Recipe for lunch success
How governors hired their own 'Jamie Oliver'

Skill up your support staff
The benefits of school apprenticeships

The beaker's half-full
Boost science through STEM clubs

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Governors
Autumn Term 2009 • www.governornet.co.uk

New musical expression

Pop and classical stars join DCSF campaign to boost music participation

Composer Howard Goodall and cellist Julian Lloyd Webber are among the big names supporting this month's launch of the 'National Year of Music', which the DCSF promises will offer a wealth of "unprecedented opportunities" for school pupils and staff to take part in musical activities – from joining an orchestra to learning how to DJ. The flagship campaign is intended to provide a spotlight for the work that schools across the country are already doing, as well as inspiring new music education programmes.

Announcing the campaign, DCSF Secretary of State Ed Balls said: "Our ambition for the year is to open up unprecedented opportunities for the department, and young people themselves, to work with a diverse mix of professional musicians, DJs, orchestras and performance artists – and not just in terms of encouraging young people to perform. Activities such as learning what it takes to manage a music production or write lyrics could be ideal ways for young people to participate in music in new ways."

Government funding will be used to bring the expertise of local and national musical organisations into schools across the country. More details of the groundbreaking scheme – including the names of other top-flight musicians who will act as Year of Music 'ambassadors' alongside Goodall and Lloyd Webber – were due to be announced as *Governors* went to press.

To see how your school can get involved, look out for updates at: **www.dcsf.gov.uk/tunein**

New Ofsted focus on SEN provision

The DCSF has announced plans to strengthen inspection law so schools are assessed on how they support children with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities.

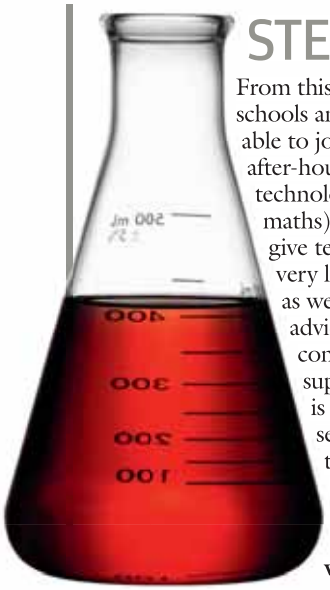
Secretary of State Ed Balls has accepted recommendations in reports published by expert Brian Lamb, in advance of his wider review of the SEN system in schools. There will be two statutory changes: one to provide a right of appeal for parents if an LA decides not to amend a statement after a review, and one to place a specific duty on Ofsted to report on the quality of the education provided for disabled children and children with SEN. To ensure schools are ready to meet this strengthened inspection framework, national guidelines have been published in the DCSF/National Strategies document *Progression guidance 2009-10*, to help schools set challenging targets for children with special educational needs. Download the publication at: **http://nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/node/190123**

Photography: Getty Images. Illustration: Robert Hanson

department for children, schools and families

Entitled to the best

Only high-quality early years settings will be allowed to provide the additional free childcare entitlement that is being offered to two-year-olds in the most disadvantaged families. The new children's minister, Dawn Primarolo, has confirmed that only settings deemed to be operating at a 'good' or 'outstanding level' by Ofsted or by local councils will be able to offer parents the additional free hours. An evaluation of a pilot scheme offering free childcare for two-year-olds found that less adequate settings had no impact on a child's development, while good quality settings left a significant impression on the child and their family, improving the parent-child relationship and having a substantial impact on the child's development.



STEM clubs

From this month, all secondary schools and colleges will be able to join a network of after-hours STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) clubs that aims to give teachers access to the very latest in best practice, as well as professional advice, resources, contacts and personal support. STEMNET is calling on every secondary school in the UK to join the STEM Clubs Network by 2012. For details, visit: **www.stemclubs.net**

Safeguarding consultation

Children's Minister Delyth Morgan has launched a consultation on guidance on serious case reviews (SCR) in order to improve their quality, consistency and impact. The guidance is aimed at Local Safeguarding Children Boards, who, by law, undertake an SCR whenever a child dies or is seriously injured and abuse or neglect is known or suspected to be a factor. The consultation is aimed at members of Local Safeguarding Children Boards and anyone who may play a part in a Serious Case Review. To read and respond to the safeguarding consulation – which closes on 23 October – visit: **www.dcsf.gov.uk/consultations** and search for 'Serious Case Reviews'.

