

Governors

Termly newsletter

A MATTER OF TRUST

Sharnbrook Upper School in Bedfordshire is going through the process of becoming a Trust school

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What the community cohesion guidelines mean for your school

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Uniform guidelines issued

Schools told to keep uniform costs down

New guidelines issued for consultation by the DfES state that schools need to limit the cost of uniforms, and ensure they are easily available. This is so that the price of the uniform doesn't deter poorer families from sending children to the school.

The guidelines encourage schools to have uniforms. "Uniforms can help to develop the right mindset among pupils, instilling pride and supporting positive behaviour and discipline," says Jim Knight, Minister for Schools. "Schools should consult parents and the wider community when setting uniform policy."

Among the recommendations included are: uniforms should be widely available at high-street shops and other retail outlets; schools continue to have the power to set uniform policy and discipline pupils who do not comply, although schools should investigate reasons as to why a pupil is not wearing the correct uniform; and schools must act reasonably in accommodating religious requirements, providing they do not pose a threat to security, safety and learning, or compromise the well-being of the whole school community.

FOR MORE INFO: To take part in the consultation, visit www.dfes.gov.uk/consultations/conDetails.cfm?consultationid=1468



Governors recognised in New Year honours list

Four governors received MBEs in the New Year 2007 honours list and Neil Davies received an OBE for his contribution to the National Governors' Council and the National Governors' Association (NGA).

Neil was elected as chair of the National Governors' Council in 2002, and in February 2006 became co-chair of the newly formed NGA. He has done much to make sure England's governors are better served by their representative bodies, building a strong relationship with the DfES, which

has resulted in a greater influence for school governors in education policy development.

The governors receiving MBEs were: Barbara Bell, chair of governors at Lady Adrian Special School in Cambridge; Michael Tyler, chair of governors at Osmani Primary School, Tower Hamlets, London; Florence Tristram, a governor at Oliver Goldsmith Primary School in Southwark, London; and Raymond Curtis, who has been a foundation governor at Ampney Crucis Primary School in Gloucestershire for the past 42 years.

WIN your school SEMERC software!

Just tell us what you think

Governors has teamed up with SEMERC to give school governors the chance to win Think About! 1, which helps support memory recall.

This CD-ROM and photocopiable workbook 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. For a chance to win the software, turn to page 7.

KS3 ICT TEST WILL NOT BE STATUTORY

Following advice from the QCA, it has been decided that the Key Stage 3 ICT test will not become a compulsory part of KS3 assessment in 2008. Instead, it will be remodelled, focusing on assessment materials that can be used throughout the Key Stage. Piloting will continue in 2007, and schools are encouraged to take part in the summer pilot to support the further development of the test.

FOR MORE INFO:

www.teachernet.gov.uk/teachingandlearning/secondary/ks3/year9tests/ict/pilot

TAKING ON A SPECIALISM

Five more local authorities now have 100 per cent specialist secondary schools, bringing the total to 17. "Having a specialism provides a school with a strong focus that enables them to raise standards across the whole curriculum and offer students a greater opportunity to realise their potential," says Education Minister Andrew Adonis.

GOVERNOR MARK

The National Co-ordinators of Governor Services (NCOGS) has developed Governor Mark, a national quality mark for school governance. The quality mark process can be used by governing bodies to assess how effective their working practices are. The link below sets out the standard criteria against which the governing body can assess its effectiveness

FOR MORE INFO:

www.tmmuk.com/ngc/document_link.asp?id=109

National Curriculum review

The secondary curriculum for 11- to 14-year-olds is undergoing a major review that will give teachers more power to help children master the basics and give greater flexibility to enliven classes.

This is the first major review of the curriculum in six years and is being undertaken by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA). Final ministerial decision is expected in early June this year and implementation from September 2008.

"The new draft curriculum is designed to create greater flexibility for schools so they can ensure pupils master the basics as well as offer more stretching opportunities for those who excel," says Education Secretary Alan Johnson. "More emphasis has been placed on developing in-depth understanding of the key ideas and practices of particular subjects. But crucially, it is balanced with the retention of tried and tested parts of the curriculum, as well as giving young people better personal skills greatly valued by employers."

