



Clerks Briefing, June 2025

An overview of key issues for Governing Boards to consider and review

Contents	Page number
DfE Consultation Reminders	
Equalities Bill (closes 10 th June 2025)	1/2
Space requirements in early years childcare settings (closes 11 th July 2025)	
DfE updates	
Letter from Catherine McKinnell MP, Minister for School Standards	2
Teachers pay award	2-3
Flexible working	3-4
Link between attendance & attainment	4
Best value	4-5
Mental Health & Wellbeing	5
SEND	5
External reviews of governance	5
PE & Sport Premium	6
Regional Improvement for Standards and Excellence (RISE)	6
Ofsted updates	
Inspections in the autumn term & Parent View	6-7
Academy updates	
Academy reserves	7-8
Budget forecast return	8
News in brief	
Equality & Human Rights Commission	8
Child poverty in schools	8
School visits	8
Suggested agenda items/reminders	
Review service level agreements	9
Headteacher appraisal	9
Help us to help you	
Governing board appointments, reappointments, resignations etc.	9
Governor and clerk training and development programme	9=10
Contact us	10

Department for Education - Consultations

[Space requirements in early years childcare settings](#) (closes 11th July 2025)

To meet demand for the expanded entitlements, additional childcare places are required. However, one of the barriers to expanding childcare provision is the indoor space requirements in the EYFS frameworks.

The DfE are consulting on potential options for amending the EYFS indoor space requirements, which is in addition to other initiatives planned to increase places by September 2025.

[Equality \(Race and Disability\) Bill: mandatory ethnicity and disability pay gap reporting](#) (Closes 10th June 2025)

The consultation is seeking views on how to introduce mandatory ethnicity and disability pay reporting for large employers (those with 250 or more employees). Responses to the consultation will help to shape proposals which will be included in the upcoming Equality (Race and Disability) Bill.

The requirement to publish gender pay gap information is a statutory obligation for schools, academy trusts, academies, and FE colleges with 250 or more employees. However, we strongly recommend that all schools and trusts publish this information voluntarily as part of the school website requirements — even if they fall below the 250-employee threshold. Transparency in pay reporting demonstrates accountability and commitment to fair pay practices and equality in the workplace.

Department for Education – Updates

[Letter of thanks from Catherine McKinnell MP, Minister for School Standards, 2nd June](#)

Extract

“This Volunteers’ Week, it gives me great pleasure to thank you and your board for all that you do for your trusts and school(s). I have been fortunate to witness the tremendous work being done by governors and trustees first hand. Your role in ensuring strong and effective governance is key to driving up school standards, and contributes to our ambition that every child, whatever their background, can achieve and thrive at school. You willingly give up your time and take on significant responsibilities, on a wholly voluntary basis, for the benefit of the children...”

Teachers Pay Award, 2025-26

The government has accepted in full the [School Teachers’ Review Body’s recommendation](#) of a 4% pay award for teachers in maintained schools in England.

While the award applies directly to maintained schools, many academies are expected to follow suit. The pay rise is set to be implemented from September 2025, following consultation and updates to the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD).

Funding and Productivity

The 4% award will be funded through a combination of:

- **1% from productivity gains**
- **1.3% from existing school budgets**
- **1.7% from new DfE funding**

An additional £615 million has been allocated this year to support this settlement. Schools are expected to make cost savings where possible, and the DfE is promoting initiatives such as its energy savings programme to support this.

Support Staff and Further Education

While the teacher pay award does not cover support staff, additional funding has taken into account the current 3.2% support staff pay offer under negotiation via the NJC. The DfE has reiterated its commitment to reinstating the School Support Staff Negotiating Body (SSSNB) to improve consistency, progression and pay.

Recruitment and Retention

There are signs of improved teacher recruitment, particularly in STEM subjects. The DfE continues to invest in workload reduction strategies, financial incentives, and professional development to make teaching an attractive long-term career.

For full details, visit:

[**Teacher Pay: Everything You Need to Know About the 2025 Pay Award**](#)

Flexible Working Programme

The Department for Education has extended its Flexible Working Ambassadors Programme until March 2026, expanding support to help more schools implement effective flexible working practices.

The programme enables schools to explore arrangements such as:

- Lesson planning from home
- Job sharing
- Part-time and flexible hours
- Phased retirement and remote working

Led by Capita and delivered in partnership with organisations including Flexible Teacher Talent and selected ambassador schools (FWAMS), the programme provides free training, webinars and peer support to school leaders, HR teams and governing boards.

New resources include:

- A flexible working self-assessment tool
- Case studies across all career stages
- Recorded sessions exploring diversity, inclusion, and workload

Flexible working is recognised as key to staff wellbeing, recruitment, and retention. The

programme is aligned with the DfE's wider strategy to reduce teacher workload and make the profession more sustainable.

