

Governors

More cash per pupil – guaranteed

Schools will be given greater financial stability thanks to a new package of funding announced by education and skills secretary Charles Clarke.

For the years 2004-5 and 2005-6, the government will support schools in three ways:

- a guaranteed minimum increase in every school's per pupil budget. This will be four per cent next year for a school whose pupil numbers do not change
- additional resources for LEAs to target at schools with extra pressures
- a package of transitional support to help schools facing the greatest difficulty bring their budgets back to balance.

LEAs will receive at least a five per cent increase in per pupil funding next year, which means that most schools will get more than a four per cent increase.

The Department for Education and Skills estimates that the unavoidable cost pressures on the average school will be 3.4 per cent next year. LEAs will be expected to target extra money at schools with unavoidably higher costs.

In addition, schools with declining numbers will be guaranteed a funding increase of more than four per cent per pupil because these schools will still need to pay fixed costs, such as building maintenance, which do not change when pupil numbers decrease.

Mr Clarke has indicated he will use his statutory powers if necessary to require LEAs to set a minimum schools budget at a particular level. This year, some LEAs did not increase their spending in line with the

additional support they received. Regulations will also be introduced next year to ensure that spending by LEAs on central education items rises no faster than spending on schools unless there are exceptional local circumstances.

Although LEAs will be able to target funding at schools facing particular pressures, some governing bodies and heads may face unavoidable difficulties



balancing their budgets next year. A package of transitional grants will be provided to enable targeted LEAs to work with headteachers and governors to bring their budgets into balance within two years.

As well as the targeted grant, if any LEA can put forward a compelling argument that additional, transitional funds are needed in the short term, the DfES will consider bringing forward grant payments with the expectation of lower future grants. ► **P2**

ask the expert

P2 Ask the expert

Stephen Crowne, schools funding director, answers your questions



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More cash per pupil – guaranteed continued

Governors, headteachers and LEAs will be required to work together to use transitional support to implement a costed, credible plan to balance budgets which protects education standards. Furthermore, the DfES has commissioned consultants KPMG to work with the National College for School Leadership and headteacher associations to develop support and guidance for heads and governors on budget management.

www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/schoolfunding

No cuts for Standards Fund

The government has recognised that this year's reductions in the Standards Fund have created problems for some schools. Therefore, the education and skills secretary Charles Clarke has confirmed the undertaking he made in July that the planned cuts for the Standards Fund in 2004-5 and 2005-6 will no longer apply. In fact, the Standards Fund is to be increased by the minimum guarantee in both years, so that schools can have greater certainty and will be able to plan effectively. Several streams of Standards Fund grants have been brought together into one School Development Grant so that schools have more flexibility about how to use it. In addition, the Schools Standards Grant is to be increased so that schools will see at least an increase equal to the minimum guarantee in 2004-5 and 2005-6. The government will also continue to support LEAs that received a budget support grant this year. Taken together, these measures will cost an additional £435 million in 2004-5 and £520 million in 2005-6.

The Chancellor announced on 10 December a further £317million for local authorities with education and social services functions for 2004-5. This is on top of the increases already announced in the provisional settlement. For almost all authorities the additional grant will reduce the pressure on services and council tax and will make it easier for authorities to meet education passporting targets.

At a glance...

The funding measures announced to help restore stability to school budgets include:

- each school will get a guaranteed minimum increase in its budget in each of the next two years. This will be at least four per cent next year for a school whose pupil numbers do not change (many schools will get more than this)
- local education authorities will receive additional resources to target at schools with additional pressures. The minimum per pupil increase for LEAs next year will be five per cent
- a package of targeted transitional support will be available to help schools facing the greatest difficulty bring their budgets back into balance
- planned Standards Fund cuts over the next two years have been reversed and grants are being combined to give schools more flexibility in the way they manage their finances.

