

April 2014 bulletin board

The National Governors' Association (NGA) is an independent charity that aims to improve the education standards and well-being of children and young people through supporting and promoting outstanding governance in all state-funded schools, including academies and free schools. As the only representative body for governors, we take our responsibilities seriously; we want to represent governors as effectively as possible. This bulletin board is distributed to local governor associations and local authorities so they can keep their schools up to date with changes and developments in governance and the NGA. If you find this information useful and you're not a member of the NGA, please consider joining us; this is only a fraction of the material we produce for governors. See section I for details.

If you have any comments or suggestions, please contact [Laura Owen](#).

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A. HMCI proposes changes to Ofsted inspections

Sir Michael Wilshaw, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI), announced proposed changes to the Ofsted inspection framework at the Association of School and College Leaders' conference on 21 March. The changes would reduce the number of inspections for 'good' schools; they will be inspected once every two years for one day in a 'light touch' inspection. He explained: 'Only when inspectors see steep decline in a good school or, conversely, great improvement, that a full inspection will be triggered...Even if the HMI does see some problems in a school, a full inspection may not be required – as long as school leaders are tackling problems effectively and have the capacity to improve the school.'

Speaking on Radio 4, HMCI said 'There is little point in school inspectors turning up once every four or five years to confirm what a good school already knows and what the data already says. We would much rather use inspection resources – particularly HMI resources – in schools that require stronger intervention; in schools that are in 'special measures' or that 'require improvement.' As he has stated previously, Sir Michael reiterated that he is keen to ensure more inspectors are directly employed by Ofsted.

These changes will be subject to consultation with the Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove.

Do you have a view on these proposals? Please let us know! Email [Gillian](#).

Read more on the [newsfeed](#) or in [Newsletter 21/03/2014](#).

B. Education news

1. Fairer Funding Consultation

We have been awaiting the promised publication of the consultation on a new National Funding Formula (NFF) since before Christmas. However, on 13 March David Laws, the Minister of State for Schools, in a statement to Parliament announced both that there would be no NFF before the next Parliament and that there would be some extra money for the 'least fairly funded authorities' from April 2015. An extra £350m has been allocated and will be awarded to authorities by first determining a minimum funding level based on five pupil characteristics and two school characteristics – if a local authority's funding level is below this minimum level it will receive additional funding – if it is not it won't. For more information, see our [newsfeed](#).

2. Ofsted Data Dashboards updated

The Ofsted School Data Dashboards for key stages 1 and 2 have been updated with 2013 results. For key stage 4, the Ofsted Dashboard will be updated later this month. The Ofsted Dashboard gives an overview of a school's performance, and compares it to similar schools, which is particularly helpful. However, governors will need to look at more detailed data to effectively monitor school performance, and the Ofsted Dashboard should only be used as a starting point.



[Find your school's Ofsted data dashboard](#)

3. Urgent action needed for secondary school places

The Local Government Association (LGA) has warned that despite local councils taking action to increase the number of secondary school places, more still needs to be done in order to avoid a potential shortfall within the next five years. Analysis by the LGA of the DfE's data suggests that 80,716 additional places will be needed by 2019/2020, covering a third of local authority (LA) areas. Although £2.35bn funding was announced in December to fund additional places up to 2017, LAs are still struggling to afford additional places, or indeed find land to house new schools.

The LGA is calling for LAs to be given indicative five year capital budgets to better enable them to plan ahead (something NGA would support); given a greater say in the establishment of new schools, particularly the choice of academy provider, and to be given a greater role in judging and approving free school applications.

The report also sets out the range of measures LAs have used to meet the need so far including borrowing extra money, adding an extra class to a different school each year to reduce the burden and extensive use of temporary accommodation.

[LGA – Council work paying off but more needed](#)

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4. Primary and 16 to 19 assessment and accountability

The government has announced changes to assessment and accountability regime in primary phase and the accountability regime for post-16 providers. Both changes were the subject of individual consultations last year.

For primary schools, new more challenging Key Stage 2 (KS2) tests will be introduced with 85% of pupils expected to reach the set standard equivalent to level 4b of the existing tests. This will be accompanied by a new floor standard. A new baseline test will also be introduced in reception against which future progress will be measured.

At 16-19 a new accountability system will be introduced including published minimum standards and headline measures.

For more details of the changes see the [newsfeed](#) and the [newsletter](#).

C. Parliamentary news

1. All party parliamentary group on education governance and leadership

The All Party Parliamentary Group on Education Governance and Leadership, for which NGA provides the secretariat, met in the House of Commons on 17 March. The event featured a keynote speech from Lord Nash, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Schools, the minister responsible for governance. He discussed the theme: 'the importance of volunteering as a school governor.'

The NGA is working with the Education and Employers taskforce, SGOSS, the Confederation for British Industry, the National Coordinators of Governor Services and the Department for Education (DfE) to encourage more people to volunteer as school governors.

