

November 2013 Bulletin Board

The National Governors' Association is an independent charity representing state school governors from both local authority maintained schools and academies. This monthly NGA bulletin board is distributed to local governor associations and co-ordinators of governor services who are members of the NGA so that they can keep governing bodies up-to-date on our work, the changes and developments in governance. So, please help to keep others informed by sharing and distributing this widely. If you are not a member of NGA and have found this bulletin useful, this is only a fraction of the information NGA produces for governors. Please consider joining us: see section G.

If you have any comments on this bulletin or suggestions for future editions, please contact laura.owen@nga.org.uk.

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A. Governors should not judge the quality of teaching in classrooms

At a number of events over the past few months, including the NGA's regional conferences, Ofsted has confirmed that governors **should not** be making any judgements about the quality of teaching in lessons when they visit the school. The wording in the current (September 2013) subsidiary guidance is rather ambiguous, and Ofsted have promised to amend it to make this clearer. In the meantime, they are urging governors to let NGA know if an inspector suggests that governors should be making assessments about the quality of individual lessons. You can do this by emailing [Mark Gardner](mailto:Mark.Gardner@nga.org.uk) and we will liaise with Ofsted over this issue.

It is essential that governors have knowledge about the quality of teaching in their schools and there are a range of mechanisms, besides school visits to do so. The very use of the word 'observation' in relation to governor visits can cause issues, as lesson observations tend to have a specific meaning to teachers (linked to their performance appraisal and professional development). As a governor, you can use classroom visits to get to know the school (particularly if you are a new governor) and see how school policies are being implemented. You don't have to sit in a classroom to do this; you could meet with department heads to discuss the progress of the school against curriculum targets, which may in fact be far more useful.

NGA members can find out more about how governors can assess the quality of teaching in Gillian's Policy News article in November's edition of *Governing Matters*, out next week. Also look out for the Knowing your School briefing notes on *Quality of Teaching* and *School Visits*, which will be out later this month.



B. Education news

1. GCSE Reform

On 1 November, Ofqual announced the results of the consultation into GCSE reform. The key changes are that from 2015 new GCSEs will be taught in English (language and literature) and maths, with other subjects introduced the following year. The new qualifications will be assessed largely by examination, with some exceptions for those subjects where some skills need to be assessed via practical examinations.

Students will be awarded one of nine grades on a numerical system (1-9) or unclassified (meaning the qualification has not been awarded). Grade 9 will be the highest grade on offer.

Exams will be taken in May/June each year, although pupils aged 16 on the preceding 31 August will be also be able to take English Language and maths in November. It is intended that the majority of subjects will have untiered exams (i.e. there will only be one paper which students of all abilities will sit). Maths will be offered as tiered examination.

For more information see the Ofqual announcement - [Ofqual exam reform](#)

2. Commons Education Select Committee quizzes Minister of State on school places

David Laws, the Minister of State for Schools, gave oral evidence to the House of Commons Education Select Committee on Wednesday 23 October on the topic of school places. The increasing requirement for school places in some areas was the main topic discussed, with particular pressure in the primary sector within some urban areas. The Minister highlighted the amount of capital funding being made available to local authorities to fill this gap and explained that in future more information will be available to the public about what LAs spend their funding on. If LAs weren't spending their allocated funding for school places on providing extra school places, then legitimate questions could be asked.

Members can read more about this story in the [newsletter](#).

[Minister's evidence to Education Select Committee](#)

3. Secondary school accountability announcement

On 14 October, David Laws MP announced changes to the secondary school accountability system. The announcement follows a consultation earlier this year, to which the [NGA responded](#). From September 2016, instead of the current 5 A*- C measure, schools will be required to publish on their websites:

- Progress across eight subjects, as measured from the end of key stage 2 statutory assessments ("Progress 8")
- Average attainment across eight subjects ("Attainment 8")
- The percentage of pupils achieving at least grade C in GCSE English and maths
- The percentage of pupils achieving the EBacc

The floor standard for schools will be based on the Progress 8 measure, which is intended to ensure that schools with challenging intakes will not be penalised.

