



# GST Newsletter

Issue 12, March 2025

## Introduction

Welcome back to the second half of the Spring Term, we hope you all managed to have a lovely break.

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

## Information

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

### National School Governors' Awareness Day (NSGAD), 13 February 2025

It was NSGAD on the 13 February 2025, which was an opportunity to recognise the impact, celebrate the commitment, and highlight the vital role governors/trustees play in shaping education.

Westmorland and Furness Council, would like to pass on our appreciation and thanks to all who volunteer as, governors/trustees/local academy committee members and associate members, for this important role, which contributes to improving the outcomes for all children and young people of Westmorland and Furness.

Westmorland and Furness Council appreciate the importance of this volunteer role in ensuring the best outcomes for all children and young people in Westmorland and Furness, by providing some paid time from work for Westmorland and Furness employees for governance duties.

### Recognition of the governance voluntary role

The hard work, dedication and support governors/trustees provide to the education of our children and young people was recognised in the [King's New Year's Honours 2025](#).

Have you ever thought about nominating someone for an honour? The National Governance Association (NGA) provides a [brief outline](#) of the process including links to how to make a nomination.

### Raising the profile governance

Learn Sheffield have produced [an inspiring new video](#), created as part of their governance engagement project.

This resource showcases the vital role of governance, what it means to those who serve, and how we can attract more talented individuals to these essential positions.



## Updated DfE guidance: alternative provision

The DfE has published updated statutory guidance on [arranging alternative provision](#) designed to support schools and local authorities understand their statutory duties, powers and best practice.

Updated to reflect changes in policy, the guidance includes new sections on managed moves, unregistered alternative provision and the use of in-school units.

Those governing, should refer to the guidance to understand the board's responsibilities in relation to alternative provision, including off-site directions and arranging alternative provision for suspended or permanently excluded pupils. While some of the specific statutory duties set out in the guidance apply only to maintained schools, academies and free schools are required to take account of anything in the guidance that is relevant to carrying out their functions.

## Education Secretary gives Bett Show 2025 keynote address

Education Secretary, [Bridget Phillipson's address to the Bett delegation](#) outlined her plans to modernise education through the power of technology.

## Artificial Intelligence (AI) teacher tools set to break down barriers to opportunity

The government [has announced](#) £1 million of funding awarded to 16 developers to build teacher AI tools for feedback and marking.

Bridget Phillipson, Secretary of State for Education, said that through "harnessing the potential of AI" that "we can get teachers at the front of classrooms doing what they do best – teaching."

## Generative AI in education and Generative AI: product safety expectations

DfE have updated their [Generative AI in education](#), including a link to the newly published [Generative AI: product safety expectations](#).

## Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges

DfE have updated the [Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges](#), specifically clarifying that Cyber Essentials is a requirement for colleges under their ESFA funding agreement. These standards should be used as guidelines to support your school or college use the right digital infrastructure and technology.

## Use of reasonable force in schools

DfE have updated their [guidance](#) about the use of physical restraint in schools for governing bodies, headteachers and school staff.

## UK-Ukraine enter schools partnership to drive education standards

[UK-Ukraine School Partnerships programme](#) has been [launched](#) to boost education standards and break down barriers to opportunity, by fostering cross-cultural understanding and enhance English language skills, while forging lasting links between school communities here and in Ukraine.

## Leasing for maintained schools

Information on [leasing activities for maintained schools](#), including the international financial reporting standard (IFRS 16 leases), has been updated to reflect that the IFRS 16 is now in effect.

## Leasing for academy trusts

Information on [leasing activities for academy trusts](#) following the introduction of IFRS 16 leases, has been updated to reflect that the IFRS 16 is now in effect.

## Breakfast clubs early adopter guidance for schools and trusts in England

With the scheme set to begin in the summer term of 2025, the [guidance](#) details how the strategic oversight of a free breakfast club can be incorporated into trustees and governing board's responsibilities. This will include ensuring compliance with the school food standards.

