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### Correspondence

# Local-authority-maintained schools: school governance update January 2020

Updated 16 January 2020

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## 1. New year message from Lord Agnew

I am delighted to be returning as the minister for the school system.

Firstly, I am pleased to see that a number of governors in the education sector were recognised in the Queen's New Year's Honours List. This is a reminder of the vital role you play in your own schools, and how effective governance can help ensure that all children have access to a world-class education.

With the start of every new year comes a time for self-reflection and longer-term planning. I invite you to explore our development programmes to sharpen your governance skills and to build your networks. You can refresh your knowledge of statutory duties through our [statutory policies for schools and academy trusts guidance](#), or remind yourself of the core guidance in the [governance handbook](#).

This year, my priority is that we continue to improve the support, training and guidance available to governors and clerks.

7. Action: compare how much your school is spending on agency supply teachers
8. Action: keep your details on GIAS (Get Information About Schools) up to date to receive governance update email alerts [direct](#)

I am also looking forward to publishing soon the response to the [consultation on financial transparency](#). This includes levelling up the reporting requirements for local authority schools and academies, so that parents and other key stakeholders have a better view of what is happening inside schools.

This is the third edition of the new governance update, and I hope you are finding it useful. Having listened to feedback, it will be published approximately twice per term. Your ongoing feedback is extremely important so please get in touch if you have any suggestions for improvements by emailing [schoolgovernance.update@education.gov.uk](mailto:schoolgovernance.update@education.gov.uk)

Finally, I would like to say how much I appreciate the time and dedication you put into governing our schools. Together we can make a positive impact on the education and lives of young people everywhere. I wish you all the best for 2020.



## 2. Action: consultation on the removal of the outstanding exemption

The DfE announced last autumn proposals to lift the exemption from routine inspection for outstanding schools. This will help to give parents a clearer picture of the standard of schools in their area and support these schools to continue improving. The consultation on lifting the exemption on outstanding school inspections is now live and we are keen to hear from those on governing and trust boards. You can [take part in the consultation](#).

### **3. Information: NFER and DfE survey of governance sector, deadline for responding extended**

The department is working with NFER (National Foundation for Educational Research) to conduct an important survey of those involved in school governance in England. The survey went live in November and the deadline for responding has been extended to 24 January. Around 5,000 schools have been sampled to take part. If your school has been contacted by NFER we urge you to participate. These results will help to inform the Department's evidence base and influence future policy development on school governance.

### **4. Information: are you aware of the clerking competency framework?**

The [clerking competency framework](#) demonstrates the importance of professional clerking and the knowledge, skills and behaviours needed to deliver it, and provides some helpful guidance on how clerks may be used. We would suggest that all clerks and governing board members, especially chairs, familiarise themselves with the framework in order to understand the clerking role more fully.

### **5. Action: calling clerks - do you want to be heard?**

The DfE governance policy team is looking to speak to clerks to develop their policy work. If you would like to register your interest to be involved, please send an email using the subject title: 'Clerking Future Policy Work' to [capacityandpractice.governance@education.gov.uk](mailto:capacityandpractice.governance@education.gov.uk).

### **6. Action: funded training and development programmes available now**

The department has contracted 7 organisations to continue to provide professional development programmes until March 2021.

The governance leadership programmes are ideal for those in roles such as chair, vice chair or committee chair and will support you to work with your board to increase its effectiveness.

The governance clerking programmes are suitable for all school, academy or trust board clerks and aims to increase clerking expertise.

For further details on these two programmes go to our guidance on [‘Academy and school governance: professional development’](#).

The free integrated curriculum financial planning training is suitable for all school leaders, including governors, to help schools plan the best curriculum for your pupils within your budget. To find out more visit the [ISBL website](#) or email [training@isbl.org.uk](mailto:training@isbl.org.uk).

## **7. Action: compare how much your school is spending on agency supply teachers**

Schools using our [supply teachers and agency workers deal](#) are achieving substantial savings. Using this deal your school can avoid costly temp-to-perm fees, as agencies cannot apply fees for making temporary staff permanent after 12 weeks of working for you (must give 4 weeks’ notice).

You can use the department’s [financial benchmarking service](#) to help you compare how much your school is spending on agency supply staff compared with similar schools.

## **8. Action: keep your details on GIAS (Get Information About Schools) up to date to receive governance update email alerts direct**

We are keen to continue to increase the reach of this update. If you would like to receive a direct email alert when the updates are published, please ask your school’s ‘DfE sign-in approver’ to add your contact details onto [‘Get Information About Schools’ website](#). As a reminder, it is a requirement that all chair of governors’ email details are on GIAS, as well as the correct start and end of term of office dates for all governor posts. You can read [further information on GIAS](#). If you are a clerk, or otherwise unable to upload your details to GIAS, please email [schoolgovernance.update@education.gov.uk](mailto:schoolgovernance.update@education.gov.uk) and we will add you to the circulation

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