

The new Ofsted framework

Steve Barker outlines the new, slimmed down, Ofsted inspection framework to be introduced from September 2005 and stresses the importance of governors continuing to be involved in the process.

We know that governance is about collective responsibility, but I am a little alarmed at the collective sighs of relief I hear from governing bodies who read about the new Ofsted framework, scheduled for introduction in September, and think the spotlight on their work is being taken away. This view is not just irresponsible – it is positively ostrich-like. The judgements on governance, that have so sharply focused governing bodies on their own effectiveness, look set to disappear. However, it will be a brave, if not a foolish, governing body that believes that this is a signal for sitting back and resting on its laurels.

Much information relating to the shape of future inspections is available from the Ofsted website. The disappointment is that governance is conspicuous by its absence. It is mentioned once in the most recent 'self-evaluation form' (SEF) (28 January 2005) and again in a corresponding line in the 'judgement recording form'.

According to the new framework inspections will be:

- slimmed down and more sharply focused
- shorter in duration and notice period
- more frequent
- reliant on fewer inspectors in school.

The new framework will have, at its core, the effectiveness of school self-evaluation.

Parents, who are the main audience for Ofsted reports, will get reports which grade schools using a new four-point scale rather than the current seven-point scale (see overleaf). The new framework will judge just five main aspects of the school:

- overall effectiveness
- achievement and standards
- personal development and well-being
- the quality of provision
- leadership and management.

continued overleaf

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Current judgements	Judgements from September 2005
Excellent	Outstanding
Very good	
Good	Good
Satisfactory	
Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory
Poor	
Very poor	Inadequate

Although governance gets only a single mention, the judgements on the effectiveness of leadership and management form a very significant part of the framework and governance is part of leadership. It talks of 'leaders and managers at all levels' – this includes governors. The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) has recently published its *Governing the school of the future*¹, which reiterates the government's view of where we all fit: 'The governing body, headteacher and senior management team together constitute the leadership team of the school.' A governing body that clearly understands its strategic role in the school supports the school but challenges it to improve still further and ensures accountability to all stakeholders. Such a governing body will be working effectively with the headteacher and senior managers and it is this effectiveness that Ofsted will continue to judge.

Leadership and management
How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education
How effectively performance is monitored and improved through quality assurance and self-assessment
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can (ie how inclusive the school is)
The adequacy and suitability of staff, specialist equipment, learning resources and accommodation
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money
How effective the links are with other providers, services, employers and other organisations to promote the integration of care, education and any extended services to enhance learning
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities.

Ofsted, Judgement Recording Form, 15 Nov 2004

The only judgement on governance, from September, charges inspectors with judging 'the extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities'. But, when governors look at the SEF and the judgement recording form (as shown in previous column), it is plain to see that all judgements within leadership and management, and for that matter the entire framework, require governor overview and involvement.

Ofsted judgements will be made in a very short time-frame. Inspectors will not hunt out evidence that governance is outstanding or very good. If school leadership teams (and that does include governors) judge the monitoring of performance and improvement brought about through quality assurance and self-assessment to be very good, it will be imperative that the SEF clearly indicates why and, more importantly, what evidence they have to support this judgement. For governors, this could include details of how they monitor the quality of teaching. We all know that governors don't do this directly, but they need to know, and provide evidence in the SEF of who does:

- Who in the leadership team monitors teaching?
- How often do they do so?
- What does the monitoring tell them about the quality of teaching?
- How are any issues it unearths addressed?

It is also vital that the SEF details how this is reported to governors and what their response is:

- For governors, does this elicit a challenging question about how the leadership team knows that everyone who monitors teaching does so with the same rigour?

The same is true of all other judgements schools make in their SEF. The role of governors is mainly strategic and for this they need to have a balanced view of what their school's strengths are and what needs further improvement. Self-evaluation provides governors with the opportunity to gain a view of their school's strengths and weaknesses and the most effective governing bodies will already be planning how they can engage in the self-evaluation process in their schools.

Governors are leaders in their schools and they now need to take a lead in setting out the agenda for how their work will complement and contribute to school self-evaluation. Perhaps the next act of collective responsibility for each of our governing bodies should be to evaluate how well prepared they are to face the new Ofsted framework.

Steve Barker has been a governor in Surrey since 1991. He chairs two governing bodies and is an experienced governor trainer with Four S.

¹You can download *Governing the school of the future* or order copies online from www.teachernet.gov.uk, using the reference DfES/0786/2004.

Pilot Ofsted inspections

The Liverpool Governors' Forum shares with readers the experiences of four Chairs of governors involved in the pilot of the new inspection framework.

Several local education authorities (LEAs) across the country volunteered to act as pilots for the new regime. Liverpool consulted schools and many due for an inspection agreed to be part of a pilot.

The main features of the new framework are:

- giving between two and five working days' notice before an inspection
- using a four-point grading scale in reports, and simplifying the approach to schools causing concern
- a greater emphasis on school self-evaluation. The focus of an inspection will be driven by the strengths and weaknesses identified by the school in its self-evaluation form.
- the publication of inspection reports within three weeks of inspection
- the inspection of curriculum areas via a separate rolling programme of 'subject-focused studies'.

Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) will play a role in all school inspections.

Following the first eight pilot inspections in Liverpool, the Liverpool Governors' Forum was keen to ascertain the level of involvement and input by governing bodies under the new arrangements. We contacted the Chairs of governors of those schools and four agreed to submit their personal views about their experience.

Views from the Chairs

I was invited to discuss a number of topics with the inspector and the questions were quite probing and detailed. The general view of the inspection was one of improvement over the 'old style' inspections. They certainly caused less stress for staff and governors and my personal view was that the inspectors reported more accurately on how our school was performing **now** rather than how well we had prepared for the inspection.

Along with the rest of the governing body, I take my job very seriously. I am therefore keen to ensure that we deliver excellent teachers, excellent teaching and excellent results for our students. Although I would like to think that we do a good job, I am not blind to the fact that we could always do better. We are always looking for ways in which the role of the governing body could be made more effective and focused. In fact I was questioned quite closely on the role of the governing body.

Because the 'new relationship' gives a shorter lead-in for inspection, the notice to meet with an inspector is necessarily very short and finding a mutually convenient time for a meeting was difficult.

The inspectors came. The inspectors went. The major significant missing factor was the lack of feedback to me on any of the topics raised. Feedback was given to the headteacher, but not to me on behalf of the governing body. This raises the question: Did the final report cover everything that was observed or said? **This must be an area for improvement.**

I know that the inspectors will be back. They will be welcomed. But I also consider that an action plan from both Head and governors, with deliverables and timescales, should be a statutory requirement.

