

The Wirral Governor

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Published by The Children and Young People's Department:
Interim Director David Armstrong

Editorial

WELCOME to the 62nd edition of the Wirral Governor. By the time you read this we should have greater clarity both nationally and locally on policy decisions and budgetary implications for schools.

You will notice a key change locally in the top left of this front page. We have a new Interim Director in David Armstrong as the previous Director, Howard Cooper, has moved on to oversee Adult Services. I would like to thank Howard for all that he has achieved for Wirral education and children's services over the years and look forward to working with David.

Nationally we are still awaiting the next Education Bill but this may have been published by the time this goes to print. What has just been released is the Department for Education Business Plan 2011-2015 which gives an insight into possible national policy direction. The DfE's plan sets out a timetable for all the government's commitments, including increasing support for families with multiple problems and reforming the inspection regime for schools and local authority children's services. The plan sets out that the new school's Ofsted framework should be in place a year and that we should know the details by June 2011. The DfE's plan also includes a set of indicators for local authorities and government, which aim to allow the public to measure whether policies or reforms are effective. For schools it appears that the key indicators of performance could be:

- Readiness to progress to next stage of schooling (early years into primary, primary into secondary)
- Attainment at age 16
- Attainment at age 19
- Narrowing the gap in educational attainment

There is also a commitment to reform the curriculum so that it will ensure that all children gain the knowledge they need to prepare them for adult life, through a reformed National Curriculum and more robust academic and vocational qualifications up to the age of 19. This will be for first teaching for primary and secondary in September 2013.

Locally we have had the consultation undertaken around establishing the priorities for Wirral Council. Linked to this as part of the necessary budgetary savings has been the offer to all non-school employed council staff to take up Early Voluntary Retirement and/or severance. By the time you read this many staff will have taken this opportunity and I wish them well with their next future plans.

I wish you well for the Spring Term and we look forward to continuing to work with you.

Stuart Bellerby
Strategic Service Manager

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Introduction

I cannot remember how many editions of the newsletter I have compiled, but for me this one is significant because it will be my last. I have taken the opportunity of the EVR (Early Voluntary Retirement) offered by the Authority and will be leaving the Service on 31 March 2011.

At the time of writing I am unsure as to how Governor Support will be restructured but I can assure you that I will do everything I can to make sure that the high level of service you have come to expect will hopefully continue.

I take this opportunity to thank you all for your support and friendship throughout my 24 years in the Governor Support Service.

As we begin a new year I would like to say thank you to our LA colleagues who have provided excellent training sessions for governors last year. Also thanks to colleagues who have submitted articles to each term's Wirral Governor newsletter which I hope governors have found interesting and informative.

Thanks also to all governors who have given time and expertise to their governing bodies and attended training courses and, last but not least, to all clerks to governing bodies for their hard work as always.

I would like to welcome all new governors and clerks to governors and would encourage them to attend, initially, the following developmental courses:

- Module 1 Strategic Role
- Module 2 Monitoring & Critical Friend Role
- Module 3 Accountability Role.

These courses are offered each term and are very popular. To ensure a place please return your application form for training to the Governor Support Service as soon as possible.

If your school has signed up to GEL (Governors Electronic Learning) please do make use of the various modules.

The Governor Support Service welcomes feedback from all governors and clerks and if you have any ideas on how we can improve our service to you please let us know.

Here's to a successful, no doubt challenging, and enjoyable new year ahead!

Margaret Dunfey
Principal Officer (Governor Support)

What's new?

Government moves to abolish school Self Evaluation Form - it is to go but not yet

THE COALITION government has announced the scrapping of the self evaluation form (SEF) as part of its drive to reduce bureaucracy in schools.

Teachers and governors will now be able to use their own approaches to reviewing the performance of their schools, freeing up many head and teacher days over the course of the year.

A lot of publicity was given to the Secretary of State's announcement in September that schools should no longer be expected to complete the SEF. Press coverage suggested that this would have immediate effect, but Ofsted will continue to require schools either to use the form or

to have some other equally robust form of self-evaluation until September next year. The Ofsted website explains that the organisation is considering how the next framework will look "We will consider carefully how inspectors will manage school inspections when the SEF has been withdrawn as part of work to develop a new school inspection framework during the coming year. We will be consulting on the development of the new framework during the next few weeks; this will provide an opportunity to explore the implications of conducting inspections without a common summative self-evaluation form" (written November).

WAMG goes, Governors come in

THE CHANGE of Government in May 2010 has led to the WAMG being suspended and replaced by a new Education Partnership.

In June the Department for Education (DfE) invited teaching and non-teaching unions, the Local Government Association (LGA), the National Governors' Association (NGA), and other educational stakeholders to be part of the new partnership.

GOVERNORS' GUIDE TO THE LAW

The next edition of the Governors' Guide to the Law is to be issued in April 2011. This will be an online version only and will not be distributed to schools in CD-ROM form.

INSET DAYS

The previous Government agreed an extra non teaching day to be used for primary curricular training for 2010-11. The Coalition Government have agreed that the extra day can go ahead. It should be used on school improvement activities.

TEACHERS TV

Teachers TV is no longer available on air but only on-line on www.teachers.tv.

The site includes a whole suite of videos on governor matters, such as guidance for chairs, target setting and dealing with personnel problems. Access is free.

A new way of handling Parents' Complaints about School Issues

PROVISIONS contained in the ASCL Act give the Local Government Ombudsman power to investigate parental and young people's complaints about schools that remain unresolved once they have exhausted a school's complaints procedure.

This will replace the Secretary of State's power to investigate under S496 and 497 of the Education Act 1996. The

pilot exercise commenced in Medway, Sefton, Cambridgeshire & Barking and Dagenham LAs in April 2010.

Ministers have cancelled the addition of further LAs to the pilot from September and a full evaluation will take place prior to consideration of national roll-out (provisionally scheduled for September 2011).

CORPORATE DfE WEBSITE

At the time of writing the new corporate DfE website is undergoing final testing. School Governance material will be contained in a dedicated Leadership and Governance section.

THE EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP

The purpose of the new Education Partnership is to discuss, debate and engage its members in the development and implementation of Department for Education policy. The partnership's work programme will, like the WAMG, focus on reducing bureaucracy in schools and freeing schools and teachers to focus on their core role of raising standards through better teaching and learning.

FREE SCHOOLS

Guidance for bodies considering making applications to set up free schools can be found on the website at <http://www.education.gov.uk/freeschools>

Equality Act 2010 came into force on 1st October 2010

THE EQUALITY ACT 2010 provides a new cross-cutting legislative framework to protect the rights of individuals and advance equality of opportunity for all, to update, simplify and strengthen the previous legislation and to deliver a simple, modern and accessible framework of discrimination law which protects individuals from unfair

treatment and promotes a fair and more equal society.

To download What I Need to Know - A Summary Guide to Your Rights, Google: Equality Act 2010 or visit http://www.equalities.gov.uk/equality_bill.aspx

Vetting procedures are put on hold

REGISTRATION with the Vetting and Barring Scheme (VBS) was halted in June 2010 when the new government set up a review 'to remodel the scheme back to proportionate, common sense levels'.

The ISA has emphasised that, for the time being, the safeguarding regulations that were introduced in October 2009 will continue to apply. Under these rules:

- A person who is barred from working with children will be breaking the law if they work or volunteer, or try to work or volunteer with children.
- An organisation which knowingly employs someone who is barred to work with children will also be breaking the law.
- An organisation which dismisses a member of staff or a volunteer because they have harmed a child, or would have done so if they had not left, must inform the ISA.

Reducing Bureaucracy

WORK continues across the Department for Education on reducing bureaucracy proposals and a Ministerial announcement will be made in due course on a range of measures for schools and governors.

Lord Hill (Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Schools) would particularly like to hear from existing governors with ideas on how we can remove any barriers which may prevent people from becoming governors.

He has set up a dedicated website school.governance@education.gsi.gov.uk to which suggestions can be emailed.

Changes to Pupil Registration Regulations

A CHANGE to the regulations on pupil registration was introduced in September, in response to the high incidence of unavoidable absenteeism caused last school year, first by adverse weather and then by the disruption to flights because of the Icelandic volcano.

Previously if a school closed for unavoidable reasons the missed pupil time was not recorded in the

school's absence statistics, but if it remained open so that some pupils could attend, those who could not were recorded as absentees. Now pupils who cannot attend because of weather-related emergencies, natural disasters, health-related emergencies or non-availability of fuel will be recorded as 'unable to attend' rather than 'absent'.

Admissions Code of Practice

REVISIONS have been made to the Admissions Code of Practice affecting when children start school. Beginning September 2010 schools must admit children from the September following their fourth birthday, if the parents so wish. Parents do not have to take the place immediately the child becomes eligible as they can claim it and then defer taking it up until later in the school year while the child attends a nursery. Parents can also opt for part time education for their children at this age.

Specialist Status

Schools with specialist status will not receive extra funding from next April. Instead the funding that was given to them will be absorbed into the Government's overall schools' budget. Specialist status itself has not been abolished, but if schools continue to seek or maintain it, it will be because the specialism is an integral part of the school's ethos and curriculum, without the financial bonus.

THE SCHOOL INFORMATION (ENGLAND) (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS 2010, SI NO 2010 / 1006

These regulations were passed by the previous Government and were due to come into force on 1 September 2010 changing the information that was to be required to be published in the school prospectus for admissions to school for academic years 2011-12 onwards. The regulations were however revoked by the Coalition Government - The School Information (England) (Amendment) (Revocation) Regulations 2010 SI No 2010 / 1874 refer. Information required to be published in the prospectus is as set out in the Guide to the Law at Chapter 25, paragraph 24 onwards and Chapter 12, paragraph 19.

FMSIS

Following discussions with local authorities and schools, there was an overwhelming consensus to scrap FMSiS and to develop a simpler standard. FMSiS was introduced in the early 2000's and made compulsory in 2007 for all schools. Schools were required to meet the standard every three years by going through a self-evaluation tool. Financial Management Standard in Schools was scrapped in November. At the time of writing (November) it is hoped a replacement system will be introduced next year.

ACADEMY CONVERTERS

Guidance for academy converters can be found on the DfE website at www.education.gov.uk/academies

Margaret Dunfey
Principal Officer (Governor Support)

ACTION REQUIRED: For information

The Education White Paper

THE WHITE PAPER, *The Importance of Teaching*, was published on 23 November. It spells out the principles that will guide legislation on schools that the government proposes to introduce in the spring and beyond. The title is significant as it reflects the government's belief that good teaching is essential for the educational progress of all children.

