

Clerks' Monthly Briefing

October 2023



Strong teamwork between the headteacher, the chair of the governing body and the clerk is crucial to efficient working.

Ofsted, Learning from the Best 2011.



The role of the clerk is pivotal to ensuring that statutory duties are met, meetings are well organised and governors receive the information they need in good time. Consequently, governors come to meetings well prepared and with pertinent questions ready so that they are able to provide constructive challenge.

Ofsted, Learning from the Best 2011.



Governor Support Service

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<http://www.governor.support>

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Agenda

➤ Welcome new clerks	➤ Information exchange
➤ Help us to help you	➤ Updates
➤ Clerking vacancies	➤ Your questions

Governor Support Service

We hold a database of maintained school and academy governing boards which helps us to help you. Such information is needed for governor recruitment purposes, in cases of urgency, safeguarding, Ofsted inspections, and schools where there is a cause for concern. All data is stored and accessed in accordance with the Data Protection Act and GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation). The only piece of information we can give out publicly is the name of the Chair of the Governing Board, which is already in the public domain. We do not give out personal contact details or any other information.

With contact details changing each term, please let us have a complete list of all your GB (Governing Board) membership including:

- Category of governor
- Contact phone numbers (mobile & home)
- Who is chair and vice chair
- Term of office
- Email address
- Details of any associate members of the board (inc. contact details and term of office)

Please send your Governing Board membership information to: office@governor.support

Instruments of Government (IOG)

Please send us a copy of any changes made to your IOG.

Get Information About Schools (GIAS)

Please make sure that you keep the DfE (Department for Education) site updated with your governing board membership as well.

Your governing board minutes

Please send us a copy of your draft board and committee minutes once approved by your chair of governors and the final agreed minutes. Email: office@governor.support

School email addresses

Please can you check with your school that our email addresses are on the “White” allowed list? This issue happens more often with “LGFL” school email

Autumn 2023 Term Governor & Clerk Training Courses

Please can you remind your governors of the range of courses that will be available, also that they feedback on the course(s) attended to the governing board and to update your training records.

Please remind new or recently appointed governors to book a place on the New Governors three-part course. Follow this link to [book](#).

Your minutes need to show what learning was achieved and shared with all governors. Check the courses [here](#).

Please ask your colleagues to let us know if they cannot attend after booking a place. A phone call or email.

Agenda reminders

Items to consider

- ✓ Academy AGM
- ✓ Annual report to parents (maintained schools)
- ✓ Budget/Pay award
- ✓ Pupil Attendance in school
- ✓ Pupil & PE premium
- ✓ Sharing curriculum resources with parents
- ✓ Behaviour & Exclusions
- ✓ Special Educational Needs/EHCPs
- ✓ Headteacher appraisal
- ✓ Review & approve committee structure, membership & terms of reference
- ✓ Review policies and update as necessary
- ✓ Data protection
- ✓ School security
- ✓ School buildings condition

An overview of key issues for Governing Boards to consider and review over the second half of the Autumn Term 2023.

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DfE Updates

Consultation

[Elective home education](#) closes 18th January 2024

The changes made to the guidance documents are with the aim to help parents and local authorities better understand what they are required to do and what should be done to ensure all children receive a suitable education. The proposed changes are intended to improve the clarity of the EHE guidance for local authorities and parents to promote greater accessibility and transparency of the process; encourage a more

collaborative approach between local authorities and home educating parents; and focus more on available support.

Some children who are educated at home most of the time are also registered at school and attend school for part of the week, known as flexi-schooling.

Information: Question how many pupils are flexi educated in our school?

Children in need-26th October 2023

Children in Need are a legally defined group of children (under the [Children Act 1989](#)), assessed as needing help and protection as a result of risks to their development or health. This group includes children on child in need plans, children on child protection plans, children looked after by local authorities, care leavers and disabled children.

This annual release contains statistics on children in need in England, including child protection plans, and referrals to and assessments completed by children's social care services. Each reporting year covers the financial year, 1 April to 31 March.

Pupil attendance

This publication provides information on the levels of overall, authorised, and unauthorised absence in state-funded:

- primary schools
- secondary schools
- special schools

This release covers the 2023/24 academic year up to 13 October 2023.

The attendance rate (proportion of possible sessions attended) was 93.7% across all schools in the **week commencing 9 October 2023**. The absence rate was, therefore, 6.3%.

