



GST Newsletter

Issue 10, November 2024

Introduction

Welcome back to the second half of the Autumn term. As part of the Learning Improvement Service (LIS) the Governor Support Team (GST) are here to support you and your board.

To assist us, it would be very helpful if you can update us with any changes to chairs and clerks contact details, so we can ensure all boards receive our communications. GST contact details can be found at the end of this newsletter.

If anyone would like to refer back to any information in previous newsletters, please go to the [GST website](#).

News/updates

As well as the Department for Education (DfE) [School Governance update](#), below are further items which may be of interest:

Schools: statutory guidance

The DfE's [statutory guidance publications for schools and local authorities](#).

Note the [Further education corporations and sixth-form college corporations: governance guide](#) that details the legal and regulatory requirements and recommended practice that apply to further education and sixth-form college corporations had been updated.

You may also be interested in Bridget Phillipson's, Secretary of State for Education, [speech](#) to the Confederation of School Trusts.



Safeguarding

Prevent Duty - Virtual training sessions (DfE)

The DfE regional Prevent coordinators (RPEC) support and improve Prevent delivery in each region of England. Their role includes implementing Prevent duty responsibilities across schools, further education (FE) and higher education (HE) settings.

The RPECs offer large, virtual training sessions that are available to anyone working within an education setting in England. They focus on the implementation of Prevent and are designed primarily for those in dedicated safeguarding or Prevent roles.

Part of their training package has been designed by DfE for school governors to understand their responsibilities and the importance of the Prevent duty. Details of future sessions and to reserve a place are listed below:

Session date 2024 to 2025	Register on eventbrite
Thursday 12 December 2024: 5:00pm to 6:00pm	Register
Monday 6 January 2025: 5:00pm to 6:00pm	Register
Tuesday 21 January 2025: 5:00pm to 6:00pm	Register

Data protection in schools

The policies and processes schools and multi-academy trusts need to protect personal data and respond effectively to a personal data breach.

The DfE have developed a [toolkit](#) to help schools plan and use digital technology to improve outcomes for pupils, save money, reduce workload and help staff, governors and trustees:

- Understand how to comply with data protection law
- Develop their data policies and processes
- Know what staff and pupil data to keep
- Follow good practices for preventing personal data breaches.

The new tool compliments the existing guidelines from the DfE on [‘meeting digital and technology standards for schools’](#).

Equality, diversity and inclusion

The Department for Education (DfE) has confirmed [£7 million funding to combat antisemitism in schools, colleges and universities](#). This follows the number of antisemitic incidents doubling nationally in the first 5 months of 2024.

The Education Secretary stated the funding will be used to prepare and upskill schools and teachers to eradicate antisemitic abuse. There will also be an innovation fund to support the combating of disinformation on social media.

Governing boards have an important role to play in ensuring a commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion is threaded through all a school or trust is and does.

Suggested National Governance Association (NGA) Learning Link (LL) module: [Equality, diversity and inclusion](#).

OFSTED

As a result of Ofsted's [Big Listen](#) consultation, some changes to Ofsted inspections have come into place this academic year.

The NGA have produced some guidance for boards to find out about recent changes to inspection including:

The removal of single headline grades (schools will still receive grades for key judgement areas) – Ofsted is developing report cards to replace this in 2025

The removal of 'deep dives' from ungraded inspections

A revised process for **pausing** and **deferring inspections**

- **Notice for all routine inspections** (graded and ungraded) in the form of a phone call will be given on a Monday with inspections to start on a Tuesday
- **A new pilot approach to safeguarding reporting** – school leaders may be given 3 months to resolve safeguarding issues if the school is doing well in all other areas.

Sir Martyn Oliver's speech to the Confederation of School Trusts

[A speech by Martyn Oliver, Ofsted's Chief Inspector, at the Confederation of School Trusts' conference.](#)

Ofsted publishes inspector training materials

Ofsted has published [recordings of inspector training materials](#), delivered by the [Ofsted Academy](#) as part of its commitment to being a more open and transparent organisation.

Other sources of support available:

- [School Inspection Handbooks](#)
- [Inspecting schools: guide for maintained and academy schools](#)
- [Inspecting schools: guidance for parents](#)
- [Selecting new schools and schools that undergo significant change for inspection](#)
- Suggested NGA LL modules:
 - [Ofsted and the new inspection framework](#)
 - [Ofsted inspections step by step](#)
- Westmorland and Furness Council (WFC), Looking Forward to Inspection! Virtual session:
 - [13 February 2025](#)
 - [20 May 2025](#)



Resources/Finance

Further to our articles re finance in the last newsletter, DfE have a useful resource, [School resource management: top 10 planning checks for governors](#), that provides some guidance for governors, including suggested questions, board members can ask to help manage schools' resources and money efficiently.