Changes to school governance

Chapter 6, Accountability, has a section on school governance. It starts by praising governing bodies as "the unsung heroes of our education system". The White Paper commits the government to supporting them and to giving them greater recognition for their work. It also says that governors' valuable time could be better employed than it has been and that the government will work with the National Governors' Association to clarify and tighten governing body responsibilities, so as to place the emphasis on their strategic role.

At the same time the White Paper acknowledges that governors do not always have the information or the training they need. Clerks are singled out as an important support, and the government undertakes to encourage schools to appoint trained clerks who can give them expert advice and guidance. (Note the word "encourage", as there will be no attempt to force them – in common with the White Paper's main theme of not using prescription and compulsion and removing them in places where they are currently found.) Training is addressed by the stated intention of asking the National College to offer suitable training for chairs.

Steps will be taken to encourage people with business and professional backgrounds to become governors, as their expertise is seen to be of particular value to governing bodies. Following from this, the White Paper states that smaller, more skilled governing bodies are often more effective than large ones, and the spring Education Bill will contain provisions to allow governing bodies to have fewer members than the current minimum of nine. From early 2012 more flexibility will be allowed in the make-up of governing bodies, with the proviso that each governing body must have at least two parent governors. Voluntary aided schools that have majority of foundation governors will continue to do so.

Other items in the White Paper also directly affect how governors work:

Growth of academies

Special schools will follow primaries and secondaries in being able to convert to academy status. Schools that are judged inadequate and do not improve fast enough will be forced to close and will be replaced by academies working in partnerships

with an outstanding academy or a good academy with outstanding features. The government's hope is that in time all schools will become academies.

SIPS - to be abolished.

Ofsted

A new inspection framework will come into effect in autumn next year. This will require inspectors to concentrate on four areas of the school's performance only: pupil achievement, quality of teaching, leadership and management, and pupil safety and behaviour. The Self-Evaluation Form is to go, though the White Paper does acknowledge the value of schools assessing their own effectiveness. Ofsted inspectors will discriminate between "satisfactory schools" that are improving or have the potential to improve and those that are stuck. The latter can expect a monitoring visit within a year.

Accountability to parents

Schools are to give parents a new range of information about the school. The White Paper does not specifically mention the School Profile, but the implication is that it will either be abolished or radically altered. Schools will also have to account to parents for how they spend the Pupil Premium.

Children's Trusts

Children's Trusts are no longer to be compulsory, and schools are not to be required to work with them or follow the Children and Young People's Plan.

Finally, it's only a White Paper

A White Paper is both a statement of intent and a discussion document. Provisions may change even before legislation is introduced and then during the passage of a Bill through Parliament. Nevertheless, major diversion from these proposals is unlikely.

Taken from Adamson Publications - Clerkwise

Notifying the DfE of change of Chair of Governors

A CHANGE of Chair should be notified by schools through the schools interface. They should use their data collection username and password to log on to this service on the Edubase website. It is not necessary to email Prolog separately or to provide details of the outgoing Chair. This action happens automatically via Edubase database.

It is important to note that if Chairs wish mailings to be sent to their home address, the name and address details must be completed.

If they want mailings to be made in their name to the school, the Chair's name should be inserted but the address fields must be left blank as the default is set to the school.

If they wish mail to be delivered to the school with no personal name in the address, they should leave all fields blank. Mail will then be delivered to Chair of Governors at the school address.

Are your school policies up to date?

GOVERNING BODIES need to make sure that not only do they have all the statutory policies, but that they keep their policies serviced and up to date.

Drawing up, monitoring and revising policies is a key element of governing body activity. Policies are a significant strategic tool that enables a governing body to perform its primary function. You are obliged by law to have certain policies. They are listed at the back of the Guide to the Law for School Governors.

Keeping track of policies need not be onerous and there are a few procedures that should become part of your governing body's normal practice.

- Start by checking what policies your governing body has got, against the list in the Governors' Guide to the Law.
- If you are missing a policy refer it to the relevant committee. They can decide who should draw it up – whether it is the headteacher, other member of the senior management team, or a group of governors from the committee. A policy can be approved by a committee as part of its delegated responsibilities, but all new policies should be brought to the attention of the full governing body.
- Look at all the policies that you do have. These are best dealt with by the governing body's committees. When was each one last reviewed? If you are efficient they will not be slipping through the net as each policy will have built into it when it is going to be reviewed, and the date will have been entered into the clerk's long-term work plan.
- There are no hard and fast rules about how often policies should be reviewed; the need will be determined by the nature of the policy and of the school. However, every two years is a good rule of thumb to start with. If this looks as if the governing body is going to spend a large part of each year overhauling policies, be reassured. Frequent review will mean that in many cases the changes needed will be slight, or even non-existent. If there is a lot of work it will be because

legislation or regulations have changed and you would have had to address the policy anyway.

- Even though the actual work of revising a policy is best handled by only one or two people that does not preclude consulting. A successful policy is one that is owned by all those involved, so review should involve talking to other groups where relevant. For example, the race equality policy should be discussed with any ethnic minority community groups represented in the school, and the sex education policy should be discussed with parents.
- There are some policies which do not obviously fall into the remit of any committee. The governing body as a whole then decides who will review each one. It may be best done by the headteacher or senior member of staff reporting back to the governing body, by a couple of governors specially elected for the job, or by a specially constituted working group including non-governors (though remember that working groups can only make recommendations to the governing body). You should also ask why the policy does not come into the committee structure. Is there an important area of governing body responsibility that is not being properly addressed?
- Finally, don't involve the governing body unnecessarily in policies. It is likely that the school has many policies beyond those listed in the Guide to the Law. Is it really necessary to involve the governing body in the decisions about how history should be taught? If the school has comprehensive policies for the curriculum, teaching and learning, homework, and assessment, recording and reporting, the underpinning principles will be explicit. The governing body should concentrate on the key roles, so that it can make a real difference to the school.

Margaret Dunfey
Principal Officer (Governor Support Service)

ACTION REQUIRED: For Information & Statutory Requirement

Extended Services - Next Steps

WIRRAL is now the best performing Authority in the north west of England in terms of delivering Extended Services, with 100% of schools delivering the Full Core Offer (FCO). This is a remarkable success which can chiefly be attributed to the willingness of schools to embrace collaborative work, and to the excellent support the schools have received from their cluster co-ordinators (known as ACES).

Every school in Wirral is currently delivering the five elements of Extended Services:

- wraparound childcare (for primary and special schools)
- a wide variety of activities
- swift and easy access to targeted and specialist services,
- parenting and family support
- wider community access to school facilities.

Individual schools are not necessarily providing all these services alone, or even on their site. Instead, supported by their ACES, they have been working together and also with external agencies including the voluntary and community organisations, to provide some services in-house and signpost families to existing services elsewhere.

The role of the ACES has been to set up and render sustainable the machinery of inter-school collaborative working and to help put in place strong partnerships with other agencies to sustain the delivery of extended services beyond March 2011. They have, without exception, discharged this role superbly. In March 2011, the ACES fixed term contracts come to their full term. The LA will no longer receive grant to support Extended Services and any funding will be part of schools' budgets. The majority of the ACES will receive redundancy payments and leave the clusters.

So what happens after March?

Three of the clusters, which feel they will benefit from further ACES support, have opted to extend their co-ordinator's contract until August 2011. These clusters – New Brighton/Wallasey, Hoylake/West Kirby/Thurstaston/Meols, and Bidston St James/Claughton – will all take on the responsibility of line-managing the ACES from April 1, and have identified the additional salary needed from within their own clusters' funds.

However, all school governing bodies need to be very aware that the expectation to continue to deliver ES beyond March 2011 remains.

The most recent Ofsted guidance document has this (extract) to say:

“Section 5 inspections are not expected to evaluate each of the extended services provided by school. However, inspectors are asked to consider how far key aspects of the curriculum (which include any extended services) are contributing to pupils' outcomes. Under the current inspection arrangements, inspectors are also guided to take account of the impact of schools' partnerships with other organisations, through extended services. Inspectors should... check that activities are appropriate for all ages of children attending and that health and Safety requirements are met.

Possible questions to ask on inspection:

- What particular support services are provided for pupils, parents and the wider community and what difference are they making?
- Why has the school established these particular services and what impact are they having?
- What particular support services are provided for pupils, parents and the wider community and what difference are they making?
- Why has the school established these particular services and what impact are they having in improving pupils' outcomes, including their personal development and achievement?
- Who are the key partners and how effective are relationships with them?
- Do the services meet the needs of the local community including its most vulnerable members?
- How has the sustainability of the extended provision been planned for?
- How does the school ensure the effectiveness of each aspect of the provision?”

In planning for delivering ES post-March (or August) 2011, it is very important for schools to ensure they are able to offer compelling evidence of how embedded ES is in the school's planning and culture, and the effect it is having on pupils, their families and the wider community.

Ros Free, ES Manager
rosfree@wirral.gov.uk

ACTION REQUIRED: For discussion

Vacancies and School Governors' One-Stop Shop



THE SCHOOL GOVERNORS' ONE-STOP SHOP (SGOSS) helps to find governors who are committed to working with schools to deliver the highest possible standards of education and helping children to realise their expectations and aspirations.

SGOSS sends the Governor Support Service details of people who are interested in becoming governors in Wirral; its strength lies in having access to different networks which complements other methods of recruiting governors. Many governing bodies have already recruited volunteers who have no previous connection with the school but who are committed to helping to make a difference.

The Governor Support Service mostly uses the applicants forwarded to us by SGOSS to fill community governor vacancies. Please get in touch and we will see if we can find you a suitable volunteer. Alternatively, you might use the SGOSS Direct to Schools service which responds to school requests for assistance in recruiting governors.

SGOSS also provides Vacancy Notification opportunities to schools; this is available electronically or as hard copy. The former can be completed on-line and is located in the Schools section of the SGOSS web site (www.sgoss.org.uk). There is no charge for this assistance. SGOSS also has a range of standard materials which it is willing to share with schools on a similar basis.

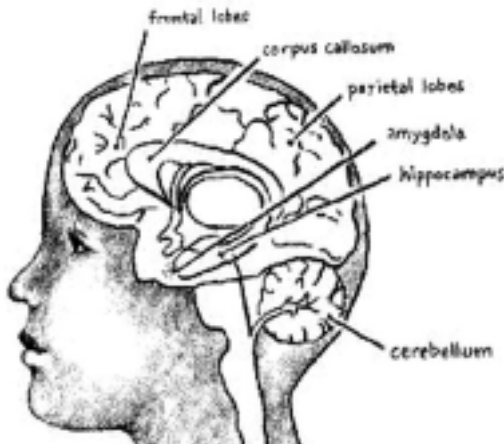
Over the years, SGOSS has recruited and helped place over 8000 volunteers onto governing bodies in schools across England, and its services are free. It is recognised by employers and schools as having a particularly effective set of recruitment techniques.