By school type, the absence rates across the week commencing 9 October 2023 were:

- 4.7% in state-funded primary schools (3.2% authorised and 1.4% unauthorised)
- 8.2% in state-funded secondary schools (5.1% authorised and 3.1% unauthorised)
- 12.4% in state-funded special schools (9.4% authorised and 3.1% unauthorised)

The data shows that the attendance rate across the **academic year to date** was 93.9%. The absence rate was, therefore, 6.1% across all schools.

By school type, the absence rates across the academic year 2023/24 to date were:

- 4.6% in state-funded primary schools (3.2% authorised and 1.4% unauthorised)
- 7.9% in state-funded secondary schools (5.0% authorised and 2.9% unauthorised)
- 11.9% in state-funded special schools (9.0% authorised and 2.9% unauthorised)

Information and discussion

Pupil Premium Overview- 25th October 2023

Schools must show how they are using their pupil premium effectively:

- by publishing a statement on their website which presents an overview of their pupil premium strategy, and demonstrates that their use of the funding meets the requirements of the [conditions of grant](#)
- through [inspections by Ofsted](#) - inspectors may discuss plans schools have to spend their pupil premium
- through scrutiny of pupil premium plans by governors and trustees
- Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) [discussion prompts for governors and trustees](#)
- Important Primary PE & Sport Premium Update 2023/24, [webinar](#)

How much [PE and sport premium funding](#) schools will receive for the academic year 2023 to 2024 and advice on how to spend it.

Clerks reminder, publish an updated Pupil Premium strategy statement every academic year before 31 December.

Key stage 1 and phonics screening check attainment – 12th October 2023

Attainment in the phonics screening check has increased compared to 2022

79% of pupils met the expected standard in the phonics screening check in year 1, up from 75% in 2022.

89% of pupils met the expected standard in the phonics screening check by the end of year 2, up from 87% in 2022.

Attainment at key stage 1 has increased in all subjects compared to 2022

68% of pupils met the expected standard in reading, up from 67% in 2022.

60% of pupils met the expected standard in writing, up from 58% in 2022.

70% of pupils met the expected standard in maths, up from 68% in 2022.

79% of pupils met the expected standard in science, up from 77% in 2022.

Information and discussion

Secretary of State letters to schools about sharing curriculum resources with parents- 24th October 2023

Parents can ask to see the curriculum resources used to teach their children.

These letters set out the existing position on sharing resources, including that schools should:

- respond positively when parents request to see teaching materials
- have [consulted parents on their relationships and sex education policy](#), including providing examples of the resources they plan to use

Information and discussion

The Advanced British Standard' sets out ambitious long-term proposals for a new 16 to 19 qualification which takes the best of A levels and T levels and brings them together into a single qualification.

This proposal explains:

- what the Advanced British Standard is
- why it is needed
- the initial investments the government will make to support its delivery
- next steps in policy development

1. We will deliver genuine parity of esteem between technical and academic routes. We have not yet resolved the unequal status that has dogged technical education. Despite recent streamlining, technical pathways are still too complex, with a confusing and duplicative landscape of thousands of available qualifications and teachers that receive lower pay and recognition than academic routes. Most fundamentally, the divide between technical and academic study perpetuates an unacceptable gap in esteem.

2. We will increase quality teaching time. Currently we have high expectations of independent study and offer students far fewer hours with a teacher than in many other countries. Young people in England spend the equivalent of around 10 fewer hours per week being taught than in, for example, France or many US states. Yet we know that disadvantaged students are less likely to have access to the space and equipment they need for independent study and stand to benefit the most from a great teachers. We need to do more to increase students' access to and time with high quality teachers.

3. We will embed a core of essential knowledge. We do not guide all students to focus on essential maths and English, and nor have we worked to drive evidence-based approaches to teaching in 16-19 as clearly as we have done earlier in the system. As a result, too many students – particularly the most disadvantaged – leave education without a clear grasp of the basic skills needed to fulfil their potential. Numeracy and literacy both have strong links to wage returns, but more fundamentally both are integral to connected, engaged, fulfilling lives – linked to everything from the ease of developing future interests to ability to identify misinformation.

