

# 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 Governor Headlines #46

Welcome to Governor Headlines #46 for November and December.

As the autumn term continues, we are aware that school leaders, including governors, are working incredibly hard to support teachers so that children and young people can learn and have as wide an educational experience as possible despite the continuing pandemic and rising Covid numbers. On behalf of the children in school and their families we do thank you for all that you do and we also remind you to ensure the wellbeing of those on the frontline and to contact LA colleagues if you have questions or need support.

We continue the theme of equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) by featuring an example of the work one primary school has been carrying out. We would like to continue to give an example in each edition of Governor Headlines, so if your school has one to share for a future article please do let us know. This edition also includes a reminder of the benefits of working collaboratively and some information on diverse governor recruitment. There is also an overview of the governor role in safeguarding and information on the Specialist Learning Support Service.

As always, if you have any thoughts or suggestions about the Governor Headlines newsletter, please email the Governor Services team at [governance@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:governance@suffolk.gov.uk).



**Suffolk**  
County Council



[governance@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:governance@suffolk.gov.uk) 1

# K The Knowledge

Please find the latest edition of **The Knowledge** for November 2021 [here](#).

## Strategic Leadership

that sets and champions vision, ethos and strategy.

## Equality and Diversity Barrow CEVC Primary School



Barrow CEVC Primary School governors and school leadership team have been focusing on equality, diversity and cohesion over the last 12 months and Chair of Governors Andrew Wilson has kindly put together the following article to share their story of the why's, what's, and the impact the changes have made to pupils and the broader school community:

The why's? Our thinking started around the following three key factors:

- **Questioning what we were doing** - Was the breadth and depth of the school's diversity and inclusion offer as good as it could and should be? We felt that it wasn't and was perhaps tokenistic. It was unlikely that our initiatives would have a long-term impact.
- **Context - What's been happening nationally:** (news and current affairs, Department for Education expectations)
- **Limited experiences, exposure and language within the school.** With the demographic make-up of the school, were we adequately preparing our pupils to achieve a broad knowledge of the world

to equip them for life as global citizens?

Some of the actions we took:

- setting the tone and dedicating a diversity celebration week linked to a longer-term school assembly plan focusing on identity, race, gender, disability, social injustice and mental health;
- training the teaching team over a period of months to underpin the work we've been doing and how we've looked at our whole curriculum through this prism;
- expanding whose stories get told and growing our reading stock of diverse themes, writers, stories and cultures;
- finally, getting feedback from parents via a Parents Forum on their impressions of what the school has been doing and whether they had noticed some changes in the conversations they were having with their children.

*“Massive thanks for reading ‘Amazing Grace’. This is the one and only story I grew up with allowing me as a young black girl to believe I could do anything I set my mind to despite my gender or race. My heart swelled with happiness hearing this absolute classic story of empowerment being read to all the children of Barrow school”.*  
(Quote from a parent).

What we've noticed following these changes is that by looking at 'what' we do, 'how' we do it and importantly 'why' we do it through an equality, diversity and cohesion lens, pupils' experiences have become more enriched, conversations more navigable and their learning deeper...which for me counts as a fantastic lesson!

If you would like to learn more about Barrow's work on diversity and equality Andrew would be happy to discuss and is contactable through the school office at [admin@barrow.suffolk.sch.uk](mailto:admin@barrow.suffolk.sch.uk) or 01284 810223.

## Governing Boards Working Together



It has been good to meet some of you at governor network meetings, which have been held so far (virtually) with governors in the South of Suffolk, the West of Suffolk and in Lowestoft. Those who have joined us have appreciated the opportunity to meet and talk with other governors, some reporting that there can be a sense of isolation as a Chair of Governors.

So far, we have shared thoughts on identifying strengths, areas to improve and strategies for recruiting new governors. Working together can be organised informally through local agreements. For example, it was suggested that when a school might be in a situation where they need an interim school leader, perhaps for a term, another school locally may be able to offer support. This could provide some great professional development opportunities for school leaders looking to build their leadership experience. As part of Local Authority officers' work to support Headteacher recruitment we do sometimes support governors to find interim leadership solutions. Local offers of support for this would be very welcome.