For more information or assistance, you can contact SGOSS via email info@sgoss.org.uk, phone 020 7288 9536, or www.sgoss.org.uk

Margaret Dunfey
Principal Officer (Governor Support)

ACTION REQUIRED: For information

Are your children ready to learn both physically and mentally?



ARE CHILDREN REALLY ready to learn when they enter the classroom in the morning? Many children have only been out of bed for half an hour when they arrive at school and haven't woken up properly, let alone be in a mindset to learn.

Research shows that children learn better when they have been involved in some sort of physical activity. It wakes children up, gets them ready to learn and keeps children engaged. The scientific research behind this is that regular physical activity may increase the production of cells in the hippocampus, the part of the brain involved in learning and memory. The end result is a brain that's more equipped to learn and therefore perform better in school.

In a recent TV documentary Professor Dylan Wiliam, deputy director of the London University Institute for Education, worked with a class of year 8 pupils from Hertswood School in Borehamwood to take part in morning exercise before their usual timetable of lessons began. Although the burst of energy in the mornings was not the only new initiative he introduced in the "Classroom Experiment" his findings, according to the teacher's assessment, were that the pupils involved have made significantly greater progress than their peers in English and Maths.

The General Teaching Council has reported on a study (reference: P. Preedy, R. Wolinski & C. O'Donovan. (2004) Exercise for learning) which was carried out in two primary schools over a period of nine months, involving four teachers, and 18 Year 3 children (half of them being in the control group who were from a school in the same area, with a similar catchment and academic profile). The teachers introduced a daily exercise programme of 15 minutes every morning and set out to explore its impact on children's reading. The teachers found that:

- the average increase in reading accuracy and comprehension for children on the daily exercise programme was 14 months, while the children in the control group made eight months progress in reading accuracy and four months in reading comprehension during the same period

- children's gross and fine motor skills had developed
- children's concentration, self-esteem and self-confidence had also improved.

Commenting on improvements in concentration and self-esteem, teachers noted in particular:

- *"The children's behaviour and work has noticeably improved over the year."*
- *"It is much easier to manage the class. The lively children are more focused and capable of completing work within lessons."*

The children enjoyed the programme and said how much it had helped them personally and socially. The following are examples of comments from children:

- *"I have more self confidence. I have improved my co-ordination, catching skills and handwriting. I have also learnt to ride my bike."*
- *"My work has got faster. I find throwing and catching easier."*
- *"My balance is getting better. I can also write and colour more neatly."*
- *"The exercises have helped me in Maths. I am now a super genius. I am also faster at doing things at home."*
- *"I have more control in the classroom. I can focus on my work."*



Many Wirral schools are already using various techniques and activities to wake up the children throughout the school day. Walking Bus, Yoga and Peer Massage are amongst some of the ways children can become more energised and ready to learn. The children at Millfields enjoy “Rise and Shine” activities within the classroom. Children interviewed reported:

- *“It makes me feel more woke up. We usually do it in the morning because that’s when we need to be more awake” (Yr 3 pupil)*
- *“Afterwards I feel more ready to do stuff” (Yr 3 pupil)*
- *“I find things easier to do after I’ve done Rise and Shine” (Yr 3 pupil)*



At Stanton Road they take part in a whole school “Wake Up - Shake Up” activity on the playground. With the support of the PE co-ordinator a group of year 6 children decide on the routine and music to deliver to the whole school. They then lead the session out on the playground after lunch to prepare the children for their afternoon sessions. The children interviewed reported:

- *“It makes us feel energised and more awake” (Yr 6 pupil)*
- *“We love working out new routines but we don’t make them too complicated so the little ones can do it” (Yr 6 pupil)*
- *“Sometimes I get a bit fiddly in class when I haven’t done wake up - shake up” (Yr 6 pupil)*

Millfields have agreed to be a pilot school for a “Get fit for the Olympics” before school workout. The children will be encouraged to arrive at school 10 minutes before the school day starts for a fun and lively workout to music on the playground.

John Ratey, author of a new book, *Spark: The Revolutionary New Science of Exercise and the Brain*, also suggests that regular physical activity makes the brain function better. *Spark* is a groundbreaking exploration of the connection between exercise and the brain’s performance that shows how even moderate exercise will supercharge mental circuits to beat stress, sharpen thinking, enhance memory, and much more.

We want to encourage schools to try a burst of activity first thing to wake everyone up. Any schools wanting to start such an exciting initiative please do not hesitate to contact us.

Kerry Cowley

Physical Development, Health and Wellbeing Advisory Teacher

ACTION REQUIRED: For discussion

Health & Safety

Common Sense, Common Safety

A REPORT reviewing health and safety bureaucracy, written by Lord Young, was published mid October 2010. The purpose of the report was to review the current operation of health and safety laws and the growth of the compensation culture.

‘The aim is to free businesses from unnecessary bureaucratic burdens and the fear of having to pay out unjustified damages claims and legal fees. Above all it means applying common sense not just to compensation but to everyday decisions once again.’

Lord Young’s summary recommendations for Education:

- Simplify the process that schools and similar organisations undertake before taking children on trips.
- Introduce a single consent form that covers all activities a child may undertake during his or her time at a school.
- Introduce a simplified risk assessment for classrooms.
- Shift from a system of risk assessment to a system of risk–benefit assessment and consider reviewing the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 to separate out play and leisure from workplace contexts.

How do we measure up?

- Generic model risk assessments for educational visits are readily available to download from the CYPD Health & Safety Website to assist schools to meet their requirements and take the fear out of the risk assessment process.
- Schools are encouraged to obtain annual consent forms for every day trips, eg sporting fixtures, local field trips and culture and leisure activities. All forms are available electronically via the CYPD website.

- There is a comprehensive library of simple model risk assessments for a variety of locations, equipment, activities and individuals which can be downloaded from the CYPD Health & Safety Website - to remove the mystery, myths and fear of the process.
- The Department’s mission is to give support to make school an adventure for staff and pupils. We are not in the business of saying no - our policy is to make it happen by giving guidance on how best to carry out the activity safely.

Wirral Council has signed up with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) to promote a sensible approach to health and safety and we would welcome your comments and/or suggestions to further improve our services.

Debbie Todd

Principal Health & Safety Officer

Children & Young People’s Department

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ACTION REQUIRED: For information

Key tasks for School Governors for the Spring Term

THE FOLLOWING key tasks need to be completed by school governors throughout the Spring Term.

Agree curriculum plans

The school curriculum comprises all learning and other experiences that each school provides for its pupils. For maintained schools (except special schools established in hospitals) this includes the National Curriculum, religious education, collective worship, sex education and careers education. The school curriculum has two aims:

- i) to provide opportunities for all pupils to learn and achieve
- ii) to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life.

The governing body shares responsibility with the headteacher and the LA for making sure the National Curriculum is taught.

The governing body and headteacher are required to produce a curriculum policy. The policy should set out the principles underpinning the curriculum and reflects the school's commitment to developing all aspects of their pupils' lives. The governing body must consider and agree the policy and monitor and review its implementation.

Review Equal Opportunities Pay

The governing body's policy on Equal Opportunities will need to take into account the governing body and school's role in

- i) the access to and provision of education to pupils
- ii) the access to and provision of educational services to pupils
- iii) the provision of goods, facilities and service to the public
- iv) the provision of access to these goods, facilities and services
- v) the employment of staff.

In the context of the relevant legislation relating to:

- i) gender (Sex Discrimination Act 1975)
- ii) race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins (Race Relations Act 1976 and Race Relations (amendment) Act).

Review School Improvement Plan process

The school improvement plan (SIP) forms a key part of the governing body's drive to raise educational achievement.

Having reviewed and approved the plan during the autumn term the governing body will find it useful to review regularly the plan to assess the school's progress, and to identify any changes in priorities, obstacles to progression or additional resourcing requirements.

Agree budget and staffing structure

Except in certain exceptional circumstances, the governing body has overall responsibility for the school's delegated budget and for staffing matters, and decides or is responsible for

- i) how to spend the delegated budget
- ii) producing an annual budget plan
- iii) ensuring that accurate accounts are kept
- iv) deciding on the number of staff (teaching and support staff).

Local authority schemes for financing schools require governing bodies to demonstrate, in their annual budget plan, that they have followed best value principles in drawing up that plan. Governors should be aware that during their inspection, Ofsted inspectors will evaluate and report on how effectively the school applies best value principles in its management and use of resources.

Agree School Prospectus

Each year the governing body must publish a school prospectus for parents and prospective parents. The only obligatory content in the prospectus is the information about special educational needs (SEN) and disability work of the school, which was previously contained in the governors' annual report.

Publish admission arrangements for the following Autumn

Admission authorities, including the governing body, have a duty to publish details of the admission arrangements they have determined. Admission authorities within a relevant area must consult each other on their proposed admission arrangements, and governors of foundation and voluntary-aided schools must also consult the governing body of community and voluntary-controlled schools for which the LA is the admission authority. All maintained-school admission authorities are encouraged to establish the views of parents before determining their admission arrangements.

Local consultation must be complete by 1 March each year and arrangements should be determined by 15 April.

Once an admission authority has determined its arrangements, it must notify, in writing, within 14 days, all of those whom it was required to consult. It also has a duty to publish its arrangements by sending the LA the information required for the LA's composite prospectus of admission arrangements.

Review Pay Policy

The governing body must have a pay policy that sets out the value of any discretionary payments or allowances attached to posts in the school's staffing structure and procedures for determining appeals. The pay policy will need to be updated at least annually.

The pay policy should explain the basis on which pay decisions are made, in the context of the school improvement plan, and must be compliant with all relevant legislation and regulations, including (but not necessarily limited) to

- the current School teachers' pay and conditions document
- race relations, sex discrimination, equal pay and disability discrimination acts
- employment relations acts
- part-time worker regulations
- employment equality regulations - age, sexual orientation and religion and belief
- fixed term employee regulations
- The Employment Act 2008.

Review Special Educational Needs policy

The governing body should, with the headteacher, decide the school's general policy and approach to meeting children's special educational needs – for those with statements and those without. Particular reference should be made to the SEN Code of Practice.

There is a variety of resources available to help governors devise and review the SEN policy. Some perspectives that may be relevant include

- SEN and disability/disability discrimination
- SEN of gifted pupils
- SEN and children in public care.

Finance Committee - budget Planning & Monitoring

The governing body is responsible for deciding how to spend individual school's budget to ensure that resources are

allocated in line with agreed priorities and will deliver value for money. It should also review progress to make sure that spending is delivering the right results and keeps within budget limits. Day-to-day decisions are generally delegated to the headteacher but the overall financial plan and monitoring should be a key function of the Finance committee.

