

# Governors

## Termly newsletter

### BEATING THE BULLYING

How the governing body helped shape River Leen's anti-bullying policy

PAGE 3



### NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH SCHOOLS

Focusing on school improvement

PAGE 6



### GOVERNING WITH HONOURS

Alec Osborn MBE is in the spotlight

PAGE 8

## Zero tolerance towards unruly behaviour

The Government has confirmed plans for tackling 'low-level' misbehaviour in schools

Schools should take a zero-tolerance approach to classroom disruption such as 'incessant chattering' and 'answering back', according to Education Secretary Ruth Kelly.

The Secretary of State said that while progress had been made in tackling serious bad behaviour in schools – with permanent exclusions 25 per cent lower than in 1997 – a focus was also needed on

the 'low-level' unruliness of a minority of pupils.

In a speech to headteachers in Blackpool in February, Ruth Kelly said: "Behaviour is good in most schools most of the time. Often, schools are the most secure and stable environment in the communities they serve. But any poor behaviour is too much and should not be tolerated. We need to redraw the line on what is acceptable."



To prevent disruption in the classroom, some schools implement a system of internal exclusion, where students work at their own desk in a corridor

Ruth Kelly confirmed plans to enable schools to pool their expertise to tackle pupil behaviour in new partnerships, able to draw resources from local authorities to buy shared in-school or off-site support to remove

disruptive pupils from classrooms.

Also, local authority directors would review schools where behaviour is rated as unsatisfactory by Ofsted, and develop action plans to revamp their behaviour policies

and practice. Ofsted would conduct follow-up visits to these schools within 12 months to check on progress and ensure that improvement is underway.

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

## Governing the school of the future

Every chair of governors has been sent a copy of *Governing the School of the Future*. This sets out the Government's vision for school governors and encourages greater participation from employers.

The document celebrates the contribution and achievements of school governors, and highlights the pivotal role governors can play in shaping schools – standards of attainment, quality of teaching and pupil behaviour are likely to be better in schools where



governance is good. It also sets out some of the benefits to employers who support and encourage their staff to serve as governors.

**FOR MORE INFO: For a copy of *Governing the School of the Future* call 0845 602 2260 (Ref: DfES/0786/2004) or visit [www.governornet.co.uk/schoolofthefuture](http://www.governornet.co.uk/schoolofthefuture)**

**Email your views on the issues raised in *Governing the School of the Future* to: [future.governance@dfes.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:future.governance@dfes.gsi.gov.uk)**

### 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 autumn 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 8.**

### Reaching out to the community

So far, 12 schools have been selected to take up a new specialism in special educational needs (SEN). The SEN centres of expertise have been selected to focus on one of the four areas of the SEN code of practice. The centres are due to start operating from September 2005.

### School travel plans



The Travelling to School project is an initiative by the Department for Transport and the Department for Education and Skills that encourages parents and children to walk or cycle to school. It has recently been boosted by the extension of its capital grant scheme for two years.

About 6,000 schools have already drawn up School Travel Plans and are now receiving the grant, averaging £5k for primary and £10k for secondary schools.

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

### ICT in schools

The Government's published targets for the provision of computers in schools have been met, according to the DfES's 2004 ICT in schools survey. It showed that the average target had been achieved, with 63 per cent of primary and secondary schools meeting their respective computer-to-pupil ratio targets (1:5 in secondary schools and 1:8 in primary schools).

## Governors and school staff Leading Together

Leading Together, the first National Development Programme to involve governors and school staff working together, has been successfully rolled out to LEA and Diocesan Board governor trainers.

This school improvement programme aims to develop and improve teamwork between the governing body, the headteacher and the school leadership team.

Schools may engage in Leading Together for a variety of reasons, such as the opportunity to review working relationships afforded by the arrival of a new chair of governors or headteacher, or where the implementation of shared leadership is a cause for concern.

Governor support services are offering the programme, which comprises three facilitated meetings in the school spread over nine months.



**FOR MORE INFO:** Training facilitators can obtain copies of the *Leading Together Facilitator Handbook* from

[governor.materials@dfes.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:governor.materials@dfes.gsi.gov.uk) or by phoning the DfES School Governance Team on 01325 391294.

