

Governors

May 2003 www.governor.net.co.uk

Specialism key to secondary strategy

A strategy to transform secondary education has been unveiled by education and skills secretary Charles Clarke.

In the strategy document, Mr Clarke says that he hopes it will "motivate school leadership teams and governors to plot the onward course of their school in pursuing higher standards". Its aim is to help inform governors and leadership teams so that they, along with their LEA and other schools in the community, can make important decisions on the future of their schools, such as specialist status, remodelling the school workforce and how school budgets are used.

The strategy, which reflects discussion with 2,000 secondary heads, is based on four key principles: the creation of a new specialist system; the building of strong leadership teams; reform of the school workforce; and the development of partnerships beyond the classroom with other schools, parents, employers and the local community. A key area of change is the extension of the specialist school programme. Last November the cap on national funding was lifted so that any school that meets the required standards can become a specialist school. In addition, two new specialisms have been added – humanities (based around the key subjects of history, geography or English) and music. A Partnership Fund has also been launched which will support those schools that have made serious efforts to raise the £50,000 sponsorship but have not managed to attract the full amount.

Strong leadership is seen as key to the transformation



of secondary education and training resources will be made available through the National College for School Leadership. The Leadership Incentive Grant will also give 1,400 schools in deprived areas and challenging circumstance funding to enhance school management.

Reform of the school workforce will also play a pivotal role in the strategy. A national agreement to reform the school workforce has been signed by the government and most of the teaching unions. This historic agreement will mean extended roles for support staff, with extra help for teachers from administrative assistants, additional technical support, cover supervisors and high level teaching assistants. Under the strategy, collaboration will also be encouraged so that excellence in one school can be shared with others. Schools will be able to join together to share skills and experience, either formally or informally, as 'federations' (see page 3).

www.teachernet.gov.uk/makingadiff

GovernorNet goes live

GovernorNet, the new school governors' website, has gone live.

Designed for governors, the website provides up-to-date information on all aspects of school governance and features links to other useful sites.

All information and links are categorised for easy searching and users can also personalise searches, so that information on the site is directly relevant to them.

GovernorNet will continue to be improved and feedback on the site is welcome, either through the feedback facility on

www.governor.net.co.uk

or by contacting the GovernorNet project team on 01325

391184.



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KS3 'critical driver for success'

All secondary heads and chairs of governors have received a letter from the secretary of state, Charles Clarke, highlighting the importance the government is placing on progress at Key Stage 3 (KS3).

This follows widespread recognition that many children experience a lack of progress and loss of motivation between the ages of 11 and 14, which can negatively impact on their GCSE results.

The focus will be on improving teaching and learning as critical drivers for success at GCSE.

Mr Clarke also announced that from now on he intends to publish separate KS3 performance data and has asked schools to use the inclusion of value added data in the performance tables to help monitor the impact they make on pupil performance.

There was also mention of the importance of booster materials and the introduction of the behaviour strand in schools from September 2003. Mr Clarke has asked schools to contact him at key.stage3@dfes.gsi.gov.uk with their views on how to build on the implementation of the KS3 strategy.

Meanwhile the KS3 tests for 2003 have been improved to better reflect what should be taught and learnt in the classroom.

In the English test there will be three papers: reading; writing; and Shakespeare. Pupils will receive separate levels for reading and writing as well as an overall level for English.

In the science test there will be an increase in the number of questions assessing scientific enquiry, and in the maths test, there will be approximately 12.5% more questions assessing 'using and applying mathematics'.

For more details of all the changes call the QCA helpline on 0207 509 5532 or visit www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/keystage3

Primary strategy under development



Stephen Twigg, minister responsible for primary schools, has been travelling up and down the country talking to primary headteachers about the shape of the forthcoming primary strategy document, due to be published this summer.

Feedback from the 2,000 headteachers who attended the eight half-day conferences in February and March was very positive, with 95% of heads reporting that they found the events useful to excellent.

