

Dear Governor,

Welcome to this latest edition of Governor News and a very warm welcome especially to all new governors who have joined the Trust since last summer.

In the last edition of the newsletter one of the articles discussed the new developments the Trust would be introducing to provide further support to the Local Governing Bodies. Since then, I am pleased to report the following have been implemented; the governors' area of the website has been fully updated with additional resources and records of previous meetings, the Trust clerks are now in place and have clerked the first round of governing body meetings in all schools, and the Chairs Forum has been introduced as a regular meeting in the academic year. We hope the above will enable greater efficiencies for the Local Governing Bodies to dedicate their valued time and expertise to the support of the schools.

As the Trust continues to grow as a single organisation, I hope to replicate the collaboration across the schools, seen in the educational support and business services, across the governing bodies. The implementation of the Chairs Forum is a great step forward to achieving a robust Trust-wide governance body, encouraging greater collaboration and sharing of best practice between our schools. This forum will also see a clearer line of communication between the Board of Directors and all schools, ensuring all are fully aware of Trust developments.

As always, both I and the senior leaders within the schools are grateful for the invaluable support you provide. If you have any comments, queries or feedback please do contact Sarah Mills or Anna Trott. **Finally, I'd like to wish you all a Happy Christmas and New Year from everyone in the Trust central team.**

DR ANDREW CAMPBELL
BROOKE WESTON TRUST



Schools Minister's focus on Governance

The Schools Minister, Lord Nash, recently published a letter to all Chairs of Governors across the country outlining his priorities and his expectations of those who hold this position. The importance of finding and developing first-rate governors was at the forefront of his message.

It read: "As Chair, you have a vital role in keeping governance focused on three core strategic functions – setting vision, ethos and strategic direction; holding your school leaders to account for the performance of pupils and the performance management of staff; and ensuring your school's finances are well spent.

"In the same way that you strive to deliver the best possible education for your pupils you will also be striving to offer the best possible governance for your school. It is your role to lead by example, to encourage within the governing body a culture of self-review with regular evaluation of the impact of the governing body."

The example of a governor's charter (see website) is a useful tool by which governors can evaluate their impact and effectiveness on the governing body.

This September has also seen the launch of BWT's No-one Left Behind initiative. CEO Andrew Campbell met with staff from all schools to set out the focus of the drive to raise and maintain better progress.

All governing bodies will also have discussed or been made aware of the

'No-one Left Behind' focus at their meetings in a bid to put a spotlight on progress.



Lord Nash

In a letter to CoGs Dr Campbell wrote: "The point of 'No-one Left Behind' as a mantra is that it embraces every student in our care. Regardless of gender, ethnicity, academic ability or level of need the 'No-one Left Behind' principle asks the direct question of school leaders and local governing bodies: are you doing everything you can to ensure you support these students' progress – and, crucially, how do you know your strategies are working?"

He added: "I hope I can look forward to an increased emphasis on progress at local governing body meetings during this year."



A Guide to Tackling Bullying

Bullying is a prevalent issue across the country which needs to be addressed by all schools.

The DfE has recently published *Preventing and tackling bullying: Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies* (October 2014). It is hoped that the document will assist schools in preventing and responding to bullying as part of their overall behaviour policy.

What are the responsibilities of governors and trustees?

Governors and trustees should be monitoring behaviour and bullying. Governors can request relevant (anonymised) data from the Principal to be shared with you – this could be a standing item in the Principal's reports. Such updates should include information about the actions being taken to resolve incidents of bullying, and the governing board should be proactive in supporting and challenging these accordingly. It is useful to look at attendance figures – if certain students are frequently absent, could this be due to bullying?

Recommendations for governors to tackle bullying

- 1 Give someone on the governing body a lead role in addressing bullying.
- 2 Include bullying as a regular standing item at your meetings and ask the Principal to provide the governing body with relevant data to support discussion.
- 3 Make sure that as a governing body and as a school you are meeting all your statutory duties with regard to behaviour and bullying.
- 4 Make sure that the governing body and the wider school community have a shared definition of bullying; full understanding of the Anti-Bullying policy (on Brooke Weston Trust website); and that pupils, staff and parents and carers are well informed about procedures and know how to effectively address bullying.
- 5 Work with the Principal to take a whole school approach to preventing and responding to bullying.
- 6 Create opportunities to consult with and involve pupils, parents and carers in the school's approach to bullying and behaviour
- 7 Build partnerships in the wider community and work together to address bullying behaviour inside and outside of school.
- 8 Find out which agencies and voluntary organisations can offer support to your school.

Focus on Safeguarding

Governing bodies have a key role to play in the management of safeguarding procedures and policies. Following a recent training session for governors, Vice Principal at Brooke Weston Academy Sam Strickland outlines what is involved.

In its broadest sense safeguarding is taken as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment.
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development.
- Ensuring children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.

Safeguarding covers anything and anyone that filters into our schools. There are a number of key, identifiable areas of abuse, including physical, emotional, sexual and neglect. Staff and governors need to also be aware of other key issues, ranging from child sexual exploitation, cyberbullying, to radicalisation.

