

Director of Children's Service Report to Governors

AUTUMN TERM 2011

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

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1.

Learning Network Inspector visits

Summary

With the termination of the School Improvement Partner (SIP) programme, Barnet schools no longer have an allocated SIP. However the Local Authority retains responsibility as the champion for all Barnet pupils, and there remains a Council strategic objective to ensure that 'every school is a good school for every child'.

The monitoring and challenge function of the Local Authority will be carried out by the Learning Network Inspectors (LNIs). For many schools this will be a continuation of the previous relationship, as our Learning Network Inspectors were the allocated SIPs for a large proportion of our schools. However, with the significant reduction in Schools and Learning staff, the Learning Network Inspectors have a range of additional management responsibilities and a reduced capacity for school visits. Visits will therefore be to a differentiated programme as set out below.

Schools operate within a framework of autonomy with accountability. They are responsible for their own management and development and have the primary responsibility for their own performance. It is the responsibility of the local authority to respect, encourage and support autonomy but also, through the LNI, to monitor, challenge and intervene where appropriate. Self evaluation is the starting point for the local authority monitoring of schools. With the passing of the OFSTED Self Evaluation Form (SEF), schools are no longer required to use a standard format, however a framework will be provided by Barnet in order to support schools in their self evaluation.

The LNIs will visit schools to a differentiated programme in inverse proportion to success. Visits will be phased across the year.

In essence the programme of visits is:-

For outstanding schools	one visit a year
For good schools	two visits a year
For satisfactory schools with good or better capacity to improve	three visits a year
For satisfactory schools where there are one or two areas which are less secure and which in turn affect their capacity to improve.	a programme of visits identified through the schools causing concern protocol
Schools where standards are deemed by the DfE to be below the floor	
For schools in an Ofsted category	

This provides only a bald outline and there may be circumstances where additional visits are undertaken because of a significant change in the school's circumstances, for example where there is a change of

Headteacher, or a marked change in performance indicators. These visits will be agreed between the LNI and Headteacher or Chair of Governors.

The local authority will provide data sets, to support schools in their self evaluation and LNIs in their preparation for visiting schools. A local authority desk top exercise, reviewing the attainment and achievement data for every school, will inform the attainment review and target setting meetings and will contribute to the identification of those satisfactory and good schools requiring a visit in the Autumn term. Schools are expected also to use the range of data available to them from national sources to undertake this analysis.

Challenge from the LA will include the following:

- statutory targets for the improvement of pupil performance
- the school's self evaluation judgements against each aspect of the school's provision and outcomes
- any aspect of school performance where there are concerns.

Schools are encouraged to enter into the formal or informal partnerships with other schools where challenge between peers is part of the improvement process.

At least annually, taking into account the monitoring and challenge of attainment data and the school's self evaluation, the LNI will agree the category in which the school has placed itself and complete a Monitoring and Challenge report. This report will be agreed with the headteacher and should then be made available to members of the governing body.

Headteacher performance management

The Learning Network Inspectors do not have the capacity routinely to take part as advisors in Headteacher Performance Management. However they will prioritise requests from those schools which are on the list of Schools Causing Concern or where there is a new or acting headteacher. This support will be charged at the Barnet Partnership for School Improvement (BPSI) rate. Governors of other schools seeking external advisors are directed to the BPSI site where there is a list of those qualified to undertake the role.

Governors' Role	For governors to note the information above
For action by	All Governors Chris Brook, Learning Network Inspector
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2.

Academies and Free Schools update

Summary

The last few months have seen an increasing number of Barnet schools working towards academy status. Queen Elizabeth Girls' School successfully converted to academy status on 1 August 2011, bringing the total number of academies in the borough up to seven.¹

Primary school, Independent Jewish Day, and secondary school, Mill Hill, both have target conversion dates of 17 August 2011. Secondary schools Henrietta Barnett, The Ravenscroft, Whitefield, and Christ's College are aiming to convert on 1 September 2011, while Hasmonian High has a target date of 1 October 2011. It should also be noted that The Ravenscroft will be changing its name to The Totteridge Academy on 1 September. As of 1 September it is anticipated that over half of Barnet secondary schools (12/22) will be academies. Within Barnet there is also one primary Free School, Etz Chaim, on track to open in September 2011.

We are aware of a further two secondary schools that have applied to convert to academy status and when they receive academy orders we will work to facilitate the conversions. The Council is supportive of Barnet schools that wish to convert to academy status and welcomes their inclusion in the wider schools partnership. In our role as champions of children and young people we will continue to work with all schools to improve outcomes for all pupils in Barnet's schools.

¹ There were two pre-existing academies, The Wren and the London Academy, and a further five have converted since September 2010 - Queen Elizabeth's School, Ashmole, The Compton, East Barnet and Queen Elizabeth Girls' School.