CODE OF CONDUCT

The General Teaching Council for England has approved a new Code of Conduct and Practice for registered teachers, which will come into effect next month. For details visit: **www.gtce.org.uk**

STRETCHING A LEVELS

From this term, sixth formers start studying for A Levels that incorporate the 'stretch and challenge' elements required to get the new A* grade. The QCA has developed guidance for schools on how to implement these changes. Visit: **www.qcda.gov.uk/23025.aspx**

TEACHING AWARDS

Great governors from across the country will go head-to-head at the national final of the 2009 Teaching Awards. The DCSF Award for Governor of the Year celebrates and rewards the country's most outstanding governors. The ceremony will be shown live on BBC2 on 25 October. Visit: **www.teachingawards.com**

WHITE PAPER

The White Paper, *Your child, your schools, our future: building a 21st century schools system,* outlines the challenges that schools now face and describes reforms made to meet them. The Government can now set out new Pupil and Parent Guarantees. See the full report at: **http://publications.dcsf.gov.uk and search for 'Cm 7588'**

Photography: Getty Images; PJ/DCSF; Guy Farrow (Learning Curve) Words: Margaret Kubicek (Learning Curve)

Save your energy... for an award!

The Ashden Awards for sustainable energy are seeking entries from primary or secondary schools that have developed "an ethos and practice of sustainability", in which the responsible use of energy is a crucial element. Judges are looking for schools that can demonstrate they have made tangible energy savings and reduced greenhouse gas emissions. The deadline for entries is 24 November and application forms are now online at: www.ashdenawards.org/school_award

OPEN for business

The DCSF's online 'marketplace' for schools has been re-launched with the aim of increasing the number of users.

The Online Procurement for Educational Needs (OPEN) is designed to help schools and their suppliers save money by cutting down on administration and removing the cost of printing and posting invoices, orders and statements. Transactions take place in a safe and secure website.

OPEN is part of the DCSF Educational Procurement Centre – set-up to help educate schools on how to buy better by making good purchasing decisions.

www.dcsf.gov.uk/open

LEARNING CURVE Great governance in action

Recipe for lunch success

Creativity and success go hand in hand at Performing Arts specialist Egglescliffe School – even in the kitchen.

From the handmade sausages and beefburgers on offer, to the modern, cafe-style aluminium tables and chairs, it's not surprising that so many sixth-formers choose to stay on campus for lunch.

Judged outstanding by Ofsted and awarded a second specialism in science as a high-performing specialist school, the Stockton-on-Tees school, has no shortage of awards under its belt.

Now its success in the kitchen has been recognised by the School Food Trust's Million Meals campaign, which aims to get a million more children eating healthy school meals by the end of 2010. The School Food Trust awarded Egglescliffe 'School of the Month' earlier this year for the professional standards of its kitchen, high quality food it offers to its 1,400 students, and the way it's increased uptake of school meals.

When the contract with the school's previous meals provider ended five years ago, management and governors were well aware that a wholesale transformation of the lunchtime experience was in order.

Less than 30 per cent of students opted for school meals at that time, but interviews for a replacement supplier left governors uninspired. "So we thought, we'll interview for a chef," recalls chair of governors George Davies. "It was like a Jamie Oliver show. For the interview, our panel of five governors asked candidates to make a meal for 80 pence."

Tony Wood – the winning chef, who now presides over the kitchen at Egglescliffe – prepared a simple meal of pizza and salad. But the high-quality ingredients and homemade flavours won over the panel.

George advises governors take an adventurous approach if they want to make a real difference to the health of children in their school. "Get someone creative in who can work well with existing kitchen staff," he says. "Our kitchen had been using all frozen products, but Tony came in and said that everything's got to be fresh. The staff have taken to it like ducks to water."

