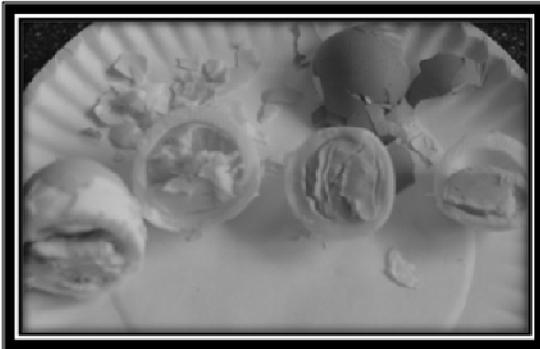
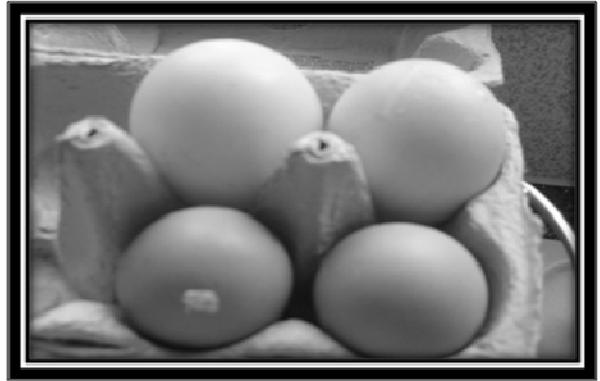
*(This article is from the National Governors Association news briefing)*

# DE LUCY PRIMARY SCHOOL'S FARM

If you go down to De Lucy School in Abbey Wood, you'll be in for a very big but pleasant surprise... they have a productive farm on the premises...right there, in the middle of the school grounds there are animals including 2 pigmy goats, chickens, ducks and rabbits.

The farm is integrated into the school curriculum. All pupils participate in cross-curricular activities focused around the farm. Beautiful work is often produced and gets displayed around the school for the entire school community, School Governors and visitors too, to enjoy. Clearly, from their school work, the children love their farm.

In my role as Community Governor at De Lucy, I was very supportive of the Heads decision to start a farm. I felt that it would add value to the pupil's achievements and interests by them learning more practically about the environment, life cycles, where some of their favourite foods come from and learning to give, share and working in a team by caring for animals.



There is such a buzz of excitement whenever I attend meetings or school visits. Often you are greeted by the bleating of the goats. At the end of April our second set of bantam\* chicks were hatched from their eggs in our incubator. In no time at all they were big chicks – no longer little fluff balls, as I refer to the hatchlings.

Note: \*The name *bantam* is derived from the city of Bantam, once a major seaport, in Indonesia. European sailors restocking on live fowl for sea journeys found the small native breeds of chicken in Southeast Asia to be useful, and any such small poultry came to be known as a *bantam*. [Wikipedia]

Earlier this year I had the pleasure of comparing the taste of a couple of chicken and a duck egg. The duck egg is bigger and, fried or boiled, 'eggier' in taste [that raw essence of what is essentially an egg]. Proceeds from the sale of these eggs contribute towards the on-going running expenses of the school's farm.

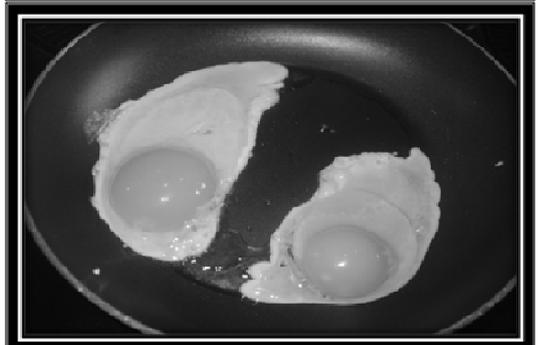
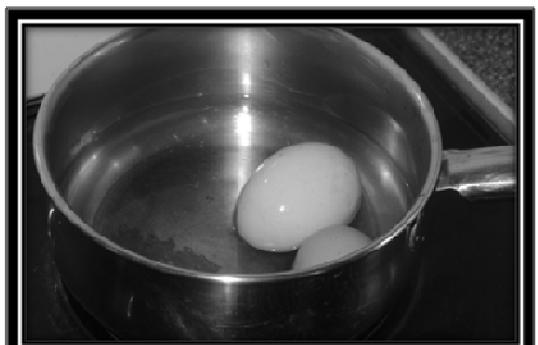
De Lucy School is now looking at starting to organically grow some of their own foods too!

