

Our Ref.: PBU/May

20th May 2013

Copies to: Chair of Governor; Headteacher

Dear Colleague

Key messages from recent Ofsted inspections and support for governing bodies

I am writing to reemphasise some of the key messages shared by the Local Authority and which have featured within Ofsted inspections within the district in recent months or have been observed through direct working with governing bodies. In the April 2013, the Ofsted Subsidiary Guidance stated Ofsted inspectors should consider whether governors, in implementing effective governance:

- carry out their statutory duties
- understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school, including the quality of teaching
- ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
- understand and take sufficient account of pupil data, particularly their understanding and use of the school data dashboard
- are aware of the impact of teaching on learning and progress in different subjects and year groups
- are challenging and supporting leadership in equal measure
- are providing support for an effective headteacher, or whether they are hindering school improvement by failing to tackle key concerns
- understand how the school makes decisions about teachers' salary progression
- performance manage the headteacher rigorously

If Ofsted have concerns from the points above, they would consider whether the Governing Body:

- are failing to perform well and contributing to weaknesses in leadership and management.

I hope you find the following information useful in considering your schools approaches to implementing effective governance. I have also sign posted support available from the LAs School Governor Services team.

Performance management

A committee of governors, with the support an external source, must complete the Headteacher's performance management by the end of the autumn term. The progress to these targets should also be reviewed at least one during the twelve month period.

Equally, governors should receive a report from the headteacher about the outcome of the teachers performance management. This shouldn't be the fine detail, such as individual teachers objectives. Governors need to understand the processes followed by the school.

Governors should have sufficient information to make an informed decision as to whether or not a pay increase should be made. The relationship between governors decisions to award pay increases, or not, and pupil outcomes is of growing importance in inspections.

Profile of teaching

Governors need to be aware of the schools profile of teaching on a regular basis, i.e. the percentage of lessons judged to be 'outstanding', 'good', 'requiring improvement' or 'inadequate'. Individual staff members do not need to be named, but governors need to be prepared to clarify action taken by the Headteacher if teaching is not consistently good or better. This includes ensuring staff receive the support and CPD and that the Headteacher is responding to the issued identified.

Monitoring and evaluation activities

To help governors to provide support and challenge in equal measure, governing bodies need to plan their monitoring and evaluation activities in advance. The School Development Plan (SDP) is a useful starting point for this – as it clearly sets out the schools priorities for the coming academic year. Governors should consider:

- how they will monitor each of these (assigning a governor to each priority is one approach some schools are adopting)
- how governors will learn more about the priority and the schools actions to address it
- when governors need to come into school (meetings, classrooms visits, learning walks) to see the work being undertaken to address the priority
- when reports are needed to show progress and impact of the support

The 'Annual Planner and Self-Evaluation Toolkit' developed by the LA last year has proven to be an effective resource in supporting governing bodies to undertake this planning. Support for this is available via:

- **Bespoke support:** School Governor Services will work with a small working group of governors to establish monitoring and evaluation activities.
- **'Self-Evaluating and Improvement Planning: Developing the Governing Body'** training has been scheduled for:
 - 6th June, 6.30-8.30 at Chesneys, Featherstone
 - 18th September, 6.30-8.30 at Hemsworth Arts and Community College
 - 31st March, 6.30-8.30 at Hemsworth Arts and Community College

Ofsted Data Dashboard

This new dataset was first published in the spring term of 2013. Ofsted's intention with these is to ensure all governors are aware of the headline performance indicators and how they relate to pupil outcomes at their school. They provide three-year trend data and comparisons to national

averages and national expectations in regards to minimum standards of attainment and progress.

The LA produced Governor Data Profiles in November 2012, in advance of the Ofsted Data Dashboard. These provide more detail and support governors in asking questions about the data. These have been posted to all Chair of Governors and Headteachers. These will be updated with 2013 result in September.

I would ask for these two resources to be shared with all governors in your school. You can access further copies of these resources via the following means:

- Ofsted Data Dashboard: <http://dashboard.ofsted.gov.uk/>
- Governor Data Profile: Email Andy Hoole – ahoole@wakefield.gov.uk – stating the name of your school.

RaiseOnline

During inspections, governors have been expected to know what RaiseOnline is, to have reviewed it and to have used it as part of their monitoring and evaluation activities. Your headteacher has access to this dataset. We'd encourage governors to ensure they have a degree of familiarity with this, as it forms the basis of Ofsted's initial impression of the school and the inspection focuses as well as providing a very detailed summary of 2012 results.

Developing governors confidence with pupil performance data

Within the governor training and development programme for 2012-13, the LA have scheduled training events to support governors in developing their confidence in understanding and utilising the Ofsted Data dashboard, Governor Data Profile and RaiseOnline.

