



# GOVERNOR SERVICES NEWSLETTER

***“Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success.” Henry Ford***

It has been another intriguing term working with Governors in Trafford. You certainly have presented us with a wide range of issues and, as ever, I have been impressed and sometimes in awe of the enthusiasm and dedication so many of you bring to your roles as Governors.

The summer term training sessions spanned a wide range of subjects. The Governors’ Guide to Academies sessions were interactive and well attended. Whilst there are many questions for Governing Bodies to discuss, comments on the evaluation forms seem to suggest that we were able to clarify some key points and give some useful tools for you to use in your discussions. The Communication and Committees sessions were a departure from the norm. Many thanks to those of you who engaged and participated so well in the sessions. The feedback was very positive for example *“An excellent session, I’m really glad I came”*. I am delighted that the sessions were useful and enjoyable. It was an opportunity for all of us to reflect on our behaviour. The *“Do’s and Don’ts”* of communication highlighted how we can take positive steps to work more effectively with others. Whether you are predominantly cool blue, fiery red, feeling green or sunshine yellow you can play an important role in the success of your team.

The Governor Services team has now relocated from Sale to Woodsend, Flixton, so please note our new address, all other contact details remain the same. I hope you find the Newsletter useful and remember, see our Bulletin Board [www.cyps.org.uk/governors](http://www.cyps.org.uk/governors) for more regular updates.

Julie Lawson – Governor Services Manager  
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## Autumn 2011

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## Taking Part in Meetings

Decisions are made at either committee or main meetings. Many new governors ask how they should take part in the discussions. The Chairman should try to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to give their views about the topic on the agenda. This is not only the right thing to do, but as all governors are expected to accept the decision they should have an opportunity to contribute before a democratic vote is taken

### What is appropriate?

You will have something to offer, your perspective as a parent, member of staff or part of the local community. You will probably find some people agree with what you are saying while others do not. In the interests of good decision making, it is healthy to air different opinions in a constructive way. Appropriate ways of making a point could include:

- Starting with a positive comment
- Saying politely what you think
- Speaking firmly but not aggressively
- Speaking from your own knowledge or experience
- Making constructive contributions – that are aimed at helping your school find the best solution.

### Appropriate questions could include

- Any questions which help you to understand more about the subject being discussed
- Any question which adds to your knowledge of the way the school works
- Questions about school policies
- Questions about the school's performance and achievements

- Questions about future needs and developments
- Always ask to have jargon explained!

### How can you get an item on the agenda?

All governors can ask for items to be included in the agenda. You will need to speak to your Chairman and Headteacher who finalise the agenda. They will tell you if it is put on the agenda. However, the Chairman has the discretion to send your item to a committee if that is the most appropriate way of dealing with it. Or if the agenda is already very full and the item is not urgent they can defer it until the next meeting. You should never use Any Other Business to raise items. This part of the agenda is strictly for urgent items that have arisen since the agenda was dispatched.

### Inappropriate items for the main meeting

Matters concerning individual teachers, pupils or parents should never be discussed at the main meeting. It is not appropriate and it may be a serious lapse of procedure if it were to happen. For example, if you discuss a pupil's behaviour and then the pupil is excluded, the parents cannot have a fair hearing when the exclusion is reviewed by the Pupil Discipline Committee. Of course, there is the one obvious exception, you can name individuals when the governing body wants to thank them or congratulate them!

### What could individual governors report on?

If you have visited school, you could share this experience with other governors. Report on the purpose of your visit and what you observed. It is particularly useful to note any policies

you see in action. Always remembering that as lay people we cannot comment on the quality of teaching, but we can identify a happy and exciting learning environment.

If you have been on governor training, try and share one or two useful things you learned at the session. This means your time has been used to even greater advantage.

If you have attended the Governors' Forum, you could give a brief summary of the topics discussed.

If you are a member of the Schools Funding Forum or School Organisation Committee you could update governors.

## Ofsted on Governance

Ofsted have produced a report examining the principles and practices which contribute to *outstanding* governance. They examined 14 Governing Bodies to identify examples of good practice. The report is titled *School Governance – Learning from the best (May 2011)*. The key sections, which would therefore suggest the key areas for Governors to take note of, are;

- **Going about the work**
  - Knowing their schools
  - Supporting School Leaders
  - Providing Challenge
  - Working Efficiently
  - Engaging Others
- **Strengthening leadership through Governance**
  - Making a difference
  - Recruitment, induction and training
  - Governing body self review

I recommend the report as an 'easy read' however if you prefer my summary the key issues identified are;

