

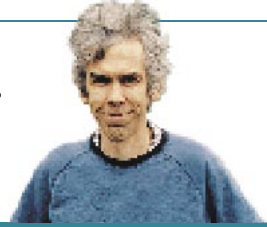
# Governors

## Termly newsletter

### RECRUITING A NEW HEAD

George Tomlinson's governors used an assessor centre to evaluate potential heads

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### MONEY TALKS

Focusing on the new multi-year school funding plans

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### REWARDING WORK

Olive Young, MBE, talks about her role as a school governor

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## Governors key to extended services

Governing bodies have a crucial role to play in developing and leading extended services

The Extended Schools Prospectus sets out the Government's vision for extended schools. By 2010, it wants to see all schools providing access to: childcare from 8am to 6pm; a range of before- and after-school activities; parenting support and family learning opportunities; referral to a range of specialist support services; as well as wider access to ICT, sports and arts facilities.

Schools and governing bodies will need to work in partnership with existing providers to ensure access to these services.

The governing body is

responsible for deciding what form these additional activities and services should take. Governing bodies can delegate the practical delivery of services to others, but will retain ultimate legal responsibility.

Governing bodies are required to consult their local authority, the staff of the school, parents and pupils. They must abide by provisions in the local authorities' scheme for financing schools, and ensure that any proposed service does not interfere with a pupil's education and that they are representative of extended



service providers.

The Government also wants to see links formed between extended schools and children's centres (which provide integrated services for children under five and their families). It is

encouraging schools, especially primary, to consider co-locating with a children's centre and offering joint services, to provide a more streamlined service to parents and families.

Schools, together with

the local authority and any existing management or partnership board, will need to agree how to govern and manage these children's centres.

**FOR MORE INFO:**  
[www.teachernet.gov.uk/extendedschools](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/extendedschools)

## Teaching Awards to recognise governance

Governors' work will be rewarded in the 2006 Teaching Awards, with the addition of a new category recognising excellence in school governance.

The DfES Award for School Governance will acknowledge the vital role that governors play within the whole school community, and will be open to all school governors.

The Teaching Awards Trust will be writing to all schools in September to invite nominations.

The Rt Hon Jacqui Smith, Minister of State for



Schools, said: "The new DfES Award for Governors is a positive step forward in recognising the pivotal role that governors play in driving improvement and change. Like headteachers, teachers and teaching assistants, governors ensure that a school is run effectively and to the best of its ability, and I look forward to meeting outstanding candidates during the 2006 awards ceremonies."

**FOR MORE INFO:** [www.teachingawards.com](http://www.teachingawards.com)

## WIN software for your school!

### Just tell us what you think

*Governors* has teamed up with RM to give governors the chance to win a copy of its Living Library for their school.

The software will be awarded to the best letter sent to us for use in the spring term issue of *Governors*. We value your feedback, top tips, and responses to articles and look forward to hearing from you. For a chance to win, **turn to page 7.**

**Teaching in England**

Governors need to be aware of their legal position with regard to overseas trained teachers (OTTs). OTTs can teach in England for up to four years without gaining QTS. **FOR MORE INFO:** On routes to QTS: [www.tta.gov.uk/php/read.php?sectid=358&articleid=844](http://www.tta.gov.uk/php/read.php?sectid=358&articleid=844) On the four-year rule, email: [JenniferMckenna@ind.homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:JenniferMckenna@ind.homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk)

**Digital diploma**



The new DiDA (Diploma in Digital Applications) qualification is available to all secondary schools. The three-part suite of qualifications, which leads to the full diploma, is an alternative to the GNVQ in IT. Secondary schools are eligible to receive free digital resources from the Regional Broadband Consortia (RBC). As from this month, the RBC website includes an area aimed at school governors. **FOR MORE INFO on DiDA:** <http://dida.edexcel.org.uk> **Free resource info:** <http://dida.nwlg.org.uk>

