Welcome to the Autumn edition of The Governor Magazine. This September is an exciting time for the Governance Division as we move into The Education People. We look forward to welcoming you to this year’s training events and we hope you will look at the new bespoke training courses we have on offer this year, Vision and Values, Understanding Governance and our new Website Workshop.

I am delighted to welcome Jude Johnson to our team as the new North Kent Area Governance Officer. Jude is an experienced Chair of Governors who has led her school through a federation process and is excited to be supporting schools in North Kent. I am sure you will give her a warm welcome at our upcoming District Governor Briefings. We also said farewell and thank you to Sue Hill, Clerking Service Manager, at the end of the summer term. Sue has lead the Clerking Service for 9 years and the service has grown significantly under her leadership. I am sure Governors and Clerks will join us in wishing Sue all the best for her retirement!

I am also delighted to welcome Medway Governors to this publication of The Governor. The Education People are now supporting Governance in Medway and we look forward to working and meeting you all at upcoming training sessions.

Thank you for engaging with our survey over the summer on ways in which we can shape our service going forward to ensure it meets your needs and gives you the tools to continue the excellent work you do supporting the children and young people in Kent.

We would like to hear from you and welcome your contributions or suggestions for future issues of The Governor. Please contact us at: The Governor, Room 2.18 Sessions House, County Hall, County Road, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 1XQ or email leadershipgovernancecentral@theeducationpeople.org
Matt Dunkley CBE, Corporate Director - Education and Young People’s Services

As usual at the start of the new school year we provide a summary of the provisional school results for all key stages and emerging national results. In the case of GCSE and post 16 the data is very provisional until more information is published later in the autumn – please can I encourage those schools who have not shared their data with Management Information to do so as soon as possible. Overall the performance in 2018 is very positive with sustained performance at Key Stage 1 and improvements in outcomes for the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 2.

Early Years Foundation Stage

In 2018, the proportion of children in Kent achieving a good level of development (GLD) was 75.3%, which is an improvement of 1 percentage point compared with 2017 outcomes. Outcomes against this measure have improved by 2.3 percentage points since 2015.

Key Stage 1

In 2018, Kent has been successful in maintaining outcomes at the expected standard in line with those in 2017 and has increased the proportion of pupils exceeding the expected standard in mathematics at Key Stage 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KS1 % At the expected standard +</th>
<th>2016 Kent</th>
<th>National</th>
<th>2017 Kent</th>
<th>National</th>
<th>provisional Kent</th>
<th>Kent variation +/- from 2017</th>
<th>provisional National</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading exp+</td>
<td>78.2</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>78.8</td>
<td>75.5</td>
<td>78.1</td>
<td>-0.7</td>
<td>not yet available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading GD</td>
<td>24.6</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>25.2</td>
<td>26.5</td>
<td>+0.4</td>
<td>not yet available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing exp+</td>
<td>71.3</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>72.3</td>
<td>68.2</td>
<td>73.0</td>
<td>+0.7</td>
<td>not yet available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing GD</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>+0.4</td>
<td>not yet available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics exp+</td>
<td>77.5</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>78.4</td>
<td>75.1</td>
<td>78.7</td>
<td>+0.3</td>
<td>not yet available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics GD</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>+1.3</td>
<td>not yet available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RWM+combined</td>
<td>66.6</td>
<td>60.3</td>
<td>68.3</td>
<td>63.7</td>
<td>68.8</td>
<td>+0.5</td>
<td>not yet available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RWM combined GD</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>not available</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>+0.6</td>
<td>not yet available</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- 68.8% of Kent pupils met or exceeded the expected standard in English Reading, English Writing and Mathematics combined, which is similar to 2017. The proportion of pupils who exceeded the expected standard against this measure improved in 2017.
- In English Reading, 78.1% of pupils met or exceeded the expected standard which is similar to outcomes in 2017. The proportion of pupils who exceeded the expected standard is in line with 2017 attainment.
- In English Writing, the proportion of pupils who met or exceeded the expected standard was 73%, which is a slight improvement on 2017 outcomes. The proportion of pupils who exceeded the expected standard remained in line with 2017 outcomes.
- 78.7% of pupils in Kent met or exceeded the expected standard in Mathematics, which is the same as 2017. 22% of pupils exceeded the expected standard in 2018, which is an improvement on 2017 outcomes.
Key Stage 2

In 2018, provisional data show attainment in Kent improved at the expected standard for all subjects apart from mathematics and grammar, punctuation and spelling. The proportion of pupils in Kent who exceeded the expected standard increased across all subjects.

The proportion of pupils who met or exceeded the expected standard in English Reading, English Writing and Mathematics combined increased to 66.5% which is an improvement of 1.4 percentage points since 2017 and above the provisional national average of 64%. In relation to gender, 69.7% of girls achieved the expected standard for combined attainment compared with 63.4% of boys.

In 2018, Kent’s provisional English Reading, English Writing and Mathematics combined attainment was above the attainment element of the government floor standard of 65% and this continues the positive trajectory at the end of Key Stage 2.

The proportion of pupils who exceeded the expected standard in English Reading, English Writing and Mathematics combined also improved in 2018 to 10.9%.

Individual subjects:

- In **English Reading**, 76.8% of pupils in Kent met or exceeded the expected standard, compared to 75.0% against the provisional national data. This is an improvement of 1.7 percentage points since 2017. The proportion of girls who met or exceeded the expected standard was 80.4% compared with 73.3% of boys.

- In **English Writing**, 81.5% of Kent pupils met or exceeded the expected standard, compared to 78.0% against the provisional national. Attainment shows slight improvement on 2017 outcomes. Against this measure, 86.8% of girls achieved the expected standard compared with 76.4% of boys.

- 75.3% of pupils in Kent met or exceeded the expected standard in **Mathematics** which is just below with the provisional national of 76.0%. In 2018, 75.9% of girls achieved the expected standard compared with 74.8% of boys.

- In **Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling**, 75.8% of pupils in Kent met or exceeded the expected standard in, which is below the provisional national of 78.0% and the weakest attainment outcome when compared with the provisional national data. Against this measure, 80.0% of girls achieved the expected standard compared with 71.7% of boys.

