

# Governors' News

A Termly Newsletter for Liverpool Governors



- Liverpool Learning Partnership
- Education and Adoption Act
- Educational Excellence Everywhere
- Short inspections
- Liverpool Governors' Forum
- Summer term training programme

Issue 80  
Summer 2016

With thanks to Smithdown Primary School for the cover photo

# Liverpool Learning Partnership



The Executive Board and its strategic groups continue to meet on a regular basis. Issues under discussion include:

**City of Readers:** schools yet to engage with activities will be encouraged to do so. £50,000 from the schools causing concern budget will be used to support targeted programmes for those schools requiring it via Readers in Residence and Reading Revolutionary Roadshows.

LLP-sponsored videos can be viewed on the City of Readers website: <http://cityofreaders.org/schools/>

**Liverpool Counts:** Holly Lodge Girls' College won the Quality Mark logo competition and, as their prize, four Year 7 girls will visit the factory to see their logo being made. The first cohort is due to be assessed during the summer term with a celebration event planned for 01 July.

A city-wide Maths Party is planned for 17 June with support confirmed from a number of organisations.

**Culture Hub:** Alice Demba has been appointed as Cultural Education Co-ordinator, seconded from Curious Minds. LLP is the lead partner in the Liverpool Cultural Education Partnership. A grant for £15,000 has been awarded by the Arts Council to help develop Artsmark in Liverpool.

**Liverpool Chartered Teacher:** all Schools Direct trainees who have attended the three offered sessions will be invited to submit a reflective piece on their experience. These will then be considered by a panel before accreditation is given at an awards ceremony planned for 07 July.

**Attendance:** a draft action plan has been developed by all partners and an Attendance Quality Mark is being piloted before roll-out across the city. The Board has acknowledged that an award aimed primarily at meeting DfE targets would not reward those schools that had brought about a big improvement in attendance whilst falling short of those standards.

Other actions to be followed up by LLP include working with the Chamber of Commerce on championing attendance in the workplace; liaising with Arts organisations over a play promoting attendance at school and looking at using role models to promote the attendance 'message'.

**Families Programme:** LLP's strategic links to the programme supports joint priorities on attendance; reading; mental health and emotional

wellbeing. Discussions are ongoing regarding commissioning work around Looked After Children and summer schools, and the possible funding of a one year post via LLP to support attendance.

A whole-school approach to mental health and emotional wellbeing will be developed. Funding for the scheme would be provided by the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) through the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) budget and the Families Programme. LLP has been requested to co-ordinate recruitment and secondments.

School to school support: LLP continues to co-ordinate school to school support, working with SIL. Liverpool's Teaching Schools are also bidding for funding to supplement this. LLP has also been involved in supporting secondments into schools causing concern, largely to bolster leadership capacity.

Strategic Partnership Working: a meeting of the city's Community Cohesion Group recently considered the role the media plays in this area and was well attended by local press, TV and media groups.

The Children's Trust Board will be relaunched as the Children and Families Trust.

A collaborative meeting considering the work of SIL, LLP and Teaching

Schools has resulted in ongoing discussions over how best to move things forward together following the Liverpool Challenge conference held on 22 January.

Meetings will also be held over the summer term to discuss the academy agenda arising from the recent Educational Excellence Everywhere white paper (*see page 6*).

A recent meeting between education and health colleagues discussed ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorders) and the way forward across the city. The meeting was well attended and will reconvene to progress suggestions made.

LLP will consult in the summer term on new Articles of Association to be submitted to the Charities Commission in support of its application for charitable status.

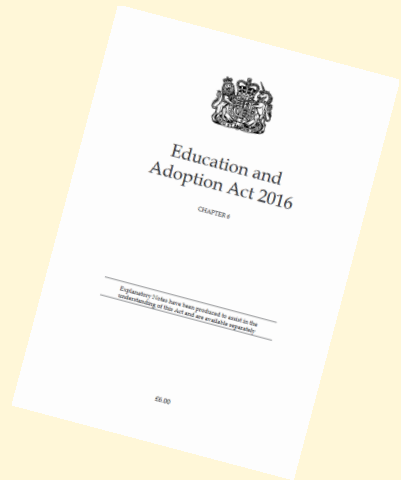
98% of schools have now signed up to the three-year subscription agreement from autumn 2015. This has enabled LLP to produce a strategic plan to 2017 (previously published as a Director's Item for spring 2016) that will drive the agenda for its meetings..

On an organisational note, the All Learners and Learners Who Need More groups have been reconfigured to become more strategic in their approach, with agenda, format and representation being adjusted to achieve this.

