

Learning and Children's Services

Patrick Leeson

Director of Learning and Children's Services



**DIRECTOR'S REPORT TO SCHOOL GOVERNORS
FOR THE SPRING TERM 2006**

CONTENTS

- 1. Budget: Revenue & Capital**
- 2. Financial Management Standard**
- 3. Children's Centres**
- 4. Schools White Paper: Implications for Governors**
- 5. Consultation on the SEN Strategy**
- 6. Governors' Perspective on the new Ofsted Inspection Framework**
- 7. Introduction of the School Profile and the Role of Governors**
- 8. Electronic On Line Admissions**
- 9. National Governors' Conference Feedback**
- 10. Committee Vacancies**

1. BUDGET: REVENUE & CAPITAL

Schools Budget Revenue and Capital 2006/07 and 2007/08

The last Directors Report provided an overview of the changes to national arrangements for funding Schools Services in 2006/07. The key changes are:

- the introduction of multi-year budgets for schools (initially two year period, followed by three-year budgets)
- a new ring-fenced grant to local authorities for school funding, the Dedicated Schools Grant
- streamlined standards-related grants, including the transfer of Teachers Pay Grants into delegated budget shares.
- new powers for Schools Forums to approve certain proposals from their local authority.
- the requirement for secondary schools to meet the Schools Financial Management Standard by March 2007.

There are a number of decisions to be taken as part of the budget process which will affect the level of funding that each school receives next year:

- (i) the amount of the Dedicated Schools Grant to be delegated to schools, and the amount to be retained by the Local Authority (LA) to fund centrally provided services such as Pupil Referral Units, out-borough SEN and nursery provision in the private and voluntary sector
- (ii) proposed changes to the local funding formula used to allocate funding between Kingston schools
- (iii) any contribution towards the cost of developing 'combined services' that help support the Every Child Matters agenda
- (iv) the basis of allocating individual Standard Fund Grants to schools.

The Dedicated Schools Grant issued to Kingston provides an increase of 6.5% per pupil in 2006/07 and a further 6.3% per pupil in 2007/08. This increase in funding includes provision for a number of new initiatives such as personalised learning in primary and secondary schools, practical learning options at Key Stage 4, additional funding for workforce reforms and an extension of free early years provision for 3 & 4 year olds in the non-maintained sector. These earmarked elements account for approximately 1.4% of the overall increase per pupil, leaving an average increase of 5.1% per pupil (just above the national minimum of 5% for all schools services). This

compares with estimated minimum cost pressures of 3.2% in Kingston schools for 2006-07.

The total delegated to schools is to increase by at least the minimum funding guarantee (MFG) required by the DfES. This provides 3.4% per pupil in secondary and special schools, and 4.0% per pupil in nursery and primary schools. The balance of the Schools Budget must be allocated amongst a number of competing priorities.

These are set out in the **Schools Budget Consultation paper** issued to schools on Friday 20 January 2006 and include:

- Match funding of Standards Fund Grant: ICT Connectivity
- Contribution to 'combined services' to support the Every Child Matters agenda
- SEN 'Invest to Save' Borrowing (Capital investment)
- Nursery provision in the private and voluntary sector – increased take-up of free provision for three and four year olds
- Additional formula funding for schools in excess of the Minimum Funding Guarantee

Sixth form funding allocations for secondary schools were issued by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) in December. These confirmed that qualification rates will increase in line with the minimum funding guarantee for secondary schools i.e. 3.4% in 2006/07.

The wider Local Authority funding settlement for the next two years is a poor one for RBK. The increase in grant for services other than schools is 2.3% for 2006/7 (2.0% if the amendments to previous years' grants are taken into account) and 2.7% for 2007/08. These figures are the minimum (floor) increase for Children's Services authorities. In addition, various specific grants have been absorbed into RSG and are effectively lost in cash terms. Taking all factors into account, the outlook is not optimistic and some significant budget/service reductions will be necessary across Council services to ensure that the council tax increase is at an acceptable level of below 5%. These will be detailed in the budget when it is published by the Executive on 1 February 2006.