### KS2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Combined RWM exp+</strong></td>
<td>58</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>66.5</td>
<td>+1.5</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Combined RWM high</strong></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>+1.9</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Reading exp+</strong></td>
<td>70</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>76.8</td>
<td>+1.8</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reading high</strong></td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>30.1</td>
<td>+3.1</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Writing exp+</strong></td>
<td>80</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>81.5</td>
<td>+0.5</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Writing Greater Depth</strong></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>+3.5</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mathematics exp+</strong></td>
<td>72</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>75.3</td>
<td>-0.7</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mathematics high</strong></td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>+0.6</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GPS exp+</strong></td>
<td>73</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>75.8</td>
<td>-0.2</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GPS high</strong></td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>31.7</td>
<td>+1.7</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Above national
- In line with national
- Below provisional national
GCSE

This year has seen the roll out of further GCSE’s following the new grading system and more demanding examinations. However provisional results show that GCSE performance in Kent is just above 2017 performance in terms of pupils attaining good GCSE outcomes.

The data is still very provisional and subject to further change. The Progress 8 measure, which is used for the floor standard, will be published later in the Autumn term along with national comparative data.

The proportion of pupils achieving standard passes in both English and mathematics, is 62.9%. The national figure for 2018 is not yet available. So far, 41% of schools have reported improvement in 2018 compared to the previous year’s performance.

Post 16

This year has seen the roll out of further A Levels using the new grading system.

Whilst the pupil population attending sixth forms reduced by 2.3% this year, the number studying Applied General and Technical qualifications reduced by 24%, with those young people attending sixth form predominantly studying A Levels.

The figures below compare 2018 data returned by schools with similar data from this point last year. This provisional data has not been validated and will be subject to change when the final validated DfE performance tables are available in January 2018. Provisional results for 2018 show that Kent schools have maintained standards and continue to be largely in line with the national averages for post 16 performance.

Congratulations to all the schools that have seen improved outcomes for pupils this year.

Ofsted Update: 91% of Kent Schools now Good or Outstanding

As we begin a new school year I would also like to summarise the position at the end of July 2018 on the quality of education in Kent schools, as reflected in the most recent Ofsted inspection judgements.

The latest Ofsted inspection figures show continued further improvements in the quality of education in Kent schools.

Overall, 91% of schools in Kent are now rated good or outstanding compared to 89% nationally. This includes 22% of schools judged to be outstanding and 69% judged to be good. This continues the good progress we have made over the last couple of years.

This overall figure includes 92% of Primary schools judged to be good or outstanding, 90% of Secondary schools, 91% of Special schools and 29% of PRUs in Kent. Also, 97% of Early Years settings are good or outstanding, which is an excellent position.

In Kent, there are now 382 good and 122 outstanding schools, 46 schools requiring improvement (including 32 Primary schools, 8 Secondary schools, 2 Special School and 4 PRUs) and two schools remain in a category of concern, out of a total of 553 schools that have a current inspection result.

In Kent, 20% of Primary schools are outstanding, 73% are good, 7% require improvement and 0.2% are inadequate. 32% of Secondary schools are outstanding, 58% are good, and 7% require improvement and 1% are inadequate. 27% of Special schools are outstanding and 64% are good and 9% require improvement.

It is encouraging to note that Kent has more outstanding provision at 22% compared to 21% nationally, we are also above for good provision at 69% compared to 68% nationally. This means that 92.5% of Kent pupils are now attending a good or outstanding school, a total of 203,654 pupils, an increase of 6,717 from last year.

Once again thank you to all the governors and senior leadership teams who continue to work so hard to ensure every child goes to a good school and we achieve our vision that Kent will be one of the best places to be educated in the country.
I am very pleased to confirm that The Education People officially launched on 1 September.

The company will be the new home of the following services that currently sat within the Children, Young People and Education Directorate:

- Early Years
- Education Safeguarding
- Governor Support
- Outdoor Education
- School Improvement
- Schools Financial Services
- Skills and Employability

The Education People has its own bespoke website: www.theeducationpeople.org and I would encourage you to visit it to look at what they can provide as a one-stop shop for education services for your school.

Matt Dunkley CBE
Corporate Director
Children, Young People and Education

James Roberts, Chief Executive Officer

I am delighted to be writing this update as the new Chief Executive Officer of The Education People. As you read this we will have launched the company, with our ‘go live’ date set as the 1st September 2018. It is a genuine privilege to be leading the company as we strive to become the foremost provider of educational services across the country. I am truly excited by this challenge and, from my interaction with staff across all service areas, am thoroughly convinced that it can be achieved.

The success of the company will be built upon a secure foundation - the exceptional quality of service and support that we currently provide, which has delivered exceptional outcomes for the young people of Kent. We will be developing and refining our service offer in partnership with schools and education providers so that we are dynamic and responsive to their needs. The surplus revenue generated through this traded activity will be reinvested to further enhance and develop our services. This continuous drive for excellence is what energises us and I have the utmost confidence in my team to deliver on this goal. I am eagerly anticipating sharing our successes with you in the near future, as we endeavour to make The Education People the one-stop shop for professional education services, support and products across the country.

There have been some slight changes since the most recent update published in the spring edition of The Governor. Firstly, and most significantly, the launch date was rescheduled to the beginning of September. This decision was taken to ensure that the company was suitably prepared for launch, including the full staffing of the Executive Team with our Director of Finance, Mirela Holmes, joining at the same time as me in early July.
Secondly our offer has been slightly changed by separating out some of our provision, and through the descoping of the educational psychology service which will remain within KCC. This has now created 9 service divisions that form our offer to schools and education providers:

- Early Years and Childcare
- Education Safeguarding
- Governor Services
- Outdoor Learning
- Primary School Improvement (including Equality and Inclusion)
- Professional Development (including NQT Induction)
- School Financial Services
- Secondary School Improvement (including Skills & Employability)
- Specialist Employment

We feel that this has delivered much improved clarity to our offer and enabled us to provide even greater focus to some of our highly popular and successful products, consultancy and training. We hope that as we engage with you more closely in the future you will discover more of this yourself first-hand, but in the interim please take the opportunity to read more about us and the services we provide by exploring our website – www.theeducationpeople.org. As I mentioned above, we are firmly committed to working in partnership with all our current customers across the education spectrum so please do not hesitate to contact us to provide feedback on our services and suggest new products and support packages that we can develop. I very much look forward to working with you!

James Roberts
Chief Executive Officer, The Education People
Since 2016, the principal measure of secondary school performance has been Progress 8, which is, at first glance fairer, as it considers the academic baseline of the child on arrival in Year 7, but it’s also more complex. Here, we attempt to demystify Progress 8.

Let’s begin with clarity over some terminology. When we talk about attainment, we are talking about the actual grades (letters or numbers) achieved by a student. When we talk about progress, we are talking about the distance travelled from a particular baseline; in this case, the results from SATS at the end of Year 6. When we talk about achievement, or using OFSTED language outcomes, we are considering both.

So to calculate Progress 8, we actually begin with another measure, Attainment 8.

