

WIRRAL GOVERNORS' FORUM NEWSFLASH - 41

MARCH 2016

I am pleased to offer some local and national information which I hope you will find useful.

Your feedback is always welcome. If you wish to contribute an article, please let me know.

Wirral Governors' Forum Meetings (@wirralgov)

We will shortly be organising our other Open Meeting dates for 2016 and will inform you of those as quickly as we can.

Director's Briefing

The Director's Briefing was held on February 2nd and we are currently waiting for the minutes to be approved by officers prior to distribution.

Executive

Chairs and Vice Chairs from Wirral Governors' Forum and Cheshire West and Chester Association of Governing Bodies met in early February to discuss the Edsential offer around governor services.

We are always pleased to hear of anyone wishing to join our executive. Please contact me if you wish to join us. I can be contacted at jane@cassowens.freeseve.co.uk or via Governor Support if you prefer.

Richard Neale, Wirral Governors' Forum Vice Chair and Treasurer, is expecting to soon leave Wirral and return to Cheltenham from whence he and Alison came from over 40 years ago.

Local information

Annual Conference

Places are limited at our EQ sponsored conference on Saturday morning 23rd April 2016 to be held at Clare Mount Specialist Sports College in Moreton. Our guest speaker is Natasha Devon MBE (@NatashaDevonMBE). Please book your place via Governor Support.

Governor Support and Training

Details of all training opportunities have been sent to your clerks. WESCOM (Wirral's communication tool) can be accessed using a password used by your school.

Edsential

I was able to attend the launch of Edsential in Ellesmere Port in February. Details of the offer for schools is available via their website <http://www.edsential.co.uk/> I will be pleased to receive your thoughts. Governor support services can be found here <http://www.edsential.co.uk/governors-support/>

Council Meetings (@WirralCouncil)

Council meetings and minutes can be found here

<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/councillors-and-committees/meetings-minutes-and-reports>

Wirral Safeguarding Children Board (@Wirralscb)

Policies and Procedures can be found on the Council website <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/children/wirral-safeguarding-childrens-board/safeguarding-children-policies> and include some updates from January 2016.

The multi agency 'Neglect Strategy' is due to be updated in April 2016. The current strategy can be found here

<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/sites/default/files/all/Health%20and%20social%20care/children/safeguarding%20children%20board/Multi%20Agency%20Neglect%20Strategy.pdf>

Membership and structure of the Board and committees can be found here

<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/sites/default/files/all/Health%20and%20social%20care/children/WSCB%20Membership%20and%20Structure%20%28February%202016%29.pdf>

Schools Forum

The election process is underway for two primary school governors to become members of the Schools Forum. Papers have been sent to your schools. Please use your vote.

WIRRAL SACRE

Our thanks to Marion Landor for this report.

Holocaust Memorial Day – 27 January 2016

This event was attended by the Deputy Mayor of Wirral, Councillor Pat Hackett, Councillors and members of SACRE, 500 people, including students from 13 Wirral Schools and of course, our main guest Speaker, Joanna Millan. Joanna last attended in 2014 and the Deputy Mayor, in his opening remarks warmly welcomed her back. The event was also attended by a group of Home educated students, their parents and members of the public.

Marion Landor – acted as MC for the first time, providing a transition from each section of the programme to the next.

Mr Steven Baker (Executive Headteacher of Kilgarth and Gilbrook Schools) drew on his own experiences as a Forensic Anthropologist in the former Yugoslavia to paint a poignant and moving picture of the genocide in Srebrenica in 1995 and paved the way for the rest of the programme by linking this to HMDs 2016 theme "Don't Stand By."

Students from Wirral Boys' Grammar School, St. Anselms, Pensby, Ridgeway, Bebington High Sports College and South Wirral High School made the Statement of Commitment.

Students from Ridgeway School gave a vivid and thoughtful presentation about their recent visit to Auschwitz – which very much set the mood for Joanna's testimony.

Joanna has now given this talk at the Floral Pavilion on three occasions, each time she appears more compelling and more than ever committed to getting across a message, in the hope that future generations will learn the lessons of the past.

Joanna's talk was followed by some interesting questions from students and thanks to Andy (New Brighton Primary) and Alisha (WYC) for manning the microphones and selecting students.