## New ministerial team announced

Following the election, Ruth Kelly will continue as Secretary of State for Education, with other ministerial changes announced elsewhere in the DfES.

Jacqui Smith, who was a junior education minister before the 2001 election and a teacher before becoming a MP, is taking over as Minister of State responsible for schools and 14-19 learners. She is also responsible for school governance.



Government ministers for the DfES (left to right) Marie Eagle, Beverley Hughes, Bill Rammell, Andrew Adonis and Ruth Kelly during a visit to a children's play centre in Camden

Beverley Hughes has been appointed Minister of State responsible for children, young people and families, and Bill Rammell becomes Minister of State for lifelong learning, further and higher education.

Ruth Kelly has also welcomed three new Parliamentary Under-Secretaries of State to her team. Andrew Adonis is responsible for schools, young people and families, and Phil Hope, skills.

## Awarding outstanding clerks

On 12 March, the National Association of School Governors (NASG) held the second Clerks' Awards at the Council House in Birmingham. Estelle Morris MP, Minister of State for the Arts and a former Minister for Education, presented the awards to the eight regional winners and the overall winner, Richard Ashdown from St Peter's Secondary School in Bournemouth, who was named Clerk of the Year 2005.

All the winners showed full commitment to their jobs and to their schools. They have played a leading role in organising and

developing the work of their governing bodies, and all produced exemplary paperwork.

Regional winners were: Pauline O'Neill, Northampton LEA • Cath O'Sullivan, Hammersmith and Fulham LEA • Margaret Arksey, Northumberland LEA • Kay Mullet, Cumbria LEA • Sylvia Vine, Hampshire LEA • Richard Ashdown, Bournemouth LEA • Ian Russell, Coventry LEA • and Sophia Rowbotham, Calderdale LEA.

The Clerk Awards are sponsored by the DfES, TES, Best Absence Management Services, the Centre for Public Scrutiny and Toshiba.

### Clerks' accreditation

LEAs are able to seek approval for the new qualification for clerks of governing bodies. The four-unit, customised BTEC Level 3 qualification is based on the DfES's national training programme for clerks, and comprises 40 hours of guided learning.

It will be available on the National Qualifications Framework in the autumn, after which the qualification will attract funding. **FOR MORE INFO:** LEAs interested in establishing their own accreditation centres and offering the qualification, contact the awarding body, Edexcel, at [salesupport@edexcel.org](mailto:salesupport@edexcel.org) or call 020 7190 4912.

## Providing the right foundation

Governors need to be aware of the new Foundation Stage Profile, which comprises 13 scales based on the early learning goals and stepping stones set out in curriculum guidance for the foundation stage.

A child's attainment on the 13 scales can be recorded in a Foundation Stage Profile booklet, or on the eProfile. These are optional – schools may want to use their own systems.

The Foundation Stage Profile aims to summarise

children's achievement at the end of the foundation stage, provide information to help practitioners plan the next steps in children's learning as they enter Year 1, and act as a basis for reporting to parents. It also provides data to local authorities and the DfES.

**FOR MORE INFO: See the Foundation Stage Profile section of the *Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 Assessment and Reporting Arrangements 2005* at [www.qca.org.uk/9974.html](http://www.qca.org.uk/9974.html) or [www.qca.org.uk/163.html](http://www.qca.org.uk/163.html)**

## Protecting children

In response to the independent inquiry into child protection matters led by Sir Michael Bichard, the DfES is testing online training for headteachers and governors.

The training will be available through the National College for School Leadership (NCSL) and will concentrate on ensuring that interviews to appoint staff reflect the importance of safeguarding children.

Training should be available to schools from the summer. To start with, the training will be aimed at every head and one governor from each maintained school.

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

## Food for thought



Education Secretary Ruth Kelly has announced a drive to raise the standard of school meals, with parents taking a more active role in what their children eat at school. They should be able to see what is on the menu and what can be improved.