The Finance committee should be made up of governors who understand the school's organisation, working practices and ethos well enough to take an informed view of its financial priorities. It is normally part of the job description of the school business manager or bursar to work with the governing body to provide information on budget monitoring.

The governing body sets the budget for the school and must ensure that there is a system for monitoring income and expenditure. Governing bodies are strongly advised to receive regular reports on budget management during the financial year. The governing body must aim to

- keep the budget balanced from year to year;
- set budgets with the best information available and with a view to the effect of any decision on the school balances position at the end of the year and full year commitments in the following year;
- maintain budgetary control and reporting systems to allow effective monitoring of the budget position;
- have strong links between the school development planning process and the budget setting process.

Further guidance can be found in chapters 8 and 9 of A Guide to the Law for School Governors - 'The School Budget' and 'School Premises and Capital Investment'.

Margaret Dunfey

Principal Officer (Governor Support)

ACTION REQUIRED: For information

Communication Matters: Impact on Children and Young People

Background

In 2008, John Bercow, the now Speaker of the House of Commons, published his report 'A Review of Services for Children and Young People (0–19) with Speech, Language and Communication Needs¹'.

This report had a number of functions including:

- looking at the range and structure of the services available to children with Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN),
- identifying good practice
- recommending future action and priorities.

It was concluded that whilst there were some pockets of good practice, overall, insufficient priority is given to addressing SLCN in our children. Members of Wirral's Educational Psychology Service have an interest in this area, and used this report as stepping stone to begin several projects around SLCN; one of which is described in this article.

Sections 3.37 - 3.40 of the Bercow Report talked briefly about the limited knowledge that professionals have about the impact of poor SLCN on offending. There is little written on this area, but a few pieces of research were identified and these suggest that at least 60% of the children who are in secure custody have 'difficulties with speech, language and communication that are sufficient to affect their ability to communicate with staff on a day-to-day basis, to prevent them from benefiting from verbally mediated interventions such as education and offender behaviour work and, if not addressed, to contribute to re-offending²' (page 41), and that offenders are 50% less likely to re-offend in the year after their release if they were supported to gain oral communication skills³ (page 42).

Further research into this area helped us identify studies that showed that up to 90% of juveniles at an 'establishment for juvenile offenders' had speech and language difficulties⁴ and that these figures were similar for children pre-custody⁵. Around 35% of offenders only have speaking and listening skills at a basic level⁶.

We decided to undertake our own research into the prevalence of SLCN difficulties in the population of children on the Wirral who offend. Educational Psychologists have a unique psychological perspective, alongside highly developed research skills, an understanding of statistics, and an ability to conduct and interpret standardised testing. This research provides local, well-constructed knowledge which can be used to inform needs and practice on the Wirral.

Method

This pilot project was conducted in collaboration with our local Youth Offending Team. Following a presentation at a training

day, staff were invited to randomly identify potential participants. Where parental agreement was gained, the children were approached and those who agreed to participate undertook the testing. In addition we conducted a staff survey into views and understanding around the area of SLCN.

Children were assessed using the CELF-IV (Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals- Fourth Edition) which is an individually administered, clinical tool for the identification, diagnosis and follow-up evaluation of language and communication disorders in children aged 5 - 16 years.

Findings

This population has, on average, mild to moderate difficulties in language skills, across all aspects of the CELF, and approximately 91% of the children in this study had some form of language difficulties.

36.4% of children showed evidence of severe difficulties; that is that at least one of their scores on the CELF was in the bottom 0.1% of children.

On several measures the mean score for the Social Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD) school population was at least one standard deviation below their mainstream peers, suggesting that the children in SEBD Schools have a greater level of language difficulties than their peers who remain in a mainstream school.

Staff significantly underestimated the difficulties faced by this population, despite feeling that they were confident in being able to identify such needs. Those staff who reported that they felt most confident in identifying these difficulties were also the staff who reported that they felt that a very small percentage of the children they worked with displayed language difficulties. Staff also had little understanding of the role of Speech and Language Therapists and did not know how to access support from this service should they feel a child needed this.

Future directions

What we have done: We have disseminated this research to a wide audience across the Wirral. A one page write up of this research has been published on the Communication Trust website⁷. We are also in discussion with the Communication Trust as to how we can support the wider roll out of a pilot training project.

What we would like to do: We would like to:

- widen this pilot study to include more children and staff
- complete a piece of work to identify how Educational Psychologists can support and train Youth Offending Team staff to develop in the area of language and communication needs

- become involved in the training of Youth Court staff
- complete a piece of work to highlight how this information can be used in the early identification and support for children who might potentially become involved in offending behaviour. We are also in the process of writing up this research to put it forward for publication in a journal.

Summary

This is a very small scale, exploratory pilot study, which has identified a significant level of Speech, Language and Communication Difficulties in the children who offend on the Wirral. Our findings are in line with other, similar studies which are emerging in the literature, which gives more weight to its validity.

For further information, or a copy of the more comprehensive report, please contact: frangames@wirral.gov.uk

Thanks to:

- **Yvonne Le Lorrain**; Principal Educational Psychologist, Wirral EPS (Educational Psychology Service)
- **Anita Curran**; Educational Psychologist, and Sarah Porter; Assistant Educational Psychologist, Wirral EPS
- **Nicky Robinson**; Senior Mental Health Practitioner, Wirral Youth Offending Service
- **Emily McArdle**; Speech and Language Therapist, Wirral Speech and Language Therapy Service
- AND all the children and staff from Wirral YOS who took part

References:

- ¹ A full copy of the Bercow report can be accessed here: <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/bercowreview/docs/7771-DCSF-BERCOW.PDF>
- ² Bryan, *Speech and language therapy for young people in prison (2004)* submitted to HM Prison Service and Helen Hamlyn Trust as quoted in Hansard HC Deb 13 December 2007, column 915W (cited in Bercow)
- ³ Moseley et al, *The impact of ESB oral communication courses in HM Prisons - an independent evaluation in developing oral communication and productive thinking skills in HM Prisons (2006)*, Learning and Skills Research Centre (cited in Bercow)
- ⁴ Bryan, Freer & Furlong (2007) *Language and communication difficulties in juvenile offenders. International Journal of Language & Communication Disorders*, 42(5), 505-520.
- ⁵ unpublished research by Ian Warriner, Bolton YOT.
- ⁶ MOSELEY et al (2006) *The Impact of ESB Oral Communication Courses in HM Prisons: An Independent Evaluation. Research Report (London: Learning and Skills Development Agency)*.
- ⁷ <http://www.sentencetrouble.info/>

Fran Games

Educational Psychologist

ACTION REQUIRED: For information

Does your governing body have an induction process in place for new Governors?

CAST your mind back to attendance at your first governing body meeting. Was it a good or not so good experience? Were you greeted by a group of people you probably didn't know, talking in a strange language using acronyms like they were going out of fashion? Did you feel that you had a lot to offer, but just didn't quite know how to go about it?

This is a common feeling for new governors, which is why it is vital that they are given the support to develop and the encouragement to get involved and make a difference. Here are some suggestions for making your governors feel as though they are part of a team.

Governing bodies should have an induction process in place for new governors including welcoming and introducing them at their first governing body meeting. The Governor Support Service can provide an information brochure on 'Induction & Mentoring New Governors'. It covers: the role of the Mentor Governor, an induction plan, sample letter of welcome to a new governor and much more. Email the Governor Support Service to request your copy.

Ways to motivate new governors

- Set up a mentoring system - new governors will have a lot of questions, but may not ask them in open meetings for fear of embarrassing themselves. Perhaps your governing body could provide an experienced governor as a mentor. They can then support the new governor until they become more confident in their role.

- Invite them to visit the school - it is only then that they will realise and see the impact of all those meetings held, policies and plans developed in practice.
- Develop a training plan - training and development is so important. Governors need to attend training sessions to be able to make informed decisions at meetings. Attending training will give them the confidence to attend meetings and to contribute.
- Give them responsibility - give them a project. Each member comes to the table with different skills and expertise to offer. Asking them to contribute will give them an early signal that you expect them to take responsibility and help shape the life of the school.
- Don't force them to specialise too early - one of the first things that often happens to new governors is they get asked to join various committees. Why restrict your options at this stage? Give them the opportunity to attend whichever ones they like for the first term so they can really get an idea of where they would like to focus.

Margaret Dunfey

Principal Officer (Governor Support)

ACTION REQUIRED: For information

Code of Conduct advice

THE ABILITY of a governing body to work together for the good of the school depends essentially on trust and an understanding of common purpose. Governing bodies may find it helpful, therefore, to consider adopting a Code of Practice which would also be a valuable guide for prospective new members.

Does your governing body have a set of Standing Orders and a Code of Conduct?

What are Standing Orders and Code of Conduct for governing bodies?

Standing Orders are rules established by the governing body to regulate the work of the governors. They are in addition to any Government Regulations.

It is highly recommended that each governing body compiles a 'Standing Orders' file as part of the governing body records. It should also be accessible to governors. The Governor Support Service can provide an information brochure on this topic - contact the team and request your electronic copy now.

Margaret Dunfey

Principal Officer (Governor Support)

ACTION REQUIRED: For information

Recruitment & Retention

A GOVERNING BODY is only as strong as its component parts. Effective governing bodies have a good understanding of the skills and experience of their members and should seek to fill any skills gaps as opportunities arise within their remit to make appointments.

An idea may be that governing bodies might like to establish a governor recruitment and retention committee in order to:

- create a pool of available governors to fill vacancies promptly as they arise;
- develop links with local business, community groups and other partners to promote school governance;

- present awareness sessions for local people who are interested in serving as school governors;
- provide briefings to potential governor candidates whilst their application is being processed;
- provide an induction programme for new governors.

Margaret Dunfey

Principal Officer (Governor Support)

ACTION REQUIRED: For information

Using Person Centred Planning to help pupils move from Primary to Secondary School

TRANSITION to a new school can be a difficult time for any young person. Most young people in Wirral start their new school with few difficulties and make a good transition with the help of systems already in place and the support of adults around them. For those young people with additional needs extra planning and support may be needed. In September 2008 the Educational Psychology Service secured funding from Wirral Children's Fund and On Track to work on a project which looked at how we could provide better support and planning for young people with additional needs during their transition from year 6 to 7.

The 'Transition Plus' project initially involved four secondary schools - one from each of the four districts; Wallasey, Birkenhead, South and West districts. One Learning Mentor from each school worked on the project for a day a week from September 2008 - March 2010. The schools involved were South Wirral High School, Hilbre High School, Park High School and Wallasey School. Each mentor, along with the feeder primary schools, identified ten year 6 pupils to take part in the project. It was felt that the pupils who were identified may have difficulties moving to secondary school and would benefit from more focused planning and support during their transition.