The Local Authority continues to be responsible for meeting the cost of borrowing associated with capital investment in schools. The poor financial settlement results in uncertainty regarding the affordability of new capital investment requiring a contribution from the Local Authority. The budget proposals issued by the Executive on 1 February 2006 should provide an indication of the total resources available for capital investment. Schools will receive further information regarding the impact on the schools' capital programme as soon as it is available.

All schools have received a series of consultation papers covering the above aspects in detail:

- (i) Revenue Budget Consultation for Schools 2006/07 (issued 12 Dec 2005)
- (ii) Consolidated Schools Funding Consultation Booklet 2006/08 (20 January 2006)
- (iii) Standards Fund Grants – Basis of Allocation (late January 2006)

As part of the on-going implementation of the SEN Strategy the consultation paper includes a proposed new funding formula for Kingston Special Schools. This seeks to ensure the total level of resources available for the three schools reflects the current level of needs being met, and provide a funding basis that enables the schools to develop medium financial and school organisational planning.

The return date for any responses to the above papers is the 16th February so that the issues can be considered in detail by the Schools Forum on 20 February 2006. The views of the Schools Forum will be taken into account by the Council's Executive when proposing the final Budget at their meeting on 21 February 2006.

All schools have received an illustrative allocation of the funding available for 2006-2007 using estimated January 2006 pupil numbers. This allocation indicated the likely level of the school budget share based on the minimum funding guarantee, school standards grant and school development grant (standards fund).

It is hoped to issue a further indicative budget to all schools by the end of February 2006, in advance of the final budget shares in March 2006.

Following the introduction of multi-year funding notifications from the DfES the LA will similarly be providing schools with multi-year information (starting with 2006/07 and 2007/08). The expectation is that schools will construct an annual budget for the next year and financial forecast(s) for the remaining year(s) in the funding period.

For more information please contact Anne Redparth, Directorate Head of Resources on 020 8547 5276, or email anne.redparth@rbk.kingston.gov.uk

2. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT STANDARD

DfES Financial Management Standard & Toolkit for Schools

Governors are reminded that the DfES has developed a Financial Management Standard for all schools. The standard itself is a set of criteria by which schools can assess the effectiveness of their financial and resource management.

By applying the Financial Management Standard, schools will be able to assess:

- (i) the soundness and effectiveness of their own financial management systems and
- (ii) identify what they need to do to improve them.

There is a toolkit available to assist schools to assess themselves against the standard and to provide a database of useful reference material.

The DfES has confirmed that all secondary schools will be expected to meet the Standard by March 2007, and all schools will be expected to comply in the next few years. Further details are expected shortly from the DfES regarding the external assessment arrangements that will be available for schools.

In the meanwhile information regarding the Standard can be downloaded from the DfES Value for Money Web Site

<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/valueformoney/index.cfm?action=financeManagement.Default>

For more information please contact Anne Redparth, Directorate Head of Resources on 020 8547 5276, or email anne.redparth@rbk.kingston.gov.uk

3. CHILDREN'S CENTRES

In order to ensure the best possible start for the youngest children in the borough, i.e. those from 0-5 years, the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames (RBK) along with partner agencies will develop 6 new Children's Centres across the borough between April 2006 and March 2008, in addition to the existing centre at Surbiton Hill.

Children's Centres are part of central Governments' Sure Start initiative to provide early learning, quality child care, health services, and family support to the families who most need additional help. The plan is to ensure that by 2010 every community has an easily accessible Children's Centre.

In Kingston we already have Surbiton Children's Centre and it will be further developed to meet DfES standards. Further centres will be developed in areas of the borough where we know the need is highest and will offer a range of services designed to reduce inequality of opportunity for RBK children. These will be centred in the following school settings: Buckland Infants, King Athelstan Primary, The Mount Primary, Malden Manor Primary, Burlington Infants and Latchmere Infant and Junior Schools.

