

**Education and Skills Director's Report to Governors**

**AUTUMN 2015**

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***DEVELOPING THE  
EFFECTIVENESS OF  
YOUR GOVERNING BODY***

**For more information please  
contact Sarah Beaumont,  
Governor Services Manager  
Tel: 020 8359 7622**

### Summary

The new OFSTED School Inspection Handbook (September 2015) provides clear guidance for inspectors on the duties and responsibilities of school governors. In order for an inspection team to gain an understanding of the effectiveness of governance in a school the Handbook states:

*“Inspectors will obtain a range of evidence from meetings with leaders and governors and first-hand evidence of their work across the school. Inspectors will use **documentary evidence provided by the school, evaluating the impact of leaders’ and governors’ work**, both currently and over time, in conjunction with first-hand evidence.”*

In addition, the DfE publication entitled “Schools Causing Concern - Statutory guidance for Local Authorities” (January 2015) made it very clear that local authorities need to have a firm understanding of the effectiveness of governing bodies of maintained schools across the LA. It states:

*“Local authorities should take an active interest in the quality of governance in maintained schools. To prevent schools becoming “eligible for intervention” local authorities should promote and support high standards of governance. To do so, they should be champions for high quality in school governance; help ensure that governors have the necessary skills; and have in place appropriate monitoring arrangements to identify signs of failure in relation to governors’ oversight of finance, safety or performance standards. Local authorities should also be able to provide governors with high quality training that is necessary to prevent schools from becoming “eligible for intervention” or at least be able to signpost governors to such training..... Local authorities should have arrangements in place for maintaining records of governors in maintained schools. This can be used by the authority to aid communication with governors and provide for them to undertake any necessary due-diligence. Ideally, the records should also include schools registers of interests and enable identification of governors who sit on more than one governing body. Information held by the local authority should also be made available to the Department for Education upon request. Where a local authority has concerns about governance within an academy in their area they should raise this with their local Regional Schools Commissioner or the EFA.”*

In order to assist Governors and Headteachers in having “documentary evidence” and identifying strengths and weaknesses in governance and to give us a better understanding of the effectiveness and training needs of governing bodies, we are offering a ‘Governance Self-Evaluation Audit Tool’ which we are asking all governing bodies to complete. This is

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attached as Appendix One.

The first part of the audit is a current list of your Governors enabling us to have a record of Governors across the LA. What follows is a list of 37 questions to help you evaluate the impact of all aspects of Governors' work. The Headteacher should be involved in the completion of this Audit.

We would like all maintained schools to complete and return this Audit to **Sarah Beaumont at [sarah.beaumont@barnet.gov.uk](mailto:sarah.beaumont@barnet.gov.uk) by Friday 23 October 2015.**

We would also welcome responses from academies and free schools. We will be evaluating every audit individually and offering feedback, advice and training opportunities where appropriate. We plan to make this an annual process with subsequent audits just asking for updates on previous information submitted.

Further support can be arranged by BPSI and Governor Services. BPSI hours can be used for some of this training.

**Governors' Role**

- All maintained schools to complete and return this Audit to Sarah Beaumont at [sarah.beaumont@barnet.gov.uk](mailto:sarah.beaumont@barnet.gov.uk) by Friday 23 October 2015.
- All Free Schools and Academies to respond at their discretion.

**For information by Contact**

All Governors

**Neil Marlow, Head of School Improvement  
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**Summary**

The Council's Internal Audit service has undertaken a piece of work with the School Improvement Service to expand the areas of audit to further support schools. As such, Internal Audit are undertaking a pilot of additional audit areas in the Autumn term to include:

- Pupil Premium
- An expansion of the current audit testing around Governance
- High level testing on pre-employment checks and Safeguarding policies / reporting
- Anti-fraud controls

The audits will provide independent assurance over these key areas. Internal Audit proposes to run the pilot during the Autumn Term 2015 and to seek feedback from the schools visited through the process. Due to the additional areas the amount of time needed on site by the auditor may increase from an average of 2 days to 3 days. During the pilot stage any findings will be an Appendix to the main audit report and will not impact on the school's audit rating.

