

Learning and Children's Services

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DIRECTOR'S REPORT TO SCHOOL GOVERNORS FOR THE AUTUMN TERM 2008

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1. 2008 SCHOOL NATIONAL CURRICULUM TESTS AND EXAM RESULTS

2008 examination results remain provisional and some results are incomplete, however early indications are that standards in Kingston's schools remain outstanding overall.

Standards are good in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 and outstanding at Key Stages 2, 3 and 4. This is an enormous achievement and tribute to the excellent work of teachers, support staff and school leadership teams.

There are improvements on last year in several subjects. High performance is also maintained in some subjects but some results have declined.

In 2008, there is:-

- very good improvement at Foundation Stage;
- some improvement and some decline at Key Stage 1;
- improvement in English and mathematics at Key Stage 2, Level 4 and a fall at Level 5;
- a fall at Key Stage 3 and some good improvement at Key Stage 4.

During the past year, schools and the LA have focussed on closing attainment gaps and this work has been successful at Foundation Stage and in improving boys' attainment.

A full report will be distributed shortly and tabled for discussion at the Governor's Partnership meeting. This report will form Part 1 of the 'Annual Report on School Improvement, Standards of Attainment and Pupil Progress'. It will be updated as revisions are made and results are validated. Two further reports will follow. Part 2 will focus on achievement and school and cluster performance and Part 3 will report on our performance in closing attainment gaps. All three reports will be available on the RBK intranet.

As usual at this time of year there are key questions for Governors in reviewing the school's performance in the 2008 National Curriculum tests and public examinations. Governors should receive a full analysis of the school's results. These questions include:

- Has the school improved its outcomes for pupils?
- What is the trend for the past three years, upwards, maintained or declining?
- Is the school's performance in line with expectations and were targets achieved?
- Is there variation in results between subjects or between different groups of pupils?
- Have attainment gaps narrowed between boys and girls, and between disadvantaged groups and other pupils?
- What issues are raised for the school's priorities and investment in improvement?

For further information on the above please contact: Tina Herring, Acting Directorate Head of Learning & School Effectiveness on 0208 547 5283, or email tina.herring@rbk.kingston.gov.uk

2. SIP PROGRAMME AND TARGET SETTING REQUIREMENTS

During the Autumn Term Headteachers and their School Improvement Partners will meet to consider:

- Pupils' attainment and achievement
 - Pupils' personal development and well being
 - The effectiveness of leadership and management
 - School priorities
 - Targets for attainment, progress and attendance in 2010
 - Performance Management (PM) arrangements
-
- Headteachers' Performance Management
 - School Categorisation

These meetings are a critical element of the school improvement cycle and the subsequent report should be discussed at a Governing Body meeting. Targets must be agreed by Governors and it is helpful if a Governor can be present at the meeting on target setting.

SIPs are asked to evaluate performance management arrangements in school including the Governors' role in relation to the Headteacher's PM; arrangements were generally good last year. Criteria for evaluating PM arrangements are available from the SIP.

At the meeting, the school's overall effectiveness is considered in relation to Ofsted criteria as outstanding, good, satisfactory, satisfactory but requiring high priority support or inadequate. The SIP will record his/her judgement for moderation by the Local Authority, which may have a broader view of a school's overall effectiveness.

For further information on the above please contact: Rosemary Hafeez, SIP Manager for Primary Schools on 020 8547 5252 or email rosemary.hafeez@rbk.kingston.gov.uk

or Graham Willett, SIP Manager for Secondary Schools on 020 8547 5287 or email graham.willett@rbk.kingston.gov.uk

or Carol Buchanan, SIP Manager for Special Schools on 020 8547 5271 or email carol.buchanan@rbk.kingston.gov.uk

3. UPDATE ON CAPITAL PROGRAMME AND BSF/PCP

DELIVERING THE STRATEGIC VISION FOR KINGSTON SCHOOLS OF THE FUTURE

The following provides an update to the information provided in the Summer Term 2008 Directors Report regarding progress being made to access significant government funding through the Building Schools for the Future and Primary Capital Programmes.

The Council's Executive considered and approved the strategy for the improvement of Kingston schools on 24 June 2008. These documents were circulated to all schools in June but are available at:

http://www.kingston.gov.uk/council_and_democracy/committeeminutes/moderngov.htm?mgl=ieListDocuments.aspx&CId=134&MId=5313&Ver=4.

