

# GOVERNOR HEADLINES

*Governor Headlines is a regular newsletter produced by Suffolk County Council's Governor Services team to support you in your role as governors and keep you informed of the latest updates.*



Welcome to issue #43 of Governor Headlines for June/July 2021.

At our Governor Headlines Live session in May we were delighted to be joined by Professor Adam Boddison, Chief Executive of nasen (the National Association for Special Educational Needs). This edition of Governor Headlines continues to build on the themes of SEND and inclusive practice relating to the role of governance. We are also thinking ahead to September and arrangements for Headteacher Performance Management, as well as sharing thoughts on succession planning for both school leaders and the governing board.

As we reach the end of the Summer Term and the end of an academic year nobody could have predicted, we want to thank you all for your contribution to supporting your schools, their staff and their pupils.

We wish you all a lovely summer but continue to be contactable at [governance@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:governance@suffolk.gov.uk) . Please do not hesitate to contact us with any support needs or governance queries.

## Governor Headlines Live Session – Summer Term

Our Governor Headlines Live session for the summer term took place on the 12<sup>th</sup> May 2021 and we were pleased that so many of you could join us.

The session covered:

- governors' participation in SEO Visits and the value of reading the rolling record to strengthen governor understanding of school improvement priorities
- Early Career Teachers
- a national SEND update from Professor Adam Boddison.

Professor Adam Boddison is the Chief Executive of nasen (the National Association for Special Educational Needs) and a National Leader of Governance. We were delighted to have him speak at the session and share his expertise. Below is one of the slides from Adam's presentation.

### Five Suggestions for Governors and Trustees

1. Give SEND an equivalent status to pupil premium
2. Make SEND everybody's responsibility (like safeguarding)
3. Ensure every leader is a leader of SEND
4. Think SEND!
5. Maximise the impact of the SENCO through effective deployment



Sally Blackman (Suffolk County Council's Deputy Head Specialist Education Services, Head of Social, Emotional, Mental Health Service) also attended the live session:

*"It was great to be a part of your Governor Live event in May and have the opportunity to hear Professor Adam Boddison speak. The key messages he shared around SEND and Inclusion were spot on for Suffolk schools and Suffolk Governance. Like safeguarding, inclusion is everyone's business. As Adam reminded us, every teacher is a teacher of SEND, every leader is a leader of SEND...and so every Governor is a Governor of SEND."*

As well as discussing SEND or Inclusion with your SEO, please do not hesitate to contact Sally Blackman or Kim Hodge (Head of Physical and Sensory Service) for any additional information. Governor CPD on Inclusion is available upon request.

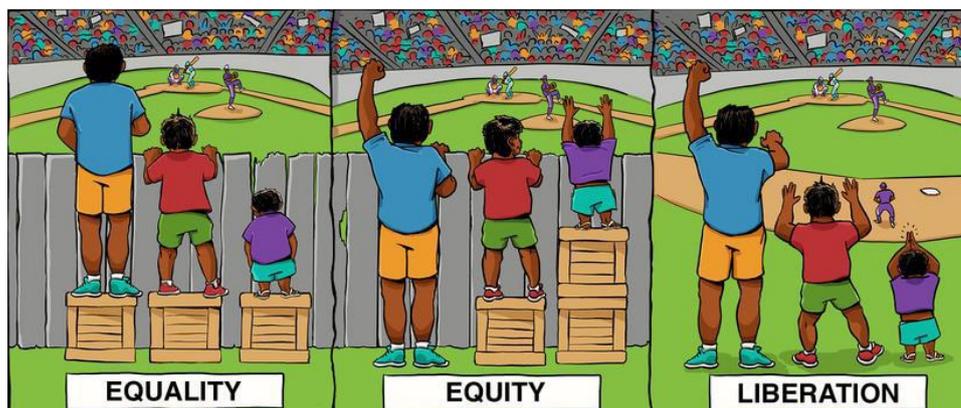
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If you were unable to attend Governor Headlines Live, a recording of the session is available to watch and can be found [here](#).

## Inclusive Practice in Schools

Inclusive practice is education that includes everyone, making it possible for pupils with SEND to achieve their potential. Everyone works to make sure all pupils feel welcome, valued, and that they get the right support to help them develop their talents and achieve their goals. When education is truly inclusive it will benefit all learners, not only those with SEND.



To support you in monitoring and supportive challenge, it would be helpful to make yourself familiar with the SEND Code of Practice, in particular, chapter 6. This highlights the 4 broad areas of SEND, responsibility and accountability:

**Communication and Interaction**

**Cognition and Learning**

**Sensory and or Physical**

**Social Emotional Mental Health**

If governors are aware of these four areas of need from the SEND Code of Practice it will allow for more informed, purposeful discussion. Key lines of enquiry for

governors will be around how well are pupils with additional needs in these areas are making progress and what is in place to support them to overcome barriers to learning? How many pupils are making expected progress towards their EHCP or targets and what is in place for those who are not?

