

Termly Bulletin: Summer 2017/18

This termly bulletin is available free of charge to non-members and is designed to keep all governors up to date with some of the key issues affecting school governance in England.

It is emailed directly to corporate and local association members of NGA to distribute to their wide network of governors. If you have any feedback, comments or questions about the content of the bulletin, please email fay.holland@nga.org.uk.

Campaign to increase number of ethnic minority and young people governing



Just 4% of school governors and trustees are from an ethnic minority and 10% are aged under 40, according to the school governance survey 2017. Given the diversity within our schools and society – around a third of pupils, and 14% teachers, are from an ethnic minority – NGA pledged to take action on this underrepresentation.

To increase the number of ethnic minority and young people on school governing boards, Inspiring Governance and NGA have launched a joint campaign, [Everyone on Board](#), which was endorsed at our summer conference by the secretary of state for education. This features a film with six serving governors and trustees sharing their personal insight into why the volunteers governing schools need to be diverse in order to be successful for all pupils.

There are several benefits to creating a diverse governing board:

- **It helps to avoid groupthink:** when the people around the table come from different places and think different things, there are diverse perspectives that bring sufficient challenge. They also ensure that barriers, biases and stereotypes do not go unchallenged, resulting in more robust decision-making.



- **Setting a culture for equality and diversity to thrive** is a critical role of the governing board. By committing to diversifying itself, the governing board will set an example about inclusion from the top down and be a catalyst for achieving diversity at all levels of the organisation.
- Seeing governors and trustees from ethnic minorities provides **role models for young people** and can give them confidence in what they can achieve. As an important part of the leadership of the school, a governing board is also an important role model for parents, staff and the wider community.
- Having a diverse governing board provides a **connectedness between the school and its community**, and ensures all stakeholders feel valued. It can increase the confidence of the community in the school because those making decisions understand the lives, context and aspirations of the community it serves.

Here are some of the steps a governing board can take to attract a more diverse mix of candidates:

- **Be explicit** that you are particularly seeking candidates from ethnic minorities, and describe why it is important for your governing board, school and community. It is okay to ask for volunteers with particular characteristics if you are using evidence on the need and benefits to substantiate it.
- **A range of approaches** are needed to interest people – from mass approaches like using Inspiring Governance to having a conversation with someone you think may be interested.
- **Explain that training and support is provided** and remind people that the important things they will bring are their skills, experience, attributes and time – there will be plenty of opportunities to learn about the role.
- **Remember to use appropriate language and imagery** when communicating the role.
- **Describe clearly and simply what governance is** and why it is needed in schools, reassuring potential volunteers that it is a positive role that provides both support and challenge to the headteacher; remember some people may themselves have had a negative experience of school.
- **Consider how your board can do things differently** to appeal to a more diverse audience. A less formal chat before a formal interview might make people who are uncertain whether the role is for them feel more welcome.

To watch the video and find out more, click [here](#).

Monitoring school performance

The end of the summer term brings with it the prospect of another year's statutory assessment results; primary schools will have just received SATs results while secondary schools will be receiving key stage four results in August. Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the school or group of schools and its pupils is a key function of school governing boards. Here are some key questions for those governing to ask:

- How does attainment and progress at this school compare to national averages and similar schools?
- What, if any, impact does the context of our school have on pupils' attainment?
- Do outcomes of statutory assessment reflect what our in-school data is telling us?
- Which groups of pupils are the highest and lowest performing? e.g. by gender, ethnicity etc.
- How are pupils eligible for pupil premium, pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, and pupils with English as an additional language progressing?
- How are pupils with low, middle and high prior attainment progressing?
- What strategies can we put in place to address any areas of concern?



What makes an effective pupil premium strategy?

Pupil premium strategies tend to produce good outcomes for pupils if they account for how every pound of the pupil premium budget is spent, have clear monitoring and success criterion for each initiative, and clarify which group of pupils will receive funding, according to a [research report](#) by NGA.

This is amongst findings of a report on a survey of 875 governors and trustees and an analysis of 36 pupil premium strategies undertaken to explore the governing board's role in spending, monitoring and evaluating the pupil premium.

The data shows that the governing board's role is a substantive one and revealed some important findings around how schools can maximise the impact of pupil premium funding through their pupil premium strategy.

For schools and governing boards the key findings from this research are:

- 1) While the majority of schools are making evidence-driven decisions when spending their pupil premium, some are still too inwards looking.** In particular, when deciding 'what works' when spending the pupil premium and monitoring its impact, many survey respondents favoured internal data and the opinions of staff over external sources of data such as academic research and the EEF toolkit.
- 2) Schools should adopt a more holistic outlook when deciding how to spend the pupil premium.** The survey data and analysis of pupil premium strategies show that many schools focus largely on teaching and learning initiatives. This is despite many of the key barriers to attainment identified by schools in the pupil premium strategies requiring more pastoral attention.
- 3) There was clear variation in the quality of pupil premium strategies published on schools' websites.** Some schools were better at accounting for how the money would be spent, rationalising spending decisions, measuring success, setting out clear monitoring processes and clarifying which group the funding would target.
- 4) Pupil premium usage is not the only determinant of disadvantaged pupil progress and attainment.** The survey data revealed a clear correlation between outcomes for all pupils and outcomes for pupil premium pupils. Geography was also a factor in influencing outcomes for pupil premium pupils.