The Attainment 8 score is calculated from the sum of four “baskets” or “buckets” for each pupil:

- **ENGLISH** – double weighted – best of English Language or Literature
- **MATHS** – double weighted
- **EBACC3** – three highest point scores from any of the EBacc qualifications in science subjects, computer science, history, geography, and languages.
- **OPEN3** – the three highest point scores in any three other subjects.

Grades for English, Maths and EBacc subjects are now numbers which reflect their points scores. Other qualifications might still be reported as letter (A*, A, B, etc.) or titled (Distinction*, Distinction, Merit, etc.) grades, in which case the Department of Education (DFE) publish a table which contains their numerical value.

The next bit is easy! Simply add together the scores for the best eight qualifications, following the guidelines above, making sure you double the scores for the best of English Lang or Lit and Maths, and you will arrive at an **Attainment 8** points score.

**Worked example:**

Jane achieved a 6 in English Language, a 5 in English Literature, a 5 in Maths, a 6 in Double Science, a 5 in History, a C in GCSE Music, a B in GCSE Drama and a Merit in BTEC Sport. If we total her attainment using the guidance above, Jane scores 12+10+17+16 = 55. The calculation in the final Open basket is the most complicated – the GCSEs in Music and Drama are ‘unreformed’ (still letter grades) and we use a table to determine the points they score, which are 4 and 5.5 respectively. She also gets a Merit in BTEC Sport which also scores 5.5 points, and then there is her English Lit score of 5, which wasn’t used in the English basket, but is better than the 4 she scored in Music. Her three best scores here are 5.5+5.5+5 = 16.

Now we have an Attainment 8 score, we can calculate **Progress 8**. Each year, after the results have been analysed and distributed, the DFE will publish a table of coefficients, taking the Key Stage 2 Fine Points Score (from Year 6 SATS) and from each achievement band, publishing the average Attainment 8 score those children achieved. This effectively becomes a ‘break-even point’ for progress. If the child scores higher than this, then progress has been made above that which would be expected. If the child scores lower, then they have made less progress than would be expected. To calculate an individual Progress 8 score, the expected Attainment 8 score is deducted from the actual Attainment 8 score, and this figure is divided by 10 to take account of the 10 counting elements (8 subjects with English and Maths doubled).
Worked example:

Jane had an actual Attainment 8 score of 55. She had a Key Stage 2 Fine Points score of 5.1, which (based on final 2017 coefficients) indicate her expected Attainment 8 score was 52.52. To calculate her Progress 8 we do 55 - 52.51 = +2.49, which, divided by 10 gives Jane a Progress 8 score of +0.25.

A school’s Progress 8 score is a mean of the individual Progress 8 scores of their students. A score of +1 indicates that, on average, every child scored one grade higher than expectation, across eight subjects, which is a magnificent performance. At time of writing, the new Secretary of State is consulting on what his acceptable level of progress is going to be in the future, but for 2017, the floor standard was -0.5 – where every child, on average, scored half a grade lower than expectation across eight subjects.

When the performance tables are published, schools are banded into quintiles based on their progress score. About 12% of schools are classified as Well Above Average; about 18% of schools are Above Average; about 40% of schools are Average; 18% of schools are Below Average; and 12% of schools are Well Below Average.

Given the shift from an attainment headline (5 GCSEs at A*-C) to a progress headline, we might expect the performance tables to reflect a more balanced picture with grammar and non-selective schools being evenly distributed through the tables. However, that is not the case, and the grammar schools, as well as obviously having the higher Attainment 8 scores, generally have the higher Progress 8 scores as well. Many reasons have been suggested; for instance, the role that special needs has as a barrier to making expected progress. It’s certainly interesting to note that schools with the lowest attainment on entry from Year 6 SATS, generally have the lowest Progress 8 scores. It’s early days with this measure, and while it has potential, it does not yet reflect a level playing field for grammar and non-selective schools.

Predicting a Progress 8 score is fraught with difficulty because it is a relative measure - the coefficients (the expected score based on the Key Stage 2 Fine Points Score) change every year to reflect the performance of that actual cohort. Your headteacher will know attainment predictions and on results day in August will know performance on attainment measures, but they will not know how that plays out with Progress 8 until the end of September when the Department of Education publish the unvalidated performance data.

Because Progress 8 is a mean average across eight subjects and the entire cohort, schools must continue to focus on the performance of all of their students, keeping as many engaged in all eight elements. The impact of missing scores (for instance, not having three counting elements in EBacc3) can be significant. The impact of missing children, who might be educated elsewhere, or at least not engaged in the Progress 8 curriculum, are even more stark. The DFE have recognised that schools may experience student disengagement through no fault of their own and have, from 2018, promised to mitigate the impact of outliers on the Progress 8 score. We know they are likely to cap the negative score but we do not know at what level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions Governors can raise with Headteachers and ‘Raising Standards Leaders’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Are all students scoring in all eight slots? If not, where are the gaps and what are the reasons for the gaps?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. How many children are educated in off-site provision? What is their curriculum?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. How many children in Year 11 are listed in the September census, but not the January census? What are the reasons? If elective home-education is cited, explore this because removing an underperforming student from roll can benefit performance measures, but can also represent unethical practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. If your headteacher gives you a Progress 8 prediction, challenge the basis of this prediction. Is it based on the last published coefficients matched with the points scores from that year?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
‘Keeping Children Safe in Education’ (KCSIE) 2018 has been published and will come into effect in September 2018. The DFE published the guidance in May allowing schools and settings a chance to understand the document, update procedures and adapt to the revised guidance in good time for its implementation.

While the guidance is largely ready for implementation (from September 2018) there is the potential for a few changes given that new ‘Working Together to Safeguard Children’ 2018 guidance is yet to be published. Essentially, the two documents are being brought in line with one another, to ensure a cohesive guidance structure when it comes to safeguarding. It is also important to note that given the updates to KCSIE, other documents that routinely reference it may also be updated in the coming months.

There are some important changes in the 2018 guidance; schools and settings need to ensure that they have read and understood these changes and additions as they will impact upon how the school functions; most strikingly, at the head of the document, the DFE are placing more of a legal duty on education to follow the guidance.

KCSIE 2018 gives instruction about what a setting MUST do and what it SHOULD do. These terms place an aspect of legality on the practices and procedures of the setting. Essentially, if within the guidance an action contains a direction of MUST, then it is to be completed without fail. If the action SHOULd be carried out, then the setting MUST undertake the action ‘unless there is a good reason not to’.

