

Hampshire Governor

Winter 2011/12

Inspectors praise 'excellent' Hampshire Children's Services

Collectively, Children's Services in Hampshire are excellent – that's the verdict of a Government inspection report on services overseen by Hampshire County Council. The annual performance assessment by Ofsted was published in November and relates to the County Council's responsibility for all services for children, from schools to social services.

It found 'many strengths' in Children's Services and concluded that 'very strong performance' had been sustained from last year. Inspectors reported that the proportion of good or outstanding schools, nurseries and childcare providers had increased, helping children and young people to 'learn well and stay safe'.

The report gives the County Council the highest performance rating for its Children's Services for the second year running. The assessment takes into account findings from across Ofsted's inspection and regulation of services, including childcare and early years settings, post-16 education, residential children's homes and fostering and adoption services. Inspectors also considered other

published data about the quality of services, such as exam results.

Areas highlighted as strengths include:

- ◆ childcare, including childminding and children's centres – the number of providers judged as good or outstanding has risen;
- ◆ quality of schools – most primary, secondary and special schools are good or outstanding; there are no inadequate primary schools; in key tests at ages 5, 11 and 16, results for Hampshire children and young people continue to improve and are in line with the national average;
- ◆ training and education for young people over 16 – most providers were found to be good or outstanding;
- ◆ services for vulnerable children – the inspection of safeguarding and services for children in care, published in August, found that all areas of these services were good or outstanding. Leadership, management and partnership working were judged to be outstanding. Capacity to improve was also rated as outstanding.

JOHN COUGHLAN
Director of children's services

How governors can help each other

Governors can save time and help each other by sharing good working practice, and I would like to encourage you to check out the Governors' Shared Practice area on the intranet.

The Shared Practice Focus Group, of which I am a member, meets termly to select documents for the site. The area has recently been updated and more examples of good working practice are needed to add

to the collection as a practical resource for all governors. Contributions don't need to be perfect or detailed, but should provide a good starting point for other governors seeking to take advantage of collective knowledge. Have you an example from your experience to submit? Please email examples to claire.e.bailey@hants.gov.uk.

ALISON WINNIK
Governor, Orchard Infant School

Win a book in this Hampshire Governor competition

Read this web edition of Hampshire Governor, then enter our first-ever prize competition!

All you have to do is provide the answers to two questions, which can be found by reading this issue and accessing the governors' website.

First prize is a copy of *The Magic-Weaving Business* by Sir John Jones, who was an inspirational speaker at Governor Services' autumn term special schools conference.

Second prize is *Welcome to Governance – A Guide for New School Governors*, from the National Governors' Association.

◆ Question one: Which school was headteacher Rebecca Kingsland seconded to?

◆ Question two: On which subsection of the governors' shared practice site would you find an example of an anti-bullying policy?

Email your answers to county.governor.services@hants.gov.uk with 'Governors' Competition' in the subject field, by Monday 9 January.

Partnership boards win Ofsted praise

Nine children's centres in Hampshire have been inspected by Ofsted so far and the results are very encouraging. Children's centres have not only done well overall, but their governance arrangements have prompted a whole range of positive comments.

A third of the centres were judged as outstanding and two-thirds as good. This compares with a national picture so far of 14% of children's centres being rated as outstanding, 58% as good, 26% as satisfactory and 2% as inadequate.

Governance, including the work of partnership boards, is assessed as part of leadership and management. Ofsted inspectors specifically consider 'the extent to which governance, accountability, professional supervision and day-to-day management arrangements are understood'. In Hampshire inspectors rated 44% of centres as outstanding in this respect and the remaining 56% as good.

Comments such as 'governance arrangements are extremely well established' and 'the partnership board and centre manager provide very strong collaborative leadership which has the needs of the area at its heart' provide additional insight into why they valued what they saw.

In contrast, the national picture shows governance arrangements as one of the three aspects of children's centres' work that achieved the lowest ratings. 16% were outstanding, 55% good, 27% satisfactory and 2% inadequate.

Common themes mentioned by inspectors nationally are that boards do not have adequate representation from the community, are not given sufficient support or training to develop their effectiveness and are not properly



Children's centres in Hampshire have been judged outstanding or good. Governance is part of that success story, with 44 per cent of centres so far regarded as outstanding in this respect.

engaged in contributing to centre developments.

The number of inspections so far is small so it would be wrong to be complacent. However, the Hampshire results are a tremendous compliment to all those who have worked so hard to support the county's centres. At a time of considerable uncertainty, we hope partnership board members will be

glad to know that they have made a significant contribution to this particular success story.

