



GST Newsletter

Issue 9 – September 2024

Introduction

Welcome back to a new academic year! We hope governors/trustees/local academy committee members (LACM) have managed to take some time to enjoy a summer break and recharge batteries.

Headteachers and staff will be feeling excited and the pressure, which comes with starting a new school year. It is critical that chairs make regular contact with their headteacher throughout the year, this might be via a phone call, a virtual or face to face meeting or a mixture of all three. Your support and duty of care to your headteacher, can and should make a significant difference to their wellbeing.

If governors would like to refer back to any information in previous newsletters, please go to the Governor Support Team (**GST**) [website](#).

News/updates

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

Election of a Labour Government

Following the general election in July, and the appointment of Bridget Phillipson as the new Education Secretary, the **King's Speech** outlines the Labour Government plans and policies for schools, with the introduction of the **Children's Wellbeing Bill**.

NGA have provided a summary of the **government's plans for education**.



Safeguarding

Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) 2024

The 2024 version of KCSIE is now in force, replacing previous versions. The changes to this year's guidance are summarised in annex F of the guidance including the role of schools around the filtering and monitoring of internet content.

Reminders:

Have all governing board members undertaken:

- **Safeguarding training**
- **Safer Recruitment training**
- **Prevent Duty training**
- DfE are delivering a number of **virtual sessions** for governors/trustees understand their responsibilities and the importance of the Prevent duty
- London Grid for Learning has also produced useful resources on Prevent, (**Online Safety Resource Centre - London Grid for Learning (lgfl.net)**).

Other useful resources:

- Westmorland and Furness Council (WFC), model safeguarding policy circulated July 2024 and is available via the School Portal
- NGA Webinar; **The governance of safeguarding**
- NGA Webinar; **The effective governance of safeguarding; culture, context, compliance**
- NGA Webinar; **Where to start with complex complaints involving safeguarding.**
- NGA Blog: **Essential Guidance and Responsibilities for Governing Boards | National Governance Association (nga.org.uk)**
- DfE, **School and college security**, guidance to help schools and colleges manage their security effectively so they can meet their obligations.
- **Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges - Digital leadership and governance standards - Guidance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)** Find out what standards your school or college should meet on digital leadership and governance.
- **Cyber security standards for schools and colleges** These standards are for all schools and colleges to help build their cyber resilience. They address the core principles of cyber governance, processes and strategy.
- **School cyber security questions for governors - NCSC.GOV.UK**
- **My digital footprint | NPSA**
- Reporting Fraud Incidents; If you fall victim to any type of fraud incident schools are reminded that passwords for all accounts must immediately be changed, the fraud must be reported to **Action Fraud** and maintained schools should **report** data breaches and security breach incidents to **databreaches@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk**, **security@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk**. Maintained schools should also report all fraud or suspected fraud incidents to the Schools Finance Team via their named finance officer contact.
- **Sextortion**, with the release of the **National Crime Agency alert** in April, financially motivated sexual extortion (Sextortion), is a growing concern across the UK, with many individuals being targeted regardless of age or gender. Schools in particular need to be well versed in how to respond effectively to a sextortion incident and be on hand to support the young person in their care. For parents and carers, supporting their child through a distressing incident can be overwhelming, but having knowledge of how to effectively communicate and take action is key to protecting them online.

In response to this, the UK Safer Internet Centre has prepared a brand new **online issue page** to guide professionals, parents, carers, and young people through what to do if they are ever faced with a sextortion incident.

The page includes a series of resources and tools that have been designed specifically to help individuals navigate and respond to incidents and outlined the correct places to go if a young person or adult needs to report anything online, and where the best line of support is.

Childrens Society, Behaviour Policy Checklist

A '**behaviour policy checklist**' to support schools to develop inclusive behaviour policies, created by a group of young people who have experienced school exclusion and now advocate for other young people facing school exclusion.

Independent Report Reveals the Need to Bridge the Gap Between Students, Parents, Carers and School Staff to Transform Anti-Bullying Strategies in Schools.

Diversity Role Models, following a three year DfE funded project working with the National Council for Voluntary Organisations, has launched '**Embracing Difference, Ending Bullying, Research and Impact Report**', along with a companion '**Best Practice Guide**' for primary and secondary teachers, school senior leadership teams (SLT), and school governors.

National School Breakfast Programme

The National School Breakfast Programme funding has been extended for another year. This means your school could be receiving support to run an affordable school breakfast provision until July 2025. Evidence shows that providing a healthy school breakfast at the start of the school day can contribute to improved readiness to learn, attendance, concentration, wellbeing, and behaviour.