*Mr Chris Hallows
is Chair of Governors at The Blue Coat School, Liverpool.*

When I heard that we had been chosen for a 48-hour inspection, I thought it was great – none of the anticipation and pressure normally felt with a full inspection. As the inspection progressed, my opinion changed. During training we had been led to believe that inspectors would dip into lessons and then move on. This, however, did not happen, as some classes were visited several times during one lesson, creating an unsettling atmosphere for pupils and staff.

As Chair, I was the only governor interviewed. This lasted approximately 50 minutes. During this time I was questioned about the governing body and the close working partnership of the headteacher and Chair. I was pleased to be invited to the feedback meeting, but was not happy that the inspection was not conducted in the manner in which we had been informed. A lighter touch inspection was promised but that is not what happened in practice.

*Kath Wall
is Chair of Governors at Rudston Junior School, Liverpool.*

Taking part in the pilot of the new Ofsted inspection process has been a very interesting experience. I was not involved in writing up the school self-evaluation. However, as Chair of Governors for the Everton Early Childhood Centre (now the Everton Children's Centre), I was invited by the headteacher/head of centre to be part of all the planning and training that led up to the pilot and the follow-up meetings.

It was very interesting, then, to be part of the inspection process. We had one week's notice of the inspection. This was useful, as any assessment of service necessarily intrudes into and impacts on the daily life of the service.

I was present at appropriate meetings with the inspection team and it was good to know that the senior staff valued the experience of the team and the fact that they had expertise both in education and in social care settings.

No other governors from the Management Board were involved; there is a tension between wanting to be inclusive and wanting to ensure that the process goes forward with as little disruption to the children's day as possible. I was interviewed in my dual role as co-ordinator of the Sure Start Local Programme based on site and Chair of the Centre Management Board.

Immediate feedback on the week of the inspection was a real boon, as everyone was anxious to hear what the inspection team thought. It was good to have the written report so quickly, so that this could be shared with staff, parents and other agencies, and it provided a good basis for discussion.

The outcome of the inspection was very positive for the Centre but gave scant regard to the multi-agency work on site. I think that this is an area for development. As the Children's Centre develops, more attention will need to be given to leadership and management of integrated working across the whole site. As different inspection processes come together, this will be a really challenging time for everyone.

*Annette James
is Chair of the Management Board of Everton Children's Centre, Liverpool.*

My dissatisfaction emanates from some inaccuracies in the inspection report and my belief that the judgements were based purely on attainment and attendance data and did not take into account value added or contextual issues. Furthermore, the oral feedback did not match the written report.

The school has been awarded Advanced Status in Quality in Study Support. Our impact measurement is

'the best in the country' and bought by other schools and authorities because of its accuracy and ease of use. The impact measurement is on display in our main corridor and HMI were given the study support file containing this measurement. Our learning mentors and Pupil Re-integration Officer are monitored by the school and the LEA. None of these was asked for the evaluation of their work.

We also have a city learning centre on site. All pupils who work on projects in the city learning centre have the impact of their projects measured. The city learning service manager was not interviewed.

Neither I, nor any other governor, was interviewed. The shortness of the inspection meant that this issue around systematic monitoring, which was not raised until the verbal feedback, could not be picked up by the school. The headteacher complained at the draft report reading, but the statement, which is simply wrong, remained in the final report.

Under leadership and management, the report is quite critical of our monitoring system. No criticism was made during the inspection and I believe that the school's monitoring process is as good as or better than that of any other school. Positive comments made by inspectors during the inspection were not replicated by the lead inspector in the report.

I feel that Parklands High School was not served well by the shortened Ofsted inspection process. I feel that a full inspection would have allowed an inspection team time to appreciate and address most, if not all, of the above issues.

*Stephen Gersham
is Chair of Governors at Parklands High School, Liverpool.*

HMCI writes ...

We invited **David Bell** to respond to the articles on inspection in this issue of *Governors' Agenda* and thank him for taking up the offer.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your articles on inspection.

Steve Barker has rightly identified the headings from The Common Inspection Schedule for Schools and other Post-16 Provision under which inspectors will report. However, legislation governs what Ofsted should inspect and this is likely to add an additional responsibility for inspection rather than reduce it. Currently, Ofsted must evaluate and report on four of the following areas. If legislation goes through and Royal Assent is given as expected, Ofsted will also have to evaluate the other areas in this list:

- the quality of the education provided in the school
- how far the education meets the needs of the range of pupils at the school
- the educational standards achieved in the school

- the quality of the leadership in and management of the school, including whether the financial resources made available to the school are managed efficiently
- the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils at the school
- the contribution made by the school to the well-being of those pupils.

We have achieved our slimmed down inspection by focusing on self-evaluation and changing our approach to inspection rather than reducing the requirements for reporting.

I am particularly pleased that governors are writing about their experience of inspection. I am slightly disappointed, but not surprised that the governors had different perceptions of the way the inspection involved

them. Their experiences show clearly the way in which the inspection model has developed and improved.

I am very grateful to schools, such as those in Liverpool, for taking part in pilot inspections. Liverpool schools were among the first to be inspected when we started this work a year ago and were instrumental in helping HMI to design the inspection model we now have. Taking part in the early pilot inspections took a great deal of courage and it is to their credit that the governors and staff of these schools embraced the pilot inspections with confidence and a willingness to contribute to inspection development.

Each term, after completing a block of pilot inspections, we carried out an evaluation with the schools and inspectors involved. It quickly became apparent that we were not involving governors or parents sufficiently in inspection, and this needed to be rectified. We took steps to deal with these issues immediately. We are still working hard to involve parents more in the inspection process; our more recent strategies have been successful so we will continue to pilot and refine these in the coming months. The steps we took to ensure governors were more involved have also proved to be successful. Our latest evaluations show a far more positive picture, but we will continue to work on making improvements. We have ensured that inspectors make it clear when contacting the headteacher to set up an inspection that governors should be fully involved at each stage of the inspection. HMI have also met with groups of governors across the country and talked with members of the national governors' forum to seek their views about how we could improve. The meetings were very helpful and we have acted on the advice given.

The following sets out how governors will be involved in the inspection process. I hope you will agree that their involvement has not diminished; governors continue to have an important role in the new arrangements.

