

Learning and Children's Services

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Services**



**DIRECTOR'S REPORT TO SCHOOL GOVERNORS
FOR THE SPRING TERM 2007**

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1. SCHOOLS BUDGET 2007 - 2008

A Schools Budget consultation document was sent to all schools on 5 January. This provides an opportunity for all schools to contribute to the decisions that will be taken by the Schools Forum and the Council's Executive regarding the funding of schools services in 2007-08.

As 2007-08 is the second year of a two-year settlement there are no significant changes proposed, either in the national or local arrangements for funding schools. The DfES confirmed in late November that the basis of determining the level of funding for Kingston schools (the Dedicated Schools Grant) would be as previously advised and equates to an increase of 6.3%.

The document includes a number of consultation questions which fall into the following categories:

- (i) firstly some relatively small changes to the local funding formula that are proposed to ensure that schools are not adversely affected by service decisions already taken e.g. to support the development of more local SEN provision in schools and the amalgamation of schools.
- (ii) changes that all authorities are being required to make to their local Financing Scheme for Schools. The Scheme provides the wider financial framework that all schools are required to operate within and changes for 2007-08 include introducing a maximum limit on the level of surplus balances that schools can retain, and an option for local authorities to be able to require schools to provide a multi-year budget.
- (iii) proposals for allocating some targeted funding streams.

The relatively small changes in the funding arrangements for schools in 2007-08 should mean that schools are well placed to continue their financial planning with some confidence regarding the level of funding that they will receive for next year. To assist with this all mainstream schools were issued with a revised indicative budget for 2007/08 on 5 January 2007 based on their own estimated January 2007 pupil numbers.

A consultation workshop on the 11 January was well attended by Governors and Headteachers and a copy of the Local Authority presentation and a summary of the issues raised in discussions were circulated to all schools on 15 January.

The return date for any consultation responses is the 29 January so that the issues can be considered in detail by the Schools Forum on 30 January 2007. 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 13 February 2007.

All of the documents referred to above will be available on the Kingston website as background papers for the Schools Forum meeting on 30 January. School Governing Bodies may wish to note that the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) have indicated their intention to commence consultation in Spring 2007 to review the new

schools funding arrangements introduced for 2006-08. All schools will be kept informed of the potential implications of any proposals, and the Kingston Schools Forum will also progress work to inform the budget process for the next multi-year period (2008-09 to 2010-11) regarding funding for deprivation and a review of the core funding of special schools.

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

2. PREVENTATIVE STRATEGY AND SERVICES

Introduction

A key priority and focus for the Children's Trust is to further develop our preventative approach for all children and young people. In providing high quality and effective universal services all benefit. We also recognise that by supporting potentially vulnerable children and young people in a more targeted way, we can help secure positive outcomes for all.

This Strategy outlines the key Policies and Legislation that we are all charged with implementing. It describes the emerging developments and future plans to achieve more effective prevention outcomes, by working within a multi disciplinary approach and focusing on a predictive model of support.

National Context

Key legislation and policy developments such as the Children's Act 2004, National Service Framework and The Every Child Matters (ECM) agenda all place a central focus on agencies being able to increasingly predict and act at an early stage to prevent children and young people becoming vulnerable or at risk of harm.

The development of Children's Centres, Extended Schools and Cluster arrangements aim to ensure these services are delivered at the right time, by the right people, in the right place.

The recognition of the integral role Parents and Carers have is well established with a significant focus placed on supporting parents.

The development of information sharing protocols, the Common Assessment Framework and Lead Professionals all aim to enable and expect agencies to work in an integrated and informed way to support children, young people and their families.

Local Context

Kingston upon Thames is well placed to build on its existing and effective preventative approach.

At a universal level our schools are highly effective in equipping children and young people to reach their potential. With high performing exam results and effective support arrangements, supported by our Cluster approach. We will develop protocols with neighbouring authorities in respect of cross boundary issues, as we recognise the complexities arising from Children attending Schools outside of their home Authority.