She has called on schools to spend at least 50p (primary) and 60p (secondary) per child on food ingredients as part of a £280m package to

transform the quality of school meals. Over the next three academic years, the DfES will help schools and local authorities to focus on healthy food, prepared on the premises by trained school cooks according to nutritional standards enforced by Ofsted – healthy eating will be part of the Ofsted inspection process as of September 2005.

**FOR MORE INFO: 0870 000 2288**



Chair of governors Barbara Madison with assistant head David Miller

Words: Mira Katbanna Picture: Jultian Hawkins

## Beating the bullying

At River Leen School in Nottinghamshire, chair of governors Barbara Madison is convinced that a happy school equals a successful school – and a happy school means addressing the sensitive issue of bullying. “I’ve been in education for over 40 years and, in my experience, it’s only in the aftermath that you discover bullying, so I was delighted when we decided to address the issue head on,” she says.

The school’s programme has three strands – the first, and for Barbara, the most innovative, is the text message service *Text Someone*, which enables pupils to text for advice or help, or to raise the alarm. Students receive an immediate automated reply, while teachers follow up the alert. “Often, pupils will be too fearful to tell someone,” Barbara says. “Text messaging gives them confidentiality, without everyone knowing what has happened.”

Less technological, but just as important, have been the buddy and counselling schemes run by the school. Involving students of all ages, they give pupils a safe place to talk and the support of their peers, and, Barbara says, they build trust within the whole school – something that has also been important when staff and governors have worked together on the policy. “We have complete

confidence in our senior staff, and we can talk to them easily, which makes such a difference – and I think they have confidence in us, too!”

Barbara has been involved at every stage of the process, meeting with staff members, leading the discussions with pupils and examining their findings, as well as consulting with the headteacher

and senior staff members before approving the policy. “We all moved the policy forward together, students, staff and governors, to work out what was best for our school in our situation,” she says. “As governors,

our primary role is to support and to listen, and although we didn’t have any concerns, we made sure that we asked questions and made suggestions as we talked it through.

“Any school of 700 students will have some bullying,” Barbara points out, “and the common factor is always fear, so the key has been working together to make sure everyone is on board.”

### FOR MORE INFO:

- **Anti-Bullying Alliance:** [www.ncb.org.uk/aba](http://www.ncb.org.uk/aba)
- **Childline:** [www.childline.org.uk/index.asp](http://www.childline.org.uk/index.asp)
- **DfES:** [www.dfes.gov.uk/bullying](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/bullying)
- **TeacherNet:** [www.teachernet.gov.uk/bullying](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/bullying)
- **Text Someone:** [www.textsomeone.com](http://www.textsomeone.com)

**RESOURCES**

**Faith working group**

Governors and teachers are invited to look at examples of good practice on inclusion and collaboration both in and between faith schools. The faiths involved in running maintained schools have come together to share their stories and to make a joint statement of their commitment.

**FOR MORE INFO: Case studies are available at [www.teachernet.gov.uk/faithschools](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/faithschools)**



**Securing specialist school status**

Governors can play an important role in securing specialist school status and supporting the resulting changes. Specialism can impact on ethos, expertise and community links, as well as offering benefits to the school, staff, pupils and the wider community.

**FOR MORE INFO: You can download *Building on Good Practice in Specialist Schools* at [www.governornet.co.uk/buildingongoodpractice](http://www.governornet.co.uk/buildingongoodpractice) or call DfES Publications on 0845 60 222 60 (Ref: DfES/1136/2004)**

**Discount scheme for Teachers' TV**

Teachers' TV is a dedicated channel aimed at everyone involved in education – governors, managers, support staff and teachers. To enable everyone working in, and with, educational institutions to have access to it, a discount has been set up with some of the UK's leading digital television services. The Get Teachers' TV scheme gives discounts of between eight and 50 per cent from a range of suppliers, including Comet (for the Freeview service), HomeChoice, KIT, Telewest and Top Up TV.

**FOR MORE INFO: [www.get.teachers.tv](http://www.get.teachers.tv) for programming info, visit [www.teachers.tv](http://www.teachers.tv)**

**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.sgross.org.uk](http://www.sgross.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

# Outdoor learning



The DfES is publishing detailed guidelines covering the fair treatment of staff when they take pupils for trips away from school.