Funding – ask the expert



Margaret Riddell, a governor at a London primary school and chair of governors at a London secondary school, asks Stephen Crowne, schools funding director, what the new funding package will mean for governors and schools.

We have had to learn to set school budgets on estimated expenditure and income. How can you make this task easier for heads and governors?

The secretary of state recently announced that we are currently looking at providing training to support school leaders in budget management with work to be undertaken by the NCSL and KPMG. The programme is being developed but will involve a mix of online and face-to-face help to support and advise schools in budget and financial planning and management.

In addition, we will shortly be piloting some further materials focusing on heads and governor roles and responsibilities in relation to the current teachers' pay system and the discretions within it. These materials aim to show how evidence from a sound performance management process can inform budget decisions.

How can schools with a high proportion of teachers on the upper pay scale be expected to keep to the benchmark of 60 per cent of expenditure?

Our main concern is to help schools manage their human resources better and improve upon current knowledge about the teachers' pay system and how it can be used strategically to pursue school improvement. We want to make sure, through our new training materials, that governors are in a position to make fair and affordable judgements relating to the staff salaries, targeting school money appropriately.

What about those schools that face real difficulties as a result of last year's funding crisis. What can you do to help?

The secretary of state is making available £120m next year and around half that amount the year after to provide one-off, transitional support to around a third of LEAs that will have received the lowest increases in support for education between 2002-03 and 2003-04. This money will be available to enable the relevant LEAs to offer targeted support to schools that are facing particular difficulties. The secretary of state expects schools and LEAs to work together and, as a condition, to use this targeted grant to implement a costed, credible plan to balance budgets which protects education standards.

How will you ensure that this increase in funding reaches schools?

The secretary of state has ensured that every LEA has the resources and flexibility to deliver the minimum schools guarantee.

Every LEA will receive at least a 5% increase in support for education per pupil. This should enable most LEAs to deliver increases to schools above the level of the guarantee. The secretary of state has also made it clear that he expects every LEA to pass this increase on in full to schools, barring wholly exceptional circumstances. He has statutory powers to require LEAs to set a minimum schools budget and has made clear that he will be prepared to use those powers if it is necessary to do so.

Do you have any views regarding funding? If so, email governor.feedback@dfes.gsi.gov.uk

Governors help take forward workforce reform agenda

The Department for Education and Skills is involving governors' organisations even more closely in the workforce reform agenda.

A governor workshop was held on 13 October with the Workforce Agreement Monitoring Group (WAMG), NRT, NGC, NAGM and NCOGS. The outcome was an agreed aim to establish a common set of messages around the main issues – and to ensure that remodelling is on the agenda of governing bodies in all schools.

An action plan has now been agreed between the governor organisations and WAMG. This is expected, over the coming year, to include: development of case studies to highlight success at school level (eg active involvement of governors in the change process); update notes from WAMG offering practical advice to governors; a follow-up pack with a strategic forward look at implementation of the next phases of contractual change resulting from the National Agreement; and regular meetings with WAMG to review progress.

In addition, a governor information

pack was sent out to all chairs of governors at the beginning of the Autumn term.

This pack gives practical information on the National Agreement on workforce reform and its implementation at school level and was prepared jointly by the National Remodelling Team (NRT), NGC and NAGM. Additional copies are available at www.ngc.org.uk.

In the meantime, the indications are that the first wave of contractual change which took effect in September and which includes the delegation of routine clerical and administrative tasks from teachers (the 24 tasks), has not caused significant problems in schools. There is no question that the process works most effectively where all members of the school team, including governing bodies, are involved, engaged and committed. This is likely to be even more significant for the second and third waves of reform in September 2004 (limits on cover) and September 2005 (which includes guaranteed time for planning preparation and assessment). www.teachernet.gov.uk/remodelling

More flexibility for 14-19 study

Young people are to be offered more flexibility in the subjects they study following DfES plans to reform education and training for 14-19 year olds.