Our health services (health visiting, school nurses, maternity, speech and language etc.) all provide advice, support and interventions to effectively promote the health of our children and young people. These services form a vital basis for our preventative work.

We have a strong and committed voluntary and private sector supporting such areas as Early Years, Transitions and Disabled Children. We are also developing a Parenting Strategy on a multi agency basis which will feed directly into this work.

Definitions of Vulnerability

As part of our preventative work we have agreed to use a jointly agreed set of vulnerability levels. This is in recognition that children and young people can have varying and changing levels of vulnerability, and that as agencies and professionals we need to have a shared understanding of what these are. These are now being used by schools to identify and prioritise support for vulnerable pupils.

- **Level 0 – Universal Not Vulnerable**

This level would be associated with queries from callers requesting contact details and information on services available in the locality such as childcare.

- **Level 1 – Early Warning**

This level relates to a child or young person that someone may be concerned about, as a result of domestic arguments at home for example. Often these are temporary situations that calm, but we consider them to be weak early warning signs.

- **Level 2 – Vulnerable and Flagged**

Several sources will have suggested that there is a negative impact on the child/young person's chances at achieving good outcomes. It is likely that the needs of this child/young person can be met through single agency support.

- **Level 3 - Vulnerable and Flagged – Family Support Package**

Children and young people in this group are at high risk of failing to achieve good outcomes in several key areas of their development. A co-ordinated multi agency package of support is required to address their needs.

- **Level 4 – Risk of Serious Harm**

Child or young person is being hurt or abused.

Protective Indicators

We are currently collating and agreeing, with our partners in Health and other agencies, a set of recognised (evidence based) protective indicators and indicators of risk. These will serve as an easy to use menu of indicators which highlight what may increase or help to protect children and young people becoming vulnerable or at risk.

These will be available by March 2007, and will be beneficial to all professionals working with Children and Young People.

Services which provide targeted support for children, young people and their families

Kingston has currently a well developed range of support services, which have a major contribution to make to prevention and early intervention. They have been recognised within our recent inspection as high performing and we are keen to build on them. As we develop multi disciplinary working these services are well placed to provide support to children and professionals alike. The existing services include:

- ASKK (Advancing Services for Kingston Kids)
- Family Liaison (Parenting Support Service)
- FASS (Family Advice and Support Service)
- CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service)
- Youth Support Services
- LAC (Looked After Children Services)
- Safeguarding Service (Child Protection and Statutory Social Care)
- Disabled Children's Service
- Transitions Service
- Children's Fund
- Behaviour Support Service

Multi Disciplinary Working

As the benefits of working in a more co-ordinated way are increasingly recognised, the Children's Trust Board supports the plans for multi disciplinary working in Kingston.

Our vision is for key professionals to work together, in a co-located way, with clear leadership to co-ordinate and facilitate joined up working for children and young people.

The first stages of this will be to train and support a number of professionals (e.g. social worker, EWO, Educational Psychologists, School Nurses, Health Visitors) to be Lead Professionals. Lead Professionals will be the one key contact for the school or the family and will be responsible for having the overview of individual cases. We will further develop the current 'ASKK Plus' model of family support with a senior manager overseeing the work. This will mean that multi disciplinary planning and support will be tailored to individual children and young people, with a named lead professional and support package.

As the developments progress our vision is for these professionals to be co-located under a clear management structure. The process of the Common Assessment Framework, Information Sharing and Lead Professional will support this.

We are also currently collating information regarding vulnerable children and young people from partner agencies. Together we will identify levels of vulnerability, desired outcomes and services. This will help ensure all children who need a Lead Professional and multi disciplinary approach receive it. We estimate that between 5-10 % of children might need this kind of support at some point in their development between the ages of 0-19 years.