This provides good geographical spread for the borough as well as ensuring the areas of greatest need will be able to access appropriate childcare, health and family support services. The Centres are a key part of the Local Authority's provision of

integrated services for children and families, delivered in a joined up way at the front line in schools. They are crucial to the implementation of the Government's ten year childcare strategy, 'Choice for parents, the best start for children', and contribute to improving outcomes for children set out in 'Every Child Matters: Change for Children', and the Children Act 2004. This outlines five key outcomes for children and young people, which are:

- Being healthy
- Staying safe
- Enjoying and achieving
- Economic well being
- Making a positive contribution

Kingston is putting Children's Centres at the heart of providing integrated services and improving outcomes for children and families. This will reduce the inequalities between the most disadvantaged children and the rest of the community by ensuring all families receive an appropriate level of support that meets their needs.

The aim of Children's Centres is to create a network of centres that offer information, advice and support to parents, carers and their families with targeted services for the under fives. A Children's Centre should not just be regarded as a building, but a reconfiguration of existing and new services to meet the needs of families, as identified by them, to reduce poverty and improve the life chances of children.

In total, seven Children's Centres reaching 5,456 under 5's need to be in place by March 2008. There will be further proposals developed for 2008-2010 with the long term aim that there will be a Children's Centre in every community and within easy reach of every family.

The services developed will take account of consultations with parents across the borough and will include some of the following:

- quality child care
- early learning
- toy libraries
- stay and play groups
- parents focus groups
- baby cafés
- health clinics
- housing advice
- benefits advice
- adult education

Governance

The local authority has responsibility for the development of Children's Centres, working in partnership with health colleagues and other key agencies and through Children's Trust arrangements.

There is no Government guidance yet on what the governance arrangements should be for Children's Centres, this means local authorities may determine how they wish to see the centres managed. They will be managed through the existing arrangements in the school settings, with the Headteacher and governors assuming responsibility for the provision. We await further Government guidance on the implications for school governance in the longer term.

Funding

Capital	£829,920.00
Revenue	£1,190,239.00 over 2 years

To deliver Phase 2 of the Children's Centre Programme Kingston has been allocated £829,920 capital and £1,190,239 revenue funding for the period 2006-2008. The capital allocation in Phase 2 is significantly lower than the funding received by local authorities in the national first round of Children's Centres development.

This will mean that Kingston will not be able to undertake large scale new building schemes, but smaller refurbishments.

The revenue allocated is modest given the requirements to provide the core services and in order to designate Kingston's current Early Excellence Centre as a Sure Start Children's Centre. To make the best possible use of resources this programme will need to link with other initiatives, for example the extended schools funding and reconfiguration of existing services currently delivered in other settings. All the Children's Centres will be located in settings that are also developing extended school services and should form part of a continuum of provision to support children as they get older.

Consultation and the engagement of stakeholders on these proposals will run until 11 February 2006 with a view to having a final strategy in place by April 2006. Detailed implementation plans for each centre will be developed, with all centres being fully operational by March 2008.

For more information please contact Cathie Pattison, Directorate Head of Children's Services and Safeguarding on 020 8547 6056, or email: Cathie.Pattison@rbk.kingston.gov.uk

4. SCHOOLS WHITE PAPER

The Secretary of State for Education and Skills launched the Education White Paper *Higher Standards, Better Schools for All* in October 2005. Much of what is in the White Paper follows on from existing policies, in particular, the Five Year Education Strategy published in 2004.

The Main Proposals

The main proposals are:

- Self-governing Trust Schools – every school to be given the opportunity to acquire a Trust – which could appoint the majority of the governing body.
- Governing Bodies – new statutory duty to have regard to the views of parents.
- Academies – to remain at the heart of the new programme.
- Schools Commissioner – to promote diversity of choice and champion parents' interests.
- Parents to receive termly information on the progress of their children.
- All new schools will be either: Trust Schools, Academies, Foundation Schools or Voluntary Aided schools.
- School Transport – extend right to free school transport for the most disadvantaged children to their three nearest secondary schools when more than 2 miles and no more than six miles from their home.
- Banding – make it easier for schools to introduce banding into their admission policies.
- Parent Councils – to allow parents a voice on school issues, school meals, uniform and discipline. All schools will be encouraged to have one and it will be compulsory in Trust Schools.
- Ofsted – new statutory duty to investigate where parents have legitimate concerns.
- Parents would be able to set up new schools.
- One-to-One tuition in English and Maths for most underperforming pupils.
- Gifted and Talented Pupils – more opportunities to be provided.
- Schools in Special Measures – where no improvement within 12 months a competition for a new school will be held.
- Expansion of Schools, good schools to expand or federate more easily.
- Specialist Schools able to acquire more specialisms.
- Discipline – Excluded Pupils:
 - Parents responsible for first five days and could be fined if pupils found to be unsupervised;
 - Headteachers to collaborate to use powers and funding collectively to develop on or off site provision for pupils excluded for longer than five days;