The main aims of this work are to ensure that we:

- (i) Gain DCSF approval of our Primary Capital Programme to secure access to the Primary Capital Programme funding of between £3m and £5m per annum with effect from 2009-10, and
- (ii) evidence to the DCSF that we have a shared vision and a strategy and proven capacity to deliver it. We will then be well placed to evidence our 'readiness to deliver' and submit an expression of interest by 30 November to enter the Building Schools for the Future programme earlier than currently planned.

At the time of writing this report the DCSF have not yet advised Local Authorities if they have approved their Primary Capital Programme Strategies. We are expecting to hear the outcome of our submission by the end of September 2008. One aspect that the DCSF may require further information about is the extent to which there is a sustained need for additional primary school places in Kingston.

Pupil Places Planning

Work is continuing to update pupil places planning information in order to take a view whether there is likely to be a sustained increase in need for school places. All recent information indicates that the increased birth rate has been sustained from 2004 to 2007. A decision will need to be taken in early 2009 regarding permanent increases in admissions numbers that will be needed, followed by discussions with schools in advance of statutory consultation. It seems likely that some primary schools will need to expand. Similarly there would need to be an increase in secondary school provision in future years. Schools will be kept fully informed about these developments and consulted regarding any options being considered.

In the meanwhile preparatory work is underway to progress the priority schemes for 2009 at Castle Hill Primary School and to ensure that those schools that will be having an additional Reception Year class for the September 2009 intake have sufficient classroom accommodation.

The DCSF has indicated that there is that no further capital funding available to meet the need for additional primary school places for the period 2008-2011. Kingston will

continue to make a case to the DCSF for funding, but in the meanwhile it will be necessary to assume that we may need to use some of the Primary Capital Programme grant to fund the cost of additional accommodation.

The DCSF published guidance on 22 September for all authorities wishing to submit an expression of interest by 30 November to enter the Building Schools for the Future Programme (covering secondary and special schools and Pupil Referral Units). Kingston is currently working closely with Croydon to establish a joint Local Education Partnership to procure and deliver the building projects. This will achieve efficiencies for both authorities by sharing costs and enable us to offer a more attractive phased package of work to the building sector.

For further information on the above please contact either Donald Farquharson, BSF Consultant on 020 8547 5249, email donald.farquharson@rbk.kingston.gov.uk or Anne Redparth, Directorate Head of Resources & Commissioning on 020 8547 5276, or email anne.redparth@rbk.kingston.gov.uk

4. STRATEGY TO IMPLEMENT 15 HOURS OF EARLY EDUCATION PROVISION

From September 2010, every local authority must offer 15 hours of free early education to all 3 and 4 year olds, over a minimum of 38 weeks. That offer must be made available flexibly, to meet parental demand over a minimum of three days.

Parents are currently entitled to access 12.5 hours of free early learning and care a week across a minimum of 3 days over 38 weeks a year.

Local authorities have a duty to secure sufficient nursery education for children in their area under section 7 of the Childcare Act 2006 and have regard to the 2006 Code of Practice on the provision of nursery education places for 3 and 4 year olds.

Parents have a choice about where to take up their free place from a range of early years settings including nursery classes, reception classes, nurseries, pre-schools and full day-care providers. In order to draw down funding to deliver the free entitlement, early years providers must meet any conditions set out by their local authority, be registered with and inspected by Ofsted and work within the Early Years Foundation Stage and deliver the Foundation Stage curriculum.

This offer is being introduced through a phased approach. From September 2009, all local authorities will be required to make the offer available to 25 per cent of their most disadvantaged 3 and 4 year olds. Additional funding has been allocated through the Standards Fund for this provision.

Early Years provision can act as an enabler for parents, allowing them time to return to work, enter training or achieve a better balance in their work and family life. Evidence shows that involvement in high quality early years education can lead to better educational and social outcomes for all children but there are particular benefits for children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

In preparation for the introduction of the 15 hour flexible offer, Kingston has:

- Undertaken a cost analysis for the private, voluntary and independent (PVI) and maintained sectors to move towards a single funding formula, to determine a basic hourly rate for each sector.
- Held consultation meetings with schools and settings who are already delivering early education.
- Worked with the PVI sector to elect a representative to the Schools Forum.
- Established an Early Education sub-group of the Schools Forum, with representatives of the maintained and PVI sector, chaired by Chair of the Schools Forum.

