GOVERNOR SUPPORT SERVICE

Hot Topics

Summer 2017

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Following general election on 8th June, Justine Greening has been reappointed as Secretary of State for Education. The Minister for School Standards, Nick Gibb, and the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the School System, Lord John Nash, both remain in post. Two new ministers have been appointed to the Department for Education, Anne Milton and Robert Goodwill, and their portfolios have not yet been confirmed.

**Primary assessment consultation**

The consultation sets out wide-ranging proposals for improving the primary assessment system. These include consideration of the best starting point from which to measure pupils' progress, how to ensure the assessment system is proportionate, and how to improve end of key stage assessments.

A parallel consultation, launched at the same time asks for views on the recommendations of the independent Rochford Review. The recommendations focus on the future of statutory assessment arrangements for pupils working below the standard of national curriculum tests at the end of key stages 1 and 2.


**Replacement for RAISE online**

The Department for Education (DfE) has released a video with information on the replacement for the RAISE online service. The new “Analyse School Performance” service will be a “sister service” to the DfE performance tables. Unlike the performance tables, it will require secure access and those governing should speak with their business manager about obtaining access from the secure access approver. Any access provided should be in anonymised form. The anonymised data will also be available to Ofsted, local authorities, multi-academy trusts and dioceses.

The service will allow governors and trustees to “view and analyse details on key headline measures” and compare performance at “school and pupil group level against national averages”. The system allows for both overview and in-depth reports (i.e. breakdown by pupil groups) on headline measures. The new system also allows users to use scatter graphs to identify trends over time. This useful feature will help those governing to see if “their school development plan and priorities” are being translated into better results in key areas.

The new service will be available through ‘Secure Access’, DfE’s single sign on for a growing range of services. Each school, Local Authority, Multi Academy Trust and Diocese has someone already designated as the Secure Access Approver.

If you are not sure who your Secure Access Approver is then ask the person who sends the data returns such as the School Census to DfE – this may be your Business Manager.

Link to DfE video: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hZxymO3Rsj8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hZxymO3Rsj8)
Governor Details on Edubase
As of the 1st September 2016 it has been as statutory obligation for all schools, maintained and academy, to register the details of all their governors on Edubase, the DfE’s register of educational establishments in England and Wales. However, compliance with this statutory requirement is still patchy across schools. Please note that it is the responsibility of the Governing Board to ensure that this statutory obligation is complied with, although the actual inputting of the data will be delegated to the school’s administrative team.

The information to be disclosed will need to include name, appointment date, the appointing body and for maintained schools, whether the governor is the chair of governors or a member of the governing body, and for academies, whether they are a trust member, a trustee, the chair of trustees or a governor on a local governing body. This information will be fully accessible by the public. Information that will also need to be supplied but not made available to the public will include each governor’s postcode, their date of birth, any previous names, their nationality and the chair’s email address.

Multi-Academy Trusts must also provide details of their local governing body members on Edubase.

The Removal of Governors from Maintained School Boards
Following a closed consultation amongst members of the DfE’s Advisory Group on Governance, the School Governance (Constitution and Federations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2017 have recently been published which enforce changes to the constitutional arrangements of maintained school Governing Boards, including federated Governing Boards. From the 1st September 2017, maintained school Governing Boards have been given the power to remove elected parent and staff governors in the same way in which co-opted governors can be removed (currently done by a majority decision of the Board).

These powers have been provided to remove such elected governors where there have been serious or repeated instances of governance misconduct. Furthermore, from the 1st May 2017, any person who has been an elected parent or staff governor and removed from the Board during their term of office, will be disqualified from serving or continuing to serve as a school governor for five years from the date of their removal.

Your code of conduct will need to be reviewed. More details once the framework is published by the DfE.

Proposed Revisions to Pupil Exclusions Guidance
The DfE’s public consultation on revisions proposed to the current statutory guidance (published in 2012) on pupil exclusions has just closed. As a reminder, the DfE has proposed changes in a small number of areas to make the current rules that apply to exclusions and the process of review clearer. The proposed revisions include two new non-statutory annexes: Annex B, an exclusion guide for Headteachers and Annex C, exclusion information for parents.

The revised statutory guidance is expected to become effective from 1st September 2017 and will be applicable for Boards of both maintained schools and academies, as well as for independent review panels.

