

Governors' Newsletter

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A New Phase for School Governance

Some of you may be surprised to hear that I am retiring at Christmas. I have been involved with School Governance over 30 years and feel I need more time now to spend with my husband and ever-growing family. I have recently been reflecting on my experiences in governance and share them with you as an encouragement for those of you who may be starting out in the world of governance.

Before I had my first child, I was an English Teacher in a Secondary School. I started as a timid Parent Governor in the 1970s and, as I had four children, I continued as a Parent Governor and then a Community Governor for 20 years. For the last five of those 20 years, I served as Chair of Governors. During that time I was involved in the appointment of many staff, including two headteachers, and I experienced the process of amalgamating the infants and junior schools. In 1992 I became a Governor Trainer for Essex Governor Services and during the next 10 years progressed to Governor Advisor eventually taking on the role of one of three Governor Managers within a large team of 18. My particular responsibilities included support for schools causing concern and managing the Assessment Centre for the BTEC. It was an exciting time to be in Essex as I was part of the team which wrote and developed the BTEC for Governors for which we were awarded the Top Team Award.

Continued...../

A New Phase for Governance Continued.../

In 2002 I seized the opportunity to be part of a much smaller team in South Gloucestershire and to take on a variety of responsibilities in Governor Support. During my 5 years in post here I have introduced several tools to enable governing bodies to be more self-evaluative, the most successful being Governor Index in which 45 % of governing bodies have now taken part .

The introduction of the BTEC for Clerks has given a higher profile to the role of clerk and seven clerks have successfully completed this award. Similarly the BTEC for Governors has enabled a small group of governors to gain a better understanding of the role and therefore given them more confidence.

The Governor Support website <http://www.southglosgovernors.org> has been a major development in communicating with all governors and I hope that you will use it as an information source especially in the interim until my successor takes up post. The nationally produced course "Taking the Chair" has become increasingly popular as more Chairs of Governors recognise the need to be equipped for their role. A small group of chairs is currently producing a "Guide for New Chairs" which will also be available on the website. We have developed a group of Coaches for Governors and Clerks as well as Additional Governors to support governing bodies in their role of school

I would like to express my thanks to Tom Whittingham for encouraging me to develop my role; to Kate Davies for supporting me with efficient administrative systems and numerous cups of tea; and to all of you for working with me to improve the standards of school governance in South Gloucestershire.

With my best wishes for the future

Pat Fuggle
Governor Development Officer

improvement. Conferences have approached future issues in a proactive way and governance is beginning to be integrated with the work of the Leadership Academy.

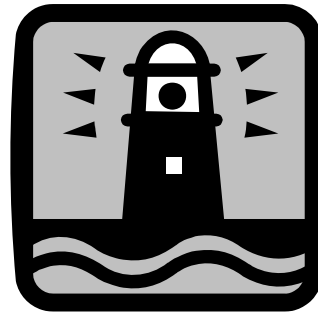
Over the past 30 years I have seen and experienced many changes in the role of governing bodies from one of compliance when we rubber-stamped the ideas of the Headteacher and the LEA to one where governors now have many key legal responsibilities. Governing bodies are recognising the need for support and training and this is reflected in the increase in the number of schools who now subscribe to Governor Support. Currently 95% subscribe. Recently I have been part of a team of Co-ordinators for Governor Services (known as COGS) producing a document entitled "Succession Breeds Success" to help governing bodies in succession-planning. Please see p.11 for more details.

I believe that Governance is at another turning point as there are different examples of governance in the pipeline such as Governing Bodies for Federations, Extended Schools and Sure Start Centres. From February 2008 there are also regulations for the Pupil Referral Unit's Management Committee which will require an Instrument of Government. One thing is certain; Governance doesn't stand still. I expect my successor will introduce new ways of working which will help you to take governance forward.

Beacon Outreach

A review of the impact of Beacon Status

It has been quite a busy few months since South Gloucestershire Council gained its status as a Beacon Council for School Improvement. Each successful Beacon Council will hold a key event and a series of outreach activities, across the 2007-08 period of its award.



South Gloucestershire, in July 2007, held a highly successful innovative event through its Leadership Academy. An International Leadership Symposium attracted a wide audience from within South Gloucestershire, neighbouring local authorities, national organisations and School Improvement Services and International partners. Reflections on the Symposium can be found on <http://www.leadersoflearning.net>. Evaluations showed the event to be rated as 87% very good or better, 38% Excellent, 49% Very Good, 13% Good and no satisfactory or poor responses!