The updated guidance refers to the Children and Social Work Act 2017 which, throughout the guidance, places more emphasis on the unique and often increased vulnerabilities of safeguarding Looked After Children and those who have previously been Looked After. Additionally, there is further clarification, amongst other issues, about the use of ‘Reasonable Force’, how many contact numbers should be recorded for students, DBS checking of parents hosting exchange students, the need to reflect your school’s specific circumstances and community within policies, updates with regards to Online Safety and reference to safeguarding priorities such as homelessness, child criminal exploitation and domestic abuse.

There is also a new section which highlights the growing concerns around Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment; part 5 addresses how schools should respond to incidents of sexual violence or sexual harassment and how there is a need for risk assessment following reported incidents.

The new guidance has come with an informative and helpful Annexe H which lists the changes between the 2016 and 2018 guidance documents. The NSPCC has produced a summary of the changes: www.nspcc.org.uk/what-we-do/news-opinion/summary-key-changes-keeping-children-safe-in-education-2018/. The Kent Online Safety adviser has also produced a summary of the key changes with regards to online safety within KCSIE 2018: https://www.theeducationpeople.org/blog/online-safety-within-keeping-children-safe-in-education-2018/

The Education Safeguarding Team encourages all concerned with safeguarding in education settings to read the new guidance and annexe, alongside other useful documents such as that produced by the NSPCC to assist in updating policy and procedures, the implementation of the new guidance and most of all, the continuation of providing excellent standards in safeguarding the children in your care.
The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) was implemented on the 25th May 2018 and sets out requirements for how organisations, including schools, need to handle personal data. Personal data is defined by the ICO as “any information relating to an identifiable person who can be directly or indirectly identified in particular by reference to an identifier”. Under the new regulations, organisations, including schools, which breach the requirements will be liable for fines of 4 per cent of their annual revenue or €20m (around £17.7m), whichever is larger.

Governors work at a strategic level, and in most cases will not be handling any identifiable personal information. Whilst this means that data protection breaches are unlikely to occur, there may still be considerable risks regarding breaches of confidentiality; this poses a significant reputation risk to schools and can undermine confidence in the governing body if breaches were to occur. It’s therefore important that any information governors have access to, whether electronically or otherwise, as part of their role is managed with caution, and that clear expectations regarding professional practice is in place.

Useful links for further information

- KCC Information Governance on Kelsi
- ICO: General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) FAQs for the education sector
- TES: GDPR for leaders
- DfE: Data Protection Toolkit for Schools
With the Primary School Sport Premium now doubled, is your school really maximising its use?

Tim Sells, Project Officer (Primary PE and School Sport)

In the academic year 2017/18, all primary schools throughout the Country received double their normal allowance for Sports Premium Funding. Schools went from receiving £8000 plus £5 per pupil to £16000 plus £10 per pupil which is a staggering amount to spend on School Sport/PE and Physical Activity, but are you aware of how this funding is being spent? And more importantly, do you know what impact this is having on the school with regards to academic performance and/or helping with other whole school issues?
There is a real concern that many schools are unsure of how to allocate this funding and more worryingly that many governors are still unaware of the five intended outcomes of this money, namely:

- Engagement of all pupils in regular physical activity; kick starting healthy lifestyles
- Raised profile of PES as a tool for whole school improvement
- Increased confidence & knowledge of all staff in teaching PES
- Broader experience of a range of sports and activities offered to all pupils
- Increased participation in competitive sports

Do you know if this is happening in your school?
If you do, are you monitoring it and ensuring it is being completed to a high standard?

Governors will now need to ensure that the school’s finances are properly managed and can evaluate how the school is using the Pupil Premium, Year 7 Literacy and Numeracy Catch-Up Premium, Primary PE and Sport Premium and Special Educational Needs funding.

To be judged as outstanding, governors will need to systematically challenge senior leaders so that the effective deployment of staff and resources, including the Pupil Premium and the Primary PE and Sport Premium secure excellent outcomes for pupils.

Governors must not shy away from challenging leaders about variations in outcomes for pupil groups and between disadvantaged.

Here are a few questions that you should be able to answer as a governor:

- What specific outcomes does the school aim to achieve with the PSSP? For example: improving progress and skills, better attendance, increasing opportunities and activities
- Has there been an impact on whole school improvement as a result of the PSSP Funding? If so, how do you know and what evidence do you have to support this?
- How is the PSSP being used to enhance, rather than maintain existing provision?
- How will these improvements be sustainable in the long term? What will the impact of the changes that the school is making now, be on pupils arriving at the school in five to 10 years’ time?
- Where external specialist coaches are being used in curriculum time, are they working alongside class teachers to improve their skills and securing long-term impact?
- What has been the most notable impact of the PSSP in terms of outcomes for your pupils? How do you measure these?
- How has the PSSP Funding impacted on attainment in national curriculum physical education?

To enable you to answer the above, the Kent Sport & Physical Activity Service (Kent Sport) has created an online resource to help you with everything you need to know about the funding. Kent Sport will also be running FREE governor training throughout the 2018/19 academic term, rolling out the Schools Information Management System (SIMS) Sports Premium intervention (to allow you to measure impact effectively) for schools and supporting Sport England to carry out their Active Lives survey throughout Kent’s schools.

To find out more, please visit [www.kentsport.org/make-sport-happen/sport-in-education/primary-school-premium/](http://www.kentsport.org/make-sport-happen/sport-in-education/primary-school-premium/) or contact Tim Sells tim.sells@kent.gov.uk or telephone 03000 412330
Best
e Endeavours
And
Behaviour

Diana Robinson, SEN Consultant

All schools have a legal duty to use their ‘best endeavours’ to support pupils with SEN. Governors must ensure SEN and behaviour policies consistently fulfil the schools’ legal duties towards disabled pupils. When a pupil is facing permanent exclusion, governors need to be confident that these best endeavours are in place.

The best endeavours duty (Children and Families Act 2014) has been embraced well by schools where the disability or SEN is physical or sensory but where the pupils’ condition is less visible, for instance communication and interaction, social, emotional and mental health needs, school policies are more likely to be successfully challenged through appeal and decisions over turned.

This article based on the recent and extensive experience I have gained through providing SEN Expert advice to Independent Review Panels (IRPs) after Governor Disciplinary Panels have upheld the headteacher decision to permanently exclude a pupil. Since October 2016 I have provided evidence on many cases, most of which were quashed by the IRP. This indicates that governors have an insecure understanding of the parameters they must consider, including their best endeavours duty, when holding their review meetings.