The plans include creating more flexibility in the curriculum at Key Stage 4 and giving young people the freedom to follow programmes that meet their individual needs and aspirations.

From September 2004, all 14-16 year olds will be entitled to study a modern foreign language, a humanities subject, an arts subject and design and technology. Work-related learning will become a statutory requirement for all schools.

English, mathematics, ICT and science will remain compulsory and citizenship, religious education, sex education, careers education and physical education will also continue to be taught to students.

This new flexibility will give schools the opportunity to increase the range of options they can offer young people, including eight GCSEs in vocational subjects introduced in September 2002.

For more information on these changes visit www.qca.org.uk/14-19. If you would like to discuss these changes online with David Miliband MP visit www.dfes.gov.uk/ask on 23 February.

STRB pay report welcomed by Charles Clarke

Education and skills secretary Charles Clarke has largely accepted the School Teachers' Review Body (STRB) report on teachers' pay that was published in November.

The first ever multi-year pay award will run from this April to August 2006. Teachers will receive an increase of 2.5% from April, with the same in April 2005, topped up to 3.25% in September 2005.

Outer London teachers and new teachers in inner and outer London will also get enhanced increases in September 2005. However, Mr Clarke proposed some modifications to the STRB recommendations. Teachers' pay rises in 2005 will be phased in to ensure that schools have sufficient capacity to balance their budgets. The STRB also recommended that a framework for progression to Upper Pay Scale 3 should be consulted on and completed by 5 January, and discussions have been taking place with stakeholders.

Mr Clarke said: "The proposals are fair to teachers and affordable for schools. Teachers will benefit from inflation-led pay rises in addition to their annual increments and allowances. At the same time schools will have headroom to address workforce reforms to raise standards and ease teacher workload."

The STRB will report further on teachers' pay matters by the end of January. www.teachernet.gov.uk/pay

Parents matter!

Parental involvement in children's education really does make a difference to their performance at school.

Research from the DfES – *The Impact of Parental Involvement in Children's Education* – reveals that parental interest and involvement contributes significantly to children's achievement and outweighs family background, social class and level of parental education.

Support materials to help schools improve their partnerships with parents can be obtained from Prolog on 0845 6022260 quoting HYCL and PICE-IPRA.

www.teachernet.gov.uk/workingwithparents

Meanwhile, a new website for parents and carers who want to help their child learn has been launched. It offers support, information and advice about children's learning and the English education system.

www.parentscentre.gov.uk



School budgets – getting the best from your finances

Headteacher Gaynor Stubbs frequently finds herself on the end of a barrage of questions at budget meetings – but she insists this is a good thing!

Exceptionally well-informed governors are central to the success of Wensley Fold primary school in Blackburn, adds Gaynor, who says that the school has a particularly good finance committee. "I'm exhausted after meetings as they give me an absolute grilling! Heads shouldn't be threatened by that. They should be confident of what they have in place."

The school has pulled itself around after a budget crisis and being put into special measures five years ago. Now it is a Beacon school. "It was a bombshell for the governors. Some of them were long-standing governors and thought they knew their school, but they didn't. I made a conscious decision to tell them everything – good, bad and indifferent. Now they are far more informed. They are now asking to get less information, but that's an informed choice," says Gaynor, who adds that it's vital to build up trust and a good relationship with the governors.

Frank Baxendale is chair of the finance committee at Wensley Fold and also at St Aiden's primary school in Blackburn. He

has been a governor for 40 years and his guiding principle is going back to zero and asking the headteacher to talk governors through each aspect of the budget. And he reiterates the importance of asking questions, both of headteachers and advisers. "If you don't understand, ask what it means! If you don't understand something, how can you use it or object to it?"

Stephen Adamson, vice-chair of NAGM (National Association of Governors and Managers), says there is no magic solution to dealing with budgets. There's no substitute for experience and asking lots of questions – and it often comes down to a balancing act in the end and making sure everyone is involved, he adds.