**Inclusive secondary schools**

The Refugee Council's Inclusive Secondary Schools project is a three-year action research initiative, funded by the KPMG Foundation. It seeks to develop strategies for increasing the inclusion of asylum seeking and refugee children in secondary education through the involvement of parents and communities. The results will include pilot partnerships and a tool kit for schools and community organisations. **FOR MORE INFO:** [www.refugeecouncil.org.uk](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk)

# Opportunity knocks for teenagers

The Government's youth Green Paper, *Youth Matters*, is a comprehensive package of measures designed to address the needs of teenagers. Building on the principles and reforms already set out in *Every Child Matters*, the Green Paper aims to help all young people achieve the five ECM outcomes through:

- giving them more say over what they do and where they can go in their spare time
- encouraging young people to become more involved in their communities
- improving information, advice and guidance
- and providing better personalised support for young people who need it.

There are a range of proposals in the Green Paper on which the Government is seeking views. These include new ways of commissioning information, advice and guidance, with collaboration between schools and colleges being encouraged; Opportunity Cards, which aim to get



young people more involved in positive activities; Capital Funds to enable new approaches to strategic investment in youth facilities; and new national standards for young peoples' activities.

An e-consultation on the plans runs until 4 November. Students can be directed to the 'Young People's questionnaire' - which will ensure that the consultation is informed by those the changes are aimed at helping.

**FOR MORE INFO:**

- **Youth Matters:** [www.teachernet.gov.uk/educationoverview/briefing/currentstrategy/youthgreenpaper](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/educationoverview/briefing/currentstrategy/youthgreenpaper)
- **e-consultation:** [www.dfes.gov.uk/consultations/conRespond.cfm?consultationId=1325](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/consultations/conRespond.cfm?consultationId=1325)
- **Young People's questionnaire:** [www.dfes.gov.uk/consultations/condetails.cfm?consultationid=1324](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/consultations/condetails.cfm?consultationid=1324)

## Schools to get more for their money

The Government has set up a specialist DfES team to co-ordinate the effort to realise procurement savings of £1.4bn across the education system over the next three years, in line with the Gershon Review. Ian Taylor, a businessman and experienced school governor, is heading up this Centre for Procurement Performance (CPP).

"We need to make huge savings and make sure that the scale of benefit is big enough for even the smallest institution to recognise and welcome - and

we need to work fast," says Ian, whose previous post was head of procurement with HBOS.

"From my own experience serving in schools for the last 12 years [Ian chairs the governing body at his local primary school in Yorkshire and is also governor of a secondary school], I know what a difference better procurement deals could make. Our job is simply to help budget holders get more for their money - they'll keep everything they save."

**FOR MORE INFO:** [www.dfes.gov.uk/cpp](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/cpp)

## Six make Queen's Birthday Honours List



Norman Harrison MBE, chair of governors at Atkinson Road Primary School

Six governors were recognised in the Queen's Birthday 2005 Honours List for their contribution to education and skills. MBEs were awarded to Colin Tufnell for his work at Salvatorian College in Harrow; Donald Wingate, a governor at Bebington High School and Brackenwood Junior School

in the Wirral, Merseyside; Peter Brooks, chair of governors at Marriots School and Camp Hill JMI School in Stevenage, Herts; Gordon Ascroft, a governor at St Neot's Community College in Cambridgeshire; Olive Young, chair of governors at Fernwood Junior School in Nottingham (see pg8 for a more in-depth interview); and Norman Harrison, chair of governors at Atkinson Road Primary School in Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Norman Harrison has been a governor at Atkinson Road Primary School since 1973. He became chair of governors in 1997. He was awarded the MBE for his services to education. "When I found out that I'd been recognised for an MBE, I was stunned into silence. I couldn't help wondering, why me? There are lots of people doing good work. However I am honoured to have received the award."