The key issue for schools is to identify the most vulnerable children, those with multiple deprivation and a combination of risk factors in their lives, who would benefit from this coordinated approach to their support, both within the school and from outside agencies.

We will also be able to use the information to service plan and predict future vulnerability issues for individuals and communities. This is a key focus for all of us and training and support to re-focus our efforts and skills in this area will be made available.

Next Steps

We will establish a focused Task Group to develop the following areas.

1. Establish Senior Lead Manager to oversee the work – by January 2007
2. Identify which professionals should be trained as Lead Professionals – by Feb 2007.
3. Provide training to the identified professionals – by April 2007
4. Via the Clusters, communicate the Prevention Strategy, with a particular focus on multi disciplinary working and the lead professional – by April 2007.
5. Integrate the existing 'ASKK Plus' service into the Multi Disciplinary arrangements
6. Collate all schools' Vulnerable Children's 'lists' and identify levels of need, desired outcomes and services - by May 2007.
7. Use our data via the clusters to predict future needs of individual children and communities
8. Review arrangements after 6 months and plan for phase 2 (co location and management arrangements) to be planned - by June 2007

For further information please contact Duncan Clark, Directorate Head of Children's Services and Safeguarding on telephone 020 8547 6037 or email duncan.clark@rbk.kingston.gov.uk

3. CHANGE TO PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS IN SCHOOLS

Revised Performance Management for Teachers and Headteachers

The National Agreement on Raising Standards and Tackling Workload, and the Agreement on Rewards and Incentives for Post Threshold Teachers laid the foundations for the new Teacher Professionalism launched by the Government in July 2004 as part of the 5 Five Year Strategy for Children.

The change to the process of Performance Management for Teachers and Headteachers is seen as a key step in the process of supporting staff to focus on the core work of raising standards and leading the teaching and learning in the school.

The new proposals are to be implemented by schools from 1st September 2007.

The new proposals are based on the principle of one professional development meeting each year for each member of staff with follow up monitoring activities. This meeting is used to set objectives, determine success criteria, consider the professional development needs of the individual and determine criteria for pay progression. Objectives that are set should reflect the school's improvement plan and self evaluation information and be set against the individual's job specification. The Headteacher is responsible for the review of individuals but may delegate the task in its entirety to a senior manager.

Headteachers and Governors are required to revise their Performance Management policies in line with legislation. These policies should link together School Self Review, School Improvement Plans, Continuing Professional Development Policies and a protocol for Classroom Observation. The policy should outline clear time scales for the process, appeal procedures and monitoring details.

The School Improvement Partner will act as the external advisor to the Governing Body on the Headteacher's performance.

The Training and Development Agency (TDA) are rolling out a programme of training via Local Authorities during this term for Headteachers, Deputies and Senior Managers on the revised arrangements. The TDA will support schools by providing a model policy for their consideration, further training materials and a Governor training programme.

For more information please contact Colin Powell, Associate Headteacher on 020 8547 5250, or email colin.powell@rbk.kingston.gov.uk

4. UPDATE ON WORKING GROUP ON GOVERNANCE OF CLUSTERS, CHILDRENS CENTRES AND EXTENDED SCHOOLS

The Governors working party on the governance of school clusters, extended services, children's centres has been meeting since November 2006.

The Working Group of Chairs of Governors, Heads and Officers was set up to identify suitable models of governance for extended schools and cluster groups. Cluster groups are working to collaborate on aspects of School Improvement and on co-ordinating extended services provided by schools, children centres and other partnership agencies e.g. health services, police and the voluntary sector.

The Working Group met twice last term and there are two further meetings arranged for this term during February and March. Kingston is leading at the cutting edge of this very new and exciting area of work and is one of the first authorities to work towards defining a working model of governance within cluster settings and extended schools.

The membership of the Group includes representative Heads and Chairs from primary and secondary schools. Officers include the Strategic Director of Learning and Children's Services, Principal Inspector, Policy and Strategy Manager, Head of Early Years Education and Childcare, Directorate Head of Youth, Inclusion and Participation Services, Head of Children and Family Services in Kingston PCT and the Principal Admissions and Governance Officer.