4. We will ensure everyone studies a greater breadth of subjects. We have not prioritised as broad and balanced a curriculum for 16–19-year-olds as we have pre-16 and are an outlier in not encouraging as much breadth of study as other countries. The average A level student studies around three subjects, whereas across the OECD, students typically study around seven subjects. This holds back students' life chances as well as their education: in a world where technology and the economy move at pace, we know that breadth of knowledge can afford students greater flexibility in the labour market. If we deliver on these aims, we will disproportionately benefit the most disadvantaged. A significant number of 16–19-year-olds are leaving compulsory education without the basic numeracy and literacy to succeed, or high-quality qualifications to support career progression. Disadvantaged students are over-represented in this cohort. Our education system must deliver for all.

Information

[New measures to protect children's learning from strike action - 20th October 2023](#)

Minimum service levels (MSLs) to protect children and young people's education are set to be introduced in schools and colleges, the government has announced.

The proposals will put in place protections for children, young people, and parents to ensure education can continue during any future strike action.

Information

[Implementing Your School's Approach to Pay Advice for maintained schools, academies and local authorities - 13th October 2023](#)

Schools should ensure that an appeals procedure is in place before any pay determinations are made. The adoption of an appeals procedure after a pay appeal has already been lodged could leave schools open to legal challenge. An appeals policy should have clear timescales which are reasonable in all circumstances, make allowances for school holidays, yet allow appeals to be expedited in good time.

The DfE guidance offers an example pay appeals procedure, pages 29-31

The role of the governing board in setting the pay of school leaders, pages 33-38

[School teachers' pay and conditions document 2023 and guidance on school teachers' pay and conditions 1st September 2023](#)

For information

[Data protection in schools - 12th September 2023](#)

The responsibility and accountability for compliance sits with governors and trustees. Schools and multi-academy trusts risk getting a fine if they don't comply.

Governors and trustees check that the school:

- monitors their data protection performance
- supports the data protection officer
- has good network security infrastructure to keep personal data protected
- has a business continuity plan in place that includes cyber security

Discussion, compliance check and minuted actions

[School security - 9th October 2023](#)

This guidance is for:

- headteachers, staff and governing boards bodies of local-authority-maintained schools (including maintained nursery schools)
- academies, 16 to 19 academies, free schools, and alternative provision academies

Includes:

Self-Assessment Emergency Incident Planning Checklist

- Emergency planning
- Risk assessment
- Business Continuity Plan Templates & Checklists
- Evacuation
- Bomb alert or threat
- Invacuation
- Lockdown
- Post incident support

Your security policy should complement your safeguarding policy, particularly where it puts in place measures to protect pupils and address the threat of serious violence. It should form part of your suite of policies to ensure the health, safety and well-being of pupils and staff.

Questions for governing boards and trustee to seek assurances and minute compliance.

[National funding formula tables for schools and high needs: 2024 to 2025, 6th October 2023](#)

Tables showing provisional allocations for the schools, high needs, and central school services blocks from 2024 to 2025.

'Impact of the schools NFF' sets out notional school-level allocations for 2024 to 2025. Local authorities will continue to set a local formula to distribute funding to schools in their area. This means schools' actual funding may be different to the amounts shown in these tables.

Information and discussion

DfE £40m "hardship fund"

Local authority-maintained schools in just thirty-five areas will get "hardship fund" support to help them deliver 6.5 per cent teacher pay rises – and the cash is for one year only.

The allocation for Hillingdon is £491,623

Councils to allocate money 'on case-by-case basis'

The guidance added: "This does not mean that every school with a deficit within that local authority should be given additional funding.

"We expect funding to be allocated on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the severity of the school's position and prioritising those in greatest need."

But it stressed the allocations are not solely intended to cover schools which are in deficit as a result of the 2023 teachers' pay award".

More details when available

[DfE Permanent Secretary NFF letter to the Education Select Committee, 6th October 2023](#)

The letter outlines a technical error made in the calculations of the national funding formula (NFF). New NFF allocations will be issued to correct the technical error.

Information

[Mobile phone use in schools - 2nd October 2023](#)

New guidance from the Department for Education will back head teachers in banning mobile phone use throughout the school day, including at break times, to tackle disruptive behaviour and online bullying while boosting attention during lessons. It aims to support the wider work the government is doing to raise standards in schools by increasing students' focus and reducing distractions.

Information

Flexible working in schools

Help to implement flexible working including a [toolkit of resources](#) and webinar training.