School resource management self-assessment checklist

This [self-assessment checklist](#) helps academy trusts check they are managing resources effectively and identify any adjustments they need to make.

School workforce planning

DfE has recently updated their [guidance on how schools and academy trusts can carry out workforce and resource planning](#). It aligns to the wider [schools resource management](#) (SRM) agenda which aims to support schools and academy trusts in investing and targeting valuable resources as effectively as possible to secure the best outcome for pupils, and value for money.

Education and Skills Funding Agency to integrate into DfE

The government has [announced](#) it will be closing the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) (March 2025) and moving its functions into the DfE.

The move will happen in two stages. The ESFA's Schools Financial Support and Oversight (SFSO) teams have transferred to the Regions Group from 1 October, in time to support the launch of Regional Improvement Teams by January 2025 and the funding and assurance functions will be fully centralised by the end of March 2025. These changes will help to ensure financial improvement is central to school improvement and give education settings a single point of contact for financial management and support.

Establishing school-based nursery provision

[DfE guidance on establishing school-based nursery provision](#) .

In September the government [announced](#) the first stage of their plan to deliver 3,000 nurseries by upgrading spare spaces in primary schools.

Subsequently DfE has produced [non-statutory guidance](#) for schools, responsible bodies and childcare providers looking to open or expand school-based nursery provision.

Between 17 October and 19 December 2024, state-funded primary schools can [apply](#) for up to £150,000 in capital funding to create or expand on-site nurseries, with a total of [£15 million](#) available.

Schools must demonstrate how their proposals meet local childcare needs and ensure their local authority approves the use of surplus space for nursery provision. Schools not yet ready to apply can register interest for future phases, helping the DfE gauge demand across the country.

For more details, schools can refer to the School-Based Nursery Capital Grant [guidance](#) and the [school-based nurseries](#) explainer on the DfE's Education Hub. The DfE will also host a webinar on [Thursday 28th November 2024](#) for further information and support.

Staffing and employment: advice for schools

[DfE guidance on staffing and employment: advice for schools](#) DfE have archived the statutory guidance on Managing Staff Employment in Schools. In its place, DfE have produced [non-statutory guidance](#) which applies to both maintained schools and academies.

Please note the non-statutory guidance does include links to the Governance Handbook, which has been withdrawn and been replaced with the Governance Guides for [maintained](#) and [academy](#) schools.



The Education Endowment Foundation publishes updated pupil premium resources

The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) has published updates to their suite of [pupil premium resources](#), designed to help schools maximise the impact of their spending and improve outcomes for socio-economically disadvantaged pupils.

The resources are useful for governors/trustees as they support and challenge their leadership teams, to improve outcomes for socio-economically disadvantaged pupils. EEF provide a downloadable guide with suggested discussion prompts for governors/trustees to help support the delivery of an effective Pupil Premium Strategy.

The DfE requires every school to review and publish an updated Pupil Premium strategy statement every academic year, before 31 December.

PE and sport premium for primary schools

[DfE guidance on PE and sport premium for primary schools.](#)

As part of their role, governors and academy trustees should monitor how the funding is being spent and determine how it fits into school development plans and assess the impact it is having on pupils. To assist with this, in conjunction with the NGA and the Local Government Association, have devised a [monitoring tool](#) that can be used for this purpose.

Related party transactions: information for academy trusts

DfE has updated their [guidance for academy trusts reporting or seeking approval for related party transactions \(RPTs\)](#).

Managing asbestos in your school or college

[Guidance for school leaders, governors, local authorities and academy trusts about managing asbestos in schools and colleges.](#)

Attendance

School suspensions and permanent exclusions

DfE has updated their [guidance on the suspension and permanent exclusion of pupils from Local Authority maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units](#) to reflect new regulations on school attendance.

Providing remote education

Providing remote education: guidance for schools How schools can maintain their capability to provide remote education when it is not possible for some or all of their pupils to attend in person including link to new regulations on school attendance.

Mandatory qualification for SENCOs

Information about the mandatory qualifications special educational needs co-ordinators (SENCOs) must gain within 3 years of taking up their post.

Ofqual Chief Regulator thanks governing boards and provides exam grading update

In an [open letter](#) to governing boards, Sir Ian Bauckham CBE, Chief Regulator of Ofqual has provided an update outlining the national context for qualification results this year.

National results for AS and A levels, GCSEs and vocational and technical qualifications remained broadly stable aside from small fluctuations. Grading standards in 2025 will be maintained from summer 2024, meaning that the standard of work to achieve a particular grade remains the same as summer 2024.

Sir Ian also recognised the significant contribution governors and trustees make to schools and colleges across the country and their important role in supporting senior leadership teams in the safe delivery of exams and assessments each year.

Analyse School Performance (ASP)

The [ASP service](#) supports school improvement initiatives by offering detailed reports on pupil attainment and progress.