- **'Knowing Your School'** event: This helps governors to understand the floor standards and national expectation from EYFS to Key Stage 5. It explores FFT estimates and asking questions about the data. This has been updated for 2013-14 as the government are changing the floor standards. Dates for this training are:
 - 25th June, 6.30-8.30 at Northfield School
 - 30th September, 6.30-8.30 at Ossett Academy
 - 29th January, 6.30-8.30 at Wakefield Town Hall
- **'Using RaiseOnline'** event: This event provides an introduction to RaiseOnline. Dates for this training are:
 - 24th October, 6.30-8.30 at Chesneys, Featherstone

Standards Committees

In working with governing bodies, we have come across a number who do not have a Standards Committee. The main purpose of this committee is to review children's attainment and progress, **including those of disadvantaged and vulnerable groups**, and provide support and challenge to school leaders to raise standards. Pupil performance data, including teacher assessment that helps governors explore whether a school is on track to achieve its targets, should be reviewed in depth within these committee meetings, as opposed to full governing body meetings (where headline data and decisions made by the committee would be shared). Without this committee, it is often difficult for governors to have a firm understanding of the data.

Support is available from the LA to address this via:

- **Bespoke support:** School Governor Services will work with a small working group of governors to establish a Standards Committee with a clear role and responsibilities.
- **'Effective Standards Committee'** training event. Dates for this training are:
 - 9th December, 6.30-8.30 at Hemsworth Arts and Community College
 - 10th February, 6.30-8.30 at Ossett Academy

Governor training and development events are at no additional costs to schools subscribing to the training service level agreement (SLA). Your governing body is welcome to send as many governors as you wish to each of these events. Places can be booked by email – governor.training@wakefield.gov.uk – or by phone – 01924 305637. If you haven't yet subscribed to the training SLA, please contact us and we'll provide you with further information.

Bespoke support is provided at no additional costs to schools subscribing to the training SLA. This support can be organised by email – governor.training@wakefield.gov.uk – or by phone – 01924 305637. This is facilitated by School Governor Services, working with a small working group of governors to address a specific area for development via daytime meetings in school.

The Local Authority are committed to supporting governors to effectively lead, support and challenge their school alongside the headteacher and senior leadership team. We continue to provide an extensive package of support to schools to help them further develop effective governance and to respond to increased expectations from the department for education (DfE) and Ofsted.

Changes to floor standards

The Department for Education (DfE) has announced changes to floor standards, the minimum level of expected performance by schools, for the period up to and including 2015. Below is a summary of the current floor standards (2012-13 academic year) and the changes that will be introduced.

Current Floor Standards for 2012 pupil outcomes

Key Stage 2:

- English and mathematics combined: 60% Level 4 or above; or
- English: Above national median (92%) making two levels of progress from Key Stage 1; or
- Mathematics: Above national median (90%) making two levels of progress from Key Stage 1

Key Stage 4:

- 5+ A*-C including English and mathematics combined: 40%; or
- English: 70% making three levels of progress from Key Stage 2; or
- Mathematics: 70% making three levels of progress from Key Stage 2

Changes to floor standards for 2013 pupil outcomes

Key Stage 2:

- 60% Level 4 or above in each of reading, writing and mathematics (this does not include the grammar, punctuation and spelling test); or
- Above national median for two levels of progress in each of reading, writing and mathematics

Changes to floor standards for 2014 pupil outcomes

Key Stage 2:

- 65% Level 4 or above in each of reading, writing and mathematics (this does not include the grammar, punctuation and spelling test); or
- Above national median for two levels of progress in each of reading, writing and mathematics

Changes to floor standards for 2015 pupil outcomes

Key Stage 4:

- 5+ A*-C including English and mathematics combined: 50%; or
- English: Above national median making three levels of progress from Key Stage 2; or
- Mathematics: Above national median making three levels of progress from Key Stage 2

Please note: The national median changes annually. DfE will publish this data during the autumn or spring terms with the Statistical First Release.

Secondary school accountability (from 2016)

In February 2013 the DfE launched a consultation on secondary school accountability measures to coincide with reforms to GCSE. This proposes significant changes, with an increased focus on English and mathematics and a new 8 qualification measure to encourage a broad and balanced curriculum.

A primary school accountability consultation is expected later in 2013.

The outcomes of these consultations are likely to result in further changes to floor standards. The Local Authority will communicate any further changes in due course.

Dissemination of these key messages

We would encourage school senior leaders and the Chair of Governors to disseminate this information amongst their staff and governing body. To support this, the LA has added a prompt to agendas for the second full governing body meeting of the summer term. Please coordinate with School Governor Services to finalise your agenda in the usual way.

Yours sincerely,



Paul Butler
Lead Officer: School Governor Services