Pupils with SEND are more likely to be excluded than those without SEND. The Timpson Review, May 2019, highlights how much more likely this is, suggesting that a pupil is 4 times more likely to be permanently excluded if they have social emotional behavioural and mental health difficulties, 6 times more likely to be permanently excluded if they have behavioural social and emotional difficulties and 7.5 more likely to be excluded if their SEND type is not recorded. There is a question to pose here: 'how are we meeting the needs of pupils and supporting what may be at the heart of their needs?' Is there a danger that some are being managed for behaviour rather than an underlying unmet need? There are often SEND needs that may not be being met and they also require input from the SENDCo/SEND team.

Following on from this, as a governing board it would be useful to consider:

- What support and/or strategies are in place for pupils in all categories of SEND but particularly those mentioned in the Timpson Review?
- What is in place to accurately identify the needs of pupils who present with behaviour challenges, in particular, those displaying social, emotional, behavioural and mental health difficulties?
- What do our exclusion rates (permanent or fixed term) tell us about inclusive practice in our school?
- Do the governing board and school leaders in the school champion that SEND is everyone's responsibility and if so, how?

Alongside these considerations ask yourself, how do I know? What is the evidence to demonstrate this? The current covid situation has meant that it is paramount that governors are sensitive to the school and its leaders. This should be balanced with the need to ensure that some of our most vulnerable pupils are given the best opportunities within education to ensure they maximise their potential and life chances.

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## Ofsted Inspections – Autumn 2021

Ofsted have confirmed that the full programme of graded school inspections will resume in autumn 2021.

On 4 May 2021 Ofsted began to restart some on-site inspections under the Education Inspection Framework (EIF). These include section 8 monitoring inspections of schools graded 'inadequate', and those graded 'requires improvement' at their last 2 consecutive full inspections.

In line with their usual policy, where inspectors find evidence that an inadequate school has improved and is no longer inadequate, they will be able to convert this to a [section 5 \('full'\) inspection](#), which will be graded.

Similarly, where inspectors believe a school judged 'requires improvement' shows improvement, they may deem the section 8 monitoring visit to be a section 5 inspection. Inspectors will do the same if there are serious concerns (for example, about safeguarding).

Ofsted will also inspect 'good' schools that, due to the pandemic, have not had an inspection within the statutory 5-year window. These will be section 8 inspections and follow the usual approach to inspecting good schools, as outlined in the [section 8 school inspection handbook](#).

'Outstanding' schools will also be able to request an inspection. When considering requests, Ofsted will prioritise those schools that have gone the longest without an inspection. School leaders can request an inspection by writing to the relevant Ofsted regional director.

Ofsted will continue to prioritise inspections of all schools where significant concerns are raised, when necessary.

Consequently, under these plans, most schools will not receive an inspection until the programme of routine inspections restarts in September.

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## Looking Ahead to Headteacher Performance Management

The summer term is a good time to review and take stock of things in advance of the autumn term. This includes a review of the membership of the Headteacher Performance Management (HTPM) review committee. Just as you will reassess the relationship with the external adviser it is always useful to introduce new governors onto this committee for objectivity and fresh ideas.



Governors should agree in consultation with the Headteacher whether the Chair of Governors should be on the HTPM review committee. In Suffolk, both models are working effectively across the county.

It is essential that at least one governor has attended training on effective Headteacher performance management. It is best practice for all governors to be trained. If you are a subscriber to Schools' Choice Governor Training then training is free. Planned courses for AG4 – Effective Headteacher Performance Management are scheduled for:

- Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> July @ 6pm via Zoom. Register via Governorhub.
- Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> September @ 6pm. Register via Governorhub.
- Monday 4<sup>th</sup> October @ 6pm. Register via Governorhub.

Once the panel has been provisionally appointed, including a chair of the committee, allow the headteacher to raise any concerns they have about the membership.



It is also advisable to review the contract in place with the external advisor. The LA recommends that the adviser is changed every 3 years to ensure that the relationship remains objective, supportive and robust.

Headteacher performance management is an integral part of school improvement. It is also an integral part of governors' support for headteacher wellbeing. Carefully planned and thought through policies and procedures can show headteachers that governors are taking their wellbeing and performance seriously.

## School Leadership Planning for Succession, Including the Recruitment of a New Headteacher

The recruitment of a new headteacher is arguably the most important task that a governing body will ever undertake.