The MBE recognises Norman Harrison's services as a school governor in the local community. "I have been a school governor for 32 years, and have been involved over the years in various committees dealing with local affairs and the community."

## One-Stop Shop to cover all local authorities

School Governors' One-Stop Shop (SGOSS) will be extending its remit to cover all English local authorities.

Steve Acklam, SGOSS CEO, will be writing to all local authorities with which SGOSS is not currently working to offer its services with a view to starting work in

either October 2005 or January 2006.

Since its inception in 2000, SGOSS has recruited more than 7,200 volunteers, over 60 per cent of which are now serving as governors. Around 23 per cent of its recruits come from ethnic-minority backgrounds.

## Rise in exclusions

A six per cent rise in exclusions is evidence that schools are taking a zero-tolerance approach to disruptive behaviour, according to schools minister Jacqui Smith.

New figures from the DfES show that heads' judgements on exclusions are not being routinely overturned, with the number of pupils being reinstated after exclusion down from 150 in 2002/03 to 130 in 2003/04.

## SEAL awareness

Governors of primary schools need to be aware of the Government's new curriculum resource to promote the social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL).

SEAL promotes positive behaviour and enables children to be effective learners, get on with others, set themselves goals and be able to work towards them.

**FOR MORE INFO:** The free resource can be ordered from Prolog on 0845 6022260 (quote DfES 0110-2005) or online via [www.teachernet.gov.uk/seal](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/seal)

## Reducing bureaucracy



The Implementation Review Unit (IRU) - the independent panel of school staff tasked with helping schools to cut bureaucracy - has filed its second annual report.

The report - drawn up by a panel of serving heads, senior teachers and a school bursar - offers schools a set of principles aimed at curbing the growth of 'unnecessarily bureaucratic'

demands, and advice on reducing the burden of existing requirements.

The report also invites schools to suggest areas where the IRU might usefully challenge unnecessarily bureaucratic arrangements. The principles for schools will be available in poster form in the autumn.

**FOR MORE INFO:** [www.dfes.gov.uk/iru](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/iru)



Chair of governors Paul Dixon and the school council

Words: Tom Moggach Picture: Zoe Norfolk

## The right candidate

**D**etermined to find the right person to fill the role of headteacher, the governing body at George Tomlinson, a primary school in east London, has decided to use an assessor centre in their search. The governors, in consultation with the children and staff, are taking advantage of this new approach to evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of candidates.

In addition to the traditional interview, aspiring leaders of city schools can now be independently assessed with a focus on the specific leadership skills needed to succeed in this challenging environment.

"In interviews, people tend to come out with the pat answer," explains chair of governors Paul Dixon, "but we'll get a more in-depth view of the candidates' qualities and potential when operating under pressure."

Groups of candidates work for a day with expert assessors at a centre in Hackney, east London. They are set various tasks, including a school-improvement planning exercise and a critical incident interview.

The school began its recruitment process with a session for governors and staff to decide the qualities they needed from their new head. This personal specification was divided up into aspects that can be best evaluated at the assessment centre and those that can be

evaluated at school. "We're going to ask them for an interview and a presentation," says school councillor Florence, aged 11.

The school council is playing an important role in the interview process. Councillors have asked their classmates to write questions for the candidates, which are then voted on to create a short list.

As the school council met in

Leytonstone, six candidates were spending the day with assessors in London. Two had applied for the George Tomlinson post and the others had enrolled independently for their own

professional development.

Later that day, governors received the assessors' feedback, focused on the four areas previously identified: leadership of staff, ability to engage with the community, consistency and accountability, and communication skills. The news was disappointing. The assessors had identified several areas for development in the candidates and couldn't recommend them as ready for headship.