Governors will:

- have their work evaluated as part of leadership and management
- be responsible for signing off the self-evaluation form
- need to assure themselves that the process of self-evaluation and planning is based on good evidence and on how parents and pupils feel about the school
- need to be confident in the strategies adopted to bring about improvement
- be required to notify parents and others of the inspection
- give views during the inspection, and the governing body will be represented at the feedback meeting for senior managers
- continue to have responsibility for distributing reports to parents, and making these available to others with an interest.

*David Bell
is Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools*

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We would like to hear from any readers who have an experience of the new Ofsted framework that they would be willing to share. Please email the editor, Beryl Hawkins, at beryl@hawknet.fsnet.co.uk.

Finding and keeping governors

Northamptonshire County Council has been working with its schools to recruit and retain active and informed governors. **Martin Lawrence** reports on this cross-council strategy and gives examples of good practice.

Introduction

There has never been a more important time for schools to ensure that they have full, active and informed governing bodies, playing a full part in a leadership and management role on behalf of the communities they serve.

Changing responsibilities for governors, as part of the 'new relationship with schools' and the framework published with *Every child matters*, provide a fresh perspective and emphasis on:

- schools recruiting and retaining more parent and community governors
- keeping all governor vacancies to a minimum
- prompt and efficient recruitment and retention of LEA governors by the local authority, as part of its statutory responsibilities.

Northamptonshire County Council, in partnership with its schools, is serious about the implementation of its school governor recruitment and retention strategy. The strategy was agreed by a cross-council group. It is promoted through joined-up working between teams with responsibility for schools, adult learning, children and families, community cohesion, social inclusion and equalities issues.

Recruitment

The Council's recruitment strategy has established targets for:

- reducing governor vacancies in all categories
- ensuring that benchmark data for vacancy rates compare favourably with those of local authority statistical neighbours

- influencing the make-up of governing bodies, so that they reflect the communities they serve.

Targets relating to retention focus on:

- reducing turnover rates
- increasing the percentage of new governors taking up initial training
- improving school-based governor induction programmes
- recognising governors: for long service, as exemplars of good practice and for the completion of accredited training.

An example of Northamptonshire's progress is the filling of more than 100 LEA vacancies in the past six months, reducing the vacancy rate by nearly 50 per cent. It is on course for a further reduction to 5 per cent within the next six months, well within its benchmark range. This rapid progress has been facilitated by a number of factors:

- a new 'breakthrough' LEA appointments process, designed by elected members, to turn applications into appointments more speedily
- a partnership with the School Governors One Stop Shop (SGOSS)
- outreach into communities
- external partnerships with the local council for voluntary service, chamber of commerce, police and fire services, universities, primary care trusts, and so on
- the local authority providing monitoring, challenge, support and guidance directly to schools on how to recruit and retain governors
- recognition by schools that they need to take responsibility for recruitment and retention issues on their governing bodies, leading, for example, to an increased number of school self-nominations for LEA positions.

Schools have worked with the local authority on planning their required governing body reconstitution. This has facilitated the planning for zero vacancies and the introduction of succession planning to ensure smooth transition without vacancies occurring.

A working group has been formed under the auspices of the Northamptonshire Learning Partnership, to support the recruitment and retention of governors from black and minority ethnic communities. Current plans include the delivery of governor awareness programmes, with an option of basic skills provision. This is being partially funded by Bite Size funding from the Learning and Skills Council. The formation of a black governor support group will run along side this provision. These activities are being promoted by the Council for Ethnic Minority Communities and the Race Equality Council.

The enhanced council website is also encouraging new recruits. Every library in the county displays recruitment packs, as do the volunteer bureaux. Mailshots and advertising in local newspapers by the SGOSS has encouraged a new flow of candidates.

County council employees are regularly canvassed and recognition for their contribution to the community is to be provided, both as part of the county council appraisal regime and by elected members at specific events.

The 'constitution' regulations have required an increase in the percentage of parent governors in many schools. The council has worked in partnership with schools in areas of greatest need, within the excellence clusters in Northampton and Corby, on the effective recruitment, election and appointment of parent governors.

Retention

Schools recognise that, in order to maintain the momentum, the retention of governors is as crucial as their recruitment. Turnover data has demonstrated that up to 30 per cent of governors in the county leave in the first two years in post. This places an immense additional burden on schools and the local authority.

The local evidence suggests that the quality of school-based induction programmes and access to the national training programme for new governors are significant indicators of a school's capacity to stem the flow of early-departing governors.

In 2004 Northamptonshire launched a governors' awards evening. This recognised both long-serving governors and finalists in a Governing Body of the Year scheme. The latter celebrated excellent practice, which has since been publicised widely in the county.

Northamptonshire stresses the learning opportunities that come with being a school governor. There is a full programme of centrally delivered training and in-house consultancy in schools. Below are some further examples of governor-related development opportunities:

- Adult Learners Week each year provides opportunities for new learners to find out how they can increase their skills base through being a school governor.
- Participation in the new national programme Taking the Chair provides strong transferable skills.
- The provision of an NVQ Level 4 Certificate in Management Studies, using the experience of being a school governor, has been popular in the past and is being considered again.
- Offering governing body perspectives within the National Professional Qualification for Headship and Leading from the Middle programmes delivered by regional leadership centres are helping to strengthen leadership development.

With the reconstitution of all governing bodies by August 2006, every school has had the opportunity to make choices about its size and composition. In Northamptonshire, schools are committed to ensuring that governor vacancies are minimised and that members of the community who volunteer to join a governing body are valued, have development opportunities and are recognised for their contribution.

Martin Lawrence
is Governor Development Adviser for Northamptonshire County Council.

Children's services departments

David Hawker offers some advice on how governors can be helped to play a leading part in the development of children's services, drawing on his knowledge of the national picture and the experiences of Brighton and Hove City Council.

In September 2004 there were 25 directors of children's services (DCSs) in post; now there are three times that number, and by the end of 2005 we expect all but a handful of local authorities to have appointed one. The rate at which the new DCSs are taking over from old-style directors of education, and the new 'children's services authorities' from local education authorities, has taken everyone by surprise.

The organisational changes are slower, however. Most of the early pioneers will agree that it probably takes two to three years to bed down the cultural and organisational changes needed to create a fully functioning children's services department. So, at present, most local authorities are in the process of transition, and children's services nationally are in the chrysalis phase.

School governors, and indeed headteachers, can be forgiven for feeling a little nervous about the changes taking place in the service. Schools suddenly find themselves part of a much wider service, in which they are meant to play a central part, but where many of their new partners in the service are relatively unfamiliar to them. There is inevitably a temptation to retreat into familiar territory, and wait until the changes have settled down before venturing forth.