In order to implement the free entitlement from September 2009, to 25 per cent of Kingston's most disadvantaged 3 and 4 year olds (this refers to 25 per cent of the total 3 and 4 year old School Census and Early Years Census population) we have identified that in Kingston most 4 year olds start reception in the autumn term, so will already be accessing 15 hours early education. Therefore, the target group will be 3 year olds in schools and settings. Kingston will look to offer 500 children additional provision between September 2009 and March 2010. This year allows Local Authorities time and opportunity to deliver the offer to fit our local circumstances, in preparation for universal provision from April 2010.

In order to identify nursery classes and settings who would be interested to be part of this pilot group, a letter has been sent inviting expressions of interest to offer the 15 hours from September 2009.

Once expressions of interest have been received, Kingston will look at the changes required by those schools and settings to deliver 15 hours a week of free provision more flexibly and support the delivery of this.

School classes will be funded to extend the offer to all the children on roll in the nursery class by providing additional funding for staff salaries. Other early Years settings will be funded an additional payment per week for each child taking up the extended offer.

It is unlikely that many nursery classes and some pre-schools will wish to offer the flexible offer in this initial period, as traditionally children are offered morning or afternoon sessions rather than whole days.

Parents are entitled to access 15 hours of free early learning and care a week across a minimum of 3 days. Parents will be able to access this entitlement over 38 weeks a year. The flexible offer for parents sets out a minimum time for access to free provision, so that a session should not be less than 2 hours and the maximum length of a session should not exceed more than 10 hours in one day.

Next steps to implement the extended offer:

- Bring together schools and settings in November who will provide the offer from September 2009 to 25% of children in the most disadvantaged areas
- Identify the level of funding for each sector to deliver the offer, with agreement with Schools Forum
- Develop a communication strategy to communicate with parents and all settings

- Ensure that the flexible offer continues to build on existing high quality early years practice.

Governors are asked to consider these requirements, the changes (if any) that will be required in the school and the expression of interest in taking part in the 2009 pilot.

For further information on the above please contact: Christine Halstead, Strategic Manager, Early Years Education & Childcare on 020 8547 5278, or email christine.halstead@rbk.kington.gov.uk

5. PARENTING STRATEGY

The Local Authority is about to publish a draft strategy for supporting parents. This is in recognition of the fact that parents are their children's first educator and main carer, and all of our efforts to improve outcomes for children and young people also require us to extend support to parents and families.

Schools play a major role in supporting parents and Governors are asked to consider the implications of the Strategy for the way the school engages and supports parents.

Bringing up children is not easy and all parents and carers benefit from a range of support at different times during their children's development and education. The Strategy sets out what we are doing to promote both the development of services for parents as well as their involvement in shaping services for themselves and their children.

Parents and the home environment they create are the single most important factor in shaping their children's well-being, achievements and prospects.

Parents and carers are a crucial influence on what their children experience and achieve. The evidence of the importance of parental impact is building and the shape and structure of families and the social context in which they live is evolving rapidly. Parents, the home and community environment, followed by the quality of the school that a child attends, are the greatest influences on whether a child succeeds and flourishes. Success for all children now depends on integrating support between home and school, and between the school and other services.

The Strategy aims to ensure:

- Parents have the information, advice and support that is relevant and timely to their needs as parents, so they can ensure their children are safe, secure and succeeding in their lives.
- Information services are easily accessible to all parents and are effective in providing advice and signposting for all parents.

- All multi-agency partners of the Children's Trust have effective programmes for consulting with, engaging and supporting parents especially those with most need.
- The Parents' Charter, clearly sets out what parents are entitled to at each stage of their children's lives
- There is a multi-agency support package including the identification of a Lead Professional available for those families with higher levels of need.
- All children access the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) programme in Primary and Secondary schools
- Parents and carers with literacy and numeracy needs, will be able to attend and benefit from a Family Learning course
- All parents can access information sessions around the time their child enters primary and secondary school
- Parents of children with learning difficulties or disabilities are supported to meet their children's needs, and to access appropriate education, care and medical attention
- Parents can find the childcare place they need and those who need it will receive support to access affordable childcare including the take up of tax credits
- All children and young people with additional needs will receive enhanced support which involves their parents or carers
- Through working with health visitors and midwives, we improve parents' interaction with their baby, increase the likelihood of smoking cessation, improve the mother's diet in pregnancy, increase breastfeeding initiation and duration, and help parents develop in their own lives, e.g. by participation in the workforce or re-engagement with education.
- Children 0-5 will have access to good quality childcare and early education and will be supported to achieve good outcomes in the Foundation Stage
- Parents of children and young people from birth – 19 years will have access to a full range of information on parenting and local services from the Children's Information Service
- All families with children under 5 have access to a Children's Centre by 2010
- All Children's Centres will have parent participation in their local forums, and consult regularly with parents on the services provided and their quality
- All families are able to access extended services through their children's school, including after- school and holiday activities