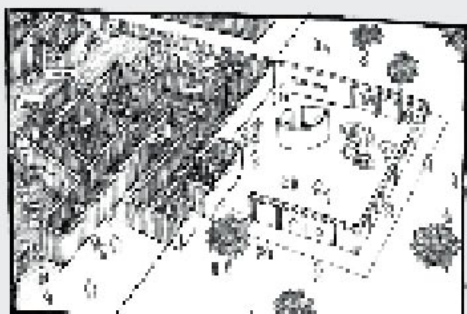
The assessment centre process had proved its worth and the school is now planning to re-advertise the post. "The feedback was very professional, and we are planning to use the process again" says Paul. **G**

**"WE'LL GET A MORE IN-DEPTH VIEW OF THE CANDIDATES' QUALITIES AND POTENTIAL WHEN OPERATING UNDER PRESSURE"**

**FOR MORE INFO:**

**www.ncsl.org.uk**  
Tel 0870 001 1155

**RESOURCES**



**The A-Z of design**

The new *A-Z Sketchbook of School Build and Design* aims to make participation in the laying out of schools more accessible to everyone – from governors to pupils.

The guide aims to cover the core areas, from basic access through to kitchens, classrooms, external spaces, toilets and ventilation.

**FOR MORE INFO: 0845 456 1803 or mail@school-works.org** Copies can be downloaded from: [www.school-works.org](http://www.school-works.org)

**Managing falling primary rolls**

The DfES and the Audit Commission have produced a web-based tool kit to help authorities and schools address the challenges and take advantage of the opportunities created by falling primary rolls.

The tool kit will help schools and local authorities faced with falling rolls take action to ensure that they are equipped to deliver the best possible quality of education with the resources available to them.

**FOR MORE INFO: [www.teachernet.gov.uk/fallingrolls](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/fallingrolls)**

**A Guide to the Law for School Governors**

The next hard copy edition of *A Guide to the Law for School Governors* is due to be published in January 2006. The guide is undergoing a major overhaul, with improvements being made to the layout and indexing. Representatives from the DfES, governors, governor organisations and the National Co-ordinators of Governor Services have been consulted and agreement reached that the current four versions of the guide should be merged into one composite edition. The system of online termly amendments will continue.

**WEBSITES**

[www.governornet.co.uk](http://www.governornet.co.uk)  
Useful information for all school governors

[www.nasg.org.uk](http://www.nasg.org.uk)  
National Association of School Governors (NASG)  
Tel: 0121 643 5787

[www.ngc.org.uk](http://www.ngc.org.uk)  
National Governors' Council (NGC) Tel: 0121 616 5104

[www.governors.fsnet.co.uk](http://www.governors.fsnet.co.uk)  
Information for School and College Governors (ISCG)  
Tel: 020 7229 0200

[www.sgoss.org.uk](http://www.sgoss.org.uk)  
SGOSS recruits and brokers volunteers to become governors in schools Tel: 0870 241 3883

[www.teachernet.gov.uk/schoolinfocus](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/schoolinfocus)  
Celebrating innovative work in schools

# An enterprising scheme



A new focus on enterprise education for all Key Stage 4 pupils begins this month, backed by DfES funding of £60m a year.

Enterprise education, as a key element of work-related learning, has been a statutory requirement at KS4 since last year.

The new entitlement includes the equivalent of five days' enterprise activity – for instance, running a business – linked to existing activities such as work experience and business mentoring.

The funding will be distributed to schools through the Standards Fund.

**FOR MORE INFO: [www.teachernet.gov.uk/enterpriseeducation](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/enterpriseeducation)**

# Safer recruitment

Online training for headteachers and governors, developed in response to a recommendation of the Bichard inquiry following the Soham tragedies, was launched on 4 July.

The training focuses on good practices to be adopted when recruiting and selecting adults to work in schools.

The online training package is password protected and is located on NCSL's Learning Gateway. It is being rolled out to heads and

one governor of every maintained school in England, plus two relevant staff members in every local authority.

From September, NCSL has started asking schools to nominate a governor and apply online for registration on their behalf. One nominated governor from every school will be able to access the training by January 2006.