Its members are:

Name	Title	School
Chris Wansborough	Headteacher	Buckland Infants School
Andy Corbett	Chair of Governors	Buckland Infants School
Heidi Langrish	Chair of Governors	Chessington Community College
Margaret Matthews	Headteacher	Malden Manor Primary School
Richard Burt	Chair of Governors	St. Andrews and St. Marks C of E Primary School
Tracey Coton	Headteacher	Christ Church Primary School
Josephine Willows	Chair of Governors	Coombe Hill Infants School

Tim Rome	Headteacher	Lovelace Primary School
Steve Narramore	Chair of Governors	Lovelace Primary School
Nick Harris	Chair of Governors	Green Lane Primary School
John Rook	Headteacher	Southborough High School
Brian Burns	Deputy Headteacher	Southborough High School
Elaine Joyce	Headteacher	Tolworth Infants School
Matthew Rees	Chair of Governors	The Mount Primary School
Patrick Leeson	Director	RBK
Hatija Bhatia	Governor Support Officer	RBK
Caroline Catlow	Cluster Services Manager	RBK
Chris Dixon	Manager Strategy and Policy	RBK

The requirement is to deliver the core offer, through cluster working, as follows:

Extended Schools	<p>To offer or provide access to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Study support and out of school activities – including homework clubs, ‘catch up’ classes, Gifted and Talented programmes, sports and cultural activities ▪ Childcare (8am to 6pm, all year round) either on the school site or with supervised transfer arrangements. (We are testing what ‘childcare’ means in practical terms for secondary schools.) ▪ Parenting support – access to local and national information on parenting support services, family learning opportunities, etc ▪ Swift and easy referral to wider services – including CAMHS, speech and language therapy and other multi-agency services
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Community use – opening up school ICT, sports and arts facilities to local communities beyond the school day
Sure Start Children's Centres	<p>To offer or provide access to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Early learning and childcare, and support for a childminder network ▪ Family Support and Parental Outreach – information on parenting, drop in groups and opportunities to access parenting support and education ▪ Child and Family Health Services – antenatal and post-natal services and child health services ▪ Links with Jobcentre Plus – information about employment, education and training ▪ Quick and easy access to wider services – staff in Sure Start Centres will be well placed to identify and refer those children and families who need additional help to the full range of support services

The Working Party has been considering the following issues:

- Shared decision making and accountability across the cluster?
- Pooling of schools' resources?
- Accountability and decision making for Cluster budgets and funding?
- Responsibility for extended use of school buildings including co-location of LA and health services on school sites?
- School and non school aspects of the agenda?
- Impact and issues for existing governing body terms of reference and statutory responsibilities?
- Children's centres governance models, and different options?
- Piloting of cluster governance arrangements?
- Need for more formal cluster agreements....a partnership, a federation

Questions and issuesin the Change Process for Governance

- Community and parents' ownership of new local services?
- Flexibility in employment conditions, staff management and training?
- Joint working with other external services-developing a seamless approach?
- Expanding governance structure to reflect involvement by statutory and voluntary agencies, parents, staff and wider community?
- Governor training?
- Information sharing and confidentiality?
- Managing a big change process

Options of Governance Models

The following options for governance models have been considered:

- Extended School
- Cluster Group
- Management Board
- Children's Centre
- Combined Governing Body

The Extended School Model: School Governing Body plus additional stakeholders. For example, staff governors who are health and social care staff working on school site and associate members representing local service users and providers. Delegated responsibility to committees made up of associate members, key stakeholders, report to GB for final decision making.

The Cluster Group Model: Joint Committee made up of Heads and governors from participating schools and representatives of key extended services. Similar powers, procedures and composition to GB committees.