The project focused on the mentors using person centred approaches to help the year 6 pupils make a good transition. Person centred approaches involve schools working with young people and their families in a very different way to:

- Establish supportive relationships with the pupils and the important people in their lives (e.g. parents, teachers, support assistants, other family members and friends)
- Gather information from the pupil and the people above about what is important 'for' and 'to' the pupil and how best to support them in school
- Prepare a 'one page profile' with the pupil which captures this information
- Facilitate a transition meeting and prepare an action plan which will help support the pupil's transition.

This first stage of the project has been evaluated through pupil, parent and mentor questionnaires. Analysis of these questionnaires is summarised below:

What went well?

- 97% of pupils and 93% of parents felt that the extra visits to secondary school before the pupils started really helped
- 100% of mentors, 87% of pupils and 96% of parents felt the 'one page profiles' really helped
- 75% of mentors, 68% of pupils and 75% of parents felt the review meetings really helped

- 97% of pupils and 93% of parents felt more involved in the planning of the transition to secondary school.

The pupils felt that overall the following had gone well:

- 97% of pupils felt their worries about transition had reduced through the project
- They got the chance to meet new friends before they started secondary school
- They visited school a few times and got to know it before they started in September
- They got a lot of support from the school mentor
- Their worries about starting secondary school were reduced.

The parents felt that overall the following had gone well:

- 100% of parents felt their worries about transition had reduced through the project
- 100% felt their child had settled well into secondary school
- Their child was able to build up a relationship with the mentor before they started the school
- They felt that their child was more confident / happy in secondary school
- The teaching staff in the secondary school knew their child better through reading the 'One Page Profile'.

The learning mentors felt that overall the following had gone well:

- 100% of them felt the pupil's and parents' anxieties had reduced through the project
- Meeting with parents and talking through worries helped and developed better relationships
- Vulnerable pupils were identified early
- Better communication and relationships developed between primary and secondary schools
- There was time to focus on issues with individual pupils.

What did not go so well?

The pupils felt that overall the following had not gone so well:

- 76% of pupils felt nothing - it had all gone well
- 2 out of 37 pupils were still worried about bullying
- 2 out of 37 said they did not like getting taken out of lessons.

The parents felt that overall the following had not gone so well:

- 74% of parents felt nothing - it had all gone well
- Not all teaching staff read the 'one page profiles'
- More mentor time needed on the project.

The learning mentors felt that overall the following had not gone so well:

- Having to chase up questionnaires
- Trying to get primary schools interested at the start was difficult at times
- One mentor only worked one day a week and found it difficult because of this.

What else have we learned?

- Parents want and like to be involved in planning with schools for their children's transition but do not always know how to be - Person Centred Planning helps schools and families work and plan together
- Time spent planning at the beginning saves time later
- Schools working collaboratively with parents is the key to success - Person Centred Planning gives us the tools to do this
- Person Centred Planning promotes positive relationships between school and home
- Person Centred Planning gives a opportunity for pupils to be actively involved in talking and planning with the adults that support them
- The 'One Page Profiles' helped the teachers get to know the pupils quickly, understand their needs and be more helpful and supportive right from the start.

What Next?

In May this year we were told that the funding would be continued for another year until March 2011. This has enabled us to extend the project to a further 9 secondary schools including Clare Mount School, Woodchurch High School, St John's Plessington Catholic College, St Anselm's College, Wirral Grammar School for Boys, Oldershaw School, Pensby High School for Girls, Prenton High School for Girls and Ridgeway High School. Within each of these schools there is at least one person who has been trained in using person centred approaches and they are currently working on drawing up 'One Page Profiles' with a number of year 7 pupils. Elaine Kinsella (Educational Psychologist) is continuing to support these schools in using person centred approaches as part of this project and will continue to evaluate the impact of this over the next 6 months.

If you would like to find out more about the Transition Plus Project or Person Centred Planning please do not hesitate to get in touch with Elaine Kinsella (Educational Psychologist).

Telephone: 0151 643 7070

Email: elainekinsella@wirral.gov.uk

Elaine Kinsella, Educational Psychologist
Sarah Porter, Assistant Educational Psychologist

ACTION REQUIRED: For information

Report on Wirral Schools Forum Meeting 29th September 2010

AS IS customary at the start of a new year, the members of the forum introduced themselves. The Forum had previously agreed that the Chair of Wirral Governors Forum should be a member of the Schools Forum and it was a pleasure to welcome Jane Owens to her first meeting. I was pleased to be re-elected as Chair of the Schools Forum and Steve Dainty was also re-elected as Vice Chair.

Previous minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting dated 23rd June were accepted as a true record.

DSG Reserve and Final Grant Allocation 2010/11

The final amount of DSG grant for 2010-11 announced on 1st July 2010 was £194,032,000, an increase of £36,600, compared to the previously budgeted amount, which was due to a slight increase in the number of pupils, to correspond with the final census data. Overall there was a reserve balance of approximately £800,000

Implementation of Job Evaluation and Harmonisation of Conditions of Service (Second Stage) across Schools Support Staff

Proposals are being put forward that the job evaluation scheme up to Spinal Column Point 34 and harmonisation for all school staff be implemented. The cost of funding these proposals amounts to approximately £2.6m. The Schools Forum had previously agreed in 2007-08 to set aside a provision of £300k and it was further agreed at the meeting to use the DSG reserve in the current year for funding these proposals.

Update on Review of Service Level Agreements with Schools

A panel of primary headteachers together with representatives from Voluntary Aided Schools and governors have been meeting with providers, who have been presenting proposals for the new Service Level Agreements. The services involved are:

- Facilities Management
- Risk Assessment & Insurance
- Grounds Maintenance
- Wirral Community Control
- Metro Catering
- Metro Caretaking & Cleaning
- Cash to Bank
- Human Resources
- Financial Support
- Employee Administration
- Payroll & Pensions
- Technical Support Services
- School Library Service

Service Level Agreements will be circulated to schools in early November. Schools will be asked to make decisions on which services they wish to procure by January 2011.

Proposed Consultation on the future of Gilbrook Outreach Service and Behaviour Support for Primary Schools

In January 2010 the Schools Forum had agreed as a temporary measure that the shortfall in funding for this service be found from the Contingency Fund for 2010 -11.

The Schools Forum agreed subject to the ongoing consultation in respect of the service that £150k from the Direct Schools Grant be used to fund the Gilbrook Outreach service and that an amount of £45k currently set aside for permanently excluded pupils should also be used to assist schools supporting pupils at risk of permanent exclusion.

Deprivation Funding Consultation Group

A working Group of the Schools Forum is continuing to examine and review deprivation funding and the impact on school performance. This work will contribute to the review of the Schools Funding Formula. The Schools Forum was asked and agreed to note the work to date and to endorse the future work of this group.

DFG Consultation on School Funding 2011-12

The government had begun a short period of consultation on school funding in advance of the Comprehensive Spending Review. Proposals in the consultation included the Pupil Premium and the consolidation of Grants within DSG. The consultation is predominantly about national changes, although the outcome will have implications locally.

The Schools Forum noted and approved the proposed response to this consultation, the full details of which are accessible on the Wirral Website.

Playing for Success

Playing for success is a national initiative involving football clubs working with councils to provide additional support and out of school provision for pupils. Tranmere Rovers and the Council were invited to join the scheme in 2004 and an area of the club was converted, in 2005 to provide appropriate facilities at a cost of £200k.

Playing for success is funded by a national grant for 2011-12, but there is a risk that it may not be able to continue unless alternative funding is put in place thereafter. Consultations will take place with schools and the Schools Forum regarding the continuation and funding of this service, and the Forum noted that a further report would subsequently be provided for consideration.

Early Years Single Funding Formula Update

A working group of the Schools Forum is continuing to meet to consider how a single formula for Early Years should best be designed. The formula needs to be introduced from April 2011 and will apply to all providers of Early Years Education. The formula will be funded from DSG (including growth of £200k) and a Standards Fund Grant.

The Schools Forum noted that the proposed formula will be submitted for approval at a subsequent meeting.

Consultation on Proposed Changes to LMS Funding Formula for Schools

The LMS formula is the means to distribute £175m of DSG to Wirral Schools. A consultation with schools is proposed to the LMS funding formula with effect from 1st April 2011, in respect of Gilbrook, Equal Pay and Harmonisation Costs, and the Consolidation of Grant Funding.

Gilbrook has been referred to earlier. The views of all schools are sought regarding a model that will fund outreach centrally. In respect of Equal Pay and Harmonisation Costs the Forum have previously agreed to create a provision of £300k, which for 2011-12 will need to be allocated within the funding formula.

The government are planning to consolidate grant funding into school budgets, which can be modelled using existing formula factors. Initial findings however indicate that this could cause turbulence with a number of significant losers and gainers. Schools will be asked to make their comments prior to the next Schools Forum meeting.

Consultation on the School Finance (England) Regulations 2011

The Department of Education in September launched a consultation on the new School Finance (England) Regulations 2011. The main changes relate to decisions and proposals including the requirement to introduce an Early Years single funding Formula and the mainstreaming of some specific grants into the Dedicated Schools Grant.

Other proposals include changes to make federations more attractive, allowing penalties from the carbon reduction commitment to be passed through to the schools budget or individual schools and removing exclusions as an allowable formula factor.

Draft regulations will be available on the Department of Education's website.

Special Schools Numbers

Peter Edmondson advised the Forum that a review of required Special School numbers was to take place due to the current changes in numbers attending Special Schools compared to previous years.

Generally

This report comprises a brief summary only. Full minutes and agendas of Schools Forum meetings are available at <http://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=148&Year=2010>

Richard Longster

Chair of Wirral Schools Forum

Websites of interest

GOVERNOR SUPPORT SERVICE Our website includes pages for prospective governors, information for governors, events and conferences, briefings to chairs of governors, clerks to governing bodies, governor training, termly mailing, newsletter and lots more. It also includes information pages for the Wirral Governors' Forum.
www.wirral.gov.uk, A-Z / G / Governors.

DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION (DfE) This section of the DfE site contains information on all aspects of school leadership and governance, including issues such as strategic funding, school performance, governance and managing staff, and the management of teaching and learning.
www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership

GOVERNORNET is the one stop shop website for school governors. It provides information about all aspects of school governance.
www.governornet.co.uk

TEACHERNET contains guidance documents on a very wide range of topics.
www.teachernet.gov.uk

OFSTED (OFFICE FOR STANDARDS IN EDUCATION)
www.ofsted.gov.uk

SCHOOL STANDARDS
www.standards.dfes.gov.uk

OFFICE OF PUBLIC SECTOR INFORMATION (OPSI)
Official publications, including Acts and Statutory Instruments
www.opsi.gov.uk

NATIONAL GOVERNORS' ASSOCIATION (NGA) is the representative body for school governors in England. Its aims are to consult and represent governors and promote high standards in the exercise of governors' responsibilities.
www.nga.org.uk

‘THE CORRESPONDENT’

News for Clerks to Governors

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to a new year and to the latest edition of the ‘Correspondent’. I know that the new year will be challenging but I hope it will be successful, enjoyable and stimulating for you in your role as clerk to your governing body.