Published inspection reports for children's centres in Hampshire can be seen at www3.hants.gov.uk/education/governors/education-governors-childrenscentressupport.htm

HAZEL ROUND
Governor services co-ordinator

School improvement

How to advance from satisfactory to good

How can governors help their school to advance from merely 'satisfactory', in Ofsted terms, to really 'good'?

There is no formulaic answer.

However, over the past two terms, members of HIAS have been looking at the activities that are key to improvement and have identified a number of key principles to follow.

For example, good teaching is a key requisite of a good school. But how can schools develop their teachers so that this becomes a reality?

Good teaching, at its irreducible core, is about teachers enabling children to understand ideas or master skills that they find hard. It follows that simply monitoring teaching against the Ofsted schedule, or against a list of features of a good lesson, is unlikely to bring about improvement. There is a need for a different approach to lesson observation if teaching is to really develop.

It's not just processes that matter but how they are used and how the school's

understanding of its work develops as a result.

Do teachers report regularly in staff meetings the blocks that children are having with their learning, as well as the degree to which children have moved on? Do they discuss possible teaching strategies to help the children overcome these blocks? Such conversations enable teachers' tacit knowledge to be made explicit. This creates a useful foundation for developing professional practice.

Similarly with lesson observation, if there are key things a teacher does to help pupils who are behind to catch

Attributes of good governance cannot be adequately fulfilled on a formulaic basis

up, the observer can examine how successful they have been and feed back appropriately. Systems based on such research are key to developing professional knowledge.

As with good teaching, so with good governance. It's easy to list attributes of good governance, such as clear focus, willingness to challenge, and ensuring accountability. But these cannot be adequately fulfilled on a formulaic basis.

Governors need a good understanding of improvement priorities and of pupil performance against targets and benchmarks. By monitoring school improvement plans they can assess impact on pupil progress. A positive and open working relationship with senior leaders in the school is central to making this process meaningful and effective.

DAVID HARDCASTLE
Area director, western area

MIKE HISCOCK
Governor services co-ordinator

RAISE online update: changes to value added and more

Changes in government policy have been reflected in the content of RAISE online reports:

Contextual Value Added (CVA) is no longer recorded. It has been replaced by Valued Added (VA) which takes into account only a pupil's prior attainment. The contextual factors have been removed, so that all pupils, no matter their social, economic, or educational needs, are expected to make the same progress.

With the removal of statutory target setting, the school forward estimates report (usually at the end of the

report) has been discontinued.

There is improved analysis of vulnerable groups, allowing the comparison of the performance of a school with both the national average for all pupils and the national average for all pupils in a vulnerable group.

For secondary schools, there is a new 'basics' attainment indicator, the percentage of pupils in a school obtaining grade A* to C in both English and maths at Key Stage 4. A measure of VA for each of the five subject areas (or 'pillars') of the English Baccalaureate – English,

maths, sciences, humanities and a language – will be added.

For primary schools, reports of Key Stage 2 pupils operating below the level of the tests will now be released to all mainstream and special schools for Key Stages 1 and 2, and will also enable comparison with national figures.

If you would like more information or support, bespoke training sessions can be provided through Governor Services.

CHRIS MARTIN
Resources and strategy manager

New school admissions code comes into force in February

A revised draft school admissions code was issued on 2 November 2011 by the Department for Education.

The code is intended to come into force in February 2012 and have effect for the September 2013 main admissions round. Its stated intent is to remove duplication, provide clarity and reduce unnecessary bureaucracy.

Here we highlight some of the changes from the current code.

- ◆ A 'national offer day' will be introduced for primary places (16 April).

- ◆ Schools will be given greater freedom to increase the number of places they offer to parents.

- ◆ Schools will be allowed to take direct in-year applications from parents. From September 2013 there is no requirement for local authorities to co-ordinate in-year admissions.

- ◆ Admission authorities must publish their appeals timetable on their website by

28 February each year and this must allow parents at least 20 school days from the date of notification that their application was unsuccessful, to lodge an appeal.

- ◆ Schools will have to give adopted children who were previously in care the same, highest priority for places as looked-after children.

- ◆ Children of staff who have been employed at a school for more than two years, or who are meeting a skills shortage, may be prioritised in the school's admission policy.

- ◆ Infant class size legislation will be amended to include two new categories of excepted pupil: twins/multiple births (where one already has a place), and armed forces children. However, there will be a duty on schools to keep the local authority informed.

For more about the draft code, go to A for Admissions in the A-Z section of the governors' website.

Absence ruling

The definition of 'persistent absence' is being changed, to deal with the reality of pupil absenteeism.

