

Governors

Termly newsletter

SIMPLY THE BEST

The governing body of Eastlea School plays a key role in its Gifted & Talented programme

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Stefan Brown talks about his experiences as a new governor

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Steering behaviour in the right direction

Governors are responsible for ensuring that their school has a sound behaviour policy

Education Secretary Ruth Kelly has announced a wide-ranging package of guidance and policy recommendations to tackle poor pupil behaviour.

The announcement was made in response to the Steer report, *Learning Behaviour*. The report was formulated by a group of experienced heads and teachers, chaired by Sir Alan Steer, looking at what could be done to improve behaviour in our schools.

Key recommendations include an explicit legal right for teachers to discipline pupils, power to

use parenting contracts as a preventative measure before a child has reached the point of exclusion, and supervision by parents of pupils excluded from their school.

The Steer group also recommends the development of a National Behaviour Charter, and that every school should have a Pupil/Parent Support Worker. These will help ensure that excluded children continue with their school work.

The report says that, while good teaching is



Sir Alan Steer at Seven Kings High School in East London, where he is head

crucial to good behaviour, schools must also have effective policies for managing behaviour with a healthy balance of rewards and sanctions that are consistently applied by all staff.

The Government has accepted the report's key

recommendations. Ruth Kelly commented: "These proposals can help bring change, not just to the rules but to the culture reaffirming respect in classrooms and putting teachers firmly in charge."

Governing bodies will want to take account of

the good practice recommended by the report in carrying out their duty to ensure that their school has a sound behaviour policy.

FOR MORE INFO: www.dfes.gov.uk/behaviour and [attendance/about/learning_behaviour.cfm](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/attendance/about/learning_behaviour.cfm)

List 99 overhaul announced

Education Secretary Ruth Kelly has promised to close the loopholes regarding the sex offenders' register and List 99 – the DfES's list of people banned from working in schools.

Ms Kelly said she deeply regretted the worry and concern that had been caused to parents, and was determined to do everything she could to ease their concerns. "It's time to overhaul the system. We need a system where child protection comes first, above all other considerations." Under the new rules, anyone convicted of, or cautioned for, a sex offence against children – as well as for a range of serious sexual offences against adults – would be automatically entered onto List 99, and therefore barred from working with children.

All new school employees will have to undergo mandatory Criminal Records Bureau checks, and Ofsted will carry out a review of vetting procedures.

An independent panel will be formed, chaired by Sir Roger Singleton the former head of Barnado's, to advise ministers regarding who can work with children.

All DfES staff who are part of the vetting process will receive appropriate training, support and advice in child-protection issues.

"These reforms will make the current List 99 system work better immediately. But the whole Government is determined to replace List 99 entirely with a new, better system as quickly as possible," said Ms Kelly.

In response to recommendations in the Bichard report, a new Bill to be introduced this month will integrate and upgrade the current List 99 and the Protection of Children Act list of individuals deemed unsuitable to work with children, with a centralised vetting and barring system run by a statutory body.

FOR MORE INFO: www.teachernet.gov.uk/Bichard

WIN your school SEMERC software!

Just tell us what you think



Governors has teamed up with Granada Learning to give governors the chance to win the complete SEMERC Track series of CD-ROMs and workbooks.

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

School attendance

Regular school attendance is important because of the links to pupils' attainment. Governors have an important role to play in ensuring their schools have policies to promote attendance.
FOR MORE INFO: www.dfes.gov.uk/schoolattendance/publications/index.cfm

Tribunal update

The Council on Tribunals, which oversees the constitution and workings of tribunals in Great Britain, has announced a special education edition of *Adjust*, its quarterly e-newsletter. This edition contains news and articles about education appeals in England and Wales.
FOR MORE INFO: www.council-on-tribunals.gov.uk/1061.htm



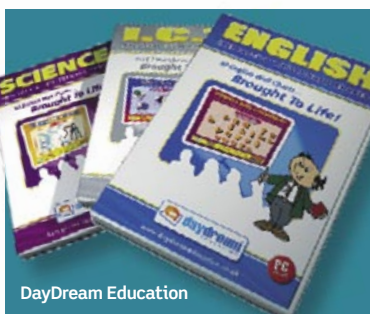
Joan Sallis is in the hotseat

On 17 February at 3pm, Joan Sallis, TES governor columnist, will be answering your questions on primary and secondary governance in a GovernorNet hot seat.
FOR MORE INFO: www.governornet.co.uk