CLERKS’ TRAINING

If you are a new clerk please inform the Governor Support Service team who will arrange for you to attend an introductory training/development session. The session includes the basics covered in induction and offers practical guidance and interactive activities to help clerks as they learn about the role and develop their skills. Clerks are also invited and welcome to attend governor training courses.

Support and Development after your appointment as Clerk

The Governor Support Service offers continual support and development after your appointment. As soon as we are informed of your appointment, a letter of welcome and information booklet is sent to you.

You are sent an invitation to attend an introductory training course for new clerks, this is held once a term. Clerks are also invited to attend governor development sessions.

You have the opportunity to gain accreditation through Edge Hill College for the work you carry out.

The team are available Monday to Friday 9.00 am - 5.00 pm and welcome all calls requesting advice. We can be emailed anytime, details are on the notice board page of this newsletter.

Termly newsletter produced specifically for clerks called ‘The Correspondent’.

An invitation to Cluster Group meeting is held each term to keep clerks updated with the latest legislation and it also gives you the opportunity to meet and discuss good working practices with other clerks.

WHAT MAKES A GOOD CLERK?

As clerk you are a very important team player on your governing body. You should be working closely with your chair and headteacher. A good clerk will know what the governing body’s legal duties are - the statutory policies, production of an annual School Profile. They will realise, for example that governors should be involved in the production of the SEF and approve the final version. Although the clerk’s role is often to be the silent witness, he or she will know when it is necessary to intervene and will do it in a tactful way. Familiarity with the Guide to the Law is essential, as is knowing where to go for advice for those items where the Guide does not help.

Personal skills - While paperwork will be a priority for most clerks, governing body work is primarily about people. You have

to be a good communicator, flexible and willing to go that extra mile.

Paperwork - Agendas will be well laid out, with enough detail to help governors understand what action is required at the meeting, but remaining simple and clear. Attachments are labelled in a way which relates them instantly to the agenda point. The clerk should work with the chair and head in producing the agenda and it is a statutory requirement that the agenda is sent to all governors seven days before the meeting.

Minutes should be written, approved and distributed quickly after the meeting. The emphasis should be on clarity with good use of headings and clear, unambiguous language. The clerk is expected to show judgement in knowing how much detail to put in, doing more than simply recording decisions but not presenting a blow-by-blow account of who said what. Action points should be highlighted in some way.

A successful clerk will probably not just use formats for agendas and minutes that they inherited from their predecessor or the LA, but will have introduced some changes to make them work best for their governing body.

Distribution of documents is not the end of the matter. They are records not just for governors, but also for staff and external bodies such as Ofsted and FMSiS assessors. Paperwork (hard copy and electronic) should be filed in an accessible and coherent way, and governors informed of where to go to look things up.

GEL

Has your school signed up yet?

GEL is an on-line learning site just for governors, with a range of different modules you can study, hot topics and useful tips.

Learning on-line can never replace the opportunity to meet and discuss issues with other governors, but it is a useful alternative for those who are short of time, wish to access training from home or simply cannot get enough training!

You can access the site by going to www.elc-gel.org, click on ‘register’. You will be asked to enter your details and will receive an email confirming your eligibility. You can then access the site as little or as often as you like at times that suit you. If you would like further details, contact the Governor Support Service who will be pleased to advise.

REQUESTED GOVERNING BODY INFORMATION

Thank you to all clerks to governors who continue to update us on governing body membership. As a reminder, we require clerks to governors to tell us when:

- schools have a governor vacancy (all categories)
- your governing body has a new governor or associate member
- a member’s term of office is renewed
- the governing body has a new Chair and/or Vice Chair.

For each governing body member we require:

- category of governorship
- term of office
- a contact address
- a contact phone number
- an email address.

You can download the relevant forms for completion from the clerks' area of the Governor Support Service website:

www.wirral.gov.uk, A-Z, Governors, Clerks to Governors.

This information will help us to support your governing body more effectively. If we know about your vacancies then we may be able to help you to fill them.

When we are informed about new governing body members the Governor Support Service automatically sends them their welcome pack to support them initially. We also need the information to ensure that every governor receives the 'termly mailing' which includes the 'Wirral Governor' newsletter and training application form. We can only do this effectively if we are kept up to date with governing body membership.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

We were busy last term assisting your schools with enquiries. Below are some of the queries received and answers given to help you.



Q. Can governors make governing body and committee decisions by email?

A. No, it's not legal! The Governors Guide to the Law (January 2010) Chapter 3, paras 64 and 89 state clearly that governors have to be present at a meeting for decision making and ratification.

64. Every question to be decided at a governing body meeting must be determined by a majority of votes of those governors present and voting.

89. Every question to be decided at a committee meeting must be determined by a majority of votes of those governors and associate members present and voting.

Q. Why does the Governor Support Service request copies of governing body minutes?

A. We request your minutes under the Education (School Governance Procedures) Regulations 2001, part 3, item 13(2)(b). It is also stated in the Governors Guide to the Law (January 2010), Chapter 25 Providing Information, para 7, "The governing body must give the LA any relevant information or reports in connection with the discharge of the governing body's functions that the LA may require".

Q. Who is eligible to be a staff governor?

A. The Instrument of Government will specify the number of staff places on the governing body. One place must be held for the headteacher and another for a teacher (unless none stands). If there is a third place then it must be kept for a member of the support staff (unless none stands).

Q. Who is a member of the support staff?

A. Anyone not a teacher employed in the school.

Q. What happens if a staff governor leaves their employment?

A. Their office as governor automatically terminates on their last day of employment at the school.

Q. What happens if an elected parent governor takes paid employment at the school that breaches the 500 hour rule after their election?

A. They may continue to serve out their term of office but will not be eligible to be re-elected as a parent governor if employment continues. However, they would be eligible for staff governor vacancies.

Q. As an elected governor am I a representative or a delegate?

A.

- Staff and parent governors do not have to try to represent the views of all staff and parents
- They should communicate with them about issues that arise, but only in so far as is reasonable.
- When decisions have to be made by the governing body, each staff and parent governor is free to vote in accordance with his/her own views.
- They are representative staff/parents rather than representatives of staff/parents.

Q. To effectively fulfil the parent governor role what should I do?

A.

- make yourself known to the parent body
- attend training sessions
- listen impartially to concerns raised by parents
- present a balanced view of issues, representing different sections of the community
- abide by the agreed protocol regarding agenda items and Any Other Business.

Q. Do our school policies have to be signed by anyone when they have been approved?

A. Yes, the Headteacher and Chair of Governors should sign them.

GOVERNOR VACANCIES

There are approximately 350,000 governor places in England, around 1% of the adult population, forming the largest single volunteer force in the country. The majority of Wirral schools are excellent at filling their governing body vacancies but there are still some vacancies remaining.

Vacancies reduce the effectiveness of governing bodies because it limits the range of experience available to the school and increases the workload of other governors. Schools serve their local community and it is therefore important that the governing body reflects that community. The school and its community will be better served if the governors bring the perspective of the community to their decision-making, and the community will feel connected to the school through the governing body. Stakeholder groups such as parents, school staff, people from the local community, the local authority and in the case of certain schools, the foundation body, reflect those with an interest in the school. Vacancies result in the relevant stakeholder group being under-represented and this, in turn, disturbs the balance between the groups.

Filling your vacancies

The Governor Support Service can help to fill community governor vacancies as we keep a data bank register of applications received from people who are interested in becoming school governors.

Once you have identified the vacant posts you will need to take the necessary action to attract candidates. Here are some useful tips.

In your recruitment material you will need to generate interest and create a positive image:

- Stress that decision-making is collective and that no governor has to 'go it alone'
- Mention that full induction, training and expert support is available from many sources including Wirral's Governor Support Service
- Ensure that letters requesting parent governor nominations are friendly and highlight the importance, value and rewards of the role. Explain why parents need a voice on the governing body. A similar approach can be used for staff governors
- Do not use dry, administrative terms such as 'agenda', 'meetings' or 'reports'. Try to refer to subject matters such as 'behaviour', 'staffing' and 'curriculum'
- Use positive language/phrases - an enthusiastic approach will motivate any candidates
- Ensure that potential candidates feel valued and important.

New recruits can bring new ideas and enthusiasm to a governing body.

Appointment of your new Governor

Once the governing body has elected or appointed the successful candidate(s), the governing body may wish to do some of the following for the new governor:

The Chair could

- offer an informal introductory telephone call or meeting (interview) expressing thanks and giving a brief background to the main issues being discussed by the governing body
- allocate an experienced governor to 'mentor' the newcomer
- introduce them to the members of the governing body
- make sure they feel welcome, valued and involved early on in their term of office.

The Head may

- have a brief chat and give a tour of the school.

The Clerk may

- advise the dates, venues and timings of meetings and outline the type of documentation each meeting will require
- work, in conjunction with the LA, to provide good initial training and induction.

Fellow governors

- help them to understand their role within the governing body.

AIDE MEMOIRE

- It is good practice to ensure that it is noted in the minutes whether or not the governing body consents to apologies received.
- Remember to check the quorum before the start of the meeting. One half (rounded up to a whole number) of the complete membership of the governing body, excluding vacancies.
- Governors, and anyone else who may be attending as observers, should be reminded at the start of each meeting that they must declare any conflict of interest and withdraw from the meeting during any discussion/decision on that matter.
- If necessary seek clarification from the Chair at the meeting, as it is important to obtain an accurate record.



- Remember it is not the job of the governing body to approve committee meeting minutes. This should be done by the committee at their next meeting.
- When taking your minutes remember that a minute is NOT a verbatim record of the meeting, 'he said... she said', but should contain a beginning, a middle and an end:
Beginning - the beginning should be an explanation of the agenda item.
Middle - the middle summarises the main points of the discussion, and the questions asked of the headteacher providing the evidence of how the school is governed.
End - the end states the outcome of the discussion, usually a recommendation or a decision, including the voting result. This will result in an action, who, when and a time frame.

Remember, key to a good set of minutes is to write them in plain English, past tense, numbering and headings should match the agenda. Think also about the layout, are they easy to read and access information - use bold, underline and spacing to maximise accessibility of information.

Clerks should be appointed to all committees. This can be the clerk to the governing body, or a member of the committee.