The Management Board: For children's centres or extended schools, the membership is made up of representative stakeholders and centre/services manager. The Board sets up committees to carry out functions in accordance with terms of reference.

The Children's Centre: Where the centre is co-located within a school, a special committee is set up to oversee the centre but with some functions shared within the existing GB structure. Involves stakeholders - parents and partner organisations.

Combined Governing Body: Where two or more schools combine their GBs join and pool expertise to form committees with specific functions. Includes Heads and governors from each school plus user and provider stakeholders.

All the models include a consultative local forum made up of health, social services, voluntary groups, parents, carers, local community organisations and other stakeholder groups.

The working party has considered the pros and cons of each model and will move on to looking at more detailed terms of reference at its next meeting. The working party will report at Easter and the aim will be to pilot one or two approaches in a small number of settings in Kingston.

For more information please contact Patrick Leeson, Strategic Director of Learning and Children's Services on 020 8547 5220, or email: patrick.leeson@rbk.kingston.gov.uk

5. FULL TIME EDUCATION FOR EXCLUDED PUPILS

REQUIREMENT FOR SCHOOLS TO PROVIDE FULL TIME EDUCATION FROM THE 6TH DAY OF A FIXED PERIOD EXCLUSION

The DfES has placed a requirement on school to provide full time education from the sixth day of any fixed period exclusion in a school year from the 1st of September 2007. The DfES expects schools to work collaboratively to address this requirement.

Funding to support the development of alternative provision will be made through the Dedicated School Grant. This will be part year funding in 2007/8 as the requirement does not come into effect until September 2007. The DfES is indicating that this funding will equate to approximately £36 per day per pupil. Proposals for allocating this funding will need to be agreed at the Schools Forum.

Officers from the Local Authority have briefed the Headteachers on this requirement. In December 2006, a meeting was held with a Headteacher representative from primary and secondary schools in which the following key issues were discussed:

Unless the alternative provision is also being offered to pupils from another school any such provision must take place off-site.

The use of ICT/ e-learning needs to be explored further by schools. Packages of work could be developed for use via laptops in an appropriate setting e.g. library, youth club. This would be overseen by a TA.

A menu of options is needed in order to adequately address the range of difficulties which excluded pupils present. They are not a homogeneous group and so the 'one size fits all' model will not work. Such options can be used as a preventative tool as well as an alternative to exclusion. There are resource implications for providing ICT, TAs and using an off-site location. Additional streams of funding need to be considered to supplement the money centrally e.g. personalized learning grant.

Schools feel they can be innovative in working to avoid exclusion, and provide for those excluded, but only if sufficient resources (funding) are devolved e.g. to employ a designated TA. The provision will need to be adequately monitored and assessed as it will form part of an OfSTED inspection. The proposals will need to reflect the varying needs of schools in each cluster in respect of exclusions.

Schools may need to review their exclusion policy to reduce the number/length of their exclusions which would lead to a reduction in the need for the provision of full time alternatives.

Primary Headteachers could give consideration to developing a procedure across Clusters to accommodate each others pupils if they are fixed term excluded for beyond 5 days. They would need to agree SLA between themselves and they could request that the Schools Forum allocate their share of the additional funding to the Cluster for them

to agree how to allocate it to provide support for a child who is attending another school for a short period.

In Secondary Schools, the approach adopted will need to be collaborative across schools and will need to recognise that there is not a one fit solution to providing education for this group of pupils. It will therefore be necessary to look at developing a menu of provision for schools to identify the most appropriate provision for individual pupils.

