

Governors

New plans aim to restore stability and confidence in school funding



Education secretary Charles Clarke has announced the first stage of government plans to restore stability and confidence to the school funding system.

In a statement to Parliament, he recognised that a significant number of schools had faced funding difficulties this year and put on record his appreciation of the hard work of all those involved in managing the situation.

He also set out a number of changes to the system, which include:

- a guaranteed per pupil increase in each school's funding in both 2004-05 and 2005-06
- earlier announcements of schools' budgets
- a two-year settlement on teachers' pay, subject to recommendations from the School Teachers' Review Body, and ring fenced grants

- the reversal of next year's scheduled cuts to the support provided to schools through the Standards Fund. This, along with inflation-proofing for the Standards Fund grant, will result in more than £400 million extra funding for schools in 2004-05 and in 2005-06.

The DfES will continue to work with partners (including representatives of the headteacher unions, governors and local government) on the issues arising from this year. There will be further consultations over the summer and autumn, with more detail and guidelines in the autumn. In the meantime, LEAs and schools will need to continue to work together to resolve any outstanding funding problems.

For a full copy of Charles Clarke's statement, visit www.governornet.co.uk and go to 'Recent Additions'.

Annual parents' meetings – more choice for schools!

New regulations which give governors more flexibility over whether they hold an Annual Parents' Meeting (APM) have been introduced.

Low turnouts at APMs have long been a problem for many schools and the new regulations aim to recognise this by giving governing bodies more freedom on how they keep parents informed.

The regulations have been warmly welcomed by an overwhelming majority of respondents (85%) to the recent APM consultation, which included governors, parents and teachers.

While the regulations seek to ensure as much freedom as possible for those schools which have found alternative ways of involving parents they will also provide a safeguard for those parents who would still like their school to hold an APM.

www.governornet.co.uk/apms



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Governors most effective recruiters, says report

The most effective method of recruiting governors is through existing governors, according to a report published by The Education Network on behalf of the Department for Education and Skills.

Word of mouth, headteachers and the Governors One-Stop Shop were also rated as effective methods of recruitment.

Do the right thing – how governors can contribute to community cohesion and accountability also revealed a marked under-representation of women in senior governance roles. While 54% of governors were female, only 38% of chair and 41% of vice-chair posts were held by women. The report also revealed a marked under-representation of minority ethnic governors.

www.ten.info

New website explains school organisation changes

A new School Organisation website has been launched which includes a range of guidance and information about making changes to the organisation of local schools.

Governors who are involved in proposed changes to local school provision will be particularly interested in the site, which explains how such changes are made – eg enlargements (including expansion of popular and successful schools) and the addition of sixth forms and nurseries.

Governors can also register with The Forum, which gives them access to a range of standard letters and forms and a tool which will enable them to build a statutory notice online. They can also raise questions through a Discussion Board or by 'Ask The Expert'. The site also features a news page highlighting the latest developments in school organisation.

www.dfes.gov.uk/schoolorg



Education Photos

Excellence, creativity and fun – the new primary strategy



Following the launch of the government's primary strategy in May, primary teachers and governors are being encouraged to be bolder in developing a broad, rich and exciting curriculum with a focus on excellence.

This will build on the success of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies by extending the support provided by the strategies to all foundation subjects.

Under the strategy,

schools will be encouraged to adapt the curriculum to develop their own distinctive character and to be creative and innovative in how they teach and how they manage a school.

A new approach to Key Stage 1 assessment in 2004 will also be trialled, with tests and tasks underpinning teacher assessment rather than test results being reported separately. Additionally, schools will be free to set

their own targets at Key Stage 2, with LEA targets being set afterwards. The Department has also given a commitment to consult on how it reports the results of children with SEN. It says it does not wish to 'write-off' any child, but it also wants to recognise the achievements of inclusive schools properly.

Finally, new programmes will be developed to support leadership and extra support will be made available in the areas of behaviour and working with parents.

For copies of *Excellence and enjoyment: A strategy for primary schools* call 0845 602 2260 or visit www.dfes.gov.uk/primarydocument

Young people's consultation gives pupils more say in governance

New guidance, currently up for consultation, could see young people actively involved in the work of the governing body.