# Education and Adoption Act

The Education and Adoption Act became law in March. The Act's provisions will:

- Require every school judged 'inadequate' by Ofsted to be turned into a sponsored academy
- Give new powers to the Secretary of State (SoS) to intervene in maintained schools considered to be underperforming, and constrain LAs from doing so in some circumstances
- Expand the legal definition of the 'eligible for intervention' category to include 'coasting' schools, and enable the SoS to intervene through a range of measures including requiring the school to become a sponsored academy
- Enable intervention in academies on the basis that they are 'coasting'.
- Allow the SoS to issue directions, with time limits, to school governing bodies and local authorities, to speed up academy conversions
- Place a new duty on schools and LAs in specified cases to take all reasonable steps to progress the conversion



- Require schools and LAs in specified cases to work with an identified sponsor toward the 'making of academy arrangements' with that sponsor
- Remove the requirements for a consultation to be held where a school 'eligible for intervention' is being converted to a sponsored academy. Government amendments tabled in the Lords require a new sponsor to communicate their plans for a school to parents.

## What this means for governors

If a maintained school is judged by Ofsted to be 'inadequate' it will become an academy because the new law will require the education secretary to make an academy order. The LA and governing board will have to facilitate the conversion. The SoS may revoke an academy order if

another potential approach to improvement is identified or if closure is deemed to be the best solution.

A new performance measure may leave a school open to academy conversion by the SoS if the school is deemed to be 'coasting'. Where a school meets the criteria for 'coasting' it will be for the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) to determine whether it has a credible plan to improve or whether intervention is required.

If it doesn't, the RSC may decide that a school:

- needs additional support and challenge
- should be required to enter into specified arrangements
- that additional governors or an Interim Executive Board (IEB) are needed
- that the school should become a sponsored academy.

Academies can also be 'coasting' and could be handed over to new sponsors. Academy trusts, however, will have the power to challenge the decision.

The governing boards of foundation schools will have recourse to consultation if the government is seeking to convert its school into an academy.

### **Eligible for intervention**

The DfE or LA has the power to intervene in the running of a school where:

- the governing body has failed to comply with the terms of a warning notice issued by the LA or the SoS/RSC.
- the school has been judged 'inadequate' by Ofsted
- The school's performance falls under the 'coasting' definition

When a school is 'eligible for intervention', either the LA or Regional Schools Commissioner may utilise one of the following measures:

- Suspend the right to a delegated budget (LA)
- Appoint an Interim Executive Board (RSC, or LA with RSC's permission)
- Appoint additional governors (RSC or LA)
- Require the governing body to 'enter into arrangements' (RSC or LA)
- Direct the LA to close the school (RSC)
- Make an academy order (RSC)

In general, where the RSC intends to intervene in a school, their powers take precedence over those of the LA.

The Education and Adoption Act 2016 can be accessed at [www.legislation.gov.uk](http://www.legislation.gov.uk)

# Educational Excellence Everywhere

## White Paper

The white paper, Educational Excellence Everywhere, published on 17 March, sets out the government's vision for education, including the plan to see all schools in England convert to academy status.

A general overview of the white paper is set out below followed by a full reproduction of the paragraphs that focus on governance.

### Recruitment

1. The National College for Teaching and Leadership will be reformed to reduce costs for schools.
2. Schools will be able to advertise vacancies for free on a new national teacher vacancy website.
3. The Allocation of Initial Teaching Training will be reformed and will be based on need, demand and quality.
4. ITT content will include more subject knowledge and less "unevidenced" material.
5. Qualified Teaching Status will be replaced with a "stronger, more challenging" accreditation.
6. A commitment is given to developing the new National Teaching Service.
7. A new Standard for Teachers' Professional Development to help schools improve the quality of

continued professional development (CPD) will be established. The feasibility of paying teaching schools to publish their CPD materials on an "open-source" basis will also be looked into.

8. Increase teachers' access to high-quality evidence and support a new, peer-reviewed British education journal.

### Great leaders

1. Headteachers, multi-academy trust (MAT) chief executives and other experts will help design new voluntary National Professional Qualifications for each level of leadership. This will "better prepare" leaders in the system. These won't be mandatory.
2. An Excellence in Leadership fund will be set up to help develop more leaders.
3. A new national database will be set up to track those involved in governance. The government will introduce legislation so they can bar unsuitable individuals from being governors.
4. The role of local authorities in education will be defined. They will now ensure every child has a school place, needs of pupils are met and champion parents. Local authorities will also step back from maintaining schools and school improvement.

## **A school-led system**

Sets out the conditions that will be created for “excellent heads and teachers to thrive”.

1. All schools must become academies by 2022.
2. The smallest schools will have to form or join a MAT. But schools that are “successful and sustainable” can become single academy trusts if they want.
3. An online Parent Portal will be set up to inform parents about the school system. This will include a route for parents to complain about their school to the DfE and beyond that to a public service ombudsman.
4. Local authorities will co-ordinate all in-year admissions and appeals.

## **Preventing underperformance**

The government will focus on ensuring there is extra support and challenge in areas where schools are failing.

1. There will be 300 more teaching schools and 800 more national leaders of education “where they are most needed”. It will also be incentivised so they reach the most vulnerable schools.
2. “New and better” means for brokering school improvement.
3. “We will ensure there are enough strong academy sponsors to transform schools”. Although it doesn’t say how this will happen.