- All families with children aged three and four are able to access 15 hours of free early education and childcare, 38 weeks of the year, over three or more days by 2010
- All children and their parents, especially those who need additional support, will be advised and helped to make a successful transition from primary to secondary school
- All adolescent young people who are at risk of becoming disengaged, and their parents, will have access to support from the Integrated Youth Support Services, including help to participate in a range of positive activities
- All schools are able to offer parenting support or signpost parents to a range of parenting support activities and services as part of the extended offer
- All teenage parents will be supported to care well for their child and to re-engage with education and training
- All foster carers are supported to care well for children in public care so that these children have stability in their lives and are able to be healthy, safe, attend school regularly and succeed at school
- Parents whose children are at risk of being taken into public care are supported to safely keep their children at home
- All children who can be adopted have a successful and timely adoption and good support is available to their adoptive parents
- Parents will receive good information and advice about finding a school place for their child in primary and secondary schools
- The Local Authority will make good progress in ensuring all parents have the choice of a good school and there are sufficient places for all the local families who want their children to be educated in a Kingston school

For further information on the above please contact: Patrick Leeson, Strategic Director, Learning and Children's Services on 0208 547 5220, or email patrick.leeson@rbk.kingston.gov.uk

6. REFRESHED CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PLAN

Each year the Local Authority assesses progress on the key priorities in the Children and Young People's Plan, and reviews the objectives to improve outcomes and the quality of our provision. Schools play a major part in this process, and are expected to have regard to the Plan in setting priorities for the school's improvement across the 5 ECM outcomes.

In our APA (Annual Performance Assessment), Ofsted judges Kingston as outstanding overall for Children's Services. The priorities in the Children and Young People's Plan remain key priorities in our programme to enhance the life of the community and promote community cohesion. They are central to our efforts to improve outcomes for all children and young people, to tackle inequalities and achievement gaps and to support vulnerable young people, children and their families.

The APA grades reflect high performance, with outstanding social care and educational provision, good health provision and strong partnership with the Police to improve community cohesion and reduce youth offending. Outcomes for children and young people overall are mostly outstanding and there is no complacency about improving the life chances of all children and young people especially those that are vulnerable and who under-achieve.

Overall the progress in achieving the targets and objectives in the Plan during 2007-2008 has been very good. There has been good and very good progress for 80% of the performance indicators and in very few areas is there unsatisfactory progress or performance.

However we continue to have challenging issues and poorer outcomes for some groups of children and young people. A key benchmark for success is our effectiveness in narrowing gaps in outcomes. We are especially challenged to improve and eradicate child poverty, nationally and locally, and to tackle the persistent link between deprivation and poor educational and other outcomes.

This requires all our schools, and all services, to be more inclusive and responsive to individual needs, to personalise support for children, to reach out to the poorest children and families and to focus more attention on narrowing gaps. The target to narrow the gaps in outcomes between pupils on free school meals and other pupils, is a key priority together with continued efforts to reduce exclusion and drop-out rates.

We recognise that these aspirations can only be achieved by continuing to improve teaching and learning and raise attainment through the school curriculum, supported by extended services in schools and close integration with the external services that work with schools to help the most needy families and children. This focus is the nub of the Children and Young People's Plan.

Other key issues for further improvement are:

Being Healthy

- Therapy waiting times
- Reducing obesity among children and young people
- Effectiveness of CAMHS (child and adolescent mental health services)
- Prevalence of Chlamydia in under 25 year olds
- Improving participation in PE and sport
- HPV immunisation take up

Staying Safe

- Increasing the stability of foster placements for children in public care
- Further promote private fostering underpinned by our Private Fostering Strategy.
- Reducing re-referrals for statutory social care

- Implement the parenting strategy
- Prevention and early intervention so that children get the additional support they need