The possible range of provision for secondary school pupils could include:

- The development of shared unit provision between groups of schools
- The use of ICT solutions such as distance learning delivered in other settings (Libraries/Youth and Community Buildings/other schools) which could necessitate the purchase of laptops for use by individual students in these settings
- Employing and training pooled TAs to work with the students in alternative settings
- Students attending an alternative school for short fixed term exclusions
- A “staggered” school day for excluded pupils to offer the students a programme outside of the main school day

These key issues are currently being discussed with primary and secondary Head teachers

Next Steps

- Head teachers, through further discussions in partnership within their own groups and Cluster Group forums, will need to develop proposals for meeting this requirement.
- Proposals with regards to the allocation of funding will need to be put to the Schools Forum for consideration and agreement

Role of Governors

The proposals that Headteachers develop, will necessitate collaboration between schools if this requirement is to be met. Governors will therefore need to discuss the implications of this with their Headteachers and may need to consider entering into SLAs with other schools where a collaborative approach to accommodating each others pupils is being considered. They will also need to consider the financial implications of any proposals.

For more information please contact Jill Roucroft, Directorate Head of Social Inclusion on 020 8547 6681, or email: jill.roucroft@rbk.kingston.gov.uk.

6. JOINT AREA REVIEW

The Local Authority and our partners in the Children and Young People's Trust were inspected by OfSTED in September 2006. The final inspection report was published in December. Overall we were judged to be outstanding for Children's Services in Kingston and to date we are the first Local Authority to achieve this outcome. Copies of the JAR inspection report and a summary of the key findings and recommendations are being sent to schools this week, 22 January.

The excellent result reflects all the hard work we do collectively to improve outcomes for children and young people. OfSTED judged all the outcomes in Kingston as good in all areas and outstanding in most. The services provided by the council and its partners were judged to be good or excellent and to have a very substantial impact on improving outcomes for almost all children and young people. The inspection found that we are implementing an ambitious change agenda for children and young people, with clear priorities which are comprehensively set out in our Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP).

Being Healthy

Health outcomes were judged to be good or excellent. Schools and the youth service were judged to be promoting healthy lifestyles well and providing good personal, social and health education. Children have good access to age appropriate health services when they are ill, and there are good examples of joint working between health visiting and other early intervention services, and an excellent school nursing service which is innovative.

Staying Safe

The inspection found that the impact of all local services in keeping children and young people safe is good. There is effective inter-agency work and children and young people who are most at risk are protected well. Performance indicators show very good outcomes for safeguarding children and young people, with most showing a sustained trend either of improvement or of high standards being maintained. Very good progress has been made in setting up preventative services which provide early support as well as more intensive work to children and their families. Support for looked after children is good.

Enjoy and Achieve

Education outcomes and the services that help children and young people to enjoy and achieve were judged to be outstanding. School attendance overall is very good. The council and partners were found by OfSTED to give a high priority to ensuring that children and young people enjoy good leisure provision. Early years education and childcare were judged to be very good; there is very good focus on identifying and supporting specific groups of vulnerable pupils and children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well. The inspection found that there are very good relationships between the council, schools and other partners, including the voluntary sector, and a shared commitment and drive to improving standards further.

Making a Positive Contribution

OfSTED judged the impact of local services in helping children and young people to make a positive contribution as good. Children and young people receive good support to develop socially and emotionally and there are many opportunities for them to become involved constructively in society, both at school and in their local communities. The inspection also found a strong commitment to involving all children and young people in contributing to service developments through our well-conceived participation strategy. Also there is good, targeted early intervention to reduce anti-social behaviour and youth offending for the first time.

Achieving Economic Well Being

Outcomes for children and young people in achieving economic well-being were judged to be outstanding. There are very good services for careers advice and guidance, Connexions and collaborative working by partners, including the further education college, and the local Learning and Skills Council. A very high proportion of young people, including those who are more vulnerable, remain in full-time education at age 16, and the strategy to meet the needs of 14–19 year olds was judged to be having a good impact on the development of post-16 provision, particularly vocational courses.

Overall the inspection found strong leadership, high calibre staff and elected members, good partnership working and good management of services for children and young people. The overall capacity of the council and its partners was judged to be good, supported by good performance management and good understanding of strengths and weaknesses. Performance is well above the national average for most aspects of education and children's social care.

