

*Enabling all young people of Kent to receive a first class education
with outstanding governance strengthening school improvement.*

The government has set out a challenging agenda for schools and Local Authorities in raising standards and improving schools. Governing bodies have a vital role to play in ensuring that happens.

The Kent Governance Team is your dedicated team who will work with you to meet the needs of individual governors and governing bodies of all the county's schools, in the light of national legislation and guidance. We are:

North Kent (Dartford, Gravesham, Sevenoaks): Suzanne Mayes suzanne.mayes@kent.gov.uk

South Kent (Ashford, Dover, Shepway): Tina Gimber tina.gimber@kent.gov.uk

East Kent (Canterbury, Swale, Thanet): Lorraine Monkhouse lorraine.monkhouse@kent.gov.uk

West Kent (Maidstone, Tonbridge and Malling, Tunbridge Wells): Julia Durcan julia.durcan@kent.gov.uk

Thank you for your continued feedback and welcome to our Term 4 Update!

HMCI's monthly commentary and views on the wearing of veils in schools

In his monthly commentary Ofsted's Chief Inspector, Sir Michael Wilshaw, reflects on the implementation of 'short' inspections over the last term.

Since September 2015, Ofsted has carried out 300 short inspections of 'good' schools (64% of schools remaining good, 8% improving to outstanding and 28% were downgraded). Short inspections are for schools currently designated as good by Ofsted. Inspectors are on site for a maximum of one day and only make judgements on whether the school or provider remains 'good' and whether safeguarding is effective. The one day visit can be turned into a 'full' inspection if the inspectors think the school may have become outstanding or alternatively slipped below good.

For those schools remaining good, an inspection letter is issued, rather than a full inspection report. NGA has noted that in a number of these letters there is no reference at all to the governing body. While accepting that this is not a full report, a total lack of reference to a school's accountable body appears to be at odds with Ofsted's statements that governance is important.

Sir Michael also said in his commentary that inspectors had said that a one day inspection had not hampered their ability to collect the views of governors.

NGA would be interested to hear from our members who have had short inspections; specifically whether governors found it difficult to arrange to speak with inspectors or even if inspectors did not need to speak to them. Please email [Fay Holland](mailto:Fay.Holland@kent.gov.uk).

Also this week, Sir Michael [announced](#) that he fully supported schools which took a "...stand against the inappropriate wearing of the veil" and, moreover, had instructed inspectors to "mark down" schools where they believe that the "...wearing of a veil hinders communication and social interaction". Governing bodies are generally responsible for setting school uniform policy which should make clear what is and is not allowed. Such policies should be adopted and implemented following consultation with both pupils and parents. The Department for Education has [issued advice](#) for schools when establishing their school uniform policies which governors may find useful.

HMCI Survey into effectiveness of Governance

We encouraged you to complete the questionnaire by Sir Michael Wilshaw, you can find the NGA's response [Click here to download NGA submission](#).

NGA Governing Matters January/February edition

This edition has some very interesting information for you to look at regarding cultural creativity and pupil premium. It also discusses what governors need to consider before committing to expanding a trust. We would also draw your attention to the feature on a school moving from requires improvement to outstanding.

[NGA membership](#)

NGA offer a number of membership options, each providing different benefits – please use link above for details on full benefits options

Individual Governor	Standard Governing Body	Gold Governing Body
£38 Annual cost from 1/4/2015	£77 Annual cost from 1/4/2015	£260 Annual cost from 1/4/2015

Links are for NGA Members only

[Cultural Education Challenge](#)

[Spending the pupil premium](#)

[Expanding a trust](#)

Admissions

Earlier this week, Education Secretary Nicky Morgan [announced](#) the government's plans to amend the rules relating to consultation about and objections to admission arrangements.

The proposals are that:

Only parents in a local area and the local authority would be allowed to submit objections to a school's admission criteria.

Admissions authorities will need to consult on their admission arrangements every four, instead of seven, years

Ms Morgan said that the purpose of the change was to give more power to parents and also stop "vexatious complaints against faith schools from secularist campaign groups". The latter proposals follows a recommendation in the annual report of the Chief Schools Adjudicator.