Suggested NGA LL Module: [Progress and attainment: using your data to improve educational outcomes.](#)

School inspection data summary report (IDSR) guide

This guide provides an [overview of the inspection data summary report \(IDSR\) for primary and secondary schools](#), including schools with a sixth form and gives guidance on interpreting the data.

What maintained schools must or should publish online

[Information that schools maintained by a local authority must or should publish on their website.](#)

What academies and further education colleges must or should publish online

[Information that academies – including any educational setting with academy arrangements – and FE colleges must or should publish on their website.](#)

Mental health and wellbeing calendar - Autumn Term 2024

Anna Freud's Mentally Healthy Schools team have produced a useful [calendar](#) looking at mental health and well-being for this term.

Period products in schools and colleges

[Updated guidance](#) for schools and post-16 education organisations in England on providing free period products for pupils and students for the academic year 2024 to 2025.

Free school meals: guidance for schools and local authorities

[Guidance for schools and local authorities about providing school meals](#) including information on free school meal eligibility. Asking leaders how they are encouraging or aiding parents to apply is key in supporting children and gaining extra funding.

Senior mental health lead training

[Apply for a grant to train a senior mental health lead](#) to develop your school or college's approach to mental health and wellbeing.

Music Opportunities Pilot

DfE has launched the [Music Opportunities Pilot](#) to help break down barriers to opportunities for disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND to receive support to progress their musical talent and interests.

Sustainability leadership and climate action plans in education

The DfE [sustainability leadership and climate action plans initiative](#). Wherever you are on your sustainability journey, this non-statutory guidance and the support now available can help you get started or take the next step.

The department's support for sustainability programmes is available to nurseries, schools and colleges and has three components:

- **[Sustainability Support for Education](#)**: a digital hub of resources, services and tools to help you identify appropriate action to develop, or build on, your climate action plan, regardless of where you are on your sustainability journey
- **[Climate Ambassador Programme](#)**: provides access to volunteer climate ambassadors and regional networks to support the development and delivery of impactful climate action plans
- **[The National Education Nature Park](#)**: brings together all the land from across education settings into a vast virtual nature park. Participation in the Nature Park is a great way to add meaningful education, skills and biodiversity action to your plan. The Park provides curriculum-linked resources and practical activities to engage children and young people in nature and the improvement of their local environment.



Reminders

Executive/Headteacher appraisal support

Any effective performance management process ensures accountability while helping to support the wellbeing and meet the professional development needs of the executive leader/headteacher.

Appraisal is an important element of the board's overall responsibility for executive leaders/headteachers performance management and this must be completed by 31 December.

The board appoints a panel and in the case of maintained schools, must also appoint an external adviser.

Any board members who are involved in the performance management and appraisal process for executive leaders/headteachers many find the following resources useful:

- [**DfE: Headteacher performance: effective management - GOV.UK**](#)
- [**NGA LL Module: Headteacher appraisal and capability | National Governance Association**](#)
- [**Impactful executive leader performance management**](#)

Constitution Review (LA maintained schools)

Governing bodies should review their constitution regularly (ideally annually) as part of their long-term planning in securing, developing education opportunities and improving opportunities for pupils in their school(s).

As part of these discussions has your governing body ever had the conversation around the option of federating with another school or schools.

All categories of maintained school, including voluntary-aided, foundation schools and maintained school nurseries can federate together under one governing body.

The establishment and membership of a federation means that the governors and school leaders commit to improving the outcomes and life chances for all children across the federation, as opposed to just a single school.

Some of the benefits from being in a federation can be:

- Financial resilience
- The opportunity for a central approach to curriculum design and expertise
- Economies of scale in the procurement of key services
- Increased opportunities for staff career progression
- The best structure for effective teacher recruitment, training and deployment across the federation.

Some useful resources in relation to federations:

- [**DfE: Federations: guidance on the governance processes - GOV.UK**](#)
- [**The School Governance \(Federations\) \(England\) Regulations 2012**](#)
- [**NCTL: A study of the impact of school federation on student outcomes - GOV.UK**](#)
- [**NGA: Federation First Campaign | National Governance Association**](#)
- If you want more information regarding the actual process, we have developed some guidance re the process, contact Jane Lees for further details.

New: Guide for governing boards on cared for children and young people

Written by BECOME, a charity for cared for children and young people, and Aaron King from 9000 Lives, [the guide](#) provides useful information and great questions to support boards discuss cared for children with their school leaders.

The guide is suitable for those governing in primary and secondary schools, including academies, as well as special schools and pupil referral units.

Development/Training/Support

WFC Clerks (Governance Professional Handbook)

The [WFC Clerks \(Governance Professional Handbook\)](#) has been updated and uploaded onto our new website for you to access/download.