Speaking at the event, Professor Chris James from the University of Bath said: 'The governing environment is a thoroughly enjoyable one as well as being challenging. People learn new skills to then take back into the workplace. This can be a virtuous cycle.'

NGA is working with Professor James on a major survey into the state of governance in England's schools, with the NGA - you can take the survey [here](#). **There are only 10 days to go: the survey closes on 14 April.** Last time such a survey was carried out 5,000 governors responded and we would like to reach that, so please distribute the link widely.

To find out more about this event, members can read the [Newsletter](#).

2. MPs take evidence on academies and free schools

The House of Commons Education Select Committee has been taking further oral evidence in its inquiry into academies and free schools. NGA will be giving evidence to the committee, and we would welcome your opinions and experiences, particularly around contact with brokers; please email [Gillian](#).

NGA members can read more about the inquiry on our [Parliamentary business page](#).

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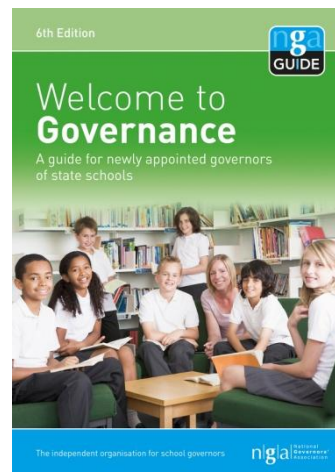
D. Effective practice

Governor role description

As you will know, the role of the governor and governing body is to hold the school to account to improve educational standards for children and young people. After much demand, the NGA model role description in the 6th Edition of *Welcome to Governance* will be adapted for an online release very soon. It outlines the activities a governor is expected to take part in, and some things you should do in order to help you do this role well.

We are also going to be publishing a revised version of the skills audit for governors to assess their skills and identify areas for training and development, or to look out for when recruiting new governors. If you have any comments of feedback on the current version, please email Ellie.

Look out for their release!



E. NGA news

1. NGA Poll

Thank you to everyone who voted in the poll:

On a scale of 1-5 (5 being very confident), how confident are you that staff are prepared for the new national curriculum?

10%	(21)	1
15%	(30)	2
35%	(68)	3
26%	(50)	4
9%	(18)	5
2%	(5)	Don't know



Emma Knights, Chief Executive of NGA, talks about how governors can get ready for the changes in an [interview](#) with the Department for Education. You can also find links to the government guidance on the curriculum in our refurbished [free governance resources pages](#).

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Please take the time to participate in our new poll:

New poll: How is your school reacting to the removal of National Curriculum levels:

- *Our staff will still be using the current NC levels*
- *Our staff are developing our own progress measures*
- *Local schools are working together to develop new progress measures*
- *We have not made any decisions yet*
- *Don't know*

2. NGA Summer Conference: 14 June 2014, London

The NGA Summer Conference is being held in London. There will also be an EGM for members to vote on proposed changes to the NGA board.

Keynote speaker: Neil Carberry, Director for Employment and Skills, CBI

Bookings are [open online](#) for members.

F. Consultations

These consultations have been released since the last bulletin. Closing dates are for the organisation consulting. NGA is always interesting in hearing governors' views. Please email any comments, or a copy of your submission, to [Gillian Allcroft](#), NGA's Policy Manager.

1. [Fairer schools funding in 2015-16](#) **Closing date:** Wednesday 30 April 2013
2. [Inspection of maintained schools and academies: consultation on the introduction of separate graded judgements on early school years and the sixth form from September 2014](#) **Closing date:** Tuesday 13 May 2014
3. [Savings to the Education Services Grant for 2015-16](#) **Closing date:** Thursday 19 June 2014
4. [Setting the grade standards of new GCSEs in England](#) **Closing date:** Monday 30 June 2014

G. NGA partners

Gain national recognition with Artsmark

Artsmark is a sign of commitment to high quality arts and cultural education and applications are now open for schools across England. Artsmark is a nationally recognised award demonstrating excellence in arts and cultural provision. A comprehensive audit tool enables you to identify areas for development. The Artsmark is a way of celebrating your school's success in the arts and culture.

To apply, schools need to register for the [Artsmark network](#), Download their [leaflet](#), or visit the [Artsmark website](#) for more information before applications close on Friday 25 July 2014..

H. NGA membership benefits

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Governing bodies can join the NGA to receive more benefits. Every governor will gain access to the members' only area of the website, and receive the weekly newsletter. Members also receive generous discounts off our publications.

GOLD governing body membership: £260 ensures in addition that every governor receives NGA's magazine *Governing Matters*, free induction guides, additional event places, and is entitled to advice from the NGA, including **free access to our legal advice service**.

Standard governing body membership: £75 entitles you to five free copies of the bi-monthly magazine, discounts on publications, and a free place at members' events as well as the weekly newsletter and web resources.

Make sure your association is receiving all its benefits. If you have not yet given us the names, home addresses and email addresses of your executive members, or if these have changed, please send details to: membership@nga.org.uk.