The JAR inspection provides a very good basis for the next phase of improvement in services and outcomes for children and young people. We are clear what we need to do to improve further and the JAR identified a small number of recommendations. These are set out in the summary and the main report.

For more information please contact Patrick Leeson, Strategic Director of Learning and Children's Services on 020 8547 5220, or email: patrick.leeson@rbk.kingston.gov.uk

7. GOVERNORS' CONFERENCE

Kingston's second Governors' Conference has been arranged to take place on **Saturday 23 June 2007**. The theme of the conference is "Ensuring Every Child Matters – Implications for Governance". Key aims of the conference include:

- Update governors on the *Every Child Matters* agenda
- Explore the relevance of the extended services agenda
- Identify key implications for the shared leadership role of governing bodies
- Encourage discussion about how governing bodies should respond

Details of the conference and booking information will be sent to all Chairs of Governors and Clerks shortly. Bookings will be accepted on a first come first served basis and there are 100 places, so please book early to avoid disappointment.

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

8. GOVERNORS' UPDATE

Education and Inspections Act

The Education and Inspections Act became law in November 2007. The Education and Inspections Act represents a major step forward in the Government's aim of ensuring that every child in every school in every community gets the education they need to enable them to fulfil their potential.

Trust schools. All schools will be able to become Trust schools by forming links with external partners who will be able, should the school choose, to appoint the majority of the Governing Body.

Local Authorities. Local authorities will take on a new strategic role, with duties to promote choice, diversity, high standards and, for the first time, the fulfilment of **every child's** educational potential. They will respond to parental concerns about the quality of local schools – and, in doing so, they will have new powers to intervene earlier where performance is poor. As the commissioner of school places, local authorities will be able to propose expansions to all categories of school, set the terms for school competitions and take all decisions relating to school organisation.

Fair Access. The Act will tighten the admissions framework to ensure fair access for all. As well as reaffirming the ban on new selection by ability, it will outlaw interviewing; strengthen the status of the Code on School Admissions; create a new power for Admission Forums to produce an annual report and to refer objections to the Schools Adjudicator.

Behaviour. It will extend the scope of parenting orders and contracts and will improve provision for excluded pupils, with parents taking responsibility for excluded pupils in their first five days of an exclusion. Governing bodies and local authorities will be required to provide full-time alternative provision from the sixth day of an exclusion.

14-19 Education. Requires the introduction of 14 new specialised Diplomas, available to every young person aged 14-19, wherever they are in the country. The Bill makes access to Diplomas an entitlement for every young person everywhere. In order to

deliver the entitlement to young people aged 14-16, schools will need to work collaboratively with each other and with colleges and other providers.

School Food. The Act establishes the power to create tough new nutritional standards for food and drink served in maintained schools to ensure that all children have access throughout the day to good quality food and drink.

Youth Services. The Act gives local authorities responsibility for making sure young people have a range of exciting and positive things to do in their spare time, as promised in the recent Youth Green Paper, Youth Matters. This will increase their access to new opportunities and new experiences, and empower them to shape the services they receive.

Inspectorate Reform. Finally, the Act will merge several existing inspectorates to bring all learning issues within one body under OFSTED that covers the full range of services for children and young people, as well as lifelong learning.

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Bill

The Bill will introduce the new Vetting and Barring Scheme which will be in place by 2008. The Bill will create a single list of people barred from working closely with children. There will also be a separate list of people barred from working with vulnerable adults. A barring decision will be made on the basis of a person's criminal history from the Criminal Records Bureau check and referrals from employers and other bodies. An independent expert barring board will be established and will have responsibility for discretionary barring decisions. Schools will be able to make online checks of a person's barred status.

Once enacted, mandatory checks of all governors when they are appointed will be required.