There are two very clear and entirely reciprocal guidance statements for governors to follow. The guidance on exclusions states that headteachers and governors ‘must take account of their statutory duties in relation to special educational needs (SEN) when administering the exclusion process’ (para 11) and the SEND Code or Practice: 0-25 states they ‘must have regard to the Code or Practice. This means that whenever they are taking decisions they must give consideration to what the Code says. They cannot ignore it. They must fulfil their statutory duties towards children and young people with SEN or disabilities in the light of the guidance set out in it’ (page 12)

The Code of Practice: 0-25 sets out that

- All Boards have legal duties in relation to pupils with SEN and it is their responsibility to ensure that delegated functions are carried out
- If a pupil has special educational needs they must have special educational provision made for them
- Schools should use their best endeavours to make sure that a child with SEN gets the support they need – this means doing everything they can to meet children and young people’s SEN (para 6.2)
- When determining the special educational provision required schools should work on an assess, plan, do, review cycle and involve the parents in that planning with at least 3 meetings a year.

So how would governors know these best endeavours are in place for a pupil with a social, emotional or mental health (SEMH) need or a communication and interaction need like autistic spectrum disorder, which are the types of need most often seen in the permanent exclusion cases?

There are two simple checks they can make. The first is anticipatory and is how the policies you have (particularly the SEN Policy/Information Report, and the Behaviour and Discipline policy) are compliant with regulations and the Equality Act 2010

- The format for the SEN policy is set out in regulations and there is a fully compliant template for schools to use and adapt on the KELSI website
The Scheme for Financing Schools is the statutory document that governs the relationship on ‘all matters financial’ between the Local Authority (LA) and maintained schools (including PRUs) in Kent. It is the umbrella document that contains the rules and regulations which other finance guidance feeds from including the Financial Controls. It does not apply to Academies.

The Department for Education (DfE) has made some directed changes to the Scheme for Financing Schools relating to loan schemes. They have removed the option of giving schools revenue loans; previously our preferred method of managing deficit schools. As a consequence of this we have now introduced Licensed Deficits in our Finance Scheme for schools either in deficit or forecasting a deficit.

Section 5 of our Financial Controls, Guidance for Schools in Financial Difficulty has been replaced by Guidance for Schools in Financial Difficulty incorporating the Licensed Deficit Application to accommodate these changes.

Please ensure you familiarise yourself with this updated financial control. If you are in a current deficit position or forecasting a deficit you will need to complete a Licensed Deficit Application and send it in with your three year budget plan by 31st May 2018.

For further information and guidance please contact Schools Financial services on 03000 4151415.

These revisions were agreed at the Schools Funding Forum on 27th April 2018 and have been uploaded to Kelsi.
What complaints might a member of staff raise during the course of their employment?

Even in the happiest of workplaces there may be occasions where an Employee has a concern about their working environment or working relationships.

These may fall under several related, but subtly different, areas:

**GRIEVANCE:** This may include concerns an Employee raises about their work, working conditions and managerial decisions or complaints about the actions of managers or colleagues.

**BULLYING:** This term may describe a range of offensive, intimidating, or insulting behaviour or the abuse or misuse of power to undermine, humiliate or injure the recipient.

**HARASSMENT:** This has a legal definition under the 2010 Equality Act and describes unwanted conduct affecting the dignity of an individual in the workplace related to personal characteristics (e.g. their age, gender, race, sexual orientation or any disability they may have).

In maintained Schools this policy should be agreed and approved by the Governing Body. In Academies the responsibility for determining the procedure may be delegated.

Who is responsible for the management of staff complaints?

On a day to day basis the management of staff complaints is an operational issue and is delegated to the Headteacher.

Often minor complaints, concerns and disagreements can be resolved informally through discussion between the parties concerned. It may also be appropriate for the Headteacher / Line Manager to facilitate a discussion between the parties with the aim of seeking a swift and early resolution to a complaint.

Early informal action is often the best way to resolve issues before complaints escalate or the working relationship deteriorates.

Where it is not possible to resolve a complaint informally or where the seriousness of the complaint warrants, an Employee may wish to raise a formal written complaint.

When might governors become involved?

When a formal grievance is raised Governors may be required to fulfil several different roles. This may include hearing the complaint in a formal grievance meeting, acting as investigating officer or serving as a member of a grievance appeal panel.

Where a complaint is raised against the Headteacher it may appropriate for the Chair of Governors to become involved at an early stage to facilitate an informal discussion between the parties. Where is it not possible to reach a resolution through informal conversations, the Chair may also hear the grievance under the formal stage of the procedure.

What is the role of governors in determining the School’s policy?

Every School / Academy should have agreed procedures for managing concerns raised by Employees.

It is recommended that any policy makes provision for concerns to be resolved initially through informal action. The policy should also allow for a complaint to be escalated and considered formally where necessary and for the Employee to raise an appeal where they remain dissatisfied with the outcome.

Any policy must be consistent with the ACAS Code of Practice on Discipline and Grievance.

When is the role of a governor in hearing a formal grievance meeting?

The grievance meeting is an opportunity for the Employee to explain their concerns in full.

The discussion should be focused on resolving the complaint – so it is important to explore what outcome the Employee is seeking and consider what measures might be put in place to bring about a resolution to the concerns.
Depending on the nature of the complaint it may also be appropriate to adjourn the meeting to gather additional information or commission a fuller investigation.

The outcome of the grievance meeting should be communicated in writing and state what, if any, elements of the grievance are upheld and the reasons for this. The outcome letter should also detail any actions that are proposed to resolve the situation.

Where there is evidence of misconduct on the part of an Employee this should be addressed under the school’s disciplinary procedures.

**What measures might be put in place to resolve a complaint?**

It is important to give careful consideration to actions which might resolve a complaint and enable all parties to move forward.

These may include:
- Providing an apology to the aggrieved party
- Agreeing future conduct which is acceptable to all
- Agreeing how future communications will take place
- Agreeing alternative work patterns or practices
- Exploring counselling or workplace mediation

**What is the role of a governor in considering a grievance appeal?**

In considering an appeal the role of the Governor is to review the outcome of the grievance on the basis of the grounds for appeal presented by the Employee. They may determine either to uphold the previous decision either in part or full or to uphold the Employee’s appeal.

**What role can mediation play in resolving complaints?**

The is a voluntary process facilitated by a trained mediator which aims to assist parties in reaching a resolution to workplace disputes.

The focus is not on apportioning blame but on enabling the parties to move forward in reaching an agreement about how they will work together in the future.

**What role can school leaders and governors play in promoting a positive working environment and work culture?**

Whilst it will never be possible to eliminate all the causes of workplace complaints – there are actions which school leaders and governors can take to foster a more positive working culture.