- Local authorities will have a duty to provide permanently excluded pupils with full-time education after the sixth day of an exclusion (currently the sixteenth day).
- Local Authorities will have a new duty to promote choice, diversity and fair access to school places, and will have more power to act decisively where schools are failing and underperforming.
- School Organisation Committees to be abolished.

Implications for Governors

There is one statutory implication which would be a new duty to have regard to the views of parents.

Governing bodies will be encouraged to set up Parent Councils to give parents a voice in school decisions. These will only be compulsory in Trust Schools where the Trust appoints the majority of the governing body.

Governing bodies should already be taking account of the views of parents, as well as pupils and other stakeholders. Governing bodies will need to ensure that they keep clear records of what measures they take in respect of this duty. Ofsted have already made clear that they would be looking for this evidence within the self-evaluation form.

DfES will also be promoting training for governors and in particular the White Paper says that: "We will increasingly expect all new governors to take up induction training and all schools to make this a priority when making decisions about training and budgets."

The proposed "trust schools" also have potentially profound implications for the make-up of governing bodies. Trust schools would become their own admissions authority, employ their own staff and own the school assets. By definition they would also have a Trust. The Trust would also have the right to appoint the majority of the governing body.

If the proposals become law following the publication of the Education Bill in February 2006, it will be for the governing body of the existing school to decide whether it wishes to become a Trust School. Before publishing formal proposals the governing body would need to consult with parents to ensure they support the proposal to become a Trust school and the particular Trust the school wishes to adopt.

Trusts which hold land and appoint Governors would be charities regulated by the Charity Commission. Any income received or generated must be used for its charitable purposes and they will not be able to receive income from the schools' budget. They will also have a duty to promote community cohesion and good race relations.

The governing body of a Trust school must have a minimum of 11 members. It will be for the Trust to decide whether it wishes to appoint the majority of the members of the governing body, but if it does so there must still be elected representation from

the parent body, the school workforce, the local authority and the local community. Where a Trust appoints the majority of the governing body it must also establish a Parents' Council to ensure that Parents have a strong voice in the way the school is run. The current regulations on the governance of Community schools which provide for a third of governing body representatives to be parent governors would no longer apply.

Federated Schools and Partnerships

Schools already have the ability to form "hard" federations where more than one school shares the same governing body. At present in RBK Coombe Girls' and Coombe Boys' Schools form a federation.

All secondary schools are expected to form or join partnerships by 2007 in order to cooperate on attendance and behaviour issues and also in relation to sharing "hard to place" pupils.

Admission Arrangements

The White Paper promises fairer admissions and requires all schools to take account of the Admissions Code of Practice. The local Schools Admissions Forum will have a clear role in setting expectations for all admissions arrangements in RBK schools, in line with the Code. According to the White Paper there will be improvements in parents' ability to choose a school for their child through:

- Provision of better information;
- Extending the rights to free school transport;
- Allowing schools to amend their admission arrangements to offer places across a wider area so as to provide more opportunities for disadvantaged children to access places in good schools.

Better information will be made available online through the DfES website and via school produced information, e.g. the School Profile. In addition, in order that those parents who do not have access to the internet or require help to understand what is on offer, local authorities will have to provide "Choice Advisers". £12m will be provided by Government in order to help local authorities ensure they have the advisers in place by 2008.