**FOR MORE INFO: [www.ncsl.org.uk/saferrecruitment](http://www.ncsl.org.uk/saferrecruitment)**



## Food policy in schools

**What is the new framework?**

*Food Policy in Schools: A Strategic Policy Framework for Governing Bodies* is a joint National Governors Council/ Food Standards Agency publication. It aims to provide guidance to help governing bodies adopt a strategic, whole-school approach to food policy in school.

**Why should school governors get involved in school food?**

School food can and should play a part in improving children's diets and educating them to eat healthily. School governors really can make a difference to this. They can exert influence to make improvements in food right across the school day, in policies concerned with vending machines, breakfast clubs, snacking etc. They can also help to bring together parents and schools to initiate co-ordinated change in the school's food ethos.

**What is the most effective way of introducing a whole-school approach?**

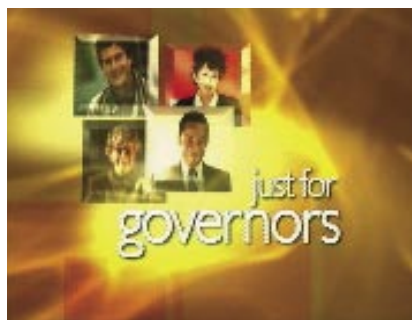
The governing body should plan an overall strategic approach embedded in the aims and objectives of the school and its development plan, rather than taking

# What's on Teachers' TV

Teachers' TV returns this autumn with a number of new programmes that will interest governors, teachers, parents and support staff.

*Just for Governors* begins again on Thursday 3 November and comprises a series of debates on issues such as bullying, child protection and staff relationships. There are also single, short documentaries aimed at school governors. *Opting for Health* shows how governors at an infant school near Bath opted out from their local authority catering provider and helped the school start its own catering business.

There is also a Special Needs documentary specifically for governors, and a programme on the implications for governors regarding the new Ofsted



self-evaluation process.

Governors may also find the Autism Awareness Week, 19-25 September, and the Behaviour Matters Week, 10-16 October, of interest. The latter culminates in *The Big Behaviour Debate* hosted by Jonathan Dimbleby.

**FOR MORE INFO:** [www.teachers.tv](http://www.teachers.tv)

## Student finance changes



Changes are currently being made to the structure of student finance that will have a significant impact on students moving into higher education.

From 2006 onwards, students will no longer have to pay their tuition fees upfront. Instead, a new loan is available to eligible, full-time students to cover tuition fees. This won't have to be paid back until they start earning. Students from lower-income households could be eligible for a non-repayable grant of up to £2,700.

**FOR MORE INFO:** [www.dfes.gov.uk/student\\_finance](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/student_finance) (as of 12 September)  
08456 077 577


ad-hoc approaches to particular issues. To begin, there could be a review of existing provision, and the mechanisms for involving pupils in the decision making. Based on findings, governors could help the school to draw up a written policy setting out its strategy for providing healthier food and promoting healthier eating.

### How can the food policy be initiated?

Governors need not feel overwhelmed or that it's necessary to tackle all areas at once. The framework provides a step-by-step guide through policy development from an initial review check list, to identifying issues for food policy development, and collecting the views of pupils, parents and staff. It then covers aims, issues, sources of guidance and

help, and real examples of how others have set about making changes in individual areas such as breakfast and after-school clubs, vending machines, tuck shops, water provision etc.

### Once the policy is implemented, how should the governing body ensure that it is maintained?

The governing body should ask for regular feedback from the senior management team as part of continuous monitoring and review, which should lead to ongoing policy development with changes over time. 