But reacting in this way would be unfortunate. And, to be fair, I have not met many governors or Heads who want to do so. The vast majority are enthusiastic about the *Every child matters* agenda, and want to play a leading part in the new service. So here are three pieces of advice which I think it is worthwhile passing on:

- 1 Both governors and Heads should embrace and welcome the wider service. Quite probably the director and his or her team will be rather preoccupied with getting new organisational structures in place, and they may well have less time to devote to individual schools, at least for a while. But once they have sorted out their structures and responsibilities, schools should get as good a level of support as before. And schools that make clear that they want to play their part in the new service will probably find themselves making fruitful relationships across the social care parts of the service. There will be myriad opportunities for working together on joint projects, taking part in joint training, and designing better ways of helping children. Experience of doing this up and down the country has been very positive, with colleagues from the different disciplines learning from one another and discovering new and more productive ways of working together.

- 2 We need to make sure that governors become part of the consultative processes for the new service. In Brighton & Hove we recognised our Governors' Network as one of the key consultative groups for the Children's Trust, alongside our Workforce Development Partnership, Youth Council, Headteachers' Steering Group and Parent Partnership. So school governors are now formally part of the consultative process, which will in time be redesigning all the services for children and young people in the city. School governors are, of course, a unique resource for the whole system – a group of highly committed, highly professional volunteers able to take the broader view for the sake of the children. Their views and insights need to count in this new service, and every children's services authority needs to find ways of structuring them in.
- 3 Each school governing body needs to develop a vision for its school as part of the extended service provision envisaged in *Every child matters*. The government's proposals for extended schools and childcare provide plenty of challenges, not least in developing new aspects of governance and partnership working. There is no single model for an extended school, since it will depend largely on local circumstances and need, and the availability of resources to make it happen. The real essence of the extended school is being at the heart of its community. Hopefully, a school's own vision will be in line with that of the local authority. If so, it can take things forward and relish the challenges and opportunities it presents. If not, at least it will have the starting point for a lively debate!

David Hawker

is Director of Children, Families and Schools for Brighton and Hove City Council and Chair of the Association of Directors of Education and Children's Services.

Governors' Agenda Publication schedule

Issue	Copy deadline	Week of publication
June 2005	29 April 2005	13 June 2005
Sept 2005	15 July 2005	12 Sept 2005
Nov 2005	21 Oct 2005	21 Nov 2005
Jan 2006	18 Nov 2005	16 Jan 2006

Growing great governors

Maria Noble describes a competency framework designed to help governors in Manchester in making effective recruitment decisions, as well as providing a tool for evaluating performance and planning for the development needs of the governing body.

The rationale

During a best value review in 2004, consultations with governors generated a request for a 'job description' for governors. Beyond this thought was a desire to identify the qualities and forms of behaviour necessary for effective governance.

Research shows that what differentiates superior from average performers is **behaviour**. Individual forms of behaviour differ and this helps to explain why people with broadly the same experience, qualifications and skills may perform the same role very differently. Although we may be readily aware of gaps in our own skills and knowledge, it is less likely that we will have the same level of awareness about how we behave. Individuals will have different levels of consciousness of their competency, capability and achievement.

Some of the comments from the research illustrate that expertise and good processes are **necessary**, but not **sufficient**, to sustain success:

'People are focused on doing and what is measured, rather than the bigger picture.'

'Most challenging are the cliques, being accepted by existing governors and questioning the Head or senior management.'

'We need to be challenging without being critical.'

Competency has been defined as: 'characteristic ways of behaving shown to be associated with achieving successful outcomes'. Developing competencies allows for a more effective delivery of an individual's prior and developed skills and knowledge.

Developing the framework

Manchester Education Department enlisted the support of two partners with which it has enjoyed a long-standing working relationship – a housing association committed to neighbourhood regeneration and a consultancy, specialising in the development of people and processes in the public and private sectors. Both of these organisations had successfully developed a competency framework for governance.

Growing great governors has been developed from a competency framework created by our colleagues, Harvest Housing and The MR Partnership, to improve the effectiveness of social enterprise boards. Informed by early work on national initiatives such as Leading Together and Taking the Chair, we have been keen to identify the five competencies most critical to success in the distinctive role of the Chair. We undertook specific research with governors, and adapted our model as a result of governors' comments.

Purpose

Our aspirations were:

- to increase the number of schools achieving 'good', 'very good' or 'excellent' ratings in Ofsted inspections
- to provide a tool for recruitment and increasing participation in effective school governance
- to provide an empowerment tool to bring about self-assessment and development planning by whole governing bodies and individual governors
- to increase the self-esteem and confidence of individual governors.

The Competency Framework Tool is intended to enable governing bodies to identify the current balance of competencies within their team and to provide information and awareness that can be used in:

- the recruitment and induction of new governors
- evaluating governing body performance
- planning training and development
- 'growing' governors into succession routes for the roles of Chair, Vice-chair and committee Chair.

It does this by moving governing bodies towards:

- achieving clarity – defining what is expected of a governor, in order to attract new talent and motivate existing talent
- defining a common language – helping governors to achieve a degree of consistency in understanding and describing what competence performance means and what it looks like
- achieving a balanced governing body – governors can agree the 'ideal profile' for their governing body
- playing to strengths – governors can assess themselves against a framework and tap into their natural talents, interests and skills
- being a 'learning organisation' – providing evidence for development plans, which benefits both individuals and the governing body
- planning for succession – in future appointments, the governing body can use the framework to identify and fill gaps
- promoting diversity – encouraging the recruitment of people who bring different strengths and talents, to add more value.

The competencies

The process of developing the framework has allowed us to describe what good governance looks like and to devise twelve key competencies or forms of behaviour relevant to the role of governor.

<p>Thinking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bigger picture thinking ● Analysing and evaluating ● Resource management 	<p>Achieving things through others</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Influencing ● Initiating improvements ● Showing leadership
<p>Guiding action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Gathering information ● Getting things done ● Achieving high standards 	<p>Managing the heart and the head</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assertiveness and challenge ● Managing your own style ● Integrity and inclusion

An example competency from *Growing great governors*

Bigger picture thinking

This competency is about looking at the bigger picture, having a clear vision of the future and seeing connections between situations, policies and opportunities. This helps to make sure there is a long-term focus on raising standards in the context of teaching, learning and educational achievement.

Why is it important?

Governing bodies are accountable for the school's overall performance and direction for the future. In order to fulfil this responsibility, they must plan how to achieve the school's vision, taking account of external demands, such as economic and sociological changes, and taking advantage of opportunities.