DfE has produced [guidance](#) explaining the role of schools taking part in the breakfast clubs early adopter programme.

In addition DfE has produced some [case studies](#) on how universal free breakfast clubs have helped give children a supportive start to the school day.

## School food standards: resources for schools

In addition to the [School Food Guide: guidance for governors](#), the [School food standards: resources for schools](#), the [School food standards practical guide](#) has been updated to include the [Breakfast clubs early adopter guidance](#).

## Integrated curriculum and financial planning (ICFP)

Updated information from DfE on how schools can use [ICFP](#) to create the best curriculum for pupils with available funding.

## Record keeping and retention information for academies

[Guidance](#) for academies and academy trusts on record keeping and retention has been updated.

## Children's Bill to keep children safe from exploitation

The governments [Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill](#), which includes major reforms to protect thousands of vulnerable children hidden from sight, has started its journey through parliament.

## Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill 2024: policy summary

The '[Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill 2024: policy summary notes](#)' have been updated with information on the governments amendment tabled on 28 January regarding the teacher pay measure.

## Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill: impact assessments

[Impact assessments](#) of the measures in the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill.

## Further education corporations and sixth-form college corporations: governance guide

The [Further education corporations and sixth-form college corporations: governance guide](#) has been updated with, legal and regulatory requirements and recommended practice that apply to further education and sixth-form college corporations.

## Government aims to crack down on rogue higher education operators

[Proposed reforms](#) to tighten rules around franchising and crack down on fraud in the student finance system.

As a result the DfE are now running a [consultation](#) on the proposals to strengthen oversight of subcontracted delivery of higher education, also known as franchising.

## Reading and writing boost to drive high and rising standards

DfE [announced](#) that thousands of pupils set to benefit from a £2 million investment in reading and writing, breaking down the barriers to opportunity.

Speaking at the Centre for Social Justice, Bridget Phillipson's [speech](#) laid out plans for a new era of school standards delivering on the [Plan for Change](#), including the announcement of the first cohort of appointed [Regional Improvement for Standards and Excellence \(RISE\)](#) advisers.

## School improvement support

DfE have a [collection of links sign posting to support](#) available to help all schools improve, including resources on teaching, development, curriculum, leadership, governance and finance.

## Inspection Data Summary Report (IDSR): news and updates

The IDSR has been [updated](#) with the 2025 release:

### IDSR release: 6 February 2025

This release contains:

- Revised key stage 2 data for 2024
- Revised 16 to 18 data for 2024

### IDSR release: 16 January 2025

This release contains:

- Provisional key stage 4 data for 2024.

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

# Reminders and items for action/checking

## Ofsted launch consultation

The [Ofsted's new inspection framework consultation](#) was launched on the 3 February 2025, and will run for 12 weeks closing on 28 April 2025. It is expected that Ofsted will publish the outcome of the consultation in the Summer.

The consultation has 5 proposal areas:

- Record Cards:
  - [Ofsted consultation - new report cards.](#)
- Education Inspection Toolkits:
  - [Early years inspection toolkit](#)
  - [School inspection toolkit](#)
  - [Independent school inspection toolkit](#)
  - [FE and skills inspection toolkit](#)
  - [ITE inspection toolkit.](#)
- Inspection Methodology
- Full inspections and monitoring inspections in state funded schools
- Identifying state schools causing concern:
  - [Flowchart](#)
  - Ofsted does not decide what happens to schools once they are placed in a category of concern. The DfE does this. See the [DfE's consultation](#) for proposed changes to what this will mean for schools.