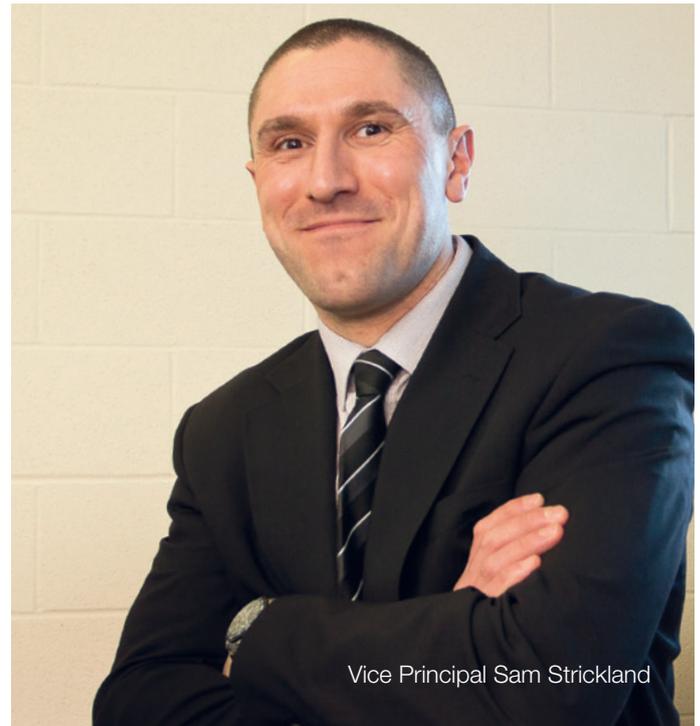
What process do the schools follow?

In the event of child abuse taking place in our schools the following process should be adhered to:



What do schools do to prevent safeguarding issues occurring within schools?

There is also a critical need to protect our staff and, indeed, avoid situations of exposing children to teachers whose motivation is less than innocent. To safeguard our schools and children, all staff that sit on a recruitment panel should have undertaken Safer Recruitment training. All teachers/staff joining a school should have a DBS check (Disclosure and Barring Service check). There should also be a staff Code of Conduct in place that clearly defines acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and all of our staff behaviour policies should include the prohibition of corporal punishment, safeguards when using restraint or other risky situations, a complaints and whistleblowing procedure and, more importantly, all staff should know what the policies are.



Vice Principal Sam Strickland

The Key Role Of The Governing Body:

Critically the governing body should support the Principal and the Designated Lead Teacher to ensure that their Academy fulfils all of its safeguarding responsibilities. As outlined in Section 157 of the 2002 Education Act, 'The governing body of an Academy shall make arrangements for ensuring that their functions relating to the conduct of the school are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are pupil at the school.' Governing bodies should support Principals to:

- Audit their practice.
- Ensure a child protection policy is in place, which is reviewed annually and available for all stakeholders to see and that a staff behaviour policy is in place.
- Ensure that a Designated Lead Teacher is in place.
- That appropriate training for all staff is in place.
- That robust safer recruitment and allegation procedures are in place.
- Ensure the Academy provides co-ordinated early help.
- Ensure the curriculum promotes students to safeguard themselves.

Equally, governing bodies should not get involved or know the details of individual safeguarding cases. The governing body should designate a governor, usually the Chair, to act in case of allegations against the Principal. There should also be a lead Governor in place who understands the work and role of the Designated Lead Teacher.

Governors should be aware of the following two key documents which can be found on the governors' area of the website:

- *'Working Together to Safeguard Children (2013).'*
- *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2014).*

The best safeguard is a climate of overall excellence.

A copy of Sam's PowerPoint used to deliver Safeguarding training for all Trust governors in September can be found on the website. Further training dates will be available in the New Year

NEWS FROM OUR SCHOOLS

Helping with a charity challenge

The Trust has been thanked for supporting a local charity. A minibus was donated to the Windmills Charity to help with the West Highland Way fundraiser that took place in September.

provides support to local families of sick children.

Windmills said: "We would like to thank Brooke Weston Trust for their sponsorship of our West Highland Way Challenge.

The vehicle was loaned to challenger Linda Rodgers who raised £3600 for the Corby based charity that

"We are very grateful for all the support shown to us by the Trust and Dr Campbell."



GOVERNOR Q&A

Ana Martinez Ribeiro was appointed as the new staff governor at Corby Business Academy in May.



Q&A Why did you choose to take on a governor role?

I believe that this role will give me a better understanding of the workings of my school and the way the Trust schools work together.

Q&A What you see as your main role as chair of governors?

My main role will be to act as the spokesperson for the staff at CBA.

Q&A What skills do you think are needed to become an effective governor?

Inquiring, being a good listener and discretion are among some of the skills that an effective governor should have.

Q&A What work have you undertaken so far?

I have only attended one meeting so far, but it was very interesting to understand how the governing body works. Meeting other governors and knowing how they act within the role is very helpful as well.

Q&A In what ways can governors help shape a school?