Outputs from the events will be used to help create the new primary strategy. ■

The national literacy and numeracy strategies are being brought together as one national primary strategy to further improve teaching and learning in primary schools.

Under the new strategy, support to schools will be intensified, the success of teaching phonics will be further examined and a new major leadership programme for primary heads will be introduced.

There will, however, be no

substantive changes to the core literacy and numeracy strategies, which will continue to be at the centre of the primary strategy to improve teaching and learning in a broad curriculum.

To oversee this change, Dr Kevan Collins has been appointed director of the national primary strategy.

Dr Collins will be responsible for achieving the government's national English and mathematics targets for 2004 and 2006. He previously worked as the deputy national director of the national literacy strategy and has taught in a variety of schools.

His appointment follows the publication on 27 January of a report by the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education which praised much of the work done by the national literacy and numeracy strategies.

For more information on the conference outputs visit www.teachernet.gov.uk/primaryconf

Government commits to wider HE access

The government is committed to widening participation in higher education (HE) and wants to increase the number of people going on to HE from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Currently, there are inequalities in the opportunities available to young people – only 18% of young people from the bottom three social groups take up a university place

compared to 48% from the top three social groups.

The government plans to encourage wider participation in HE by raising levels of attainment in schools and colleges and by raising aspirations, for example, through the Aimhigher programme. From 2006, the government proposes to allow universities to charge additional fees but access will remain a priority. Any

university that introduces additional fees must first have an Access Agreement, which will set out how the university will ensure access by offering bursaries and other financial support and by encouraging more applications from disadvantaged backgrounds. ■

Giving young people and adults the education, training and skills to meet the

country's future skill needs is the central message in *Developing a National Skills Strategy and Delivery Plan: Progress Report*, published in March.

The DfES report sets out the key themes for the Skills Strategy and Delivery plan, due to be published in June. Copies of the Progress Report and the Underlying Evidence report are available by visiting

www.dfes.gov.uk/skillsstrategy

Federating for success

Four new school federations are up and running.

Two of these – in Bradford and Leeds – are strategic LEA-wide federations involving all the secondary schools in the area, and tackle a number of issues including standards, social cohesion and racial equality. The other two – in Birmingham and Gateshead – are based around a two-school model designed to support a school facing challenging circumstances.

Federations are groups of schools working closely together with the aim of raising standards – both in a direct sense, by concentrating on teaching and learning, and in a broader sense, looking at inclusion, leadership, professional development, community cohesion, behaviour and widening curriculum provision.

Some of the benefits of federating include sharing best practice and partnering schools to share strengths and raise attainment in all the schools involved in the partnership.

Federations can be created through a contract between two or more schools plus any associate bodies with specified targets to raise standards, and some sort of joint management structure.

Another way, from September 2003, will be for two or more schools to set up a strategic joint committee to take legally binding joint decisions or agree to a single governing body running two or more schools.

Federations will not affect parents' admission rights or choices. The Education Act 2002 excludes federations – even where they decide to have a single headteacher and governing body – from having a single admission process. Parents will still apply for a place for their child at individual schools within a federation.

Federations will be voluntarily entered into by schools, not imposed by government.

Visit www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/federations

OFSTED has pointed out that well governed schools tend to have higher standards of attainment than other schools. Governing bodies are therefore rightly responsible for approving the school budget; they should make provision for meeting their own needs. The primary source of funding for governor training and clerking is the school's delegated budget. The money provided to LEAs for them to delegate to schools has been increased significantly over the past few years and will increase in the future. (An average real term increase per pupil of £140 in 2003-04 and £1,000 between 1997-98 and 2005-06).

For further information visit www.dfes.gov.uk/efsg/fundingreform.shtml

New regulations offer governors more freedom and choice



The introduction of the Education Act (2002) gives governing bodies more freedom and choice over how they operate.