It is not entirely clear at this point whether 'local parents' refers only to those residing in the same local authority area as the school, or all those who live within a certain distance of the school and could reasonably consider it local. A number of schools sit near to local authority boundaries and will traditionally take children from more than one authority area. This could also affect schools with religious characters, where particularly at secondary level, school catchment areas may be much wider.

The Department for Education will launch a public consultation regarding its proposals in due course and NGA will submit and publish our response on their website.

Governing bodies which are their own admission authorities must set their admission arrangements in line with the Admissions Code. The NGA reported [two weeks ago](#) on the annual report of the Chief Schools Adjudicator which reported that "Adjudicators have again been concerned that although the Code is a very concise document some of our findings about the objections suggest that the admission authority had not read the Code and therefore failed to comply with its mandatory terms." In particular, the Chief Adjudicator noted that some admission authorities in setting their arrangements were failing to test their arrangements against its over-arching principles that the criteria for the allocation of places should be "fair, clear and objective" and that "parents should be able to look at a set of arrangements and understand easily how places for that school will be".

To read more about admissions, please visit the [NGA Guidance Centre](#). NGA is in the process of developing more extensive guidance on school admissions for governing bodies that are their own admission authorities. This will be made available in NGA's Guidance Centre in the near future.

NEETs – a Kent priority

A [new national mentoring campaign](#) was launched on Monday targeting children at risk of becoming NEET (young people who are not in education or employment). In 2014, the number of young people NEET was 7.3% of 16-18 year olds. David Cameron announced that £70 million will be directed towards careers, most of this to the Careers and Enterprise Company who will lead the mentoring scheme targeted at those who are at most risk.

The scheme will aim to encourage mentors from the business, public and charitable sectors to volunteer, link potential volunteers with mentoring organisations and target schools who need help to offer mentors.

Governing bodies should ensure that any careers advice provided by the school is unbiased and impartial. NGA has more information about schools careers advice in the [Guidance Centre](#).

New legislation to compel schools to provide impartial careers advice

The government has announced its intention to [introduce new legislation](#) which will require schools “to collaborate with colleges, university technical colleges and other training providers to ensure that young people are aware of all the routes to higher skills and the workplace, including higher and degree apprenticeships”.

The Secretary of State for Education, Nicky Morgan MP, said that the new legislation was designed to ensure all young people “are aware of all the options open to them and are able to make the right choice for them”. In particular, she expressed concern that some schools were failing to provide all pupils with information about apprenticeships or technical qualifications.

The issue of poor careers advice in schools has been a constant theme in recent years. It is important that governing bodies ask questions about the quality of careers advice in their school and make clear that students should have access to unbiased and impartial careers advice.

Secondary School Governors - How well do you know your school?

Please find below a list of questions which could be asked if your school is visited by HMI. Even if your school is not due a visit it would be worthwhile setting some time aside to consider and discuss the response you as governors may have to these questions. If any training issues are highlighted please contact your Senior Improvement Adviser who will work with the Area Governance Officer to support you.

Questions HMI may expect you to be able to answer:

Not all governors will be expected to answer **but** 3 or 4 governors should be confident in their answers.

- How many governors receive regular and detailed training on how to use RAISE Online?
- How did your English and Maths departments perform last year? Tell me about the percentage making 3 and 4 levels of progress? What will outcomes be next August and how do you know?
- Which departments are performing well and why?
- Which departments disappoint you and what are you as governors doing about this?
- What will GCSE results look like next August and how do you know?
- How does the Governing Body tackle underperformance?
- Tell me how Pupil Premium (PP) students perform and what are you doing to raise the performance of PP students?
- How well/effectively is Year 7 catch-up funding used? How do you know?
- How well do post 16 students perform? What is VA like post 16? What percentage of Year 13 gain grades in the range A* - B? What is being done to improve this outcome?
- How well do DSEN students perform and how do you know?
- How well do more able students perform and how do you know?

Timelines

The Department for Education (DfE) updated its [Need to Know timeline](#) document at the beginning of February.

Pupil Mobility

Over 10,000 challenging pupils moved out of mainstream education before GCSEs.

