

DET Governance



24:05:2021

Welcome to the first edition of DET Governance, a termly governance newsletter. I have been in post for 18 months and have really enjoyed working for the Trust Board and supporting the governance of the existing schools in the Trust, our new joiners and those who are hoping to join. It has been inspiring to see the dedication shown during an historic time when the role that you do has been vital in supporting and guiding our schools.

As a Trust we strive to 'make the difference together' and we feel that a governance newsletter will bring us together and celebrate the achievements in governance across the Trust. I hope that this forum for sharing success, news and ideas will inspire us all to work towards our collective goal of good governance to improve educational outcomes and experience for all of our learners.

If you wish to contribute on any of these subjects in the next edition, please share with me by the 1st October.

With best wishes,

Susan Poole

Head of Policy and Governance

Trust Strategic Focus

Currently the Trust is undertaking a wholesale review of its strategic direction. This has included discussion with leaders across the Trust and a number of events are planned for the coming months with a facilitator to ensure the new strategy will set up DET for the next 5 years. The new strategy will be launched in the Autumn Term.

Dates for your diary

Trust-wide Governance Event

Saturday 6th November 2021, 9.30am – 12.30pm

DET New Governor and Trustee Induction

Wednesday 23rd June 2021, 4.30am – 5.30pm

Governor Link Role Groups

The first of these groups for finance, SEND, HR and Careers have started. Each group will meet once a term, remotely, to talk about their link role area, share ideas and develop their skills. Link role groups for other areas of responsibility will be starting later this term.

Elstree Screen Arts

ESA joined DET on 1st April 2021. ESA is a university technical college (UTC) for Y9 – Y14.

We are putting a together a new School Board. Contained within the funding agreement for ESA, there has to be involvement from the industry partners. To fulfil this requirement, ESA will have a Partnership Board, running alongside the School Board. This will be chaired by Roger Morris, who was the Chair of ESA Trust and is MD at Elstree Studios. Elstree Studios has been a key part of the success of ESA. Roger is



currently recruiting people to the Partnership Board from organisations such as Sky, BBC and University of Hertfordshire.

De Havilland Primary School

De Havilland Primary School joined us in October 2020, but they don't have a School Board - yet.

DEH as a school needed some extra support, and so instead of a School Board, the Trust appointed an Interim Action Board to support the school's improvement plan. This is a group of professionals, chaired by Jonathan Huddleston from Chancellors. This group's work will come to a close at the end of the Summer Term, and we are in the process of recruiting a School Board to take over the reins.



External Reviews of Governance

It is best practice to carry out external reviews of governance and Chancellors, Croxley Danes, Onslow St Audrey's and St Clement Danes have all undergone the process this term. Out of this comes an action plan for areas to develop. The Trust Board underwent the exact same process last year and are working on their action plan alongside the School Boards. All of the reviews identified some excellent practices across the Trust, which we will be looking to share.

Being invited by DET to take part in an NGA External Review of Governance (ERG) felt a bit like being 'invited' to complete a tax-return; I thought everything we did as a School Board was in order, but you never know what might creep out of the woodwork. Anyhow, the process proved to be painless and has provided some helpful suggestions on how we can strengthen our approach.



All Governors were asked to complete a 20 question on-line survey and a number of us had a discussion with the NGA's external reviewer, who also observed one of our School Board meetings. In the background, our website presence and GovernorHub records were reviewed.

Happily, the key messages of our report were that as a School Board we are effective, supportive, challenging and operate appropriately within the Scheme of Delegation. Our development areas highlighted issues we had already identified within the KPI process as needing attention; essentially a more structured training programme, a clear succession plan and more formal records of our school visits.

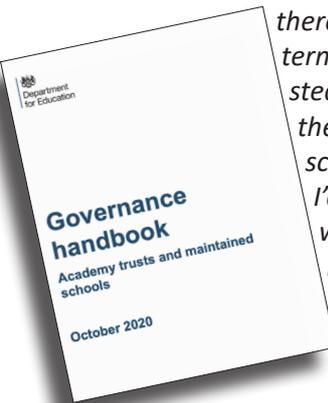
It was made clear throughout the process that this wasn't an inspection and that, as a School Board, it was up to us to take the recommendations forward as we felt appropriate. That's helpful guidance, as some of the report's findings did seem to steer us towards a standardised approach, rather than



recognise processes that work for our school while still meeting governance requirements. Our action plan will involve discussions with the DET to ensure everyone is comfortable with the outcomes of the review.

Overall, our NGA ERG has been a positive experience. It's always good to have affirmation of what's working and to be reminded of where you could improve - plus there's clear benefit in having an external review as preparation for any Ofsted conversations and to demonstrate the Governors are open to external scrutiny. If you're invited to take part, I'd encourage you to engage fully, with all the School Board getting involved.

Martin Day
Chair of Governors
St Clement Danes School



NGA Learning Link

Does your School Board have NGA Learning Link? There are some great bite size learning modules in there that aren't included in Modern Governor.

Please [Click HERE](#) for website.

Four brand new bitesize modules are now available on Learning Link:

- **Holding to account:**
How to question and challenge
- **Holding to account:**
How to conduct a courageous conversation
- **Creating a new vision for your school or trust**
- **Using integrated curriculum and financial planning (ICFP) to resource the best curriculum for your pupils.**



Reading

Herts for Learning have put up Mental Health and Wellbeing resources onto Governorhub. Go to Herts for Learning, Resources, 'Mental Health and Wellbeing' folder.



PEACE, JOY, HEALTH AND WELL-BEING CAN ONLY BE FOUND INSIDE US. THEY EXIST WITHIN US NOW, WAITING TO BE DISCOVERED. YET WE TEND TO LOOK TO THE OUTSIDE WORLD TO SATISFY OUR NEEDS AND LONGINGS.

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