International study

Schools in England are being called on to take part in an international study of children's experiences of science education. The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2006 – by the Organisation for Economic Development – is a survey of 15-year-olds who have finished compulsory education.
FOR MORE INFO: www.pisa.oecd.org

New edition of A Guide to the Law



The 2006 edition of *A Guide to the Law for School Governors* has been published. The new single volume contains guidance relating to all categories of maintained schools. It

has been revised and updated to include changes created by the introduction of the Education Act 2005, which were current at 1 September 2005.

Distribution of the guide began on 30 January. Schools should have received a box of 15 copies, addressed to the chair of governors. In each box is a mailing receipt competition entry, offering the chair of governors a chance to win a variety of prizes for his or her school. Prizes include a SMART Board interactive whiteboard 600 series, a five-user licence of Counterpoint's eSAAMS assessment system, a connected learning community (CLC) from Uniservity, and interactive whiteboard charts from DayDream Education. To be in with a chance to win, simply email the DfES to acknowledge receipt of the guides (the email address will be inside the box). Any school that has not received its guides by 28 February should contact Prolog at guidetothelaw@prolog.uk.com
FOR MORE INFO: Additional copies of the guide can be obtained from Prolog: 0845 602 2260 or dfes@prolog.uk.com reference DFES-0227-2005

Simplifying admissions applications

The eAdmissions National Project is working with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) and the DfES to assist local authorities in developing systems that will allow parents/carers to find information on their local schools and make an application for their child's school place online. This will supplement existing means of providing information and making applications.

The project benefits parents/carers by simplifying the application process, enabling them to make changes up to the deadline date, offering more accessible information to help them make their choice, and by providing electronic notification of the school place. For schools, this means less paperwork, and applications may be viewed online.
FOR MORE INFO: www.eadmissions.org/OnlineSchools

Changes announced to funding levels

Schools Minister Jacqui Smith has announced record funding levels for schools and important changes to the funding system. These will provide the financial foundation for key education reforms, helping schools to deliver more practical learning options, catch up classes and stretch for gifted and talented pupils. The new school funding system will deliver a new ring-fenced Dedicated Schools Grant for local authorities, multi-year budgets for schools and streamlined specific grants. Primary schools will get an increase in their core funding of at least four per cent per pupil, and secondary schools 3.4 per cent in 2006-07. A further minimum 3.7 per cent increase per pupil is guaranteed in 2007-08 for all schools. Local authorities will see a national average increase in funding for schools of 6.8 per cent per pupil in 2006-07,



compared with their planned spending in 2005-06, with a further average increase of 6.7 per cent per pupil in 2007-08. The funding settlement will help schools and local authorities deliver reforms, including those set out in the Schools and 14-19 White Papers. To be introduced from April 2006, the new school funding system follows detailed consultation with headteachers, school governors and local authorities. "We have acted to ensure that every school, whatever its location, will benefit from the substantial increases in funding the Government has committed to education. The settlement gives schools the secure and predictable base they need to deliver a wider and more personalised offer to all their pupils," says Jacqui Smith.
FOR MORE INFO: www.teachernet.gov.uk/schoolfunding200608

Nominate governors for new teaching award

There are many governors who play a pivotal role in their schools. Now is your chance to nominate them for the DfES award for School Governance, a new category in the 2006 Teaching Awards. This award aims to

acknowledge the vital role that governors play within the whole school community.

Nominations can be made online (closing date for entries is 1 March).

FOR MORE INFO: www.teachingawards.com

NGC and NASG merger

In future, school governors, governing bodies and local governor associations will be represented by one national body. Following the annual general meetings of the National Association of School Governors (NASG) and the National Governors' Council (NGC), the two organisations will merge early this year to become the National Governors' Association (NGA). Jean McEntire, CEO of the NGC, will be the new CEO of the NGA. All other postholders will remain the same for the time being.



Is your school ready?

In 2008, the new on-screen KS3 ICT test will become statutory and results will be included in the achievement and attainment tables.

In 2005, the QCA piloted the new test, and it will be running two further national pilots in 2006 and 2007. Feedback from the 2005

pilot has shown that schools need to prepare themselves in 2006 and 2007 to be ready for 2008.