So, too, by all accounts, have the students, with take-up of school meals more than doubled over the past five years. "We're at 70 per cent now," says George. "Ofsted were very impressed with that. Our target is 80 per cent. It's ambitious, but that's the kind of school we are."

www.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk/millionmeals

"Get someone creative, who can work well with existing kitchen staff"

Chair of Governors George Davies tucks in with Egglescliffe pupils

FOCUS ON...

Community cohesion

What is... community cohesion?

Working towards a society where there is a common vision and sense of belonging by all communities. Community cohesion is central to what the majority of good schools are already doing to ensure that they help all their pupils succeed and prepare them to be active citizens in an increasingly diverse UK society.

When was it introduced as a formal responsibility for schools?

The duty on all maintained schools to promote community cohesion came into effect in September 2007, as a recognition of the important role that schools can play in building strong and cohesive communities. It is also a key part of the DCSF's vision of learning, as set out in the Children's Plan, and contributes to reforms announced in the Schools' White Paper, *Your child, your schools, our future: building a 21st century schools system.*

How are schools assessed on their efforts to promote community cohesion?

From September 2008, Ofsted has been inspecting schools against the duty as part of their normal school inspection process. However, the school governing body is legally responsible for ensuring that the school meets its duty to promote community cohesion, with the headteacher responsible for operational management of the duty.

What is expected of governors?

Governors have a key role to play in supporting their school to review and improve its effectiveness in promoting community cohesion. In particular, they are tasked with ensuring children and young people from different backgrounds, have similar life opportunities, appreciate diversity, have meaningful interaction with each other, and have a sense of belonging within their community.

What support is available?

To support governing bodies in meeting their duty to promote community cohesion, the DCSF is working with the National Governors' Association to produce an online training resource, designed to help embed the duty into whole-school practice to influence positive outcomes for children. This resource will be available from the end of September 2009 on the NGA website: www.nga.org.uk/cohesion

More information »

www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/communitycohesion/communitycohesionresourcepack (click on 'governors' information')

RESOURCES

PROGRESSION GUIDANCE

To ensure schools are ready to meet the strengthened inspection framework, national guidelines are now available to set challenging targets for children with special educational needs. Progression Guidance 2009–10: Improving data to raise attainment and maximise the progress of learners with special educational needs, learning difficulties and disabilities can be found at **http://nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/node/190123**

PARENT COUNCIL WORKSHOP

Find out how your school can use parent councils and forums to encourage the involvement of mums, dads and carers. Parent Councils UK is holding a one-day workshop for teachers, governors, parents and LA advisers in Bristol on 2 October. Led by education expert Fiona Carnie, the event will cover topics such as legal requirements and evaluating progress. The cost is £95 per delegate. For further information or to book a place, email: **carnie@clara.co.uk**

SCHOOL REPORT CARD

Following a public consultation earlier this year, the DCSF and Ofsted have published more details of the proposed School Report Card, to be introduced from 2011 as part of Government plans for the school accountability system. The consultation document sets out early decisions and how the DCSF will take forward work on its detailed design. Visit: **http://publications.dcsf.gov.uk and search for 'DCSF-01045-2008'**

Twitter feed

Schools in Somerset have started posting regular updates about their lunch menus on the social networking website Twitter, so that parents can see what their children are eating. Somerset County Council, which is believed to be the first local authority to publish its school menus in this way, is running the trial scheme in partnership with the School Food Trust.

Every morning, parents who are subscribed to the Twitter 'feed' (**http://twitter.com/SCSSchoolmeals**) receive a 'tweet' (brief message), telling them what's on the menu that day. The feed will also be used to update parents on special theme days, taster sessions and how to apply for free school meals. Chris Wainwright of the School Food Trust says: "Parents have told us that they want more information about what their children are eating."

Photography: Edmund Sumner/Photolibrary

Primary growth

The Government has set up a special £200m fund to build permanent classrooms for reception pupils over the next two years in areas facing exceptional growth in demand. The money will be available to local authorities facing a 15 per cent growth in four and five-year-olds across their areas between September 2008 and September 2011.

All bidders will be expected to build extra places by September 2011 and money will be held back from future capital funding allocations where actual pupil numbers fall short of predictions.

