

DAG Newsletter

October 2009

This newsletter is a precis of the two most recent weekly newsletters from the NGA together with extracts of the October Board Bulletin.

The whole document is available as a pdf file, or use the links below to read bite size chunks for easy digestion.

DAG Digest of NGA Weekly newsletters and October Board Bulletin

Index

[Special Educational Needs](#)

[Racism in Schools](#)

[Behaviour Strategy](#)

[Ofsted's Guide to Achieving Excellence in Primary Schools](#)

[Capital Programmes](#)

[Sex and relationships education survey](#)

[CEO Moves On](#)

[Community Cohesion](#)

[Million Meals](#)

[TDA extended services toolkit](#)

[Extended Services](#)

[Legal Support](#)

[Policies](#)

[Valuable lessons: a value for money guide](#)

Special Educational Needs

In responding to a letter from Sir Brian Lamb (who heads up the Lamb Inquiry into parental confidence in the assessment process for pupils with SEN), the Secretary of State has announced three strands of work relating to pupils with SEN, these are to:

- Test easier ways of assessing children with special educational needs
- Review current and future supply of teachers trained to meet the needs of pupils with severe learning difficulties
- Produce new guidance for schools to tackle high exclusions of children with SEN

More details about the Lamb Inquiry, including its interim reports can be found via the following link - [Lamb Inquiry](#)

Racism in Schools

The Secretary of State has announced an inquiry into the ways in which schools prevent the promotion of racism. Maurice Smith CB (a former Chief Inspector of Schools) has been asked to lead the Inquiry.

The inquiry will look at whether existing mechanisms for preventing racism are sufficient and whether there are any further measures (including whether the membership of an organisations which promotes racist views is grounds from barring people from the teaching profession). This is hot on the heels of NASUWT's campaign to have BNP members banned from the teaching profession and from being school governors. The Inquiry is due to report in January 2010.

The full terms of reference can be found on the DCFSF website via the following link -[Maurice Smith Inquiry](#).

The inquiry will be seeking stakeholder views. The NGA will let members know when views are requested. This is an important review and members are encouraged to respond.

For governing bodies the current legal position is that the BNP is a legal party and, therefore, its members cannot be banned from being school governors purely because they are members of the BNP. All governing bodies must have a race equality policy and any governor in breach of such a policy could be open to the sanctions available to the governing body (suspension or if appointed by the governing body removal).

Behaviour Strategy

Ed Balls speech to the Labour Party Conference also announced a behaviour strategy for secondary schools. This takes forward some of the recommendations in Sir Alan Steer's report on behaviour. There are three key planks of the strategy:

- the new Behaviour Challenge, through which schools that have only a 'satisfactory' Ofsted grade for behaviour will be encouraged and supported to work towards the 'good' or 'outstanding' standard
- making behaviour improvement a priority for the Good and Great Schools programme
- engaging parents through a new leaflet on how they can work with schools on pupil behaviour issues. The leaflet can be downloaded via the following link: [Behaviour leaflet for parents](#)

Further details can be found on the DCSF's TeacherNet website via the following link: [Behaviour Strategy](#)

Ofsted's Guide to Achieving Excellence in Primary Schools

Ofsted today published a report about the characteristics of successful primary schools in disadvantaged areas. The report looked at three key factors: achieving excellence, sustaining excellence and sharing excellence. There are also sections on each individual school used in the study.

The full report can be downloaded here - [Twenty outstanding primary schools: excelling against the odds](#)

Capital Programmes

From 1 October 2009 Partnership for Schools (the DCSF's delivery partner for Building Schools for the Future) took over responsibility for the management and delivery of all DCSF school capital programmes. As well as BSF Partnerships for schools will also be responsible for the:

- Primary Capital Programme: funding for national primary school building programme earmarked in every local authority - £1.9 billion in the CSR period up to 2011
- Devolved Capital Programmes: funding for schools which is spent on capital projects – almost £7.8 billion in the CSR period up to 2011
- Targeted Capital Programmes: funding for a wide range of targeted projects aligned to specific policies including carbon reduction and school kitchens – almost £2.6 billion in the CSR period up to 2011.

More information about Partnership for Schools can be found on their website via the attached link – [Partnerships for schools](#).

Sex and relationships education survey

Schools are in the process of meeting a new requirement for promoting the well being of their pupils from September 2009 and preparing for statutory Personal Social Health education including sex and relationships education (SRE) from September 2011.

The challenge is to work out what form SRE should assume, and how and when it should be taught.

This is why NGA has joined with the National Confederation of Parent Teacher Association (NCPTA) and NAHT, the Association of all School Leaders, to launch a unique survey into the opinions of governors, parents and school leaders on the provision of formal SRE in England. The survey is being funded by SSL International, the company that manufactures contraceptive products including Durex condoms.

This is your chance to let us know what you think would work best in promoting learning and supporting a child's emotional and social development.

This is an online survey for governors; there are separate surveys for parents and school leaders. The survey should take around 20 minutes to complete. The results will be used to influence government policy in the run up to the next election. As ever, if the governor voice is to be heard, we need a high number of responses to the survey.

The survey can be downloaded from the NGA website via the following link - [Sex and Relationships Education Survey](#).

The first 1,000 taking part will be entered in a prize draw for the chance to win £100 worth of sex education resources for a school of their choice. The survey link will remain accessible until we have reached our target number of responses. Your answers will be completely anonymous and the results will help build an understanding of the opinions and levels of knowledge on the subject.

