OXFORDSHIRE GOVERNORS' ASSOCIATION (OGA)

Notes of the 20th Anniversary Open Meeting held at Matthew Arnold School
at 9.45am on Saturday 13th June 2015

Introduction

Carole Thomson (CT) Chair of OGA, welcomed everyone to the 20th Anniversary Open Meeting, specifically welcoming back former members of the OGA Executive Committee and John Christie, who as a senior officer spoke at our inaugural meeting. She recalled that in 1994 when the National Governors Council had been formed to create a voice for Governors' Associations, South Oxfordshire and Oxford City had organised groups/forums of governors. With the support of the Local Authority (LA), in 1995 OGA was set up developing the work started in these Districts. This was at a time of severe budget cuts. Representation on various LA groups and committees was agreed, though these have changed over time. The Association had continued to work for a better future for all schools in Oxfordshire for the past 20 years.

CT advised that there was a vacancy for a Governor member on the Schools' Forum and a vacancy on the School Organisation Stakeholders Group. Anyone interested was asked to contact either Carole or Judith Bennett.

CT asked governors to get behind the current movement for "school to school support".

CT was particularly delighted to welcome Sir John Dunford to this Anniversary Open Meeting. Until September he would remain the Government's National Pupil Premium Champion and will continue to be Chair of Whole Education and World Wide Volunteering UK, a dynamic network of schools, organisations and partners dedicated to redefining today's education offering. He is working with the University of Nottingham on evaluation of teaching schools and is a governor of a primary school in Leicestershire. In a distinguished career in education, Sir John had been a teacher, Headteacher and General Secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders.

'School Leadership, that essential mix of governors and heads, is crucial to successful schools and never more so than this moment'.

Sir John (JD) thanked everyone for attending and as an admirer of Matthew Arnold he was particularly pleased to be able to visit a school named after him. Arnold's Annual Reports of School Inspections from 1851 made interesting reading and inspections were very much in JD's mind as the primary school for which he was a governor had been inspected this week.

'Leading through change: school priorities after the election

Oxfordshire Governors' Association
13 June 2015

John Dunford

1.

Leading through change

- The climate
- Autonomy and structure
- Partnership working
- Narrowing the gap
- Accountability and data
- Curriculum and assessment

2.

V I P

Values
Innovation
Partnership

Values should underpin decisions

Take every opportunity to innovate

Work in Partnership – no school is an island

3.

The Climate

- The only constant is change
- Stability under Nicky Morgan?
- GBs in their historical context

What values underpin your work as a governor

Teachers frequently complained about the number of changes but had to appreciate that change was not limited to education – it was happening in all all walks of life.

Average length of office for Secretary's of State for Education since 1941 was 2.2 years. Nicky Morgan may be lucky and serve for longer.

4.

Autonomy and Structure

- From constrained to confident
- Taking ownership of your situation
- *Prioritise, prioritise, prioritise..*
- *Focus relentlessly on the quality of teaching and learning*
- <mark>*Autonomy isn't just for academies*</mark>
- *Freedom to … not just freedom from*

How are you using your autonomy as a school?

Since 1990 after the introduction of LMS the responsibilities of Governors had increased considerably – this would continue.

Teachers and governors knew their school and its pupils and had considerable autonomy to establish their own priorities and values. Focus on quality of teaching for the children.
Never do anything because of Ofsted but do it because of the children

5.

Working in partnership: national context

- Gove recognises success of S2S support
- London Challenge and later City Challenge
- National Support Schools- National Leaders of Education, LLEs, Specialist Leaders of Education (SLE), National Leaders of governance (NLG)
- School chairs and groups – national and local
- Teaching schools
- Towards a self-improving system
- Unleashing greatness- report on academisation *

Gove continued to push S2S Support started by Labour
Teaching schools 3 year project coming to the end
Most Multi Academy Trusts have tight accountability structures but it is looser for Teaching Schools.

*Unleashing Greatness Getting the best from an academised system. The Report of the Academies Commission whose Chair Christine Gilbert, former HMCI, had talked about their findings at an OGA open meeting in June 2013

6.

A self-improving system

"A new vision of school improvement in which the school system becomes the major agent for its own improvement"

David Hargreaves. Creating a Self-improving System, National College, 2010

7.

