

# Dartford & Gravesham District Governor Briefing

Spring 2017

# Welcome

# Agenda

## 1. **Welcome**

Suzanne Mayes – Interim Governor Services Manager & Joanne Beale – Governor Services (North Kent)

## 2. **Finance**

Yvonne King – Schools Financial Services Manager

## 3. **Kent Governors Association**

Janice Brooke – Dartford KGA Representative

Keith Blakemore – Gravesham KGA Representative

## 4. **Governing Body Training & Development**

Role of the Training & Development Governor

Joanne Beale – Governor Services (North Kent)

## 5. **In the News, Governors' Discussion Points, Networking**

Suzanne Mayes – Interim Governor Services Manager

# The Four C's When Approving the school's 3 Year Budget Plan

# Course Aim

To ensure that Governing bodies have an understanding of their financial responsibilities when:

- Approving the school's 3 Year Plan
- Signing the Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS) for section B. Setting the Budget



# This session will explore:

- The Role of the Governor
- What the 3 Year Planning report means
- How as governors you challenge the assumptions made for the school's 3 Year Plan
- Whether as governors you are fulfilling your responsibility with regard to the School Financial Value Standard

# Governor Handbook

Governance handbook

For trustees of academies and multi-academy trusts and governors of maintained schools (November 2015)

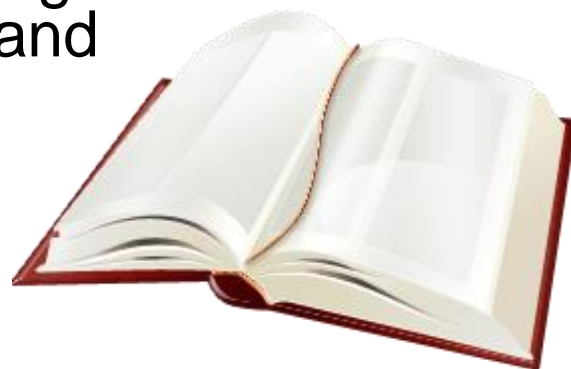
Provides information about the role and legal duties of governing bodies in maintained schools and academies (including free schools)

Available on the GOV.UK Website

Sect. 1 The essentials of effective governance

Sect. 2 -8 Summarises legal duties

Includes signposting to other reading material (Beware of any updates – use Changes to Legislation facility on the website)



# Section 1 The essentials of effective governance

- All boards, whether in the maintained or academy sector and no matter how many schools they are responsible for three **core functions**:
- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
- Holding the head teacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils
- Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent

# Ofsted Inspection Framework

Four key judgements:

- The achievement of pupils
- The quality of teaching
- The behaviour and safety of pupils
- The quality of leadership and management

Every inspection will comment on the quality of governance as part of the overall judgement.



# Ofsted

Looks with judgement

- That governors are informed and ask challenging questions
- Governors will hold the head teacher to account, for finance they will look at the effective management of financial resources to raise standards
  - **Receive relevant timely and accurate information**
  - **Challenging the information**
  - **Accept only when clear about the response**
  - **Ensure challenge is reported in the minutes**

# Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS)

- The purpose of SFVS is to help schools manage their finances, to support them in securing value for money across all of their spending, and to **give assurance that secure financial management arrangements are in place.**
- **governors must be confident that their response has a firm grounding**
- Governors must demonstrate compliance through the submission of the SFVS assessment form signed by the chair. The form must include a summary of remedial actions with a clear timetable, ensuring that each action has a specified deadline and an agreed owner.
- Governors must monitor the progress of these actions to ensure that all actions are cleared within specified deadlines.

# 3 Year Budget Plan Questions?

## General

1. Does the full governing body receive a report / comments on the budget in a timely manner and are you given sufficient information about the budget setting process?
2. How might a 3 year budget plan assist Senior Leadership and Governors with ensuring that standards are improving?
3. How do you know that the school is making the most efficient use of its financial resources?
4. Looking at year 1 of a budget plan. If the school that you are a governor at had an overall surplus balance at the end of the previous year was there a clear plan for spending it?
5. As a governor what action would you take, if when looking at the 3 year budget plan, you can see that there is a deficit (in year or overall)?

## Specific to the 3 Year Plan issued

1. From the 3 Year Plan presented how do you know what assumptions have been made for income and expenditure? What additional information might you need?
2. What 'challenging' questions would you ask if you were at this school's governing body meeting and presented with the District School's 3 Year Plan?

# SFVS Questions relating to Section B. Setting the Budget

10. Is there a clear and demonstrable link between the school's budgeting and its plan for raising standards and attainment?

11. Does the school make a forward projection of budget, including both revenue and capital funds, for at least three years, using the best available information?

12. Does the school set a well-informed and balanced budget each year (with an agreed and timed plan for eliminating any deficit)?