[An example of a flexible working policy](#)

Webinar: [Why flexible working is a priority now](#)

3rd November at 10.00am (registration required)

The webinar will be particularly helpful for school/trust leaders, governors, and HR/School Business Managers in any school settings. However, anyone with an interest in this area is welcome to attend.

Information and discussion

Ofsted Updates

[New Ofsted Chief Inspector - 12th October 2023](#)

The education secretary (12 October) announced the appointment of Sir Martyn Oliver as the next His Majesty's chief inspector (HMCI) of education, children's services, and skills.

He will begin his initial five-year term on 1st January 2024.

[School Inspection Handbook, updated 6th October 2023](#)

Key changes:

- providing more detail on what evidence inspectors will ask schools to provide in relation to safeguarding, to prevent unnecessary workload for schools
- clarifying that inspectors will want schools to provide details about adults living on school sites

- clarifying that inspectors will look at attendance when carrying out ungraded inspections of schools
- minor changes to take account of the new Department for Education's exclusions and suspensions guidance

[Summary table of Ofsted state-funded school inspections](#)

[Ofsted's school inspection update: autumn 2023, video](#)

Information

Academy Updates

The DfE published updated versions of two key documents, for MATs which contain one or more Church of England school. The [model articles of association](#) have been updated, and a new [memorandum of understanding](#) has been agreed between the Department and National Society.

The trust's articles are a contract between the trust and Department. They set out the fundamental constitutional rules for the trust, including the composition and procedures for the members, trust board and local academy committees.

ESFA webinars:

- Integrated curriculum financial planning (ICFP) practical examples
- Funding and financial management
- Strategic financial planning
- Procurement: compliance and maximising value
- Strategic estate management
- Strategic workforce planning
- Staff wellbeing and engagement
- Getting the right technology in place

[Book a course](#)

[Reminder: related party transaction \(RPT\) reporting requirements have changed](#)

For RPTs starting on or after 1 September 2023:

- The approval threshold for RPTs increased to £40,000 per transaction. The cumulative total for multiple transactions with the same supplier is removed.
- RPTs with:
 1. schools/colleges/universities that are the trust sponsor, or

2. with state-funded schools/colleges, no longer require ESFA approval, but must be declared in advance via the online form.
- There is no change to the requirement for trusts to declare transactions with their religious authority for services fundamental to the trust's religious character and ethos using the [online form](#) and these transactions do not require ESFA approval.

RPTs must be declared in advance of the contract starting, using the online form.

Information

News in Brief

National Coordinators of Governor Service (NCOGS)

Clerking Handbook updated 2023 edition

Includes:

Example maintained school annual cycle checklist

“ academy “ “ “

Example of a vacancy letter and welcome email

“ agenda

Policy list

A copy will be included in the email of the briefing and PowerPoint presentation. It will also be available in the clerks section of our website.

Children in Care, a guide for governors

You'll find useful information and great questions to help governors discuss Children in Care with their school leaders. This booklet is written for primary and secondary schools, including academies. It is also written for special schools and PRUs

Inspiring Governance

Over a third of Inspiring Governance's current governor appointments are from an ethnic minority and nearly half are under 35 years old, yet there is a fast-growing divergence in the wider school system between those making and implementing decisions in our schools and those on the receiving end of those decisions.

Bola-Alysia, Jasmin, Justin, and Meera – talk about why volunteering in the role is important to them, the benefits the role brings – and why others from diverse backgrounds should consider joining them. Watch the [video](#)

National Stress Awareness Day

Coming up on 1 November, we've shared some tips to help you manage stress at

work, follow the [link](#) for more information.

Governor Training and Development Programme

Did you become a governor in 2022/3?	1 st November 2023	6.30pm-8.00pm
Managing concerns & complaint hearings	2 nd November 2023	6.30pm-8.00pm
Governor Safeguarding Responsibilities & Keeping Children Safe in Education (Updated)	7 th November 2023	6.30pm-8.00pm
Budgeting & Human Resource Solutions for governing boards	23 rd November 2023	6.30pm-8.00pm
Clerks briefing	30 th November 2023	10.00am-11.00am
Meeting the inspector	17 th January 2024	6.30pm-8.00pm
Understanding school finance for academy & maintained school governors	31 st January 2024	6.30pm-8.00pm

Follow the [link](#) to find out more about the courses and to book a place.