The consultation paper, *Working together: giving children and young people a say*, aims to encourage governing bodies to look at ways in which pupils can participate in all aspects of their education.

The proposals include inviting students to governor meetings and committee meetings as observers (excluding confidential matters), which would give them an opportunity to see how a governing body works and what kind of issues are discussed. This follows new

provisions in the Education Act 2003 which require LEAs and governing bodies to have regard to guidance about consulting pupils when making decisions that affect them.

From 1 September 2003, governing bodies that have adopted a new constitution will be able to appoint pupils as associate members. Once appointed, pupils will be able to attend full governing body meetings and become members of some governing body committees.

This consultation is due to close on 22 November. Copies of the consultation can be found at www.dfes.gov.uk/consultations2/18/ or call 0845 602 2260.

Freedom of information – is your school ready?

Governors are set to receive help on how the Freedom of Information (Fol) Act is to be implemented in schools.

The DfES is working on a model scheme to minimise the workload for schools. The scheme is a catalogue of information that a school undertakes to make available. Information which schools have already made public (eg their prospectus and governors' annual report) will be included, as well as information such as the school's homework policy, the school inspection action plan (which follows an Ofsted inspection) and the home/school agreement outlining the role and responsibilities of the school, parents and pupils.

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 was introduced to promote greater openness and accountability across the public sector and will come into force in stages, with full implementation by 1 January 2005.

The model scheme will be available to schools once it has been approved by the Information Commissioner (ICO). Schools will be sent the model from the beginning of the autumn term 2003 and they must adopt a scheme by 29 February 2004. The model is being developed in a way that will allow a school to simply insert its own details.



To adopt the model and comply with the Fol requirements, governing bodies should take the following steps:

- Adopt the model scheme
- Enter school and contact details in the model, including any reference to the school's website
- Publish the scheme
- Make the information available on request.

Schools may also want to review their record management system to help respond to requests.

Where information is available on a website the Information Commissioner will still expect hard copies to be made available, as not everyone has access to the internet.

Once approved, schools will simply need to formally adopt the appropriate model scheme and, from 29 February next year, publish information in accordance with it.

Schools can either produce their own scheme, which must be submitted to the Information Commissioner by 31 December 2003 for approval, or adopt the model scheme. The model scheme has been designed by the DfES and approved by the ICO with input from interested parties. If adopted by a school, it does not need to be submitted to the ICO.

The draft model scheme has been welcomed by Claudia Wade, chair of the National Co-ordinators of Governor Services. She said: "The paperwork is very straightforward. It's been done in a way that sets out very clearly what the responsibilities are and how schools can make sure these are fulfilled."

www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk/noticetoschools.html

For record management guidance see www.nationalarchives.gov.uk

Should governors be paid professionals?

For: Juliet Brunner is a Parent Governor at two schools in Worcestershire

I believe that there is a case for governors to be paid for their valuable service to their communities.

At present there is a national shortage of governors. There are problems in many parts of the country where recruitment and retention of governors is a serious problem.

People may be more willing to stand for governorships if their work is acknowledged and validated by financial recompense. This could be a way of recruiting people who perhaps have not considered becoming a governor. I know of many single parents who would like to be governors but are unable to because of their inability to pay for childcare whilst meetings are taking place.

Our local Councillors are paid for their services to the community so why shouldn't governors? As far as I am

concerned, governors are just as committed to serving their local community, often without acknowledgement or validation of their effort.

It's now time for change. Let's find a way to recruit and retain before we suffer a serious shortage crisis, which may lead to governing bodies having to manage a whole pyramid of schools instead of one. Imagine the pressure of that scenario!

One criticism is that people may only put their names forward for financial gain. I do feel that a screening/interviewing process would help enable the governing body to filter this problem out. After all, we interview staff to work in our schools, so why not governors?

I believe that the government should undertake a survey allowing all governors the opportunity to comment and then perhaps pilot a scheme in an area where retention and recruitment of governors is a serious problem.

for & against

Against: Neil Davies is a chair of governors in Portsmouth and chair of the National Governors Council (NGC)

Whilst governors are able to claim expenses, many do not, as they believe that this would divert money from providing resources for children in schools.