These include:
- Treating staff fairly and consistently
- Promoting a culture of open and transparent communication
- Showing appreciation for the contribution that individuals make
- Inviting and listening to the ideas of all staff
- Gathering feedback from staff to identify any potential areas of concern
- Addressing any concerns early before they impact on morale and working relationships

The Schools’ Personnel Service has a suite of model policies for the management of all HR issues in Schools and Academies – including staff grievances. They’re also able to provide advice and support to Headteachers / Governing Bodies in managing all aspects of staff complaints and offer mediation services to Schools and Academies. Please visit their website www.the-sps.co.uk for further information.
What they do, how to find one and other important points

Dr Peter Gregory, National Leader of Governance Advocate (Kent & Medway)

NLGs have existed for several years now, but I still meet governors (and professional educators) who aren’t sure what they do so I’m pleased to explain this in this article.

Firstly, NLGs are Chairs of Governors in good or outstanding schools who have demonstrated to DfE that they can lead governing bodies to ensure the education of the pupils in their school improves. They also have good understanding of education, analytical skills as well as inter (and intra) personal skills. For me, their most admirable quality is their open generosity as they freely invest up to five full days each year in order to work alongside other governors. Once they have been designated by DfE, they are able to undertake a range of deployments. These vary tremendously as the contexts and circumstances demand. NLGs are independent of LA, Diocese or Trusts.

What do NLGs do?

Depending on the needs of the deployment, they try to develop the Chair, Vice Chair or groups of governors to bring about identified improvements. Sometimes this is through a series of coaching or mentoring conversations – usually in a venue and at a time which is convenient to all. NLGs don’t ‘take over’ although sometimes they are invited to become Chair for a specified period (not usually longer than a year) in order to strengthen the governing body and ensure other individuals are able to take on the role after that time.
In the past year some of the Kent and Medway NLGs have undertaken a deployment involving one or more of these activities within the system leadership team - providing school to school support:

- Supporting the Chair to focus more closely on raising standards and leading improvement
- Helping the Chair to understand and interpret strategic school/academy data
- Mentoring/coaching a Chair to develop solutions to identified problems or in providing more effective challenge to senior leaders
- Helping the Chair build his/her relationship with the Headteacher/Principal
- Providing bespoke support for a new Chair of Governors
- Helping to redefine and restructure the GB to work more effectively
- Joining an IEB/GB for a fixed period of time (usually ‘coasting’, RI/Inadequate or soon likely to become)
- Undertaking External Reviews of Governance (ERGs) by those NLGs who have completed DfE training (although there may be a charge for this activity)

How to find an NLG and commission a deployment to start

At present there isn’t a simple one-stop shop where you’ll find details of all the NLGs working across Kent and Medway – we’re currently working on this! Soon they will appear in a directory of school-to-school support as well as be listed on the Kent and Medway Teaching School Network’s websites and on some of the Teaching School Alliances ones as well. In the meantime, you could approach me as the local NLG Advocate, your LA governor support officer or Diocese Office. Support is available for governors of maintained schools and academies alike – so this resource deserves to be better used for the sake of our pupils.

In terms of who commissions the deployment, sometimes this is one of the folk already mentioned – an LA or Diocese officer but often it’s the Chair themselves, or a colleague on the GB or the Head teacher or…. The list could go on, which is why everyone needs to understand the role, the opportunities and the process: please pass this message on.

In summary, if you would like to talk about some minor issues through with an experienced Chair, or feel you can’t see the wood for the trees in trying to steer through some major issues, you’re able to request or approach a NLG – either directly or through me.

My email address is peter.gregory@canterbury.ac.uk and you’re very welcome to speak confidentially in order to get the support, encouragement and mentoring that you’d like. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Making the Circle Model work for us

Ros Fisher, Chair of Governors, Hadlow Primary School

When I joined the governing body of Hadlow Primary School some years ago, we were using the two teams model. As I found my feet as a new governor, it became clear to me that two teams weren’t really working very well for us – the curriculum team knew all about the outcomes for pupils but virtually nothing about the building or financial health of the school, and vice versa for the finance team. We went looking for an alternative and adopted the circle model to try and even out the knowledge of the governing body. Initially we allocated governor pairs to the four Ofsted areas, plus EYFS, maths and English, and any other areas which we’d identified in the School Improvement Plan as needing a special focus. We found that this worked, but there are many areas of overlap between these categories, so for example the SEND governor and the Outcomes for Pupils pair all found themselves asking the same questions of the SENCO. We also noticed that each governor needs to have a separate, well-defined role to avoid the members of a pair stepping on each other’s toes.

Last year, the natural turnover of membership meant we had several new governors starting together, so to provide mentoring support we experimented with trios in some areas. As a result of our growing experience with the circle model, we came up with a modified structure which takes the guiding principles of the circle and tweaks them to ensure all governors are fully informed about all aspects of the school.

Every governor is attached to a year group or a member of the SLT, and they are responsible for asking all the appropriate questions about that year group or key stage – e.g. is the behaviour policy working, what are the expected outcomes for the group. Each governor also takes responsibility for a subject. With Ofsted inspections looking more at the whole range of subjects taught, we feel it is important to reflect that in our monitoring. In our school every class teacher is also a subject leader, so we monitor the subject which our attached class teacher leads. Year and subject monitoring are grouped together so we have a trio covering years R, 1 and 2, two pairs covering years 3 & 4, and years 5 & 6, and a fourth pair working with the SLT, one governor taking on KS2, Maths and Science and the other taking KS1, English and GPS. Each governor additionally takes an “operations” type role, including a finance and buildings trio, a compliance trio (data protection, safeguarding and business continuity) and four standalone roles (website, training, SEND and policies).

The aim of this reorganisation is to ensure that the governing body receives the same information across the school by working closely with all staff, which will give the whole board a stronger understanding of the school and enable better decision making and a more strategic outlook.
With appraisal time just around the corner you might like to reflect upon and consider the role of the Clerk, the expectations your Board has of them and most importantly, how your Board is helping the Clerk to develop their knowledge and skills.

The support of a trained Professional Clerk can greatly assist with effectiveness and efficiency of the Board – being prepared for the appraisal meeting could be the key to enhancing the abilities of both the Clerk and the Board.


High quality professional clerking is crucial to the effective functioning of the board. The clerk should be the boards’ ‘governance professional’. Their role is not only about good and effective organisation and administration, but also, and more importantly, about helping the board understand its role, functions and legal duties and supporting the chair to enable and facilitate strategic debate and decision making. This is crucial in helping the board exercise its functions expediently and confidently, so that it can stay focused on its core functions.

Boards should set demanding standards for the service they expect from their professional clerk and assure themselves that they are employing a clerk with suitable skills, training and knowledge. The NGA has developed a model job description and person specification. NCTL licenses delivery of a clerks training programme.