When it comes to understanding budgets, Sean Rogers, governor services manager for Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council, advocates using common sense, and says that governors don't have to be financial experts to understand budgets.

"In many ways it's just like your own house – there always seems to be more to be done than there's money available, so you have to prioritise. Look at the big picture rather than chasing pennies," says Sean.

"Profile your budget in an understandable way. Sort out the

five or six main headings – teaching costs, other staff costs, premises, classroom materials (or capitation), contracts and service level agreements and other/miscellaneous.

"Ask questions, but not in a critical sense. What difference will spending this additional money make? What else could it be spent on? It's important that headteachers identify possible spending options and explain why their preferred option is the best one for the school. The Development Plan should drive the budget and not vice-versa."

Jackie McGeady, bursar at Beardwood High School in Blackburn and an online tutor for the NCSL's bursar development programme, advises early planning and making sure governors are as well-informed as possible about the budget. "They need to know what's going on in the school – it's their school. I aim to avoid accountancy speak. Some governors are embarrassed about admitting they don't understand, so I tell them to phone me or drop in so we can discuss it together."

Christine Seddon, who's been chair of governors at Beardwood for five years and a governor for 19, praises Jackie for her ability to break the complex budget down into manageable chunks. One of the difficulties for governors, she says, is

understanding the extra grants that come through to schools. Christine advises:

- Getting the bursar or whoever is responsible to make budget paperwork an easy read. Visuals and graphs such as pie charts help
- Having committee meetings that follow through logically so that everyone knows what decisions have been made
- Having more than just one finance meeting a term
- Going on courses and never being afraid to ask questions
- Getting someone financially-minded on the committee
- The curriculum must drive the budget and not the other way round
- Keeping within the five per cent reserve. "The budget is for the children of today, not the children of tomorrow!" says Christine.

More information

For more information on school funding visit www.teachernet.gov.uk/schoolfunding

The Department's revised School Finance Pack, which provides the latest guidance about the framework used in Consistent Financial Reporting, can be downloaded from www.dfes.gov.uk/vfm or order a copy of the pack from Prolog 0845 60 222 60.

The joys of governorhood



DAVID AARONOVITCH is a columnist on the *Observer* and *Guardian* newspapers, and is a parent governor at a primary school in North London. He was educated in the same area himself, a long, long time ago.

I probably would never have been a parent governor if my partner wasn't so nosy. I'd have called the occasional parents association raffle or acted as auctioneer at the school auction, but avoided the responsibilities, the joys, the many evening meetings of governorhood.

My partner's point was that we had a lot invested in the school. One daughter was about to leave, one was coming in to replace her, and a third was in the middle of her primary school career. So it would be good to know what was going on. And then there was the matter – pious-sounding, I know – of 'putting something back'. We were grateful to the school, and felt we ought to do our bit.

The trouble was that, in an earlier life as a student politician, I had seriously gone off committees and agendas. All such institutions have their Wernham Hogg moments, composed as they are of normal people with sudden quirks and quirky people with occasional moments of normality. And then there would be the constant threat (or so I thought) of co-option creep, with any sign of willingness rewarded by chairmanship of ten committees, and an unpaid workload that would make Mother Teresa look like a layabout. So I was nervous about it.

It hasn't happened quite like that. True, we have had our difficulties. One LEA governor began my first ever meeting with a prolonged procedural wrangle which occupied a third of the time we had available. Since then I have occasionally felt that some colleagues act out scenarios that they have seen in films such as *All The Presidents Men* or in courtroom dramas.

One thing parent governors are not, I have realised, is shop stewards for playground grievances. That doesn't work. Teachers are usually pretty well tuned in to the scuttlebutt, and need your support and advice in dealing with problems, not your advocacy of a particular cause. In any case they have a tendency towards defensiveness which has to be negotiated rather than confronted.