13. Is end year outturn in line with budget projections, or if not, is the governing body alerted to significant variations in a timely manner, and do they result from explicitly planned changes or from genuinely unforeseeable circumstances?

# So what were the Four C's when approving the school's 3 Year Budget Plan?

- Challenge - Ask questions, don't just accept the figures that you're provided with
- Consult – Ask questions of others including headteacher, finance staff, school leadership team and other governors (share knowledge)
- Compare – Benchmarking template can be found using [www.kelsi.org.uk](http://www.kelsi.org.uk)
- Core – ‘The part of something that is central to its existence’  
The plan is central to facilitating the school's vision; the education of the children
  - ‘The plan has the interest of the children at its core’

# Support

**Schools Financial Services**  
**0300 0415 415**



**Helpdesk is for Governors as well**

**Information available on KELSI  
(Kent Education Learning & Skills  
Information) using [www.kelsi.org.uk](http://www.kelsi.org.uk)**

# **KGA**

## **Kent Governors' Association**

### **Dartford KGA Representative**

**Janice Brooke – [janicebrooked28@btinternet.com](mailto:janicebrooked28@btinternet.com)**

### **Gravesham KGA Representative**

**Keith Blakemore – [Keith.Blakemore@bexley.gov.uk](mailto:Keith.Blakemore@bexley.gov.uk)**



## Notes for District Governor Briefings

- New Chair of KGA appointed – Janice Brooke – but she will not take up the post until later in the year. In the meantime Jack Keeler will take on the role of Interim Chair
- Next KGA Assembly 7-9 pm Monday 13 March 2017, Oakwood House, Maidstone: Please book via CPD Online. All governors welcome.





- **DfE consultation ‘Schools that work for everyone’** sought views on a variety of topics including the expansion of grammar schools and admission restrictions for faith schools. If you would like to read the KCC response you can find it on Kelsi – we will put a link from the KGA page.
- **KGA seeks information** about what governors want from the KGA as it revises its constitution and activities in the light of the changing educational landscape. Please tell your KGA Executive Member your opinions or email the chair
- If your district does not have an **Executive Member**, please appoint one!



## Governor Vacancies

- There are currently 475 governor vacancies in Kent. It is the responsibility of each governing body to fill its vacancies.
- Help is available at the government sponsored **inspiringgovernance.org** and independent charity **sgoss.org**  
Register with these sites if you need to find governors
- Consider other ways of finding governors – networking, advertising, approaching local businesses etc
- Make sure you have a selection procedure in place which complies with Safer Recruitment practices



# Governor Training

- Remember to plan your training and book in advance
- Give honest feedback about sessions attended to help maintain quality
- Use the section asking for training that is wanted to help Governor Services understand what topics need to be introduced/repeated



## News from NGA

- The DfE has released a January 2017 updated and restructured version of the Governance Handbook and a new document Competency Framework for Governance
- DfE Governance structured into

|                             |                       |                   |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Strategic leadership</b> | <b>Accountability</b> | <b>People</b>     |
| <b>Structures</b>           | <b>Compliance</b>     | <b>Evaluation</b> |

- NGA SE Region Meeting Tuesday 21 March 2017



## News from NGA

### Priorities for 2017

- School funding
- The pace of change
- Ability to recruit and retain staff
- Assessment and the curriculum offer



## News from Ofsted

- New HMCI Amanda Spielman
- Small change to inspection arrangements allows for short inspections to be led by Ofsted Inspector rather than HMI

# The Role of the Training & Development Governor

## Aim:

- Define the role within the governing body
- Offer practical help in fulfilling the role
- Know how the T & D governor can impact on the effectiveness of the governing body

# Expectations - Ofsted

Ofsted - Inspection Handbook (item 141)

*“The effectiveness of governors in discharging their core statutory functions and **how committed** they are to their own development as governors in order to improve their performance.”*

Raises the importance of the role of a  
lead governor for Training & Development



# Expectations

## Governance Handbook

**Governance handbook Section 4.2 states that Boards should:**

- All boards are responsible for identifying the induction and other ongoing training and development they need – including for those with specific responsibilities such as the lead on safeguarding including Prevent.
- The board's code of conduct should set an ethos of professionalism and high expectations of everyone involved in governance, including an expectation that they undertake whatever training or development activity is needed to fill any gaps in the skills they have to contribute to effective governance.

# Expectations

## Governance Handbook

**Governance handbook Section 4.2 states that Boards should:**

- Boards should consider giving the vice-chair or another individual on the board a specific responsibility for enabling every person to develop the skills they need to be effective. Rather than simply track attendance at training and development courses, with administrative support from the professional clerk, this person would be responsible for ensuring that everyone on the board develops their skills to make an active and valuable contribution to the board. Any persistent skill gaps across the board or for individuals should be brought to the attention of the chair.