Enjoy and Achieve

- Improve the percentage of SEN statements completed within 26 weeks, including those where medical advice is required
- More focus on strengthening support for children in care, and those with learning difficulties and disabilities, to achieve at school
- Managing behaviour in primary schools and improving the emotional resilience of all children and young people
- Closing attainment gaps including the achievement gap between those on FSM and other pupils
- Continue to expand cultural opportunities and play

Making a Positive Contribution

- Reducing the number of first time offenders in the criminal justice system
- Reducing the number of young people who re-offend
- More support for children to make a successful transition to secondary school

Achieving Economic Well-being

- Improve the percentage of 19 year olds who have achieved at least 5 good GCSEs including English and mathematics
- Increase the take up by families of childcare tax credits
- Extend the September Guarantee for Year 12 students
- Improve the quality of school 6th forms, and increase their numbers of students
- Develop and implement the 14-19 diplomas by 2013
- Reduce the inequality gap in the achievement of a Level 2 qualification by the age of 19

In addition, in 2008-2009, we have added new objectives which focus on the following:

- Increase the numbers of children and young people who enjoy school and are motivated to learn
- Increase the number of young people who make a successful transition at ages 14 and 16
- Develop a universal and targeted parenting programme for parents of 0-18 year olds
- Implement key targets in the crime reduction strategy to ensure fewer young people are the victims of crime
- Develop effective early intervention strategies to ensure children and young people on the edge of care are enabled to remain within their own home
- Continue to improve user friendly health services for young people including sexual health and improved Chlamydia screening
- Reduce re-offending by young people

- Develop and implement an integrated strategy including opportunities through the Primary Capital Programme and Building Schools for the Future and the development of Community Hubs

For further information on the above please contact: Patrick Leeson, Strategic Director, Learning and Children’s Services on 0208 547 5220, or email patrick.leeson@rbk.kingston.gov.uk

7. SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION ON SACRE COLLECTIVE WORSHIP GUIDANCE

‘The challenge consists in creating an experience which does not compromise belief but recognises the integrity and dignity of all members of the school community; which is essentially educational, and stimulates the possibility of reflecting inwardly, sharing outwardly, and living upwardly.’ Angela Wood

Schools are being consulted during the autumn term on draft guidance for Collective Worship from the Kingston Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) which has a responsibility to advise RBK schools on this statutory responsibility. The guidance document has been emailed to headteachers and hard copies will be sent to schools for headteachers, Chairs of Governors and clerks to the Governors. The draft guidance document can also be viewed on the RBK website, School Governors pages at the following link:

http://www.kingston.gov.uk/browse/education/schools/governors/documents_for_governors.htm

It is still the law that pupils (who have not been withdrawn) take part in a daily act of worship, although this can take place at any time of the day. The school prospectus must include information about collective worship. The pattern of daily worship may be varied to include whole school, key stage, year group, or class-based worship. The SACRE guidance explains the legal requirement (including the procedure for seeking a determination) and provides examples of good practice in local schools.

In [*RE and collective worship - An analysis of 2006 SACRE reports*](#) the QCA reports that collective worship often allows for the clearest expression of a school's ethos. The QCA recognises the important role collective worship plays in the school's development of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC) of its pupils. Ofsted inspects schools for the provision that is made for SMSC and the contribution which collective worship makes to the life of the school. The QCA advises that best practice in collective worship is usually characterised by thorough planning and evaluation, the use of themes over a term or half term and the use of outside speakers who are able to bring insights directly from their own faith and cultural traditions.

The SACRE hopes that school governors, headteachers and staff with pastoral responsibilities will ask themselves how the daily act of collective worship in the school can be integrated in a planned and coherent way into the school's approach to fulfilling

its responsibilities for SMSC, the *'Every Child Matters'* agenda and the new duty of schools to promote community cohesion. Governors could ask questions such as:

- is there a collective worship policy in the school, with someone taking a lead responsibility?
- how is the worship linked to the life of the school?
- is collective worship allowed adequate time?
- are we planning for a shared and involved experience of all, not just a few?
- do we invite speakers from local faith and other community groups to foster closer links with the local and wider community?
- how is a sense of occasion created (with a clear beginning and ending, separated from administration)?
- how do we ensure we use the right language for the age group?

Schools' comments on the draft Guidance for the SACRE meeting in November are requested by **Tuesday 14 October 2008**. **Please send your comments** to Jean Cousens, RBK Democratic Support, The Guildhall, Kingston KT1 1EU or telephone 020 8547 5023 or email jean.cousens@rbk.kingston.gov.uk.