Much of the previously restrictive legislation has now been changed in favour of more flexible regulations and guidance.

The new regulatory changes that will affect governors include:

- **Constitution** These regulations set out the categories of governors, the various models for the composition of governing bodies, qualifications and tenure of office and instruments of government. Governing bodies have from 1 September 2003 until 31 August 2006 to choose the right composition for them, within the broadly prescribed framework, and to agree a new instrument of governance.
- **Terms of reference** These regulations will set out the roles and responsibilities of governing bodies and, unlike the current ones, those of LEAs. They need to be in line with the Code of Practice on LEA-School Relations, which is being revised and will take effect this September.
- **Procedures** From September 2003 regulations will give governing bodies more freedom to determine their own procedures.
- **Complaints Procedures** All governing bodies must have a published complaints procedure in place by September 2003.
- **Governors' Allowances** From September 2003, regulations will clarify the provision for allowances to be paid to governors by the governing bodies of maintained schools that have delegated budgets and by the LEA to the governors of a maintained school that does not have a delegated budget.
- **Annual Parents' Meetings** All governing bodies must hold an annual parents' meeting except in defined circumstances.

A Guide to the Law for School Governors is being rewritten to incorporate these regulations and any other changes that affect governors. Every school will be supplied with fifteen copies and will be able to order more. It will be available on GovernorNet, www.governornet.co.uk

Heads to advise governing bodies

Headteachers have been asked by the Department for Education and Skills to consider becoming advisers to school governing bodies.

Every school has access to an external adviser who helps the governing body review the performance of the headteacher. The Department would like to see more serving headteachers take on this role and share their management and performance appraisal expertise with governors.

Visit www.cea-advisers.co.uk/recruitment.htm Also, see page 6 'New training materials to support performance management role'

Building for the future



Is it a shopping centre? Is it an airport? No... It's the entrance to Swanlea School in London.

The Whitechapel-based school gets more than its fair share of comments when visitors arrive in the spectacular 'street' named The Mall. Overhead and all around is a stunning glass structure, supported by curved columns. Now, thanks to new government plans, other schools will soon boast sparkling new buildings.

Swanlea School bursar Rob Weaver says: "It's the most interesting school building in the area. It had a lot of money spent on it, and all credit to both Tower Hamlets Council and the Department of Education (sic) for that. Pupils find it an amazing place to have their education and by and large respect it."

"It has an indoor and outdoor sense to it, due to its height and the light and airy feel. People

come in the front door and say 'blimey, is this a school, shopping centre or airport entrance!'"

Swanlea, built in 1993, was the first new school built in London for ten years. It cost £10m and has 1,050 pupils.

Habib Rahman, chair of governors at Swanlea, is immensely proud of the building, which is a popular choice for film shoots, conferences and parties and also boasts a near-international standard sports hall.

"When my kids were in education, their schools were all redbrick buildings.

This school welcomes you in. It's very neat and clean and light. There's a feeling of being outside in the open air. It's definitely a welcoming feature," says Mr Rahman, who has been chair of governors for six years.

"It provides an uplift for pupils. Seventy per cent of the kids have free school meals and the housing they live in is perhaps not great. So when they come to school, they look forward to it."

The government wants to ensure that other schools can also improve their surroundings and give staff, pupils and governors an environment that improves the quality of teaching and learning. Further new investment in buildings was announced by the Chancellor last year, and will reach an annual rate of £5.1 billion by 2005-6.

A new approach to capital investment has just been launched, which aims to replace or renew all secondary schools

over ten to 15 years from 2005-06, depending on future public spending decisions. There will also be substantial investment in primary schools. By now, all schools will have received a copy of the DfES's consultation *Building Schools for the Future – a New Approach to Capital Investment*, which was launched in February.

LEAs and heads will continue to receive existing, successful capital funding to repair and improve their schools. The extra money available in 2005-06 will be concentrated in larger sums. This means that authorities can look at secondary provision in their area from first principles, and, based on a shared local educational vision, transform school buildings in partnership with schools, governors and the community.