All 11- to 14-year-old pupils will continue to study all 12 subjects of the National Curriculum covering, in addition



to English and mathematics, science, design and technology, ICT, the humanities, a foreign language, art, music, PE and citizenship.

The new curriculum will put more emphasis on using the curriculum as a whole to develop general skills, such as initiative, enterprise and the capacity to learn independently, better preparing pupils for GCSEs and the new diplomas.

FOR MORE INFO: www.qca.org.uk/secondarycurriculumreview

Vision for personalised learning



2020 Vision, the report of Christine Gilbert's Teaching and Learning in 2020 Review Group, has been published. It presents a vision for personalised teaching and learning by 2020 and makes recommendations to Ministers on what needs to happen in order to deliver that vision.

The report considers ways to improve and sustain the rate of

pupil progress, strategies to enhance teachers' skills and share best practice, and how to engage pupils and parents in the learning process. This document also looks at ways in which flexibilities in the curriculum might support personalised learning, and how to establish a better system of innovation in teaching and learning in schools.

Home-to-school travel

Under the Education and Inspections Act 2006, local authority duties and powers have been extended. Evidence shows that a lack of transport, its cost and distance needed to travel can act as barrier to choice.

Local authorities now have a duty to assess the travel and transport needs of pupils and to promote sustainable travel to school. There is also extended entitlement to free home-to-school transport for low-income families. For secondary-aged pupils, this means to any one of the three nearest suitable schools, where the distance travelled is more than two but less than six miles, and to



the nearest school preferred on grounds of religion or belief where it is more than two and up to 15 miles from home. For primary-aged pupils, free travel entitlement will be for their nearest suitable school where this is more than two miles from home.

The primary entitlement commences in September 2007 and the secondary the following year.

Additionally, some local authorities will run pathfinder schemes to test innovative approaches to home-to-school transport, supporting school choice and increasing the proportion of pupils travelling by sustainable means.

Language review

Education Secretary Alan Johnson has announced that learning a foreign language will become a compulsory part of the primary curriculum when it is next reviewed. This would make languages compulsory for seven- to 14-year-olds.

This is a response to Lord Dearing's Languages Review, which considered ways to increase the number of pupils studying

languages post-14. Other recommendations include making the secondary curriculum more engaging for pupils, promoting flexible alternatives to the GCSE, establishing an Open School for Languages, new CPD opportunities for teachers and an annual budget of £50 million a year.

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

Primary rollout for SIPs

Having been put in place across the secondary sector, School Improvement Partners (SIPs) are now being introduced to primary schools on a rolling programme between January 2007 and April 2008. SIPs are a key element of the New Relationship with Schools. This aims to help governors, headteachers and schools to focus more on school improvement and concentrate on improving the quality of teaching and learning.

The SIP provides professional support to the school, helping its leadership to evaluate its performance, identify priorities for improvement and plan effective change. He or she provides the main channel of communication on school improvement between the local authority and the school.

FOR MORE INFO: www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/newrelationship

Setting the standards for early years development

The new Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework sets the standards for development, care and learning of children from birth to age five. It builds on, and will replace, the non-statutory Birth to Three Matters guidance, the Foundation Stage curriculum for three- and four-year-olds, and the national standards for under-eights' day-care and childminding.

All registered early years providers and schools will be required to implement the EYFS from September 2008. "The Early Years Foundation Stage will help practitioners plan stimulating, age-appropriate activities based on what they know about the child's interests, in discussion with parents

and other relevant professionals," says Beverley Hughes, Minister of State for Children.

The EYFS is also published as an online tool, showing how people can use the framework in a way that is tailored to the needs of individual children in their care, and carry out the planning that will ensure every child benefits from it.