Governors can play a vital role in ensuring that their schools take part in the 2006 pilot.

FOR MORE INFO: To register for the pilot, visit www.ks3ictpilot.com

Governors' programmes

Teachers' TV has a number of programmes this term that will interest governors.

In particular, look out for Special Needs week (13-19 February) for programmes and debates providing advice and recommendations on Special Needs. *Parents' Evening* continues every Wednesday, and a new series of *Just for Governors* begins after half term. **FOR MORE INFO: A full listings guide is available at www.teachers.tv**



Eastlea's G&T governor Paul Cannons with fellow governor Edward Mugni

Words: Tom Moggach Picture: Zoe Norfolk

Simply the best

Gifted and Talented education (G&T) has built up considerable momentum, with mainstream schools now expected to identify and provide for their G&T pupils. The Government's G&T programme aims to give these pupils opportunities to study some, or all, subjects to a greater depth and breadth and, sometimes, at a faster pace.

As a result, governors are looking for innovative ways of translating national policy into good practice for their schools.

One secondary school in East London has some answers. As one of London Gifted and Talented's Partner Schools, Eastlea Community School

is at the forefront of G&T education, piloting projects and sharing ideas with the regional networks now under development across the UK.

The remarkable atmosphere at Eastlea reflects the educational philosophy that underpins G&T; students take responsibility for their own learning and are not afraid or embarrassed to discuss their ability and ambitions. The school provides opportunities to enrich and deepen the students' understanding both in and out of the classroom.

"The ball's in our court," says Thomas, 13, on his way to a meeting to pitch an idea for his latest project – the setting up of a customised clothing company mentored by professional business advisers. "The kids see what's on offer and it makes them work harder. It's down to us to grab it with both hands."

So what can other schools learn from Eastlea? Paul Cannons, G&T governor, is clear as to the main priority: "None of this works unless you have the right philosophy. Every child has gifts and talents."

Governors have taken this ethos to heart, building opportunities for the children through partnerships with local organisations and exploiting links in their own field of work. They contacted the Education Business Partnership for their area to open out a range of resources from employers

and helped forge links with primary schools and cultural, academic, sporting and FE institutions. Parents were provided with workshops advising them how they can

finance their child through higher and further education.

The school keeps the G&T register open and flexible, and plans well ahead to make sure each subject area gets a G&T focus each year.

Thomas has his own mantra: "Life's too short not to do the best you can," and the governors and community at Eastlea school are doing their best to fuel this motivation. **G**

AT EASTLEA, STUDENTS TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR OWN LEARNING

FOR MORE INFO:

- www.teachernet.gov.uk/gtwise
- **London Gifted and Talented:** www.londongt.org
- **National Education Business Partnership Network:** www.nebpn.org
- **National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth:** www.nagty.ac.uk
- **QCA guidance for governors:** www.nc.uk.net/gt/general/03_governors.htm

RESOURCES

Interactive website

The performance information and analyses provided to schools by Ofsted and the DfES will improve with the launch (planned for summer 2006) of an interactive website called RAISEonline. This will bring together the Ofsted PANDA and the DfES Pupil Achievement Tracker into one product for use by inspectors, school improvement partners, local authorities and schools.

FOR MORE INFO: www.ofsted.gov.uk/schools/dataandinformationsystems.cfm

New materials from SGOSS

The School Governors' One-Stop Shop (SGOSS) has redesigned and updated all its marketing materials.

New brochures are available for individuals, schools and employers, supported by expanded Frequently Asked Questions, revised application forms, posters and vacancy notification forms. Materials are free.

FOR MORE INFO: 0870 241 3883, email: info@sgoss.org.uk or visit www.sgoss.org.uk



Building Schools for the Future

Building Schools for the Future – A Guide for Governors and Teachers has been produced to help heads and governors understand the Building Schools for the Future programme.

FOR MORE INFO: the guide is available at www.4ps.co.uk/Documents/docstore/4ps%20BSF%20Governors%20Guide.pdf



Governors' guide to LSC

The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) has launched a guide for school governors on its key initiatives. Melanie Hunt, director of young people's learning for the LSC, says: "Translating the vision for 14-19 education into reality requires schools, the FE sector, work-based training providers and employers to work together. Governors have an important role in this by leading discussion within schools."