For those schools which will have their autumn term Governing Body meeting before 14 October, the headteacher is invited to seek any comments from Governors at that meeting.

For further information on the above please contact Jean Cousens, Democratic Support Officer, on 020 8547 5023, or email jean.cousens@rbk.kingston.gov.uk.

8. ENERGY STRATEGY

The Council is developing an Energy Strategy for the whole borough to target the energy challenges faced by rising fuel prices and carbon emissions from fossil fuels. The aim is to ensure a consistent approach to tackling energy use across the borough and using the existing regulatory planning framework to secure delivery.

The role of the School Governing Bodies in the energy strategy is to assist in recognising the benefits for schools. Schools can benefit from affective asset management, investment and maintenance of building and energy monitoring. Secondly, the community can benefit from the improved learning environment and the curriculum benefits to good energy education.

Energy issues can and are already being addressed in existing school programmes such as

- Sustainable Schools National Framework – the eight 'doorways'
- Building Schools for the Future Programme
- Primary Schools Review
- Extended Schools
- School Travel Planning – Walking buses
- Eco-Schools

These initiatives and programmes can be linked to the Children and Young People's Plan 2006-10.

Schools have a role to assist the Council meet its performance targets and reporting data to government. As part of measuring the success of tackling climate change and energy in the borough the Council has agreed a carbon reduction target in the Local Area Agreement. That is carbon dioxide emissions (CO₂) from homes, businesses, and transport as well as from our own estate. This is Nation Indicator 186: Per capita CO₂ emissions in the local authority area.

Secondly, the Council has to report on Percentage CO₂ reduction from Local Authority operations (NI 185). Schools will have a responsibility to provide data and can work with the Council to develop a programme of improvement.

As part of raising the issues regarding schools there is a representative from the education department on the Corporate Energy Strategy Steering Group, this has ensured that the Schools Premises Consultative Group and the Children's and Young People's Delivery Group have been informed of the need to address energy issues in the borough. As part of this ongoing consultation process a Stakeholder Seminar was hosted on Monday 22nd September and school representatives took an active role on the day.

Formal consultation on the Draft Energy Strategy will be launched from November 2008. School Governing Bodies will be informed of the launch and asked for feedback.

For more information on the above please contact either: Shadia Rahman, Energy Strategy Development Officer on 020 8547 5763, email shadia.rahman@rbk.kingston.gov.uk or Frances Smith, Principal Environmental Officer on 020 8547 4758, or email frances.smith@rbk.kingston.gov.uk

9. HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDANCE FOR KINGSTON SCHOOLS

SCHOOL OFFSITE VISITS AND LEARNING OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

Every school should have a trained Educational Visits Coordinator, who is responsible for overseeing the organisation, guidance and risk assessment of offsite visits. RBK retains the services of Alan Cottle (Head of Strategic Risk Management, Surrey County Council) as Outdoor Education Adviser. Alan provides advice and support on all matters relating to offsite education and approves all residential and/or potentially hazardous visits on behalf of the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames.

Educational Visit Coordinators should attend training on this key role every three years - the next available course is at the King Charles Centre on 21st October. Details are provided on the KIMS system.

All residential visits should be planned using RBK 'Guidelines for Educational Visits and Outdoor Education Visits 2006' and complete the approval form, which must also be approved by the Chair of Governors, once all relevant paperwork and assessments have been completed.

The approval form is Appendix A of the Guidelines, which were issued to schools during 2006 and are available to view from RBK's Health and Safety intranet website. In order that approval forms can be given proper attention, they should be sent to Alan at least four weeks before the date of the activity, to the following address:

Room 168, County Hall, Kingston upon Thames, KT1 2D

Alan recently demonstrated an online approval system called Evolve which he has been using with Surrey schools for a year. The system is hosted and maintained by an external provider so is web-based. It enables users to submit approval forms and supporting risk assessments on-line. The system has a number of advantages including speed, ease of communication (for example commenting on risk assessments) as well as not requiring paper use. Users can easily identify what stage they have reached in co-ordinating the different visits they are involved with. The Evolve will be presented to schools during the next few months with a view to adopting the package by the beginning of the summer term 2009.

Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare continues to provide advice to schools on all other health and safety matters – 020 8547 5161 or 5189.