# Expectations

## Governance Handbook

### **Governance handbook Section 4.2 states that Boards should:**

- If, in the view of the board, an individual fails persistently to undertake the training or development they need to contribute effectively to the board, then they are likely to be in breach of the board's code of conduct. Where they have powers to do so, the board should consider suspending them on the grounds that they have acted in a way that is contrary to the board's ethos and has brought or is likely to bring the organisation, the board or their role into disrepute. Suspensions are for a fixed period of up to six months at a time.
- Governing Bodies should set aside a budget for training.

# Why the need for development?

- Expands the knowledge base
- Strengthens skills
- Helps reduce any weak links
- Stops heavy reliance on others / a few members
- Develops independent, self-determining working
- Aids a consistent & systematic approach

# Why the need for development?

- Improves satisfaction & pride
- Promotes high morale & confidence in self, GB & relationships with Head, staff, other stakeholders
- Can help to avert a high turnover of members
- Beware over training can
  - create stress
  - waste time & money
  - Provide too much theory & not enough practice

# Discuss & feedback ...

What does your Board currently have in place?

- a Board member with T & D responsibilities?
- what do they do?

# Why have a T&D Governor?

- Enables a focussed overview of the knowledge & skills of Board members
- Can help governors identify their learning & development needs
- Significant role in developing the effectiveness of the Board
- Best undertaken by someone who has at least a year's experience
  - Will have developed a better understanding of the strategic priorities of the school's improvement planning
  - Be able to ensure that the governing bodies training needs are identified in line with school improvement plan

# T & D Governor - The Role

- Not a statutory role – but significant
- Need to understand the strategic priorities of the School Plan – including those for GB itself
- Ensure Governors are equipped with the skills and knowledge to drive school improvement
- Ensure allocation of budget for governor training and ensure it is spent effectively



# Discuss & Feedback ...

**Discuss how you might define the T&D governor role:**

- What do you think constitutes the T & D governor role?
- What could you expect from your T&D Governor?
- What type of activities would you like them to undertake?

# Practical help - Impact on the effectiveness of the governing body

- A systematic approach to governor training/induction should ensure that basic needs are identified.
- Induction pack – start as you mean to go on!
- Expectations in code of conduct / hold each other to account – consequences?
- Regular agenda item/formal records/constant systematic reviews as GB membership changes/officer roles/ including the clerk

# Development Cycle



# In the News, Discussion & Networking

**Ofsted - developments in education inspection:** the link below also accesses other topics e.g. early years, leadership, governors, myths, short inspections

**Inspection and revisions to safeguarding guidance:**

<https://educationinspection.blog.gov.uk/2016/12/07/inspection-and-revisions-to-safeguarding-guidance>

## **Ofsted – Improving Governance**

HMCI commissioned a survey to investigate the challenges facing governing bodies in schools. The report draws on evidence from visits to 24 improving primary, secondary and special schools that are situated in some of the poorest areas of the country and look at their governance arrangements.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-governance>

## **Admission arrangements** – must be published on school website

- Foundation schools & voluntary-aided schools must publish the school's admission arrangements each year & keep the information on the website for the whole school year.
- Community schools & voluntary-controlled schools - If the local authority decides your admissions, write that parents should contact the local authority to find out about admission arrangements.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/what-maintained-schools-must-publish-online#history>

## **What maintained schools must publish online -**

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/what-maintained-schools-must-publish-online>

Please be sure that your Pupil Premium, Sports Premium and Yr7 catch up funding are compliant with this guidance

# In the News, Discussion & Networking

**School attendance parental responsibility measures** - Statutory guidance, required by law to have regard to the relevant parts of this guidance -

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/581539/School\\_attendance\\_parental\\_responsibility\\_measures\\_statutory\\_guidance.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/581539/School_attendance_parental_responsibility_measures_statutory_guidance.pdf)

## **Staying in Control of your School's Destiny:**

- Joining a group of schools
- Joining a Multi Academy Trust
- Forming a Multi Academy Trust



<http://www.nga.org.uk/Guidance/School-structures-and-constitution/Forming-or-joining-a-group-of-schools.aspx>

**Governorline** - national helpline offering free, confidential and independent advice, information and support to school governors, clerks and individuals involved directly in the governance of schools and multi-academy trusts in England.