The reason that most of us become governors in the first place is because we have an interest in education and wish to put something back into the education system and into our local communities. We are true volunteers. To pay governors would take away that status and weaken our position as an independent voice.

If payment came directly from either central or local government it could be seen as influencing the role of governing bodies. To remain as unpaid volunteers allows us to act as a true critical friend to not only the headteacher and the senior management team, but also to the LEA and even to the DfES. It also enables us to challenge and to offer support where it is warranted without having to "look over our shoulder" to check that we are not offending those who pay us. It would be more valuable to change the culture so that governors feel more able to claim expenses than to introduce payment for governors.



Planning ahead helps ease the load

How early planning can give you more time to do the things that can make a real difference to your school

Planning governing body business for the coming year can be a daunting task. However, if you're a school governor in Essex, that task has now been made easier with access to a year planner, developed by Essex LEA, which can be downloaded from the internet.

"We are trying to look ahead at what governors need and want," says Heather Leverett, the LEA's governor services manager. "We want to enable... it's not for us to dictate. The more understanding there is, the more people work co-operatively and professionally together."

The year planner is just one of the ways in which the local authority is attempting to help governors. There is also a website with a dedicated area just for governors and an information audit is being carried out with the help of workshops and focus

groups to look at further improving their services.

Gareth Williams, chair of governors at Beauchamps High School in Wickford, Essex, praises the amount of support governors get in the county and adds that planning ahead can be difficult "as you have an eclectic mix of people, and it's especially difficult for new governors."

Experts agree on the importance of good planning from an early stage. Felicity Taylor, a director of Information for School and College Governors and governor of a primary and secondary school in Camden, north London, mentions the importance of getting into decision-making mode from the first meeting of the autumn term.

She would like to see the final meeting of the summer term used to organise committees and working parties for the

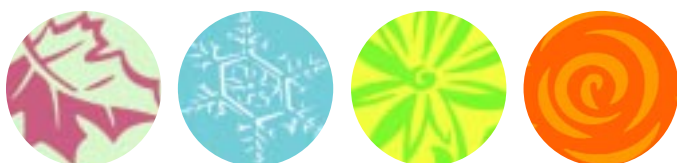
following year and to reflect on what's been done. And she urges governors to think long-term: "You've got to have a very clear idea of what's in the development plan. You need to be very well engaged and know how to bring it about. Everything we do ought to be geared to that. Sometimes governors neglect that and end up rubber-stamping. Governors need to be proactive rather than reactive."

Clare Collins, an NGC executive committee member and chair of governors at Warden Park School in Cuckfield, West Sussex, and at Ifield Middle School, Crawley, also recommends considering carefully when particular meetings should be held. "I'd like to see parent-governor elections at the beginning of the school year. That way you enfranchise new parents while people are still enthusiastic!" And she adds:

"We're also moving the review meeting from spring to autumn. You can reflect on what's been done more quickly and it makes analysing results more meaningful."

Governors agree on the need for good training. Arthur Mullin, who was a senior manager at the Ford car firm for 30 years and a governor at Howbridge Infant School in Witham, Essex, feels education has a lot to learn from business. He suggests playing to people's strengths and setting up a register of skills as part of the planning process. Otherwise, he says, "people's abilities aren't listed and used."

It's very easy to see the year go by and then wonder what you have achieved, says Stephen Adamson, who is acting chair of NAGM and chair of governors at Stretham Primary School in Cambridgeshire, as well as the publisher of a handbook for



governors that includes a year planner*. Governing bodies that do not plan their year carefully, he warns, are in danger of always struggling to meet imminent deadlines and consequently only react to events.

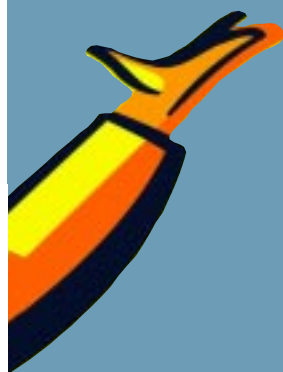
"Various jobs have to be done at certain times: the head's performance review, setting the budget, holding an Annual Parents Meeting, for example," he says. "To do all of this well, an effective governing body will have known from the beginning of the school year when they were to be tackled and will have given them plenty of thought."