The South Gloucestershire School Improvement Beacon year, will also include a series of Leadership Learning Walks. The learning walks are opportunities to explore a theme, to be inspired and challenged by an 'expert' facilitator and to then network learning and build future actions in a supportive framework. Details of the Leadership Learning Walks can also be found on <http://www.leadersoflearning.net>.

Regular Beacon Council meetings are held throughout the year for the five Local Authorities who gained School Improvement status in 2007. These meetings are an opportunity for the Beacon Councils, facilitated by an organisation called IDeA, to meet and share practice and to build together sustainable pieces of outreach for other Local Authorities. South Gloucestershire has also attended various national events, to publicise its work e.g. Manchester, where other Local Authorities attended to learn the best practice from the Beacon Council's for School Improvement and Healthy Schools.

South Gloucestershire has also hosted a series of visits from Local Authorities across England who are wanting a one to one session to find out more about our areas of work, e.g. The Leadership Academy, School Improvement, Raising Performance in Schools etc.

Being a Beacon Council is energising and exciting. It is demanding but fulfilling, particularly when you can network with other organisations and 'share' learning.

Tom Whittingham – Leadership, Management and Governance Strategy Manager

Common Assessment Framework

A summary of the role of the Integrated Working Team

Integrated Working covers Information Sharing, the Common Assessment Framework (CAF), the role of the Lead Professional and the introduction towards the end of 2008 of Contact Point (national database of all children and young people). It is a key component of the Children Act 2004, and as such is a statutory duty for all agencies working with children and young people.

Since January 2007, Integrated Working has been rolled out across the Authority after a pilot in the Severnvalle area in 2006.

The aim of Integrated Working is to ensure that vulnerable children and young people get the help and services they need at an early stage so that any difficulties do not get any worse. CAF is a holistic multi agency assessment to ensure that all the relevant agencies work together rather than separately for the benefit of children, young people and families.

A comprehensive training programme is up and running with dates available through until summer 2008. The training covers the CAF, the role of the Lead Professional and how to share

Lead Professionals continue to include a wide range of staff: teachers, school support staff, Head teachers, youth workers, school nurses, education welfare officers, physiotherapists, early years inclusion team, occupational therapy team, voluntary sector, police and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services. CAFs have been across the age range of 0-19 years with over 60 children and young people being supported so far.

For more information please do get in touch with the Integrated Working Team (Jacqui, Phillippa, Rachel and Reka): 01454 865734
<http://www.southglos.gov.uk/integratedworking> or
integratedworking@southglos.gov.uk

Please encourage your schools to come on training if they have not already done so!

information legally, safely and appropriately.

Multi Agency prevention panels have been set up in each of the three locality areas which are looking at the more complex CAFs and the Integrated Working Team can give help and advice on any aspect of the CAF and Lead Professional.



The website has been improved and now contains information on all aspects of Integrated Working. It provides access to all documents, forms and booklets including a new Toolkit which will help practitioners complete CAFs and provide support around the processes of panels and Lead Professional roles. We also now have leaflets for children, young people and their families which can be used to explain the CAF process.

Attendance

Governor Briefing 2007/2008

Welcome to the first Attendance Governor Briefing for the new academic year. We would like to share with you :-

1. Priorities for this year
2. Feedback from our recent Governor Training Session held in Yate.
- 3 Target Setting 2008/9

1. The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) are asking all Local Authorities to target Persistent Absence in Secondary Schools this year. Persistent absence is defined as attendance below 80%.

Particular attention is being addressed to those schools who have a significant number of pupils, at least 70, and that those pupils form (9 %) of pupils with below 80% attendance.

These schools are referred to as PA (Persistent Absence) schools.

South Gloucestershire has one PA school at Secondary level.

The Education Welfare Service is highlighting these students and sharing data with Attendance leaders in school. As an Attendance Governor this information should be available to you to discuss with your schools.

For more information please log on to the portal.swgfl.org.uk or <http://www.DCSF>

2. On 9th October 15 Attendance Governors from both Primary and Secondary Schools took part in Governor Training at Poole Court in Yate. The evening focussed on the use of Attendance Data to monitor whole school attendance and its use in targeting groups of students where attendance issues are of concern. Examples of Reports were shown and discussion on how these reports may be used to assist Attendance Governors in their work in schools.

The format of the evening included whole group and small group discussion with some pertinent questioning and sharing of experiences from all members. I found this a particularly useful evening as I also have a Governor role in a South Gloucestershire School alongside my Specialist role in the Education Welfare Service as a Systems Officer.