Governors' Role For consideration by

- To note the above information

All Governors

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- Introduction** The Department for Education (DfE) has now published the results of the consultation on this new Standard and this paper informs governors of the main features of the new Standard.
- What is the SFVS?** Schools manage many billions of pounds of public money each year. Effective financial management ensures this money is spent wisely and properly, and allows schools to optimise their resources to provide high-quality teaching and learning and so raise standards and attainment for all their pupils. The SFVS replaces the Financial Management Standard in Schools (FMSiS) and has been designed in conjunction with schools to assist them in managing their finances and to give assurance that they have secure financial management in place.
- Who is the SFVS for?** The standard is a requirement for local authority maintained schools. Governing bodies have formal responsibility for the financial management of their schools, and so the standard is primarily aimed at governors.
- What do schools need to do?**
- The standard consists of 23 questions, which governing bodies should formally discuss annually with the head teacher and senior staff. The questions are in four sections:
 - The Governing Body and School Staff
 - Setting the Budget
 - Value for Money
 - Protecting Public Money
 - The questions which form the standard are in sections A to D. Each question requires an answer of 'Yes', 'In Part', or 'No'.
 - If the answer is 'Yes', the comments column can be used to indicate the main evidence on which the governing body based its answer.
 - If the answer is 'No' or 'In Part', the column should contain a very brief summary of the position and proposed remedial action.
 - In Section E, governors should summarise remedial actions and the timetable for reporting back. Governors should ensure that each action has a specified deadline and an agreed owner.
 - The governing body may delegate the consideration of the questions to a finance or other relevant committee, but a detailed report should be provided to the full governing body and the chair of governors must sign the completed form.
 - The school must send a copy of the signed standard to their local authority's finance department.

There is no prescription of the level of evidence that the governing body should require. The important thing is that governors are confident about their responses.

What is the role of local authorities (LAs)?

Unlike FMSiS, the SVFS will not be externally assessed. LAs should use schools' SFVS returns to inform their programme of financial assessment and audit. LA and other auditors will have access to the standard, and, when they conduct an audit, can check whether the self-assessment is in line with their own judgement. Auditors should make the governing body and the LA aware of any major discrepancies in judgements.

Timetable – key dates

- For all maintained schools, the first run through is required by 31 March 2013; and an annual review thereafter.
- However, Barnet schools are encouraged to undertake the exercise during 2011/12.

Further information

The DfE website includes support notes for each question, which governing bodies can use if they wish. The notes provide clarification of the questions, examples of good practice and information on further support to assist schools in addressing specific issues.

Briefing sessions will be held for governors, headteachers and school finance staff during the autumn term 2011.

Governors' Role

Governors are asked to note the introduction of the new Standard and asked to undertake the Standard during 2011/12 on a voluntary basis.

For information/action

All Governors

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Barnet Safeguarding Children Board: Overview

Summary

The Barnet Safeguarding Children Board (BSCB) is a multi-agency partnership, which has a statutory responsibility to ensure children in Barnet are effectively safeguarded.

Local safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) were established as a requirement of the Children Act 2004 and their functions are set out in primary legislation and regulations. This includes specific functions in relation to the review of child deaths and learning from review of child abuse tragedies.

The BSCB involves a wide range of members from different organisations and communities in Barnet, and aims to ensure that services work together effectively to protect children and young people from harm.

Schools are very much at the forefront of this activity as one of the main services in contact with children and young people and the priority of safeguarding is reflected in the current inspection regime and proposed amendments.

An important function of the BSCB is to provide oversight and scrutiny of safeguarding arrangements through a multi-agency programme of audit and review co-ordinated via the Performance and Quality Assurance Sub-Group

LSCBs have a key role in promoting high standards in safeguarding through a cycle of evaluation and continuous review. There is a particular focus on ensuring that organisations that have a duty under Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 or section 175 or 157 of the Education Act 2002 are fulfilling their statutory obligations to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

The role of the board as an independent vehicle was further consolidated by the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 which introduced the requirement for LSCBs to produce and publish an annual report on the effectiveness of local safeguarding arrangements which provides robust challenge to the work of the Children's Trust.

This also allowed for expanded membership, with representation from schools and colleges a priority. In Barnet, we were already well placed in taking this forward having the benefit of representation from 2 primary schools. We have since recruited further colleagues from secondary schools and have established a regular forum for dialogue with safeguarding leads in schools.

The Board additionally has the benefit of representation from 3 members of the community in order to bring a 'lay person's' perspective to the business.

We are also working closely with young people, through their Youth Shield group, to promote participation in the safeguarding agenda.

The recent Munro report into child protection gives further impetus in driving the work of the Board and we are well placed to respond to the challenges with a strong and well functioning LSCB.

For further information about the activity of the BSCB over the last year, Governors are invited to read the 2010-11 Annual Report on the BSCB web pages

www.barnet.gov.uk/safeguarding-children-board

Governors' Role To note the content and familiarise themselves with their own school's safeguarding arrangements

For action by All Governors

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