The new guidance – scheduled for publication this summer – will remind employers and school staff that those who take reasonable care and follow

employer guidelines are, in the event of an accident, protected by law. It will also emphasise that school staff can protect children from possible injury on a school visit – and protect themselves by showing they have complied with the law – by carrying out compulsory safety checks.

Education Secretary Ruth Kelly says: "The majority of schools already offer a range of outdoor learning, including school trips that enrich the curriculum, build confidence and increase skills. We want to make sure that all school staff have the confidence to continue offering these experiences, and that everyone involved in a school trip, including parents, is aware of their rights and responsibilities."

With the new guidance in place, the Government would like to see school visits continue to be an important part of education, and develop still further.

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

## Closing the attainment gap

The proportion of Pakistani, Bangladeshi and black pupils achieving five or more A\* to C grades at GCSE and equivalent improved by more than 2.5 percentage points, according to a DfES statistical first release.

The biggest improvers were Pakistani pupils, who improved by nearly four



percentage points from 41.5 per cent to 45.2 per cent.

The DfES welcomed the figures, which represent a considerable effort by schools and provides an incentive to ensure that the work to close the attainment gap continues.

**FOR MORE INFO: [www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000564/index.shtml](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000564/index.shtml)**



## Ofsted

**Why does Ofsted inspect schools?**

Inspection highlights schools' strengths and weaknesses – enabling them to focus on key areas for improvement. The published inspection report tells parents, schools and the wider community about the quality of education at the school and whether pupils achieve as well as they can.

**Why and how is Ofsted changing the way it carries out inspections?**

The introduction of the New Relationship with Schools framework (see pg 6 and 7) requires a new approach to accountability and inspection. So, after 12 years, Ofsted is changing the inspection process.

Under the new approach, inspections will be shorter, sharper and more frequent. They will be conducted at short notice, and inspection evidence will start from a school's self-evaluation. Inspection reports will be much shorter, and schools will no longer need to produce a separate post-inspection action plan.

During the inspection, Ofsted will widen its scope to include information on how a school contributes to the well-being of pupils. It is this last area that adds a new dimension.

# Reforms to end academic snobbery

Education Secretary Ruth Kelly has announced an end to the 'snobbery' that has condemned vocational education as 'second best'.

The shift towards vocational education is part of the proposed reforms to the secondary and post-16 curriculum, which will come into force over the next 10 years. These form the Government's response to the suggestions made by the working group chaired by the former head of Ofsted, Sir Mike Tomlinson.

"The reforms will mark the end of the divide between vocational and academic study. We will move to a truly comprehensive education system for every teenager, by ensuring real choice from the age of 14," says Ruth Kelly.

The key points of the White Paper are:

- Vocational opportunities from 14 that



give clear routes to higher education and/or employment

- A renewed focus on maths and English, at secondary level, which will be a compulsory part of every diploma
- Stretch for all students, where every child will be given the opportunity to develop to their full potential and be rewarded for their success.

**FOR MORE INFO:** [www.governornet.co.uk/14to19](http://www.governornet.co.uk/14to19)

## A call for more governors in London



The London Challenge has put out a call for more governors in the capital. Its aim is to recruit individuals who will add value in schools where they are needed most.

"Many urban schools serve challenging communities. Schools' response in the

past was to care for the youngsters, conscious of the hopeless inevitability of some of their backgrounds. Now, heads and the staff care much more about the people their youngsters will become," says Tim Brighouse, chief adviser to London Schools. "That's why improvement in London pupils' attainment is, and will remain, greater than the national average... (Governors) have a crucial role to play in supporting schools, to ensure that every student fulfils their potential."

**FOR MORE INFO:** [london.challenge@dfes.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:london.challenge@dfes.gsi.gov.uk)

### How will the new inspections work?

Schools will usually have two days' notice of an inspection. Visits last for two days and, during this time, inspectors will have discussions with staff, pupils and governors, and observe lessons. Inspectors may spend short periods of time in several lessons to pursue a particular issue, or a longer period of time in one lesson. This will depend on the reason for visiting the lesson.