For more information see the [NGA newsfeed article](#).

[Department for Education response to consultation](#)

[David Laws MP oral statement to Parliament](#)

4. Pupil premium plus

On Tuesday 1 October, Children's Minister, Edward Timpson, announced that from April 2014 children in care will attract a higher rate of pupil premium funding than other pupils. The new 'pupil premium plus' will see funding to support children in care at school increase by £1,000 per pupil. From April 2014, children in care will attract £1,900 additional funding per pupil. In addition, children will become eligible for funding from the first day of care; currently children have to be in care for six months before they attract funding. For the first time, children adopted from care and those who leave care under a special guardianship order or residence order will also attract the pupil premium plus.

Edward Timpson said 'children in care face unique challenges at school and often struggle to keep up with their peers at both primary and secondary level...I'm delighted to announce that we're more than doubling funding to support the education of children in care whilst at school and that from next year they will receive this extra support from the moment they enter care.'

Governing bodies are accountable for the pupil premium; you need to know what it is being spent on and what impact it is having. Make sure your governing body is receiving this information and can evaluate whether the pupil premium is being spent in the most effective way. In 2014-15, primary pupils eligible for the premium will attract £1,300 and secondary pupils £935.

[DfE press release](#)

Members can read more about the pupil premium in our [Pupil premium guidance](#) and [Questions governing bodies should ask: pupil premium](#)

5. NAHT Commission on Assessment

The National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT) has established a commission on assessment in response to the government announcement about the abolishment of national curriculum levels and level descriptors. Chaired by Lord Stewart Sutherland, former Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, the panel includes leaders from across education. They are still looking for your views. Find out more on the [NAHT website](#).

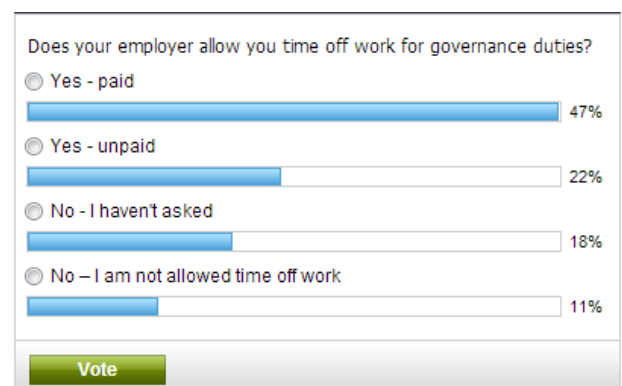
C. NGA news

1. NGA Web Polls

The results of the last poll are in:

Does your employer allow you time off work for governance duties?

47% (111)	Yes – paid
22% (53)	Yes – unpaid
18% (43)	No – I haven't asked
11% (27)	No – I am not allowed time off work



Our new poll is aimed specifically at chairs of governors. The issue of how much time governance takes up is a frequent topic of discussion and the NGA is seeking better understanding of just how much time chairs are spending on governance. In charity boards the general rule of thumb is 10-20 days per year with chairs at the upper end of that spectrum. This poll is just one strand of the more in depth work we are planning to undertake in this area – to go with the how much we also want to look at 'what on' and 'why'.

Chairs of governors, please take the time to vote in the new NGA poll on how much time does governance take:

Chairs only: How much time do you spend on governance on average each week per governing body?

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| Less than 2 hours | 7-9 hours |
| 2-4 hours | More than 10 hours |
| 5-6 hours | |

2. NGA response to changes to early entry GCSE

In an interview with the Sunday Times on 29 September 2013, the Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove announced that with immediate effect only a student's first entry to a GCSE examination will count in their school's performance tables. This change is intended to deter schools from entering students into exams early to 'bank' a pass grade.

The changes will not affect pupils that have already completed a GCSE, and the performance tables will still record their best result from either their previous attempt or from the next time they sit that GCSE.