To support the pilot a self-assessment checklist will be provided and Internal Audit will be requesting that this be completed by Headteachers with the support of the Chair of Governors and Schools Business Manager. Your co-operation with the pilot of additional audit areas is much appreciated.

**Governors' Role**

To note the above information

**For action by**

All Governors

**Contact**

**Caroline Glitre, Head of Internal Audit, Assurance Group  
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**3.****New BPSI Services Available from the Autumn Term****Summary**

Barnet Partnership for School Improvement (BPSI) is launching some new services available to schools from 1 September 2015.

Schools will be able to commission either a full *BPSI Governance Review* (the schools would be charged 10 'BPSI hours'); a *BPSI Governance Review Follow Up* (the schools would be charged 3 'BPSI hours'); or a *BPSI Governance Healthcheck* (the schools would be charged 5 'BPSI hours').

Links can be found to the following documents below:

**BPSI Governance Review**

[http://webfronter.com/barnet/bpsi/menu4/images/BPSI\\_Governance\\_Review\\_Report\\_-\\_Template\\_-\\_V06.doc](http://webfronter.com/barnet/bpsi/menu4/images/BPSI_Governance_Review_Report_-_Template_-_V06.doc)

**BPSI Governance Review Follow Up**

[http://webfronter.com/barnet/bpsi/menu4/images/BPSI\\_Governance\\_Review\\_Follow-up\\_Guidance\\_and\\_Action\\_Plan\\_Template\\_-\\_V05.doc](http://webfronter.com/barnet/bpsi/menu4/images/BPSI_Governance_Review_Follow-up_Guidance_and_Action_Plan_Template_-_V05.doc)

**BPSI Governance Healthcheck**

[http://webfronter.com/barnet/bpsi/menu4/images/BPSI\\_Governance\\_Healthcheck\\_Guidance\\_Notes\\_and\\_Action\\_Plan\\_Template\\_-\\_V05.doc](http://webfronter.com/barnet/bpsi/menu4/images/BPSI_Governance_Healthcheck_Guidance_Notes_and_Action_Plan_Template_-_V05.doc)

**Governors' Role**

Governors to note the information above

**For information by**

All Governors

**Contact**

**Richard Griggs, Barnet Partnership for School Improvement (BPSI) Manager, Education & Skills, Children's Service**  
**London Borough of Barnet, North London Business Park, Oakleigh Road South, London N11 1NP**  
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**Summary**

Following on from our July update on the Unified Reward Project we are arranging special briefings for schools as follows:

- **Headteacher briefings** on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> September 2015 and Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> September 2015 at 8:30 – venue to be confirmed
- **Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Governors briefings** on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> September 2015 or Wednesday 23 September 2015 at 7pm – in the Central Room, North London Business Park

The purpose of each briefing will be to update you on the latest developments within the project, including the Council's proposals going forward into negotiations with the recognised trade unions this Autumn. These proposals will apply to all support staff in Community Schools and your attendance is strongly recommended.

As the information we intend to discuss with you during the briefings forms part of confidential management proposals the briefings are for Headteachers (or Deputy Headteachers) and Chairs of Governors only. There will be full consultation with staff following the negotiations with the trade unions at the appropriate time.

**Governors' Role**

Governors to note the information above

**For information by Contact**

All Governors

**Deborah Shaw, Schools Business Partner, Human Resources Customer & Support Group (CSG)**  
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**Summary**

The HR/Payroll service is continually looking to make improvements to the service delivered to Barnet Schools.

Many improvements have already taken place since commencement of the contract including improvements to:

- Reporting
- Improvements to the functionality in the MyView system
- Improvements to processes such as the process for staff moving schools within the borough and fixed-term contracts

More improvements are planned for roll out in September including further improvements to reporting and input processes. There is also a training session planned for 16 September where schools staff dealing with the HR/Payroll system can attend a free session to be updated on new processes and reporting. Each school that sends a delegate will receive either a £50 book token or Amazon gift card.

More information is available in The Service Development Update, a newsletter available to purchasers of the Capita HR/Payroll service via AskHR. This is a web system used by schools to access HR/Payroll information and communicate with the team.

