

Director of Children’s Service Report to Governors

AUTUMN 2013

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***DEVELOPING THE
EFFECTIVENESS OF
YOUR GOVERNING BODY***

**For more information please
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Education Strategy for Barnet 2013/14-2015/16

Summary

On 24 June 2013, the council's Cabinet endorsed the Education Strategy for Barnet 2013/14-2015/16. The Cabinet papers can be found here:

<http://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s9215/Cabinet%20report%20-%20Education%20Strategy%20for%20Barnet%2024th%20June%20Final%204.pdf>

The strategy is now being prepared for publication at the beginning of the Autumn term.

The development of the strategy was shaped through a series of consultation events and engagement with schools, governors, elected members and other partner organisations and was overseen by the Education Strategy Board (with representatives from headteachers, Barnet and Southgate College, Middlesex University, Public Health and chaired by Kate Kennally, the council's Director for People).

The strategy sets out the framework for our partnership to continue to champion and meet the needs of all Barnet's children and young people whilst recognising the changing educational landscape within which we all work.

Many thanks to everyone who helped to shape this strategy and if you have any queries or questions in relation to the strategy, please email

Governors' Role

For Governors to note the information above

For information by

All Governors

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Summary

The Children and Families Bill, covering a wide range of provisions affecting children and young people and currently in the final stages of its passage through Parliament, will bring about the most far-reaching changes in SEN legislation for over thirty years. It is expected to be implemented from September 2014. The SEN elements of the Bill set out to reduce the sometimes adversarial nature of the SEN process to a minimum, by engaging parents as partners in the process of identifying, assessing and determining provision for their children. The voice of children and young people will also be enhanced, while professionals in education, health and social care will be expected to work much more closely together, jointly assessing and planning to meet children's needs.

The principal changes expected are:

- the replacement of statements of SEN with Education, Health and Care plans, underpinned by a shorter, integrated assessment process and joint planning to meet needs
- the provision of statutory protections comparable to those associated with a statement of SEN up to 25 - instead of being cut off at 16 years
- a requirement to develop a 'Local Offer' of provision and services which sets out clearly what parents can expect to be made available in their area, from mainstream school services to support from the local authority and from therapies provided by health to respite care of children with severe and complex needs
- giving parents the right to a personal budget to purchase support, though not to pay for a particular type of school place.

Twenty 'Pathfinder' sites, comprising thirty-one local authority areas, have been tasked by the government to develop and trial: an integrated assessment process; a single, joined up 'Education, Health and Care Plan'; and personal budgets across education, social care and health, and adult services as appropriate for children and young people from birth to 25 years. The Department for Education has commissioned a series of evaluations to review Pathfinder progress. An evaluation of the new processes and their implementation over the last 18 months is now available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/evaluation-of-the-send-pathfinder-programme-process-and-implementation>

A new draft SEN Code of Practice has recently been published which will determine how schools, academies and free schools and local authorities are expected to work with children with SEN. Once the Code is in its final form, Barnet educational psychologists will provide school staff and SENCOs with advice and support regarding its implementation as required.

The draft Code can be found at:

<http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/s/sen%20code%20of%20practice%20indicative%20draft%20for%20committee.pdf>.

Barnet is preparing for the implementation of the Bill. It will be holding an initial stakeholder event early in the Autumn term to which parents, schools, representatives from the voluntary sector and others will be invited. The school circular will provide regular updates on progress.

As part of the Governor Support and Development programme, there will be a briefing for Governors on Tuesday 22 October 2013 at 7 – 9pm at North London Business Park. Those who wish to attend should register via the Governor Support and Development programme.

Governors' Role	For Governors to note the information above
For information by	All Governors
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Introduction 2012/13 was the first year of completion of the Standard and to that extent some schools were unclear as to the detail of how the form was to be completed. However most schools made a good effort and managed this within the deadline of 31 January 2012 and completed the form satisfactorily. Many found it straightforward after the more detailed approach of FMSiS.

General Commentary After much chasing all schools made satisfactory submissions before the end of the financial year, enabling the Chief Finance Officer to report to the DfE that there had been a 100% completion by Barnet schools..

The following applies to the few –

- did not answer all the questions
- made subjective assertions in response to questions rather than providing facts and evidence
- did not provide an Action Plan despite not answering Yes to all questions.

Accordingly a small number of submissions had to be rejected for schools to do further work and make revised submissions.

Some schools appeared to answer “Yes” to everything when it is doubtful that every aspect was 100%. They thus missed the opportunity to use the Standard for the purpose of self improvement.

The following applies to a number of schools –

- some did not provide each of “comments, evidence and proposed action” in response to each question
- some questions contained more than one question in the question and the schools answered Yes but only provided comments and evidence for one part of the question rather than each aspect of the question.

With effect from the summer term 2013 the scope of Internal Audit reviews includes the SFVS and schools will be expected to make all evidence available to audit.

Recommendations

Schools should use the Standard as a checklist for self improvement and not take the approach that “Yes” is the right answer.

