



Leading Governance Forward

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ANNUAL REVIEW FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31ST AUGUST 2020

INTRODUCTION:

Governors and trustees have an important role in the education of our children and the LGF was established in 1996 to coordinate and represent the views of Liverpool's Governors and Trustees on the various strategic education committees which operate in the city.

The range of committees is listed in Appendix A, together with the name of the committee member and the committees on which he/she represents LGF.

This report aims to provide Governors and Trustees, together with our partners - the three Headteachers' Associations, Liverpool Learning Partnership, Liverpool Local Authority, School Improvement Liverpool and other interested parties - with a succinct overview of the key activities and progress we have made over the 2019/20 academic year. However, more detailed information is available on our website.

OPENING COMMENTS BY KATHY DESMOND LGF CHAIR:

On behalf of the LGF committee, I am once again pleased to have the opportunity of welcoming you to this 6th LGF Annual Review.

I am sure you will agree, it was a rather eventful academic year. Whilst the autumn term progressed with the usual commitment and enthusiasm of everyone, we were hit hard during the spring term by the world wide coronavirus pandemic resulting in a national lockdown.

This had a profound effect on our schools and the education of our children. Arrangements were put in place to support both vulnerable children and children of parents who were key workers. Other children were forced to move to a home schooling environment, which presented staff with the challenges of supporting children with their learning and mental wellbeing from a distance rather than face-to-face. A special thanks must go to Headteachers and staff who have worked incredibly hard during the crisis.

In order to get an understanding of the impact of the work of governors, we undertook a sample survey of both committee and associate members last July. It was pleasing to note that generally speaking governing bodies adapted well to the Covid-19 situation and continued to discharge their duties and progress school business.

We were only able to hold one conference this year which was held last November and covered Headteacher and staff wellbeing. Once again, the feedback from delegates clearly indicated we had successfully delivered a quality and beneficial event.

Finally, it's been a pleasure to Chair an active and progressive committee and I would like to thank my colleagues for their support and contribution to our important work.

I hope you find this report interesting and informative.

CONFERENCE:

We arranged a further conference during the autumn term bringing the total to 8 since we first introduced these events in October 2015. Details as follows:

16th November: Headteacher & Staff Wellbeing; how can Governing Bodies ease the pressure?

This was an interactive session delivered by Ruth Town, now a consultant in school leadership, with over 30 years' experience in teaching and learning in Liverpool schools, including Headships at Breckfield Primary and St Michaels-in-the-Hamlet and Chair of LPHA and LLP.

With her extensive knowledge and experience in Liverpool schools, Ruth understands the many challenges which staff face on a daily basis and was able to ensure attendees had a clearer understanding of these issues together with actions and solutions that we as governors / trustees can provide to support our staff at our respective schools.

The delegates attending the conference overwhelmingly indicated the key conference objectives were fully met and that they had benefitted from their attendance. Furthermore, it was another opportunity for governors / trustees from all educational sectors to learn together.

We had a total of 47 Governors and Trustees attending this 8th conference, which is above the average of 43, and a total of 39 Liverpool schools represented.

You will appreciate the usual planned May conference unfortunately had to be cancelled.

PUBLICATIONS:

School Improvement Liverpool published three Governors Newsletters during the year, which contained articles submitted by LGF members. These documents are most informative and contain a wealth of advice and current governance practice, ensuring governors and trustees are up to date on a wide range of topics. We do recommend governors and trustees access and make full use of this information: www.schoolimprovementliverpool.co.uk

We would also like to record our thanks to SIL for their continued support which is appreciated and in particular in such an unprecedented year.

KEY NOTE SPEAKERS & HOST SCHOOLS:

Before the start of the majority of our committee meetings, we continued our policy to organise a diverse range of development sessions. These were all informative and engaging. We would like to thank all our speakers for giving their time and valuable contribution to our work. The host schools and topics included:

MONTH & VENUE	KEY NOTE SPEAKER & DEVELOPMENT / INFORMATION SESSION
September Notre Dame Catholic College	Jonathon Dickinson, Head of Resonate Services, Notre Dame Catholic College Topic: Update on Resonate Services & Development of school music curriculum
October Archbishop Blanch CE High	Elaine Rees, CEO, Liverpool Learning Partnership Topic: Update on LLP priorities
December Belle Vale Primary	Avril O'Brien, LGF Committee Member Topic: The new Ofsted inspection; Governors' experience and viewpoint
January Mossfits Lane Primary,	Committee meeting only
March Gateacre	Jonathon Nichols, CEO, Rainbow Educational MAT Topic: Parental Engagement
NB: Further planned meetings unfortunately had to be cancelled due to the coronavirus pandemic	

MEETING VENUES:

Monthly meetings are held at a range of schools across the city and we would like to record our thanks to the host schools. We do appreciate the warm welcome we have received on each occasion.

We welcome offers from our city schools to host one of our monthly meetings. Please do let us know if you can accommodate us by contacting:

David Blythe, LGF Honorary Secretary at: admin@livgovforum.org.uk

DATES FOR FUTURE EVENTS:

We normally include in this report details of our plans for the next academic year, but you will appreciate at this stage we are unsure which schools will be able to host our meeting. Indeed, schools will be under immense pressure in September when children return to school and the new Covid-19 safety procedures are fully operational. We will, therefore, update you via our website and Governor Hub.