And, of course, we are a bunch of rank amateurs, operating on the margins of our own time. By definition, a parent governor has other responsibilities, and one who works full-time cannot put in large numbers of hours. My very own sub-committee has suffered from minutes that are late, inexact or (once) completely absent because I lost my notes. We are forgiven.

Somehow, at our school, we have made it work. I have watched the chair of governors grow in confidence and create a relationship with the head that makes it possible for us to act as genuine 'critical friends' (usually people who employ that phrase only really enjoy the 'critical' part). The chair of the finance committee actually knows what he is doing and helps the rest of us to understand the school's budget. At the last meeting when the head declared herself concerned about writing in the school, and asked for the governors' views, the discussion was one of the best in my time on the committee. Tears all but pricked my eyes. Real life is made up of small triumphs.

It's very important for schools to get the best out of their finite resources.

Benchmarking expenditure is a way schools can take control of their budgets by learning from others and implementing changes to spending patterns which will help them deliver their education priorities.

10 Tips for Successful Benchmarking

- Use benchmarking as part of a strategic financial plan linked to your school development plan.
- Make sure school managers and governors are committed to benchmarking.
- Select a small number of key areas of expenditure likely to bring early success or large improvements in standards or costs.
- Compare your spending in these areas with schools similar to your own – the benchmarking website offers a number of criteria.
- Take time to analyse results carefully – involve the whole team.
- Agree a plan for making changes with management and stakeholders and set targets.
- Monitor outcomes and ensure the whole team is aware of successes.
- **DON'T** benchmark just to seek reassurance. The aim is to improve.
- **DON'T** waste time on areas where there is little scope for improvement.
- **DON'T** lose sight of your objective. It is tempting to try to benchmark too much at once.

Want to know more about benchmarking? Visit the new benchmarking website at www.teachernet.gov.uk/schoolfinance

Bullying 'not to be tolerated'



Bullying must not be tolerated and every individual can 'make the difference' is the message behind a new government campaign to tackle bullying.

A hard-hitting television advertisement, an anti-bullying charter and a series of regional conferences will back the initiative.

"We need an approach to bullying in our schools that makes it clear that bullying will not be tolerated," said

Ivan Lewis, minister for young people. "No child should know the indignity and distress of suffering in silence."

A £75million package to improve behaviour and attendance is also available through the National Key Stage 3 strategy. The package, which will run over three years, includes support and training for senior leaders and teachers in secondary and middle schools. A consultant will also be available in every LEA to help schools promote and sustain positive behaviour and attendance.

Meanwhile, in primary schools, £5million of specialist curriculum materials, training and group intervention work and the promotion of good practice among clusters of schools will be trialled in 25 LEAs to promote positive behaviour from an early age.

www.teachernet.gov.uk/behaviour

GCSE/GNVQ results show improvement

Last year's GCSE/GNVQ results showed a one percentage point increase in the proportion of pupils achieving five or more GCSE/GNVQs at grades A*-C. Last year 52.6 per cent of pupils achieved five or more good GCSE/GNVQs.

Schools facing challenging circumstances have improved two and half times more than other schools – their results improved by two percentage points compared to a 0.8 percentage point improvement among the rest. In addition, Excellence in Cities schools improved by 1.7 percentage points. In specialist schools, 56.1 per cent of pupils gained 5 or more A*-C grades compared to 48.7 per cent in non-specialist.

www.teachernet.gov.uk/gcse2003

Global Gateway set to forge international connections

Launched next month, the Global Gateway website aims to help schools and colleges in different countries forge international connections.

The website, which has been set up by the Department for Education and Skills and developed by the British Council, will provide UK schools with comprehensive information on how to develop an international dimension in the work they do. It will also show how schools can forge educational partnerships and how they can make use of available financial support.

Schools will be sent information about the Global Gateway this month. For details of the existing programmes offered by the British Council, visit www.britishcouncil.org



Student contributions to help widen HE access

According to the government, widening university education to many more young people will cost money.