As well as informal partnerships, governors may be looking ahead as part of their strategic planning to other ways of working collaboratively with another school or schools. Partnering, or more formally federating can help sustain schools which may have falling pupil numbers. It can be a strong way

of maximising resources for the benefit of all pupils and improving standards as well as providing opportunities for the development of teaching, learning, leadership and governance. There are many benefits to this arrangement, which also enables schools to retain the feel of the distinct character of their school and of autonomy in their leadership decisions.

*"It is the long history of humankind (and animal kind, too) that those who learned to collaborate and improvise most effectively have prevailed."*

*– Charles Darwin*

If you are interested in further details about any of the ideas above, please contact Governor Services to discuss at [governance@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:governance@suffolk.gov.uk) or talk to your school's SEO or LSEO.

We hope you will join us and governor colleagues at one of the next governor network meetings. Here are the dates for next two planned sessions.

Date	Locality	Time
Thursday 2 December 2021	CENTRAL	5.30-7.00 p.m.
Thursday 13 January 2022	IPSWICH & COASTAL	5.30-7.00 p.m.

## Governor Headlines Live – Save the Date

***Our Governor Headlines Live session for the Spring term is taking place in the morning of Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> February. Further details about the session will follow in the new year.***

**People** with the right skills, experience, qualities and capacity.

## Governor Recruitment



The Department for Education's **Governance Handbook** states one of the six key features of effective governance as having people with the right skills, experience, qualities and capacity on the governing board. The importance of succession planning cannot be stressed enough regarding governing board membership; however we also appreciate that unexpected vacancies can occur.

A skills audit is always a useful exercise to carry out with existing board members and can help determine strengths and gaps in knowledge that need to be filled, either by appointing a new governor with the required experience, or by training an existing governor. Both the **National Governance Association** (NGA) and **The Key for School Governors** offer a Skills Audit template. Membership is required to access The Key for School Governors. If you have been struggling to fill vacancies on your board for some time, it may be necessary for

you to re-think your approach and to consider other opportunities for advertising the positions.

A diverse governing board, inclusive of race, religion, sexual orientation, gender, disability and age can strengthen the governing board by representing the wider community, society and a range of views. There is an expectation that governor recruitment processes should encourage applicants from a wide range of backgrounds, cultures and perspectives. To assist with this, we have put together a list of local organisations that you may wish to contact to ask if they could assist with the filling of your vacancy. To access this list please click [here](#).

### Did You Know?

*The NGA have published their final report presenting the third instalment of findings of the annual governance survey, providing a narrative on the demographics of governance volunteers and board practice.*

## The Governor's Role in Safeguarding

Keeping children safe in education, 2021 is clear that governing boards have a strategic leadership responsibility for their school's or college's safeguarding arrangements and must ensure that they comply with their duties under legislation. Keeping children and young people safe is of paramount importance. Leaders must ensure that policies, procedures and training in their schools or colleges are effective and comply with the law at all times.

Ofsted inspectors will always make a judgement on whether safeguarding is effective or not in every [section 5](#) or [section 8](#) inspection.

All schools should have a culture of safeguarding. This means they should have effective arrangements to:

- always act in the best interests of children, pupils and students to protect them online and offline, including when they are receiving remote education or self-isolating due to COVID-19
- identify children, pupils and students who may need early help, and who are at risk of harm or have been harmed. This can include, but is not limited to, neglect, abuse (including by their peers), grooming or exploitation

- secure the help that children, pupils and students need, and if required, referring in a timely way to those who have the expertise to help
- manage safe recruitment and allegations about adults who may be a risk to children, pupils, students and vulnerable adults

During an inspection, inspectors will not grade this aspect of a school's work. However, inspectors will always make a written judgement about whether the arrangements for safeguarding children and pupils are effective.

Inspectors will go beyond ensuring that schools meet statutory requirements, and beyond simply reviewing documents, to evaluate the safeguarding culture that has been established in the school.