Effective forms of behaviour	Outstanding forms of behaviour	Development indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Wants to understand how to help the school and children improve ● Spends time with children, teachers and parents to observe and get a first hand insight into the school's ethos and operation ● Explores and brings in ideas and good practice from elsewhere ● Advises on the basis of experience from other situations to enable the school to improve ● Ensures there are systems in place to gather evidence about context and performance to inform strategy and policy making ● Helps to set policies that provide a broad framework within which the headteacher and staff should run the school ● Uses a wide range of information to progress change and improvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Separates out linked issues to ensure root causes of problems are identified ● Shapes decisions about what the school should achieve (the vision) and develops strategy and plans to get there ● Is forward looking and talks to parents to invite them to identify future priorities ● Reconciles competing priorities between central and local government and between the children in education now and policy makers ● Strikes the appropriate balance between doing things right and doing the right things 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Focuses on the detail ● Wants to be a 'doer' rather than a thinker ● Tries to do the staff's job rather than provide direction ● Simply addresses symptoms of problems

Maria Noble
is Head of Manchester Governor Support and Training Service.

Growing great governors is due to be piloted with a diverse group of schools during the summer term 2005.

'Link' governors

Margaret Hunt considers the case for nominating individual governors to specific subject areas and provides a checklist to help in defining their roles.

Wanted: Head lice detectors as school governors

I can recall the moment when I began to doubt the need for an individual governor to be linked to every aspect of school life. It was the day a leaflet dropped through my letterbox, encouraging me (as a Chair of governors) to ensure that our governing body nominated a governor to take specific responsibility for head lice.

Needless to say, our governing body didn't follow the advice contained in that leaflet and I have yet to come across a governor with responsibility for head lice. However, from that moment, I did begin to question whether linking individual governors to specific areas necessarily contributes to fulfilling the strategic, and corporate, role of the governing body.

Through the training sessions I run for subject link governors I've discovered that, like my own governing body, many governing bodies dutifully nominate individual governors to specific subjects or other school focus areas at the first meeting of each academic year. How quickly a year passes in the life of a governing body! No sooner have you nominated these governors than the year has flown and you find yourselves nominating them all over again. How many of us stop and consider what has been achieved through the links in the previous year before going through this process again?

Ways of keeping informed

Drawing on the experience of my own governing body, I now encourage governing bodies to consider whether the links are going to work for them. There may be a better way for a governing body to keep itself informed of the school's strengths and weaknesses and the impact of improvement activities. For example it might do this through:

- requesting regular reports from subject leaders to the full governing body, or one of its committees, and asking them legitimately challenging questions
- asking committees with delegated responsibility to evaluate the impact of improvement activities
- asking the headteacher, or another member of the senior management team, to report regularly on progress against priorities in the school improvement plan, ensuring that there is the opportunity for the governing body to ask questions and suggest amendments
- using the full range of available school performance data to inform discussions about school improvement.

Defining the role of the link governor

When a governing body agrees that there is a real role for a link governor, it's important that it makes clear what is expected of that person, and that it identifies activities for them to undertake that will be both helpful and manageable. These won't necessarily be the same for every governor or every governing body. Activities might include:

- meeting regularly with the subject leader to discuss any relevant issues or developments and sharing learning with the governing body
- attending relevant governor training or briefing events and sharing learning with the governing body
- considering, with the subject leader, ways of encouraging parental involvement
- participating, as previously agreed with the subject leader and the headteacher, in the school's self-evaluation of its performance
- ensuring that the outcomes of self-evaluation in a particular subject area are used to inform future improvement priorities
- attending relevant parts of senior management team meetings where performance data related to the specified subject are being analysed and improvement activities are being agreed
- attending parts of teacher development days and staff meetings where the subject is being discussed
- attending any parents' evenings organised by staff on initiatives in the specified subject area
- becoming familiar with any areas relating to the subject within the school's improvement plan
- maintaining a record of the governors' role in monitoring and evaluating performance in specific focus areas and making them available to Ofsted inspection teams when they are examining the work of the governing body.

The corporate role of the governing body

Governing bodies and individual governors are likely to come up with other ways of fulfilling the role in their schools. But, however we approach this, I would urge that we don't undermine the corporate responsibility of the governing body by placing undue emphasis on the responsibilities assigned to individual governors.

Margaret Hunt is Manager of Governor Support Services in Swindon, and Chair of Governors at Holbrook Primary School, Trowbridge.

Margaret can be contacted by email: mhunt@swindon.gov.uk.

Recognition for clerks

The important part that clerks play in supporting governing bodies has again been recognised by the National Association of School Governors through its Award for Outstanding Clerks. **Carolyn Sugden** reports on the awards ceremony, held at the Council House in Birmingham on 12 March 2005.

Chris Waterman, Executive Director of ConfEd, introduced representatives of the sponsors of the award: John Britton from the DfES, Jane Martin from the Centre for Public Scrutiny, and Justin Damen from Best Absence Management. All the sponsors welcomed this opportunity to enhance the status of clerks and give them the recognition they deserve.

Presenting the awards, Rt Hon Estelle Morris MP, Minister for the Arts, paid tribute to the work of clerks. 'We are all aiming to improve the quality of life for our children', she said, 'and clerks are contributing to that.' She suggested that a good way of gauging the usefulness of a particular job is to ask: 'What would life be like if you weren't doing your job?' The answer as far as clerks were concerned was that, without clerks, governing bodies wouldn't work effectively, headteachers wouldn't work effectively with governing bodies, and ultimately children wouldn't learn as much.

She stressed the importance of the words 'education service' – if we only think about the 'education system' or about individual schools, we are losing sight of something vital: a shared commitment to making things better for all children and young people. Clerks are part of the education service – its unsung heroes, enabling the system to work smoothly.

The winners of the awards were:

- Eastern – Pauline O'Neill, St Mary's Catholic Primary School in Northampton LEA
- London – Cath O'Sullivan, William Morris Sixth Form Academy in Hammersmith and Fulham LEA
- North East – Margaret Arksey, Herdley Bank First School in Northumberland LEA
- North West – Kay Mullet, Keswick Secondary School in Cumbria LEA
- South East – Sylvia Vine, Eggars Secondary School in Hampshire LEA
- South West – Richard Ashdown, St Peter's Secondary School in Bournemouth LEA
- West Midlands – Ian Russell, Federation of Wainbody Wood Special School in Coventry LEA
- Yorks and Humber – Sophia Rowbotham, St Mary's CE J&I School in Calderdale LEA

The Clerk of the Year 2005 is Richard Ashdown from the South West.