There will be no overall effectiveness grade, instead Ofsted is proposing a 5 point scale to grade different areas of a provider's work:

- Exemplary (dark green)
- Strong (green)
- Secure (light green)
- Attention Needed (amber)
- Causing Concern (red), and
- 'Met' or 'not met' for safeguarding:
  - His Majesty's Chief Inspector, Sir Martyn Oliver from Ofsted attended the House of Commons Education Committee. Looking to the future of inspection around safeguarding he said:

'Safeguarding should be separate and not a part of leadership and management as it is right now...also, because safeguarding is very much a met/not met judgment, it is very difficult to say safeguarding is outstanding. Even in outstanding settings where good things are happening, bad people can still exist and bad things can still happen. We have seen that, sadly, in far too many cases across all the remits in which we work. It is nonsense to try to judge anything other than met/not met.

Keeping Children Safe in Education, which is an inch and a bit thick, and that is a difficult job. Every year it is updated. If you are a standalone primary headteacher, you have to try to get through that every year. Even though it summarises what is different, it is still a big requirement. I have tasked Lee with explaining in the new framework what are the key aspects of that against which we will hold people to account.

'It is going to be unbelievably obvious what we will inspect on. I do not expect anyone to fail safeguarding, because I do not want any children to be unsafe anywhere.'

You can read Sir Oliver's remarks in full [here](#).

The areas for judgement are:

- Leadership and governance
- Curriculum
- Developing teaching
- Achievement
- Behaviour and attitudes
- Attendance
- Personal development and wellbeing
- Inclusion
- Safeguarding
- Early years in schools (where applicable)
- Sixth form in schools (where applicable).

Catch up on NGA's [latest webinar](#), where NGA's Deputy Chief Executive, Sam Henson, is joined by Ofsted's Dr Sue Morris-King to discuss the latest developments in inspection proposals and their impact on your school or trust.

## The Prevent duty: a focus on whole-community safeguarding

We advise that all those who govern complete [prevent duty training](#) as part of their safeguarding duty as laid out in [Keeping Children safe in Education](#).

NGAs [latest blog](#) explores the complex landscape of Prevent, acknowledging rising youth violence and the need for effective safeguarding. It encourages investing in a whole-community approach that supports young people rather than stigmatising them. Crucially, the blog offers practical guidance for school governors and trustees, outlining key questions to ask to ensure you are fulfilling your responsibilities under the Prevent duty.

## Update your records: add your clerk/governance professional details on Get Information about Schools (GIAS)

Schools and trusts can now add their clerk/governance professional details to the [GIAS](#) platform.

This is not a mandatory requirement, but the DfE are strongly encouraging institutions to add their clerk/governance professional's details. This will allow the DfE to communicate directly with clerks/governance professionals and share key information, rather than relying on schools or chairs to pass news along.

System limitations mean it is only possible to add individuals, as opposed to governance service providers. Updates to GIAS can be made in the usual way, with [supporting guidance available](#).

## Schools Financial Value Statement (SFVS) – LA maintained schools only

A reminder that the SFVS needs to be signed off and submitted to the LA no later than 31 March 2025.

## Consistent Financial Reporting (CFR) data 2023/24 – All Maintained Schools

Please be aware that the DfE have now updated the [financial benchmarking and insights tool](#) to include Westmorland & Furness maintained schools' CFR data for 2023/24.

This means you can now benchmark your income and expenditure for 2023/24 against other similar schools as required by the SFVS which is due to be completed and uploaded to the School Portal returns folder no later than **31 March 2025**.

## Simpler Recycling: workplace recycling in England

[Guidance](#) from 31 March 2025, schools will be required (if not already in place) to separate dry recyclables, food waste and black bin waste.

## Updating the Gatsby Benchmarks for 2024 and beyond – the next 10 years

Ten years on from when they were first published, the Gatsby Benchmarks for good careers guidance are being implemented in over 4,700 schools and colleges across England.

A lot has changed in the past decade: technological advances, innovation in education and major shifts in the labour market.

Now, the [Gatsby Benchmarks](#) have been updated to ensure the framework is fit for the future. The updates have been made after two years of research and consultation.