4. Where schools are performing well they will choose their own support. But for underperforming schools that don’t have a plan, the regional schools commissioners will do this on their behalf.

## **High expectations**

1. “World-leading” curricula will be established for academies to build on.
2. The National Citizen Service will be expanded so every pupil has the opportunity to take part.
3. A strategy for improved careers provision will be published.
4. The alternative provision (AP) system will be reformed so mainstream schools remain accountable for the education of pupils in AP, and schools will be responsible for the quality of commissioning.

## **Accountability**

1. Ofsted will consult on removing the separated graded judgments on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to help clarify that the focus of inspection is on outcomes.
2. New performance tables for MATs will be published.
3. Parents will have the “right” information in an “easy-to-navigate” format.

*continued...*



4. Schools judged as requiring improvement by Ofsted where a headteacher “steps forward” to lead improvement will not face re-inspection for 30 months. This will also apply when a poorly-performing maintained school becomes an academy, a new school opens or a new sponsor is needed to drive further improvement

### **Strategic leadership and oversight by skilled governing boards**

Paras 3.27—3.35 of the white paper focus on governance and are reproduced below.

3.27. As we move to a more autonomous school-led system, it is increasingly vital that schools operate under effective governing boards. As the key decision maker and accountable body for their school(s), governing boards have a vital strategic role, which they should deliver in a dynamic and professional manner: focusing strongly on their core functions of setting the vision and ethos for their school(s), holding school leaders to account and making sure money is well spent.

3.28. The growth of MATs will improve the quality of governance – meaning that the best governing boards will take responsibility for more schools. As fewer, more highly skilled boards take more strategic oversight of the trust’s schools, MAT boards will increasingly use professionals to hold

individual school-level heads to account for educational standards and the professional management of the school, allowing school level governing boards to focus on understanding and championing the needs of pupils, parents and the wider local community. This does not mean less accountability – MATs must publish a clear scheme of delegation to set out how their governance is organised, including any functions they choose to delegate to regional or school level.

3.29. In recent years we have given governing boards more freedom to appoint the best possible people with the skills the board needs to be effective.

3.30. We will expect all governing boards to focus on seeking people with the right skills for governance, and so we will no longer require academy trusts to reserve places for elected parents on governing boards. We will offer this freedom to all open and new academies, and as we move towards a system where every school is an academy, fully skills-based governance will become the norm across the education system.

3.31. Parents often have these skills and many parents already play a valuable role in governance – and will always be encouraged to serve on governing boards. We will also expect every academy to put in place arrangements for meaningful



engagement with all parents, to listen to their views and feedback.

3.32. To encourage everyone involved in governance to develop their skills, we will work with schools and MATs to develop a competency framework defining the core skills and knowledge needed for governance in different contexts. We will also set a new, stronger requirement on all governing boards to ensure that individuals are properly inducted, and receive the training or development they need to develop the skills set out in the competency framework. We have extended licensed delivery of NCTL training programmes for chairs and clerks until September 2017, and will review our approach to governance training programmes in light of the new competency framework.

3.33. Clear, high quality information about performance is essential for good governance, and so we will make it easier for members of governing boards to access high quality, objective data about their school's educational and financial performance.

3.34. In March 2016 we launched a new, clearer website displaying school performance tables, making it easier for governing boards, parents and others to find key information and compare the results of schools (see more in chapter 7). We will continue to develop this in response to feedback to make it easier than ever to understand a school's

performance. Where data suggests that there may be an issue within a school or MAT, we will pilot a proactive approach to alert governing boards so that they can investigate and, if necessary, take action.

3.35. We have a long and rich tradition of voluntary trusteeship and we expect the vast majority of those involved in governance will continue to be unpaid, volunteering to serve their community and give their school(s) the benefit of their expertise and commitment. As the scale of the challenge in governing large and growing MATs increases, we may see more of them seeking Charity Commission authorisation to offer payment to attract the very best people into key positions such as the chair of the board.

The crucial role of governance makes it more important than ever to ensure that only the right individuals are involved. So we will extend Edubase to establish a database of everyone involved in governance, requiring schools and MATs to start providing information from September 2016, and we intend to legislate so that we have the power to bar unsuitable individuals from being governors of maintained schools, to mirror the existing barring power for academies and independent schools.

Educational Excellence Everywhere can be viewed or downloaded from [www.gov.uk/government/publications](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications)

## Short inspections

*Sean Harford, Ofsted's National Director of Schools, addresses queries regarding 'short' inspections of schools and academies judged to be Good at their most recent section 5 inspection (the 'routine' inspection):*

Short, or monitoring, inspections are carried out under section 8 of 2005 Education Act. They will be roughly every three years so we can identify decline or improvement earlier. (because of scheduling constraints, good schools are likely to be inspected in the period between 33 and 47 months after their previous short inspection.)

Short inspections of schools are for one day and are led by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI); a team inspector will accompany the lead HMI in secondary schools and large primaries.