INFORMATION

- **www.governornet.co.uk**
  Useful information for all school governors
- **www.nga.org.uk**
  National Governors' Association (NGA). Tel: 0121 643 5787
- **www.governors.uk.com**
  Information for School and College Governors (ISCG) Tel: 01483 300280
- **www.sgoss.org.uk**
  SGOSS recruits and brokers volunteers to become governors in schools. Tel: 020 7354 9805

Speaking up for speech & language

A national 'Communication Champion' is being recruited as part of a new campaign to help improve services for children and young people with speech, language and communication (SLCN) problems. The appointee will be tasked with raising the profile of these issues, improving local performance and leading the planned National Year of Speech, Language and Communication in 2011/12. Sixteen pilot areas have been chosen to identify good practice in providing support for SLCN. Visit: **www.dcsf.gov.uk/slcnaction**

LEGISLATION

SENCO regulations

New regulations relating to the role of SEN coordinators come into force this term. They require the school governing body to ensure the person designated as the SENCO, who is new to the role, undertakes nationally approved training. The regulations apply to any teacher who has been in post as a SENCO for a total period of less than 12 months before 1 September 2009, or who subsequently becomes a SENCO and who has not previously been the SENCO at that or any maintained school for a total period of more than 12 months. The regulations also allow a period of latitude of up to three years in which to undertake the training. Visit: **www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2008/uksi_20082945_en_1**