### How will governors be involved in the new inspection process?

The governing body will have an important role in the new arrangements. It will have responsibility for the main judgments in the self-evaluation form. Governors will need to assure themselves that the process of self-evaluation and planning is based on good evidence and on how parents and pupils

feel about the school. They will also need to be confident in the strategies adopted to bring about improvement.

The governing body will be required to notify parents and others of the inspection. Governors' views will be sought during the inspection, and the governing body will be represented at the feedback meeting for senior managers. Governors will continue to have responsibility for distributing reports to parents. They will engage with the School Improvement Partner (the link between a school, local authority and central government) on an ongoing basis regarding the school's performance and future priorities. [G](#)

**FOR MORE INFO:**

[www.governornet.co.uk/ofstedoverview](http://www.governornet.co.uk/ofstedoverview) (see pg6 for NRwS article)

## LEGISLATION

### Charging for school activities

Governing bodies must draw up a charging and remissions policy before charging for certain defined school activities. Governors may invite parents to make voluntary contributions to enable school funds go further.

**FOR MORE INFO:** [www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/atoz/c/chargingforactivities](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/atoz/c/chargingforactivities)

- The DfES wants to hear of any problems you encounter when trying to adhere to the current charging legislation, as well as examples of good practice. Email: [pwtt.well-being@dfes.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:pwtt.well-being@dfes.gsi.gov.uk)

### Changes to email guidance

It is already legal for schools to send ordinary day-to-day communications electronically. As of January, it is also lawful for schools to send out statutory notices electronically, including notices to parents provided that they consent. Exceptions to this are certain notices about permanent exclusion, and notices to local authorities. *Email Service of Documents: Guidance Note GN20041.215* provides guidance to the education service on this amendment.

**FOR MORE INFO:** [www.governornet.co.uk/emailguidance](http://www.governornet.co.uk/emailguidance)

### Company Directors Disqualification Act amendment

Under current education legislation, anyone who has been disqualified from running a company under the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986 is also disqualified from holding, or continuing to hold, office as:

- a member of a foundation body
- a school governor
- a temporary governor of a new school
- a member of a school Private Finance Initiative (PFI) company
- a member of a school company.

As of 28 January 2005, this exclusion has been extended to people who have given a disqualification 'undertaking' not to act as a company director. These amendments close a loophole created by changes made to the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986 by the Insolvency Act 2000 and the Insolvency Act 2000 (Company Directors Disqualification Undertakings) Order 2004.