Inspectors start with the presumption that the school is still good. This allows honest, challenging, professional dialogue between inspectors and senior leaders, rather than a 'cliff-edge' experience.

Inspectors check:

- whether leaders have a sound grasp of relative strengths and weaknesses in their school
- if there's a credible plan to

address the areas for concern and maintain the strengths

- if the safeguarding is effective and the culture is sufficiently aspirational

During the short inspection, inspectors look to validate the leaders' assessment and test it against observation, discussion with staff and students, and data. They share emerging findings with senior leaders.

At the end of the inspection, if the school remains good, inspectors give clear, helpful feedback to leaders. If there are other things that can be done to offer a better experience for children and learners, they say so.

Rather than a new set of judgements, the principal judgements that inspectors make are whether the school remains good, and whether safeguarding is effective. Although HMI might conclude that particular areas are weaker than they were before, they will give credit if this has been identified and if effective leadership is moving the institution forward.

For example, let's say results in a school have suffered a dip because of problems in the maths department while everything else looks stable. If inspectors assess that the leadership is clear about the reasons behind this

and there is a credible plan for addressing the situation, in that instance, the 'good' judgement would be confirmed, and it'll have a clear mandate to improve the areas identified over the next few years.

After the inspection, HMI report their findings in a letter confirming that the school remains good, explaining what inspectors saw, and highlighting areas for improvement. The school returns to the short inspection cycle unless concerns are raised in the meantime.

If an inspector believes that standards may have declined or improved from good, they will tell senior leaders and convert the inspection into a full inspection to gather sufficient evidence. They will call in a full inspection team to support them, usually within 24-48 hours in a school.

A decision to convert does not mean the outcome of the full inspection is pre-determined – the overall effectiveness judgement may go up or down or may confirm that the provider remains good.

After a full inspection, inspectors will give clear, professional feedback to



leaders on why they believe the school has declined, remains good, or improved to outstanding. The findings are published as a standard inspection report.

If the school is judged as Requires Improvement or Inadequate Ofsted's monitoring processes kick in to provide support and challenge.

If the school is again judged as Good it returns to the short inspection cycle (approximately every three years).

If the school is judged as Outstanding it is exempt from routine inspection and will only undergo full inspection if performance drops.

*Taken from Sean Harford's Developments in Education blog on the GOV.UK website.*

# Dealing With School Complaints

The DfE has produced non-statutory guidance to share best practice and help schools avoid common pitfalls when dealing with complaints.

All maintained schools must have and make available a procedure to deal with all complaints relating to their school and to any community facilities or services that the school provides.

## **What is the difference between a Concern and a Complaint?**

A 'concern' may be defined as *'an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought'*. A complaint may be generally defined as *'an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action'*.

It is in everyone's interest that complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to invoke formal procedures. Schools should take informal concerns seriously and make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

There are occasions when complainants would like to raise their concerns formally. In those cases the school's formal complaints procedure should be invoked.

## **The Complaints Procedure**

A guidance document for parents on making complaints does not satisfy the legal requirement for schools to have in place a procedure to deal with all complaints. A distinct policy must be in place.

Currently, schools are free to decide how to make the complaints procedure available. It is expected however that the next amendment to the School Information Regulations (due later this year) will require schools to publish it online.

The guidance recommends that the governing body ensures that any third party providers offering community facilities or services through the school premises, or using school facilities, have their own complaints procedure in place.

The guidance contains suggestions to help schools ensure their complaints procedures are robust and effective, such as:

- Ask the complainant at the earliest stage what they think might resolve the issue (an acknowledgement that the school could have handled the situation better is not the same as an admission of unlawful or negligent action).

- The complaints procedure should set out the steps to follow in the event that the headteacher or member of the governing body is the subject of the complaint.

### **Timeliness**

Complaints need to be considered and resolved as quickly and efficiently as possible:

- Set realistic time limits for each action within each stage (where further investigations are necessary, set new time limits, send the complainant details of the new deadline and give an explanation for the delay);
- DfE does not consider excessive time limits to be reasonable or acceptable, except in extenuating circumstances;
- Expect complaints to be made as soon as possible after an incident arises (although three months is generally considered to be an acceptable time frame in which to lodge a complaint);
- Ensure that, if the policy includes a cut-off timeframe, the school will consider exceptions and that the complaints procedure reflects this.

### **Governing Body review**

Complaints should not be shared with the whole governing body, except in very general terms, in case an appeal panel needs to be organised. If the whole governing body is aware of the

substance of a complaint before the final stage has been completed, schools should arrange for an independent panel to hear the complaint.

Complainants have the right to request an independent panel if they believe there is likely to be bias in the proceedings. Schools should consider the request but ultimately this decision is made by the governors.

If a complaint has completed the school's procedures and the complainant remains dissatisfied, they have the right to refer their complaint to the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State has a duty to consider all complaints raised however will only act where the governing body has acted unlawfully or unreasonably and where it is expedient or practical to do so.