3. A reminder that Attendance Targets for 2008/9 are due to be set and the information sent to the LA as soon as possible. For further advice or discussion regarding this or any other attendance related matter, please contact Guy Halley SEWO Systems or myself Victoria Franklin Specialist EWO Systems on 863377 or email guy.halley@southglos.gov.uk / vickifranklin@southglos.gov.uk

Thank you for your continuing hard work to raise attendance and achievement for all our young people in South Gloucestershire schools. This success has recently been acknowledged in the press stating South Gloucestershire

as an authority with the lowest unauthorised absence in the west of 0.26% for 2006/7.

Links to further information portal.swgfl.org.uk
and <http://www.DCSF>

Victoria Franklin Specialist EWO Systems

The Revised Primary Framework for Literacy and Mathematics

An overview by Claire Ridsdale Teaching and Learning Adviser Literacy

Since the introduction of the Literacy and Numeracy strategies in the late 1990s there have been significant changes and developments. Every Child Matters has set a clear focus on improving the five outcomes for children, the Early Years Foundation Stage has become the first stage of the National Curriculum, there has been a drive towards personalisation and enrichment of the curriculum, promoted through 'Excellence and Enjoyment,' the use of Assessment for Learning has been widely developed, technology has become integral to teaching and learning and the Rose Review into the teaching of early reading has led to recommendations and guidance in relation to the teaching of phonics.

In order to reflect these key developments over the last ten years in 2006 the Primary National Strategy launched the Revised Frameworks for English and mathematics.

The Revised Frameworks

Both the English and mathematics frameworks centre around five key themes:

- Raising expectations
- Encouraging flexibility
- Developing learning sequences
- Use of assessment
- Understanding pedagogy

The guidance places an emphasis on carefully planned, purposeful, well-directed teaching and learning. Objectives have been revised to provide clearer progression with expectations for each year group being made explicit.

Both subjects promote planning units of work, developing learning through sequences of lessons which are underpinned by the 'Review, Teach, Practice, Apply, Evaluate' cycle. The structure is flexible to allow teachers to make adaptations in order to meet the needs of children in their class and personalise their learning. Formative assessment opportunities are integral throughout each unit of work. The focus is on sharing the learning journey, so that children **know** what they are learning, **recognise** the progress they have made, **understand** their next steps and **know** what they need to do to achieve them.



What's changed?

There is a significant shift from the previous 'content based' approach with its emphasis on coverage of objectives, to a 'skills based' approach focusing on

teachers identifying the skills children need to develop and then planning to address these.

The vital role of speaking and listening, identified through much research, is reflected through the inclusion of specific objectives. There is an expectation that teachers create a range of speaking and listening opportunities to enhance children's learning, with greater emphasis placed on pupil talk and interactivity in lessons.

Assessment is explicit, with direct reference to children's targets and identified outcomes for the end of each phase of learning throughout the units of work. The use of a range of formative assessment strategies are promoted, including pupil self and peer evaluation.

Challenge has been increased for some year groups, with objectives reflecting a rise in expectations.

The objectives are presented by strand as well as year group, allowing easier forward and backward tracking when planning for more able or less able pupils.

Links between curriculum subjects are promoted in order to enrich and deepen children's understanding through providing real experiences and contexts for them to apply their knowledge and skills.

The use of ICT is integral. A third of the English units have a recommended ICT outcome and ICT is recognised specifically in several mathematics strands. The frameworks require enhanced ICT skills by pupils.

The Frameworks are structured in electronic format, to providing practitioners with ready access to a broad range of appropriate guidance and resources.

What have we done as a Local Authority so far?

Over recent years we have done much to support schools in preparing for implementation of the Revised Frameworks. Working collaboratively as a primary team we have:

- Run funded training on 'Embedding ICT,' focusing on the use of sound and images to enhance learning
- Supported teachers through the Interactive Whiteboard Network
- Supported schools in completing action research in the areas of boys' writing and girls' performance in mathematics
- Run joint training on the development of 'Assessment for Learning'
- Delivered joint training on the Revised Framework throughout 2006-2007 for subject leaders
- Continued to provide support through the L&SES website and SWGfL portal.

What are the implications for schools?