FOR MORE INFO: www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/eyfs



LEARNING CURVE



Words: Margaret Kubicek Picture: Dave Young

Chair of governors at Sharnbrook Upper School, Hugh Carr-Archer, and his wife Liz, chair of John Gibbard

A matter of trust

Sharnbrook Upper School in Bedfordshire has a strong tradition of working with its feeder schools to boost teaching and learning, and smooth pupil transition through the three-tier system. Sharnbrook also maintains close links with industry, for example nearby Unilever Research, which offers work experience for students, and inputs into scientific initiatives in the school.

Now, Sharnbrook wants to formalise and extend this partnership by creating a Trust with the schools in its 'pyramid', as well as additional external players, such as the Oracle Education Foundation and Cranfield University. All three of

partners such as Unilever and Cranfield will be a true asset.

The process of seeking Trust status began last summer, when the DfES invited bids to become pathfinder schools. Sharnbrook's governing body set up a working party with the head to begin discussions with potential partners and draw up a model, with pathfinder status awarded to the six schools in September. In March, the governing body conducted a formal consultation with parents and stakeholders. With the help of pathfinder funding (£15,000 each for start-up costs), the schools employed


**"TRUST STATUS IS ABOUT RAISING STANDARDS"
HUGH CARR-ARCHER**

a project manager to guide the process. A final vote by the governing body this term should see the Trust up and running for September 2007.

Sharnbrook's feeder middle schools have signed up along with two lower schools, and it's hoped the remaining 13 lower schools in the pyramid will eventually join. Sharnbrook's chair of governors, Hugh Carr-Archer, believes the Trust will further a sense of collective leadership among partner schools for the teaching and learning of all pupils. "We believe we have a clear idea about four-to-19 education; that's what Trust status is about for us," explains Hugh. "It's about raising standards."

One way Trust status will bring "increased accountability", believes Hugh, is through shared data management as well as continuity in curriculum, building on current practice such as sharing Sharnbrook's foreign-language teachers with feeder schools. A charitable Trust will also have much more clout in accessing funds and grants than one school on its own – an area in which external

While the Trust will help shape the long-term strategic future of the school, the governing body will remain responsible for the running of the school. Under current proposals, the Trust's board will be made up of one representative from each partner. In the case of schools, that representative would be a governor.

Sharnbrook John Gibbard Lower School is going to be part of the Trust. Chair of governors Liz Carr-Archer is passionate about the benefits formal collaboration can bring. "The modern age of governance is no longer just looking at standards in your own school, but how those standards can be enhanced by partnership," she says. 

FOR MORE INFO:

■ In May, legislation that enables schools to become Trust schools comes into force
■ www.ssatrust.org.uk/trustschools

RESOURCES

G&T in a Nutshell

The National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth (NAGTY) has launched G&T in a Nutshell – a series of free, online professional-development modules for education professionals, including governors. Taking only 20 minutes to complete, these bite-size Nutshells provide a basic introduction to key topics within gifted and talented education, answer frequently asked questions and give direction for further study. Nutshells offer guidance on whole-school approaches, policy and classroom practice.
FOR MORE INFO: www.nagty.ac.uk/nutshells

Governor guidance on sustainability

For many schools, the idea of a sustainable school offers an umbrella under which a range of critical initiatives and policies can be pursued in an integrated way. The DfES has introduced guidance for governors that will help them improve the sustainable operation of their school and ensure that young people are prepared with the knowledge, skills and experience to live a sustainable lifestyle. It identifies the questions that should be considered when developing and reviewing school improvement plans, and provide examples of good practice. A booklet and training sessions are available.
FOR MORE INFO: www.teachernet.gov.uk/sustainableschools

Academies prospectus published

The academies prospectus can be used to attract new sponsors and promote the academies programme to local authorities, schools, governors, teachers and other parties. It provides information on how the academies policy has transformed the lives of pupils in deprived areas.
 The prospectus is available to download on the academies area of the Standards site.
FOR MORE INFO: www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/academies/publications/?version=1

School Food Trust newsletter

The Cook for Success update is available three times a year, offering tips, advice and recipe ideas. It also helps cooks find out about the newest regulations and guidance from the School Food Trust.
FOR MORE INFO: www.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk

WEBSITES

- www.governornet.co.uk
Useful information for all school governors
- www.nga.org.uk
National Governors' Association (NGA)
Tel: 0121 643 5787
- www.governors.fsnet.co.uk
Information for School and College Governors (ISCG)
Tel: 020 7229 0200
- www.sgooss.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

Education budget to rise

Gordon Brown announced an increase in education spending as part of the 2007 Budget. Education spending in England will rise to £74 billion in the next three years.