Schools may express an interest in joining the scheme by completing an expression of interest on the link **here** or for more information visit their website by clicking **here**.

Free flexible working webinars

As part of DfE's Flexible Working Programme, Capita is presenting a series of **free webinars** for schools and trusts on flexible working. Following the changes to flexible working legislation in April, their upcoming webinars are designed to explain the organisational and personal impact of the new laws on schools and their staff. Many of their webinars are suitable for governors and trustees as well as school staff.

Suggest NGA LL module: **Management of workload and wellbeing: the governance role**

School Website Information

The DfE has made amendments to what maintained, academy schools and further education colleges must, or should publish online, see governance section:

- **What maintained schools must or should publish online**
- **What academies and further education colleges must or should publish online.**

For the start of the academic year 2024/25, schools are expected to publish details of their music development plan as part of the music curriculum information. An example template has been provided by the DfE, but use of this template is not mandatory.



Schools should already have a music development plan in place, the summary of this plan on the school website should set out how the school will deliver high-quality music provision in curriculum music, co-curricular music and musical experiences, taking into account the key features in the **national plan for music education**:

- Timetabled curriculum music of at least one hour each week of the school year for key stages 1-3
- Access to lessons across a range of instruments, and voice.
- A school choir and/or vocal ensemble.
- A school ensemble/band/group
- Space for rehearsals and individual practice
- A termly school performance
- Opportunity to enjoy live performance at least once a year

The summary should reflect the school's music provision for the given school year and their plans for subsequent years. It should also refer to any existing partnership with the local music hub or other music education organisations that supports the school with music provision.

OFSTED

From September, following feedback, inspectors will no longer conduct subject deep dives during ungraded inspections.

Instead, school leaders will have the opportunity to discuss their school's strengths and areas for development with inspectors. Ofsted states that the changes are designed to reduce the burden on school leaders and allow more time and flexibility for inspectors to get to know the school, including its context and priorities.

The lead inspector's initial phone call will focus on getting to know the school, its context, priorities and progress since the previous inspection. There will then be more space for school leaders to help shape the inspection plan and ensure it is focused on the right things.

The inspection framework will remain unchanged, but in place of the deep dives, inspectors will typically use extended learning walks to consider the impact of the curriculum and pupils' personal development.

Safeguarding arrangements, behaviour and attendance will continue to be evaluated in the same way.

Suggested NGA LL modules:

- **Ofsted, inspection framework**
- **Ofsted step by step**

Ofsted Big Listen

Ofsted ran a consultation called the 'Big Listen' where they asked for views, from schools and children's social care to teacher training and early years and ended on the 31 May 2024.

Ofsted has now published a detailed response to its 'Big Listen' consultation (including all **supporting documents**), setting out how the inspectorate will reset its relationship with the sectors it inspects and regulates, while continuing to raise standards for children and learners.

Ofsted have also updated the **Ofsted's code of conduct: collaborative inspection and regulation**, which sets out the professionalism and sensitivity that providers can expect from Ofsted staff, and the integrity and cooperation that Ofsted expect from providers as the basis for a collaborative working relationship.

The National Foundation for Education Research (NFER), The ongoing impact of the cost-of-living crisis on schools

A survey of 1,282 teachers and senior leaders across mainstream primary and secondary schools, into how the increased cost of living is contributing to pressures on schools, and looks at how staff are responding to these challenges. The report found:

- 31% of primary school respondents said more children were showing up to class hungry
- 40% reported an increase in pupils arriving without adequate clothing
- 79% of primary school teachers (and 62% of secondary school) said they were spending their own money purchasing items for pupils
- 93% of primary and 87% of secondary leaders report making cuts in at least one area in response to cost pressures
- 46% of primary senior leaders and 33% of secondary senior leaders report making cuts to planned spending on building improvements and new buildings in response to current cost pressures.

How do your boards ensure they are hearing the parent, pupil and staff voice?

GovernorHub have produced '**Is yours a listening school**', although specifically aimed at Multi Academy Trusts and the local tier of governance, it has some useful information to help schools, including federations and maintained schools, when discussing/reviewing how engagement with stakeholder groups is conducted.

Suggest NGA LL module: **Stakeholder engagement: the governance role**

School teachers' pay and conditions: guidance

Effective from 1 September 2024, DfE have updated the School teachers' pay and conditions guidance, to help schools and governance boards develop their approach to teachers' and school leaders' pay. In addition, the **Teacher appraisal and capability guidance**, has been updated, effective from 1 September 2024.