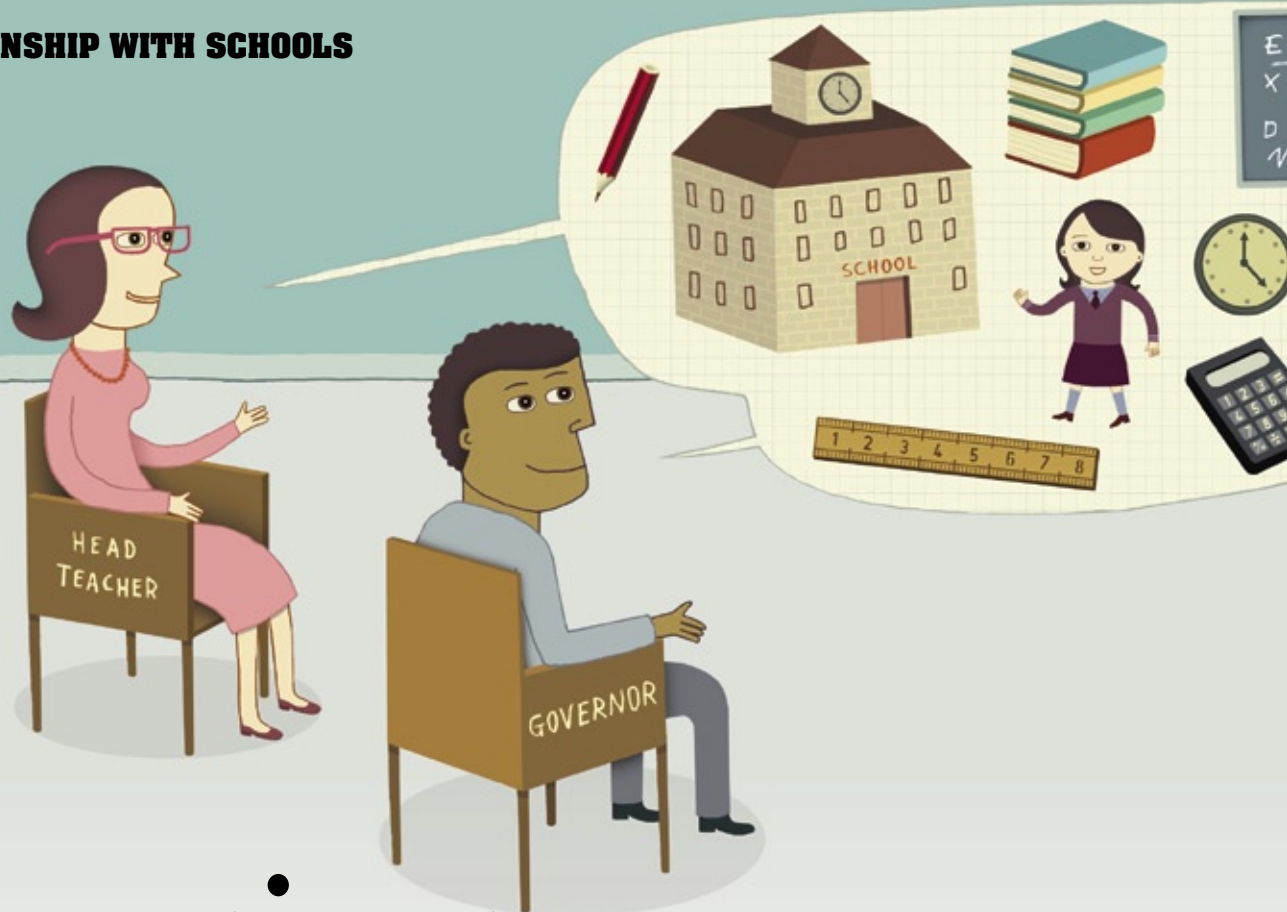
**FOR MORE INFO:** See Statutory Instrument 2004 No.3264: Education (Company Directors Disqualification Provisions) (England) Regulations 2004, or the related Explanatory memorandum

### Free school meals

From 6 April 2005, children whose parents receive the following support payments are entitled to also receive free school meals:

- Income Support
- Income Based Jobseekers Allowance
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act
- Child Tax Credit, provided they are not entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual income, as assessed by the Inland Revenue, that does not exceed £13,910.

**FOR MORE INFO:** [www.governornet.co.uk/schoolmeals](http://www.governornet.co.uk/schoolmeals)



# Forging new relationships

The New Relationship with Schools will help governors, headteachers and schools to raise standards – with clearer priorities, less clutter, intelligent accountability, a bigger role for school leaders in system-wide reform, and better information for parents

Words: Sharon Wheeler Illustration: Allan Sanders

**T**he aim of the New Relationship is to allow schools to focus more clearly on school improvement, and concentrate their energy and resources on improving the quality of teaching and learning.

The New Relationship with Schools (NRwS) has been trialled with eight local authorities in 92 schools, and will be rolled out nationally on a phased basis.

A fuller primary school trial will take place in 2005-06, to look in more detail at the best way of introducing the programme in all 18,000 primary schools. The trials this year involved headteachers and governing bodies in testing different elements of the New Relationship, and listening to their feedback – and the results of

these trials have shaped national policy.

Headteachers involved in the trials have been enthusiastic about the new scheme. “I welcome it, as it should cut down on bureaucracy and give us more autonomy. We can then concentrate on our *raison d’être*, which

is teaching and learning,” says Ros Gulson, headteacher of Walton Girls’ School in Grantham, Lincolnshire.