The Clerking Competency Framework sets out the knowledge, skills and behaviours required to provide professional clerking to the governing boards of maintained schools, academies and multi-academy trust, it also assists Governing Boards to: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/609971/Clerking_competency_framework.pdf

- understand the role of Professional clerking and how it can improve the quality of governance in an organisation
- help with recruiting a clerk
- set their clerk’s objectives and inform their performance appraisal process
- identify where improvement may be required in the services they receive from their clerk.

With regard to the first of the four competencies “Understanding Governance,” you may like to review the item entitled “A clerk’s reward” which has been kindly provided by a Clerk in Kent.

In Kent we offer a facilitated suite of training and ongoing development opportunities for both new and experienced clerks as follows:

- New Clerks’ Induction
- Producing Professional Minutes
- Managing Hearings and Appeals
- The Professional Clerk
- The Accredited Clerk
- District Clerks Briefings
- Clerks’ Conferences

By engaging with the above resources both the Clerk and Board will be able to set meaningful objectives and inform the performance appraisal process.
A Clerk’s Perspective

Susan Foster, The Education People Clerking Service

As Clerks, I think it is true to say that we live in fear of making a false move and giving false advice or information. Yet before I had even attended my first governors’ meeting I was already doing the wrong thing – but what a lucky mistake it turned out to be!

I became employed as a Clerk to Governors in February 2017 and within the very first few days I was booked to attend a governors’ induction training. In my complete ignorance I never thought to question why I wasn’t going for a clerk’s induction so along I duly trotted. I was warmly welcomed by Tina Gimber, Area Governance Officer, and it was only when we all were asked to introduce ourselves that my error became clear – I was the only clerk in the room!

However, the day turned out to be very enlightening and the discussions shared by new governors soon made me realise that they were as ignorant as I. So, my first lesson well-learned was that there is no need to be over-awed by governors, sometimes the best of whom are not educational experts but simply people who are not too reticent to question “Why?”

I learned that the main role of a governor is to challenge the Headteacher – such an important lesson to learn – and this made me see the true purpose of a governing body. It is not enough to listen to what is happening in our schools and accept it for what it is. With the current financial climate, it is even more vital that every operational decision is fully investigated, always with the School Improvement Plan in mind and the Headteacher must be held to account. Ofsted requirements were discussed, and governors were told to ensure that their meetings reflect challenges to the Headteacher and the impact of decisions made. I wonder how many meetings clerks attend where challenging the Headteacher is clearly missing? We need to remember that it is okay, as a clerk, to provoke challenges – let us not forget my first valuable lesson that governors are normal people too who may need help!

A noticeable feature of the governors’ induction training is how important clerks are. Governors are told to value and trust their clerk and use them as a font of all knowledge. This sounds daunting but even though we don’t know all the answers, we always know where to go to find them out. This is valuable knowledge and we can provide support for people who are often too busy in their daily lives to carry out seemingly tedious research.

My advice to all clerks, new and old, would be to attend a governors’ induction training. There are so many different aspects to learn and valuable points to be reminded of, not least the fact of our worth to the governing body. This instilled me with self-confidence in my new role to be able to attend my first governor meeting with some idea of the ultimate aim. As clerks, I believe we need not only to bear our own duties in mind but additionally we need to think like governors too – the training may have planted a small seed in my mind that one day, when I no longer need to earn a living, that I may even like to become a governor too. All in all, it was a very useful day – and the lunch was good too!
Herne Church of England (Aided) Junior School is a voluntary aided school with a current role of 360 pupils. Over the past five years the school has witnessed a significant change in its position. From an Ofsted report in 2012, stating that the school requires improvement, the school gained outstanding following an Ofsted inspection in March 2016. In addition, the school has repeated that success in a recent Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) (and now confidently finds itself one of the top performing junior schools in Kent.) Much of the transformation is due to the hard work, innovation and excellence of the senior leadership team and all the teaching staff. However, as governors we believed that we had also contributed to the success. Over the previous five years the governing body had undertaken a radical review of its procedures. We had streamlined committees, ensured subject teaching is overviewed by individual governors, made a concerted effort to understand data given to us by the Head Teacher (and Raise online). We have regularly challenged the school in relation to teaching standards, finance and all aspects of the school’s welfare and facilities but hopefully with good humour and constructive support.

Whilst schools are subject to Ofsted inspections (and undoubtedly the performance of the governors is scrutinised as part of that process) there appears little separate inspection of the governing body until things go wrong! We were confident that we were functioning well and that we were adopting good or perhaps even best practice. However, how can this be judged independently? Applying for Governor Mark status seemed to be an excellent way of benchmarking our performance. It has a financial cost and a significant cost in time and effort from the governors. However, it offered an opportunity to ensure that we were reaching the best practical standards and it would also demonstrate our weaknesses and how these could be overcome.

Oddly the decision to seek Governor Mark was not triggered by the successful Ofsted inspection. The full governing body had decided to apply some two years previously as of course the school would not know when an Ofsted inspection might occur. The school was functioning well, with a series of excellent SATS results and improvements in core teaching standards. The governors sought details of the Governor Mark requirements. Effectively the application then required a detailed scrutiny of the governing body’s approach to all aspects of governance with a robust self-evaluation of strengths and weaknesses and the submission of three statements in support (a) a School Improvement Statement (b) a review of community engagement and (c) pupil well-being and safety.

It quickly became apparent that the submission needed to be prepared by a working party of governors who could target the application questions. A subcommittee of four governors was appointed: the chair and vice chair of the full board, the chair of finance and one other experienced governor together with the Head Teacher. We also decided to have the meetings clerked by our professional clerk. This decision proved extremely cost effective as her minutes formed the basis of the
The progress of the application would be brought to the full governing body at each termly meeting. It is important that all the governors are given an opportunity to consider the committee’s deliberations and no one feels excluded from the process.

As a preliminary exercise we completed a self-evaluation tool for Governing Bodies based on the All Party Parliamentary Group’s “Twenty Questions for School Governing Bodies to ask themselves”. The tool now appears on the NGA website and focussed our minds on the areas which were our strengths (and where we needed to improve). It also helped us to identify the evidence that would have to be submitted in support. Where improvement was required we concentrated on the issues.

When considering the Governor Mark application, the immediate reaction is perhaps first to complete the evidence grid. However, we thought that the easier approach would be to complete the three statements. We had a brainstorming meeting for each statement. The guidance required five questions to be answered; identify an issue, what the governors decided to do about it, what action was taken by the school in response, how did the governors monitor progress and what was the impact of the strategy? In each module we concentrated on one piece of evidence. You may be keen to show the breadth of your success, but the inspector prefers quality not quantity.