Safeguarding is ineffective when there are serious or widespread failures in the school's/setting's safeguarding arrangements that give cause for concern because children are not protected and statutory requirements are not being met, or because insufficient action is being taken to remedy weaknesses following a serious failure of safeguarding arrangements.

The following are examples of what ineffective safeguarding might include:

- Safeguarding allegations about staff members are not being handled appropriately.
- Children, pupils and students or particular groups of children, pupils and students do not feel safe in school/the setting.
- Children, pupils and students have little confidence that the school/setting will address concerns about their safety, including risk of abuse.
- For schools: pupils are frequently missing from school (including for part of the school day), but this is not addressed appropriately by staff.
- Incidents of bullying or prejudiced and discriminatory behaviour are common.

Annex 1 of [Inspecting safeguarding in early years, education and skills](#) sets out some of the responsibilities placed on governing bodies. It is crucial that governors know they are meeting these responsibilities.

## School Admissions Arrangements for 2023/2024

All voluntary aided schools, free schools and academies must determine their admission arrangements for the 2023/2024 school year by **28 February 2022**, even if they have not been changed from the previous year and a consultation was not required.

Admission arrangements include your oversubscription criteria, Published Admission Number and

Supplementary Information Form, if relevant.

Please [click here](#) for further information.

If you have any further queries please contact Jan Scott, Senior Education Officer for Admissions and School Transport, on 01473 264657 or at [jan.scott@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:jan.scott@suffolk.gov.uk) .

### ***DID YOU KNOW?***

*The Department for Education have recently released their November school governance update. The update is relevant to both maintained and academy schools and this edition includes a guide for understanding your data, information on National Leaders of Governance (NLGs) and a welcome message from the new minister with responsibility for governance, Baroness Barran, who thanks all governors and trustees for their work. You can read the full update [here](#).*

# Other News

## The Specialist Learning Support Service



The Specialist Learning Support Service was introduced in recognition of the increasing number of children and young people (CYP) with complex health needs who were not accessing formal education. The aim of the service is to enable 1-1 or 2-1 support for CYP from ages 2.5 – 19 to manage their health needs and thus access education.

The team is co-ordinated, trained, assessed, and supervised by qualified children's nurses (care co-ordinators). It is a jointly funded service between health and education. To read an overview of the service please click [here](#).

## Complimentary Cyber Security Service

Suffolk County Council IT Services have launched the first of their new cyber security services for Suffolk Schools. This new service will be provided at no cost for the first 12 months for all schools who purchase a broadband service from Suffolk County Council.

The new service has four security and information management features, which have been grouped together to help protect schools and educate staff. The services included are:

- NCSC CiSP - Cyber advice and forum sign up referral
- NCSC - Early Warning System reports, Webcheck & Mailcheck
- Weekly Cyber News, including latest threats and vulnerabilities
- Information Management training

You can find full details of this service on the Suffolk County Council website at:

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/business/it-services-for-schools-and->

[academies/suffolk-schools-bronze-cyber-security-service/](https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/academies/suffolk-schools-bronze-cyber-security-service/)

To fully participate in this service, you will need to provide contact details and some information about your email and website setup so that it can be confirmed which email address is the best to send full details about the service too. Please For further information about the service please confirm your preferred email address by emailing [schoolscyber@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:schoolscyber@suffolk.gov.uk).

As well as launching this service Suffolk County Council IT Service has been working with colleagues in the Children's Services Education team to see how they can better support schools and share information and lessons learned. It's known that in recent times there have been at least three major attacks on Suffolk schools

(Ransomware and Distributed Denial of Service -DDoS) which have caused significant disruption to the education of students and the general running of the school.

Where these incidents happen, there is an opportunity to share details of the experience and lessons learned. With this in mind, Suffolk County Council IT Services are launching a cyber-security survey. The aim of the survey is to collect and then share knowledge, experiences and lessons learnt, between all schools in Suffolk.

Please take some time to complete the survey which is available at: [SCC IT - Suffolk schools Cyber Security Survey](#)

If you have any questions about the new service or the cyber security survey, then please contact us at [schoolscyber@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:schoolscyber@suffolk.gov.uk)