School Visits Guidance – Model procedure and report template

It is seen as best practice for governing boards to have a procedure for arranging and conducting a monitoring visit to the school. We have developed some guidance notes and a model procedure and reporting template, see Appendix 20, which is included in the newly updated Clerks (Governance Professionals Handbook).

This guide provides advice and guidance around the purpose of monitoring visits, including suggestions of what to do before, during and after a school visit.

Training Sessions 2024 to 2025

Chairs Role – Developing Leadership

We are going to be running the above session in the Spring term. Look out in the next newsletter for dates.

New! Introduction to governance

For newly appointed/elected governors, trustees and local academy committee members as an introduction to their new role to help build confidence, outline expectations of the board and board members, and to consider the next steps in the development of their governance career.

Dates:

Wednesday, 12 February 2025, 5pm to 6.30pm

Thursday, 22 May 2025, 6pm to 7.30pm

New! Looking forward to inspection!

This session outlines the process of an Ofsted Inspection, particularly useful for those who have not yet experienced an inspection. However, may be useful to all governors, trustees and local academy committee members to reflect and consider their involvement and contribution to the process.

Dates:

Thursday, 13 February 2025, 5pm to 6.30pm

Tuesday, 20 May 2025, 6pm to 7.30pm

New! Introduction to the role of governance professional/clerk

For newly appointed Clerks/Governance Professionals as an introduction to their new role to help build confidence, outline expectations, and to consider the next steps in the development of their role.

Dates:

Thursday, 27 February 2025, 5pm to 6.30pm

Tuesday, 3 June 2025, 6pm to 7.30pm

Booking: Places for this event can be booked via [SLA online](#).

If you have any issues accessing the SLA, please email the School Development Team at school.development@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk to book your place.

Governance Professional/Clerking Cluster

Dates, topics and links below for sessions for the next academic year. No cost for any clerk/governance professional who would like to attend.

Wednesday, 26 February 2025, 5pm to 6.30pm

Focus on governor/trustee induction

[Join the meeting now](#)

Meeting ID: 377 475 559 102

Passcode: WGf5PV

Thursday, 5 June 2025, 6pm to 7.30pm

Focus on chairs role and board succession planning

[Join the meeting now](#)

Meeting ID: 351 357 532 43

Passcode: 9hoQ3f

Ofsted, Disadvantage and Poverty Proofing

Turning the Page on Poverty resource.

Ofsted's recent announcement of a focus upon outcomes for pupils, especially those identified as disadvantaged:

'We expect to see schools breaking down barriers for disadvantaged and vulnerable children. We want to support schools to reverse the widening gap between those children and their peers. This is why we will consult on introducing a criterion on inclusion within the report card. It will evaluate whether schools are providing high-quality support for disadvantaged and vulnerable children.'

To support schools in 'breaking down the barriers for disadvantaged and vulnerable children', we are delivering a repeat of the face-to-face Poverty Proofing Workshop offered last term.

The session will provide a wide range of actions schools can take and is free to attend for all schools in Westmorland and Furness. It will be held from 1pm to 4pm on **Thursday 21st November at the Junction 36 Meeting Rooms (NW Auctions -M6/A65 junction)** - (coffee / tea available on arrival).

To book your place, please email Office admin@morlandarea.cumbria.sch.uk (adding 'Poverty Proofing Workshop' in the subject line) as soon as possible as there is a maximum of 60 places available. The session will be suitable for headteachers, senior staff or governors from schools covering all age phases. Schools can decide who will be best placed to attend and share feedback from the messages covered on the day to ensure maximum impact in school. Please let us know the name and role of those who you are booking a place for as this will help us plan for the day.



Free school food module: NGA in partnership with DfE

NGA have announced the release of a new module on their Learning Link platform, [A whole-school approach to food](#), that has been developed in partnership with DfE.

You don't have to be a Learning Link subscriber to benefit from this learning - the module is free to all governors and trustees, providing essential guidance on the legal requirements and best practices around the School Food Standards, the board's oversight responsibilities, creating policies, and effectively monitoring school food provision.

Navigating Artificial Intelligence (AI): Essentials for school governance webinar, NGA, 19 November, 12 – 12:45pm

This introductory session will hopefully demystify AI a little and explore its potential impact on the education sector. Whether you're new to AI or curious about its future role in education, this session will provide practical insights and expert advice to help you navigate the opportunities and challenges of AI in governance.

[Don't miss out—secure your spot today!](#)

School to school support

Further to our article 'School to School Support' previously, the GST wish to remind any governors/trustees who feel they may be in a position to provide governance support to other boards on a voluntary basis, to contact the GST for an informal conversation.

We would like to extend this invite to include clerks (governance professionals).

Please contact Jane Lees or drop an email to GST.mailbox.WAF@cumbria.gov.uk to discuss further or if you would just like a little bit more detail.

GST Contact Details

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

Jane Lees

Governor Support Assistant

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