It is the governing body which determines how often the complaints procedure is reviewed however DfE suggests as good practice that it is reviewed regularly - every two to three years. If projected review dates are published on the policy document they should be adhered to. Failure to do so could constitute a failure to adhere to the policy.

Best Practice Advice for School Complaints Procedures 2016, can be viewed or downloaded from the [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) publications page

# School Food Plan

It is the statutory responsibility of the governing board/trustees to ensure that School Food Standards are being met and Ofsted is putting a much greater focus on how schools are creating a culture and ethos of healthy eating. A good school food culture improves children's health and academic performance.

Increasing the take-up of school meals is also better for your school's finances: a half-empty dining hall, like a half-empty restaurant, is certain to lose money.

Getting more families to choose school meals may require a cultural change within your school. It means providing tasty food that looks good and is nutritious, creating a positive dining experience, getting the price right and allowing children to eat with their friends.

The School Food Plan, in collaboration with the National Governors' Association, has produced resources to support governors in championing a whole school approach to food. The following examples of good practice are known to make a big difference to take-up and food culture in schools.

## **Food**

Eat in the canteen with the children. Ask yourself whether the food looks appetising and tastes good.

Provide a mix of familiar and new foods for the pupils and ensure that catering staff encourage children to experiment. Children find the idea of local produce exciting (especially from the school garden), and are more likely to try it. Integrate cooking and growing into the curriculum and give pupils opportunities to prepare, cook or serve the food.

Offer a cheaper 'set menu' meal; require children to fill their plates with options from different categories; or simply put vegetables on their plates.

Make sure packed lunches are not a 'better' option. Ban sugary drinks, crisps and confectionery, or offer prizes and other incentives for bringing in a healthy lunch. Some schools ban packed lunches outright.

Monitor what gets served at mid-morning break. Many pupils can be hungry at this time, filling up on paninis or cake.

Ensure water is widely available at all times, make it the drink of choice across the school and encourage all children to keep well hydrated.

## **Environment**

Look around your dining room. Is it clean and attractive? Does it smell good?

Keep queuing times short. Try





staggering lunch breaks, introducing more service points and reducing choice.

A cashless payment system shortens queuing times, can enable parents to go online to see what their children are eating and prevents FSM pupils being stigmatised.

### ***Social life***

Have a stay-on-site rule for break and lunch time. Allow all children to sit together – don't segregate those with packed lunches.

Structure the lunch break so there is sufficient time for eating as well as activities or clubs. This may mean amending the timing of clubs.

Give special consideration to the youngest pupils at secondary schools,

who might be intimidated by the noise and rush of lunch hour.

### ***Improve the brand***

Encourage staff to eat in the dining room with the children. It may require a cultural or logistical shift but it has a unifying effect on the whole school, and raises the status of school meals.

Bring your school cook to parents' evenings to answer questions from parents about their children's eating habits.

Make sure children get consistent messages about nutrition in lessons and at lunchtime.

*For more information visit [www.schoolfoodplan.com](http://www.schoolfoodplan.com)*



## The Local Offer

Liverpool Children and Young People's Services has launched a unique new app and series of animations promoting the local services available for young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

There is a growing demand for special educational needs services and the toolkit will make sure families and especially young people are aware of the support available for them (the 'Local Offer').

The app and animations, which have been designed with input from Liverpool school children, open up a vital communications channel with young people, enabling them to access information at their fingertips and in a format that is familiar and user-friendly.

Every local authority must publish a Local Offer that describes what provision it expects to be available for children and young people (aged 0-25) with special educational needs and disabilities. It must include information about education, health and social care provision and services. The Local Offer should be easy to



understand, up to date and clear and include information on:

- how an education, health and care (EHC) assessment can be requested
- how a child or young person's needs are identified and assessed
- post-16 education and training provision
- arrangements for transport and travel
- preparing for adulthood
- leisure activities
- where to find information, advice and support
- resolving disagreements

You can find the Local Offer for Liverpool on the Early Help Directory at [ehd.liverpool.gov.uk](http://ehd.liverpool.gov.uk)

# Multi-academy trusts inquiry

The House of Commons Education Select Committee has commenced an inquiry into the performance, accountability and governance of multi-academy trusts (MATs).

Speaking in March, its Chair, Neil Carmichael, said: "MATs play a substantial role in today's education system but with relatively little scrutiny. The government's direction of travel towards a fully-academised system means we are likely to see more MATs in the future."

National Schools Commissioner Sir David Carter has suggested around 1,000 more MATs will be needed by 2020.

Earlier, Ofsted Chief Inspector, Sir Michael Wilshaw, had written to the Nicky Morgan, Secretary of State, describing findings of inspections across seven large MATs as "worrying"

Sir Michael wrote: "Given that the academies movement was initiated principally to improve the performance of disadvantaged pupils, it is particularly concerning that many of the academies in these trusts are failing their poorest children."