A choice of good school designs will provide models which can be customised to accommodate school settings, sizes and specialisms. And a new national body will support better procurement using the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) and other funding methods efficiently, ensuring local people get the schools they want.

David Miliband, minister of state for school standards, said: "Our strategic approach to capital investment will transform the face of secondary education with better design and better procurement. Pupils will be more motivated to learn in modern, well-designed classrooms with state-of-the-art sports halls, laboratories and other facilities. Teachers will be

able to focus on their teaching, working in surroundings that motivate them and provide them with the right environment to prepare lessons, share ideas and mark homework."

For pupils at Goldthorn Park Primary School in Wolverhampton, major rebuilding work on their school proved to be a huge adventure. For staff and governors, it was a logistical challenge.

The school was built in 1946 and added to and patched up over the years. Finally, in the spring of 2000, Wolverhampton City Council agreed to fund the £1.8m project to rebuild the school and nursery.

Chair of governors Nigel Whyte, whose ten-year-old twin daughters Charlotte and Kathryn are pupils at the school, says: "The old building was in a very dilapidated state. It had been built to last for seven years, but they'd somehow got 50-odd years out of it! It was in a dreadful state, and very damp. You could smell it on the children's clothes when they came in through the door from school. Any work put on the walls was destroyed by the damp."

When the main project started in October 2001, the decision was made to bus eight junior classes to a site several miles away, where a school had been left empty after two had amalgamated. The operation was planned with military precision, as five coaches were laid on daily, pupils were allocated seats for the year, and parents and grandparents acted as escorts.

When pupils returned in September 2002, they had a striking new school, painted in blue and yellow, and complete with new library and computer suite.

Mr Whyte says: "Everything is

together and it's improved school security. There are not so many doors to worry about. Each classroom has an exit onto the playground, and the main entrance has an electronic magnetic door."

All the renovations have also left the school with a bigger playground – although there was a scare when a 20 metre mine shaft was found under it during the building work!

Headteacher Keith Rogers says: "It's a really nice building and the overall result is terrific. It's light and airy and the children love it. They found it a little confusing at first, and one child was heard to comment that if you got lost, you just had to keep walking and you'd end up in your classroom!"

"The computer room has made an enormous difference. Before, we had some machines in a couple of classrooms. One of the teachers said she can now teach in 45 minutes what would previously have taken her three classes to cover.

"Each classroom has big walk-in cupboards to store things, and the rooms are all nice and spacious. They have benches and a sink, and all the classrooms are wired into the computer suite."

Mr Rogers, who has been head since 1992, is only the third headteacher at the school since it opened. "Most of the teachers have been here longer than me and it's been a very stable staff. They've remained enthusiastic, which is a strength of the school. They've earned their new building!"

For further information visit www.teachernet.gov.uk/makingadiff

To view *Building Schools for the Future – a new approach to capital investment*, visit www.teachernet.gov.uk/schoolscapital

Viewpoint

Having recently collected my copy of the Workforce Remodelling



document, I was impressed to see the list of signatories supporting the proposals. Until, that is, I noticed a glaring omission; namely the two main governor associations, NAGM and NGC.

Reading through the document, importance is placed on the role of governing bodies, but how much input did governors have in its formulation? It seems very little and it led me to ponder on whether governors are really valued.

Governing bodies have significant responsibilities in these proposals, amongst other duties, in agreeing staffing levels and related budgets and yet it seems that we are presented with what may be regarded as a 'fait accompli' to carry out ever more tasks.

In the same way as consultation clearly took place with the signatory partners, wouldn't it have been useful to involve governors before the plans were published so at least we would have the opportunity for input?

All too often, it seems, governors are left with the task of 'making it work'. It's a challenge that governors rise to.