The scope of free transport will be widened so that the most disadvantaged pupils (those eligible for free school meals or in receipt of maximum Working Tax Credit) will be eligible for transport to the three secondary schools nearest to their home providing that these are over 2 miles and under 6 miles away. In London the eligibility for free bus travel will be extended to those up to the age of 18 from September 2006.

Where the governing body is the admission authority (voluntary aided, foundation, and the new Trust Schools) it will be for them to decide whether to seek to amend their admission arrangements to enable admission by aptitude (only allowed in

certain circumstances) or banding. If the Government's proposals come to fruition then all schools will be Trust, Foundation or Voluntary Aided and all governing bodies will be admission authorities.

Teaching and Learning

The White Paper gives specific emphasis to personalised learning, for example for pupils needing additional help to reach national standards in English and Maths and gifted and talented pupils who need further challenge in their learning.

Governors are advised to pay particular attention to the pupils who are not reaching the expected levels of attainment in English and mathematics, especially at Key Stages 2 and 3 and those who do not achieve in these subjects at GCSE.

The Government has identified Key Stage 3 pupils as a priority. As part of the Dedicated Schools Budget they will invest £335m to enable secondary schools to provide small group tuition. The Local authority is expected to review the local funding formula to ensure the funding is directed to schools with the most challenging circumstances as part of this year's budget round.

It will be for individual schools to decide what additional support they need to provide for their pupils, however School Improvement Partners (SIPs) and Ofsted will monitor how each school is delivering to the most challenged and the most gifted pupils.

Governing bodies are not currently required to have **policies on gifted and talented** pupils, although many schools do. It is clear from the White Paper that there will be a renewed focus on this group of pupils and governing bodies, if they do not already have a policy should consider putting one in place. Governors will clearly need to have appropriate mechanisms in place to monitor the teaching, learning and outcomes for gifted and talented pupils.

For more information please contact Patrick Leeson, Director of Learning and Children's Services on 020 8547 5221, or email:
Patrick.Leeson@rbk.kingston.gov.uk

5. CONSULTATION ON THE SEN STRATEGY TO DEVELOP PROVISION IN MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS

The Local Authority strategy for SEN is to develop more local provision for pupils so that we are better able to meet their needs, both in RBK special schools and mainstream schools. The aim is to ensure that more of the funding currently spent on

SEN is invested in RBK schools, with less going to specialist placements outside of Kingston. This strategy also helps to re-direct money spent on transport into educational provision. During 2005 we consulted on extending the provision in special schools. In January 2006 we are starting a consultation process on proposals to develop new provision in some identified mainstream schools.

The consultation paper will be available on 30 January and sets out a number of proposals for mainstream schools:

- what the Council proposes in each school with timescales for implementation;
- how parents in identified schools, and other interested parties can respond to our proposals;
- some background information to help explain our proposals.

The main aims are to include most children in mainstream schools and meet all their learning needs alongside children of the same age. We refer to this as children being included or 'inclusion'. We want to do this by making sure:

- that there is more local provision for Kingston pupils;
- that there is more specialist support for pupils with complex needs;
- that provision is more local in order to avoid difficult travel for pupils.

The Council is committed to meeting the needs of all its pupils. As part of this commitment we are now proposing to set up some new specialist help for children with the greatest difficulties in a number of mainstream schools, building on existing expertise where pupils are already successfully part of their schools, and increasing the skills of teachers to meet the needs of pupils in their school community. This will be delivered in two ways:

- **Gathered Provision** – bringing expertise together in a dedicated setting. This provision will enable inclusion as appropriate with additional teaching and support staff, within small group settings. Places offered would be above the normal admission number of the school where this is necessary because there are no unfilled places.
- **Enhanced specialist teaching arrangements** – providing extra support in the mainstream classroom from specialist SEN teachers and support staff alongside mainstream classroom teaching. Pupils would be included in the usual school roll, within the normal admission number.