CEO Moves On

Phil Revell, chief executive of the National Governors' Association, is to leave the NGA in the New Year, his departure is by mutual agreement and a new CEO is expected to start work early in 2010.

Other News

There are two new sections on the NGA website

Community Cohesion

The first new resource is a Microsite on Community Cohesion which the NGA has produced for the DCSF. The microsite has a series of webpages which aim to help present the issues that governors should consider. There is a PowerPoint presentation which should help a presenter deliver a half day (or twilight) training session for a governing body or governor's group with minimum preparation. A collection of paper and online resources, which might be reproduced and distributed to governors during the training session or used by the presenter as a background briefing. Case studies demonstrate how schools in different contexts have approached the new duty and a page of links

Find the Community Cohesion governors' microsite [here](#)

Million Meals

The other new online resource is a microsite to support our work with the School Food Trust. The Million Meals site sets out how governors can:

- Make positive changes to increase their meal take up
- Improve the health, wellbeing and concentration of pupils
- And be in with a chance of winning £5,000 for their school?

Find the School Food Trust website [here](#)

TDA extended services toolkit

We have mentioned this before, but as it is not being heavily promoted elsewhere we thought we would give it another mention, because it is a good document.

By 2010, all schools will be expected to provide access to a range of extended services aimed at removing the barriers that prevent children and young people from realising their potential. Governing bodies have an important role to play in developing extended services, which are a key part of the Government's vision for 21st century schools. The TDA toolkit is designed to help your governing body support its school in developing effective extended services that reflect the needs of the pupils and the wider community and make a real impact on standards, achievement and well-being.

Find the toolkit [here](#)

This is also a good opportunity to reproduce what the new Support and Challenge NGA Guide says on the issue of extended services.

Extended Services

Support and Challenge – published September 2009

Extended Schools and additional services and activities

The governing body has the power to provide ‘charitable services’ whose provision furthers any charitable purpose for the benefit of pupils registered at the school, or their parents, or the local community. (see Notes)

The governing body is also responsible for determining what additional services the school should provide under the Extended Services initiative. Once the decision to offer services is made the governing body is also responsible for implementation, for ensuring service delivery, and for the decision to cease offering such services.

The governing body may create a school company in order to deliver such services: such a company may operate in partnership with other schools. Such a company must be registered.

Delegation

There is no legal limit on delegation, but published advice and guidance makes it clear that it should be the full governing body that makes the decision as to whether services are offered and which services to offer, and whether services should be stopped or curtailed.

Once in place the day-to-day operation of such services should be delegated to the Headteacher in the first instance.

School companies can only be set up by the full governing body. This decision cannot be delegated.

Challenge

Q Has the governing body established what services, if any, ought to be provided either by the school or on school premises by partner organisations?

Q Is the governing body certain that there is a clear demand for these services?

Q Do governors understand that extended services should be offered to all children and families in an area, and not just to the children and families served by the school?

Q Is the governing body certain that the provision of additional services will not impact on the provision of education at the school?

Q Is the governing body certain that the additional services offered are being staffed and managed in ways that do not place unacceptable workloads on existing school staff?

Q Are the extended services offered included in the school’s development plan and does the governing body have a means to measure the impact of the services?

Notes:

Schools do not have to provide additional services, but the Government has set out its view that all schools should offer extended services of some kind by 2010.

If a governing body decides to investigate such services it **must** consult about the services that parents would like to have available. Schools **must** then ascertain whether such services are available in the local area, and, if they are not, how the school might work with other agencies to provide such services. If there are adequate services in an area then the school should provide information about those services to parents and others.

Additional services may be provided to:

- pupils at the school or their families
- people who live or work in the locality in which the school is situated

In providing these services a governing body may:

- incur expenditure,
- enter into arrangements or agreements with any person,
- co-operate with, or facilitate or co-ordinate the activities of, any person, and
- provide staff, goods, services and accommodation
- make suitable charges

‘Charitable Services’ has a specific legal definition. The main things covered are to: relieve poverty, advance education, advance religion or be for any other purpose that the law recognises as charitable.

School Companies are limited companies with additional limitations on share ownership and participation; they may make a profit.

Legal Support

Legal Support for Governing Bodies: NGA has come to an agreement with a legal firm to provide some legal support for governing bodies. For details visit: www.nga.org.uk/NGAlegal.aspx

Policies

NGA are trying to collect copies of policies on pupil behaviour and discipline and on school uniform, and examples of Home-School Agreements. We should be very grateful if members would share these with NGA. *Please email to: gillian.allcroft@nga.org.uk or send hard copies to the NGA Office.*

Valuable lessons: a value for money guide

***NEW:* Audit Commission – Valuable lessons: a value for money guide for school governors**

In June the Audit Commission published a report about value for money in schools. One of the conclusions of the Commission was that insufficient attention was paid to economy and efficiency in schools and that as a result the Commission could not be sure that the taxpayer was receiving value for money. Following the report the Audit Commission issued separate guidance for local authorities, headteachers and school governors.

The guidance for governors, *Valuable lessons improving economy and efficiency in schools*, was published in July 2009 and is available to download from the Audit Commission’s website via this link: valuablelessons.govorgovernorsguide30jun2009.pdf

David Tall

EO to DAG

5 October 2009