A self-improving system

- Strong clusters: groups of schools working together, sharing resources and expertise
- Local solutions: local self-evaluation leading to local action
- Raising aspirations across the area
- Building leadership capacity across groups of schools

8.

Working in partnership: Oxfordshire

- Achieving more together
- Single school too small as an effective professional development community
- Stop looking up and start looking out
- Building collaborative professional relationships
- Sharing resources to do more- and better

    How strong are your school's partnerships?

Soft collaboration before 1984 – no competition
Stronger clusters are now needed
No future for small schools, without collaboration
May need a minimum of 500 pupils.
   How many literacy co-ordinators in the 20,000 schools in the country? Groups of school permit cross-school appointments.
   *Raising of aspirations is easier when primary schools are grouped with secondary schools*
   Leadership development is facilitated
   During last 25 years teachers have been told
what to do. All must stop looking 'up' and use evidence of what really works elsewhere. There is a skill in taking others ideas and making them work in your school this may be deemed innovation!

Governors are held to account for failure of disadvantaged pupils to make progress. The individual needs of Pupil Premium pupils need to be considered – do not categorise into groups

Effect of teaching on students in years of progress
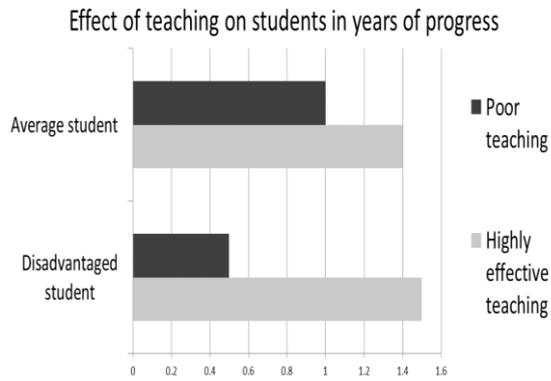
Source: Sutton Trust (2011)

_____ *Barriers may be outside school - parental low expectations*

Overcoming the barriers to learning for disadvantaged young people

- Identify barriers to learning for PP pupils
- Decide your desired outcomes
- Identify success criteria for each outcome
- Choose your PP strategies
- Implement strategies with in-depth training
- Evaluate strategies regularly
- Tell the story: create an audit trail

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The methodology outlined below works for 5 children or 500. Decisions must be based on individual needs. Balance expenditure between individual needs and the whole school strategy

Deciding your desired outcomes

Desired outcomes	Detail Success Criteria Identified
Improving FSM attainment	
Reducing gaps	
Improving attendance	
Accelerating progress	
Reducing exclusions	
Improving behaviour	
Improving engagement of families	
Developing skills and personal qualities	
Extending opportunities	
Good destination data	

Strategies for narrowing the gap

- What strategies will produce these desired outcomes and help you to achieve your success criteria?
- Use evidence of what works
- Train staff in depth on chosen strategies
- Monitor progress of pupils frequently
- Make rapid interventions

- Evaluate impact of strategies
- http://tscouncil.org.uk/guide-effective-pupil-premium-reviews/
- Compare your school's PP performance with like schools
  http://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/toolkit/families-of-schools/
  (secondary only; primary available later in 2015)

Audit trail on the school website

	Person responsible	Cost	Evaluation	Impact
Improve feedback				
1:1 tuition				
Attendance officer				
Peer tutoring				
etc				

Plus case studies of impact on (anon) individual pupils

How good is the audit trail in your school?

If individual pupils could be identified then still do the case studies but keep in a folder and do not post them on the website.

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Accountability and data

- Intelligent accountability
- In-school accountability
- Quality assurance = external + internal
- Data is critical to success
  - Collecting / Interpreting and analysing / Using

- Take ownership of accountability
- Build your own data

- *What data should your school be collecting / analysing / using?*

> Governors need to take ownership of accountability.
>
> Money may be spent on parental engagement.
>
> Build your own data set

An international perspective

"Today schooling needs to be much more about ways of thinking, involving creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving and decision-making."