In real terms our proposals are to set up the following:

Gathered Provision (We have used abbreviations: ASD for Autistic Spectrum Disorder, MLD for Moderate Learning Difficulties and SLD for Severe Learning Difficulties)

Type of Provision	Provider	Age Range	Maximum number of pupils	Effective from
ASD/SLD Assessment	Knollmead Primary	Nursery Key Stage 1 Key Stage 2	4 (part time) 8 8	Sept 2006 Sept 2006 Sept 2008
ASD	The Mount Primary	Nursery (Assessment) Reception / Key Stage 1 * Key Stage 2 * Key Stage 2	4 (part time) 9 12 6	Sept 2006 Sept 2006 Sept 2006 Sept 2007
	Latchmere Junior	Key Stage 2	8	Sept 2007
	Tolworth Girls'	Key Stages 3 & 4 (Mixed)	20	Sept 2007
MLD/SLD	Tolworth Infant	Nursery Key Stage 1	4 (part time) 8	Sept 2006 Sept 2007
	Tolworth Junior	Key Stage 2	12	Sept 2008
Emotional and Social Needs	Malden Manor Primary	Key Stage 1	4	Sept 2006
		Key Stage 2	8	

* This provision already exists but proposals are to widen the age range and increase the number of places

Enhanced specialist teaching arrangements

Type of Provision	Provider	Age Range	Maximum number of pupils	Effective from
ASD	Grand Avenue Primary	Key Stages 1 & 2	6	Sept 2006
	Christ Church Primary	Key Stages 1 & 2	6	Sept 2006
	Richard Challoner	Key Stages 3 & 4	14	Sept 2007
ASD/Home programmes	Fern Hill Primary	Key Stage 1	6	Sept 2006

Service level agreements

We will have an agreement with each school to ensure that the school's current provision is not affected, that the provision is of high quality, that the range of provision meets the need of all and that resources are effectively targeted. Service level agreements are described more fully in Annex 3.

We believe these proposals will mean:

- more children with special educational needs can be taught in mainstream schools;
- increased access by mainstream schools to support from other staff and special schools;
- sufficient and appropriate places being provided to match the changing numbers of pupils who require them;
- more local provision for children and families reducing the need for long distance travel;
- schools, who are already meeting the needs of pupils with complex and significant needs, will have greater capacity through well planned and long term investment in staff development and training.

For more information please contact Nick Whitfield, Directorate Head of Learning & School Effectiveness on 020 8547 5290, or email: Nick.Whitfield@rbk.kingston.gov.uk

6. GOVERNORS' PERSPECTIVE ON THE NEW OFSTED INSPECTION FRAMEWORK

The Governors Role in OFSTED Inspections

The new inspection arrangements came into place in September 2005. Inspection will continue to give a clear, impartial view on the overall quality of your school and what it does well and not so well. The new inspection framework incorporates the *Every Child Matters* agenda. Inspection will provide the school with a useful check on its work and guide it towards further improvements. Inspections will be about every three years; they will be shorter – no more than two days – and schools will have very little notice of nor more than a few days; also, the school's self – evaluation will be central to inspection.

Governors are asked to ensure that the School Self-Evaluation form (SEF) is kept up to date at all times, that they are clear about the judgements it contains and are aware of their responsibility for the overall leadership, management and levels of performance.

Governors need to be fully involved in the school self review process as part of their on going monitoring. The SEF should take full account of the views of parents and carers, pupils and other stakeholders. Headteachers, Senior Management Teams and Governors will have to make judgements about the quality of different aspects of their school. This includes standards, the school's effectiveness, the quality of provision and leadership and management. Using guidance provided by OFSTED the aspects are judged against a four-point scale:

Grade 1:	Outstanding
Grade 2:	Good
Grade 3:	Satisfactory
Grade 4:	Inadequate

Inspection then uses a series of audit trails and inspection techniques to test the judgements that the school has made in order to confirm the quality of the school's self-evaluation procedures. It is a measure of the school's effectiveness that it is able to make accurate judgements about its quality of education and performance.

Governors will have less contact with the inspection team during the two day visit than in the past. However Governors need to be fully involved in formulating and understanding the SEF, know the strengths of their school, the areas for development and why priorities for further development have been set.