The head of Ofsted, who will stand down later this year, also stressed that salary levels for the chief

executives of these MATs "do not appear to be commensurate with the level of performance of their trusts or constituent academies."

The average pay of the chief executives in the seven trusts is higher than the prime minister's salary, according to the letter, with one chief executive's salary reaching £225,000.

The committee has said that it wants to:

- Map the current MAT landscape, including numbers, size and geographical spread of MATs.
- Look at the characteristics of high-performing MATs.
- Review how the performance of MATs should be assessed.
- Ensure that the workings of the "middle tier" of management between government and individual schools is transparent.
- Examine how many decisions are made at chain level and how many at individual school level.
- Question how the expansion of MATs should be monitored and managed.

# Succession Planning

Has your governing board ever found itself in any of these situations?

- Nobody was prepared to stand as Chair
- The Deputy Chair has no clearly defined role
- Committees are simply ‘talking shops’
- It’s usually the same few governors who volunteer to take on a task
- It takes too long for new governors to feel they can contribute
- There are too many vacancies and/or it takes too long to recruit

If the answer is yes, you’re not alone! It’s good practice to ensure your governing board secures the legacy for the strategic leadership of your school. It is important to ensure continuity of leadership throughout the governing board through effective succession planning.

Don’t wait for vacancies to arise before developing recruitment strategies to promote the work of the governing board and actively encouraging community and business links.

## **Succession planning is:**

- Attracting and retaining good governors
- Spotting leadership talent early
- Supporting and developing

leadership skills throughout the governing board

- Creating opportunities to practise leadership skills
- Giving and receiving feedback
- Coaching and mentoring
- Developing the governing board as a team
- Delegating fairly and effectively
- Encouraging others to take up opportunities.

For an individual governor, succession planning can open up a range of opportunities for personal development. For a governing board, succession planning ensures its future strength and effectiveness: it’s easier to achieve in a governing board with a more stable membership.

## **What does good governance leadership look like?**

Distributed leadership is common to many schools. In practice this means that many members of the school are seen as leaders and tasks are delegated far and wide.

Traditionally, we tend to think of the leadership of the governing board as being vested in the Chair. However, for governance to be truly effective and guard against the impact of rapid change it, also, needs to distribute leadership. For this to work, we need



to grow leaders within the governing board.

Effective leadership of the governing board involves working towards a shared vision for school improvement which all governors help to achieve, working together to share responsibility, workload and the adoption of effective working practices which enable everyone to participate and develop leadership skills.

An effective governing board motivates and enables all members to play an active part in its school improvement and strategic development work. This could include:

- Taking a lead on a specific area such as SEN, Child Protection or Health & Safety
- Joining a committee

- Linking with a School Development Plan priority
- Leading a school improvement task or working group
- Leading on an agenda item
- Becoming a Link/Development governor

Leading a team in the governing body can mean chairing a committee or leading a working party. An effective team leader doesn't simply run a meeting, s/he ensures that all governors have an opportunity to contribute, especially those reporting back on their additional responsibilities and they forge positive relationships with other players involved, such as key school staff and, where appropriate, the School Improvement Partner.

# NGA North West Regional Conference



*David Blythe, LGF Hon Treasurer, reports on the National Governors' Association NW Conference*

90 governors attended the NGA regional conference held on 12 March at the Marriot Hotel, Liverpool, with nine representing Liverpool Schools.

The conference focused on three key topics:

## **Supporting the North West to become the best region to teach, lead and educate a child**

Vicky Beer, Regional Schools Commissioner, provided an overview of the government's school academy policy along with the types of academy which schools could convert to, the role and structure of the school commissioner, and proposed new legislation being introduced to speed up the process for schools to be converted to academy status.

DfE facts provided at the conference on the progress of academy growth since September 2010 at the end of January 2016 are as follows:

- There are 5516 academies, free schools, studio schools and UTC's in England
- 65% of secondary schools and 18% of primary schools are academies
- Academies make up 23% of all

schools and employ 40% of all educational staff and educate 37% of children

No compelling evidence was provided on the benefits of being an academy. Furthermore, compared to other regions, the North West had been slow in moving forward on converting to academy status.

However, it was pointed out that it was formal government policy and their vision is to have all schools converted to academy status by 2020. They want Local Authorities running schools being a 'thing of the past'.

New legislation will be introduced to help speed up the process and this will be particularly aimed at failing and coasting schools. It will make it easier for the government to intervene in underperforming maintained schools by removing bureaucracy and the scope for using any delaying tactics.

Another important point to mention is the future role of Local Authorities. Whilst they will still have an important part to play it will be as a 'partner' rather than the lead. Key specific areas of responsibility will be: admissions, SEN, safeguarding (including identifying those at risk of extremism) and school transport.

## **Financial Efficiency**

Paul Aber, NGA Head of Development, focused on financial management and, with current budget constraints, there was great emphasis on the importance of governors providing effective and constructive challenge in order to achieve financial efficiencies.