Having stressed that 'You are all winners here today', Chris Waterman rounded things off with a reading of the first part of 'The Clerk's Tale' (see alongside) and an invitation to others to complete it.

Calling all poets

Can you rise to Chris Waterman's challenge to compose some lines to complete 'The Clerk's Tale'? We feel sure that plenty of our readers have both the literary ability and the knowledge of the innermost workings of governing bodies that are needed for this task! No prizes, I'm afraid – just the chance to become a published poet. Please get writing and send your submissions to Beryl Hawkins at beryl@hawknet.fsnet.co.uk.

The Clerk's Tale

When in mid-March, with budgets underspent,
The CEO a fine hotel did rent,
The AD Admin said 'T'would be a crime,
To miss an opportunity this time,
To spend one small part, not yet full reserved,
Upon one group, for it is well deserved.
Let's celebrate the work of that fine team,
Who do not always get their due esteem.'

In truth, I'm sure that you're not in the dark,
He spake, of course, of you – the humble clerk!

The maître d' of all this CPD,
Was Jonas Smythe, a CEO who, he
Would tell to anybody as would listen,
(Forsooth, this subject caused his eyes to glisten)
That spending time with staff in such a fashion,
Was bordering on an all-consuming passion!

So thus it was that Jonas, after lunch,
Stood up, surveying all of the mixed bunch,
Of clerks from every school, both large and small,
And having cast his eye across them all,
He spied the oldest clerk, a chap called John,
Who, on eye contact, went both pale and wan.

'You, sire, from Camford,' said the Chief, 'Let's see,
Long-serving clerk to governing bodies three,
We look to you for some outrageous tale
Of goings-on that are beyond the pale,
A tale of them that truly – inter alia,
Have said that they believe I am a failia.'

The clerk, an old hand, used to being berated,
Then scoured his mind for one tale, full x-rated,
That he had minuted before half-term,
That would not cause the CEO to squirm,
For he was nothing if not very shrew-ed,
And with the Chief would hate to start a fu-ed.

Thus spake the humble clerk to the assembly,
With halting voice and lips that were a-trembly: ...

Governing the school of the future

Governing the school of the future, published by the Department for Education and Skills in February this year, aims to celebrate achievement and consider the future role for governing bodies. **David Marriott** gives his views on the document.

First, there's the title. Maybe it's just me, but I expected something ground-breaking, waking me up to ideas I'd never thought of. Maybe it all depends on what you mean by 'the future'. Second, there's the parity of esteem issue: 'Governing bodies are equal partners in leadership' – where's the evidence?

But... OK, we need a balanced perspective. This is a welcome and useful document, well intentioned and largely reassuring, full of deserved pats on the back and statements valuing governors. It is endorsed by an impressive array of national organisations – nice to see SHA (Secondary Heads' Association) and NAHT (National Association of Headteachers) agreeing that 'the governing body, headteacher and senior management team constitute the leadership team of the school'. It does flag up some of the issues arising from the DfES Five Year Strategy. It covers the obvious ground – governance and leadership, membership, support and training, the role of the Chair, recruitment and raising the profile of governors.

There are lots of phrases along the lines of the DfES's 'commitment to robust and confident governors for all schools', yet no offer of the strategies that we know would make this more likely, such as compulsory training, ring-fenced funding and paid time off work. In several places the DfES invites readers to send in their ideas and solutions – a sort of governance swap-shop. But shouldn't the Department be coming up with a few solid solutions itself? Identifying the issues is helpful – but we've known what they are for a long time. We could do with a few answers, which this document signally fails to offer.

It is instructive to compare the provision for Heads with what is offered to governors. The National College for School Leadership (NCSL) has luxurious headquarters, an outstanding website, a comprehensive suite of excellent development programmes for leaders at all levels and, until a recent review clipped its wings, a seemingly unlimited budget. 'Governing bodies are partners in leadership' – so where do they feature in NCSL's brief? There have been some tentative steps in that direction, but we're a very long way behind. The funding of governance depends on governors allocating money to themselves from the school budget – which they are loath to do, as the document acknowledges. Support and training are largely the preserve of LEA teams, often operating on a shoestring and on a business unit basis (yet still the best regarded LEA service, according to Ofsted).

As far as the future goes, NCSL offers a truly imaginative development package called FutureSight (www.ncsl.org.uk – select 'research and development') looking twenty years ahead and considering radically different scenarios of education. Each scenario implies equally different models of governance. I guess this is the kind of far-sighted thinking I was hoping to find in *Governing the school of the future*. Similarly, NCSL's Growing Tomorrow's Leaders offers a well-researched and practical approach to succession planning – ideas readily transferable to governance. It is conspicuous by its absence from the document under review.

The challenges identified include:

- strengthening governing body membership (no solutions offered)
- the governance of extended schools (send us your ideas)
- recruitment (existing strategies listed).

Much of the content describes the present and, in some cases the past: how many LEA teams these days are not offering school-based governor training? Other challenges are not spotted at all, such as how governing bodies are to remain accountable once the annual report and annual meeting both disappear this year. This is a huge issue and I find it worrying that no account is taken of it here.

In a nutshell, the document proposes:

- that governors should read the Five Year Strategy
- that governors could get help from other governing bodies when appointing Heads
- the provision of guidance on school self-evaluation
- development opportunities for COGS
- on-line training for governors on interviewing (child protection focus)
- establishing a cadre of super Chairs.

Most of this will happen in the next eighteen months to two years – if the government is re-elected. Personally, I think we should be looking further ahead. What will governance look like in ten years' time, for example? What should we be doing now in order to prepare for it? This document takes us nowhere near answering those questions, so I'm going back to the NCSL website...

David Marriott
is Head of Governor Services for Wiltshire County Council.

DfES support for governance

This article provides an overview of the DfES School Admissions, Governance and Organisation Division in its work to support school governance, including planned future developments.

Governing the school of the future, published by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) in early February, celebrates the many achievements of our system of governance and looks ahead to the challenges and opportunities for the future. It makes clear that governing bodies have become the strategic leaders of schools in equal partnership with headteachers, ensuring accountability and challenge for parents and communities. The School Governance Unit aims to support governors so that they can help schools to provide the best possible education for pupils.