The Chancellor said this will enable the Government to "provide one-to-one tuition for 600,000 children, do more to double apprenticeship numbers to 500,000, increase higher education student numbers to 1.2 million, [and for] every school to be an extended community school."

Average cash spending per pupil on school running costs and buildings is set to rise 20 per cent from 2006 to £6,600 in 2010.

Funds have also been set aside for the years to 2010 to expand the number of



hours of free nursery education, "meeting our promise to raise nursery hours for every three- and four-year-old from 12-and-a-half hours a week to 15," continued Gordon Brown.

He also announced the availability of funds to set up six children's centres in the typical constituency, bringing the total to 3,500.
FOR MORE INFO: www.hm-treasury.gov.uk

Images: Jess Hurd/reportdigital.co.uk; Chuck Frankin/Alamy, Paul Box/reportdigital.co.uk

Useful guidance on procurement

The Centre for Procurement Performance has produced a mini guide to procurement aimed at people who have not had any formal training in this area.

The guidance provides useful questions to address, and tips to follow, towards a successful procurement outcome. It also steers the purchaser

through the key processes to be applied in the form of flow charts against three separate categories – low-value spend (under £10k); medium-value spend (£10k- £50k); and high-value spend (£50k-£144k).

FOR MORE INFO: www.dfes.gov.uk/cpp/buyingguidance-mini.shtml

FOCUS ON...

School admissions

Why has it been introduced?
 To outlaw unfair admissions practices and put an end to covert selection, by making the admissions process easier for parents to understand.
 The old Code only required schools to "have regard" for its guidance, but there is a mandatory requirement for schools to follow the new Code.

When does it come into effect?
 The Code came into force in February and will affect admissions from the 2008 school year.

What do the changes mean for schools?
 The Code will apply to selective and comprehensive schools, academies, faith schools and state boarding schools. The key changes will be:
 ■ Schools can no longer ask about a parent's financial, marital or social

Every parent matters

Every Parent Matters is a document pulling together in one place, for the first time, all the activities and experiments the DfES has underway to promote parental engagement and involvement in improving outcomes for children. These include: a new family learning course to be piloted to parents and carers of pre-school children who have literacy and numeracy needs; numeracy and literacy packs for parents with children in Year 7; training to help LAs deliver information sessions for parents whose child is entering primary or secondary school; and encouraging the establishment of Parent Councils.

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



Campaign to be a page turner



A National Year of Reading will be launched in 2008 to promote reading for pleasure. It will be aimed at everyone, from toddlers to grandparents, avid readers to the less enthusiastic.

During the last Year of Reading, in 1998, teachers, school librarians and governors organised thousands of reading events in

schools, including author visits, book festivals and reading clubs. Schools also benefited from a significant increase in the number of businesses committing employees to reading volunteer schemes. National businesses already involved in literacy projects stepped up their activities, and other businesses got involved on a local basis.

status during the application process.

■ The Code prohibits the use of “unfair oversubscription criteria” to discriminate against parents from certain groups. This means schools cannot give priority to parents who have made the school their first choice, or select children with particular hobbies and interests.

■ Other school policies can no longer be used to discourage applications from less prosperous families. School uniform must be available to buy on the high street and internet. Transport to and from school should be open to low-income families.

What are the implications for the governing body?

Foundation/voluntary-aided (F/VA) school governors, as the admission authority for their school, must act in accordance with the new Code. Any admission arrangements for 2008 that are not

compliant with the Code but have already been determined, must be amended; transitional arrangements are in place for this to be done without reference to the Schools Adjudicator.