Recent exclusions training facilitated by Governor Services highlighted that It is good practice for at least one member of an exclusions governor panel to have attended current (within the last two years) exclusions training.
DfE Clerking Competency Framework 2017

Governing boards should use this to evaluate what your current clerk job/person spec looks like. In the main body of the framework, the knowledge, skills and effective behaviours required from professional clerks are grouped under four competency headings:

**Competency 1: Understanding Governance**
A sound understanding of the Board’s roles and responsibilities, governance legislation and procedures as well as the wider context in which the Board is operating will enable the clerk to make an important contribution to the Board’s effectiveness. It should result in better quality advice on legal and procedural matters related to governance and more accurate recording of discussions and decisions.

**Competency 2: Administration**
Professional clerking ensures that the governance processes and procedures are administered efficiently. Taking care of the basics enables the chair and the Board to make more effective use of their time and focus on strategic matters. Professional clerking involves developing a forward plan with the chair so that board members are well prepared for meetings and school leaders can provide the right information for discussion.

**Competency 3: Advice and Guidance**
Access to timely and accurate advice and guidance, or signposting to expert advice where appropriate, contributes to better and more efficient decision-making and helps the Board to manage the risk of non-compliance with legal and regulatory frameworks. Appropriate advice and guidance reduces the risk that Boards will get drawn into or distracted by operational matters, helping it stay focused on its strategic functions. Professional clerking gains the confidence and respect of the board by being proactive in keeping knowledge current, is aware of relevant and reliable sources of information, and is clear about when to provide advice themselves and when to recommend external or specialist advice.

**DfE Competency 4: People and Relationships**
Professional clerking plays an important role in ensuring that the board has accurate records of its people and their skills and can contribute to the induction and training of new board members. Good relationships are also essential to establishing open communication and ensuring smooth information flow between the Board, school leaders and, where required, staff, parents and the local community.

**Ofsted News**

**Ofsted consultation on short inspections**
Ofsted has opened a consultation on proposed changes to the process for short inspections of ‘good’ schools. One day inspections were introduced in September 2015 in part to reduce the burden of inspection for schools that are performing well.

A short inspection can convert to a full two day inspection if there is not enough evidence that the school remains ‘good’ or if inspectors think it might be ‘outstanding’. The consultation proposes extending the period in which a converted inspection will be completed from 48 hours to 15 working days. This is for ease of scheduling and to reduce the burden on schools. The consultation also proposes that schools “in complex circumstances” will automatically receive a full inspection. These will be identified through Ofsted’s standard risk assessment process.
Ofsted complaints guidance
Ofsted has amended its guidance about raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted. The guidance applies to the handling of complaints about Ofsted’s work, including the inspection and regulation of maintained schools including academies.

There is also information how organisations may raise a concern about an Ofsted inspection or inspector. Find more at https://www.gov.uk/complain-ofsted-report

Download the document: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted

Reflections from recent Ofsted Inspections
A number of our schools have been inspected by Ofsted since January 2017. Feedback from the Local Authority highlights that a number of common themes have emerged from these inspections:

Lack of website compliance see national figures attached
- A number of school websites were not compliant with statutory regulations, missing required information on the Pupil Premium Grant and Sports Premium funding, along with the impact of spend. Child protection policies had also been found to be out of date on some websites.
- Governing Boards may wish to consider nominating a governor to retain a strategic overview of the website, ensuring governance compliance. Schools, maintained and academies, will find a list of the statutory policies that must be on their website on both the DfE website and the audit checklist issued by Governor Services at the start of the 2016/17 academic year.

Safeguarding
- Governing Boards need to ensure that they identify and understand their local safeguarding risks, such as radicalisation, gangs and FGM.
- Boards should seek assurances that the school’s teachers are aware of and understand these local risks and are able to discuss with their children how to keep safe.
- One specific Ofsted inspection placed a considerable focus on safeguarding and the Single Central Record, in particular the compliant recording of overseas’ teachers and agency workers.
- Governors need to ensure all safeguarding and safer recruitment practices and processes are in place and these are monitored regularly with any action points followed up on a timely basis.

Knowing your Data Dashboard
- For one day (section 8) inspections of schools currently judged as Good by Ofsted, it is the Data Dashboard that will be reviewed by the attending Inspector as a key line of enquiry.
- It is essential that the collective Board, and not just the nominated Data Governor, knows and understands the school’s key strengths and areas of development.
- A Section 8 inspection will place more focus on analysing and understanding current data.
- Ofsted will also expect the Governing Board to be monitoring and evaluating current rather than historical data.
- Also, understand your own current school data, and what’s changed since the data that Ofsted are relying upon.
Engaging with the governance of schools in Multi-Academy Trusts

The latest edition of the School Inspection Newsletter issued by Ofsted’s National Director of Education clarified arrangements for inspecting academies within a MAT framework:

- During a section 5 inspection is an important aspect of the judgement on the effectiveness of leadership and management.
- In maintained schools, the accountable body is the Governing Board, whereas in academies (Stand-Alone and Multi-Academy Trusts) it is the Board of Trustees. At the point of notification of the inspection for an academy within a MAT, Ofsted will check the name and contact details for the Trust’s Chief Executive Officer and the Trustee Board and notify them of the forthcoming inspection.
- It is important that the lead inspector offers to meet with the MAT CEO and the Chair of the Trustee Board during the inspection.
- The CEO and the Chair of the Trustee Board should also be invited to join the academy headteacher/head of school in observing the final team meeting and attend the final feedback meeting at the school.
- Ofsted will also ensure that when the school receives the final inspection report that a copy is sent to the CEO and the Chair of the Trustee Board.

Safeguarding News

An Update from Ofsted’s National Director of Education

Ofsted’s National Director of Education, Sean Harford, clarified some safeguarding issues arising from record records during recent Ofsted inspections:

*Trainee teachers* – in the case of trainee teachers and students on placement, if they are employed by the school/setting, they should be subject to the same checks under regulations as other members of staff. Where trainee teachers are fee-funded, the setting should obtain written confirmation from the training provider that these checks have been carried out and that the trainee has been judged by the provider to be suitable to work with children. There is no requirement for a school to record details of fee-funded trainees on the Single Central Record (SCR).

*MAT staff* – every academy within a MAT needs to maintain an SCR. Where the MAT employs staff who are not assigned to an individual academy, these employees must be recorded on the MAT’s SCR.

*MAT teaching staff* – where teaching staff work in more than one academy across a MAT, their details should be recorded on the SCR for one academy. This should be the academy where they spend the most teaching time or the one against which they are recorded for pay and other purposes. For other academies where the member of staff operates, there should be a reference on the SCR to the fact that their record is held at ‘XX academy’.

Good safeguarding practice for visitors

John Locke Academy in Uxbridge has kindly agreed to share their Safeguarding for Visitors document with governance colleagues. A hard copy is available for you to take home from this session. For an electronic PDF version, please contact GSS.

Weapons seized by police in schools

Freedom of Information requests by the Press Association have shown that 2,579 weapons were seized from schools in England and Wales, in the two years to March 2017.

In 2016/17 alone, a total of 1,369 weapons were seized by police, representing a rise of almost 20% compared to last year. The weapons seized include knives, guns, including imitation firearms
and air guns, rocks and tasers. Of the overall incidents reported, a sizeable one-fifth involved knives or swords.

Punishments for bringing weapons into school will, in many cases, include permanent exclusion. The general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders said that schools should “work closely with the police to protect and educate their pupils … Where appropriate, schools [can] conduct searches and use metal detectors, and they [are able to] implement robust disciplinary procedures against anyone found in possession of a weapon”.

Governing Boards will need to gain assurances from the Senior Leadership Team that robust, current and fit for purpose procedures are in place for dealing with such scenarios and are included in the school’s behaviour policy. Governing Boards will also need to understand how pupils, parents and staff are made aware of the school’s behaviour policy, including the consequences of carrying weapons into school.

School trips and supporting pupils following recent terror attacks
Following the recent tragic events in London and Manchester, Schools will understandably be concerned about taking pupils on school trips to places like central London and other large cities, events and attractions.

Governing boards have a responsibility for ensuring that neither pupils nor employees are put at unnecessary risk while at school or on school business – this includes school trips. This does not mean that trips should be cancelled - but schools should seek specific advice where this is a genuine concern, and ensure that their risk assessment procedure is being closely followed before going ahead with a planned trip.

New identity verification form for the Chair of Trustees
New Chairs of Trustees are now required to complete a new Identity Verification Form in addition to the already mandatory Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) application form. The following are permitted to confirm the Chair’s identity:

- Headteachers - but NOT the head of the school for which the check is being undertaken
- Judges and Magistrates
- Barristers and Solicitors
- Civil Servants – ‘Executive Officer’ grade or above
- Police Officers

Download the forms at:

Lead Child Protection Adviser and LADO Function
Article from Hillingdon LA Headteachers’ Briefing - June 2017
My name is Megan Brown, and I am the Lead Child Protection Schools Advisor for Hillingdon. I have now been in the role about 8 weeks and have managed to meet many of the designated safeguarding leads and head teachers either at cluster meetings or when I have been out to deliver the level 1 safeguarding training.

I wanted to take this opportunity to introduce myself and more importantly inform or remind you of the function of my role so that hopefully I can best support your school.