The DfE is reducing the threshold at which a pupil is defined as persistently absent from 20 per cent to 15 per cent. The reason given is that 'some schools only take action to intervene when pupils near the persistently absent threshold, but nearing 20 per cent is too late. Lowering the threshold will ensure that schools take action sooner.'

Governors need to be aware that the new threshold will be published in statistical releases, performance tables and RAISE online.

LISA-MARIE SMITH
Teaching & learning adviser (B&A)

What pupils really think about their schools

The results of the annual pupil attitude survey were reported to schools in the autumn term. The survey gives governors a clear idea of whether pupils have enjoyed coming to school, whether they think the level of work is correct and whether they feel the school has made them aware of how to eat healthily and take physical exercise.

The survey takes place in Years 2, 6, 7 and 9. As well as measuring the attitudes of pupils towards their school, it enables governors and staff to make comparisons with 300 other Hampshire schools.

The findings provide evidence for

Ofsted and help governors and leadership teams to improve the curriculum and amend pastoral support. They also help the County Council put in place support for schools, and judge whether measures they have already introduced – for instance, around anti-bullying and safeguarding – have been effective.

The views sought by the survey range from how safe young people feel to how well they think the school teaches about sex and relationships and substance misuse. Here are some recent findings across the county:

- ◆ The percentage of pupils who feel

that their school always encourages them to eat healthily and take regular exercise has risen from 73% to 74.1% over the past three years.

- ◆ Last year, 19.6% of Year 7s felt that they were rarely or never told how to make their work better; 12.7% thought bullying was dealt with not very well or badly; and only 54.8% felt their opinions had any influence.

- ◆ In Year 9, only 49.3% thought careers education/advice was helpful.

For more information, contact glynis.wright@hants.gov.uk.

GLYNIS WRIGHT

County inspector/adviser, personal development learning

When governors have to 'lend' their head

Ideally, recruitment processes should be completed in time for the arrival of a new headteacher to coincide with the departure of the outgoing head who is moving on or retiring. However, we do not live in a perfect world!

For various reasons, it is not always possible to appoint a replacement by the time the current headteacher leaves. For example, it may have been necessary to re-advertise to attract suitable candidates, or a vacancy may have occurred because the headteacher resigned at relatively short notice (having been successful in securing a post in another school at the end of a recruitment window).

Recruitment takes a minimum of six to eight months, including the successful candidate's notice period.

This means temporary cover is often needed. In some cases cover can be provided from within the school; in others this is not possible or desirable.

Therefore governors of other schools may be asked by district managers (DMs) to agree to second their headteacher or a senior leader for a few months to a school that needs headship cover. The willingness of governing bodies and headteachers to agree to

Secondments provide valuable opportunities for leaders to develop their skills

such arrangements is greatly appreciated by DMs, who have a key role in supporting schools in facing this situation. Such secondments provide valuable opportunities for headteachers and senior leaders to develop their leadership and management skills, often in schools facing considerable challenges, so there are opportunities for both schools engaged in the arrangement to gain from the experience.

On the following two pages, headteachers who have recently completed secondments to other schools talk about the broader benefits for participating schools and senior leaders on both sides of the process.

BRIAN POPE

Area director, education and inclusion

Why leadership can involve collaboration and sharing

Schools are more complex and flexible organisations than ever before and the role of leading them is a multi-faceted one, demanding new skills and different approaches. Effective leadership is a key aspect of school improvement; school leaders make a difference to the lives of children and leadership is second only to teaching in its impact on school improvement and positive outcomes for children.

Models of leadership are changing across the country and Hampshire is no exception. Many schools are considering different models of leadership to meet the challenges of today's education system.

Governing bodies are increasingly looking at opportunities for collaborative working, either through

the formation of a statutory collaboration (where two or more schools work together but retain their individual governing bodies) or through federation (where two or more schools enter into a formal arrangement under a single governing body).

In both cases, there are several benefits which arise from such joint working arrangements. The most obvious is the opportunity to share resources and take advantage of economies of scale by avoiding duplication of resources and effort. Leadership can be shared in the form of an executive headteacher but also the administrative roles such as the bursar or school business manager which can be shared across all schools

in the federation or collaboration.

This can enable schools to take a more strategic approach which encompasses the wider community within which they operate. Attracting and retaining staff can be improved as collaborative working arrangements give rise to greater career development opportunities. This is particularly beneficial in relation to headteacher appointments which is one of the most difficult and important responsibilities of the governing body.

For more information on the different models of leadership, contact Mike Hiscock in Governor Services or myself in Education Personnel Services.