Schools now need to:

- Continue to review their work, identify key priorities and take action
- Use the Revised Framework to help
- Ensure teachers are aware of expectations in each year group
- Embed the use of Assessment for Learning
- Implement a discrete, daily phonics session in foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 classes
- Consider the management and deployment of ICT resources
- Identify the professional development needs of staff including those linked to ICT
- Review the ICT curriculum to ensure it provides pupils with the skills necessary to access the frameworks
- Continue to participate in Local Authority training

What can Governors do to support?

As a governor, continue to be a critical friend. Find out where your school is currently in relation to implementation and how this is impacting upon raising standards and enriching the curriculum.

Attend governor training on the Revised Frameworks and related issues such as Assessment for Learning and ICT.

For further information or support contact:

Claire Ridsdale, Teaching and Learning Adviser (Literacy)

claire.ridsdale@southglos.gov.uk

Liz Thomas, Teaching and Learning Adviser (Mathematics)

liz.thomas@southglos.gov.uk

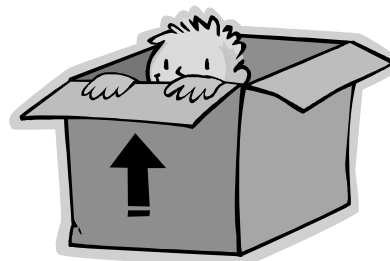
Jo Briscoombe, Teaching and Learning Adviser (ICT)

jo.briscombe@southglos.gov.uk

Or visit:<http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/primaryframeworks/>



Play Pods for Primary Schools



Have you heard the one about the cardboard box? It is a well known fact that children like to play with stuff that has no obvious use to anyone else. If it doesn't matter if you break it and if it could be used for anything your imagination comes up with, it is probably valuable to children.

South Gloucestershire, Bristol and B&NES schools have been funded to take place in an action research project to see what happens if you provide school children with a whole shipping container of what others called scrap and the play sector call 'Loose parts for Play'.

Three schools will share a play pod for 12 weeks each over the year.

- Abbotswood Primary: September - December
- Severn Beach Primary: January –March
- St Anne's Oldland Common: April- July

The project is looking at the effect on the school of improving provision of good quality play opportunities through addressing

- Training
- Risk Policy
- Storage
- Access to 'Loose Parts'

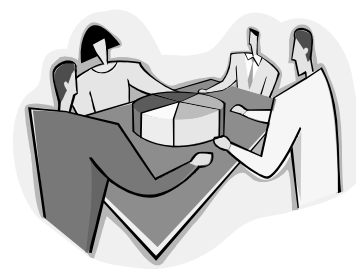
The project is being assessed by a well known academic researcher and independent evaluator called Marc Armitage. His report will be published for a national audience next year.

If you would like to visit play pods in action please contact the heads of the schools involved or contact the project manager Kirsty Wilson at Children's Scrapstore, Bristol

Michael Follett – Play Development Adviser

A Chair's Job.....Shared!

Experience of Joint Chair's at Pucklechurch Primary School



Since September 2006 the post of Chair of Governors at Pucklechurch Primary School has been shared between two people. This is something which has worked well in our particular context and is certainly an option other governing bodies may wish to think about in the future. We weighed up the pros and cons of sharing very carefully from the outset and would suggest others do the same, remembering of course that this might not be an appropriate arrangement for all situations!

The suggestion arose from a particular set of circumstances:

- the Head teacher was new to the school in September 2006
- the Senior Leadership Team were new to their posts
- the previous Chair of Governors had left to live abroad
- at that time we had a high proportion of relatively new governors

In order to promote continuity and to provide appropriate support to the Head, two of us, both experienced governors, expressed an interest to each other in taking on the role of Chair. However due to work and other community interests neither of us felt we could individually commit to the amount of time required by the job. Job-sharing was suggested and once the practicalities of doing so were explored it was officially raised and accepted at a meeting of the FGB, with the proviso that all parties would review the situation after 12 months.

The main advantage for both of us is that we've been able to share the workload.... up to a point, for example, we chair alternate FGB meetings although we both still attend! Our experience and interests as governors lie within different areas, so one of us takes "ownership" of Finance and Staffing the other Curriculum and Monitoring. As we both work and are sometimes Unavailable, more often than not the Head is still able to get hold of one or other of us. We have been able to provide each other with moral support and have both faced and dealt with challenging situations together – having somebody else to talk things through with can be very helpful! The fact that we have different personalities and viewpoints has been beneficial and our three-way discussions with the Head allow us to explore issues more thoroughly.

