



Welcome to 2023 and the new term. Hopefully governors and school leaders have taken the Christmas break as a chance to spend time with family and friends and recharge batteries.

Further to our article re School to School Support in our last newsletter, the Governor Support Team (GST) wish to remind any governors/trustees who feel they may be in a position to provide governance support to other boards to contact the GST for an informal conversation. Please contact either your Governor Support Assistant or drop an email to [GST@cumbria.gov.uk](mailto:GST@cumbria.gov.uk) to discuss further or if you would just like a little bit more detail.

## **Local Government Reorganisation**

As you will already be aware, as of 1st April 2023 Cumbria County Council and the six District Councils will, under Local Government Reform (LGR) become two new unitary authorities: Cumberland Council and Westmorland and Furness Council.

Staff in the Cumbria County Council Learning Improvement Service (LIS) team will be disaggregated and allocated into the two new councils. As part of LIS, the GST will also be disaggregated. There are still decisions to be finalised regarding staff allocation but there is a very clear commitment from everyone to ensure that there is an equal balance of skills and knowledge available in both councils to continue a high level of competent governance support to all our Local Authority schools.

## News/Updates

The Department for Education (DfE) regularly share **School Governance** updates which provide important news and communications relating to governance in maintained schools and academy trusts in England. As well as the School Governance update, below are further items listed on the DfE website which may be of interest:

### **The Prevent duty: safeguarding learners vulnerable to radicalisation**

The government has updated and redeveloped its resources for schools around the **Prevent duty**, including the **self-assessment tool** to help schools in England review their responsibilities under the Prevent duty.

### **Safeguarding and remote education**

This **guidance** has been updated to align with guidance on Keeping Children Safe In Education 2022 and is to help schools and colleges support children's remote education. For the purposes of this guidance, children includes everyone under the age of 18.

It should be read alongside:

- Statutory safeguarding guidance on keeping children safe in education
- Emergency planning and response for education, childcare, and children's social care settings guidance
- Guidance for schools on providing remote education

### **Guidance for senior leaders on monitoring the provision of online safety education in schools and colleges**

**Guidance** for school governors and trustees to help them support school leaders to keep children safe online. Set out as a list of questions, it includes examples of good and outstanding practice, as well as identifying when governors should be concerned.

### **Safeguarding - Safer Internet Day 2023 (UK Safer Internet Centre)**

Safer Internet Day 2023 will take place on the 7th of February 2023, with celebrations and learning based around the theme 'Want to talk about it? Making space for conversations about life online.'

The UK will be celebrating by putting children and young people's voices at the heart of the day and encouraging them to shape the online safety support that they receive. If you would like further information please visit: <https://saferinternet.org.uk/blog/theme-announced-for-safer-internet-day-2023>

### **Improving attendance: good practice for schools and multi-academy trusts (DfE)**

Attendance is an important aspect of safeguarding, and the academic progress of children and young people. The DfE has released a set of webinars to help schools and Multi-Academy Trusts to improve attendance. There is a specific webinar '**Effective governance which supports stronger attendance**' which may be of interest.

### **Schools White Paper update**

Speaking at the Education Select Committee, the Education Secretary Gillian Keegan has announced the end of the Schools Bill passing through parliament. The Education Secretary did however insist that the government "remains committed to the objectives" of the Bill and will prioritise elements of the Bill when formulating the legislative agenda going forwards. This will include removing barriers for faith schools joining trusts and creating a register of children not in school. For the other propositions, the Education Secretary assured the committee that these are already being implemented as they do not require formal legal changes.

### **Schools financial value standard (SFVS) and assurance statement**

Maintained schools are required to comply with the **LA's Scheme for Financing Schools** which includes the Financial Regulations for Schools. On an annual basis, maintained schools must complete the Schools Financial Value Standard, submitting a copy to the LA Finance Team.

The DfE **guidance** has been updated including the documents 'Schools financial value standard checklist' and 'Checklist guidance', to reflect expectations for the 2022 to 2023 academic year. Changes to the guidance include, in section E on value for money, updates on threshold values for public procurement, good estate management and the get help buying for schools service.

### **Federations: guidance on the governance process**

A federation is defined in law as two or more maintained schools operating under the governance of a single governing body.

'The governance of federations' has been removed and replaced with '**Federations: guidance on the governance processes**' which provides information on how to create, run and dissolve a federation.