Visits from other schools would be welcomed. The farm animals are now very tame and love getting attention. Just contact the school for details. Tel: 020 8310 5290 | Website: <http://webfronter.com/greenwich/DeLucy/>

## Quiz for the fun of it...

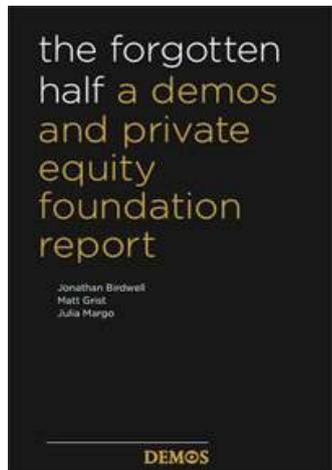
Q: What birds are responsible for laying the largest and the smallest eggs in the world?

A: The ostrich produces the largest bird's egg in the world, which weighs in at around 1.3kg per egg. The smallest egg in the world is the size of a small pea and is laid by the bee hummingbird, a tiny bird native to Cuba which measures only 5cm long from tip of bill to tail.



**Ann-Marie Cousins,**  
Community School Governor at De Lucy since 2006

This study published by the think tank Demos looks at the 50% of young people who do not go on to higher education. It says that the work opportunities for these young people are much more limited than those for graduates and it takes the view that in part this is a result of a poor educational offer in schools.



# THE FORGOTTEN HALF

- It argues that there is 'a cultural bias in the school system that privileges academic success over the broader skills that are of benefit to the 'other 50 per cent'. It makes a number of recommendations including, that:
- The Government and schools should develop intensive but practical literacy and numeracy recovery programmes at key stage 3 and 4.
- School and colleges should provide further time for, and investment in, 'enrichment' frameworks that help to prioritise and capture 'life skills' and other employability skills.
- Ofsted should make career advice, the imparting of employability skills and employer engagement key components of assessing schools and colleges.
- The Government should consider introducing intensive employability. programmes (e.g. Working Links and Fit4Work) for some young people in schools.
- Schools and colleges should create new development and advice roles for employers and people from business backgrounds.
- The quality of work experience in schools should be vastly improved and that work experience should be integrated better with the curriculum and careers advice.

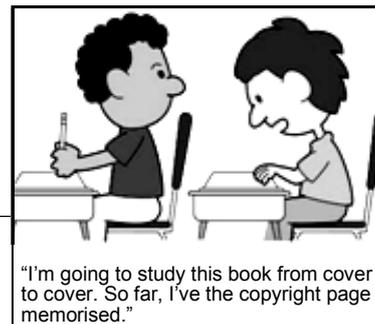
## SCHOOLS URGED TO MAKE MORE EFFORT TO INVOLVE FATHERS

Children whose fathers play an active role in their education are likely to attain higher academic qualifications, be better behaved, and report greater enjoyment of school than those with unengaged fathers. However, schools regularly fail to include fathers in their children's education. It is a particular issue for separated fathers who often struggle to obtain their children's school reports, or find out about parents' nights and school events. This is despite evidence that 70% of fathers who live with their children and 81% of those who do not what to be more involved in their children's education. Families Need Fathers would like Ofsted to change the wording of its reports so that 'parental engagement' includes both mothers and fathers. For more information, go to [www.fnf.org.uk](http://www.fnf.org.uk)

The full report can be downloaded via the link – do be aware that it is over 200 pages long – [www.demos.co.uk/publications/theforgottenhalf](http://www.demos.co.uk/publications/theforgottenhalf) (Authors: Jonathan Birdwell, Matt Grist and Julia Margo) Note: The report is Free to download from the website.

*(from the National Governors Association)*

*(This article was first published in the NGA newsletter 'Matters Arising')*



## THE ASSOCIATION OF GREENWICH GOVERNORS HAS A WEBSITE!

The AGG now has its own website at [www.associationofgreenwichgovernors.org](http://www.associationofgreenwichgovernors.org) It has:

- a list (and thumbnail sketches) of committee members,
- all the back issues of Voice (plus an index),
- copies of information sharing emails which are sent to all Chairs
- links to useful organisations.

Have a look and tell us what you think. We particularly welcome suggestions for other things to include. In addition, you can contact us at [voice@associationofgreenwichgovernors.org](mailto:voice@associationofgreenwichgovernors.org)