Early planning, he says, brings advantages. "It doesn't just help you do those jobs that by law you have to do – it enables you to do those other things where you really can make a difference to your school. You are freed from the demands of the urgent to truly exercise your strategic role and to plan in the creative sense. Knowing that the machinery is under control, you can give some thought as to where you're steering the vehicle."

**The School Governors Yearbook 2004, Adamson Books (ISBN 0-948543-11-6)*
To help plan your year ahead, pull out and use the Year Planner insert in this edition of *Governors*. An online year planner will also be available on www.governor.net.co.uk by mid-October.

The experts' top tips for forward planning

- Set clear, measurable, realistic objectives and agree them
- Set up a formal review process of all the objectives at regular intervals throughout the year
- Delegate tasks to committees
- Conduct a governor skills audit
- Organise planning sessions for governors – doing this can save time in the long run



Thank you!

In May's edition of *Governors*, the Reverend RE Chatwin asked whether he was the longest serving governor. Many of you responded to his letter, with Ned Burke, a governor with over 62 years service, as a clear and impressive winner!

Dear Editor

My congratulations to Reverend RE Chatwin on his 35 years as a school governor.

I am still a governor of a school I was first appointed as manager to in 1941, when it was an all-ages elementary school...During my governorship I have assisted in the appointment of four headteachers and five deputy heads of the school.

Between 1954 and until we were restricted to serving on two governing bodies, I was chairman of a county primary school as well as chairman for three years, then deputy, of a county comprehensive school. Contiguously I was a governor of two voluntary-aided grammar schools. In the latter capacity, with my contemporaries two more headteachers and two deputy heads were appointed...

Finally, to broaden the quest for the record of school governor membership, my wife serves at present on a high school and a primary school body. She was appointed to the High School in 1965. Your readers may appreciate why 'education, education, education' is an interesting topic of conversation in our household.

Ned Burke
(All Saints Infant, Nursery and Junior School, Liverpool)



Congratulations also go to Mrs JM Jefferis MBE (30 years), Canon RA Mason (31 years), Mr Ray Nutman (35 years), Revd Douglas Cave (42 years), Mr Jim Ham MBE (43 years), Miss Florence Tristram (43 years), and Mr KA Griffin (44 years). We would also like to pay tribute to the late Mrs Dorothy Furniss, who served as a governor for 48 years.

'I read with interest the letter from the Reverend Chatwin about his 35 years as a governor in the May issue. I know that there are many others with equally impressive records of service. I am afraid the government does not keep a central register of governors, so I cannot congratulate them in person, but I am delighted to be able to thank them in particular, and all governors more generally, for their hard work and commitment.'

David Miliband
Minister of State for School Standards

Queen's Birthday Honours

Congratulations go to:

Arnold Wagner (OBE)
George Brown (MBE)
Elisabeth Earle (MBE)
Peter Fletcher (MBE)
Jean Gooding (MBE)
Eileen Hargreaves (MBE)
Beryl Mason (MBE) and
Rhoda Ottoway (MBE).

To nominate a head, teacher, member of the support staff or governor, download a form from www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/ceremonial and send to Amanda Thomas, Honours Team, DfES, Sanctuary Bldgs, Gt Smith St, London SW1P 3BT or call 020 7925 6239 for more information.



Tackling bureaucracy in schools

schools, has been tasked with reviewing the impact of existing and new policy initiatives from all organisations that deal with schools in England.

In particular, the IRU is asking schools to highlight particular workload burdens they would most like tackled and any constructive time-saving examples from their school that could be used more widely.

Comments can be sent to iru.panel@dfes.gsi.gov.uk or call 020 7273 6273 or visit www.dfes.gov.uk/iru

The Implementation Review Unit (IRU), which was launched in April this year with a remit to reduce bureaucracy in schools, is asking governors to help in the fight against red tape.

The unit, which consists of a panel of 12 serving front-line practitioners from

New regs for support staff

New regulations now specify the teaching activities which staff without qualified teacher status (QTS) may undertake and the conditions under which they may work.