Fair-access events have been taking place across the country for local authorities (LAs) and governors of F/VA schools, to raise awareness of the new Code and the need to ensure that admission arrangements are clear, objective and fair.

While the LA is the admissions authority for community and voluntary-controlled schools, and will determine the admission policy for them, governors of such schools are still able to object to the Schools Adjudicator about the admissions figure the LA proposes to set.

FOR MORE INFO:

www.dfes.gov.uk/sacode

LEGISLATION

Performance management update

The model performance management policy has been prepared by the Rewards and Incentives Group (RIG) and is recommended for schools to use to support the implementation of the revised performance management arrangements set out in The Education (School Teacher Performance Management) (England) Regulations 2006.

These regulations come into force on 1 September 2007, with the first performance management planning statement under the revised arrangements requiring completion by 31 October 2007 for teachers, and 31 December 2007 for headteachers. The revised regulations will apply for pay progression purposes from 1 September 2008.

The regulations require that the governing body shall ensure that the performance of teachers and the headteacher is managed and reviewed in accordance with the regulations and the school's performance management policy.

FOR MORE INFO: www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/payandperformance/performanceupdate

Professional standards for teachers

The framework of professional standards is being revised. These standards, subject to the outcome of the pay standards consultation, will be used as a backdrop for the performance management process.

The revised framework of professional standards for teachers should not be confused with teachers' professional duties contained in the STPCD. The framework of standards defines the characteristics of teachers at each career stage. Specifically, it provides professional standards for: the award of QTS; teachers on the Mainscale; teachers on the Upper Pay Scale (Post Threshold Teachers); Excellent Teachers; and Advanced Skills Teachers.

The Training and Development Agency (TDA) will begin reviewing the standards for classroom assistants, TAs and HLTAs in 2007. A review of leadership standards will follow.

FOR MORE INFO: A draft version can be viewed at www.tda.gov.uk/teachers/professionalstandards.aspx

Getting to grips with gender equality

All schools are now required to demonstrate that they are promoting equality for women and men and eliminating sexual discrimination and harassment. Under the new Gender Equality Duty (in force from 6 April 2007), schools need to create a gender-equality scheme setting out the actions they will take to achieve these ends. Guidance from the Equal Opportunities Commission sets out how such a scheme could be included within a school's Development Plan.

FOR MORE INFO:

www.eoc.org.uk/Default.aspx?page=20094

Changes to free school meal entitlement

From 6 April 2007, the annual income threshold has increased to £14,495 for the parents of children entitled to receive free school meals. All other criteria remains the same.

FOR MORE INFO: www.teachernet.gov.uk/educationoverview/briefing/freemealsandtrips

Community Spirit



What community cohesion means for your school

Words: Katy Ward Illustration: Natsko Seki/Zeegenrush.com

No two schools will make an identical contribution towards community cohesion because of each school's unique location and student population

As a place to work, learn and interact, a school is in an ideal position to show pupils how different communities share common experiences and values. For this reason, the Government has produced new draft guidance for consultation on what schools can do to promote community cohesion.

Many schools already encourage strong community links. However, the new non-statutory community cohesion guidance, for consultation in May 2007, will provide information for schools to support them in implementing the new duty to promote community cohesion. From September 2007, Ofsted will also inspect schools on their contribution to community cohesion.

No two schools will make an identical contribution towards community cohesion because of their unique locations and the different ethnic and socio-economic make-up of their students.


The National Curriculum is an obvious tool to teach the value of diversity. Lessons taught across the curriculum provide an opportunity to discuss diversity and to challenge prejudice and stereotyping.

Governors are key to making sure students

from all backgrounds have equal opportunity for academic success. Schools are able to analyse assessment results to monitor groups that are consistently underachieving. Appropriate behaviour and discipline policies should also be in place to deal with bullying and harassment of minority groups.

The guidance offers examples of what schools already do to promote community cohesion. Governors need to consider what is important for their school and look at activities that enrich their pupils' understanding, such as visits and meetings with members of different communities.