**Governors' Role**

To note the information above

**For information by**

All Governors

**Contact**

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**Schools Services Manager**  
**Customer and Support Group (CSG)**  
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**Arrangements for Managing Allegations Against Staff****Summary**

All Governors are reminded of the arrangements for handling allegations against staff within the children's workforce in Barnet. These arrangements are managed by the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer).

Essential information about the relevant procedures, how to make a referral, training and safer working practice is now on the Barnet Safeguarding Children Board website at the link below:

<http://www.barnetscb.org/lado>

Please note that all referrals now go through the MASH Team.

**Governors' Role**

For Governors to note the information above

**For information by**

All Governors

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**Summary**

In an era of increasing school autonomy and declining local authority capacity, the need for schools to work collaboratively is greater than ever. **Federation is where two or more maintained schools work together under a single Governing Body.** Academies are also able to federate, and this is known as forming a Multi-Academy Trust. Within a federation, the single governing body is accountable for the performance of all of its schools. There is no one set model for federation - maintained schools of different sizes, phases, types and faiths can federate together.

**Why federate?**

Establishing a single governing body under a federation enables schools to share resources, training, expertise, staffing, facilities, and a vision to raise standards and improve teaching and leadership. Schools may consider federation for a variety of reasons including addressing or preventing school failure, ensuring viability and achieving economies of scale, or creating more integrated provision across phases.

Ofsted's 2011 '*Leadership of More Than One School*' report found that federation led to:

- improvements in teaching and learning
- improvements in pupils' behaviour and achievement
- a broader and richer curriculum
- schools pooling resources and expertise
- improved staffing
- improved governance in weaker schools.

Schools within a federation retain their individual unique identity by maintaining their separate names, uniforms, budgets, performance tables, Ofsted inspections and admission arrangements. Staff also continue to be employed by individual schools. In contrast, an amalgamation involves the closure of one or more of the participating school(s), resulting in one school overall with a single name, uniform, budget, performance table, Ofsted inspection, and admission arrangements. In recent years a number of infant and junior schools in Barnet have amalgamated.

Federation requires a commitment from governors and school leaders to improving the outcomes *for all children across the federation* (as opposed to

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just a single school), through a school-led system of raising standards and driving improvement.

Successful federation is usually preceded by a period of collaborative working between schools. This allows the schools to develop a shared vision and appreciate the benefits of partnership working. Schools considering federation must consult interested parties in the area including parents, staff at the schools and the LA.

**Governors’  
Role**

For Governors to note the information above

**For  
information  
by**

All Governors of maintained schools

**Contact**

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### Summary

A revised edition of the *Constitution of Governing Bodies of Maintained Schools: Statutory Guidance for Governing Bodies of Maintained Schools and Local Authorities in England, 2015* was published in August 2015. The previous (March) edition brought maintained schools into line with academies in having to publish information about their governors, including the register of interests, on their websites.

However, the new edition extends the obligation in two ways: by including all governors who have served in the previous 12 months, and by detailing the structure of the governing body.

The website should describe the structure and remit of the governing body and any committees, and give the full names of the chair of each. For each governor who has served at any point over the past 12 months the information should contain:

- their full names, date of appointment, term of office, date they stepped down (where applicable), who appointed them (in accordance with the governing body's instrument of government)
- relevant business and pecuniary interests (as recorded in the register of interests) including:
  - governance roles in other educational institutions
  - any material interests arising from relationships between governors or relationships between governors and school staff (including spouses, partners and close relatives)
- their attendance record at governing body and committee meetings over the last academic year.

The declaration should include any associate members, stating any committees on which they have voting rights.

The provision cannot be legally enforced, but the DfE recommends that it should be part of the code of conduct that governors produce this information, and that those who do not are suspended.

Governing bodies of maintained schools should also now publish an annual statement setting out the key issues they have addressed over the year and an assessment of the impact of their work on the school.