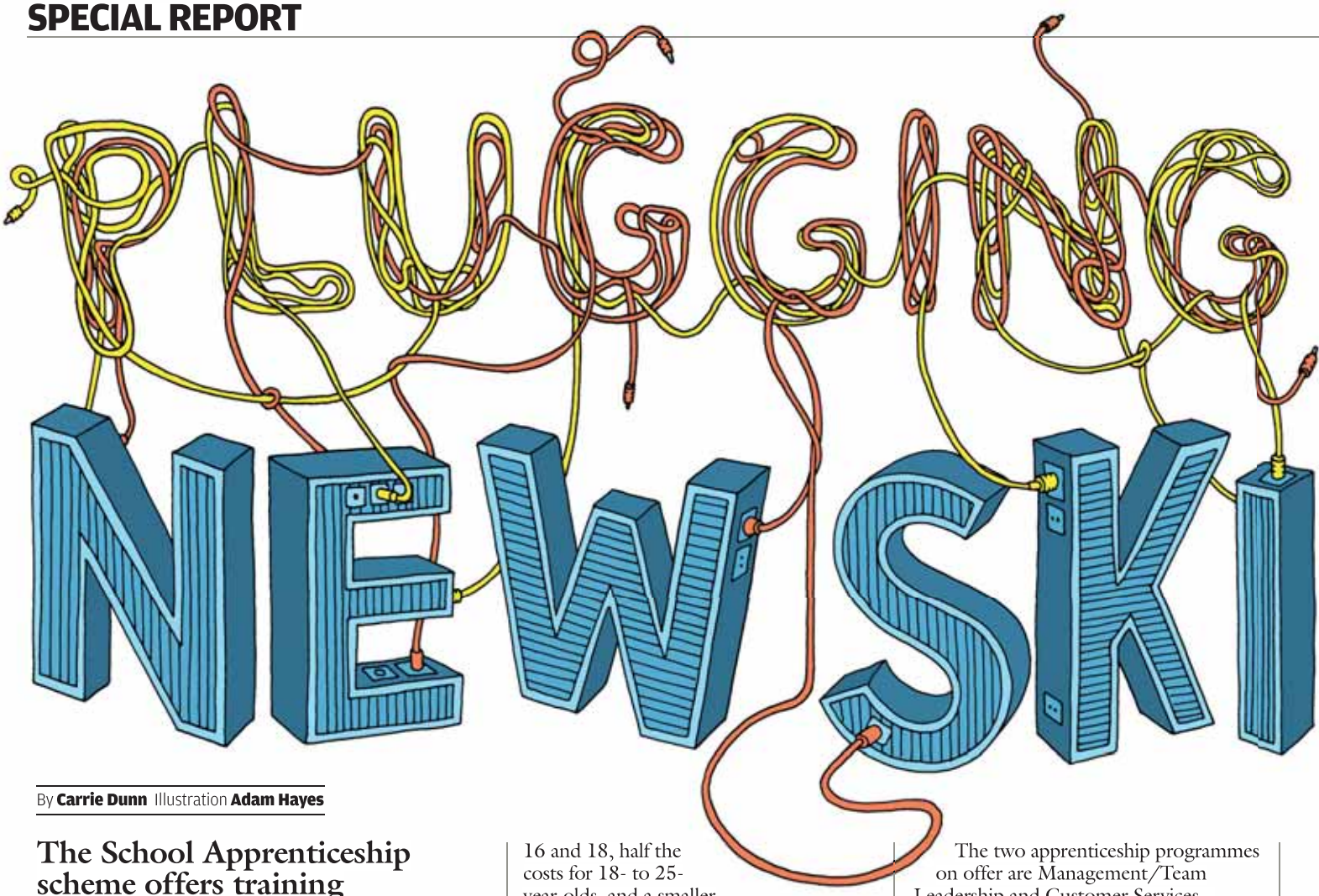
Increasing early entitlement

Draft DCSF guidance on changes to the free early education entitlement, due to come into force from September 2010, will be published later this month (September 2009) for a 12-week consultation.

Free provision for children aged three and four is being extended from 12.5 to 15 hours a week, with more flexibility for families. Publication of the draft guidance, aimed at supporting LAs in delivering the extended provision, follows an eight-week discussion with stakeholders and local authorities. The consultation on the new document begins at the end of September, providing a further opportunity to comment on how it supports delivery of the extended entitlement. It will be available online from late-September at: **www.dcsf.gov.uk/consultations**

Federation governance

Amendments to the Federation Regulations 2007 – in force since 1 September 2009 – require governing bodies to send the Secretary of State copies of federation proposals within one week of publication and to notify the Secretary of State of their subsequent decision on the proposals via the following email address: federations.mailbox@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk. Governing Bodies will also be required to notify the Secretary of State when a school leaves a federation or a federation dissolves. For more information about federations, visit: **www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/federations**



By **Carrie Dunn** Illustration **Adam Hayes**

The School Apprenticeship scheme offers training opportunities to new and experienced recruits, while helping schools fill skills gaps

Professional development tends to be tightly focused on teachers' needs, but in the West Midlands, schools are becoming more effective as support staff get the chance to enrol on work-based training courses, thanks to a new DCSF-backed scheme.

For the last year, Solihull College has been working in partnership with the local authority to offer Level 3 apprenticeships to staff in primary and secondary schools in the area, with pathways ranging from business administration to teaching and learning support. The off-the-job training takes place at a school, college or training provider, either in evening classes or day-release. This means that the apprentice is still mostly in school and their training has little adverse impact on the timetable.

Even better for cost-conscious governing bodies, there's funding available, with all costs being met for staff aged between 16 and 18, half the costs for 18- to 25-year-olds, and a smaller proportion for those over 25. There's also practical advice and support on offer from the National Apprenticeship Service.

It's a new way for schools to invest in their non-teaching staff and CTC Kingshurst Academy in Birmingham is among those reaping the benefits. Vice principal Tracy Kimberley's responsibilities for CPD led her directly to Solihull College and the apprenticeship scheme.

"I wanted to find out about funding for training," she explains, "and how we could provide additional training for support staff. Then I found out about what Solihull were doing."