The new regulations state that any non-QTS adult must now work under the direction and supervision of a qualified teacher. In the past, teaching assistants and other support staff could theoretically work without any supervision because they were not specifically mentioned in legislation.

More information on the new regulations and how they affect all staff without QTS can be found at



www.teachernet.gov.uk/remodelling or can be obtained from Prolog on 0845 602 2260, quoting DfES/0538/2003. Instructors, student teachers and teachers with an overseas teaching qualification will remain exempt.

Software tracks performance

Teachers will soon be able to use new software to compare the performance of their class with similar classes across the country.

The Pupil Achievement Tracker (PAT), which schools will receive in October from the Department for Education and Skills, uses national test results to

graphically present a school's pupil achievement figures compared to national trends and schools of similar social make-up.

The assessment software will also assist schools with setting pupil targets and has been developed to take in data from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's

Diagnostic Software.

This facility provides further analysis of National Curriculum Tests and optional tests against national trends.

The QCA software was sent free of charge to schools in June this year.

For more information on the software visit www.qca.org.uk/ca/tests/diagnostic.asp

Changes to the teachers' contract

Significant changes to teachers' contractual terms and conditions came into effect on 1 September in support of the National Agreement on Raising Standards and Tackling Workload.

The changes require school leaders to take into account the need for teachers to have a reasonable work/life balance and ensure that all teachers have a reasonable allocation of time in support of their leadership and management responsibilities. They also stipulate that teachers can no longer be routinely required to carry out clerical and administrative tasks.

Guidance is contained in the new *School teachers' pay and conditions document*. For more information visit www.remodelling.org

Remodelling help

Led by Dame Pat Collarbone, the National Remodelling Team (NRT) has been established by the DfES within the National College for School Leadership (NCSL) to work with LEAs and other key partners, such as governors, to help schools engage with the remodelling agenda.

By September 2003, as well as having transferred the 24 tasks outlined in the National Agreement to support staff or ICT, schools will need to develop strategies to provide leadership and management time for school leaders and to improve teachers' work/life balance as outlined in the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (see above article).

LEAs have already appointed LEA remodelling advisers and are identifying an 'early adopter' school to be fast-tracked through the change management process. Three schools per LEA will then join the programme in November 2003, followed by a further three in January 2004.

● Last month, all chairs of governors received an information pack outlining what the National Agreement will mean for schools. The pack was sent out jointly by the NRT, NGC and NAGM. www.remodelling.org

Meanwhile...

Governors were given the opportunity to share their views on workforce reform at a national conference held in London in July. Delegates from NAGM and NGC were amongst key stakeholders attending the conference, which was addressed by both Charles Clarke and David Miliband.

Pay award set to bring stability

The government's main evidence on teachers' pay put to the School Teachers' Review Body (STRB) was, according to Charles Clarke, focused this year on ensuring financial stability for schools and rewarding excellence in the classroom.

The education and skills secretary has also set a new remit for the STRB so that it will report earlier on key pay matters. This will enable consultation to take place on the government's response to the STRB recommendations in early November instead of in February as usual. The intention is to give headteachers more time to plan their school budgets.

Mr Clarke also gave evidence in favour of a multi-year pay award because he believed this was essential for long-term stability in schools.

He also put his case for an award to be held at the rate of inflation to ensure pay increases are affordable for schools.

In addition, he proposed new criteria for performance-related pay for experienced teachers, while requiring heads and governors to take greater responsibility for managing this process.

Mr Clarke said: 'It is right that teachers' pay keeps its value. But pay must be affordable too. We must balance it against the rest of our investment, including in reforming the way teachers work.'

www.teachernet.gov.uk/pay



New tools to support performance management



Governors and headteachers will be given new support materials later this term as part of a performance management toolkit.

This is intended to help headteachers and governing bodies conduct performance management in their schools.

From early October, schools will be able to order these materials, which include a support guide for headteacher performance review, videos and a workbook.

The Department for Education and Skills will also provide headteachers and governors with case studies of good performance management practice on the website www.teachernet.gov.uk/performancemanagement

Five pension guarantees

Contrary to recent scare stories in the press about the rise in normal pension age following the consultation on the Pensions Green Paper, teachers will not be forced to work until 65 or 70, nor will those serving teachers who decide to leave at 60 lose a quarter of their pension.