Every good wish for the Spring Term

Margaret Dunfey

Principal Officer (Governor Support)

WIRRAL GOVERNORS' FORUM

'A Voice for School Governors'

A VIEW FROM THE CHAIR: Jane Owens

I am delighted to offer my view of matters around governance both nationally and locally. Due to publishing timescales I am writing this in November 2010 for publication and distribution in Spring 2011. More recently this has caused some problems in the light of fast changing local and national policies, committees and, indeed, personnel.

I would like to welcome new governors to their role and hope they take the opportunity to attend the three training sessions offered at the Professional Excellence Centre. These excellent sessions, spread over 3 evenings during the term, offer a key insight into the role you will play in your school. They are also a good 'refresher' for more experienced governors in the light of changing regulations. There are also opportunities to use online training packages if you so wish. There is a huge value however in attending face to face sessions to have an opportunity to share experiences and ask questions.

New governors will now have attended at least one full governing body meeting at their school and perhaps volunteered to become a member of a governing body committee. Each committee, both statutory and non statutory, will have a set of terms of reference that should be reviewed yearly to ensure they are following current legislation and practice. Some schools offer the opportunity for a new governor to become an observer at a committee meeting before making the decision to formally join. It can be helpful to utilise the life skills of our colleagues when forming committees or suggest a particular training course to further knowledge and competences.

Howard Cooper

We have learnt that Director of Wirral's Children and Young People Services, Howard Cooper, is moving to the position of Interim Director at Adult Social Services Department. I am sure you would wish to join me in expressing sincere thanks to Howard for all he has done to support the work of Wirral Governors' Forum and, indeed, all Wirral governors and our schools. The inclusion of governors in the planning of the NEEC 2009, and the showcasing of our children and young people during the event, were a testament of his commitment to Wirral and our schools. We wish him well in his new role.

In the interim period David Armstrong, Head of Planning and Resources in the CYPD, will take the role of Interim Director of the CYPD. We look forward to working with David and congratulate him on his new role.

Norma Gordon

An early retirement was celebrated at the Professional Excellence Centre as we said goodbye to Norma Gordon, Centre Manager.

Mark Parkinson, Head of Branch, paid tribute to Norma's outstanding contribution to Wirral over many years and the huge value that is placed on the work she has done. Wirral Governors' Forum would also like to thank Norma for all her hard work helping to organise Governor Training and Development during changes to departmental responsibilities.

LOCALLY

Director's Briefing to Chairs

At the time of writing this report we are still waiting for the minutes of a busy and information filled briefing meeting held in September. You will find these minutes on the Wirral Council website. The termly Director's briefing, led by Wirral Governors' Forum, advises governors on topics for possible inclusion in their full governing body meetings and also informs us of current local issues. Short briefings from LA officers can lead to requests for further information. I can then discuss these requests with Margaret Dunfey, Governor Support, Stuart Bellerby, Strategic Service Manager Secondary, and, where possible, a longer session can be included on the Governor Training and Development programme.

Wirral Governors are grateful for the support received from Governor Support Service who provides a wealth of information and guidance as we fulfil our roles supporting our schools.

School governors in Wirral play a very important role in helping schools to improve and raise standards. There are approximately 2,000 people who volunteer to be school governors who give time, commitment and energy to the role and Wirral Local Authority values the support that governors give to schools.

Representation

Wirral Governors' Forum colleagues and I represent governors as usual on a vast array of statutory committees and I detail below some of the reports and links to meetings, agendas and minutes for your information. I report on just a couple of those this term.

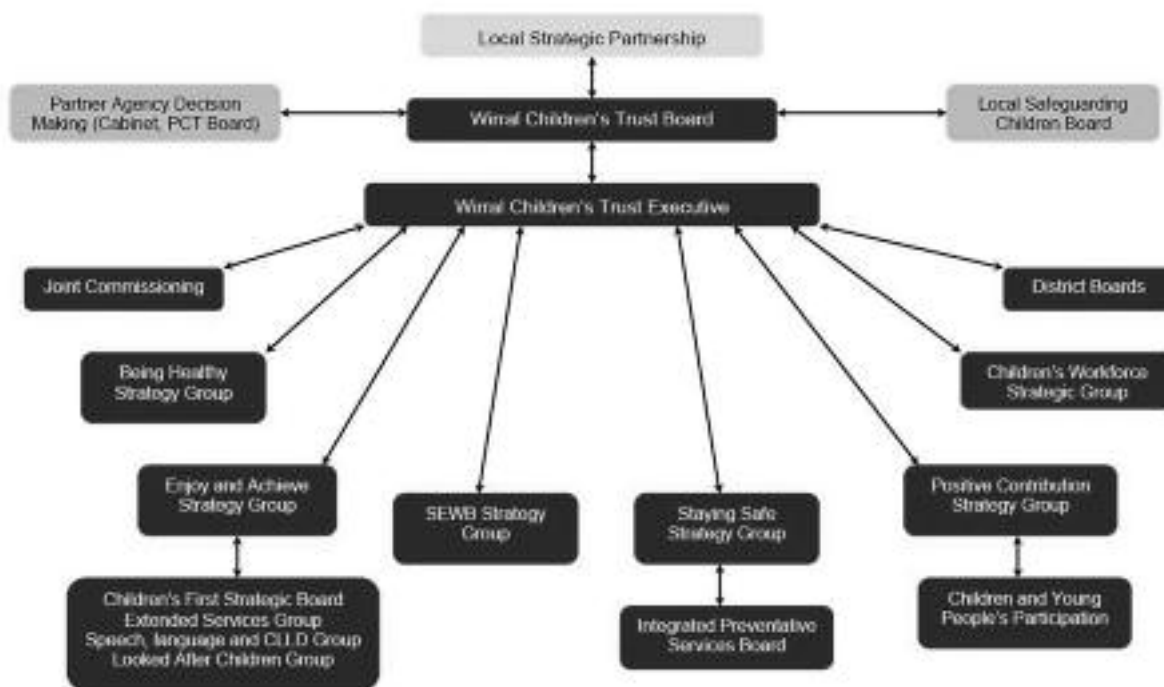
Children's Trust Board

I have now attended two Children's Trust Board meetings with a range of colleagues from statutory and voluntary organisations such as Health, Merseyside Police, Youth, Voluntary sector, Education. The minutes of the meetings are on the Wirral website by following this link to the minutes of the July 2010 meeting; the most current minutes available.

<http://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=425&MId=3016&Ver=4>

I hope you will take the opportunity to read the minutes.

The Structure of Wirral Children's Trust



School's Forum

I have attended my first meeting of the School's Forum and the Chair, Richard Longster, provides a report for the Wirral Governor within this edition.

Admissions Forum

Minutes of the meetings are on the Wirral website and topics recently included Admission Arrangements for Primary and Secondary schools, consultations around Secondary admissions for 2012-13, report from the Choice Advisor.

Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny

Richard Neale, Vice Chair Wirral Governors' Forum, and I attend meetings of Overview and Scrutiny but as representatives of other organisations. We do however inform colleagues of the agenda and minutes of this committee and direct colleagues to Cabinet items that relate to education. These can be accessed via the Wirral Council website www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/council-and-democracy/minutes-agendas-and-reports

Mailing list

Electronic information sharing has been a valuable tool in keeping colleagues informed of local and national issues and consultations that require a response. If you wish to join this list please let me know.

REGIONALLY AND NATIONALLY

At the North West Regional meeting of the NGA in October, we were delighted to welcome Emma Knights, CEO, National Governor's Association. As well as sharing information with other Chairs of Governor Forums from Cheshire to Cumbria we were able to listen to a very informative presentation from Emma on governance in Academies.



Emma Knights (CEO, NGA), Susan Marsh (Regional Director NGA), Jane Owens (Chair of Wirral Governors' Forum and Asst. Director NGA)

Please utilise the NGA website as it contains a wealth of current information. www.nga.org.uk

We receive bulletins and newsletters from the NGA on a regular basis and, again, if you wish to receive this please let me know.

NGA represent governors on a variety of committees which include:

Independent Academies Association (6.10.10): Clare Collins, NGA's Chair, attended and chaired a workshop session on governance in academies.

Association of Teachers and Leaders conference (8.10.10): Emma Knights spoke at this national conference on the NGA and its advice to governors on converting to academies.

National Co-ordinators of Governors Services national conference (13 - 15.10.10): Emma Knights attended and gave a plenary address. NCOGs used the second day of the conference to develop a draft manifesto on governance.

DfE Advisory Group on Governance (19.10.10): Discussions were had on academies, free schools and the NGA's submission of 'Reducing the Bureaucracy of Governance'. This paper can be downloaded from our newsletter dated 15.10.10. Click [here](#) to view the newsletter.

DfE Ministerial School Improvement task & finish group (21.10.10): This is part of the DfE's on-going review on the role of local authorities in education.

DfE School Funding Implementation Group (SFIG) (22.10.10): SFIG were briefed on the effect of the Comprehensive Spending Review for schools.

Meeting with Lord Hill, Under-secretary of State for Education (22.10.10): Clare Collins, Emma Knights and Gillian Allcroft met with Lord Hill to discuss NGA's submission on reducing bureaucracy and the future of governance given the increasing freedoms for schools. We took the opportunity to promote the importance of training and clerking.

Oral evidence to the House of Commons Select Committee on Education (27.10.10): Gillian Allcroft, NGA Policy Manager, gave evidence on behaviour and attendance.

NGA Annual Conference

John Weise and I will be attending the NGA conference in London in November and we will report more fully in our next edition. The theme of the conference will be 'Managing your School's Money' with the keynote speech being delivered by Lord Hill, Under Secretary of State for Education.

FINALLY

I offer sincere thanks to colleagues in the Children and Young People's Department for their continued support and to Wirral Governors' Forum colleagues for their attendance at meetings and their contributions to the lively debates.

I can be contacted on jane@cassowens.freeserve.co.uk or via the Governor Support Service.

Jane Owens

Chair, Wirral Governors' Forum

Governor Support Service

Governor Training - Spring Term 2011

The Governor Support Service continues to offer a range of quality provision to support governors in the valuable contribution they make towards our schools. We are pleased to be able to offer a range of programmes for the Spring Term that we hope you will be able to avail yourselves of.

NB A minimum of 10 delegates are required to run each course. We will advise as soon as possible if there are to be any cancellations.

I would like to thank all the people who have supported the Governor Support Service programme of training and have delivered developmental sessions to governors last term and also a thank you to those who have offered to deliver training this term. The evaluations received after sessions have been very positive with most courses receiving a rating of between Excellent and Good. Wirral governors obviously appreciate the courses that the Governor Support Service provides for them.