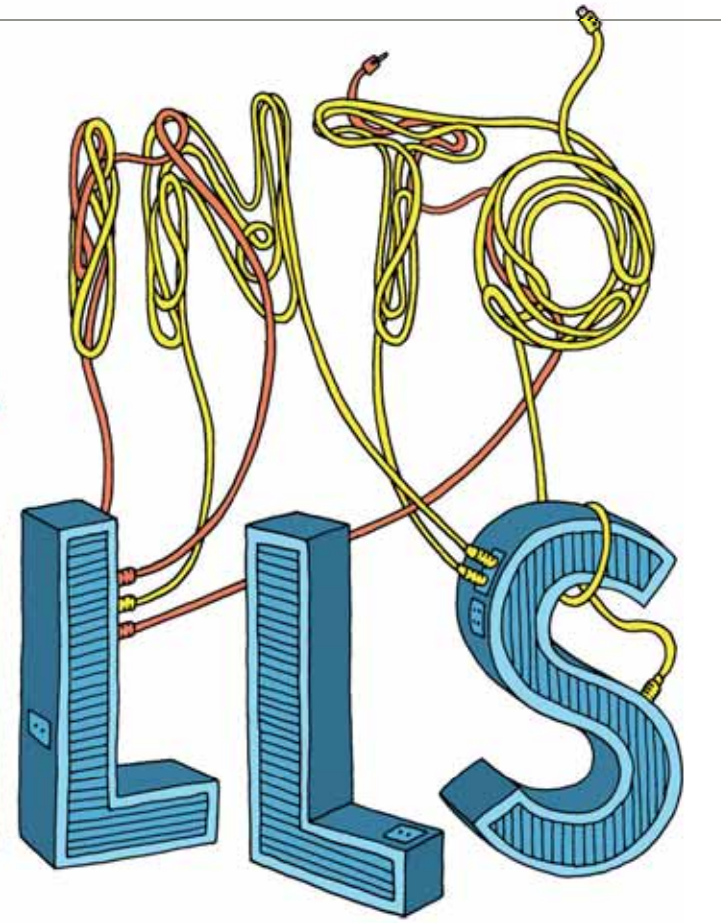
After gauging initial interest, Tracy's next step was to arrange an open afternoon for all support staff, from TAs to cleaners. "We got about 60 of them in, luring them along with promises of tea and cakes," she jokes. "We gave them information on what was available, which was absolutely the best thing we could have done. A lot of them were interested – even those who were less confident about putting themselves forward. As soon as they saw that other people wanted to get involved, they put their names down too."

The two apprenticeship programmes on offer are Management/Team Leadership and Customer Services – a popular choice with some of the IT technicians. There are also literacy and numeracy courses to improve support staff's key skills if needed.

"It was important to me to get the numbers so that we could run it from our college," says Tracy. "We got around 25 people interested in either the literacy or numeracy courses, or one of the apprenticeships. Some of the staff were a bit nervous about talking about their educational and training needs, so we got someone from Solihull to come in and talk to everyone individually in 10-minute slots, before signing them up. It kept it neat, convenient and confidential, and having

TRAINING AT WORK

- Apprenticeships are principally a route for young people (aged 16 to 25), although they are open on a limited basis for over-25s
- Courses are open to new recruits and existing employees
- The programme can help your school by addressing skills gaps for support staff
- Funding is available in 2009-10 for up to 4,500 new apprenticeship places in schools



"Admin, technical and catering staff are all mingled together and supporting each other – it's absolutely fantastic"

someone external do this helped us deal with potential issues sensitively."

Tracy is grateful to the college's principal and governing body for their support for CPD. "They have always supported whole-college CPD. This was a very special opportunity to reach staff outside the usual school hours."

Tracy believes the success of the apprenticeship scheme in the West Midlands could be replicated elsewhere, and she has absolutely no hesitation in recommending the apprenticeships programme to other schools and colleges. Not only does it improve skills, but it also improves team cohesion.

"I underestimated the importance of the collaboration that's ensued," she admits. "Admin, technical and catering staff are all mingled together and supporting one another. It's absolutely fantastic and I fully intend to run a similar scheme next year."

For more information, visit: www.apprenticeships.org.uk/employers/public-sector.aspx or call the NAS enquiry line on 08000 150 600

Inbox

Got something to say? Write to *Governors*, John Brown, 136-142 Bramley Road, London W10 6SR or email governors@governorsnewsletter.co.uk (Letters may be edited.)

WINNING LETTER

Dear Editor

On the one hand, the Government wishes to underline the importance of governors (as exemplified by your publication), while on the other, Ofsted is considering no-notice inspections, or very short notice inspections. Surely Ofsted needs to really engage with governors if they wish to inspect the school properly, not just look at the paper they have produced.

It is unrealistic to expect a chair or vice chair of governors to suddenly drop everything in order to talk to the Ofsted Inspectors who appear with little or no notice at the front door of the school. More thought needs to be given to the function of governors, their place in the good-running of a school and their involvement in the inspection process.