**“GOVERNORS HAVE PARTICULARLY WELCOMED THE SCHOOL PROFILE, WHICH WILL REPLACE THE GOVERNORS’ ANNUAL REPORTS”**

**The NRwS includes:**

■ Self-evaluation –

schools will use this to identify their strengths and weaknesses, drive their own improvements and so be accountable for the services they provide. The inspection process will draw heavily on a school’s self-evaluation

■ School Improvement Partner – a person appointed as a critical friend and link



between a school, the local authority and central government. It will in many cases be someone with current or recent headship experience, who will help the school set targets and identify support needed. The governing body will receive a report directly from the School Improvement Partner about the school's performance. They will also be advised by the School Improvement Partner on its management of the head's performance and appraisal (ground currently covered by the external adviser). Governors will no longer need to take external advice on heads' performance management

■ **Single conversation** – this signifies the ongoing dialogue between the school and its School Improvement Partner and will use the school's self-evaluation, its plan and data and local and national priorities.

■ **School profile** – this electronic document will replace the governors' annual report. It


will be a short, focused report, pre-populated with data from the DfES

■ **Data** – a fully automated collection and sharing system should be ready for 2006. Data will be collected once, but used many times

■ **Communications** – includes an online ordering system, allowing schools to order documents. It will also integrate existing DfES websites into TeacherNet and the Standards site

■ **Inspection** – a new short-notice process that pulls information from the school's self-evaluation. These sharper, more focused inspections will last two days and be carried out every three years

According to Jayne Wilson, headteacher of Littlehampton Community School in West Sussex, work still needs to be done on ensuring that the single conversation really can be boiled down to a short, sharp report, particularly given the number of agencies involved in education. But she and other headteachers have praised the introduction of a School Improvement Partner who knows the job at the sharp end and who can play a key role in performance management.

"The School Improvement Partner will offer support and guidance as well as asking challenging questions, which is entirely appropriate," says Sue Marooney, headteacher of Durrington High School in West Sussex. 

**FOR MORE INFO:**

[www.governornet.co.uk/newrelationship](http://www.governornet.co.uk/newrelationship)

**WHAT DO GOVERNORS THINK...?**

Governors have kept a watching brief on the NRWS scheme. They have particularly welcomed the School Profile that will replace the Governors' Annual Report, and are pleased that schools will be no longer required to hold an Annual Parents' Meeting. This will give governors more freedom to communicate effectively with parents.

"On the whole, these meetings haven't been very successful," says Alex Vowles, chair of governors at Walton Girls' School in Grantham, Lincolnshire. "Governors would spend a lot

of time compiling the report, turn up to the meeting and find no-one there. So, we had to assume people were satisfied, as we didn't know any different!"

Trish Reynolds, chair of governors at Durrington High School in West Sussex, agrees that the School Profile is a good idea. "We're glad to get rid of the annual report. This is a much better idea." But Trish feels that governors will need to think about how they discuss the Profile with parents.

GovernorNet is the one-stop website for school governors. It provides up-to-date information about all aspects of school governance

[www.governornet.co.uk](http://www.governornet.co.uk)

**What's new on GovernorNet**

View the latest amendments to the **Guide to the Law for School Governors** online on GovernorNet [www.governornet.co.uk/gttilamend2](http://www.governornet.co.uk/gttilamend2)

Find out more about the **Governing the School of the Future** document on GovernorNet [www.governornet.co.uk/schoolofthefuture](http://www.governornet.co.uk/schoolofthefuture)

Have you seen the **Taking the Chair** training materials, aimed at prospective, new or vice-chairs? [www.governornet.co.uk/takingthechair](http://www.governornet.co.uk/takingthechair)

See the **Recent Additions** section to keep up with all the latest articles and documents added to the site [www.governornet.co.uk/recentadditions](http://www.governornet.co.uk/recentadditions)

Have you seen GovernorNet's **Model Policies**? You can use these as templates when creating or reviewing your school policies [www.governornet.co.uk/modelpolicies](http://www.governornet.co.uk/modelpolicies)

Get chatting on our popular **Discussion Board**, which provides a forum where governors can swap ideas and discuss hot topics [www.governornet.co.uk/discussionboards](http://www.governornet.co.uk/discussionboards)