FOR MORE INFO: www.lsc.gov.uk



A new formula for GCSE science



of study is intended to maintain the breadth, depth and challenge of the current curriculum, while catering for a range of students' interests and aptitudes and encouraging more students to study more science.

It aims to ensure that all young people have a good grasp of how science impacts and affects their lives

FOR MORE INFO:

■ **Qualifications and Curriculum Authority:** www.qca.org.uk/12265.html

■ **National Curriculum Online:** www.nc.uk.net/nc_resources/html/ks4_changes.shtml

■ **Science Learning Centres:** www.sciencelearningcentres.org.uk

GCSE science is about to undergo a fundamental change, and teachers are being urged to make themselves familiar with the new programme of study ahead of its introduction this year. Information and advice has been produced about the new science GCSEs.

Events have also been organised around the new programme of study.

Over the year, schools will be choosing which of the new-style GCSEs they will be offering, and preparing to teach science in a radically different way.

The new programme

Allowances

Fewer than 10 per cent of governors said that they claimed expenses, according to a recent report published by the National Governors' Council.

Governors should be aware that the DfES considers that governors should not be out of pocket, and should be able to claim allowances for legitimate expenses incurred in carrying out their duties.

The payments of allowances are a claim on a school's budget and it is for the governing body to take account of other competing priorities when deciding whether



to meet claims for governors' expenses.

FOR MORE INFO: The guidance document *Paying Allowances to School Governors* can be viewed on www.governornet.co.uk or ordered from The Stationery Office (ISBN 0-11-045135-X) Tel: 0870 600 5522

WEBSITES

■ www.governornet.co.uk

Useful information for all school governors

■ www.nasg.org.uk

National Association of School Governors (NASG). Tel: 0121 643 5787

■ www.ngc.org.uk

National Governors' Council (NGC). Tel: 0121 616 5104

■ www.governors.fsnet.co.uk

Information for School and College Governors (ISCG) Tel: 020 7229 0200

■ www.sgoss.org.uk

SGOSS recruits and brokers volunteers to become governors in schools. Tel: 0870 241 3883

■ www.teachernet.gov.uk/schoolinfocus

Celebrating innovative work in schools

FOCUS ON...

Guidance for looked after children

Who is a 'looked after' child?

Under the Children Act 1989, a child is looked after by a local authority if he or she is in their care or is provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours

by the authority. They can be subject to a full care order, or accommodated by the local authority under a voluntary agreement with their parents.

At any one time, around 39,000 children of school age are looked after. For most children, care is intended to be time-limited with the aim of returning home as soon as possible.

All looked after children have distinct backgrounds, identities, aspirations and particular needs, and only a very small percentage enter care because of their own behaviour.

How can school governors promote the interests of looked after children?

Looked after children as a group are no less able than their peers, yet they

SIP programme to be rolled out

Local authorities will be introducing accredited primary School Improvement Partners (SIPs) on a rolling programme beginning in January 2007.

When the SIP programme is fully in place, every governing body will be advised by the SIP on the head's performance management and objectives, instead of by the external adviser, as previously. This does not change governors' responsibilities in this area. The only change is that, as the programme rolls out, advice previously offered by external advisers will instead be offered by SIPs.

Meanwhile, following the Education Act 2005, governing bodies are no longer required to hold an annual parents meeting, nor to produce a governors' annual report (the exception is maintained nurseries, which still need to produce a report). These have now been replaced by the School Profile, available online.

The format of this profile has been agreed by ministers after extensive consultation with schools, local authorities, governors, parents and pupils. It will include,



where relevant, sections on the school's performance, pre-populated with data supplied by the DfES, as well as narrative sections for the school to complete. Schools and local authorities should have received an email informing them how to access the School Profile detailing their secure login details and the website address.

The profile aims to reduce bureaucracy, in line with the principles of the Implementation Review Unit. The new Principles for Schools poster can be ordered from dfes@prolog.uk.com (reference IRUA301 (A3 format) or IRUA202 (A2 format)).

FOR MORE INFO: www.dfes.gov.uk/iru

Notifying a change of chair of governors

A change of chair should be notified by schools using the schools interface. They should use their Data Collection username and password to log on to this service at <http://schools.edubase.gov.uk>

It is not necessary to email Prolog separately or to provide details of the outgoing chair. This action happens automatically via the Edubase database.