- Positive relationships between Headteacher and Governors, based on trust
- Strong relationship between Chair and Headteacher
- Systematic monitoring of progress
- Good organisation including Committee structure and adherence to procedures
- Sharing of information, what's going well or not and why
- Governors ask for information, explanation or clarification
- Governors are well informed and knowledgeable, they are given information and attend training
- Governors back the Headteacher or make changes when necessary
- Self evaluation is carried out to challenge the Governing Body performance
- Clear understanding of roles and responsibilities
- Governors were proud to be part of their schools and routinely visit the school

For more information and a copy of the report go to [www.cyps.org.uk/governors](http://www.cyps.org.uk/governors) or contact Governor Services

## Guide to Law for Schools and Academies

We are awaiting an update to the Guide to Law which I am now informed will be published in autumn 2011. I am very aware that the existing Guide to Law (Jan 2010) is now somewhat out of date. I understand that CD versions will no longer be sent to Governors, due to Government budget cuts, but it will be available to download from the DfE website.

When the update is published we will let you know via our Governors Bulletin Board and at the training sessions.

## Read all about it - pay awards and ISR

It has been noted that a number of governing bodies are approving personnel/staffing issues that should be delegated to their personnel committees to protect an individual's right of appeal. Can I remind governors that requests from staff for items such as leave of absence, change of hours, an increase in pay point, disciplinary or competence matters, etc. should be delegated to your personnel committee and not approved by the whole governing body.

The Individual School Range (ISR) (a seven point range on the Leadership Scale) has to be agreed at a quorate meeting of the Governing Body subject to a recommendation by an appropriate Committee. However the point, at which an individual is paid on that range, is confidential and therefore should not be discussed at the full Governing Body meeting.

The remit, or terms of reference, for the personnel committee should make clear which decisions have been delegated to the Headteacher and which have been delegated to the personnel committee. For example, all governing bodies should have adopted a scheme for leave of absence and most of you will follow the agreed scheme contained in Trafford's Guidelines on Employment Related Matters. That scheme describes the types of leave of absence which the Headteacher can approve and any that fall outside of the Scheme should be delegated to the personnel committee. Where the Headteacher makes the original decision the personnel committee could hear any appeal; where the personnel committee makes the original decision then an appeal committee of governors would hear the appeal.

Similarly your pay policy would provide the framework for consideration of any

pay matters and for any subsequent appeal in line with the model pay policy published by the DfE. If there is any subsequent appeal to an Employment Tribunal the governing body must be able to demonstrate that it has followed its own agreed procedures which are fair and reasonable.

## Consultations Update

### • Behaviour in Schools

The DfE issued a document during the summer term entitled "***Behaviour and Discipline in Schools – Guidance for Governing Bodies***". Governor Services contributed to a response to the consultation which was drafted by Trafford CYPS. In my opinion there were some rather concerning ideas and suggestions in this guidance. It included Governors "providing advice and guidance" to the Headteacher on what should be included in Behaviour Policy – which seems to indicate a shift from the strategic role and responsibilities of Governors.

The consultation ended on 30 May so we await the resulting guidance which is likely to be one of our themes for training in spring 2012.

### • SEN Green Paper

The consultation on the SEN green paper "*Support & Aspiration: A new approach to SEN and disability*" ended on 30 June. Trafford CYPS responded to the consultation and thanks go to Sally Thornton (Trafford CYPS SEN Advisory Service) who gave a comprehensive summary of the key issues to Governors at the summer term training sessions - SEN Update.

I recommend governors review the NGA briefing note including details of the NGA response to the consultation. It is available via our Bulletin Board or upon request from [governor.services@trafford.gov.uk](mailto:governor.services@trafford.gov.uk) or call 0161 912 3218

## **New Ofsted Framework**

Ofsted have conducted pilot inspections using the proposed new framework (including two schools in Trafford). The existing Section 5 will be used for any inspections in autumn 2011. The new framework will be utilised from January 2012. Schools will receive an overall judgement and a grading for the following key areas;

- Achievement
- Quality of Teaching
- Quality of Leadership and Management
- Behaviour and Safety of Pupils.

Governor Services will offer training sessions on the new framework in the autumn term. Headteacher & Deputy Headteachers sessions on 22<sup>nd</sup> & 30<sup>th</sup> November. Governor sessions 6<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> December.

See the Training Calendar attached and book your place now!

## **Pupil Premium**

The Pupil Premium will target extra money at pupils from deprived backgrounds to support them in reaching their potential and to narrow the gap between them and their peers.

In 2011/12 the Pupil Premium provides

- £430 per pupil known to be eligible for FSM
- £430 per Looked After Child
- £200 per child of armed forces personnel

## **Be prepared**

As Governors you are entitled to have the agenda and any papers to be discussed at least 7 days in advance of the meeting. If you have not received your agenda please contact the school or Governor Services.

## **Freedom of Information**

Schools, academies and local authorities have experienced an increasing number of FOI requests recently.