The Governors' role as critical friends is crucial to the process as are well-developed monitoring procedures and effective school improvement strategies. The effectiveness of the Governing Body will be judged under the Leadership and Management section of the framework and will take into account governors' involvement in the self-review process.

Training is available for governing bodies on the new inspection arrangements, please contact the school's Link Inspector.

For more information please contact Nick Whitfield, Directorate Head of Learning & School Effectiveness on 020 8547 5290, or email: Nick.Whitfield@rbk.kingston.gov.uk

7. INTRODUCTION OF THE SCHOOL PROFILE

Introduction of the School Profile

All maintained schools are now required to publish a school profile annually, instead of a governors' annual report. To reduce the burdens to schools of producing this, the DfES has made on-line templates available to each school, incorporating some sections completed by the DfES, with the rest ready for schools to complete.

Schools were informed about this during December 2005, together with where to find guidance online. Each school will receive an individual email between 11 and 17 January explaining when and how they will be able to access their profile, which **should be completed during the spring term 2006 and published by the summer term 2006**. Guidance and FAQs are being posted to all chairs of governors during January. All local authority co-ordinators of governor services will receive copies of the documentation at the same time.

The format of this profile has been agreed by ministers after extensive consultation with schools, local authorities, governors, parents and pupils. It will include, where relevant, sections on the school's performance, pre-populated with data supplied by the DfES, as well as narrative sections for the school to complete that include the following headings:

- What have been our successes this year?
- What are we trying to improve?
- How have our results changed over time?
- How are we making sure that every child gets teaching to meet their individual needs?
- How do we make sure our pupils are healthy, safe and well-supported?
- What have we done in response to Ofsted?
- How are we working with parents and the community?

The narrative sections vary slightly in size, ranging from approximately 100 to 200 words.

Schools can access profile templates at <http://schoolprofile.teachernet.gov.uk>, as well as guidance and technical advice about their completion. Each school will receive an email during January 2006 explaining when and how they can access their profile. At the same time **guidance** and **frequently asked questions** are being posted to all chairs of governors and sent to local authority coordinators of governor services.

Changes to the prospectus

Along with the removal of the annual parents' meeting, the governors' annual report and the introduction of the profile, there have also been changes to the prospectus. The only statutory requirements relating to the prospectus are that it shall include:

- Information on arrangements for the admission of pupils with disabilities
- Details of steps to prevent disabled pupils being treated less favourably than other pupils
- Details of existing facilities to assist access to the school by pupils with disabilities
- The accessibility plan (required under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995) covering future policies for increasing access to the school by pupils with disabilities
- Information about the implementation of the governing body's policy on pupils with special educational needs and any changes to the policy during the last year

This information was previously included in the governors' annual report. Aside from the above requirements, schools are free to decide the content of their prospectuses.

The exceptions to the above information are maintained nursery schools, which will continue to produce a governors' annual report. They will in the future produce a profile but more work is needed to ascertain exactly what form this will take.

For further information about the profile please visit
www.teachernet.gov.uk/schoolprofile

For further information please contact Hatija Bhatia Principal Admissions & Governance Officer on 020 8547 5284 or email hatija.bhatia@rbk.kingston.gov.uk

8. ON LINE ADMISSIONS

Background

All Local Authorities (LA) are required to provide the facility for parents to make on-line applications for secondary and primary school admissions from September 2006 when the admissions round for September 2007 entry commences. This is a required Priority Service Outcome for schools and the target take up for the first year is between 5% -10%.

This facility is seen to fit in well with policy proposals set out in the Schools White Paper to help parents make the most of the choices available to them by providing better access to good quality information on options for their children when entering primary or transferring to secondary school.

All 33 London authorities are already co-ordinating secondary admissions and are all part of the London eAdmissions Programme. London eAdmissions is seen as an extension of the co-ordinated Pan London Admissions process, as it is a single London-wide solution in providing co-ordinated online admissions for all London parents and carers.

Development and Implementation

A number of LAs have already piloted online applications, and Hertfordshire Council, in its fourth year of online admissions, has reported a take up level of over 50% for on-line secondary applications this year. We hope this initiative in Kingston will make applications for secondary school places easier for parents.