Schools should provide a response to each question under the headings of
Comments; Evidence; Proposed action (if applicable)

Schools should carry out the SFVS review in late summer or early in the autumn term to get it reviewed by the Finance Committee and approved by the Governing Body in the autumn term to meet the latest submission date of 31 January 2014.

**Governors’
Role**

For Governors to note the information above

**For
information
by**

All Governors

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Summary

The Governors' Handbook has now been published. The Handbook replaces the Governors' Guide to the Law and it provides information about the role and legal duties of governing bodies in maintained schools and academies (including free schools).

Section 1 outlines the core role and functions of school governing bodies, all governors should read this section.

Sections 2 to 8 summarise all of the specific legal duties on governing bodies –providing a first point of reference for those with a specific area of interest.

Further reading, signposted from within each section, provides more detailed information on governing bodies' legal duties and any supporting guidance or resources

The Handbook is now available at the DfE website at:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/governance/b00224781/govhandbook>

Governors' Role

For Governors to note the information above

For action

All Governors

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Summary

[The School Governance \(Roles, Procedures and Allowances\) \(England\) Regulations 2013](#) come into force on September 2013. The new regulations apply to all maintained schools and pupil referral units and make significant changes to the roles and responsibilities of governors and the way in which the governing body functions. The regulations replace three sets of existing regulations; the [Procedure Regulations](#), the [Terms for Reference Regulations](#) and the [Allowances Regulations](#).

Roles of the Governing Body and Headteacher

The Regulations set out the roles of the governing body to include the three core functions as defined in the [Governor's Handbook](#), namely:

- (a) ensuring that the vision, ethos and strategic direction of the school are clearly defined;
- (b) ensuring that the headteacher performs his or her responsibilities for the educational performance of the school; and
- (c) ensuring the sound, proper and effective use of the school's financial resources.

The "critical friend" function disappears as a statutory requirement.

The Regulations state that, in exercising their functions the governing body shall:

- (a) act with integrity, objectivity and honesty and in the best interests of the school; and
- (b) be open about the decisions they make and the actions they take and in particular shall be prepared to explain their decisions and actions to interested parties.

The Regulations state that the governing body must appoint a clerk with a view to ensuring their efficient functioning and must have regard to advice from the clerk as to the nature of the governing body's functions.

The responsibilities of the headteacher are set out to include:

- (a) the internal organisation, management and control of the school; and
- (b) the educational performance of the school.

The Regulations state that the Headteacher is accountable to the governing body for the performance of all his or her responsibilities, and that the headteacher must comply with any reasonable direction of the governing body.

Meetings and Proceedings of Governing Bodies

Under the new Regulations, the Governing Body has more freedom in deciding the term of office of chair and vice-chair.

The provisions for calling meetings of the Governing Body have not changed but under the new regulations there is provision for the Governing

Body to approve alternative arrangements for governors to participate or vote at meetings of the Governing Body including (but not limited to) telephone or video conferencing.

An associate member, provided they are aged over 18, has voting rights in a committee to which that person is appointed as determined by the governing body.

Declarations of Interest

The provisions relating to declarations of interest and conflicts, including requirements to withdraw, have been simplified but not changed in substance.

Delegation

There has been a loosening on the restrictions on delegation. It is now permitted to delegate anything to a committee or an individual except:

- (a) a resolution for the dissolution of the school
- (b) approval of the first formal budget plan of the financial year
- (c) suspension of governors
- (d) functions in relation to exclusions cannot be delegated to an individual except insofar as the chair may take action as a matter of urgency
- (e) as limited by the regulations relating to the constitution of Governing Bodies, i.e decisions regarding the appointment of governors or relating to the school's Instrument of Government
- (f) Staffing functions can only be delegated as provided in the regulations relating to staffing

Delegation of pupil admission functions are constrained by the Admissions Code

Governors' Role

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Summary

FFT has a new online facility for school governors. It provides up-to-date information about their school's attainment, progress and attendance and also estimates for future performance. Most Barnet schools have access to FFT and should be able to provide governors with a username and password.

Further support materials for governors and a training guide can be downloaded from the FFT website: www.fft.org.uk

The **FFT Governor Dashboard** is a useful complement to the **Ofsted** Data dashboard which is available here: <http://dashboard.ofsted.gov.uk/>

Governors' Role

To note the information above.

For action

All Governors

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7.**The Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)****Summary**

Barnet is rolling out a Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) which will be based at North London Business Park . The MASH will be the first point of contact for all referrals regarding children in Barnet.

The MASH will co-locate Police, Children's Social Care, Education, Housing, Health and other agencies in a confidential environment. This new way of working will provide a timely consistent response to referrals ensuring the most appropriate agency is identified to support the family.

The MASH will go live fully on the 19 August 2013 . Agencies will no longer refer to the Duty Team from 19 August 2013 but to the MASH team via email: mash@barnet.gov.uk (or phone: 0208 359 4066).

Information about the MASH will be available on the www.barnet.gov.uk/wwcib/MASH from August 2013. Information will also be available on Barnet's website at www.barnet.gov.uk/MASH. Training will be available from September 2013 and this will include the MASH, thresholds and social care.

Governors' Role

To note the information above.

For action

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