

Working with School Governors

Why work with governors?

- The primary function of governors is to help raise educational standards and performance by supporting the Head and the staff of an individual school. They are answerable to the whole school community; pupils, all staff – teachers, classroom assistants, administrators, the lunch team, cleaners and the caretaker, parents and the local community.
- Governors are encouraged to act as ‘link governors’ to particular key areas eg curriculum subjects, ethnic minority achievement, cross-curricular programmes such as literacy, numeracy and ICT, the School Council, Child Protection and special educational needs.
- Getting the governing body of a school involved in the issues that concern DEA members is a good way of reinforcing our work in schools and may encourage more schools to incorporate the global dimension and use our services.
- Governors are volunteers and commitment will vary greatly with some able and willing to put in a lot of time and expertise and others less so.

Why should governors encourage their schools to develop a global dimension?

Some examples:

- In view of recent OFSTED inspections on Citizenship, it is useful for governors to think how the global dimension and sustainable development issues could support Citizenship across the curriculum.
- The global dimension has relevance in inclusion and anti-racist policy and practice.
- The DfES International Strategy encourages schools to raise the level of awareness of international issues and developing countries.
- The DfES Sustainable Development Action Plan includes ‘awareness of developing countries in schools’ and ensuring that ‘education for sustainable development builds on DFID’s Enabling Effective Support Strategy’ as key elements of Objective 1. School governors are specifically identified in this document. The Action Plan also refers to School Travel Plan Advisors and a Schools Food Procurement Action Plan which could, for example, open doors for fair trade initiatives.

Examples of practice:

Yorkshire and Humber Global Schools Association developed a range of global dimension benchmarks for schools, including sections on leadership, teaching and learning, monitoring and evaluation, staff development and parental and community involvement. www.yhgsa.org.uk/benchmarks.htm

GLADE, the Centre for Global and Development Education, designed an INSET guide ‘Supporting the Global Dimension in Citizenship Education’, with governors as well as teachers in mind. It can be used in-house without external input. Available from the Oxfam catalogue: www.oxfam.org.uk/coolplanet/go/catalogue

GEMK, Milton Keynes’ development education centre, ran two 2-hour evening training sessions on sustainability for governors. One was advertised by the LEA as a result of a face-to-face meeting with the LEA’s governor training co-ordinator. The second session followed a request by one of the attendees of the first session to repeat the training in-house for their school’s entire board of governors.

Recommendations that DEA members could promote to governor contacts

- Governors can encourage schools to become involved in current local projects.
- Governors could link with Enabling Effective Support activity in their regions.
- School literature e.g. annual reports could include statements on the global dimension.
- Governors can encourage staff to get involved in continuing professional development programmes offered by DEA member organisations or to consider initiatives such as Teachers International Professional Development (www.teachernet.gov/tipd) and Teach Global (www.teachandlearn.net/teachglobal).
- Governors can explore issues such as how children travel to school, looking at food chains, issues of sponsorship (eg many global brands are manufactured by people working in appalling conditions for poverty wages). They can also think about what sort of links and sponsorship their own school has (eg they could consider ethical/fair trade issues and the appropriateness of sponsorship from big global brands).
- Schools can get involved, perhaps in partnership with other local community groups, in annual events and organisations' campaigns, eg:
 - ✓ One World Week
 - ✓ Fair Trade Fortnight
 - ✓ Eco Schools
 - ✓ Refugee Week
 - ✓ International Education Week.

Useful contacts for DEA members wanting to develop work with school governors

Governornet

Official DFES website for governors.

tel: 01325 391170

email: John.britton@dfes.gsi.gov.uk

web: www.governornet.co.uk

National Association of School Governors (NASG)

2nd Floor SQB1

29 Queensway

Birmingham B5 4HG

tel: 0121 643 5787

email: governorhq@nasg.org.uk

web: www.nasg.org.uk

School Governors' One Stop Shop

A charity which helps to recruit governors for schools needing them. Aims to identify people with transferable skills.

64 Essex road

London N1 8LR

email: info@schoolgovernors-oss.co.uk

web: www.schoolgovernors-oss.co.uk or www.sgoss.org.uk

Times Educational Supplement

The TES runs GIN (Governor Information Network). DEA members can contact them with relevant press releases

web: www.tes.co.uk/governors/governor_info