Our clerk’s minutes enabled one of the team to prepare each statement. We decided to prepare the statement in a bullet rather than narrative form. You are limited in the number of words (no more than 1000) and we needed to highlight the issues and answers quickly and clearly.

The evidence grid is more complicated. Our application required consideration of three elements

1. **Strategic Leadership** - The governing board sets the strategic direction of the school and has a central role in the leadership and management of the school and ensures that the school complies with its statutory responsibilities and requirements for the Curriculum, Equalities and SEND

2. **Strengths and weaknesses** - The governors have a good understanding of the quality of provision and school improvement and how its performance compares locally and nationally with a self-review and innovation to improve performance

3. **Support and Challenge** - The governing board provides effective support to the head teacher and staff and demonstrates appropriate challenge. This has now been expanded to include Organisation and Teamwork and Recruitment and Retention

The sub questions to each section are detailed and required us to evaluate how well the governors are performing, categorising your answers to best practice, fully compliant partly compliant and non-compliant. There is perhaps a natural modesty to mark down one’s efforts; however, the committee was encouraged by the Head Teacher to be proud of what we had achieved.

Assembling the evidence that is required in support takes time. The inspector is only seeking one piece of evidence for each question and indeed you can provide the same evidence in support of several questions. A review of minutes of the governor body and school committees is essential together with extracts from individual governor visits and reports. Evidence from the last two years should be sufficient. Hard copies of the evidence have to be supplied and be available for inspection and we prepared an index of the evidence to support the evidence sent with the application.

During our preparation of the application the school was subject to the Ofsted inspection in March 2016. The Ofsted report was very complimentary about the school’s governance which gave us the confidence that we were working well and that our approach was at least good practice. It prompted us to complete the application and submit the same in January 2017. The application is considered by the Governor Mark inspector and an inspector then visits the school to review the evidence and meet the governors. It is important that the inspector meets a cross section of governors, including new governors and parent governors as well as those on the committees. Following the inspection, the inspector is not able to give an immediate answer as to the success or otherwise. We received a positive result within four weeks and we are now one of currently 5 schools in Kent that hold the accreditation.

We had thought that the process would be completed in about six months. Instead the whole process took 18 months. We did not want to rush the application nor cut corners. We do not know whether it is possible to gain Governor Mark status if the school is only judged good rather than outstanding. There should be no reason why this alone should preclude an application from the governors. The important point is to establish that the governors have made a positive impact on the school’s performance and has evidence to that effect and the body governs itself well.

It has been a worthwhile journey. The school can now boast a hat trick of achievements; Ofsted Outstanding, SIAMS Outstanding and Governor Mark.
School Governance is a perfect example of teamwork; everyone fulfilling a part to achieve the whole; with an added bonus, in my opinion, the children.

It’s some years ago when, as the School Business Manager, my Headteacher asked me to help with the minutes at a Governor meeting. Without really understanding what would be required, I agreed, only to find an expectation for me to be quiet (those of you that know me will appreciate how hard that was), take notes and make sure there was enough tea, coffee and chocolate biscuits for the visiting dignitaries.

Changes made by Government have transformed dramatically the expectations of Governing Boards (GB), more so in the past 6 years. The production and content of my minutes has most certainly altered to reflect these requirements.

Now I give a lot of consideration to who will be reading my minutes and for what purpose. Who actually reads them?

• Sometimes I have doubted the Governors; especially when they ask for forgotten actions, previously agreed upon, to be carried over. That doesn’t mean they have been failing in their duties; at my schools I know they are more likely supporting and getting to know the school in other ways.
• Ofsted inspectors haven’t called upon them every time, but the file evidencing Governor Challenge is always there waiting patiently just in case.
• Stakeholders asking to view them to get proof of what the GB is doing for them as well as the children.
• The Authority Finance Team during their periodic audit.
• Someone commissioned to carry out a GB performance review.
• School Improvement Advisor during their scrutiny of Leadership & Management.
• Total Contribution Pay (TCP) and performance management process for Clerks.
• There can be more.............
So, what is the reward I refer to in my title?

- Regular appreciation from Headteachers, Chairs (see below) and Governors for what is in the main, a job well done.
- An Ofsted Inspector making a point of seeking me out to thank me for such exclusive and extensive records.
- School Financial Services Statutory Officer recording one school, Castle Hill Community Primary, being only the 6th in 6 years to achieve 100% in the School Compliance & Risk Assessment Visit. There was recognition of the teamwork between school staff and governors, but it was the words used that brought smiles to our group.

“Especially impressed with the procedures and organised processes in the school and also the detail of the GB minutes which as well as descriptive also recorded evidence of understanding and challenge by Governors to presented financial data”.

- Auditors visiting Godinton Academy reporting “The minutes produced were of a good quality” then listed the positives - procedural matters; business interests, quorum, etc., key decisions highlighted and agreed actions clearly identifiable.

I am no longer in charge of the refreshments, but I am part of the dedicated volunteer army doing their part for ensuring the children get the best possible school experience. I am also grateful for their appreciation of what I do and stand tall for what the Governance team and the school staff regularly achieve.

“Having a clerk with a wealth of experience has been pivotal in how we have transformed our GB over the past 2 years. We now play to our strengths through robust self-evaluation and have found an ideal balance between support and challenge which is reflected through our minutes. This has played a crucial part in the leadership & management of the school as we now measure ourselves on the cusp of outstanding.”

C of G CHCP

“Having a clerk with a clear understanding of what Governance is all about and what is required to meet the many challenges we face has helped to ensure that our GB has moved forward positively over the past few years. Support from the clerk during a detailed self-review a year ago has ensured a clearer focus on what we must do as Governors and how we should do it leading to a stronger GB. This resulted in the following comment in the report of a recent Ofsted inspection” –

“Governors have considerable expertise and make a strong contribution to the school. They have a good understanding of the school’s strengths, know where further improvements are needed and hold leaders to account effectively”.

Chair of Governors - Godinton Academy

If you would like more information on the Clerking Service, please contact the team at Governor Services.

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**APPRENTICESHIPS IN SCHOOLS**

Owen Bartholomew, Employment Development Officer

I am the officer responsible for helping KCC Community or Voluntary Controlled schools access their levy through apprenticeship training. So far, we have had 55 schools take on apprentices using their levy.

My role is to help you as a school find a framework or standard that would fit with the role you are looking to appoint to or upskill in.

So please get in touch if this is of interest to your school or if you have any particular questions.

owen.bartholomew@kent.gov.uk
**Governor and Clerk Training Programme**

In planning your annual governance activities for the forthcoming year, please remember to plan and include your own professional training needs to effectively carry out your governance responsibilities.

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