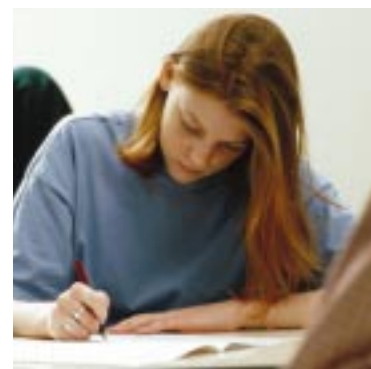
While the government already plans to give £10bn by 2005, universities will need more. A

contribution from students through tuition fees will help meet the additional costs.

However, under the government's plans no student, or their parents, will pay while studying. Students will only start paying when they graduate and only when they earn over £15,000. This rise from £10,000 will save each student £450 per year. If they earn the average graduate starting salary of £18,000, they will pay back, on average, £5 a week.

There will be a new grant of up to £1,000 and the poorest students will still get the first £1,250 of their fees paid. This means that no student, whatever their background, need be excluded from university.

Detailed information on fees and other aspects of student finance can be obtained by going to www.aimhigher.ac.uk



Education Photos

Testing key to improvement, says Charles Clarke



Education and skills secretary Charles Clarke has reiterated his commitment to national curriculum tests. He will also continue to work with teachers and schools to ensure that the national testing system works as well as possible.

This follows the news that members of the National Union of Teachers (NUT) will not be boycotting national curriculum tests this term. Mr Clarke said: "Our message has always been that we are open to dialogue with the profession about how to ensure the testing regime works as effectively as possible. That dialogue will continue."

In the primary strategy, *Excellence and Enjoyment*, which was launched last year, the government promised to trial new approaches to national curriculum testing and target setting at Key Stages 1 and 2. In a ballot of its members in December to boycott Key Stage 1 and 2 national curriculum tests, the NUT was unable to gather enough votes to trigger a boycott under its rules.

Mr Clarke said: "Naturally I am delighted at this result, which I hope will allow us all to concentrate on the important task of continuing to raise standards in our primary schools. National testing is a key part of the drive for improvement in all schools. Without it, parents and teachers would be deprived of the objective information they need to understand children's progress and to compare performance against national and local benchmarks. National tests are key to ensuring that children in poorer areas do not get left behind. They provide objective national standards and help raise expectations locally."

The NUT was the only union balloting its members in primary schools on a boycott of Key Stage 1 and 2 national curriculum tests. Ken Boston, chief executive of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority said: "I am pleased that the National Union of Teachers will not be boycotting tests for seven and 11 year-olds in England next year. Clearly some of their members have strong views about tests, but the only mandatory tests are at the ages of seven, 11 and 14. Three tests during 11 years of compulsory education is hardly excessive. Next year we will try new ways of testing seven year olds which are more flexible and have a greater reliance on teacher judgement."

www.governornet.co.uk/testingks1

DfES unveils online ordering and digital TV services

The DfES is coming to the rescue of paper-logged schools with the launch of its online ordering service.

If the pilot is successful, paper-based documents will no longer be sent to schools. Instead updates will be emailed direct via a regular e-newsletter. The newsletter will include a weblink to a new TeacherNet publications' website where teachers and governors can view, download and order documents in full.

Meanwhile, the launch of Teachers' TV, the first channel in the world to deal exclusively with programmes for heads, teachers and governors, has moved a step closer with the appointment of an independent supplier. Brook Lapping Productions, Carlton Communications and the Institute of Education will run a pilot for the service over the next three months. If successful, the digital TV channel could be launched by the end of 2004.

www.teachernet.gov.uk/ttv

Building schools for the future



This month the Department will be announcing the LEAs that have secured part of the £2.1 billion funding in 2005-6 for Building Schools for the Future.

