



<http://oga4schoolgovernors.org.uk>

21st February 2018

Dear Colleagues,

So what are the current concerns for governors, apart of course from school funding, a continuing concern as the pay-cap starts to be eased, notably for support staff and inflation (RPI) rising to 3.9% at September 2017. Certainly we must expect to continue to lobby for pay settlements and other Government initiatives to be fully funded. It is pleasing to note that the new Secretary of State, Damian Hinds MP, has agreed to meet with F40, who will continue to work for a genuinely fair National Funding Formula. Of course with the change of Education Secretary we yet again face uncertainty over the future direction of education policy. It is to be hoped that the recent shift to using evidence of what works rather than political dogma continues.

It is also to be hoped that the Speaker Dame Kate Dethridge at our Spring meeting, to be held on Monday 5th March at 7.15 -8.45pm at St Gregory the Great School, may be able to throw some light on the future direction of education policy and the relationship of the Schools Commissioners with the Maintained School sector when she will be talking about "Improving Schools in the Academy Age". It is not too late to book your free place by emailing judith.bennetts@outlook.com

Our speaker at the November Open Meeting made a very valid point well received by those attending "So much has been added to our existing model of schools that we've run out of attachment points for new ideas; we need to stop bolting things on to the outside of what we already doing and go back and rethink - retool - regrow-the basics. We need to get radical" Certainly the recruitment and retention crisis (another area of concern) would support that view, but if our Headteachers wanted to get radical would Governors be backing them? Definitely we must prioritise well-being amongst staff and pupils to make our schools as happy and safe places as they can be.

Another significant concern must be the General Data Protection Regulations, which come into force at the end of May 2018, and the associated cost of appointing an independent Data Protection Officer. The LA has issued recent initial guidance in *Schools News* and the matter will be addressed at the upcoming Heads & Chairs Briefings in March – do please remember that if Chairs are not able to attend another Governor is welcome to substitute. Schools Forum was recently informed that the LA is discussing provision of a statutory professional data protection service for Maintained schools, into which academies might also buy. Model Policies are also being updated in light of the new Regulations. Schools should not rush into the purchase of external support. A reminder that Governors are welcome to subscribe to *School News* emails by completing the subscription request in the bottom right hand corner of the InSite Schools webpage at <http://schools.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/>

For those of us that read *Schools Week* it is tempting to wonder how often Governors and Trustees and even employees at the Education and Skills Funding Agency and the DfE act ethically and in accordance with the Nolan principles of public life (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-7-principles-of-public-life>). When was the last time these were considered at your Governing Body? Most of us take for

granted that staff and Governors will act in the best interest of children, as indeed most do, but it is hardly surprising that many schools are still reluctant to join Academy chains when headlines have included:

'TWO THIRDS OF TRUSTS CAN'T JUSTIFY CEO PAY'

'Durand's eye-watering legal bills in wake of Ofsted battle'

'Bright Tribe's million pound splurge on recruiting 3 schools'

'The incredible hidden costs of seven years of free schools – the total sum of money spent on free schools up to April 2017 was over £3.6 billion'

'Sweet-talking the ESFA can be worth six figures to struggling trusts'

The ethos of the Academy has to be the number one priority for Governors when weighing the pros and cons of academisation; asking about the Nolan Principles might be a good starting point, and remember CEO pay is published in Academy accounts – which must be displayed on their website.

The National Governance Association (NGA) has an excellent model code of conduct updated in 2017 and suitable for all types of school based on the Nolan principles.

I am looking forward to seeing as many of you as possible on the 5th March.

Yours sincerely,



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