NGA has written to the Minister of State David Laws, who has responsibility for school accountability, expressing disappointment at the timing of the Secretary of State's announcement and requesting that for at least this year performance tables should show both early entry best entry results.

[NGA letter to David Laws](#)

D. Dates for your diary

If you would like us to advertise your local event, please email [Laura Owen](#).

1. Academies Show Birmingham

The next Academies Show takes place on Wednesday 27 November at the NEC in Birmingham. For maintained schools and established academies, the Show gives a chance to explore the role of academies in the education landscape. It is free to attend, and aims to provide visitors with a clear understanding of the process of converting to an academy from those who have actually done it, learn about managing a successful academy from those at the cutting edge, and be informed about the future of education policy from those who decide it.



NGA is pleased to once again be a lead supporter and contributor to the Show. Emma Knights, Chief Executive, will take part in a panel discussion on 'The Governor's Role in Improving Academy Achievement' in the main conference. Gillian Allcroft, Policy Manager and Philip Wood, Parliamentary and Advice Officer, will be leading a seminar discussing Governance in Groups of Schools, including: why you should consider governing in a group; things to think about if you are looking at governing in a group; the implications in relation to sponsored academies; and possible structures that you might want to think about.

You can register for your free entry badge at www.academiesshowbirmingham.co.uk or call 0161 200 8620 or email enquiries@academiesshowbirmingham.co.uk.

2. Free FFT data dashboard workshops

The Fisher Family Trust is running free workshops to help governors get the most out of the new data dashboard. The new secondary dashboard with 2013 data is now available (the updated primary dashboard issued at the end of September).

The following events still have places available:

- **LONDON** - Wednesday 20 November 2013 (18.00 – 19.30)
- **BIRMINGHAM** - Wednesday 27 November 2013 (18.00 – 19.30)

For further information, or to book a space at one of the workshops, please visit <http://www.fft.org.uk/fft-live/governor-dashboard.aspx>

E. Consultations since the last bulletin (closing dates are for DfE)

1. [Draft 0-25 Special Educational Needs \(SEN\) Code of Practice, Draft Regulations and Transitional Arrangements](#) Closing date: Monday 9 December 2013

NGA is always interested in hearing governors' views on these and other topics; please email any comments, or copies of any submission you make to NGA's policy manager: Gillian.allcroft@nga.org.uk.

F. NGA partners

1. Free training workshops for governing body members

The National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL) licensees are offering free training workshops for governors, addressing some key strategic policy themes.



National College for
Teaching & Leadership

The three different workshop themes are:

1. Understanding and using Performance-related Pay (PRP)
The training workshops will help governors to think about how they will make pay decisions in Autumn 2014 – to plan to raise performance through pay, whilst minimising appeals and ensuring decisions about policy and reviews can be defended.
2. Understanding and using RAISE online to improve school outcomes
The purpose of this training is to develop the capacity of governors to use RAISE online effectively in order to challenge and support their school's leadership team in their efforts to bring about school improvement.
3. Improving financial efficiencies in school
The training workshops will help governors to ensure school money is well spent.

Schools and academies may nominate up to three governors (which can include the headteacher) for a free place at all three workshops. The workshops will last for three hours with a refreshment break.

Visit the NCTL website for more information:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/nationalcollege/index/professional-development/governor-training-workshops.htm>

Leading Governance delivery

The National Governors' Association and the Eastern Leadership Centre who lead the Leading Governance group as a regional NCTL licensee will be offering these 3 hour workshops from late January 2014 onwards across England where we have local delivery partners. Our focus for delivery will be in the East of England, East Midlands, North East London, parts of the West Midlands, Worcestershire, Leeds, and York.



More information about dates, times and venues will be available on the leading governance website (www.leadinggovernance.org) within the next two weeks.

In the meantime, if you are interested in attending or would like to find out more information please email info@leadinggovernance.org.

NGA membership benefits

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 **access to our legal advice service**.

Standard governing body membership: £72 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.