Governing Bodies are required to have a "Freedom of Information Publication Scheme". The Governing Body should consider the school's scheme and record its review and adoption in the minutes. See the Autumn Training Calendar for details of the forthcoming session on Freedom of Information.

## **Governing Body Constitution**

The Education Bill puts forward changes to the constitution of Governing Bodies. Originally it specified only the Headteacher, Parent Governors and, where relevant, Foundation Governors with the remainder being up to the Governing Body. I understand that an amendment is now likely to be made in the Lords to include a requirement for a Staff Governor and an Authority Governor – we wait to see!

The key thing to bear in mind is that the legislation is permissive but not compulsory. If you are happy with your current constitution it can remain in place, if not then you will have the option to change it. The Government seem to be recommending smaller Governing Bodies however, like the NGA, I find it difficult to see how this can work in practice. Not only due to the capacity of work under normal circumstances but particularly when untainted governors are required to take part in review panels or appeals. The NGA suggests that schools start to consider working collaboratively to facilitate use of additional Governors when necessary.

This is food for thought and perhaps something we can discuss during training sessions next term.

## Autumn Training Programme

### **Roles and Responsibilities** \* *For New Governors* \*

New governors sometimes wonder what they have let themselves in for. It is important that they have a chance to ask questions about their new role. We shall explore how, as individuals, they work as members of a corporate team and the framework in which they carry out their responsibilities.

### **Governors' Forum**

All governors are invited to the Forum. The Forum will start with a buffet tea at 5.30 p.m. and the formal meeting will begin at 6.00 p.m. This is a chance for Trafford CYPS colleagues to present updates to governors and for you to submit questions or subjects for discussion.

### **Chairing Matters**

Whether you are an experienced Chairman, newly appointed or if you are considering taking the chairing in future – I hope you can join us for Chairing Matters. We will reflect on the responsibilities of the chairman and the procedures you need to be aware of. This will be a workshop session allowing governors to share experiences and consider how to deal with situations that can arise.

### **Anti-bullying**

This session will look at schools' responsibilities regarding bullying and how governors can support the school developing ways to prevent bullying and to provide a better learning environment for all pupils. Guest presenter; Sue Pennington (Trafford Behaviour and Attendance Consultant).

### **Freedom of Information**

Schools have a legal obligation to provide information through an approved publication scheme and in response to requests. Find out what you need to do under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Guest presenter; Nick Evans (Trafford Corporate Information Officer).

### **New Ofsted Framework**

Exploring the focus of inspections for the new framework due to launch January 2012. This session will look at the grading priorities and suggest some tips and recommendations for consideration when preparing for inspection. Guest presenter; Ken Bold (Trafford School Improvement, Primary Adviser).

September / October

**Roles and Responsibilities**

Thursday 22 September 2011  
6.00 p.m. to 8.00 p.m.

*Closing date for applications 12 September 2011*

**Chairing Matters**

Tuesday 4 October 2011  
1.00 p.m. to 3.00 p.m.

Tuesday 11 October 2011

6.00 p.m. to 8.00 p.m.

*Closing date for applications 23 September 2011*

**Anti-Bullying**

Thursday 6 October 2011  
6.00 p.m. to 8.00 p.m.

Wednesday 12 October 2011

9.30 a.m. to 11.30 a.m.

*Closing date for applications 23 September 2011*

November

**Freedom of Information**

Thursday 10 November 2011  
6.00 p.m. to 8.00 p.m.

Tuesday 15 November 2011  
1.00 p.m. to 3.00 p.m.

*Closing date for applications 28 October 2011*

**Governors' Forum**

*This is a chance for Trafford CYPS colleagues to present updates to governors and for you to submit questions or subjects for discussion.*

Buffet tea available from 5.30 p.m.

Thursday 24 November 2011  
6.00 p.m. to 8.00 p.m.

*Closing date for applications 11 November 2011*

December

**New Ofsted Framework**

Tuesday 6 December 2011  
6.00 p.m. to 8.00 p.m.

Thursday 8 December 2011  
9.30 a.m. to 11.30 a.m.

*Closing date for applications 25 November 2011*

**Roles and Responsibilities**

Tuesday 13 December 2011  
1.00 p.m. to 3.00 p.m.

*Closing date for applications 2 December 2011*

**Course details can be found on page 6 of the Newsletter**

**Governor Training Sessions will be held at Sale West Development Centre,  
Manor Avenue, Sale, M33 5JX (see map overleaf)**

# VENUE

## Sale West Development Centre

The Sale West Development Centre is located on Manor Avenue, Sale, M33 5JX. Approaching from Carrington Lane (with the Development Centre on the right) turn into the first gateway. Car parking spaces are available at the back of the building, overlooked by the Development Centre.