Sometimes, though, it feels we are forgotten and that begs the question that if we had a tangible financial value, rather than being thought of as unpaid non-executive directors, would those in power give greater regard to the real value and commitment which governors give to improving achievement in education?

Terry Douris is a governor at a primary and secondary school in Hemel Hempstead, Herts. He is also Chair of the NAGM Association of Hertfordshire Governors.

The Department replies: The agreement on school workforce remodelling is about raising standards and tackling teacher workload. Signatories include government, employers and school workforce unions. It confirms proposals in the Time for Standards Consultation package published in the autumn. Governor organisations were amongst those invited to comment.

It is important that governors use their experience and expertise to support their schools in seizing the opportunities that the agreement offers. The first contractual changes are planned for this coming September.

Schools need to free teachers to teach and school leaders to lead. This may mean deploying support staff in new ways. For example, personal assistants for teachers, additional technical support, business managers, cover supervisors and high level teaching assistants.

We are working with governor organisations and the signatories to ensure that governors are fully involved in implementing the agreement.

For full details of the agreement visit www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/remodelling (See page 6 for more details)

(The DfES encourages governors to spend funds from the delegated budget on their own development and support. See page 3 for more details.)

We're always keen to hear readers' views. Write to the Editor (see back page for contact details)

Pupils will be more motivated to learn in modern, well-designed classrooms with state-of-the-art sports halls, laboratories and other facilities

Unions sign workforce deal

The government has reached an historic agreement with school workforce unions and employers.

The agreement, which was signed on 15 January, provides a framework that will pave the way for radical reform of the school workforce. These reforms will help teachers focus on what really matters most – the education of pupils.



In September 2003, the first phase of contractual changes will come into force. Schools will be expected to transfer 24 of the 25 administrative tasks outlined in the agreement to support staff or ICT. Many schools have already begun this process. The School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document will also include a provision for leadership and management time to allow school leaders time to focus on their leadership responsibilities, and a new work/life balance clause.

Governing bodies will need to be involved in making these changes a reality. Support for schools will be provided. As well as additional resources, the government is developing a 'change management' programme that will enable school leaders, including governors, to implement what is, in many cases, a fundamental change in the way they deploy their staff.

www.teachernet.gov.uk/remodelling

New training materials to support performance management role

The Department for Education and Skills is planning to issue new training materials to support governors in their role as performance managers.

While many governing bodies have successfully taken on this new role, evidence suggests that some have found the process of managing the headteacher difficult and would welcome extra support.

The new materials, which will be available in the Autumn and are based on lessons learnt, will focus on practical examples, robust objective setting and provide advice on how to make pay decisions.

Longer term additional support will be provided in three ways:

1. The Department plans to expand the number of experienced serving heads who work as DfES-funded advisers to help governors ensure the degree of challenge and rigour needed for effective appraisal.

2. LEA support for governors will be brought into stronger focus, for example by providing high quality data.

LEAs have a clear legal duty to advise the governing body where they think there are problems with a head. But they also have a right to call for the appraisal documentation.

3. Governors have requested plainer guidance from the Department on capability procedures.

The new draft guidance will be available for wide consultation by the end of April this year and can be viewed at www.dfes.gov.uk/consultations



Where performance management works well it can provide sound information for governors to make decisions on deployment, promotion, professional development and pay leading to whole school improvement. So what can you do to ensure that you are injecting rigour and challenge into your headteacher appraisal?

1. You can ensure that your head uses pupil performance data to set realistic yet challenging objectives related to pupil progress. The head should be looking to raise the quality of teaching and learning in your school to achieve a measurable impact on pupil achievements.

2. You can agree a leadership and management objective with measurable features and clear success criteria

3. You can make sure, when reviewing your head's pay, that you take full account of whether they have met their objectives and sustained a high quality overall performance throughout the year.