The details of how the rise in normal pension age will be implemented, and what changes can be made to improve the Teachers' Pension Scheme, will be worked out through a review of the scheme. The Department has, nevertheless, issued five guarantees in advance of that review:

- Serving teachers who are 50 or over will not be affected by changes to the existing pension arrangements
 - pension benefits earned before the new arrangements start will not be affected
 - teachers will still be able to retire at or before 60
 - all changes to the Teachers Pension Scheme will be talked through fully with teachers, unions and employers
 - the review will offer an opportunity to examine what other benefits might be introduced into the pension scheme.
- For more details visit www.teacherspensions.co.uk

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 includes **Constitution and Procedures Regulations and Guidance, New Schools Regulations and Guidance, Staffing Regulations and Guidance, Federation and Collaboration Regulations and Guidance for Nursery Schools**. Consultations include the current **Interim Executive Boards**, plus recent press notices and publications. New articles on **Governor Allowances, School Complaints Procedure Toolkit, Specialist Schools, Teachers' Pay** and the implementation of the **Freedom of Information Act** are now available.

GovernorNet is working with the **Food Standards Agency** to raise awareness of healthy eating (salt intake, consultation on 'Getting to Grips with Grub') and with the **Home Office** and **Department of Health** on drugs awareness (Drugs: Guidance, Blueprint research project).

The **Recent Additions** section lists everything posted since 31 March. The section also lists all the weblinks for 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.

Events

**Special Needs London/The London Education Show
Olympia, London**

25–27 September 2003

www.educationshowlondon.co.uk

BETT, Olympia, London

7–10 January 2004

www.bettshow.co.uk

DfES/Ofsted National Governors' Conference

5–6 March 2004

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Title Initials

Surname

Address

Postcode

Age range of school

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Governors on tape — Visually impaired governors can
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tape, call 020 7925 5268.

Postbag



More funds for primary schools!

The talk of funding
seems to be focused on
the secondary sector,
'perhaps rightly so'.

But surely the basis
of a good education
must begin with the
'seedlings' of the primary
sector – and surely more
funding in this sector
would give these very
young children the
academic qualities they
need for a good
education?

**David G Bromage
Governor
St Jude's, Plymouth**

The Department replies:

**We would agree with
this and we will
continue to make
funding available for
both primary and
secondary schools.**

**Each local education
authority is responsible
for setting the budgets
for primary and
secondary schools and
works with the local
school forum to try to
get the balance right.**

**In recent years,
funding per pupil for
primary schools has
increased at a faster**

**rate than funding for
secondary schools.**

**It remains to be seen
what local authorities
will do in future as they
balance the competing
needs of the different
school sectors.**

**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](mailto:governor.feedback@dfes.gsi.gov.uk)**

**Letters may be edited
for clarity or brevity.**

Resources

Raising minority ethnic achievement

The government recently
consulted on a strategy
to raise minority ethnic
achievement. Five
hundred largely positive
responses were received
and are presently being
considered. An
announcement on the
way forward is due soon.
A summary report of the
responses is available on
[www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/
ethnicminorities](http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/ethnicminorities)

Governors' allowances

New regulations on
governors' allowances
came into force this
month. The government
wants to encourage
governors to claim

legitimate expenses and
not be out of pocket.
www.governornet.co.uk

School complaints

From this month, all
maintained schools and
nursery schools in
England are required to
have in place a procedure
to deal with complaints.
For assistance with
drawing up a complaints
procedure visit
www.governornet.co.uk

Leading Edge

The second round of
applications for the
Leading Edge Partnership
Programme will be
opening in October.

The programme will
allow partnerships of
secondary schools to

work together on
innovative projects to
narrow the achievement
gap by tackling the
toughest learning
challenges faced by
teachers and pupils. The
new guidance will be
published online at
www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/leadingedge

Anti-discrimination legislation

From December 2003,
new legislation
outlawing discrimination
on the grounds of
sexual orientation and
religion or belief will be
introduced. Draft
guidance for employers
and employees is now
available at www.acas.org.uk/art13.html

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