The school's work towards community cohesion is not limited to activities that take place in school hours. Extending the school's services can support parents and the wider community in lifelong learning and enhance their access to services.

Governors should encourage the school to have maximum contact with parents and other organisations such as the youth support service, the police and healthcare professionals. The local and wider community has much to offer a school; for example, community representatives can act as mentors for disaffected young people. Similarly, the school has much to offer the community – students can participate in outreach schemes and community-based activities such as volunteering. 



CALLINGTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Callington Community College in Devon is the hub of the rural community it serves. "Because our students cannot enjoy many of the activities that students would in towns, the governing body looks for ways to provide these activities at the school," says chair of governors, Peter Lee.

The school encourages the wider community to visit the school by opening up its sports grounds. A local football club has transformed one of the school's pitches into a mini-stadium.

The governing body has also set up an incentive scheme with the police; where young people who behave well outside school are rewarded with the use of the school's sports facilities. "Using our sports facilities can help stop disaffected young people in the community from doing something they shouldn't," adds Peter.

And Callington College's community cohesion policy is also evident outside of the school's grounds. The art department, for example, has helped to regenerate the area around the schools by painting murals of local scenes on unsightly walls.

LITTLE ILFORD SCHOOL

"We are a cosmopolitan school with kids from around the world," says Simon Mares, chair of governors at Little Ilford School in Newham, east London. In a school where more than 90 per cent of its 1,350 students belong to an ethnic minority, the governing body has had to understand the value of community cohesion.

To help integrate minority parents into the school community, Little Ilford hosts a Somali parents' group, and Bangladeshi translators are present at parents' evenings to discuss GCSE options. "If you haven't grown up with an education system, you don't know how it works," says Simon.

The school's attitude to diversity is reflected in the make-up of its own governing body. Although Simon does not ask members about their religious identity, he believes that between five and 10 (out of 20) are Muslim. Muslim governors have been instrumental in setting up Islamic support schools to teach the basics of the curriculum. "These are young articulate people who can go out and represent the school in the community," says Simon.

Governors at Little Ilford also encourage community cohesion by working as part of a mini-education zone, undertaking joint training on issues such as the transition from primary to secondary school.

FEEDBACK



Got something to say? Email governors@governorsnewsletter.co.uk or write to the editor at *Governors*, John Brown, 136-142 Bramley Road, London W10 6SR

BEST LETTER

Dear Editor,

I am bothered by the increasing concern among educators that disadvantaged, low-ability students may be excessively burdened, and so should learn only as much as their ability permits. This contradicts the necessity of setting higher expectations for disadvantaged, low-achieving students that any new reforms aim to achieve. Such attempts to protect their self-esteem and excuse disadvantaged children from the effort that learning requires is very discouraging.

Taking into account that attainment targets indicate the basic minimum, it must be consistently portrayed to children that any child can master the curriculum if he or she tries hard enough. Even if less talented children do not get, and could not expect, very good grades, they must not be excused from studying.

Yet, when achievement drops, parents and education authorities blame the schools, and in particular the teachers, rather than the study habits of children. All educators will agree that setting higher standards and expectations is one thing, persuading them to try harder is another.

Christopher Dimech, foundation governor

Dear Editor

I've just read the Best Letter in the Spring Term newsletter, from a maths teacher/governor claiming to be "horrified" at the literacy and maths revamp. Perhaps I'm a bit out of touch, but I assumed all children would know their multiplication tables before the age of nine. Since these are among the easiest part of maths to teach and learn, how can teachers and pupils be "put under stress"? Children usually have good memories when things are put in a rhythm, for them, and tables are particularly suited to that. Tables also have a pattern to them, with endless possibilities for variation and interest in learning so how could these be "meaningless" to a child if taught in a vibrant way?

If children do not understand basic multiplication in primary school, how can they handle finance, weights and

measurements, and all the other sums they'll come up against in working life? What is learned in childhood is remembered, but as we get older it's more difficult to recall facts and figures. Mental arithmetic is what most of us will use in daily life. We need to know early on the multiplication tables in order to do that.