The School Governance Unit

The School Governance Unit is one of a number of teams within the School Admissions, Governance and Organisation Division led by Shan Scott. Divisional staff are based in both London and Darlington. The School Governance Unit is led in London by Teresa Harper, who took over in December following June Nisbet's retirement, and in Darlington by Geoff Friston. Despite the different sites, the unit operates very much as a team to serve the needs of stakeholders. The key role of the Unit is to promote the effectiveness and strategic leadership of school governors by: improving support and training; enhancing recruitment and retention strategies; and developing and maintaining effective communication with governors.

Links with the national governors' organisations

The recent changes in the Department's ministerial team have meant that the School Governance Unit has been closely involved in briefing new ministers on governance issues. Derek Twigg, who has ministerial responsibility for school governance, is meeting the key national governors' organisations in early April. This will be the start of an ongoing dialogue with governors' organisations to discuss the implications for governors of the Department's Five Year Strategy. The Advisory Group on Governance (AGOG) continues to provide a forum for the Department to meet on a regular basis with the national governors' organisations and other key players in school governance.

SGOSS

Work is continuing with the national governors' organisations on a project to raise public awareness of school governors, to highlight and celebrate their work and to publicise the importance of the role they play in raising educational standards. The DfES is keen to encourage the recruitment of more high-quality representatives of local communities and the retention of those already involved. The School Governors One Stop Shop (SGOSS) provides a central point for people

interested in becoming a school governor. SGOSS identifies high-quality governor candidates, with transferable skills, from the business community. Since its establishment in November 1999, SGOSS has fostered links with a number of large companies and has used these links to identify over 6,000 governor candidates willing to work in local schools. Further work is planned to target recruitment activity on under-represented and hard-to-recruit groups.

Support and training

Good governor support and training are the key to ensuring that all governing bodies are as effective as the best and that they are equipped to fulfil the important functions that the role now requires of them. Two new programmes were rolled out to governor trainers last year – Taking the Chair and Leading Together. These were aimed at Chairs of governors and headteachers. Both are now available via GovernorNet (www.governornet.co.uk) or Online Publications (www.publications.teachernet.gov.uk). Plans to accredit the Chairs' and clerks' programmes are progressing well. Training materials can be ordered direct from our Darlington team by emailing: governance.materials@dfes.gsi.gov.uk.

The School Governance Unit is looking to provide more effective support for Co-ordinators of Governor Services (COGS) and to develop standards for governor support officers. Staff from both sites attend regional COGs meetings to provide up-to-date briefings on governance issues. The Department has set up a mailbox: school.governance@dfes.gsi.gov.uk, for queries from COGs.

The GovernorNet website and the *Governors* newsletter are key routes to improved communication with school governors. The Governance Unit provides regular amendments to the governors' *Guide to the law*.

The School Organisation Unit

Based in Darlington, the School Organisation Unit is responsible for statutory proposals from schools and their associated regulations and guidance, school organisation plans, school organisation committees and legislation and procedures relating to school adjudicators. It is responsible for policy on rural and faith schools, supply of schools places and falling rolls issues. It also acts as a liaison point for voluntary aided schools, foundation schools and faith organisations.

Contact: Vivienne Andrews, DfES Room 5.86 Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, London, SW1P 3BT.
Telephone: 020 7925 5592 Email: vivienne.andrews@dfes.gsi.gov.uk.

Governing passions

Acting Headteacher of Sadtidings School, Sally Pickles, is encouraging parents to become more involved in the life of the school. Individual governors reflect on the evolving partnership.

Episode 4: Dealing with parents

Ron Mutton: What teachers don't understand is that parents are customers. Now, as a man of business, I know all there is to know about customers. There's those that dig their hands in their pockets and appreciate the service you provide. That's the sort you want. And then there's others who would have their fingers in the till soon as look at you. That's the problem with this school – too many of the wrong sort. So the last thing you do is encourage them and yet that's exactly what's happened since the headmaster went off sick. No need for me to tell you who's to blame for that...

Sally Pickles: Sarwar and Jane were really helpful in setting up the first parents' coffee morning. The parents were reluctant to come along at first, but once they realised they were welcome and that we wanted to hear their views, they began to speak up. At first it was a very uncomfortable experience.

Jane Hobbs: There was a long list of issues that they were anxious about – special needs; behaviour; standards; homework; poor communications...

SP: But, as we listened and agreed to address their concerns, it became much more positive and they came up with so many ideas and offers of help.

Sarwar Aziz: We realised that many parents didn't feel valued before and that's why they were reluctant to get involved. Indeed, they still had concerns about the attitudes of some people linked to the school...

Dougie Antrobus: I'd just popped into school with some election leaflets and there he was. I could tell his sort just by looking at him. I told him to clear off but he just stood there, bold as brass. 'I have a meeting with the headteacher,' he said, 'about setting up a club for the kids.' Think I was born yesterday? And then that Pickles woman came out and greeted him as though he were a long-lost relative...

SP: I'd invited Mr Walsh to come in to discuss setting up a Dads and Lads Club but, even after I'd explained this to Mr Antrobus, he still went on and on at him. Mr Walsh did apologise to Mr Antrobus, for suggesting where he should stick his leaflets, and then, when the police turned up, I had to explain to Sergeant Harris that there'd been a misunderstanding...

Dolores Spink: Frankly, I was shocked. When a respected pillar of the community like Mr Antrobus is abused by a thug in the Reception of Sadtidings School and that same thug is then defended by a member of staff – well, what is the world coming to?

JH: And then the Parents' Forum invited the governors to the opening of the Breakfast Club they had organised.

SA: We didn't think any other governors would be able to attend, so imagine our surprise when Mr Mutton turned up unannounced.

DA: When I got wind of this nonsense, I had words with Dolores. 'We're a school not a soup kitchen,' I said. 'We're encouraging the wrong sort of parents to dump their children on us,' I said.

DS: And we said to the Chairman, 'Chairman,' we said, 'you need to get round there and nip this in the bud.'

RM: And so I thought I'd turn up, take them by surprise, and then...

JH: Mrs Patel asked Mr Mutton if he would be kind enough to cut the ribbon and declare the Breakfast Club open.

SP: And a journalist and photographer from the *Gazette* were there and asked to interview Mr Mutton. He wasn't quite sure what to say, so I wrote down a few...

SA: Words are obviously Mr Mutton's forte. I was very impressed by what he said to the press.

RM: Just as well I was there to handle the media. As I said to the chap from the *Gazette*, at Sadtidings School, we see parents as our key partners and we look for ways to support them so that together we can ensure that all our children are healthy, safe and ready to learn, enjoy and achieve.

DA: If I've said it once, I've said it a hundred times, parents are our partners. Bit like a marriage when you think of it – has its ups and downs, occasional arguments. Can end in divorce, mind you.