If you have any queries, feedback or suggestions for improvements or additions to GovernorNet, please send an email to: [governornet.team@dfes.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:governornet.team@dfes.gsi.gov.uk)

**Need help and advice?**

**GovernorLine is a free advice line that offers information and professional support to governors. Call 08000 722181 or visit [www.governorline.info](http://www.governorline.info)**



## IN THE SPOTLIGHT

# Governing with honours

In the 2005 New Year's Honours List, Alec Osborn, chair of governors at Deacon's School in Peterborough, was one of two governors to be awarded an MBE. Sara Davis spoke to him about his role as a governor.

### Why did you become a school governor?

I became a school governor over 10 years ago, when the company I worked for as chief engineer – Perkins Engines in Peterborough – decided to sponsor Deacon's School. My company suggested that I would make a good sponsor governor, and the rest is history... After about two years on the governing board, I became chair of governors and someone else from Perkins filled my shoes as sponsor governor.

### What is the most challenging thing you've done in your role as governor?

The most challenging thing for me, was being part of the management team that was determined to raise the achievement at Deacon's School. The governing body and school staff agreed a five-year rolling plan that aimed to build on the school's existing assets and turn its weaknesses into strengths – a process that I stole from my career in industry.

### Why were you awarded an MBE?

It was obvious that, with its current rate of progression, Deacon's School was going to outgrow its buildings. Therefore, a small group of us, in conjunction with the headteacher, sought out a number of solutions, one of which was forming a creative

academy in Peterborough.

During this time, we were asked to help Hereward Community College, a failing school also in Peterborough. We disbanded its governing body and replaced it with an interim executive board, of which I was chair. We then did a root cause analysis of the problem and designed a recovery plan. Over the two-year period that we chaired the board, the GCSE A-C results went from 22 to 51 per cent.


The Thomas Deacon Academy is due to open in September 2007. To form it, three neighbouring schools – Deacon's School, Hereward Community College and John Mansfield – will merge. I have relinquished my role as chairman of the governing body at Deacon's School and of the

interim board, to become a director of the academy.

### How did you feel when you received the news that you were to be awarded an MBE?

I was delighted, and completely taken aback. I received a letter in November telling me that I had been recommended for an MBE in the New Year's Honours list. The official announcement came at the end of December.

### If someone were thinking of becoming a governor, what would you say to them?

I would thoroughly recommend that they consider the invitation. And don't underestimate the added value of your professional and personal experience, and its relevance to the education of children in this country. 

**“OVER THE TWO-YEAR PERIOD THAT WE CHAIRED THE BOARD, THE GCSE A-C RESULTS WENT FROM 22 TO 51 PER CENT”**

## FEEDBACK

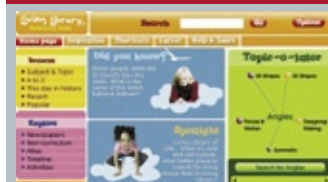


Got something to say? Email us at [governors@governorsnewsletter.co.uk](mailto:governors@governorsnewsletter.co.uk) or write to the editor at the address below

In the last issue of *Governors*, we published a letter from Giles Smith, foundation governor at a Tower Hamlet's primary school, asking for suggestions on how to attract more children to the roll. Here is a summary of your suggestions:

- the internet is often the first point of contact with a school for out-of-catchment families, so a lively website to supplement the SAT figures and Ofsted reports is helpful
  - a good range of after-school clubs is a significant draw to working parents
  - set up a committee to cover the public face of the building – removing graffiti, providing a welcoming entrance, etc. One school has planted an avenue of bulbs along the approach to the school to catch people's eye
  - be pro-active in community events. One church school led the service at its attached church for Education Sunday to advertise itself to the parishioners
  - establish relations with the local press – local publicity relating to a school campaign, e.g. a healthy eating scheme will interest parents who are 'shopping around'
- Many thanks to all those who sent in suggestions.

## WIN!



The best letter in the autumn 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 thesauri. It also provides schools with daily news feeds.

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Picture: Charles Shearn

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department for  
**education and skills**

## Governors

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