#### FOR MORE INFO:

The framework can be downloaded from [www.ngc.org.uk](http://www.ngc.org.uk) or [www.food.gov.uk](http://www.food.gov.uk) or, for a hard copy, email the National Governors' Council on [ngc@ngc.org.uk](mailto:ngc@ngc.org.uk)

## LEGISLATION

### School meal procurement

Draft guidance for headteachers and governors on procuring a school meals service is available on TeacherNet. The guidance looks at the practical steps schools can take to improve their school meals services. It looks at options available to schools, including contracting the service out to a different provider, improving the service provided by the existing contractor or bringing the service in-house. It gives help and guidance on the major issues, including relevant links.

The DfES is keen to know governors' thoughts on the guidance. Email: [schoolmeals.consultation@dfes.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:schoolmeals.consultation@dfes.gsi.gov.uk) by 31 December 2005.

**FOR MORE INFO:** [www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/healthyliving/foodanddrink](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/healthyliving/foodanddrink)

### School admissions

The DfES has begun a consultation on updates to the School Admissions Code of Practice, the School Admissions Appeals Code of Practice, and associated draft Regulations. It is important for governors to be aware of the processes involved in school admissions and appeals, to ensure that they can comply with their legal responsibilities and offer effective advice to parents. The consultation will run until 18 October.

**FOR MORE INFO:** [www.dfes.gov.uk/consultations](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/consultations)

### Guidance for looked after children

The DfES is currently developing a short, practical guidance document to help governors ensure their school delivers the support looked after children (children in care) need to succeed and play a full part in school life. The intention is that the document will be arranged in standalone sections highlighting some of the barriers looked after children face and describing strategies for overcoming them.

Governors will be notified as soon as the guidance becomes available.

### Streamlining school category change

On 1 August, regulations were introduced to make it easier for community and voluntary-controlled secondary schools to change category to foundation. The DfES is also consulting on new proposals to extend the streamlined route to primary schools. The consultation will run until 8 November.

**FOR MORE INFO:** [www.dfes.gov.uk/consultations](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/consultations)  
[www.dfes.gov.uk/schoolorg/news.cfm?ID=48](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/schoolorg/news.cfm?ID=48)

### Review of staffing structures

Under the Education (Review of Staffing Structure) (England) Regulations 2005, all maintained schools and pupil referral units in England are required to review their staffing structures by the end of this year. Any resulting changes to schools' staffing arrangements will be implemented by the end of 2008.

**FOR MORE INFO:** [www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/payandperformance/pay/2005/staffing\\_structure\\_review](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/payandperformance/pay/2005/staffing_structure_review)

# A long-term view

The proposed introduction of multi-year budgets will give schools greater certainty and predictability in their funding so that they will be able to plan ahead with confidence

Words: Lisa Hutchins Illustration: Ben Kirchner

Over the next few years, the Government is overhauling the school funding system. The changes are in response to feedback from schools and their governing bodies asking for more control over their finances. The proposed introduction of multi-year budgets for all schools, from 2006, will enable them to make their money work better in terms of planning their budgets.

The details of the new scheme have been announced, with information on how much funding for school provision each local authority will receive due to be released later in the year.

■ **What will this mean for my school?** The new arrangements should allow schools to plan their finances more effectively. Multi-year budgets should offer opportunities for stability, better financial planning to support school improvement and more effective procurement.

■ **How will it work?** From April next year, there will be a two-year transitional phase to test the arrangements. Schools will still be guaranteed a minimum increase in per-pupil funding each year, set in advance, over the next two years. Schools should know their school budgets for 2006-07 and 2007-08 by March 2006. In 2008, schools will receive three-year budgets for the first time.

■ **How will this affect teachers' pay?** The Government has submitted evidence to the School Teachers' Review Body (STRB) arguing for a two-year award in 2006-08. It will hold further discussions on pay with the STRB from 2008 onwards.

■ **Will there be any flexibility?** School budgets will be updated annually to reflect changing pupil numbers, with some room for local flexibility in other areas.

■ **What about academic year budgets?** School budgets will continue to be on a financial year basis for the time being, though the Government is considering whether to move to academic year budgets from 2008.