James M. Cassidy, governor, St Monica's & St Paul's Schools, Milton Keynes

Dear Editor

As a relatively new governor, I agree with the 25 reasons to become a school governor ('The big 25', Summer Term 2009 issue). However, I think that a related question we should ask is: What prompts people to become governors and why are there vacancies in many areas?

It's easy to assume that there just isn't an interest, but I know from my experience that as an under-30, non-parent, I assumed that it wasn't for me! All it took to change that view was a friend who was a governor at their local school suggesting that I had useful skills that I could offer to my community.

We all know someone who would make an excellent governor, but perhaps they don't realise it. Perhaps we should all consider mentioning them – they may not be interested, but at worst they'll be flattered and at best a school could gain a real boost!

Rachel Eden, governor, Wilson Primary School, Reading

Dear Editor

I could not disagree more with Paulette Furnival ('Inbox', Summer Term 2009 issue) when she says, "It does no-one any favours to have a headteacher who has been at the same school for years". I have a headteacher who has been in post for 20 years, and yet remains as dynamic, creative, innovative and inspirational as the day he was appointed; my only problem is that he will retire sometime shortly.

Mike Fitzjohn, chair of governors, Tithe Barn Primary School, Stockport

To read more letters, visit »
www.governornet.co.uk/governorsletters

WIN! Write in to win £50 in book tokens

The writer of the Best Letter in the Spring Term issue of *Governors* will win £50 worth of book tokens from Amazon. The Editor's decision is final.

TERMS & CONDITIONS

1. Prize subject to availability. **2.** Prize must be taken as offered, is not transferable and cannot be exchanged for a cash equivalent. **3.** Correspondence will not be entered into; judges' decision is final. **4.** No purchase necessary. **5.** Only one letter per school will be considered for a prize. **6.** Authors of letters will be deemed to have agreed to be bound by these rules.

Photography: Getty Images

Governors Communications Directorate, Marketing and Channels

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Creative spark

25-year-old Alex McCorkindale combines her job as programme coordinator for arts charity Bright Space with the role of SEN governor at Longwill School for the Deaf in Birmingham

By **Crispin Glover**

What made you decide to become a governor at such a young age?
While organising a theatre project at Longwill three years ago, I developed a real affinity with the place. The children were great, very mature dramatically, and the school was so welcoming that I was keen to stay involved.

What's so rewarding about working at a school for the deaf?
In a school like this, it's not just about helping the children to get better at maths, English and science, but influencing their life prospects. I work with children who have additional SEN on top of their deafness. Once a term, I shadow a pupil for a whole day, looking at good practice in accessibility and inclusion so I can report back to the curriculum committee and the board of governors. It can be a bit daunting, keeping up with all the new provision and policies, but I'm given enough information to enable me to perform my role as critical friend.

What do you find most rewarding about being a governor?
I wasn't particularly academic at school, so helping sustain a high level of creative provision, while giving children additional experiences and opportunities to develop themselves, is great.

Your day job involves delivering the Creative Partnerships programme in your region. How does that inform your role as a governor?
Longwill isn't one of my Creative Partnerships schools, but they are always keen to get involved in creative projects. So I work informally with staff members, keeping the school up to date about potential projects and funding schemes. At the moment, I'm talking to the art coordinator about doing a project with the Ikon Gallery in Birmingham – where I have contacts. At Bright Space, we are also trying to set up a course on cross-curricular creativity for governors in the area.
www.brightspace.org.uk
www.creative-partnerships.com

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

governornet

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

What's new on GovernorNet

School workforce in England

■ The latest national statistics on school workforce in England, produced by the DCSF, are now available.

Models of leadership events and seminars

■ NCSL is running a series of free Models of Leadership events across England this autumn. Early booking is recommended.

Independent schools: Reporting to parents

■ Updated guidelines for independent schools on reporting to parents means that they can now choose whether to send out paper copies as required, or save money by posting the information on their websites.

GovernorLine
08000 722181

Need help and advice?
GovernorLine is a free advice line that offers information and professional support to governors. Call **08000 722181** or visit **www.governorline.info**

■ *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 her at susie.fisher@a2i.co.uk**

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