For further information on the above please contact Caroline Woodliffe, Senior Health and Safety Adviser on 020 8547 5161, or email caroline.woodliffe@rbk.kingston.gov.uk or Alan Cottle, on 020 8541 9622, or email alan.cottle@surreycc.gov.uk

10. VACANCIES FOR GOVERNORS ON THE SCHOOL ADMISSIONS FORUM

Currently the School Admissions Forum has vacancies for representatives from VA primary schools, community secondary schools and parent governors. I am writing to ask if you have any Governors (including Heads) who may be interested in becoming members of the School Admissions Forum.

The School Admissions Forum (SAF) meets 3 times a year in the Guildhall at 6.30pm. The next meeting is on 15 October 2008.

The aims of the SAF are to be a vehicle for admission authorities and other key interested parties to discuss the effectiveness of local admission arrangements, to consider how to deal with difficult admission issues, and to advise admission authorities on ways in which their arrangements can be improved.

If anyone is interested, please contact Hatija Bhatia, Principal Admissions & Governance Officer on 0208 547 5284, or email hatija.bhatia@rbk.kingston.gov.uk

11. GOVERNOR UPDATES

Equalities Bill – A New Public Duty

In June 2008 the government published *A Framework for a Fairer Future* outlining plans for the introduction of a single equality duty. The government has now published its response to the consultation on the Green Paper, *Discrimination Law Review: A Framework for Fairness: Proposals for a Single Equality Bill for Great Britain*, June 2007. This document provides an account of the reasoning underpinning the various decisions reported in the *Framework*, and gives fuller information on the new duty.

The proposed new duty will:

- introduce a new streamlined public sector equality duty to replace the race, disability and gender equality duties
- frame the new duty in a way which makes clear the outcomes it is designed to achieve
- retain the existing structure of general and specific duties (leaving open the possibility of application of different duties to different authorities, as now)
- extend the new equality duty to age, sexual orientation and religion or belief and to make explicit that it covers gender reassignment.

The Equality Bill will be introduced in the next parliamentary session, in December or early in 2009. The implementation of the new duty will be delayed until 2010 - 2011 at the earliest, after the three-year reviews of the gender and disability duties have been completed. A cross-government working group will consider the specific duties in the meantime.

Community Cohesion for Governors

The introduction of the statutory duty on schools to promote community cohesion from September 2007 recognises the good work that many schools are already doing to encourage community cohesion, and aims to achieve a situation whereby all children understand others, value diversity, have a sense of shared values and have real and positive relationships with people from different backgrounds.

Governors are responsible for meeting the duty, and should work with the head teacher to ensure the school is complying with the duty. Governors have a key role in supporting the school to improve its effectiveness in promoting community cohesion, particularly through their knowledge of the local community and partners.

Ofsted plan to inspect the community cohesion duty from September 2008. Ofsted has worked closely with the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and other stakeholders to develop inspection guidance. This is available from www.ofsted.gov.uk.

To support schools the DCSF has:

- Published guidance in July 2007, which sets out how schools can contribute towards community cohesion – through their teaching and learning, work on narrowing achievement gaps, and through extended services and engagement with the local community.
www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/Communitycohesion/Community_Cohesion_Guidance
- An online resource pack to provide schools with practical advice, support and examples of good practice, including a section for Governors.
www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/Communitycohesion/communitycohesionresourcepack/

Governors can use this resource pack to help their school review their current work in relation to promoting community cohesion and take action to consider what more could be done to improve their practice and provision to ensure it is effective.

Review of school governance

As announced in the Children's Plan the Secretary of State, Ed Balls, announced on 8 May a review of school governance, which will develop firm proposals to give every school a highly skilled, smaller and better trained governing body to deliver the best service they can for the children and parents in their communities.

A working group chaired by Jim Knight has been set up to advise ministers on equipping governing bodies to:

- give schools clear, strategic direction and ethos;
- listen to parents and local communities
- be at the heart of turning around underperforming schools.

The last meeting of the review body is expected to take place in early October and the government is expecting to bring forward proposals for consultations by the end of the year. As soon as further details of the consultation are known, they will be made available to governing bodies. Patrick Leeson, Director, is representing Directors of Children's Services nationally on the ministerial working group.

Listening to the voice of children and young people

The need to consult children and young people and giving them a voice is increasingly recognised and becoming an essential element of an Ofsted inspection. The DCSF has recently updated its guidance, first published in 2004, on involving pupils in school decision making.

