

NGA NEWS AUTUMN TERM 2007

New Chief Executive for NGA

Phil Revell has taken over as the new Chief Executive Officer of the NGA. Phil took up post in July following the retirement of the previous CEO, Jean McEntire. Phil has been a regular contributor to the Guardian, the TES and other national newspapers. In 2005 his book *The Professionals* was published, a critique of the way the UK trains and develops its teachers. His work outside the media encompasses a variety of organisations, including the DTI, British Gas and the NAHT. Before becoming a journalist Phil worked for nearly 20 years as a teacher, ending up as head of the pastoral curriculum in a secondary school in Shropshire.

Phil plans to develop NGA publications (both print and electronic) over the next twelve months. The first step in this process is a new website which will be launched in the Autumn.

Goodbye DfES, Hello DCSF

Once more there is a change at the top of the education tree. On taking up post as Prime Minister one of Gordon Brown's first announcements was a split in the Department for Education and Skills. We now have the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS). Ed Balls is the Secretary of State at DCSF while John Denham is the Secretary of State at DIUS. Governors will principally need to have regard to the DCSF, which is responsible for children's services, families, schools, 14-19 education, and the Respect Taskforce. The DCSF is responsible for promoting the well-being, safety, protection and care of all young people – including through policy responsibility for children's social services. Jim Knight, Minister of State for Schools, and the Minister with responsibility for governance remains in post following the split.

One key change, which will affect schools, is that funding for post-16 pupils in schools will now be channelled through local authorities rather than the Learning and Skills Council.

Food Policy in Schools – A Strategic Policy Framework for School Governing Bodies (Revised) 2007 Edition

NGA will launch the revised version of our highly regarded Food Policy in Schools document at our Conference on 22 September. The document has been revised from the original 2005 edition to take account of the new school food legislation. The document provides step-by-step guidance on developing a whole school food policy.

The new requirements for school food take effect from 10 September 2007¹ and for the first time regulate what food and drink schools can serve throughout the school day and not just at lunchtime. Where the budget for school meals is delegated by the local authority (all secondary schools and many primary schools) the governing body is responsible for ensuring that food standards are met.

All governor support/service departments will be able to order a copy of the document for each of their schools. The document will also be available to download from the NGA website.

Power for Parents to Complain to Ofsted

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 gave Ofsted the power to investigate parental complaints against schools. This is not a blanket power covering all complaints, and indeed specifically excludes complaints relating to provisions for individual pupils. Instead it focuses on whole school issues, in effect the areas that Ofsted would consider as part of its formal

¹ The Education (Nutritional Standards and Requirements for School Food) (England) Regulations 2007

inspection process. In particular, Ofsted has the power to investigate where parents complain that:

- the school is not providing a good enough education
- the pupils are not achieving as much as they should, or their needs are not being met
- the school is not well led and managed, or is not using its resources efficiently
- the pupils' personal development and well-being are being neglected.

In general, Ofsted will only investigate a complaint if a parent has already exhausted the local complaints procedures (at school and local authority level) and is dissatisfied with the result. In investigating complaints Ofsted has the power to request information from either the school or the local authority, require the school to arrange a meeting for parents (this would be chaired by an inspector), and in the most serious cases it can arrange an immediate inspection. This latter power is expected to be used very rarely.

Performance Management – new arrangements come into force

In 2006 the Government consulted on new Performance Management arrangements for headteachers and teachers. Following representations from NGA and others the implementation of the new arrangements were delayed until 1 September 2007. The new arrangements explicitly link performance management and pay for the first time. It will take a full year for the new arrangements to work through. In this first year

- teachers must have planning and review statements in place by 31 October 2007
- headteachers must have planning and review statements in place by 31 December 2007.

In 2008 these planning and review statements will be used for the first time to discuss performance and pay together.

More information about the new arrangements, including model performance management and pay policies can be found on the Teachernet website at: www.teachernet.gov.uk

Behaviour and Exclusions

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 included a number of new powers and duties relating to behaviour and attendance. These came into force on 1 September 2007. They place new responsibilities on governing bodies, parents and local authorities in relation to exclusions.

- Governing Bodies are legally responsible for ensuring that a pupil is provided with full-time education from the sixth day of any fixed-period exclusion.
- Local authorities are legally responsible for ensuring that a pupil is provided with full-time education from the sixth day of a permanent exclusion.
- Governing bodies or local authorities may seek parenting contracts or parenting orders before a pupil is subject to an exclusion
 - Previously parenting contracts and orders could only be sought following an exclusion
 - Previously only local authorities could apply for parenting orders.
- Parents
 - Are legally responsible during the first five days of exclusion for ensuring their child is indoors and could be subject to a fine if the child is found in a public place during that time.
 - Must attend a reintegration interview with their child at the school following fixed-term exclusion
 - May be requested to enter into a parenting contract, or made subject to a parenting order before their child is subject to an exclusion

More information and guidance on the new exclusions arrangements can be found on Teachernet under Whole School issues/Behaviour and Attendance. www.teachernet.gov.uk