Boards are encouraged to:

- Champion flexible working in their schools
- Support school leaders in embedding whole-school approaches
- Attend training or webinars where relevant to strategic planning
- One hour webinar for school leaders, Business/HR leaders, governors, and trustees 25th June at 2.30pm Free to attend, book [here](#)

Further information and free resources are available via the DfE's flexible working hub: [Flexible Working in Education – GOV.UK families to access further support and services.](#)

DfE report-Link between attendance and attainment

New research from the Department for Education highlights a strong and direct link between attendance and attainment at both primary and secondary level.

Key findings from the 2022–23 academic year include:

- Missing just 10 days in Year 6 reduced the likelihood of meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths by 25%
- For pupils in Year 11, the same level of absence halved the chance of achieving a grade 5 in English and Maths

These findings reinforce the importance of consistent school attendance and underline the need for robust monitoring and early intervention, particularly in the lead-up to key assessment points.

Boards are encouraged to:

- Prioritise attendance in school improvement plans
- Monitor trends and challenge absence patterns through their data
- Support leadership in identifying and addressing barriers to attendance
- [DfE Pupil attendance in schools: 9 September 2024 to 16 May 2025](#)

Getting the best value from schools non-staff spend

Make sure you have the correct information. Ask thoughtful questions about procurement processes, contracts and habitual practices that could be improved.

For example, governors might ask:

- Why are we doing it this way?

- Could we use a [suitable framework](#)?
- Could we achieve better outcomes with a different approach?
- How does this align with our strategic goals?
- Are we compliant with regulations?
- How could we get better value?

Challenge assumptions and, where appropriate, encourage a focus on long-term value over short-term outputs.

[Mental Health and Wellbeing in Education](#)

Over 4,100 schools have now joined the [Education Staff Wellbeing Charter](#), and schools are encouraged to access the DfE workload and wellbeing improvement service, which offers peer-led advice to support leadership teams in reducing pressure on staff.

Boards should ensure:

- The school's mental health provision is aligned with the national offer
- Governors receive regular updates on pupil wellbeing, attendance trends and staff workload
- The charter and MHST access are considered in relevant strategic discussions

SEND System Reforms and Next Steps

The Department for Education has confirmed it will produce a fully costed plan to improve the national SEND system by April 2026. This follows a critical report by the Public Accounts Committee, which called for urgent reform to tackle widespread challenges in SEND provision.

By December 2025, the DfE will also publish its vision for what inclusive education should look like in practice. This will include clarity on what pupils with SEND and their families should expect from their schools. A panel of expert advisers, led by MAT CEO Tom Rees, is currently reviewing evidence of effective inclusive practice to inform these reforms.

Governors and trustees should ensure that SEND remains a key strategic focus, with close attention paid to inclusion, early intervention, and the impact of funding pressures on school provision.

[DfE update on External reviews of governance \(ERG\)](#)

What the review will do

The review will examine the governance structure, operations, and performance across the board, working closely with the board, executive leaders, and the governance professional, to improve the board's performance. Governance operations could include a range of contributors, including the governance professional or equivalent, the school business manager, legal and HR support and others.

DfE PE & Sport Premium, report must be published on school website by July.
Schools must use digital reporting form.

There is now a new Primary PE and Sport Premium digital reporting tool for schools. This digital tool captures details on how a school has used its PE and Sport Premium and the impact it has had on achieving the aims and objectives of the funding.

The information gathered includes:

- Figures on the overall spend
- What the funding has been spent on
- Whether there is any unspent funding
- Swimming and water safety attainment

Regional Improvement for Standards and Excellence.

RISE teams (Regional Improvement for Standards and Excellence) have been introduced by the Department for Education to raise standards in schools with persistent underperformance and to support school improvement more broadly across England.

Currently working with over 200 schools, RISE teams provide two levels of support:

- Targeted intervention for schools with multiple Ofsted judgements below 'Good'
- Universal support, promoting collaboration and sharing of best practice across all schools

Key features of the programme:

- RISE advisers are experienced education leaders with a track record of school improvement
- Support includes reviewing improvement plans, connecting schools with high-performing partners, and funding for additional resources where needed
- Priority areas include English and math's attainment, school readiness, inclusivity in mainstream schools, and improving attendance
- Further updates and wider reforms to school accountability are expected later this year.

More info: [**RISE Teams: Everything You Need to Know – Education Hub**](#)

Ofsted updates

Ofsted have recently finished consulting on the framework, ahead of implementation in autumn 2025. The revised education inspection framework will be implemented from 3

November 2025. Ofsted will not carry out any routine inspections of state-funded schools in the autumn term until 3 November.

A significant rewrite of the toolkits inspectors will use under the new report card inspection system, due to be introduced in November 2025. These toolkits outline how schools will be graded across a broader set of evaluation areas, following the government's decision to remove single headline judgments.

Ofsted have tested a new approach for graded inspections of schools.

A new 'suspend and return' policy for schools that are judged inadequate for leadership and management solely due to ineffective safeguarding. The policy will apply when considering if leaders can resolve the safeguarding issues within 3 months. When this happens, withhold the judgement and report. The school will be revisited within 3 months to make sure it has improved safeguarding and complete the inspection.

[Parent View](#)

Up-to-date picture of the results within [Parent View](#). This management information covers submissions received in the previous 365 days for maintained schools and academies inspected by Ofsted.