■ **Why is the Government doing this?** To help schools plan ahead and improve financial



management, to link financial planning to school improvement, to reduce bureaucracy for schools and to ensure that increases in school spending translate into the delivery of better education for all children.

■ **What terminology do I need to know?** From 2006, local authorities will receive a ring-fenced grant for schools provision called the Dedicated Schools Grant. The School Standards Grant will continue to be paid direct to schools but on a new, fairer basis. Some



Got something to say? Email [governors@governorsnewsletter.co.uk](mailto:governors@governorsnewsletter.co.uk) or write to the editor at **Governors John Brown Citrus Publishing, The New Boathouse, 136-142 Bramley Road, London W10 6SR**

Standards Fund grants are being combined into the School Development Grant.

■ **What about Schools Forums?** Under the new arrangements, they will be able to approve certain proposals from their local authority, helping to respond to local circumstances, as well as continuing to have a consultative role.

**“INFORMATION FOR MORE THAN ONE YEAR WILL HELP GOVERNING BODIES TO PLAN MORE STRATEGICALLY”**

The Government held a consultation earlier this year and made some changes to its plans as a result, including on distribution of the Dedicated Schools Grant. It is consulting further on the proposed new distribution method. In the longer term, it may also consult on combining the School Development Grant and the School Standards Grant.

Key to achieving greater value for money in schools is better decision-making at school level about the allocation of resources. Strategic financial and resource management and the use of benchmarking information play essential roles in maintaining and continuously improving school performance.

Secondary schools will be expected to meet the Financial Management Standard by March 2007. Consultations are taking place on the expected date for primary and special schools.

**The impact on school governors**

The National Governors’ Council (NGC), a group that speaks for governors nationally, has taken part in the DfES consultation on three-year budgets.

According to the NGC: “Information for more than one year will help governing bodies to plan more strategically. However, not all our members are convinced of the need for academic year budgets.

“It is important that budgets received by schools, whether for financial or academic years, cover all eventualities. It is important that if new initiatives are introduced they are fully funded and introduced at the beginning of an accounting cycle, rather than in the middle.”

The NGC believes that there should be scope within the system to allow for changes and that these decisions are best made at the local level. □

**FOR MORE INFO:**  
[www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/schoolfunding/2006-07\\_funding\\_arrangements](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/schoolfunding/2006-07_funding_arrangements)  
**On the Financial Management Standard:**  
[www.teachernet.gov.uk/schoolfinance](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/schoolfinance)

**BEST LETTER**

**Dear Editor,**

I suspect that even today, when some people attend their first governors’ meeting, the amount of information received varies considerably, from a quick, friendly welcome by the chairperson, followed by an equally quick introduction to fellow governors – often by first names only (which are immediately forgotten) – to a full pack containing a wealth of information.

When I became a governor of my local primary school, before attending my first meeting, I received by post the agenda and numerous documents for discussion, all of which made little sense. At the meeting, I was introduced to my fellow governors, but received no information about the school.

So, what information would I have liked to receive?

- the names (and photographs) and areas of responsibility of my fellow governors and the school’s staff
- a list of all classes and a plan of the school, including any coding used
- the timetable
- details of the various school policies
- a list with explanations of the common acronyms used

Hopefully, when it states in the HT’s report that ‘PA (a particular member of staff’s code), our HLTA, met with the SENCO to discuss the SEN of AC, who is in class 6DF, it does at least make some sense to the new school governor.

**David Craggs, governor**

**Dear Editor,**

Giles Smith of Tower Hamlets wanted suggestions for attracting children to his school, and he received many ideas.