On leaving, students and other guests queued to buy copies of the book Joanna brought with her – about the experiences of child survivors.

The day ran smoothly and was a great success - thanks to many helping hands. Thanks are due especially to Alison Jones and her team at Floral Pavilion, Ben Parker (ICT) who despite moving jobs – yet again did a brilliant work, with help from Andy. Alisha from WYC, Richard Neale, Rachel Razbully (SACRE) and lastly, but not least – Anne Lightfoot (Clerk to SACRE) – who has worked on preparing for this event for months. (I hope no one has been omitted)

M J Landor (RE Adviser to SACRE)

Richard Neale adds that at the recent Wirral SACRE meeting it was agreed that there should be a Holocaust Memorial Day arranged for a date in January/February 2017.

At that same SACRE meeting Tuyet Ramzy, Wirral Council Ethnic Minority Consultant, informed the meeting on developments surrounding those schools who have achieved their School of Sanctuary Status.

These schools have:

1. **Learnt** about seeking sanctuary and what this means.
2. **Embedded** concepts of welcome, safety and inclusion within their school and the wider community
3. **Shared** their vision and achievements with other schools

For more information Tuyet Ramzy can be contacted at tuyetramzy@wirral.gov.uk

Cheshire West and Chester Association of Governing Bodies

I was pleased to be asked to attend this conference in Christleton on Saturday 6th February as a guest of CWAC. I tweeted throughout the afternoon and have done a storify of the day which can be found via this link <https://storify.com/WirralGov/cheshire-west-and-chester-association-of-governing>

National Information

Safeguarding in Schools

Safeguarding remains high on the Ofsted agenda. This useful guide to Safeguarding is worth checking. <http://www.safeguardingschools.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Safeguarding-Statutory-and-Ofsted-Evidence-Checklist.pdf>

Do you have a Safeguarding Governor? Do they have a specific remit? Do they report back termly or annually? Have you been reading recent Ofsted Inspection reports to see HMI commentary on Safeguarding?

Safer Recruitment

It remains a statutory duty that at least one member of an appointments panel holds a Safer Recruitment Certificate.

‘Inspectors will want to consider evidence that staff, leaders, governors and supervisory bodies (where appropriate) and volunteers receive appropriate training on safeguarding that is updated regularly and know their responsibilities with respect to the protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults.’

Use of cameras in school settings

The ‘[Early Years Framework](#)’ (September 2014) (see paragraphs 3.4 and 3.6) and ‘[Inspecting safeguarding in early years, education and skills](#)’ (September 2015) (see page 9) require nurseries to have a policy regarding the use of cameras and other devices, to ensure that there is no ‘inappropriate sharing of images’. Typically, this will mean that staff’s own equipment will not be used.

Do you have a policy about this for your school setting or information on a visitor leaflet? Thanks to Andrew Hall (Andrew.hall@successinschools.co.uk) for reminding me of this information.

National Governors’ Association (@NGAMedia)

Bookings are being taken, via the NGA website, for the ‘free to members’ conference taking place in Liverpool on 12th March. Vicky Beere, Regional Schools Commissioner, is the headline speaker.

Updated guides are available for purchase for governors via the NGA website.

NGA Special Schools Group

The next meeting of the Special Schools Group took place on 23 February 2016. We look forward to an update from Wirral colleague Geoff Gubb in due course.

The Key for School Governors (@TheKeyGov)

The Key for School Governors is a national information service that provides governors with instant answers to questions on all aspects of school governance.

Access to the Key for School Governors is free to governors in EQ Schools so please make sure you activate your membership. If you are not in an EQ school there is a cost for governing board membership.

Members can sign up for a weekly update via their website.

Updates from The Key include information about Ofsted who will make graded judgements in the following areas:

- Overall effectiveness
- Effectiveness of leadership and management
- Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

- Personal development, behaviour and welfare
- Outcomes for children and learners
- The effectiveness of early years and sixth form provision, where applicable

Department for Education (@educationgovuk) and Ofsted (@Ofstednews) updates

Severe weather planning : The Government has updated its advice to schools. Is there information on your school website? The Government's advice can be found here

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/emergencies-and-severe-weather-schools-and-early-years-settings>

The Government's response to PSHE and SRE in schools can be found via this link

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pshe-and-sre-in-schools-government-response>

The Secretary of State, Nicky Morgan, said: "The vast majority of schools already make provision for PSHE and while the Government agrees that making PSHE statutory would give it equal status with other subjects, the Government is concerned that this would do little to tackle the most pressing problems with the subject, which are to do with the variable quality of its provision, as evidenced by Ofsted's finding that 40% of PSHE teaching is less than good.