As the Lead CP Adviser for Schools and LADO function, my role is to:

- Support schools and other organisations and agencies working with children with any safeguarding or child protection advice regarding thresholds, specific or general questions and
concerns you might have. Provide any additional information, support or signposting in regards to safeguarding as needed.

- To unpick and iron out issues between schools and social care and follow up and support improved relations and practise for the best interest of our children. This includes when either social care or school might be having an issue with the other or might be failing to meet their obligations in regards to safeguarding.
- Delivery of level 1 safeguarding training to all school staff as required and requested by schools.
- Lead Safeguarding Cluster meetings (North, South and Central).
- Support schools and other organisations and agencies working with children around any safeguarding policies, processes and risk assessment process and documents as required.
- Support the LADO function by leading on a small percentage of concerns or allegations made against staff or volunteers working with children.

I look forward to meeting everyone in due course. **My direct line number is 01895 277463 and my work mobile is 07702 989901.** Please also pass this also on to all relevant staff.

Megan Brown, Lead Child Protection Schools Adviser, Email: mbrown3@hillingdon.gov.uk

**Other News**

**School Data: Support for governors provided by Fischer Family Trust**

School governors and trustees (or senior leaders thinking of sharing the Governor Dashboards with their governing board) are invited to view the FFT (Fischer Family Trust) Governor Dashboards and discover how FFT Aspire supports them in their role by joining a free webinar provided by FFT.

The **FFT Aspire Overview Webinar for School Governors** lasts just twenty five minutes and will take place on the following:

- Monday 26 June, 11.00am
- Monday 26 June, 4.00pm
- Tuesday 18 July, 11.00am
- Tuesday 18 July, 4.00pm

Governing boards can see how their school attainment and pupil progress compares to the national average, how it performs in different subjects, and whether any specific groups of pupils are under-performing. This makes it ideal for planning inspections.

KS1 and KS2 Governor Dashboards are available, with the latest DfE accountability changes, including FFT’s unique comparative analysis of the new and old measures. KS4 and KS5 Governor Dashboards are available showing the latest Attainment 8, Progress 8 and English Baccalaureate measures.

To book a place on the webinar please visit [www.fft.org.uk/training-events.aspx](http://www.fft.org.uk/training-events.aspx) and choose the online training option.

If you wish to look at the FFT data in more depth and in the context of your own school (using your own school’s data), the Governor Support Service is holding the following face to face training session with FFT in July.

**Event:** FFT Data Dashboard for Governors  
**Date:** Tuesday, 11-Jul-17  
**Time:** 18:30-20:30 hrs
To book a place, please email us at office@governor.support or use the online booking facility on our website, www.governor.support.

The National Governance Association
Annual survey of the nation’s school governors and trustees. The survey aims to build a picture of who is governing our schools, of governance practice, and to understand the impact of government policies on schools. Survey closes on 17 July 2017. Take part: https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/NGATES2017

Budgeting Returns for Academies
The second Budget Forecast Return, will need to be submitted by Friday 28th July 2017 (the same timeframe as in previous years). The focus of this return will continue to be on the Trust’s projected financial position between 1st September 2017 and 31st August 2018.

Supporting guidance for the completion of the Budget Returns is available on the EFSA website.

Information Management Toolkit for Schools
The Information and Records Management Society have recently updated their Information Management Toolkit for Schools. Free for schools to download in a PDF format, the Toolkit has been created to assist schools with the management of their information in line with the current legislative frameworks. The toolkit considers:
• the school’s record management policy, including the management of pupil records;
• information audits;
• good practice for the management of emails;
• information security and business continuity;
• retention guidelines; and
• the safe disposal of records that have reached the end of their administrative life.

The full Toolkit can be accessed here: https://irms.site-ym.com/page/SchoolsToolkit

Schools’ Buying Strategy
DfE guidance was produced in January 2017 to support schools (maintained schools and academies) to save over £1Bn a year by 2019/20 on their non-staff spend through improving procurement processes. One of the three core strategic priorities highlighted within the Buying Strategy is to ensure that buyers have access to the best value every time. This strategic priority incorporates more schools using the national deals that are currently available to schools for saving money in common areas such as energy and ICT supply. The number of these national deals has been recently increased with the introduction of a buying framework negotiated by the government to save money on printers. The first schools to have used the new buying framework are alleged to have saved more than 40% on their previous contract prices.

Schools are not required to obtain three quotes when using the purchasing deal as this was done during the framework competition process. Schools needing to check whether this deal meets their local procurement rules should contact Schools.ICTSUPPORT@education.gov.uk.