[The Guardian newspaper](#) says that its analysis of government figures shows that that 12,193 pupils were moved out of mainstream education between year 9 and year 11, in the two years leading up to summer 2015. Further analysis suggests that the majority of these pupils were either excluded or moved to pupil referral units (PRUs) and special schools.

The Guardian suggests that the large number of pupils moving out of mainstream schools at this point in their education may be linked to the increased pressure on schools to do well in the performance tables. It [draws on research](#) conducted last year by the Education Datalab thinktank which concluded some challenging students were moved to improve a school's results. In a blog last week the researchers proposed that this could be avoided by holding schools to account for the educational performance of all pupils that had ever been to the school.

Governing bodies should be aware of the number of pupils moving into and out of their schools and seek regular reports about the destinations for such pupils.

Childhood Obesity

A two year study, commissioned by the World Health Organisation (WHO), has made [six recommendations for governments](#) to tackle the increasing problem of childhood obesity. One such recommendation is to "Implement comprehensive programmes that promote healthy school environments, health and nutrition literacy and physical activity among school-age children and adolescents".

Children's health and in particular school food has once again become a prominent issue. Ofsted has updated its common inspection framework to include inspectors' evaluations of schools promoting and supporting pupils' knowledge of keeping themselves healthy, including emotionally and physically, through exercising and healthy eating.

In collaboration with the School Food Plan NGA has produced a document on School Food: Guidance for Governors for its members [School Food: Guidance for Governors](#) ([NGA members only link](#)) to help governing bodies effectively fulfil their responsibilities in this area.

Governors may also find it useful to read the School Food Plan's [practical guidance](#) for adopting a whole school approach to school food, which Ofsted inspectors have been signposted to when making judgements in this area.

Updated buying guidance for schools

This week, the Department for Education (DfE) released updated guidance on [Effective buying for your school](#). This advice – aimed at school leaders, school staff, and governing bodies – outlines the basic rules of procurement to ensure public funds are spent fairly. The guidance aims to protect schools against legal challenges, financial penalties and reputation damage. It also gives advice on:

- Areas where schools can achieve value for money
- Links to finance, procurement and school related information
- Way to help schools compare spending against other schools
- Details of organisations that provide contracts, deals and frameworks
- Green and environmental initiatives

Governors may want to draw their school business manager and/or headteacher's attention to the guidance.

Report from Family and Childcare Trust emphasises impact of early years education

[A new report](#) from the Family and Childcare Trust emphasises the importance of high quality early education as a protective factor for children against the negative effects of poverty; improving their long term development and employment outcomes.

Primary schools can play a significant role in ensuring the availability of early years provision through the establishment or expansion of nursery classes. Research into quality among providers serving disadvantaged children found that one of the key factors in high quality provision was the presence of an early years graduate. Governors and school leaders report that funding is the main barrier to expanding provision. An early years national funding formula has been announced, which will be consulted upon in 2016. The report recommends a significant

increase in investment from the government, including in developing a graduate workforce and increasing the Early Years Pupil Premium.

NGA is producing its own *Governors' Guide to the Early Years* which provides guidance to school governing bodies looking to open a new early years provision or expand an existing one, which will be published in our Guidance Centre in 2016.

Kent is producing an Early Years handbook which will be available to purchase – look out for the release date in the e-bulletin.

DfE publishes new guidance on primary accountability

The Department for Education (DfE) has published [new guidance](#) detailing arrangements for primary school accountability in 2016. This is the first year that schools will be assessed against the new national curriculum, and this year's performance tables will include new headline attainment and progress measures, as well as a new floor standard. The new headline performance measures will be:

- the percentage of pupils achieving the 'expected standard' in English reading, English writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2
- pupils' average scaled score in English reading and maths at the end of key stage 2
- the percentage of pupils who achieve at a high standard in English reading, English writing and mathematics
- pupils' average progress in English reading, English writing and maths.

Following the removal of national curriculum levels, progress will be a type of value added measure, which means that pupils' results are compared to the actual achievements of other pupils nationally with similar prior attainment. The guidance provides further detail on how this is calculated, and also how to interpret a school's progress score.