In addition, the study also revealed that:

- 1) Pupil premium was viewed positively by governing boards who responded to the survey, but funding pressures are presenting a challenge to its effectiveness.** Many schools fund initiatives through the pupil premium which should generally come out of the school budget, including: improving the classroom environment, improving feedback and hiring additional teachers. To mitigate against this, pupil premium funding needs to be protected in real-terms and accompanied by a more sustainable financial settlement for schools.
- 2) There are research gaps which need to be addressed going forward.** In particular, there is the potential for more research looking at pupil premium strategies and the role of those governing in shaping pupil premium usage. With the literature skewed towards teaching and learning, this project also exposed the need for more research around measuring the impact of pastoral initiatives.

The full report is available [here](#). The research forms part of [NGA's Spotlight on Disadvantage campaign](#). The campaign seeks to help governing boards in raising outcomes for children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, and ensure that the impact of governors and trustees is recognised in assessing the impact of the pupil premium.



Celebrating the contribution of school governors and trustees

To mark Volunteer's Week in June, the NGA, the Association of School and College Leaders and the National Association of Head Teachers published a joint letter to thank school governors and trustees for their remarkable contribution to education.



5th June 2018

Dear school governors and trustees,

We are now in Volunteers' Week – 1st to 7th June - an annual, national celebration of the contribution of millions of people who volunteer across the country.

There are a quarter of a million school governors and trustees in England, yet it is perhaps one of the least known and recognised voluntary roles. Together, we want to take this opportunity to shine a light on your service and say thank you.

We are extremely appreciative of the huge amount of time, skills, care and attention you give to support and challenge school leaders, so that our schools thrive and our children have opportunities to succeed. We do not underestimate what a great responsibility this is.

Many of the education issues currently in the public eye – funding pressures, stretched provision for children with special educational needs, the rapid pace of change to curriculum and assessment, the subsequent workload burden on teachers, and a mounting recruitment crisis – end up on the agenda of governing boards. But the role of governors and trustees as guardians of our schools often passes unnoticed in the wider world.

Our three organisations recognise your remarkable contribution in dealing with the challenges facing our schools, and we share a commitment to speak out over these issues on behalf of trustees, governors, school leaders, and the children and communities you serve.

Thank you for all you do,

Emma Knights OBE

Chief Executive, National Governance Association

Geoff Barton

General Secretary, Association of School and College Leaders

Paul Whiteman

General Secretary, National Association of Head Teachers



Governance training for chairs, clerks and boards

NGA's new Leading Governance programmes are all now open for bookings - the programmes offered are: [Development for Chairs](#), [Development for Clerks](#) and [Development for Boards](#).

The programmes are funded by the Department for Education. Leading Governance programmes are currently being delivered across England; for information about where your local programmes are being delivered please check the links above or contact NGA.

If you would like to speak to a member of the Training and Consultancy team about Leading Governance, including if you would like a programme to be arranged closer to your area, please email leading.governance@nga.org.uk or ring 0121 236 4600 and ask to speak to someone about NGA's Leading Governance programmes.

Dates for your diary

NGA Autumn Regional Events:

NGA will be holding events in each of the nine regions this autumn – if you would like to attend make a note of the dates:

- East of England Regional Conference (rescheduled) - Saturday 8 September 2018
- East Midlands Regional Conference – Saturday 29 September 2018
- South West Regional Conference – Saturday 6 October 2018
- Yorkshire & Humber Regional Meeting – Monday 8 October 2018
- North East Regional Conference – Saturday 13 October 2018
- North West Regional Meeting – Wednesday 17 October 2018
- West Midlands Regional Meeting – Wednesday 24 October 2018
- South East Regional Meeting – date TBC
- London Regional Meeting – date TBC

Locations, speakers and topics will be confirmed nearer the time. Keep an eye out in NGA communications and on www.nga.org.uk/events for more details.

NGA Annual Conference & AGM

Saturday 17 November 2018, Birmingham City Centre

NGA members are invited to the annual conference and AGM. Speakers will include Professor Mick Waters on governing boards' role in the curriculum and Carolyn Roberts, the chair of the Ethical Leadership Commission. Bookings will open shortly at www.nga.org.uk/events

Membership of NGA

If you have found this bulletin useful and aren't currently a member of NGA, please consider joining. We have two levels of membership for schools: Standard (£85 per year) or GOLD (£260 per year). Both cover the school for up to 25 governors/trustees, giving them access to a wealth of resources online and an e-newsletter tailored for governance every Friday in term-time. Group, multi academy trust and local association memberships are also available. GOLD members have access to our GOLDline Advice Service and receive free guides.

Full details can be found at www.nga.org.uk/membership. If you have any questions about membership, just give us a call on 0121 237 3780 or email our membership team on membership@nga.org.uk.