DS: You have to listen to parents, encourage them, nurture them, respect them. Just because many of them are not very bright doesn't mean that they don't care about their children.

RM: What teachers don't understand is that parents are partners. As a man of business, I know all about partnerships. At the end of the day, it's not about ignoring them and hoping that they'll go away but recognising that they do have their uses if they're managed properly. And, if they do overstep the mark and get above their station, well rest assured, Ron Mutton is the best there is at dealing with parents.

Phil Dickinson

is Development Officer (South East) for the Extended Schools Support Service (TESSS) on behalf of ContinYou.

.....
'Governing passions' is being written for Governors' Agenda by Phil Dickinson. The characters are fictitious. The next episode will focus on 'downsizing and efficiency savings'.

Resources

Recruitment and selection: a practical guide for school governors and headteachers

by Jane Phillips

Adamson Publishing, 48 pp, A4, £7.50 (£11.50 with CD-ROM) + £1.50 p&p ISBN 0 948543 51 5



Written primarily for school governors, this up-to-date guide provides practical advice on considering the factors that contribute to successful selection decisions, from justifying the need to recruit through to selecting the best person for the job. It begins with a recommendation that governing bodies should have a procedure in place long before a serious selection decision has to be made. The author also suggests that governing bodies should review their recruitment and selection procedures in the context of remodelling and extended schools.

There are useful sections on: legal requirements; selection tools, including presentations, assessment centres and personality questionnaires; structuring interview questions; and scoring candidates. Two chapters focus specifically on the selection of Heads and deputies. The guide also includes: a comprehensive checklist for identifying who will do what and when; a draft timetable for headteacher appointments; and sample document templates covering the whole process – from applicants' pack to selection scoring grids. The templates are available on CD-ROM in both Word and pdf format. There are two model person specifications: one is for a headteacher and the other is a generic leadership model with advice on how to match the person specification for leadership with the needs of the school.

This guide would usefully complement the DfES *Guide to the law for school governors* and, where the LEA has advisory rights, advice from the LEA. LEAs' individual model procedures for the selection of staff in schools may vary slightly from the advice in this guide – another reason why it is important for governing bodies to establish their own ground rules.

Exclusions: a practical guide for school governors and headteachers

by Margaret Jones

Adamson Publishing, 48 pp, A4, £7.50 + £1.50 p&p, ISBN 0 948543 36 1



This step-by-step guide to exclusion from school closely follows DfES guidance. It starts with an account of the law on exclusions, including the governors' role and appeals. There is a separate section on the law relating to exclusions from Welsh schools.

The guide then goes on to consider the governing body's responsibility for the school's behaviour policy and how implementation of the policy can influence the need to resort to exclusion. This section covers issues such as support for pupils at risk, pupils in public care, equal opportunities and inclusion, pupils with special educational needs or disabilities, incidents outside school, the use of sanctions other than exclusion and drug-related incidents.

The exclusion process, including the roles of the headteacher, governing body, clerk, exclusion panel and independent appeal panel, is covered in detail.

The appendices include a useful checklist of suggested documentation for an independent exclusion appeal panel, a definition of parent, an exclusions flowchart, model letters from the DfES guidance that can be downloaded from the Teachernet website and a publication list.

Start here: what new school governors need to know

by Stephen Adamson

Adamson Publishing, A5 booklet, £2.50 + £0.50 p&p, ISBN 0 948543 46 9



This booklet answers all the questions about what governors do, who they are and how they work. Enduring issues, such as attendance at meetings, the corporate nature of the governing body, drawing the line between management and governance, being a critical friend and the difference between committees and working parties are all addressed in an honest and engaging manner.

The different categories of maintained school are briefly described. Sources of further information, support and training are listed. Finally, there is a comprehensive list of ways in which an individual governor might be expected to contribute to the work of the governing body, always remembering that 'no governor has any power on their own'.

The size of this little booklet belies its wealth of helpful advice for new governors and anyone contemplating being a governor.

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All of these publications are available from Adamson Publishing, Akeman House, High Street, Stretham, Ely, Cambs CB6 3JQ, tel: 01353 649238. You can order by post, fax: 01353 648184 or email: sales@adamsonbooks.com. Cheques should be made payable to Adamson Publishing Ltd.

Date for your diary

NCOGS Conference

5–7 October

Imperial Hotel, Torquay

Full information available soon.

Conferences

Governors: leading from within

15 June 2005

Victoria Plaza Hotel, London SW1

This annual joint conference on governance, organised by five partner organisations – COGS, ContinYou, National Association of School Governors, National Governors' Council and TEN – aims to 'further the development of governors' role in school leadership'.

The event will offer the opportunity for participants to consider and discuss this important agenda, as well as providing networking opportunities across the partner organisations, and with others committed to promoting school governance.

Speakers include: Jane Martin, Chief Executive, Centre for Public Scrutiny; Julian Piper, National Programme Director, The Extended Schools Support Service; and Steve Munby, Chief Executive, National College for School Leadership.

Participants will also have the opportunity to take part in round-table sessions focusing on the broadening role of governors.

For full details of the event, email events@lgiu.org.uk or phone 020 7554 2800.

Governors' Agenda Briefings

Briefings for June 2005

Thursday, 16 June 2005 – Birmingham

Wednesday, 22 June 2005 – London

The Briefings will focus on 'Extended schools: what role for governors?', and will also consider the Children's Centre initiative. Sessions will cover the following areas:

- understanding the context (overview of the Extended Schools Strategy; auditing the school's current position, and so on)
- developing the Extended Schools Strategy in our school (planning provision; monitoring and evaluating implementation, outcomes and impact, and so on)
- governance of Children's Centres (different models of governance for Children's Centres; examples of good practice, and so on).

Michele Robbins, Education Consultant, will run the morning session, and Joan Wilson, Education Consultant, will run the afternoon session.

For full details of the Briefings, contact Liza Griffiths at liza.griffiths@continyou.org.uk or on 024 7658 8440.

The aims of *Governors' Agenda*

Governors' Agenda seeks to support those who work in school governance, through providing information, comment and training ideas. It aims to be alert to future developments as well as being a focus for disseminating current good practice.

ContinYou produces *Governors' Agenda* as part of the services it offers to those who work in school governance. These include:

- briefings for Co-ordinators of Governor Services
- evaluation of governor support and development programmes.

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We always welcome contributions from our readers.

We want to give you the chance to express your views and pass on news and information to other readers. Please send your letters, articles and comments to the Editor.

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