A school will be above the new floor standard if:

- at least 65% of pupils meet the expected standard in English reading, English writing and mathematics; or
- the school achieves sufficient progress scores in all of English reading and English writing and mathematics.

The floor standard will not apply to infant schools, special schools, independent schools, pupil referral units, alternative provision or hospital schools.

Governing bodies should be monitoring and challenging the attainment and progress of pupils in their school: [NGA Members](#) can see the NGA's [questions for governors to ask about curriculum and assessment](#).

Local Authority Governors

It is the role of the Governing Body to source their Local Authority Governor by identifying the appropriate skill set they require. A Local Authority Governor cannot work at the school. It is unlikely that they will be appointed if they are a parent of a child attending the school; related to a member of staff or a member of the school's governing body; has worked in the school in the past or has worked at a school in the same area during the last two years or has made a complaint of a vexatious nature to either the school or the local authority.

Once you have agreed at a Full Governing Body meeting that you wish to appoint this person as your LA Governor, please send the supporting minutes along with the nomination form (available on KELS) signed by the Chair of Governors (or vice chair if the LA governor is the chair) to leadershipgovernancecentral@kent.gov.uk. Similarly, if you are renominating your existing LA Governor complete the renomination form and have this signed by the Chair (or vice chair) and send the accompanying full governing body minutes to the email address above, please also include the LA Governors attendance figures for the whole term of office. This will then go to the next Governor Appointment Panel (which are held 5 times a year), following which you will receive a letter confirming the outcome. Should you wish to discuss any of the above please call Suzanne Mayes, Area Governance Officer North Kent.

Safeguarding – Governor Information

It is important that Governors know that all school staff have read Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education, good practice suggests that this could be recorded as part of the Single Central Record and Governors need to have evidence that all School staff have received and read Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education. Governors should evidence that they have read [Keeping Children Safe in Education Part 2](#). Again this could be recorded in FGB Minutes and a record kept as part of the Single Central Record.

Schools Financial Services Training for Schools and Pupil Referral Units

Schools Financial Services provides a variety of training programmes for school finance staff, headteachers, senior leaders, governors and members of management committees. These training programmes are designed to help schools fulfil their statutory financial obligations. The courses are created to help schools and pupil referral units adhere to the Scheme for Financing Schools, which is their legal financial document.

Our training is published on Kent CPD online. <https://www.kentcpdonline.org.uk/cpd/default.asp?sid=>
The training includes courses for staff on the FMS6, courses in relation to budget setting and using the budget planning software, senior leader programmes, financial controls, embedding finance in the school improvement plan and improving the quality of schools monitoring.

Useful training for Schools and PRUs coming up includes:

Governing Bodies roles and responsibilities	8 March 2016
Budget Setting with Workshop (finance staff)	Various date in March 2016
Budget Setting inc. Budget Update for Headteachers/Governors	23 March 2016

Schools Financial Services also offer bespoke training courses for governing bodies which may be included in your Governor package purchased from KCC. Please contact schoolsfinancialservices@kent.gov.uk for details.

Reminder that maintained schools needs to submit their SFVS by 31st March 2016 [SFVS](#)

Good Practice for Governors regarding Assessment

Many of you will have attended the briefings across the county regarding Assessment delivered by Margo Barraclough. It was suggested that good practice for Governors would be for them to attend and observe one of the SATs processes (Writing or Mathematics), thereby providing evidence that due process has been complied with:

Governing bodies

Governing bodies of maintained schools must carry out their functions so that the requirements in this document are implemented in their school. [KS2 ARA](#)

PLEASE NOTE THAT LINKS TO COURSES ON SOME OF THE TOPICS MENTIONED ABOVE CAN BE FOUND IN THE SIGNPOSTS TO LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT BELOW:

Signposts

- [Kent Governors CPD Online](#)
- [The Governor Magazine](#)
- [Leadership and Governance training and development](#)
- [Leadership - kelsi.org.uk](#)

- **External Links**
- [Kent Governors Association](#)
- [National Governors' Association](#)
- [SGOSS](#)