The initiative aims to create inspirational and well designed schools for every secondary school pupil in the next 10-15 years. For details of the LEAs visit

www.teachernet.gov.uk/bsf

governornet

GovernorNet provides up-to-date information on all aspects of school governance and links to other useful sites at www.governornet.co.uk

What's new on GovernorNet

New information in **Recent Additions** includes: a draft version of the 2003 edition of **A Guide to the Law for School Governors**, including publication/distribution details; **Self evaluation service** courtesy of Ofsted; **Admissions and Exclusions Appeals Discussion Board**; **Change of Category of Maintained Schools**; **Sustainable Development and Travel to School**; **Committees of the Governing Body**; **Freedom of Information** – statutory duties for schools including model publication schemes; **Performance Management Toolkit** for school governors; **school funding**; **child protection**; **revised guidance on pre-appointment checks for school governors**; and **workforce remodelling** – a guide for governors.

GovernorNet also features an improved **Discussion Board** and a new interactive **Year Planner** to help you plan your governor business for the year ahead.

www.governornet.co.uk/yp

The **Recent Additions** section lists everything posted since August. The section also lists all the weblinks in this column.

Need help and advice?

GovernorLine is a free advice line that offers information and professional support to governors. Call 08000 722 181 or visit www.governorline.info



Websites

www.governornet.co.uk

Useful information for all school governors.

www.nagm.org.uk

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

www.ngc.org.uk

National Governors' Council (NGC)
Tel: 0121 616 5104 / Fax: 0121 616 5105
email: office@ngc.org.uk

www.governors.fsnet.co.uk

Information for School and College Governors (ISCG)
Tel: 020 7229 0200 / Fax: 020 7229 0651
email: iscg@governors.fsnet.co.uk

www.schoolgovernors-oss.co.uk

Advice and guidance on all aspects of governor recruitment.

www.teachernet.gov.uk

Linking you to education resources and information.

Events

DfES/Ofsted National Governors' Conference

5–6 March 2004

The Education Show

11–13 March 2004

www.education-show.com

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department for
education and skills

Postbag



Parental involvement versus security

As governors of a London primary school we find ourselves in a dilemma, trying to put in place a reasonable compromise between the opposing requirements of parental involvement and school security. How can we ensure that we welcome parents and involve them when security measures make them feel they have no right to be on the premises?

Paul Dixon
Chair of governors
East London

The Department replies:

Balancing security with access can be difficult. All parents will want you to keep their child safe from intruders. But parents will not mind following the school rules if they know what they are and see them as reasonable.

Governors can help by making sure parents know the times when they can be routinely inside the gate; that parents wishing to speak to a member of staff should first make an appointment; and

that all visitors in and out report to the school reception. For further advice and details of the School Security Working Group see www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/healthandsafety/

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

Governor SRE pack

The SRE pack provides support for school governors developing sex and relationships education policies and practice in schools.

For a copy of the pack, which includes a video, book and factsheet, call **020 7843 6029**.

School uniform

Research on what parents really think about school uniform and how this can help shape governors' school uniform policies is available on GovernorNet.

www.governornet.co.uk/uniformsurvey

SEN video

A video and booklet on

the role and responsibilities of SEN governors is now available. For a copy of the video call Prolog on **0845 602260 (Ref DfES/0035/2003)**.

Energy efficiency in schools

As part of the Department for Education and Skills' Sustainable Development Action Plan a website has been developed to give advice on energy efficiency, help with curriculum resources on energy efficiency, and assistance in managing a school to be more energy efficient. Visit

www.teachernet.gov.uk/sdenery

Also, a new Energy Certification Scheme has been launched (funded by the DfES and managed by the Energy Saving Trust) with the aim of promoting sustainable energy management and efficiency in schools. Benefits include reduced energy bills and rewards to schools which reach levels of certification.

www.est.co.uk/schools

Data rationalisation

The DfES has begun a data rationalisation project which aims to reduce the data collection burden on schools. For details visit www.teachernet.gov.uk/imis

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