FUNDING AND FINANCE:

LGF is funded by subscriptions from the majority of Liverpool schools; primary, special and secondary at a nominal charge of £25 per school. This is collected through the 3 Headteacher Associations.

The funding we receive is in line with similar national governor and trustee organisations across the country and ensures we are funded on a secure basis. This enables us to play a full and active role in improving educational standards in Liverpool.

However, we have not received any funding this year due to the Covid-19 virus situation and had to use our reserves to service our ongoing business.

To ensure financial control and accountability, we have a “Finance and Operating Manual” which sets out important parameters and is regularly reviewed and updated as required. The accounts are also independently audited.

A full statement of accounts will be available at the October AGM; a summary is below:

SUMMARY OF 2019 / 20 FINANCIAL STATEMENT	£
Bank balance brought forward at 1 st September 2019	4059:42
Overdue income from 2018/19 academic year	820:00
2019/20 academic year income	0:00
Expenditure during reporting year	2170:80
Closing bank balance at 31 st August 2020	2708.62

SURVEY OF COMMITTEE & ASSOCIATE MEMBERS:

As mentioned in the Chair’s opening comments, we undertook a survey towards the end of the academic year to assess the impact of the Covid-19 virus on the work of governors. The key comments included:

- Good communications between schools and governors e.g. via emails and newsletters from Headteacher or via Chair to governors
- One-to-one meetings between Chair and Headteacher e.g. Telephone, video conferencing and occasional school visits
- Full governing body meeting held by video conferencing e.g. Zoom
- Similarly, sub committee meetings held by video conferencing e.g. finance
- The support and advice available from the NGA, The Key and School Improvement Liverpool was excellent

In summary, the coronavirus presented many challenges, particularly restrictions on school visits by governors to carry out their duties. However, it was clear from the survey that school business has adapted well to the situation and progressed satisfactorily during the period. Whilst this was a limited sample survey (based on 14 governors / trustees representing 24 schools), it was pleasing to note that there was consistency across all sectors: secondary, primary, special and academies.

The general view was that whilst video conferencing is not perfect, it nevertheless provided a useful and important platform for school business to be conducted and thus ensured Board of Governors were able to discharge their responsibilities and duties in an effective manner.

APPENDIX A

2019/20 OVERVIEW OF LGF COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

The table below details the members and the various committees they represent on behalf of the LGF.

The committee formally met regularly to coordinate its activities, obtain feedback from members who have attended the various strategic committee meetings, formulate policy and progress development plans. Minutes of committee meetings and other relevant information are promptly published on the LGF website: www.livgovforum.org.uk

LGF sub committees are established when required, to focus and drive forward special projects e.g. the LGF Conferences.

LGF COMMITTEE / ASSOCIATE MEMBERS	
NAME & SCHOOL	COMMITTEE REPRESENTATION
Joe Hartley Honorary President	-
Kathy Desmond (<i>Chair</i>) (1 - NLG) (Garston CE Primary & Broadgreen)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board Member, Liverpool Learning Partnership • All Learners Strategic Group, Liverpool Learning Partnership
Frank McFarlane (<i>Vice-Chair</i>) (Archbishop Blanch CE High)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liverpool Safeguarding Partnership • All Learners Strategic Group, Liverpool Learning Partnership
David Blythe (<i>Honorary Secretary</i>) (Hope & Gateacre)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners Who Need More Strategic Group, Liverpool Learning Partnership • Main Committee and Formula Working Group, Liverpool Schools Forum
Cliff Barton (Sudley Infant)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main Committee and Formula Working Group, Liverpool Schools Forum
Dave Cadwallader (Rainbow Educational MAT, Smithdown Primary & Gateacre)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides advice and guidance to the LGF committee and acts as the liaison with School Improvement Liverpool
Cynthia Carmichael (The Beacon C of E Primary)	-
Andy Chadwick (Ranworth Square Primary)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main committee, Budget Scrutiny Group, PFI Working Group, & Capital Investment Group, Liverpool Schools Forum • All Learners Strategic Group, Liverpool Learning Partnership
Maureen McDaid (St Nicholas Catholic Primary & Gateacre)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main Committee and Formula Working Group, Liverpool Schools Forum
Michael Morris (St Margaret's CE Academy)	-
Avril O'Brien (St Paul & St Timothy Catholic Infant)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners Who Need More Strategic Group, Liverpool Learning Partnership
Dave Owens (Mossfits Lane Primary)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main Committee, Liverpool Schools Forum
Amanda Patmore (1 - NLG) (St Michael-in-the-Hamlet & St. Ambrose Catholic Primary)	-
John Thornhill (1 - NLG) (Sudley Juniors & St Julies High)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main Committee, Liverpool Schools Forum
Pauline Warrington (St Anne's Catholic Primary & Bishop Martin CE Primary)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maths & Numeracy Focus Group, Liverpool Learning Partnership
NAME & SCHOOL	ASSOCIATE MEMBERS
Howard Harris (Belle Vale Primary)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners Who Need More Strategic Group, Liverpool Learning Partnership
Marlene Taylor (Lawrence Community Primary)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main Committee, Liverpool Schools Forum
Barbara Murray (1 - NLG) (Blueberry Park Primary & The Academy of St Nicholas)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, Liverpool City Council
Mary Donohue (Broughton Hall High)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representative at Board Meetings, Liverpool Learning Partnership
Paula Anderson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting Secretary
(1 - NLG) = National Leaders of Governance with the DfE	