Each local authority is required to nominate a project lead and RBK's lead officer is Hatija Bhatia, Principal Admissions & Governance Officer. The Project Lead is expected to co-ordinate the activity at a local level and to report progress on a monthly basis to the London eAdmissions Programme Board.

At a local level, the role of the project lead is to communicate this development clearly to schools and parents. Hatija Bhatia will also ensure that online admissions is

given due prominence on RBK's website, and that parents and carers are well informed about how the admission and application process will work.

Project Objectives

The main objectives of the Local Authority Implementation Project are:

- To implement the new London eAdmissions system.
- To update local authority website content to ensure that it provides school admissions information that is consistent with the rest of London and with information provided by government, specifically the DfES.
- To include links, where appropriate, to the London eAdmissions portal and other websites.
- To promote online school applications to parents living within the local authority boundary.

Benefits of eAdmissions

It is hoped that eAdmissions will benefit parent and carers, schools and LAs by speeding up the application process and enabling online validation of data. It also benefits London LAs by creating savings in joint development costs instead of each individual LA developing an individual system.

There will be a wide ranging programme to communicate information on the on line admissions initiative with schools and parents before summer 2006.

For further information please contact Hatija Bhatia Principal Admissions & Governance Officer on 020 8547 5284 or email hatija.bhatia@rbk.kingston.gov.uk

9. NATIONAL GOVERNORS' CONFERENCE UPDATE

Governing the School of the Future: Feedback by Jo Foster, Chair of Governors King Athelstan Primary School

The focus of September's DfES/Ofsted Conference was on 'Governing the School of the Future'. The Conference began with a speech by David Bell, former HM Chief Inspector on the new Ofsted inspection framework. Given that the inspections are for a shorter period and may mean that governors have less direct involvement in the process, this highlighted the importance of the governing body in contributing to, having ownership of and reviewing the Self Evaluation Form.

I was less inspired by Stephen Crowne's speech on 'School Funding and Building Schools for the Future,' although the discussion of the changing role of Schools' Forums is of significance. An area discussed in one of the workshops was the role of the School Improvement Partner (SIP) {not to be confused with School Improvement

Plan!}. This appears to be a positive step towards supporting school staff, governors and other stakeholders in working together to improve schools and raise standards.

The recurring thread throughout the discussions was that of the school's role in helping children achieve the five outcomes in Every Child Matters. Whilst the principal focus of every school is to ensure a high standard of teaching and learning, there is now the opportunity for those agencies supporting children to work closer together towards the same goal; helping our children achieve their potential.

Although aiming to be an effective and well-informed Chair, the number of initiatives coming from the DfES can be overwhelming, listening to the presentations throughout the conference, I left feeling that I had a better understanding of what these would mean for our school.

For further information please contact Jo Foster, Chair of Governors, King Athelstan Primary School on 020 8546 8210 or email KGP@rbksch.org

10. COMMITTEE VACANCIES

There is one vacancy for a school governor representative on the School Organisation Committee for a Community Secondary School representative. The Governors Support Section would be pleased to hear from Governors who might be interested. Nominees need to be a governor (including parent, staff and LEA appointed governors, but not an elected member governor.)

The School Organisation Committee's main functions are to

- be consulted on the new Children's & Young People's Plan
- take decisions on proposals for changes to schools e.g. the enlargement, opening or closure of schools.
- refer to the Schools Adjudicator for final decision any such proposal on which the SOC is not unanimous.

Committee meetings are usually held at the Guildhall, Kingston at 7.30 pm, conclude about 9.00pm and take place 2 or 3 times a year depending on items of business.

Past minutes and agendas of committees can be viewed by logging on to our website at www.kingston.gov.uk/Council/CommitteeMinutes.

Please contact Marian Morrison, Democratic Support Officer for a nomination form on marian.morrison@rbk.kingston.gov.uk or 020 8547 5062 and we look forward to hearing from you soon.

Further details can be obtained from Jenny Haynes, Principal Education Officer on 020 8547 5260 or Jenny.Haynes@rbk.kingston.gov.uk