# Training/Development

## Westmorland and Furness Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE)

Within its statutory responsibilities, the [SACRE](#) supports and enhances the provision of religious education, where the agreed syllabus is in use.

SACRE produce newsletters, the most recent being [January 2025](#). SACRE is also providing some free training for governors/trustees on [Improving the Provision and Quality of Collective Worship and Inclusive Assemblies](#).

## School business professionals: training and development

DfE have updated this [page](#) to reflect the current offer of training and development support for school business professionals, including information on the bursaries, training workshops, webinars and mentoring opportunities that are available.



## NGA Webinar: Disadvantage – Widening the lens

This [webinar](#) explores governance strategies for breaking barriers in SEND and pupil premium.

The NGA have also made available the following resources/toolkits:

- [Widening the lens on disadvantage](#)
- [Poverty Toolkit](#)
- [SEND Toolkit](#)
- [Vulnerability Toolkit](#)
- [Ethnicity Toolkit](#)
- [Mental Health & Wellbeing Toolkit.](#)

Download and save whilst they are available.

## New DfE guidance: Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) responsibilities for governing boards.

The DfE has published new [guidance](#) to help governing boards understand their responsibilities towards children and young people with SEND in their school or trust.

The guidance details:

- Roles and responsibilities of the governing board
- Checklist on providing appropriate support and challenge
- Useful datasets to build an evidence base for strategic oversight.

## Volunteer as a School Panel Member in Westmorland and Furness!

Are you passionate about education and fairness?

We're seeking Volunteer Panel Members to join Independent Review Panels for School Admission Appeals and Permanent Exclusion reviews. As a panel member, you will:

- Help ensure fair decisions for children seeking admission to their preferred school
- Review permanent exclusion decisions to ensure fairness and balance
- Work with other independent members to assess the evidence and provide impartial judgments

This is a rewarding opportunity to support local education and make a meaningful contribution to your community. If you're interested in making a difference, we'd love to hear from you! Please send your cover letter and CV to the School Appeals Team at: [Recruitment@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk](mailto:Recruitment@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk).

## NGA Learning Link module update – Ofsted inspections: a guide for governing boards

Following changes to the Ofsted inspection process and handbook in September 2024, NGA have updated their e-learning covering the topic.

[Ofsted inspections: a guide for governing boards](#) combines the previous two modules covering the inspection process and framework into one helpful guide which outlines everything you need to know to successfully prepare yourself for your next Ofsted inspection, as well as the key changes made to the inspection process in September 2024.

By the end of this module, you will understand why schools are inspected, what inspectors look at and what criteria they judge against, and ultimately have a greater confidence in being part of an inspection and answering relevant questions as part of the inspection.

## New! Introduction to governance

For newly appointed/elected governors, associate members, trustees and LACM 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:

**Thursday, 22 May 2025, 6pm to 7.30pm.**

## New! Looking forward to inspection!

This session outlines the current 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 LACM to reflect and consider their involvement and contribution to the process:

**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:

**Tuesday, 3 June 2025, 6pm to 7.30pm.**

## Chairs Role – Developing Leadership

This session provides delegates with a greater understanding of the role of the chair in leading the governing board to fulfil its strategic responsibilities. It will also consider ways in which to strengthen the team to lead to effective succession planning:

**Thursday, 3 April 2025, 5pm to 6.30pm.**

**Booking:** Places for any of these events can be booked via SLA online.

If you have any issues accessing SLA online, please email the School Development Team at **[school.development@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk](mailto:school.development@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk)** to book your place.

## Governance Professional/Clerking Cluster

Details of our last sessions for this academic year. No cost for any clerk/governance professional who would like to attend:

**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**.

# 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](mailto: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

Email: **[jane.lees@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk](mailto:jane.lees@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk)** or **[GST.mailbox.WAF@cumbria.gov.uk](mailto:GST.mailbox.WAF@cumbria.gov.uk)**

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