However, as a mum of former schoolkids, and a deputy chair of governors at a rural primary school, I’d say to Mr Smith that sensible parents and their offspring want much more than flowering bulbs along the driveway and the lure of after-school clubs. They want a school that has a good standard of discipline among staff as well as pupils; where there’s little need to correct bad language or clean up graffiti in the first place; where the anti-bullying policy is more than just words on paper, but

a practical, spiritual solution; where the teachers have enough knowledge in their heads to teach with; where head and teachers work together without the need for the LEA to have to issue constant instructions on dealing with various problems. More than anything, parents want a school that doesn’t sweep problems under the carpet in order to enhance its image, because whatever the problems, they’ll inevitably concern their children.

**Name supplied**

**Dear Editor,**

I know that most governors do sterling work re the successful running of their schools, serving on this and that committee, and attending school council meetings. But how many of them can walk down the corridors of their schools and be recognised and named by the pupils, let alone the staff, as a governor of their school?

In a nutshell, have they developed a fruitful rapport with the children they are supposed to be governing? I know it is difficult for some governors, what with work, etc. to be so committed, but I believe it is an aspect of governorship that ought not to be neglected. Sometimes, we governors get so bogged down with documents and reports that we forget we are in charge of 1,000 or so kids and not a supermarket.

**Albert Hill, SEN governor, Longfield Comprehensive, Darlington**

**WIN!**

The best letter in the spring term’s issue will win a copy of RM’s Living Library – an online multimedia reference library comprising millions of curriculum resources for all Key Stages.

Living Library offers articles, video and audio clips, a photo library (all copyright cleared) and dictionaries and thesauruses. It also provides schools with daily news feeds.

**FOR MORE INFO: [www.rm.com](http://www.rm.com)**

**Governors**  
 Communications Unit; Children, Young People, Families and Schools  
 Managing Editor, Communications Unit: Lesley Hastie. For enquiries regarding the Department for Education and Skills, call 0870 000 2288.  
 Governors is published on behalf of the DfES by John Brown Citrus Publishing  
 Editor: Sara Davis Designer: Jennifer McNally Publisher: Helen Bligh  
 John Brown Citrus Publishing, The New Boathouse, 136-142 Bramley Road, London W10 6SR [www.jbcp.co.uk](http://www.jbcp.co.uk) Tel: 020 7565 3000  
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**“BEING A SCHOOL GOVERNOR CAN BE REALLY REWARDING. HOWEVER, IT NEEDS TIME AND COMMITMENT”**

## Rewarding work

**O**live Young, chair of governors at Fernwood Junior School in Nottingham, was one of six school governors to receive an honour in the Queen’s Birthday List.

### Why did you become a school governor?

I became a governor over 25 years ago, when someone at the local education department asked me if I was interested. I used to work for the city council, and my late husband was a chief officer there, and later became a councillor and the Sheriff of Nottingham. I was therefore asked to become an LEA governor.

I was initially governor of two schools in Wollaton in Nottingham. When the chance arose, though, I moved to Fernwood Junior School where

I’ve been for over 20 years. This was where my son and daughter attended, and I felt that as a school governor I could put something back into that school.

### What is the most rewarding aspect of being a governor?

When you see the development of the children between the age of seven, when they come into the school, and 11 when they leave.

### Why were you awarded a MBE?


When I received the news that I was to receive an MBE, I was amazed. As to why I was chosen, I can only think that it had something to do with my involvement in the refurbishment of the school.

I have been very proactive in getting the huts previously used as classrooms removed, and

having seven new classrooms built, as well as an ICT suite housing 31 computers, a room known as the Ark for the special needs children, and an extension to the school hall. I think I’m extremely well known at the education department for fighting for our cause. The school was finished in 2002.

We had been approaching the education department for years, and I have had MPs down to the school – in fact, anyone that I thought could support and help us, including the chairman of the education committee from County Hall in Nottinghamshire. All of this helped us to secure a little over £1.2m of funding from the Government’s New Deal programme to do the rebuild. And now the school is wonderful.

### What would you say to anyone thinking about becoming a school governor...?

Being a school governor can be really rewarding. However, you need to be dedicated to the school. It needs time and commitment. 

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