Teachers' pay set to rise

Most teachers received a 2.9% pay rise this April. Targeted arrangements have also been introduced in inner London to retain and recruit good teachers in the capital. Main scale teachers in inner London will get 4% increases. This gives a minimum starting salary for teachers of £18,105 outside London and £21,522 in inner London. Main scale teachers will also receive a further 7 to 8% increase in September as they progress up the scale, and many others will also receive rises.

Education and skills secretary Charles Clarke accepted the main recommendations of the School Teachers Review Body (STRB) that includes an increase of the threshold payment for inner London teachers to £4,000 (compared to £2,200 elsewhere) and average rises for school leaders in inner London of £4,000. After about five years, an inner London teacher who passes the threshold can earn £34,000.

The STRB will report on longer term pay issues in January 2004. For further information visit www.teachernet.gov.uk/2003pay



New training programme 'very helpful'

The development of a new training programme to meet the needs of governors, heads and school clerks is currently under way.

Launched by the Department for Education and Skills, The National Strategy for Governor Support has been welcomed by governors' organisations.

"Governors are legally responsible for the spending of the school budget," says Neil Davies, chair of the National Governors' Council. "Governing bodies have a lot of power and it's therefore vital to have training so they can discharge that power."

And he adds: "It's very important that training is geared to governors' needs in all phases, including special schools ... The needs are different for primary and secondary, for example. In primary a teacher may be dealing with one class and most subjects. In secondary, there will be more facilities and heads of years. Governors have to be trained accurately, especially if they are dealing with curriculum."

Jane Phillips, chair of the National Association of Governors and Managers, describes the training for heads and chairs as very helpful. She now wants the issue of training for all governors to be addressed. "There's the danger of an A and a B team. The A team would be super-duper while the B team are left reeling on the sidelines with little understanding."

Announced in 1999, the National Strategy for Governor Support has three main strands. The first is already up and running – the National Strategy for Training New Governors was implemented in September 2001 and is now delivered in almost all LEAs. The second, for governing body clerks, should start to produce trained clerks by September 2003, and will then be launched nationally.

The third strand is the National Development Programme for Chairs and Heads, which has just gone out to tender. A pilot scheme is expected to run from September 2003 to January 2004, and will then be rolled out nationally in the spring.

A range of interested parties, including headteachers' and governors' organisations and LEA co-ordinators of governor services, have been consulted on the proposals. And the Advisory Group of Governance (AGOG), which



includes DfES representatives and other experts, have given their endorsement to the programme.

Governors' organisations agree on the need for consistent training packages across the country, given that standards vary between LEAs. And Jane Phillips also highlights the problem of poor attendance on training courses.

"A lot of governors are very time-restricted, and they use this as an excuse not to go to training. There needs to be thought on how to develop governors without them going to training courses, such as expanding what can be done with ICT and with websites. It's about looking at what will work for governors, although there will still be the need for face-to-face training," she says.

"I think the issue for LEAs is not just about quality of training, which is variable. Some is excellent, some isn't. It's also about promoting and encouraging governors to take part in the things on offer.

"Another issue to think about is in-house induction for governors by schools, which is very patchy. Some do it very well, some don't do it at all."

Jane Phillips adds: "Governing bodies don't always spend sufficient money on their own development and support. It's an 'if we don't spend the money, it will be spent on the children' culture. But it's penny-pinching to such an extent that they're not taking advantage or giving themselves the support to do the job properly. They deserve this support to make sure they can do the job."

For further information visit the training section at www.governornet.co.uk

How to... induct new governors

We asked governors for their top tips

1. Keep new governors up-to-date with their application process and send a welcome letter or phone call.

2. Invite new governors to spend a day at the school.

3. Send them an information pack on the school including a copy of the latest Ofsted report, School Development Plan, Governors' Annual Report to Parents, minutes of the last governors' meeting, Governors' Guide to the Law, training programmes and a list of education jargon explained in plain English.