Andreas Schleicher – OECD
TES 16 November 2012

Using curriculum freedoms

- *What curriculum does a C21 young person need?*

- Developing knowledge, skills and personal qualities
- What skills and personal qualities to develop?
- A 3-18 continuum
- Building a "whole education" www.wholeeducation.org

www.wholeeducation.org

Assessment

- ➢ Changes in GCSEs and A-levels

- ➢ Assessment for learning
- ➢ Assessment for school improvement
- ➢ Improving assessment quality: rigour
- ➢ Life after levels
- ➢ Solid basis for target setting and intervention

Shaping the future

Values	*Ownership*
Innovation	*Data*
Partnership	*Focus*

On behalf of all in attendance CT thanked Sir John for his lucid, thought provoking presentation.

After a short break to enjoy anniversary cake and "champagne", CT introduced Paul Woodhead who was a National Leader of Governance and Chair of the Staffordshire Governance Forum.

Paul (PW) explained the background to his involvement with Staffordshire Governance Forum. He had become a governor of a small, rural primary school which had been placed in 'Special Measures'. The school was isolated, had little support from the LA, which had been reduced in size for financial reasons, and did not know where to turn to for help. PW realised that there was an urgent need to facilitate a system which would allow school governors to talk to each other and work on a peer to peer basis. The county had 6 Districts and a hub was established in each one. A website was created which included an on-line forum. Staffordshire now had 9 National Leaders of Governance. A workshop based county conference had been held and was funded by the LA. 160 governors had attended representing around 100 schools of the 400 in Staffordshire. It was a great success and it was hoped it would become an annual event.

PW had become a member of the LA's Schools' Forum Steering Committee and Scrutiny Committee. The Governance Forum had a prime role of signposting training courses available to governors and in facilitating training around the Districts.

Following some questions from the floor, during which it became apparent that Paul was the key person sustaining the Staffordshire Forum, CT thanked Paul for giving up a valuable Saturday to travel to Oxfordshire to address OGA and it had been an interesting insight to governance in another county.

The meeting then broke into small groups to discuss the following questions:

1. Do governors have a voice in your local partnership? If so how is this organised? If not would you like a voice and how do you think it should be best represented?

2. Are there ways in which OGA could be more effective?

3. What do you think the key priority should be for OGA in the next twelve months?

4. What is the best means of communicating with Governors?

Any other ideas or feedback from what you have heard?

Q	Group A	Group B	Group C	Group D
1.	Abingdon active – Heads & Chairs mtgs & govs mtgs NAPE Diocese organises gov mtgs So long as it doesn't conflict with family and work life	Witney – Yes Bicester, Banbury & Chipping Norton	Heads in partnership meet regularly. HT and govs of secondary and local partnership primaries have social gatherings and then focus on specific topic. Collaboration company is sharing resources, purchasing power	Abingdon developing good partnership voice. Govs need to take more ownership. Carterton has partnership of schools but it does not include govs.
2.	Website Chair response to go! Personnel	Website with links particularly to help new govs	Website – focal point. Most dialogue between schools – could report back to OGA. Divide Oxon into regional groups. Clerk to distribute newsletter.	Help share bench marked data pointing govs to good practice. Alerting govs to groups and meetings eg TSA. Facilitate more local events/partnerships. Broaden communication methods/multimedia. Communicate value of events.
3.	Website Links to filtered reports How to challenge	Keep pressure on for fair funding Encourage govs to support new school partnerships	Timing – now is the time- HTs/OGA Cttee to look/talk – changes taking place. Needs someone/ something to drive agenda – currently S2S. Govs only know own school – it's key that govs are outward looking especially as LA role has changed. Need advice that govs can access. If LA cannot provide expertise get it elsewhere. OGA is affiliated to NGA.	Facilitating govs talking to govs (sharing enabling contacts}. Finding out why govs not engaging with OGA. Finding out what govs need/want to know and provide/facilitate this info.
4.	Website Clerks mail New govs induction – OGA should be promoted Newsletter	Website e-mail	Website e-mail	e-mail Governor Hub Governor Services Clerks mail Twitter
5.	Annual Away Day Governors' Day	Get someone involved with IT skills to manage website and perhaps social media	Structure – consider new appt Hd of School Ldrship Governance = ldrship & mngt. Bump up OGA funding so it can function better as co-ordinating body. Regional groups. Feedback to OGA on Gov Services training sessions	