I think that the role of governors is to be critical in a positive and constructive way in order to maintain and improve school standards and to improve the academic and non-academic leadership through the questions and advice given during meetings.

Historic First Parade for Cadets

The Oundle School/Brooke Weston Trust Combined Cadet Force held its first parade this September. Twenty three students drawn from Brooke Weston Academy, Corby Business Academy, Kettering Science Academy and Thomas Clarkson Academy joined Oundle School CCF (Army) contingent to form the largest first year Army Cadet Company in Oundle School's history.

September also saw the first Field Weekend for the cadets, who meet at Oundle School once a week for platoon training.

Matt Isherwood, BWT Officer in Charge, said: "The BWT Cadets have all undergone a rigorous selection process; involving letters of application, interviews and a recommendation by their respective Principal. As such, we are indeed fortunate that all of the Trust Cadets are strong candidates to take on leadership positions and in time act as ambassadors for the CCF when we begin the recruitment of future Cadets.

"We all look forward to an exciting year which will see the Brooke Weston Trust student begin their Cadet careers laying the foundations for the future independent Brooke Weston Trust contingent."



Principal meets the PM

The Principal of Corby Technical School was invited to a special reception with the Prime Minister in October. Angela Reynolds joined representatives from other Outstanding schools at the event organised by education charity New Schools Network.

Mrs Reynolds said: "It was a privilege to represent Corby Technical School. In the two years since we opened we have achieved so much. It was wonderful to share these achievements with the Prime Minister."

GOVERNING BODY MEETING DATES 2014-2015

Please note that these dates may be subject to change, so keep an eye on the governors area of the website.

January 26th	Beanfield Primary governors meeting	6.00pm
June 22nd		
December 9th		
April 21st	Peckover Primary governors meeting	5.30pm
June 16th		
January 22nd	Corby Technical School governors meeting	4.00pm
May 28th		
December 15th	Gretton Primary governors meeting	4.30pm
March 23rd		
July 13th		
January 27th	Brooke Weston Academy governors meeting	4.00pm
May 5th		
January 20th	Kettering Science Academy governors meeting	4.00pm
March 17th		
July 2nd		
December 3rd	Thomas Clarkson Academy governors meeting	6.00pm
March 18th		
June 30th		
January 15th	Corby Business Academy governors meeting	4.00pm
April 16th		
June 25th		
January 21st	Oakley Vale Primary governors meeting	5.30pm
April 29th		
June 10th		

NEW FORUM FOR CHAIRS ESTABLISHED



The Chairs forum is now up and running as a regular event in the academic year to establish and encourage a clearer line of communication between the Board of Directors and the individual schools within Brooke Weston Trust. The aim of this is to implement a more robust governance system, encouraging collaboration between our governing bodies with an emphasis on sharing expertise and best practice whilst providing an opportunity to discuss wider Trust strategies and plans.

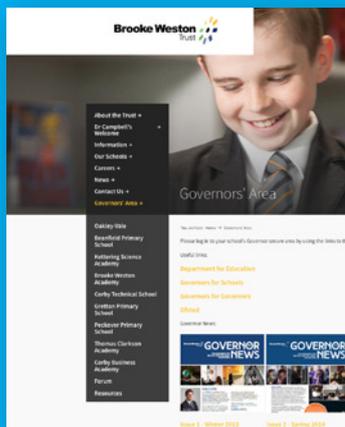
Chairs will be encouraged to relay information to their governing bodies, enabling greater understanding of the wider Trust picture. We believe this partnership working will lead to positive benefits for all our schools.

LOG IN TO THE GOVERNORS' AREA

The governors' area on the Trust website is a valuable resource and we would urge all governors to familiarise themselves and make use of it.

As well as up-to-date information about governance, each school also has its own area where governors can find meeting agendas and previous minutes.

Issue 3 of Governor News has a handy guide on how to use the website.



Chair of Governors Kerry James



Outstanding Governance Awards nomination for CBA

The Trust is nominating Corby Business Academy for the NGA's Outstanding Governance Awards.

The awards are held every two years to celebrate the excellent practice of governing boards and clerks across England. The finalists will be invited to a prestigious awards ceremony at the House of Commons on 9 June 2015, where the winners will be announced.

BWT Operations and Admin Manager Sarah Mills nominated the CBA governing body due to its robust procedures and strategy as well as how its actions have contributed to the school's ever improving results and outcomes.

She said "I had the pleasure of clerking for the CBA governing body during 2013-14. I was impressed at how the team of governors consistently monitors data and outcomes, how they work as a strategic team to ensure an even distribution of workload for all governors, whilst encouraging them all to work in areas around school not necessarily in their comfort zone".

Chair of Governors at CBA, Kerry James, said: "I am very fortunate to work with a governing body who are dedicated to making Corby Business Academy a successful and enjoyable environment for our students. The governors give up their time to not only attend the regular formal meetings, but also to spend time with students, teachers and support staff, to do anything we can to support further growth and achievement.

"CBA has gone from strength to strength since we opened, and I am proud to be involved in its future."