Even if your school is not in this position at the moment, it is good practice to continually plan for the future and to consider succession planning as part of the strategic direction and visioning for the school. This includes succession planning for all levels of leadership and not just the headteacher. The responsibility for this process lies principally with the governing body.



As part of planning ahead, it is crucial that the governing body carries out due diligence with respect to knowing the financial position of the school, the numbers of pupils predicted to be on roll for the next three to five years and the current strengths of the leadership team. Consideration should also be given to what skills would further strengthen the leadership team of the school.

Linked to financial efficiency, governors should also consider the effectiveness of the current leadership structure in meeting the needs of all pupils. The appointment of a new headteacher gives the school leaders an opportunity to restructure if this is

deemed appropriate. It is also worth considering federation with another school, in which two schools can share one governing body and an Executive Headteacher over both schools).

For more information, or to ask any questions contact [governance@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:governance@suffolk.gov.uk) . Further information about the advantages of federations and how to manage the process can be read in the 'Suffolk Guidance on Forming a Federation'; you can access this [here](#).

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## Governor Planning for Succession, Including Chair of Governors and Vice-Chair Elections



The recommended length of term for the Chair of Governors is 6 consecutive years, however the board of the maintained school decides on the regularity of its Chair of Governor elections. The majority of schools choose to do this annually. It is up to you when this election is held, however the beginning of the new school year is the preferred time for many. We have therefore put

together some advice on what to consider whilst thinking about succession planning for the Chair of Governors, the Vice-Chair and for your governing board generally:

- It is always recommended that succession planning for the Chair of Governors position is a consistent conversation, not one that occurs only when the current Chair decides to resign. The process is smoother if someone has already been identified to take up the position and who then has the time to carry out any training relating to the role.
- If your Chair of Governors is able to announce their resignation in advance and a replacement is already identified, the pending Chair can then shadow the existing Chair and responsibilities can be exchanged gradually, easing the process for board.

- If your Chair is stepping down and you have not already identified a replacement, this is a discussion you will need to have. Consider who on the board has the time, skills and willingness to take up the role and what additional

**DID YOU KNOW** – Where a vacancy arises in the office of the Chair of Governors or the Vice-Chair, the governing board must elect one of their number to fill that vacancy at their next meeting. If the Chair of Governors resigns the position, the Vice-Chair automatically becomes Chair until an election is held and either themselves or another governor is elected.

- support or training they may need. Although the Vice-Chair is the natural successor to the position, they may not want the position. There may be others on your board who would be interested in it.
- If your Vice-Chair is elected as Chair of Governors you will need to elect a new Vice-Chair and similar considerations should be made. It is the responsibility of the governing board as a whole to manage this and should not be left to the Chair of Governors. The board should share responsibility and roles as equally as possible.
- It is possible for the roles of both Chair and Vice-Chair to be shared between two governors. This can alleviate pressure where capacity is a problem and also ensures that more members of the governing board gain leadership experience, something which is of both governance and personal benefit to those involved.
- The National Governance Association (NGA) run a leadership development programme; 'Development for Chairs', which provides Chairs, Vice-Chairs and future Chairs opportunities for developing leading skills and confident governance. You can learn more about the programme [here](#).
- Even if your Chair of Governors or Vice-Chair is not stepping down, succession planning is still a conversation you should be having. The end of the school year is a natural time for governors to resign and you will need to ensure that all responsibilities and roles can still be carried out. If, for example, your safeguarding governor is resigning, who on your board can take over this role and do they need any training to do so successfully. A Skills Matrix is a good way to identify any skills gaps and training needs for current governors, as well as to determine the skills you might be looking for if recruiting new members to the board.

## Suffolk's Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) Agreed Syllabus Consultation

### FOR INFORMATION ONLY

One of the most important functions of SACRE is to produce the Locally Agreed Syllabus. This specifies what must be taught in religious education (RE) within an authority and should reflect the latest developments in education, be relevant and engaging for all pupils and support high quality teaching and learning.

Teaching of the [current Suffolk Agreed Syllabus](#) began in January 2013. This syllabus was then renewed in 2018. SACRE is now beginning to develop a new Agreed Syllabus and wants to consult with schools and school leaders to ensure that everyone's views are taken into consideration.

Therefore, SACRE has invited **all teaching colleagues in Suffolk schools** to share their thoughts about the Agreed Syllabus by completing [this online survey](#) and help to shape the future of RE in Suffolk.

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If you have any thoughts or suggestions regarding Governor Headlines or would like to find out more about any of the topics covered; please contact [governorheadlines@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:governorheadlines@suffolk.gov.uk) .