It is important to note that if chairs want mailings to be sent to their home

address, the name and address details must be completed. If they want mailings to be made, in their name, to the school, the chair's name should be inserted, but the address fields MUST be left BLANK as the default is set to the school.

If they wish mail to be delivered to the school with no personal name on it, then they should leave ALL fields blank – mail will then be delivered to the chair of governors at the school address.


often underachieve. Their lives are often characterised by instability, and many spend too much time out of school. As a result they fall behind with school work and often do not receive the help and support they need to catch up.

School governors have an important role to play in championing the needs of looked after children on their school's roll. They can ensure that designated teachers for this vulnerable group and other relevant staff understand how they can actively support local authorities to discharge their duty under the Children Act 2004 to promote the educational achievement of looked after children.

In particular, school governors can help ensure that the needs of looked after

children are reflected in their school's development plan and self-evaluation.

How will the new guidance help governors achieve this?

This guidance clearly sets out the key challenges that governing bodies may face, and offers practical solutions to a range of issues including planning, the role of designated teachers, school admissions, record keeping and transfer, pastoral and study support, and out-of-school-hours learning. 

FOR MORE INFO:

- The guidance is available on www.governornet.co.uk
- www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/socialcare/lookedafterchildren

LEGISLATION

Amendment to Education Act 2005

Changes have been made to the Education Act 2005 in relation to referrals to alternative provision for excluded pupils and the use of parenting contracts, penalty notices and prosecutions under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, where a pupil fails to attend alternative provision regularly.

The 2005 Education Act amends the power of governing bodies to send pupils to education or training that takes place off the school premises.

Governing bodies have the power to send all pupils registered at the school to off-site provision, including pupils on fixed-term exclusions or permanently excluded pupils where the appeal process is not complete. The amendment was made because there was some doubt whether governing bodies' current power to refer pupils who are "in attendance" at the school also applies to excluded pupils.

FOR MORE INFO: www.governornet.co.uk/alternativeprovisionamendment

Legislation – Reconstitution of Governing Bodies

Governing bodies are reminded that they have until 31 August 2006 to reconstitute and adopt a new Instrument of Government under the School Governance (Constitution) (England) Regulations 2003 SI 2003/348.

When reconstituting, governing bodies should bear in mind the following:

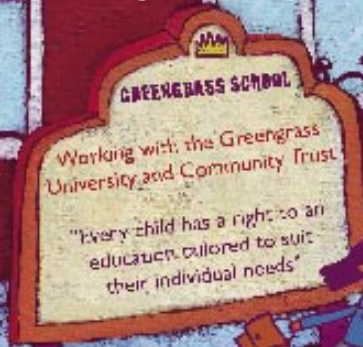
- Governors appointed or elected on or before 1 September 2003 under the 'old' system serve out their term of office until it ends, or until 31 August 2006, whichever is earlier.
- Governors appointed or elected after 1 September 2003 under the 'old' system serve out their term of office only until the governing body reconstitutes. On reconstitution, these governors would have to be reappointed or elected.
- Governors appointed after 1 September 2003 under the new system, i.e. once the governing body has reconstituted, serve out their normal term of office.
- If the governing body reduces the size of any of the categories of governors on reconstitution, it is possible that some governors may be surplus. If they were appointed or elected before 1 September 2003, the surplus governors are allowed to serve out their term of office, but not beyond 31 August 2006.

Recent developments on teachers' pay

Building on workforce remodelling, 1 January marked an important development for teachers' pay reform. Following their review of staffing structures, schools may now award Teaching and Learning Responsibility payments to replace management allowances, and management allowances continue only on a safeguarded basis.

Other new safeguarding arrangements are also in place that will affect many teachers. A new pay award for teachers has also been announced, running from September 2006 to August 2008.

FOR MORE INFO: www.teachernet.gov.uk/pay



Looking ahead

Your myth-busting guide to the Schools White Paper proposals

Illustration: Deborah Van De Leijgraaf

Since it was published, there have been rumours flying around about what the Schools White Paper will mean for schools. Here, the DfES responds to some of the concerns, and shows how the Schools White Paper can help governors to raise standards.

Aren't Trust schools just Grant Maintained schools under another name?