It's true to say that in order for this kind of arrangement to work, good communication is vital - both between us and with the Head as well as with rest of the FGB. We've known each other personally for several years but since we began this job it's true to say that we now know each other even better! That alone is not enough to guarantee success and, as far as relationships go, a high level of trust and honesty between all parties involved

- *Developing the governing body as a team*
- *Delegating fairly and effectively*
- *Encouraging others to take up opportunities*

There are a number of development stages in the life of a governor. They include recruitment, induction, taking additional responsibility, chairing a committee or task group, vice chair, chair and perhaps, chair of a federation. At each stage questions may be asked about how best to develop oneself in that role and the document offers actions and strategies for success.

David Marriott, Deputy Chair of NCOGS observes;

“Succession planning deserves to be high on your agenda. It’s an investment in the smooth continuity of the Governing Body, eliminating the lurches and bumps as members come and go. We’re constantly told we must be more strategic: it’s what succession planning is all about.”



Steve Acklam, Chief Executive of SGOSS says;

“School Governors’ One-Stop Shop regards “Succession Breeds Success”, as a timely and valuable reference for governors and governing bodies, and is delighted to have had the chance, working with private sector partners, to help fund its production.”

A copy of Succession Breeds Success has been sent to every Chair. E-versions of the publication are available to down-load from each of the NCOGS, NCSL and SGOSS web-sites:

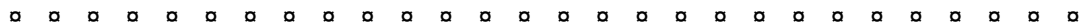
<http://www.ncogs.org.uk>, www.ncsl.org.uk, <http://www.sgooss.org.uk>



To the following Clerks who have successfully achieved the Advanced BTEC Certificate in Support and Administration of a Governing Body:

- ❖ **Mandy Anstice:** Samuel White's Infant School
- ❖ **Perry Poole:** King Edmund Community School; North Road Primary School; St John's Mead CE Primary School; St Michael's CE Stoke Gifford School
- ❖ **Rachel Thompson;** Crossways Infant School; Severn Beach Primary School; St Peter's CE Primary School

Congratulations to **Denise Dickens** from Patchway Community College who has successfully completed the Advanced BTEC Certificate in School Governance.



Date for your Diary



The next Locality 3 (Kingswood) Meeting
Will be:

**Venue : Christ Church Primary School - Hanham
Tuesday 12th February 2008 at 7.00pm**

A presentation about innovative approaches to raising achievement is planned.

All governors are welcome to attend.

Governor Training -Spring Term 2008

Title	Date	Venue
Governors' Strategic Role	15.1.08	Brimsham Green
Healthy Schools	16.1.08	BAWA
PSHE & Sex/Relationships	23.1.08	BAWA
Taking the Chair Module 2	24.1.08	Poole Court
Finance for Governors Part 2	29.1.08	Sevenside
Clerks' Network Meeting	6.2.08	Old Grammar School Chipping Sodbury
Foundation Stage	11.2.08	Ridgewood C.C.
Managing Parental Complaints	12.2.08	Poole Court
Managing Building Works	27.2.08	BAWA
Chairs' Network Meeting	28.2.08	Park Centre
Expertise & Engagement	4.3.08	Brimsham Green
Taking the Chair Module 3	6.3.08	Poole Court
Induction for New Governors	8.3.08	Bradley Stoke C.S.
Staffing Issues-Appointments	13.3.08	Bradley Stoke C.S.
Inclusion – Making it Happen	13.3.08	Poole Court
National Training for Clerks	17.3.08	Poole Court
Staffing Issues - Employment	17.3.08	Ridgewood C.C.
Critical Friend	27.3.08	Brimsham Green

NB Please note change of date and venue for Clerks' Network meeting – Now meeting on Wednesday 6th February at Old Grammar School Chipping Sodbury. The time will still be 1.00pm until 3.30pm.

For further course details please refer to your training programme

Are you getting the best deal for your design and print jobs?

Did you know that South Gloucestershire Council has a professional in-house Design and Print Service just waiting to help you?

We already do work for several schools including prospectus work, logos, letterheads, banners, signs, exhibitions and posters etc.

We are a small friendly team of experienced professionals committed to giving the best results to suit your budget. We are used to working to tight timescales/budgets and can organise all aspects of your project under one roof.

We use Apple Mac computers and our team receive regular training to keep up with all the latest software developments.

We are environmentally friendly using recycled materials and employing environmentally friendly printing practices.

All advice is free and we are happy to supply a no obligation estimate and show examples of the quality of work that we produce.

We can call on you or you can contact us by email or phone or of course you are welcome to pop in and see us for a chat.

We would love to add you to our list of valued customers so why not give us a call and see what we can do for you.