Safer Recruitment

Enhanced criminal records checks became mandatory for new appointments to the schools workforce on 12 May 2006, under The School Staffing (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2006; including for staff who do not have contact with children. The regulations will apply to those on the school workforce who do not work directly with children - admin staff, caretakers, staff delivering extended services such as after school clubs. If services are provided by another body, governors must be satisfied that the provider has appropriate child protection procedures in place. Proposed regulations will require mandatory identity checks (including photo ID).

They will also require schools to keep a single central record of all staff who have regular contact with children as proof they have carried out the necessary checks

With regard to CRB checks on school governors, the Department's advice is unchanged: governors who will work in the presence of children, or care for children or train or supervise or are in sole charge of children should be asked to obtain an enhanced CRB disclosure. Any governor giving cause for concern should also be asked to obtain an

enhanced disclosure.

NCSL have commissioned Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) to develop a generic package of training materials, based on the material in the online training, and an outline workshop that could be used by others within schools who are involved in recruiting staff and also those in the education sector outside schools, and the wider children's workforce. This should be ready in the summer term. It can be used as a stand alone package for organisations and school staff that do not have access to the on-line training, or to supplement/reinforce that package.

The Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Bill

The above Bill was introduced into the House of Commons on 20 July 2006. It creates a new offence of Corporate Manslaughter which would apply to companies and incorporated bodies. Under the Bill, if a death occurs, governing bodies could be liable for the way in which the organisation's (school) activities are run by its senior managers. Penalty would be an unlimited fine.

The definition of senior managers could include both the governing body and the staff.

The Bill defines them as:

- a) those responsible for taking decisions about how the whole or a substantial part of the organisation's activities are managed; or
- b) those who actually manage or organise the whole or a substantial part of those activities.

The new offence would be committed where, in particular circumstances, an organisation owes a duty to take reasonable care for the person's safety and the way in which activities of the organisation have been managed or organised by senior managers amounts to a **gross** breach of this duty and have caused the person's death. Should death occur, the governing body itself would be liable collectively. The new offence cannot apply to an individual as it is aimed at attributing failures within an organisation to the body itself. Where an individual is at fault other offences such as gross negligence manslaughter would apply.

School Admissions

The consultation on the new School Admissions Code opened on 8 September 2006 and closed on 1 December 2006. The Education and Inspection Act places a statutory duty on school admission authorities, local authorities, admission forums, school governing bodies, admission appeals panels and adjudicators to "act in accordance with" the new Code. The new Code was laid before Parliament on 8 January and subject to parliamentary approval, will come into force on 28 February 2007. The Code will impose mandatory requirements which must be complied with, and provide guidelines and examples of good practice.

FMS (Financial Management Standards) Toolkit

The Government's expectation is that all secondary schools should have met the Standard by March 2007. A further consultation is now aimed at extending the Standard to all Primary, Middle deemed Secondary and Special Schools.

Local Authority Chief Finance Officers will be responsible for confirming that their schools are complying with the standard. This could be through existing or augmented audit arrangements or through external assessment of the Standard. DfES is currently consulting on revisions to the guidance on Schemes for Financing Schools which would allow local authorities to make achievement of the Standard compulsory for certain phases and types of schools and also to declare the external assessment compulsory for some or all of their schools. In the same way as the current expectation for secondary schools, DfES would expect CFOs to confirm that an appropriate proportion of schools have met the standard each year when signing off the Section 52 outturn statements. DfES expects local authorities to decide how they seek assurance that schools have met the standard.

DfES Award for School Governors in the 2006 Teaching Awards

Details on the regional award winners for the 2006 Award can be found on the Teaching Awards website and nominations for the 2007 award can also be made on line via the website at www.teachingawards.com .

A Guide to the Law for School Governors:

The Guide is live on GovernorNet. DfES are considering producing the Guide on a CD-ROM instead of paper versions. This will allow amended versions to be available more frequently and remove the need for governors to do their own amendments. The CD could also incorporate the National Training Programme for New Governors, Governance related programmes from Teachers TV and Governor Organisations materials etc.