No. Grant Maintained (GM) status privileged a small group of schools giving them extra money to encourage them to opt out and letting them select by ability. Trust schools are quite different. All Trust schools will be local authority maintained schools, will operate within the fair funding regime and will benefit from the Building Schools for the Future programme just as the other schools do. And like GM schools, Trust schools must follow the Admissions Code of Practice, ensuring fair admissions.

What is the role of the governing body in becoming a Trust school?

To become a Trust school, the governing body would first consult parents to ensure they support both the idea and the particular Trust they wish to work with. They would then publish formal proposals. If there are objections, on the grounds of standards, or because parents haven't been properly listened to, the local authority can refer the case to the Schools Adjudicator.

Will the governing body have less control in Trust Schools?

No. Control of Trust schools remains with the governing body. Governing bodies are accountable for all aspects of the operation of the school and will remain the strategic leaders of the school –

as they are with all maintained schools. There will be no reduction in the role and responsibilities of the governing body of Trust schools.

What power will local authorities (LAs) hold over schools?

Schools should be able to have more autonomy over their day-to-day affairs, which taking up Foundation status and acquiring a Trust would allow them to do. LAs should have a central role in ensuring that all schools deliver a high-quality education for all of their pupils. They will oversee the deployment of School Improvement Partners (SIPs) to challenge and support schools in recognising areas of weakness and addressing them.

Where schools are seriously underperforming, the White Paper gives LAs strengthened powers to intervene – for example, by requiring a school to work in partnership with another school in a specific area of the curriculum. LAs will be expected to take swift action in the small minority of schools that go into Special Measures.

How will the governing body model be different in Trust schools?

Like in voluntary aided schools, the Trust will be able to appoint the majority of governors where this is what the school and the Trusts want. The governing body will have to include:

- LA-appointed governors – at least one and no more than a fifth of the governing body
- Parent governors – at least one elected, and there must be enough Trust governors who are parents so that they, plus elected parents, equal at least a third of the governing body
- Staff – at least two and no more than a third
- Community – at least one in 10



■ Trust governors – at least two. The Trust can appoint more, as long as their overall majority – where that is desired – is not more than two.

Will parent governors have less influence, and how will a Parent Council work?

Parents will continue to make up one third of the governing body of all maintained schools, including Trust schools. But where Trusts appoint a majority of the governing body, this will mean fewer elected parent governors. Where this happens, Trust schools must establish a Parent Council. The DfES is also encouraging other schools to establish Parent Councils. The governing body will have a duty to regard the views and advice of the Parent Council in Trust schools.

It will be for schools to decide the size and composition of Parent Councils, and it will be for Councils and governing bodies to agree how they will work together. The Council membership will have to include at least one representative of each year group, and representatives of any pupils or groups with particular needs (such as SEN or children who don't have English as a first language).

So, is the Schools White Paper good news for governors?

Yes. Trust status will offer governors a real opportunity to have more control over their day-to-day decisions for their schools. They will have more control over the employment of staff, set their own admissions arrangements under the Admissions code and own their own assets. This means, for example, that they can take decisions on how to manage and improve their facilities or to build new buildings without needing the LA's agreement.

Governing bodies and headteachers will have real freedoms to lead their schools, to enable them to succeed. **G**

TRUST SCHOOLS PROSPECTUS

In January, Education Secretary Ruth Kelly announced the new *Trust Schools Prospectus*, which sets out the potential of what Trust schools can achieve for their pupils. To download a copy, visit: www.dfes.gov.uk/publications/schoolswhitepaper

FOR MORE INFO:

- www.dfes.gov.uk/publications/schoolswhitepaper
- www.teachernet.gov.uk/whitepaper

FEEDBACK



Got something to say? Email 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

BEST LETTER

Dear Editor,

As a one-time headteacher whose school was put into special measures, things were going to have to change if I was ever to applaud inspection as a worthwhile developmental tool.

That time has come. We have just had a 'short, sharp' inspection. And the sea change that has reversed my view? The SEF! Yes, I know it is time-consuming – but it is time well spent. It is what it says on the tin, i.e. SELF-evaluation. And, as the central inspection tool, empowers the school by substantially setting the agenda.

Two pieces of advice to governors:

- Be involved in drawing up the SEF
- Ensure that what is written is backed up by externally sought judgements ...and for Ofsted:

- My judgement is 'good'. (Not quite 'outstanding!') Tweak it, don't change it.