Further education (FE) corporations and sixth-form college corporations: governance guide

The legal and regulatory requirements and recommended practice that apply to FE and sixth-form college corporations. DfE have updated the **governance guide** to align with the **College Financial Handbook**. Changes have been made to the sections on Managing conflicts of interest, Fraud and cyber security, Whistleblowing, Financial and estate management, Risk management and assurance and Executive pay.

Governors and trustees celebrated in the King's Birthday Honours List

Approximately 10 governors/trustees have been recognised in the **King's Birthday Honours List** this year, for their outstanding contributions to education and governance.

Have you ever considered nominating a governor/trustee/LACM for an honour? This could be a way of not only recognising individuals' contributions, but also raise the profile and visibility of governance, for all who volunteer to ensure the best outcomes for Westmorland and Furness children and young people.

To find out a bit more about how to make a nomination visit '**Nominate someone for an honour or award**'.

Reminders

Length of the school week

In the white paper (published in March 2022), the government announced that in order to give every pupil the opportunity to achieve their full academic potential, all mainstream, state-funded schools would be expected to deliver a minimum school week of 32.5 hours by September 2023, using their existing budgets. DfE then postponed the deadline to September 2024. The majority of schools already adhere to or exceed this minimum expectation for the school week's length, as a board are you aware if your school complies?

We have produced a briefing/guidance for boards about changing the length of the school week/day, if you would like a copy then please get in touch.



Changes to fines for term time holidays

A reminder of changes that came into place on 19 August 2024.

The schools Attendance Policy may need to be reviewed considering the changes to fines (WFC have produced a model attendance policy) to support the whole school culture around the expectations for high attendance.

As a board do you know, how do you know and if appropriate, what can be done about:

- Do all pupils feel welcomed and supported in school?
- Are parents/carers aware of the school attendance policy?
- How are staff supported to communicate the importance of attendance to parents and pupils?

You may find the NGA's webinar **Pupil Attendance** useful.

Reviewing Constitution

It is seen as best practice that schools regularly (advise annually), review their boards constitution by looking at your Instrument of Government or Articles of Association, to see if they are still fit for purpose.

We suggest that this happens in the Autumn term, when boards naturally review any schemes of delegation and committee structures in place.

If you would like to amend your constitution for:

- Maintained schools, see Appendix 18 in the Clerk/Governance Professional Handbook on the GST website
- Multi Academy and Single Trust schools, see **Chartered Governance Institute UK & Ireland** where you can register to download a free 'How to guide'.

Schools Finance (maintained schools)

As part of a board's financial statutory duties, and in readiness for review, the Scheme of Financial Delegation has been updated, see Appendix 19 in the Clerks/Governance Professionals Handbook, available on the GST website.

In addition, annually, maintained schools must complete the **Schools Financial Value Standard**, submitting a copy to the LA Finance Team.

If applicable, any maintained schools with a deficit, must have a recovery plan that is agreed by the governing body and with the LA. The plan will set out the timing for eliminating the deficit and the actions required to eliminate it.

The LA's **Scheme for financing schools and PRUs**, see annex J which provides further information around the challenges and support process involved, including a Deficit Recovery Template.

DfE provide guidance around **Integrated curriculum and financial planning** to help schools to create the best curriculum for pupils with available funding.

Suggested NGA LL modules:

- **Effective financial governance in schools and trusts**
- **Using integrated curriculum and financial planning.**

Development/Training

Training Sessions 2024 to 2025

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:

Tuesday, 22 October 2024, 4pm to 5.30pm

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:

Wednesday, 23 October 2024, 4pm to 5.30pm

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:

Wednesday, 6 November 2024, 4pm to 5.30pm

Thursday, 27 February 2025, 5pm to 6.30pm

Tuesday, 3 June 2025, 6pm to 7.30pm

Booking: Places for these events 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.