SHARON COLLINS
Senior HR adviser

Executive head shared by two schools

'It was the best professional development I have ever had in 15 years as a head. And it has strengthened two school communities.'

That is the voice of headteacher Rebecca Kingsland, looking back over the 18 months when she divided her time between her own school, Park Gate Primary in Fareham's western wards, and Siskin Junior, eight miles away in Gosport.

Park Gate's governors were asked, and agreed, to sanction the plan. Area director Brian Pope addressed the governing body and convinced it of the benefits to both schools. 'The governors asked sensible and searching questions and seriously considered all the different aspects of it,' said Rebecca. 'They judged it was a good decision to make not only for our school but to help another school that was in serious difficulty at the time.' The issue was placed on the agenda of Park Gate parents' forum, because parental approval was also seen as vital.

Back in January 2010, when the arrangement started with Rebecca appointed to the new role of executive head, Siskin was in special measures. The governing body had disbanded and an interim executive board appointed. To compound the difficulties, Siskin served a disadvantaged area, with well over half the pupils entitled to free school meals.

With the two schools geographically close, it was possible to set up a partnership between them. Rebecca divided her time, three days at Siskin and two at Park Gate. The deputy



Rebecca Kingsland, centre, at Siskin's end of year awards assembly.

heads of both schools stepped up to acting heads, gaining valuable leadership experience. The Park Gate chair of governors became a member of the Siskin executive board. There was a tightly written partnership agreement between the two schools.

Siskin staff visited Park Gate and vice versa. Good practice at Park Gate was a catalyst to improvement at Siskin. Siskin's greater experience with disadvantaged children influenced Park Gate's thinking: 'We changed some of our practices. We sharpened the way we work in terms of challenging children and tracking their progress. We would never have become a coasting school but the partnership with Siskin strengthened our focus on sustaining improvements and moving forward,' explained Rebecca.

'It was the hardest job I have ever done but I have absolutely no regrets'

Rebecca's attachment to Siskin ended at Easter 2011 and there was a phased handover to new management in the summer term. As part of the changes, Siskin Junior federated with neighbouring Siskin Infant. An Ofsted inspection in March judged the junior school to be satisfactory, with good capacity for sustained improvement. It was taken out of special measures.

Siskin is now standing on its own feet. But contacts with Park Gate continue, not least because the deputy head responsible for Siskin's junior section is now a Park Gate governor.

For Rebecca it was 'the hardest job I have ever done'. But she adds: 'I have absolutely no regrets. It really benefited this school at all levels.'

Governors of other schools faced with a request to release their headteacher should establish that they have the necessary strength in their leadership team to cover. Subject to this, says Rebecca, they should be prepared to help another school in difficult circumstances. 'It is an expression of community cohesion at its deepest. And it is a fantastic opportunity to develop leadership in your own school.'

From one new start to another

Lyn Downes knows a fair bit about making a new start. In 2006 she was appointed inaugural headteacher of Burnham Copse Primary in Tadley, a new school replacing separate junior and infant schools which were being closed because of their failure to improve. After this relaunch, with the benefit of Lyn's leadership and a completely refurbished building, Burnham Copse is now flourishing.

With her track record, it was natural that Hampshire County Council should invite Lyn to help another school in difficulties. In 2010, with the consent of her governing body, she accepted a secondment as executive head of the federation of Winklebury Junior and Infant Schools.

Lyn was the fourth interim headteacher in two years at Winklebury, which had previously failed to recruit a permanent head. When she joined, the junior school was in special measures and an Ofsted inspection was looming.

Back at Burnham Copse, senior members of staff filled the gap left by Lyn's secondment. 'A local authority never approaches a school with a request for the headteacher to go to another school unless there is a strong senior management team. I have two



Lyn Downes was seconded to another school as executive head.

strong assistant heads, and the longer serving of the two became acting head and the second one stepped up,' she explained. The experience helped to develop their careers. 'Since that time, the senior assistant head has completed two terms as an acting head at another school to cover a maternity leave. Having already fulfilled this role in her own school, she had the confidence and experience to take on a more challenging role elsewhere.'

And what did her experience at Winklebury do for her own development? 'I honed my skills in analytical thinking, knowing that within a month I was likely to have to manage an Ofsted inspection.' Lyn describes her main contribution to the school as 'team building and

operating together for the good of the children'. Staff in both schools were enabled to rebuild their confidence. The junior school was rated as satisfactory in the inspection during the summer term.

Lyn's stint at Winklebury lasted just one term, during which she liaised with the substantive headteacher who was about to replace her. Lyn believes that 'if you have to have an interim head in a school, the shortest possible time is desirable from all points of view'.