4. Make sure new governors are included in any school social events.

5. Encourage committee membership. Many new governors feel that because they're new they have nothing to contribute, when in fact many of their skills could be very useful to the school.

6. Allocate an experienced governor to act as a 'mentor'.

7. Introduce new governors to GovernorNet, the governor associations' websites (see back page for contact details) and Governorline, the freephone advice line for governors on 08000 722 181.

Websites

www.governornet.co.uk

Useful information for all school governors.

www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/cl/publicrow.htm

Local highway authorities may now divert or close rights of way that cross school land to protect pupils or staff from violence, harassment or health and safety risks. More details available on the website.

www.nagm.org.uk

National Association of Governors and Managers (NAGM)
Tel: 0121 643 5787. e-mail: governorhq@nagm.org.uk

www.ngc.org.uk

National Governors' Council (NGC) has now gone regional. For more information visit the website or contact NGC.
Tel: 0121 616 5104 / Fax: 0121 616 5105
e-mail: office@ngc.org.uk

www.governors.fsnet.co.uk

Information for School and College Governors (ISCG)
Tel: 0207 229 0200 / Fax: 0207 229 0651
e-mail: iscg@governors.fsnet.co.uk

www.teachernet.gov.uk/sbfurnitureandequipment

A new guide to buying furniture and equipment targeted at teachers and governors. The guide takes you step-by-step through the purchasing process.

www.governorline.info

Governorline offers support to governors across all aspects of school life. For the free advice line call 08000 722 181 or email via the website.

www.schoolgovernors-oss.co.uk

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Postbag



Why did DfES use Orwellian Doublespeak in calling 'begging' an entrepreneurial approach to raising sponsorship (Feb *Governors* page 7 – specialist school expansion)?

When we fill teacher vacancies we do not look for entrepreneurs but for candidates who can teach. They are fully occupied doing just that.
GA Fletcher
(Governor, Barnham)

The Department replies:

We would disagree with the term begging! Many schools tell us that, although it can sometimes be hard work, raising

sponsorship helps schools in making lasting links with businesses, local communities and employers. This is a key aspect of the programme and the criteria for the allocation of Partnership Fund monies will reflect this. We also fund the Specialist Schools and Youth Sport Trusts to support schools in raising sponsorship.

Come 3rd May 2003, I shall have been a school governor for 35 years, and I am in my eleventh year in the Chair. In that time, in five schools, I have been involved in the appointment of

three headteachers, three deputy heads and the dismissal of one headteacher and one deputy head. I muse: am I heading for a record, or in the words of the Carpenters' song has it 'only just begun'?

Reverend RE Chatwin
Chair, East Sussex

It's an impressive record! It would be interesting to know if anyone can beat this.

We want to hear your views! – Write to The Editor, *Governors*, DfES, 2B Sanctuary Buildings, London SW1P 3BT or email governor.feedback@dfes.gsi.gov.uk Letters may be edited for clarity or brevity.

Resources

Governors on tape

Visually impaired governors can now listen to *Governors* on audio tape. For a free tape call 020 7925 5268.

practice, has been published by the DfES. Visit www.dfes.gov.uk/sickchildren or call 0845 602 2260 for a copy.

£13,230) will be entitled to receive free school meals and free board and lodgings during residential school trips.
www.teachernet.gov.uk/freemealsandtrips

Raising ethnic achievement

The DfES is now consulting on its strategy *Aiming High: Raising the Achievement of Minority Ethnic Pupils*. Visit www.dfes.gov.uk/consultations

Free school meals

From 6 April, children whose parents receive either income support, income-based jobseekers allowance, support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 or Child Tax Credit (but do not receive Working Tax Credit and who have an annual income which does not exceed

Drugs consultation

The DfES is revising the guidance to schools on drugs and is inviting comments from governors.

The draft consultation is available at www.dfes.gov.uk/consultations or call 0845 602 2260 for a copy (Ref: DFES/0205/2003).

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