This guidance can be found on Teachernet:

<http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=DCSF-00410-2008>

A New Way of Handling Parents' Complaints about School Issues

On 24 September, the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families announced an imminent consultation on a new way of handling parents' complaints to their child's

school. The Children's Plan committed the Government to look at ways of improving the current arrangements for parents' complaints.

The consultation invites comments on handling parents' complaints to their child's school affecting their child, including those which concern bullying. The DCSF is asking for views on ways to improve: handling of complaints at school level; the place of mediation services to resolve disagreements early on; and possible new arrangements to consider complaints that cannot be resolved at school level.

The DCSF looks forward to hearing the views of as many people and organisations as possible including parents, parents' organisations, governing bodies and governors' organisations, local government, schools, teaching and support staff including professional bodies, and those with SEN interests. The consultation will run for eight weeks from Friday 26 September and closes on 20 November 2008. For further information, please visit www.dcsf.gov.uk/consultations

School Admissions Consultation

Governors are reminded that the closing date for responses to the School Admissions consultation is 2 October 2008. For further information and to respond on –line, please visit www.dcsf.gov.uk/consultations

Revised Ofsted framework

Ofsted are reviewing the arrangements for inspecting schools from September 2009 following a consultation which closed on 11 August 2008. As soon as the outcome of the consultation is known, we will inform governing bodies. Further information can be found on the Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

Schools' role in promoting pupil well-being

The 2006 Education and Inspections Act laid a duty on the governing bodies of maintained schools, primary, secondary, special and Pupil Referral Units, in discharging their functions relating to the conduct of the school, to promote the well-being of pupils at the school.

The DCSF produced draft guidance for consultation during the summer on the schools' role in promoting well-being. As soon as the outcome of the consultation is known, we will inform governing bodies.

For further information on any of the above items please contact: Hatija Bhatia, Principal Admissions & Governance Officer on 0208 547 5284, or email hatija.bhatia@rbk.kingston.gov.uk

12. GOVERNOR TRAINING FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2008/2009

Please find listed below the Governor training courses that are available during the Academic Year 2008/2009. Please reserve your place by speaking to your CPD coordinator and/or Headteacher depending on the arrangements at your school. All governor courses can be viewed on KIMS at the following link:

[http://www.rbksch.org/KIMS/\(S\(jkvx1m45xs5xjwvk5kqfvmid\)\)/kHome.aspx](http://www.rbksch.org/KIMS/(S(jkvx1m45xs5xjwvk5kqfvmid))/kHome.aspx) click View Courses, click Governor Training and Development.

The venue for all training is the King Charles Centre, 19.00pm – 21.00pm unless otherwise stated.

AUTUMN TERM

Interpreting Data – What do I need to know
G08/001 23/09/08

Leading in Partnership
G08/002 (9.00am – 16.00pm) 07/10/08

Safe Fair and Effective Recruitment
G08/003A 08/10/08

Exclusion of Pupils from School
G08/004 16/10/08

Introduction to Schools' Finance
G08/005 04/11/08

Sex and Relationships Education in Schools
G08/007 26/11/08

Taking the Chair
G08/006 03/12/08

SPRING TERM

Governors Update on Literacy, Numeracy and SEN
G08/008 22/01/09

Governing Body Self Review
G08/009 04/02/09

Induction Training – The New Governor
G08/010 11/02/09, 25/02/09, 04/03/09
(over 3 consecutive weeks)

The Funding Formula and setting the School Budget
G08/011 05/03/09

Safe Fair and Effective Recruitment
G08/003B 11/03/09

Inclusion: Pupils at Greater Risk of Underachievement
G08/012 18/03/09

Healthy Schools
G08/013 24/03/09

SUMMER TERM

How Governors can make Every Child Matter G08/014	29/04/09
Safe Fair and Effective Recruitment G08/003C	13/05/09
Monitoring the School Budget G08/015	02/06/09
Induction Training – The New Governor G08/016	10/06/09, 17/06/09, 24/06/09 (over 3 consecutive weeks)
CAF Level 1 Training for School Governors G08/017	23/06/09

AUTUMN TERM CLERK TRAINING

National Training Programme for Clerks to Governing Bodies 14/11/08
at King Charles Centre, 9.00am – 4.00pm
(please email sandra.rosato@rbk.kingston.gov.uk to reserve a place)

For further information on the above please contact: Hatija Bhatia, Principal Admissions & Governance Officer on 0208 547 5284, or email hatija.bhatia@rbk.kingston.gov.uk