And how did the episode affect the governing bodies of the two schools? 'My governors [at Burnham Copse] have been very supportive and because we have strong systems here it was an advantage to the school to be able to develop that leadership capacity. For the Winklebury governors I was a figurehead to help them set some strategic developments in conjunction with the local authority.'

Lyn believes there will continue to be a need for interim headships because the baby boomer generation of heads are retiring and there are fewer aspiring heads to fill their shoes. So governors of good and outstanding schools may increasingly be approached to 'lend' their headteacher to a school in need, with both gaining from the process.

Help for governing bodies in recruiting headteachers

Recruiting heads and senior leaders is possibly the most demanding and important process a governing body has to undertake.

The County Council has a statutory role to work in partnership with governing bodies of maintained schools, to pool expertise and

resources and bring about the right outcomes. Support is provided through HIAS. This focuses on advertising and preparation, shortlisting, selection and the induction of a new headteacher.

A pre-appointment training package is available from Governor Services.

Administrative support, including guidance on clearances and checks, is available from Educational Recruitment Solutions.

Information and costings can be found by contacting the district manager at the local Children's Services office.

Awards

Thanks for years of outstanding service



2011's crop of award winners for outstanding service include a governor who has seen through the challenge of creating one new school out of two that were not succeeding on their own.

Penny Waterfield, chair of Burnham Copse Primary, Tadley, has been in the (often uncomfortable) driving seat throughout the process of bringing together separate infant and junior schools.

The merger was not initially favoured by many governors and staff but Penny, who modestly claims as her main quality that 'I nag nicely', worked tirelessly to change attitudes. Now the combined school has a 'good' rating from Ofsted and – a promising sign for the future – Year R is oversubscribed.

(During the changes, Penny has worked with headteacher Lyn Downes, who is featured on the previous page of Hampshire Governor, talking about her role as a seconded head.)

Penny has been in governance for 23

years and holds down two jobs in her working life, as parish clerk for Baughurst and practice manager for an investment house.

Also honoured with an award is Denise Fletcher-Lance, outgoing chair of Castle Primary, Portchester. Denise has spent more than 16 years on the governing body. Her colleagues recorded a tribute to her 'consummate effectiveness as the strategic management lead'.

Castle Primary's headteacher, Justin Bartlett, told Hampshire Governor: 'In my time at the school Denise has provided that mix of effective challenge with the essential support that every

Penny modestly claims as her main quality that 'I nag nicely'

headteacher needs from their chair of governors. Through the ever-changing landscape of education she has kept at her core an absolute focus on what is best for the children of the school and the community the school serves.'

Denise is remaining with Castle Primary as vice-chair and has also joined Portchester Community School as a community governor.

Award winners pictured with Councillor Roy Perry, Hampshire's executive lead member for children's services, and John Coughlan, director of children's services, are: Colin Davies, Chalk Ridge Primary; George Edser, Rowner Junior; Rikki Willis, Calthorpe Park; Mike Christmas, Burnham Copse Primary; David Read, Burnham Copse Primary; Penny Waterfield, Burnham Copse Primary; Denise Fletcher-Lance, Castle Primary; Brian Vince, Hart Plain Infant; Janet Coates-Jones, The Hayling College; Terry Tillman, Rucstall Primary.

Music and library services

Listen2Me reaches out to infants



Hampshire Music Service has extended its innovative Listen2Me music programme to infants. Previously targeted at KS2 children, Listen2Me gives children the opportunity to learn a selection of instruments and helps them make an informed choice when choosing an instrument to learn at a higher level. For more information, visit www.hants.gov.uk/hms.

Making the most of school libraries

Many school libraries are underused and do not fulfil their potential to improve literacy and support pupil learning. That was one of the findings in a report last year by the School Library Commission.

To address this, the commission recommended that every governing body should include a governor with designated responsibility for the library, perhaps combining this with taking the lead on literacy issues.

Hampshire School Library Service provides schools with resources, information and expertise – and can provide great value for money. However, although 94% of Hampshire

schools subscribe to the service, not all of them take full advantage of the wide range of services on offer to help raise literacy and attainment levels.

One of our professional advisers would be delighted to come into your school to talk, either to the whole governing body or the designated



library governor, about how the school can get best value from its SLS subscription. For example, does your school make use of our information and research skills package to support the curriculum, or know how to access free advice and training on all aspects of literacy, including the use of IT and e-resources in the library, or participate in SLS Book Awards and the Meet the Author programme?

For more information, telephone 01962 826660, email libsec@hants.gov.uk or visit our website, www.hants.gov.uk/sls.

KATHRYN TOOLEY
Development and support manager

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