Within these releases, you can find:

- an overall question-by-question breakdown of the results for both school types
- a further breakdown of these results by phase and region for maintained schools and academies
- data on the number of submissions received and the response rates for the above categories
- Worth reading to see the response rates for your school.

Academy updates

Academy reserves

The Department for Education has reiterated its position on academy trust reserves following recent analysis highlighting several trusts holding savings well above their annual income.

The guidance issued in 2023 defines "high reserves" as those exceeding 20 per cent of total income. While trusts are permitted to maintain reserves based on their own risk assessments and financial strategies, the DfE expects clear justification where balances are significantly above this threshold — particularly in the context of increasing pressure on school budgets.

Many trusts report that their reserves are committed to essential infrastructure projects, financial risk management, or long-term service development.

The DfE has confirmed that its engagement with trusts holding high reserves is designed to ensure those funds are aligned to pupil benefit, strategic investment, and responsible financial planning, rather than general contingency.

Guidance for Trustees:

Trustees are advised to regularly review their trust's reserves policy, ensuring it clearly outlines the purpose and intended use of any surplus funds. Financial plans should demonstrate how reserves are aligned with the trust's strategic priorities, including investment in teaching, learning, and school improvement.

Boards should be prepared to justify their reserve levels, particularly where they exceed 20 per cent of income, and ensure that decision-making balances financial prudence with the obligation to deliver educational value for current pupils. Transparent reporting, including how reserves support risk management, capital planning or service sustainability, will remain a key aspect of effective financial oversight.

Find out more about Academy trust reserves [here](#)

Academies budget forecast return (BFR)

The academies budget forecast return (BFR) form is open.

The deadline for the BFR to be submitted is 5pm on 28 August 2025.

Guidance on completing the forecast return [here](#)

News in brief

- ✓ **The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC)** has stressed the need to clearly define terms such as *restraint* and *seclusion*, and to consider the potential impact of restrictive practices on pupil wellbeing — particularly for those with SEND.
Boards are advised to review how their own policies define and govern physical intervention and ensure training and safeguarding measures are robust.
- ✓ **Child Poverty and the Role of Schools** - Governors and trustees should seek assurance from leaders about how schools are identifying and supporting disadvantaged pupils and consider how wider pressures may be affecting pupil welfare and attainment.
- ✓ **[How school groups can reduce processing time](#)** when travelling by ferry from Dover to Calais. The DfE has published its latest guidance on how to make it as easy as possible. School groups travelling across this border can reduce the substantial processing time, by following this guidance.

Suggested agenda items/Reminders

- Review of recruitment and retention pressures (including current vacancies and use of temporary contracts)
- Gender pay analysis (particularly in leadership roles)
- Teacher workload, Pupil teacher ratio and class size monitoring
- Pay progression policy – alignment with market conditions
- Early career teacher induction and support strategy
- Preparation for 2025–26 pay award implementation and associated budget pressures
- Review and approve service level agreements
- Headteacher appraisal (appoint 2/3 governors, agree date, and arrange external reviewer to support panel) Training course for those who may need it. Details on page 10

Help us to help you

Please let us know about any:

- board appointments, reappointments, and resignations
- contact emails and mobile numbers of members of the board
- dates of appointment and term of office
- type of governor
- positions held, i.e., chair, vice chair, committee chair, member of a committee, link governor
- copies of the approved board minutes
- It is important that you **keep your GIAS establishment record up to date** so that the DfE can always contact you if needed.

Governor and Clerk Training and Development P

Summer and autumn term 2025

To book a place on any course:

Essential please remember to use the same email account when booking a place and joining the Microsoft Teams meeting

- Please follow the course link(s) where you will find full details about each course. You will then be able to register and book your place(s),
- You will receive an automatic email reply which will confirm each booking, together with a Microsoft Teams meeting link for the course.
- An automatic reminder email will be sent one hour before the course.

Any questions you have about a course, or any other queries please contact us:

Phone: 01895 717321 Email: office@governor.support

Clerks briefing meetings. <i>Clerks only, book your meetings by clicking on the dates opposite please.</i>	<u>Tuesday 8th July 2025</u>	All at 10.00am- 11.00am	
Headteacher appraisal course for governors	Wednesday 18 th June 2025	6.30pm- 8.00pm	Register and book a place here
Just for clerks-planning and managing board hearings	Thursday 19 th June 2025	6.30pm- 8.00pm	Register and book a place here
Health and Safety in Schools	Thursday 26 th June 2025	6.00pm	Register and book a place here
Online Safety for governors	Tuesday 1 st July 2025	10.00am	Register and book a place here
New Ofsted Inspection framework What we know so far	Wednesday 8 th October 2025	6.30pm- 8.00pm	Register and book a place here
Making sense of school data	Wednesday 15 th October 2025	6.30pm- 8.00pm	Register and book a place here

Governor Support Service Ltd

Contact us:

Phone:01895 717321

Email: office@governor.support

Edited material including Department of Education, Ofsted, National Governance Association ,Schoolsweek