The new *Academies Financial Handbook*, effective from 1 September 2015, sets out expectations for Academy Trusts as follows:

*In the interests of transparency, an academy trust must publish on its website up-to-date details of its governance arrangements in a readily accessible*

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*format. This must include:*

- *the structure and remit of the members, board of trustees, its committees and local governing bodies, and the full names of the chair of each (where applicable)*
- *for each member who has served at any point over the past 12 months, their full names, date of appointment, date they stepped down (where applicable), and relevant business and pecuniary interests including governance roles in other educational institutions*
- *for each trustee and local governor who has served at any point over the past 12 months, their full names, date of appointment, term of office, date they stepped down (where applicable), who appointed them (in accordance with the trust's articles), and relevant business and pecuniary interests including governance roles in other educational institutions*
- *for each trustee their attendance records at board and committee meetings over the last academic year*
- *for each local governor their attendance records at local governing body meetings over the last academic year*

**Governors' Role**

To note the information above

**For information by**

All Governors of maintained schools

**Contact**

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**Summary**

In the revised edition of the *Constitution of Governing Bodies of Maintained Schools: statutory guidance for governing bodies of maintained schools and local authorities in England, 2015* published in August 2015, contains new advice on appointing Governors.

It states that those making appointments ought to interview prospective Governors and take up references.

This edition of the guidance gives advice on appointing Governors who already serve on another Governing Body. It advises that before making a recommendation the Chair of the appointing Governing Body should discuss the matter with the Chair of the Governing Body that the person already belongs to. The DfE's view is that "only in exceptional circumstances will it be practical and beneficial for an individual to serve on more than two Governing Bodies".

**Governors' Role**

To note the information above

**For information by**

All Governors of maintained schools

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**EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE CHECKLIST**

Please advise current list of governors (expand size of table)	Governor names	Type of governor e.g. Co-opted	Terms of office

Criterion	Grading 1 (high) to 4 (low)	Comment / source of evidence (as appropriate)
1. The governing body carries out an annual audit of the skills of its members		
2. Members of the governing body have the correct skills for the job		
3. Governors understand their roles and responsibilities		
4. The chair provides effective leadership for the governing body		
5. Governors attend training to fill gaps in their knowledge and skills		
6. Succession planning prepares governors well for new roles		
7. The chair and committee chairs are re-elected each year		
8. Governors keep up to date with and discuss national developments in respect of governance		

9. The size, composition and committee structure of the governing body is conducive to effective working		
10. Meetings are professionally clerked and run efficiently		
11. Governors receive relevant and timely information to enable effective discussions at meetings		
12. Minutes effectively capture the key points of meetings, particularly the quality of challenge from governors		
13. Every member of the governing body makes a regular contribution		
14. The governing body formally evaluates its performance		
15. Findings from the evaluation inform a governance development plan		
16. The governing body is a driving force in the development of the school's vision and ethos and its long-term aims		
17. Systems are in place for governors to ensure that the school development plan reflects these aims		
18. The governing body's activities and agenda setting are driven by the strategic planning cycle		
19. Governors are able to identify ways in which they have contributed		

actively to school improvement		
20. Governors understand the school's performance data well enough to properly hold school leaders to account		
21. Governors track use of pupil premium and understand its impact on outcomes		
22. Governors understand what the school is doing to monitor progress in a world without levels, and are assured of the effectiveness of new systems		
23. Governors understand and are able to discuss the relative performance of different groups in the school		
24. Governors track use of sports funding and understand its impact on outcomes		
25. Governors ensure that the headteacher's performance management targets address key school priorities		
26. Governors ensure there are robust and effective appraisal systems in place for all staff		
27. Governors know how good the teaching in the school is and what is being done to improve it		
28. Governors ensure that there is a broad and balanced curriculum,		



which promotes fundamental British values		
29. Governors ensure that financial management systems are robust and ensure best value for money		
30. There is an effective Pay Committee that meets annually before 31 October to make pay decisions for teaching staff		
31. Governors know how good pupil behaviour is and what is being done to improve it		
32. Governors fulfil their statutory duties in respect of safeguarding and health and safety		
33. A range of formal and informal systems are in place to obtain the views of pupils, parents and staff		
34. Stakeholder views inform governing body decision making		
35. There is regular reporting to parents and the local community		
36. Relationships within the governing body and between governors and school staff are good and reflect mutual respect		
37. Governors are available to the school and participate regularly in activities beyond meetings		