School spending per-pupil is predicted to fall by around 8% between 2015 and 2020, the first time since the mid-1990's that school spending will have fallen in real terms. The pressure to get value for money will therefore increase so as to ensure standards and pupil attainment levels improve.

There was an input from the delegates present to this session through table discussions and feedback. Two key points to emerge were:

- The importance of having the necessary support of 'business experts' so as to allow teachers to focus more time on teaching and learning rather than administration duties. It was essential the correct balance was optimised between teaching and support staff.
- Making use of the benchmarking score card to compare performance against similar schools. This would inform and help to explore how improvements and efficiencies could be achieved. Examples of small groups of schools sharing support staff were highlighted.

## **The future for school level governance**

The focus of NGA CEO Emma Knights' session was on the evolution of governance, particularly as multi-academy trusts (MATs) become established. What responsibilities will be held at the overarching trust board level and what will be delegated to the individual school committees who form part of the trust?

It was highlighted that key to progressing to academy status was to ensure effective preparation work was carried out, including obtaining appropriate advice.

It was difficult to judge the consensus of those delegates from academies although there were positive comments from some who had formed small MATs, whilst Warrington is in the early stages of schools exploring options to work more closely together.

## **Summary**

The conference was well organised with three quality speakers delivering thought provoking presentations.

The huge changes to the education system will bring more responsibilities for governors and it is most important they are fully committed and understand their role. Furthermore, it is essential that Governing Boards have the knowledge and skills necessary to be effective and help raise standards.

## Courses for summer term

### Termly Meeting for Chairs

**Wednesday 27 April 6.00pm to 8.00pm**

Ref: G16/24

**Venue: Toxteth Annexe, Aigburth Road, L17 7BN**

This meeting is open to Chairs, or representatives, of all Governing Bodies.

Councillor Nick Small, Assistant Mayor of Liverpool & Cabinet Member - Education, Employment & Skills, Councillor Lana Orr, Mayoral Lead for Primary Schooling and Colette O'Brien, Director of Children's Services will be present at the meeting.

There will be a presentation of the Director's Items for the term followed by opportunities for discussion and questions.

Cost: Free

### Termly Meeting for Clerks

**Thursday 28 April 10.00am to 12noon**

Ref: G16/25

**Venue: Toxteth Annexe, Aigburth Road, L17 7BN**

Our termly meeting for clerks to governing boards and/or committees includes briefings and discussion on current issues as well as an opportunity to share good practice and raise queries.

Presenter: Terry Brown, Senior Assistant Governor Services

Cost: Free



## Ofsted Inspections

**Wednesday 04 May 10.00am to 12noon**  
or

Ref: G16/26

**Thursday 05 May 6.00pm to 8.00pm**

Ref: G16/27

**Venue: Toxteth Annexe, Aigburth Road, L17 7BN**

The session will cover:

- The framework for inspections
- The inspection process
- How is Governance inspected?
- What will the Inspector ask me?

Presenter: Dave Cadwallader, Governor Services Manager

## Safer Recruitment

**Wednesday 11 May 9.00am to 4.00pm**

Ref: G16/28

**Venue: Toxteth Annexe, Aigburth Road, L17 7BN**

*The School Staffing Regulations require governing bodies of maintained schools to ensure that at least one person on any appointment panel has undertaken safer recruitment training. Participants on this course will be awarded a Certificate of Accreditation upon successful completion of a short assessment paper on the day.*

This course will:

- Provide an understanding and awareness of offender behaviour
- Identify key features of staff recruitment that help deter or prevent the appointment of unsuitable people
- Consider policies and practices that minimise opportunities for abuse or ensure its prompt reporting
- Help participants begin to review recruitment policies and practices with a view to making them safer

Presenter: Phil Cooper, Senior School Improvement Officer, Safeguarding and SEN

Cost: Free with Governor Training Service Agreement 1; £200 if no service agreement.

## Safeguarding

**Wednesday 18 May 1.00pm to 3.00pm**

Ref: G16/29

or

**Wednesday 18 May 6.00pm to 8.00pm**

Ref: G16/30

**Venue: Toxteth Annexe, Aigburth Road, L17 7BN**

This course will:

- The governing board's responsibilities for safeguarding
- School self-assessment
- Ofsted inspection of safeguarding
- Key questions for governors to ask

Presenter: Phil Cooper, Senior School Improvement Officer, Safeguarding and SEN

## Pupil Exclusions

**Thursday 26 May 10.00am to 12noon**

Ref: G16/31

or

**Thursday 26 May 6.00pm to 8.00pm**

Ref: G16/32

**Venue: Toxteth Annexe, Aigburth Road, L17 7BN**

The course will cover:

- Regulations and statutory procedures
- The role of the Governing Body
- Governing Body panel hearings
- The role of the Independent Review Panel

Presenter: Terry Brown, School Governor Services

## Financial Benchmarking

**Thursday 09 June 10.00am to 12noon**

Ref: G16/33

or

**Thursday 09 June 6.00pm to 8.00pm**

Ref: G16/34

**Venue: Toxteth Annexe, Aigburth Road, L17 7BN**

The briefing will cover:

- Identifying historic trends and relationships over time
- Focusing on areas that are out of line with average
- Known changes and links to the current budget plan
- Identifying possible future areas for improvement
- Questions for governors to ask

Presenter: Dave Collins, Principal Finance Officer

## SEN

**Thursday 30 June 10.00am to 12noon**

Ref: G15/38

or

**Thursday 30 June 6.00pm to 8.00pm**

Ref: G15/39

**Venue: Toxteth Annexe, Aigburth Road, L17 7BN**

The session will cover:

- Statutory responsibilities of governing boards within the SEN Code of Practice
- School practices and procedures
- The role and responsibilities of the governing board in supporting the teaching and learning of children and young people with SEN

Presenter: Yvonne Sutton, School Improvement Officer, Inclusive Learning

## The Role of the School Governor - An induction course for new governors

This course is an important element of a governor's induction and it is recommended that all new governors attend. It covers the essential aspects of a governing board's responsibilities and provides an opportunity for participants to discuss how best to approach their role as a governor.

The course is informal, non-threatening (you won't be put on the spot!) and provides a forum for you to ask questions about your new role.

**The course is offered as two evening sessions on:**

**Monday 13 June 6.00pm to 8.00pm** Ref: G16/35

**and**

**Monday 20 June 6.00pm to 8.00pm** Ref: G16/37

**OR**

**a one day session on: Friday 17 June 9.30am to 2.45pm** Ref: G16/36

**Venue for all sessions: Toxteth Annexe, Aigburth Road, L17 7BN**

The course will cover:

- The different categories of school governor
- The core functions of governing bodies
- How governing bodies 'challenge' school leaders
- Monitoring and evaluating progress
- Accountability
- Complaints against the school
- The legal framework for meetings

Presenter: Dave Cadwallader, Governor Services Manager

Cost: Free with Governor Training Service Agreement 1; £100 plus vat per evening session if no service agreement; £200 plus vat for the one day session if no service agreement

## Role of the Link Governor

**Wednesday 06 July 10.00am to 12noon**

Ref: G15/40

or

**Wednesday 06 July 6.00pm to 8.00pm**

Ref: G15/41

**Venue: Toxteth Annexe, Aigburth Road, L17 7BN**

The role of the Nominated Governor is a very effective way to help the Governing Body to understand, oversee, monitor and develop a particular area of responsibility within the school.

This session will take a generic look at:

- The role and responsibilities of the nominated governor
- Establishing a protocol for governor visits to the school
- Reporting back to the governing body

Presenter: Dave Cadwallader, Governor Services Manager

## Booking information

You can book directly online on EDnet: [www.ednet.co](http://www.ednet.co) or by contacting Jean Worrall on 0151 233 3944 or [jean.worrall@si.liverpool.gov.uk](mailto:jean.worrall@si.liverpool.gov.uk). You will receive written confirmation of your booking by email or post.

Our courses are available to all schools, whatever their status (maintained, academy, free, independent, UTC) and from any local authority.

Unless otherwise stated all sessions are FREE with Governor Training Service Agreement 1 or £100 plus vat per two hour session per person if no Service Agreement. Longer sessions are priced individually. As a courtesy, please liaise with your school before booking onto a course. If you are unable to attend a course for which you have booked please tell us as soon as possible otherwise a fee, if applicable, will be charged.

Our primary venue for training sessions is Toxteth Annexe Conference Centre, Aigburth Road, Liverpool, L17 7BN (please note that Aigburth Road is a dual carriageway). Free car parking is available within the grounds of the building. Bus routes 82 and 60 run regular services along Aigburth Road whilst St Michael's train station is located 600 metres away on Southbrook Road, L17 7BQ.

EDnet: [www.ednet.co](http://www.ednet.co)

School Improvement Liverpool

SIL: Education Recruitment

Featured Training Courses

Latest Vacancies

Follow Us On Twitter

Latest News & Events

EDnet hosts a comprehensive range of information from governance information to curriculum, data, finance, health and safety, Service Level Agreements, vacancies, training courses, pastoral care and local and national developments. Governors can logon to EDnet from any PC with internet access using an individual username and password.



Follow us Twitter

Dave Cadwallader: [@DaveCadSIL](https://twitter.com/DaveCadSIL)

School Improvement Liverpool: [@SI\\_liverpool](https://twitter.com/SI_liverpool)

**Governors' News is published termly by SIL Governor Services**

**Dave Cadwallader [dave.cadwallader@si.liverpool.gov.uk](mailto:dave.cadwallader@si.liverpool.gov.uk) 0151 233 3933**

**Terry Brown [terry.brown@si.liverpool.gov.uk](mailto:terry.brown@si.liverpool.gov.uk) 0151 233 3939**

**Jean Worrall [jean.worrall@si.liverpool.gov.uk](mailto:jean.worrall@si.liverpool.gov.uk) 0151 233 3944**