Margaret Dunfey
Principal Officer (Governor Support)

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

1. INTRODUCTION TO GOVERNANCE (3 Modules)

TARGET AUDIENCE: GOVERNORS NEW TO THE ROLE AND GOVERNORS WHO WOULD APPRECIATE A REFRESHER

THE STRATEGIC ROLE (Module 1)

Course Synopsis

- Powers and duties of governing bodies
- School development plans
- Effective Schools

Wednesday 9 February 2011, 6:30 - 8:30 pm
Venue: Professional Excellence Centre

MONITORING AND THE CRITICAL FRIEND ROLE (Module 2)

Course Synopsis

- Monitoring and evaluation
- Attainment
- Organisation and procedures of meetings

Tuesday 1 March 2011, 6:30 - 8:30 pm
Venue: Professional Excellence Centre

THE ACCOUNTABILITY ROLE (Module 3)

Course Synopsis

- Representation
- Documentation
- Complaints.

Monday 28 March 2011, 6:30 - 8:30 pm
Venue: Professional Excellence Centre
Course Presenter (for all 3 modules): Stella Owen,
External Consultant

2. THE OUTSTANDING GOVERNING BODY

TARGET AUDIENCE: ALL GOVERNORS AND HEADTEACHERS

Course Synopsis

The course will cover Ofsted expectations and will suggest practical steps that can be taken to work towards achieving the grade. The course will cover:

- Ofsted criteria for an outstanding governing body
- Challenge and support
- Monitoring the school improvement plan
- Involvement in the school Self Evaluation Form
- Governing body self evaluation
- Governor Mark
- Governing body development plan
- The Headteacher and the Chair
- Involving individual governors.

Wednesday 26 January 2011, 6:30 - 8:30 pm
Venue: Professional Excellence Centre
Course Presenter: Stella Owen, External Consultant.

3. UNDERSTANDING SCHOOL FINANCES

TARGET AUDIENCE: FINANCE COMMITTEE GOVERNORS AND CHAIRS OF GOVERNORS

Course Synopsis

This course is designed to provide governors on Finance Committees with knowledge of the delegated budget, other funding streams, difficult decisions concerning the budget and other financial matters.

Course Outcomes

To gain an understanding of the formula budget and its elements, other funding streams, managing excess and deficit budgets, Wirral Schools Forum, FMSiS and financial updates.

Tuesday 8 February 2011, 9:30 am - 12:30 pm
Thursday 10 February 2011, 6:00 - 9:00 pm
Venue: Professional Excellence Centre
Course Presenter: Sue Ashley, Principal Officer (LMS)

4. USING THE WIRRAL VIRTUAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

TARGET AUDIENCE: ALL GOVERNORS

Course Synopsis

This is a hands on practical session to introduce governors to the resources available on Wirral's VLE. Attendees will learn how to access and download resources.

Course Outcomes

Governors to request an account for their own school VLE.
Governors to access information and resources placed on the VLE by the Governor Support Team.

Tuesday 15 February 2011, 10:00 am - 12:00 pm

Wednesday 16 February 2011, 6:30 - 8:00 pm

Venue: Professional Excellence Centre

Course Presenter: Angela Allen, ICT Adviser

5. RACE EQUALITY IN SCHOOLS

TARGET AUDIENCE: ALL GOVERNORS

Course Synopsis

Enabling governors to understand their general and specific duties with regard to Race Equality.

Course Outcomes

Governors will gain an understanding of their general and specific duties with regard to Race Equality.

Thursday 3 March 2011, 9:30 - 11:30 am

Thursday 3 March 2011, 6:00 - 8:00 pm

Venue: Professional Excellence Centre

Course Presenters: Yvonne Gibson, MEAS Coordinator/Avril McCarthy, MEAS Specialist Teacher/Corinne Lands, Principal Manager PSHEE.

6. THE EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S BILL

TARGET AUDIENCE: ALL GOVERNORS

Course Synopsis

This course will cover the key aspects of the proposed next Education Bill summarising how it will affect schools and governance.

Course Outcomes

For governors to gain a better understanding of the proposed Education Bill.
To consider the likely impact for their schools and any specific implications for their role as governors.

Friday 4 March 2011, 9:30 - 11:30 am

Monday 7 March 2011, 6:30 - 8:30 pm

Venue: Professional Excellence Centre

Course Presenter: Stuart Bellerby, Strategic Service Manager

7. THE ROLE & RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DESIGNATED TEACHER FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN - STATUTORY GUIDANCE FOR GOVERNING BODIES

TARGET AUDIENCE: ALL GOVERNORS, DESIGNATED GOVERNORS FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

Course Synopsis

Recent changes in legislation have placed new statutory duties on schools' governing bodies in the way in which they support the designated teacher for looked after children to promote the educational achievement of looked after children on the school role.

The course will consider the implications for practice of the new statutory guidance.

Course Outcomes

Governors will understand their responsibilities as defined by the statutory guidance and will consider how to ensure that their school follows best practice in promoting the attainment of looked after children.

Thursday 10 March 2011, 9:30 am - 12:00

Venue: Professional Excellence Centre

Course Presenter: David MacKinnon, Headteacher, Wirral Virtual School.

8. THE EQUALITY ACT

TARGET AUDIENCE: ALL GOVERNORS

Course Synopsis

An overview of how Disability Legislation has been encompassed within the Single Equalities Act 2010 - what it means for schools.

Course Outcomes

Governors to have an awareness/understanding of the recent changes in legislation and how they can brief their schools in order to prepare them for any changes they will need to make.

Thursday 7 April 2011, 9:30 - 11:30 am

Thursday 7 April 2011, 6:30 - 8:30 pm

Venue: Professional Excellence Centre

Course Presenter: Julie Hudson, Coordinator, Pupils with Disabilities.

PUPIL CARE, GUIDANCE, SUPPORT AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

1. PRIVATE FOSTERING: A SAFEGUARDING ISSUE

TARGET AUDIENCE: ALL GOVERNORS

Course Synopsis

The aims of the session are:

- To raise awareness and your ability to recognise and act on a private arrangement.
- To understand the need to assess such arrangements in safeguarding children being cared for by someone else.
- To make professionals aware of and understand their roles in ensuring the above and, in particular, schools.

Wednesday 9 March 2011, 6:30 - 8:30 pm

Venue: Professional Excellence Centre

Course Presenter: Carol Bannon, Private Fostering Officer.

QUALITY OF PROVISION (LEARNING, TEACHING AND THE CURRICULUM)

1. DEVELOPING A CURRICULUM OFFER AT KS4 AT ENTRY/LEVEL1

TARGET AUDIENCE: GOVERNORS OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Course Synopsis

The course will introduce the new Foundation Learning Programme which is for those learners 14-19 who are unlikely to have achieved 5 A*-Cs at GCSE at 16. The programme consists of unit-sized qualifications and must cover the three areas of Functional Skills, Personal & Social Development and a Vocational/Subject Area.

Course Outcomes

Delegates will gain a detailed knowledge of the principles underlying this programme, and examples of three curriculum delivery models which could be adopted for their own institutions.

Wednesday 19 January 2011, 9:30 - 11:30 am

Thursday 20 January 2011, 6:00 - 8:00 pm

Venue: Professional Excellence Centre

Course Presenter: Sue Elliot, 14-19 Foundation Learning Manager.

A training application form will be sent with this newsletter, but if you would prefer to book a place on a course via e-mail, please contact Pam Lee on pamlee@wirral.gov.uk (phone 346 6668).

Please state your name, school, daytime telephone number, number and title of course (plus date and venue if the course is offered twice).

If you have any accessibility or sensory requirements would you kindly let us know prior to the event.

CHESTER DIOCESAN TRAINING FOR GOVERNORS OF C.E. SCHOOLS SPRING TERM 2011

Denominational Inspection (SIAS)

Led by Sue Noakes (Assistant Director of Education) and Chris Hall (School Consultant).

9th February

Stockport St George's CE Primary School, 7.30 - 9.30 pm

16th February

Foxhill Conference Centre, Frodsham, 10.00 am - 12.00 pm

In this session governors will be given advice on preparing for the SIAS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools), including what the inspector will be looking for, how to undertake self-evaluation, making the SEF distinctive and church school development.

Buildings and Finance for Aided Schools

Led by Chris Woodward (Schools' Assets Officer)

10th May

Foxhill Conference Centre, Frodsham, 10.00 am - 12.00 pm

19th May

St John the Evangelist CE Primary School, Macclesfield, 7.30 - 9.30pm

Booking forms available from our website:

www.chester.anglican.org/schools and choose events.

NOTICE BOARD

Briefings to Governors

Spring Term 2011:

Tuesday 18 January 2011

Summer Term 2011:

Tuesday 17 May 2011

Time: 6.00 pm

Venue: Professional Excellence Centre,
Acre Lane, Bromborough.

Comments, contributions & compliments

What areas would you like to see covered in future issues of the Wirral Governor? Email ideas, or any other comments about school governance, to governorsupportservice@wirral.gov.uk.

What would you like to see as a regular feature in the Wirral Governor?

Do you have any other ideas to help the Governor Support Service keep you informed?

LA Agenda Items:

1. Declaration of Business/
Pecuniary Interests
2. Admission Arrangements 2012-13, Primary and Secondary
3. Health & Safety
4. Governors' Reports on Training
5. Wirral Governors' Forum.

Wirral Governors' Forum

'A voice for School Governors'

Dates for your diary:

Open Meeting

Tuesday 8 March 2011, 6.00 pm in the Professional Excellence Centre, Acre Lane, Bromborough.

Executive Committee

Meeting to be held immediately prior to the above meeting.

Contact

Mrs Jane Owens, Chair of the Wirral Governors' Forum, can be contacted by email at:

jane@cassowens.freemove.co.uk
or via the Governor Support Service.

Helpline - Being a governor is enjoyable, yet demanding. In addition to your Headteacher and Clerk to Governors, help and advice is on hand from the Governor Support Service, Professional Excellence Centre, Acre Lane, Bromborough, Wirral CH62 7BZ.

Margaret Dunfey	346 6669	margaretdunfey@wirral.gov.uk
Pam Lee	346 6668	pamlee@wirral.gov.uk
Barbara Spray	346 6641	barbaraspray@wirral.gov.uk

Fax: 346 6636
Website: www.wirral.gov.uk, Select A-Z / G / Governors.

Wirral SACRE

A requirement of the 1993 Education Act is that local SACREs (Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education) should hold meetings that are open not only to all governors but also interested members of the public. Details of the next meeting of Wirral SACRE are given below:

DATE: Thursday 17 February 2011, 4.00 pm
VENUE: Professional Excellence Centre, Acre Lane, Bromborough.

DfE GOVERNORLINE

GovernorLine is the free professional helpline offering e-mail and telephone support to school governors, clerks and individuals involved directly in the governance of maintained schools in England.

GovernorLine is available Monday to Friday 9.00 am to 10.00 pm, excluding public holidays, and 11.00 am to 4.00 pm on weekends.

Tel: 08000 722181

Email: www.governorline.info