<http://www.brightgreenlearning.co.uk/news/governorline-fantastic-support-ser-governors>

# Governance Handbook

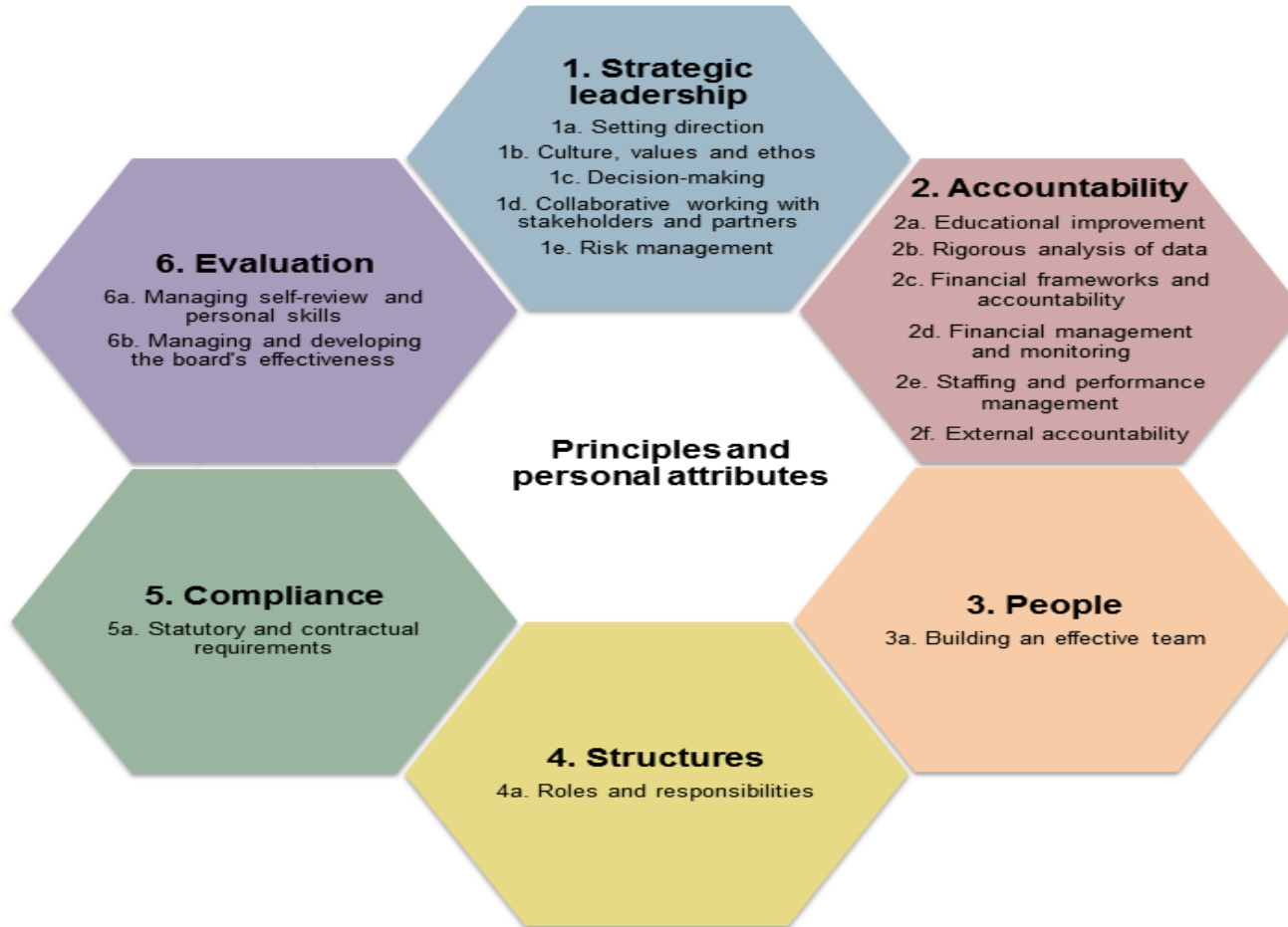
New Governance Handbook January 2017 now available:

- *The latest update of **the Governance Handbook** has a new structure which is based on the six key features of effective governance. The six key features are also used to structure the Competency Framework so that the two documents complement each other.*

Link to:

- ***The Competency Framework** sets out the knowledge, skills and behaviours that boards need for effective governance. The framework is structured around the six features of effective governance which are described in the governance handbook and is organised into the skills which are essential for everyone on the board; the additional skills that chairs need; and those which at least someone on the board should have. Boards are advised to read it alongside the Governance Handbook and in academies, the Academies Financial Handbook. They will need to consider which knowledge and skill areas outlined in the framework are most important for their context and determine the extent to which it applies to any committees they have appointed, including within multi-academy trusts to any local governing bodies, depending on the range of functions delegated to them.*

# Governance Handbook



# Dates for your diary

## **Chairs Conference:**

- 10.3.17 Ashford International Hotel 9-1pm

## **Clerks Conference**

- 8.3.17 Ashford International Hotel 9-1pm

## **National Chairs Development Programme**

Next cohort commences 3.2.17 at Ashford Chamber of Commerce. Contact Hampshire governor services if you are interested.

The course costs £399 - £320 scholarship may be available (2017) - school need to fund £79.