Christine Colloby, deputy chair of governors

Dear Editor,

Further to the letter in the last edition of *Governors*, I agree that there is an alarming downturn in the numbers of children eating school meals. The flamboyant Jamie Oliver campaign, which has undoubtedly led to improvements in the quality of school meals, has sadly missed one point in my opinion. The foodstuffs are now named very descriptively, but unfortunately I don't believe that this is selling food to the children. I recently overheard one child looking at the menu and commenting, "Ugh I'm not eating an organic beefburger". They don't need to know the organic bit. Turkey twizzlers got awfully bad press, but why can't similar food be created with better meat and lower fat content? Children are fussy eaters who we have to sell the food to. Let's try to make it both healthy and attractive to them.

Keith Manning

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

WIN!

The best letter in the summer term's issue will win SEMERC's Think About! 1 CD-ROM and accompanying workbook. Think About! 1 is designed to stimulate discussion and develop language, communication and memory skills with students aged seven and above, including those with specific learning difficulties, such as dyslexia and autistic spectrum disorders. The animations also make it appealing for older and more reluctant learners.

FOR MORE INFO: www.semerc.com



Governors

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IN THE SPOTLIGHT

“YOU DO NEED TO HAVE THE BASIC COMMITMENT TO MAKE TIME FOR MEETINGS, BUT IF YOU’RE ORGANISED, YOU CAN FIT EVERYTHING IN”

Making it work

Adam Hall is a man who knows how to manage his time. In addition to being newly elected chair of governors at Cherry Orchard Primary School in Worcester, he works full-time as a chartered engineer and is a father of two

Why did you become a school governor?
I have a son and daughter at Cherry Orchard Primary School and I wanted to have a deeper involvement in their education. Being on the governing body gives me a much better insight into the workings of the school than I would have as a parent.

I’ve been a governor since 2004. During this time, I led a review of playground security, which probably lined me up to become chair earlier this year.

How are you finding the role as newly elected chair?

There is a shift of emphasis. As a parent governor, people ask your opinion but now I’m asking people their opinions. As chair, it’s about getting the best out of the governing body.

What do you think you bring to this role?
I work for a successful electrical engineering

firm (Malvern Instruments Ltd). The same pragmatism that ensures the company is in profit can be applied to a school. I approach the School Improvement Plan in the same way I would a business plan.

How do you balance this with a full-time job?
My employer has been very supportive and encouraged me to become chair. It gives the company a good standing and helps foster links with the community. I do try to minimise the impact on my work life by scheduling meetings near the end or the beginning of the day.

What would you say to anyone thinking about becoming a governor, but who thinks they wouldn’t have the time because of work and other commitments?
I am a senior coach at a local canoeing club and have obvious family commitments, so there are a number of demands on my time. My children know they see me at school and I joke about my good relationship with the head if they won’t clean their rooms.

You do need to have the basic commitment to make time for meetings, but if you’re organised, you can fit everything in ■

What areas would you like to see covered in future issues of *Governors*?
Email ideas to: research@governorsnewsletter.co.uk

governornet 

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www.governornet.co.uk

What’s new on GovernorNet

What do you think of education provision today? Governors are invited to participate in a telephone survey commissioned by the DfES.
www.governornet.co.uk/governorsurvey

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

Governors are entitled to time off from work to perform public duties – find out more on GovernorNet.
www.governornet.co.uk/publicdutiesentitlement

Creating or reviewing your **school policies**? Save time by referring to GovernorNet’s model policies.
www.governornet.co.uk/modelpolicies

See the **recent additions** section to keep up with all the latest articles and documents added to the site.
www.governornet.co.uk/recentadditions

Need help and advice?

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Interview: Katy Ward Picture: Rogan McDonald

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Governors on tape – visually impaired governors can listen to *Governors* on audio tape. For a free tape, contact Susie Fisher at a2i on 0117 973 6013; or email susie.fisher@a2i.co.uk