- Short notice is positive, but more notice needs to be given to governors who inspectors wish to interview. Through nobody's fault, I had four hours' notice! Strangely, I have another life!

That said, it is the most positive change in the drive to improve educational provision for many years.

Graham Went, chair of governors, Durants Special School, Enfield

Dear Editor,

The autumn issue of *Governors* leads with the news that governing bodies will "have a crucial role to play in developing and leading extended services". Maybe, but will governors welcome this additional responsibility on top of all their duties?

My guess is that most of us will say 'No'. Large schools in middle-class areas may have sufficient expertise on their governing body to handle this venture that requires us to "work in partnership with existing providers". However, many schools will not.

This proposal seems like a good idea at first sight, but will adequate funding be provided? Will it work in practice?

Please will the Government stop introducing initiatives every five minutes and just let governors get on and do their main job.

Chris Chatfield, chair of governors

Dear Editor,

What makes the Government think that governors want to be responsible for extended activities from 8am to 6pm? Many will seize the task eagerly; but some will wonder whether they meant to volunteer for something way outside educational activities in their own school.

Richard Harden, governor

DfES response

Extended schools are key to the Every Child Matters agenda of improving outcomes for all children and young people. They will play a central part in ensuring integrated services that focus upon the needs of the whole child. The Government has committed £840 million 2003-2008 to develop extended services in and around schools. Schools do not have to provide services directly; the governing body may choose to work with partners in the voluntary private sector to offer access.

Evaluation from schools who already do this found early evidence that they can help increase pupil motivation, aspiration and achievement, and allow teachers to focus on teaching and learning. Support for governors will be provided by the National Remodelling Team which will publish a toolkit for governors early this year. For more info, visit: www.teachernet.gov.uk/extendedschools or www.everychildmatters.gov.uk

TO READ MORE LETTERS, VISIT: www.governornet.co.uk/governorsletters

WIN!



The best letter in the Summer term's issue will win the complete SEMERC Track series – CD-ROMs and workbooks that provide practical support for pupils studying literacy in the inclusive classroom. The series covers spelling, memorisation, the alphabet, visual perception, idioms, phonemes, and reading and writing skills. All titles meet SENDA requirements.

FOR MORE INFO: www.semerc.com



Governors

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Absolute beginner



Picture: Charles Shearn

“I’M A PART OF SOMETHING THAT IS IMPROVING OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHILDREN”

There are 350,000 governor places in England. The School Governors’ One-Stop Shop (SGOSS) aims to recruit volunteers with transferable skills to become governors and add value in schools. It also highlights the need to recruit governors from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds, so that governing bodies are representative of the community that their school serves.

SGOSS recently announced the placement of its 3,500th governor – Stefan Brown at Lady Bankes Infant School in Ruislip, Middlesex. Sara Davis spoke to him about his experiences as a new governor.

What made you decide to become a school governor?

I’ve been interested in becoming a governor ever since a friend spoke about being one. So when I received a leaflet from SGOSS, I felt that I should investigate what it was all about.

I also have a 15-month-old daughter who, in a few years, will be entering the education system herself. I felt that being a governor would help me to learn more about education today.

And, I think that being a governor is a good way of learning what the community is about and the issues affecting it.

What has been your experience so far?

The first meeting I attended was last May. It was daunting, especially regarding the amount of detail involved. However, I found that by

asking questions, I could pick up on what was going on.

I have now been to three full meetings, become the literacy governor, and am about to go to my first committee meeting. I also have a class visit scheduled.

My experience so far has been very positive, and I’ve been impressed by the commitment and competence of the governing body.


What is the most rewarding thing you’ve found about being a school governor?

It has to be the feeling that I’m a part of something that is improving opportunities for children. It’s good to see how initiatives impact the school.

I am a social worker, and it’s often hard to see success in my day-to-day work. It’s nice to be doing something where I can see more success through my involvement.

Among my interests is the whole behaviour debate. I believe exclusion can be a bit of a time bomb. Often, when looking at the social histories of the people I work with, I find that their problems started earlier on. If they are addressed at this early stage, hopefully we won’t see them going through the criminal justice system later on.

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

I would encourage them to do so, especially parents. It’s key for them to have a voice in the running of schools, and good for the community. 



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