"As such, while we will continue to keep the status of PSHE in the curriculum under review, our immediate focus will be on improving the quality of PSHE teaching in our schools."

Ofsted : Indications are that Sir Michael Wilshaw will step down in December when he has completed his 5 year term in December 2016.

Schools Minister, Nick Gibb MP, spoke in Durham in February about the core academic curriculum and the value of excellent teachers. His speech can be found via this link

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/what-is-a-good-education-in-the-21st-century>

Nick Gibb MP also spoke in February about the importance of storytelling by quoting Max Bygraves 'I wanna tell you a story'. The full story can be found via this link

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/the-importance-of-storytelling>

Content for GCSE and A Levels courses can also be found here

<https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/school-and-college-qualifications-and-curriculum>

An Ofsted report, published early February 2016, made comment on alternative provision and says that more needs to be done to ensure both the quality of education and the safety of pupils. The full report can be found via this link <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/alternative-provision-progress-made-but-more-still-to-be-done>

Ofsted's consultation on re-inspecting inadequate LAs closes on 9th March 2016. The consultation can be found via this link <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/re-inspection-of-inadequate-local-authorities>

HM Revenue and Customs issued a policy statement at the beginning of February. The Apprenticeship Levy will be a levy on UK employers to fund new apprenticeships. In England, control of apprenticeship funding will be put in the hands of employers through the Digital Apprenticeship Service. The levy will be charged at a rate of 0.5% of an employer's paybill. Each employer will receive an allowance of £15,000 to offset against their levy payment. It will be introduced in April 2017. The information can

be found via this link <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeship-levy/apprenticeship-levy>

The House of Commons Library has published a range of educational statistics. This can be found via this link

<https://dub126.mail.live.com/mail/ViewOfficePreview.aspx?messageid=mgHmAmAw7Q5RGZRgAhWtbu8g2&folderid=flinbox&attindex=0&cp=-1&attdepth=0&n=28441097>

Further links are embedded within the text of the document.

Primary School Accountability for 2016 was published late January 2016 and can be found here

<https://dub126.mail.live.com/mail/ViewOfficePreview.aspx?messageid=mgIZqWKxXQ5RGNkNidZ181dA2&folderid=flinbox&attindex=0&cp=-1&attdepth=0&n=45106041>

TES School Awards : Submissions are open until 6th March 2016 <https://www.tes.com/news/school-news/breaking-views/top-tips-putting-together-a-winning-entry-2016-tes-schools-awards>

Blogs

Does your Governing Board blog as a way of sharing information about their work with their school community? What are the pitfalls? What are the benefits?

Here are some examples :

<http://www.wilmcoteprimary.org.uk/governors/governors-blog>

<http://www.keintonmandevilleschool.org.uk/The-Governor-s-Blog/>

<http://www.granardprimary.co.uk/governors-blog/>

Watchsted (@watchsted)

This website provides current inspection intelligence via a map of the UK and holds a database of Ofsted inspection reports. www.watchsted.com

UKgovchat (@Ukgovchat)

The Twitter debates, held each Sunday evening between 8.45pm and 9.15pm, cover a variety of topics and are hosted by governors from across the country. The debates are storyfied afterwards. Have you joined in? Ofsted inspectors have also been keen to join in debates and many see it as a great way of engaging with a wider audience.

Thank you

We thank you for your continued support for the Forum.

My thanks, as always, go to my colleagues in the Forum and to officers in the Children and Young People's Department. I look forward to welcoming you at Forum meetings and events. If you have a particular topic you wish to see included at a meeting, please contact me on jane@cassowens.freeserve.co.uk or via Governor Support.

'The role of school governors may be voluntary, but it is one which has enormous impact on the nation's children and young people. It is vital their voices are heard' - Fergal Roche, CEO, The Key

Jane Owens, Chair, Wirral Governors' Forum. (@wirralgov)