Governor Professional/Clerking Cluster Group 2024 to 2025

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

Tuesday, 5 November 2024, 4pm to 5.30pm

Focus on recruitment and retention of board members

Join the meeting now

Meeting ID: 320 336 037 175

Passcode: P2zLpZ

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

NGA Governance Glossary

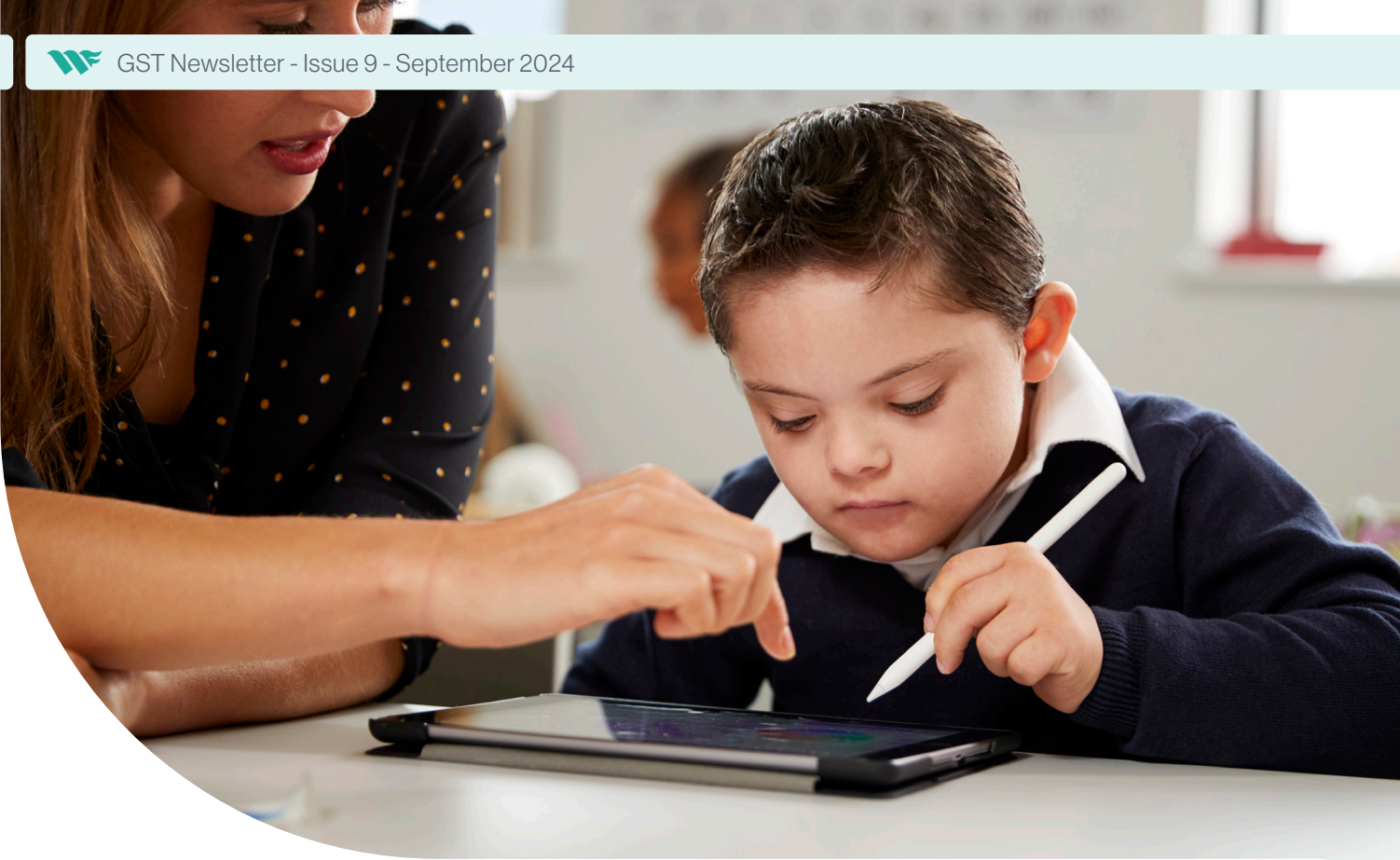
A recurring comment/question that comes up is around 'education language' and the challenge it can be, especially for new governors/trustees/LACM and clerks/governance professionals.

NGA provide a governance glossary that anyone can access/download electronically. You may want to include a copy or link, in your induction packs for new members of the board.

NGA's new report: exploring the legacy of the NLG programme

NGA has published its latest report, Growing Good Governance, which provides a 'state of the nation' review of governance in England's schools and trusts.

Drawing on analysis of the external review of governance (ERGs) from the national leaders of governance (NLG) programme, and the NGA's wider sector intelligence. This comprehensive report identifies common governance challenges and offers practical insights and resources for boards to contribute to the ultimate aim of improving academic and social outcomes for the children and young people.



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 either your Governor Support Assistant 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

E: jane.lees@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk or GST.mailbox.WAF@cumbria.gov.uk

T: 01228 226925 M: 07768 027 244