The framework has two specific deals which may be of interest to schools:

Lot 1: ‘Print equipment’ as described above.
Lot 2: ‘Multifunctional devices’ has multiple suppliers so the school will need to run a further competition. This deal may appeal to schools working in collaboration, or to a multi-academy trust running an aggregation for their schools, as there is the potential for further price reductions due to higher volume levels being involved.

Outstanding clerk award
We are absolutely delighted that Angie Marchant, clerk at Colham Manor Primary School, Uxbridge is one of the five finalists. The finals are to be held in early September 2017. Our very best wishes go to Angie.

Assessment: Education Select Committee
Following the completion in 2016 of the first year of the Key Stage assessment tests under the new National Curriculum, the House of Commons’ Education Select Committee launched an inquiry into primary assessment. The report of the committee’s findings was published at the start of May. Read the full report https://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmeduc/682/682.pdf

The report’s key recommendations included:

- The Government must introduce longer lead in times for future changes to assessment or standards to mitigate the negative impact of constant change. Schools should be given thorough information about changes at least a year before they are due to be implemented, without incremental changes throughout the year. Furthermore, the process of communication between schools and the Government must be improved.

- An independent panel of experts and teachers should review the development process for assessment tests to improve confidence amongst school leaders and teachers.

- The Standards and Testing Agency should do more to explain the development process of national curriculum assessments to schools and to ensure that teachers have confidence that they are involved from an appropriate stage. The DfE and STA should publish plans to improve the test experience for pupils, particularly for reading.

- The balance of evidence reviewed by the Committee did not support the proposition that focusing on specific grammatical techniques improved the overall quality of writing. The Committee supports the DfE’s proposal to use a ‘best fit’ model for teacher assessment of writing. The Committee also recommends the DfE should make the Key Stage 2 spelling, punctuation and grammar test non-statutory, but still available to schools for internal monitoring.

- As well as short term changes to writing assessment, the Government should carry out a thorough evaluation of the reliability of teacher assessment judgements and reconsider whether it is appropriate to use these judgements for accountability purposes.

- Professional development training on effective assessment procedures should be carried out by senior leaders and classroom teachers. This should include assessment for pupils working below the standard of national curriculum assessments. The Government should provide adequate resource for this training as part of its commitment to continuing professional development.

- National curriculum levels were removed without enough support in place for schools to implement their own assessment systems successfully. It is the Committee’s view that many schools have now adopted ineffective assessment systems. The availability of more high quality advice and guidance would mitigate the risk of schools purchasing low-quality assessment systems from commercial providers. The Government must make that advice and guidance available. This could include a more developed ‘item bank’ of case studies, professional development training, guidance on good assessment and links to research into effective assessment.
• Many teachers reported ‘teaching to the test’, narrowing of the curriculum and increased pressure and workload because of statutory assessments and accountability. Whilst Ofsted is required to monitor whether schools are teaching a broad and balanced curriculum, reports suggest there is often too strong a focus on English and maths teaching.

• Ofsted should ensure that it reports on a broad and balanced curriculum in every primary school report. Every report should specifically include science as a core subject alongside English and maths, as well as a range of other areas of the curriculum and extra-curricular activities.

• The Committee recommended a thorough review of how Ofsted inspectors use KS2 data to inform their judgements and whether inspectors rely too heavily on data over observation.

• Many of the negative effects of assessment are caused by the use of results in the accountability system rather than the assessment system itself. KS2 results are used to hold schools to account at a system level, to parents, by Ofsted, and results are linked to teachers’ pay and performance. Whilst the Committee recognised the importance of holding schools to account, its view was that this “high-stakes system” does not improve teaching and learning at primary school.

• The Government should change what is reported in performance tables to help lower the stakes associated with them and reduce issues arising from using data from a small number of pupils. The Committee recommends publishing a rolling three-year average of KS2 results instead of results from a single cohort. Yearly cohort level data should still be available for schools to use in their own internal monitoring.

• The Committee welcomed the increased focus on progress in performance measures and the Government’s commitment to introduce an improved baseline measure. However, in its consultation document, the Committee believes that the Government fails to appreciate the potentially harmful consequences of introducing a baseline accountability measure from Reception.

• For future reforms, the Government should carefully consider the impact of setting thresholds for schools with short lead in times. Whilst agreeing with the Government’s aim of raising standards at primary school, the Committee felt that setting extremely challenging targets only leaves many students feeling they have failed, when in previous years they would have succeeded. Expected standards should be raised over a much longer period to give schools a chance to adjust to new expectations.

The Education Secretary, will be tasked with responding to both the findings of the Select Committee as well as the public consultation on the future of the primary assessment system in England, which is due to close on the 22nd June 2017.