This guidance applies to all maintained:

- Schools
- Nursery schools

It is for:

- Governing bodies in maintained schools, including governance professionals
- School leaders
- Local authorities
- Diocesan authorities or other equivalent religious authorities

## **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Update**

### **Special Educational Needs (SEN) Census**

The SEN Census gathers data on SEN status and primary need in January annually. The Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo) should work alongside administrative support in their school to ensure all census information is correct. It is this information that helps to decide on appropriate funding for pupils nationally and at a Local Authority (LA) level. This year the LA continues to focus on reducing the number of pupils identified on the SEN census as NSA (No Specialist Assessment) / Other. All pupils should be identified as having a primary need.

Governors can help challenge the use of these codes and the accuracy of the census. In January the SEND Governor could ask the SENCo / Headteacher the following questions:

- How many pupils have you identified at NSA/Other for their primary need?
- What can you do as a school to identify the pupil's primary need?
- Remind the school that they do not require a formal assessment to decide on a primary need.

The attachment **here** gives further information about the SEN census for SEND governors. It is recommended that governors read this to understand how and why schools have been using the NSA/ Other code and why this needs to be avoided.

### **Guidance on SEND in mainstream schools**

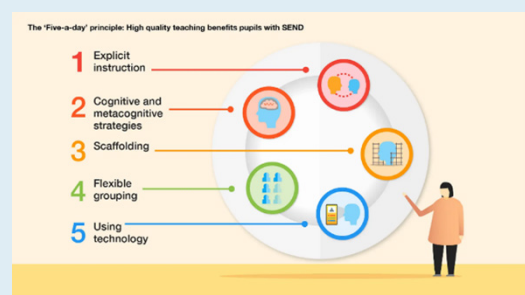
The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) provide evidence-based resources designed to improve practice and boost learning.

The guidance on '**Special Educational Needs In Mainstream Schools**' offers **five evidence-based recommendations** to support pupils with SEND:

The EEF has created a '5 a day' principles for high quality teaching that benefits pupils with SEND.

Monitoring in the Spring term could include asking the SENCo the following questions:

- How is the '5 a day' principle being used in classes?
- What adaptations are there for SEN pupils in a PE lesson? For school visits? For SEN pupils who have their swimming lessons in PE?
- What technology is used in different subjects/ lessons to support SEN?



## Training

The LIS continue to provide all schools in Cumbria with access to the National Governance Association (NGA) Learning Link e-learning modules, free of charge until 18 April 2023.

## Governance – Roles and Responsibilities

Governing boards are central to the effectiveness and accountability of schools. This short course, together with the NGA Learning Link suite of core modules covering key governance areas, will enable members of the board to become more familiar with their roles and responsibilities. A session has been arranged for:

**Monday 13 March 2023 – Book here**

Due to demand, this particular course is a repeat of the sessions held during the autumn term.

The session will be held from 6.00pm to 7.00pm and will take place on Microsoft Teams. To book a place on the course please click on the hyperlink.

## NGA Learning Link E-learning Platform

Building on NGA's e-learning module, '**Equality and Diversity: A Practical Guide for Governors**', NGA has partnered with the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) to develop a suite of e-learning modules focusing on going beyond compliance to create an inclusive culture.

NGA have published the second module, **Equality, diversity and inclusion: Beyond compliance** in the series, which aims to give users the knowledge, understanding and practical tools needed to cultivate an inclusive school/trust culture where everyone can thrive.

## NGA Partner Webinars

The NGA provides a series of **Partner webinars**: which governors of all levels of experience and knowledge may find useful.

## Governance – developing effectiveness

Following on from previous GST newsletter articles around recruitment, retention, succession planning and the recent GST virtual sessions (Chair's Role and Roles and Responsibilities), other sources of support are available for boards to access:

- GST **website** where you will find several resources:
  - GB Health Check including action plan template
  - Links and templates to help in the recruitment processes and outlining the role of governors
  - Reconstitution process
  - Chair's Personal Plan
  - Cumbria Clerks Handbook etc
- NGA webinar September 2022, **Recruiting and retaining governors and trustees: An increasing challenge for governing boards**
- NGA Webinar July 2021, **Increasing participation in governing boards: Recruiting, involving and retaining volunteers**
- NGA Webinar January 2021, **What does good governance look like?**
- NGA Succession Planning, **Finding your next chair**

## Contact

The GST continues to offer advice, support, and guidance, specific to your boards needs and can be contacted as follows:

**Jane Lees** (Barrow, Copeland and South Lakes) E: jane.lees@cumbria.gov.uk M: 07768 027 244

**Faith Matthews** (part-time), (Allerdale, Carlisle and Eden) E: faith.matthews@cumbria.gov.uk M: 07384 825 941