

## Curriculum- The role of governors



Christina.low@bradford.gov.uk  
Megan.curtis@bradford.gov.uk  
School.governor@bradford.gov.uk

Debby.Simpson@calderdale.gov.uk

Bradford School Governor Service



1

## Welcome and Aims

In this session we will consider

- The curriculum that schools need to deliver, including the wider curriculum
- How a school's vision supports curriculum including the tailoring of the curriculum to meet the needs of the school's demographic
- How governors can monitor the effectiveness of the curriculum



2

## What do Governors do?

### Governing Boards Core Functions

All governors on maintained school boards and trustee boards (academy trusts) and governors in local academy councils, have three core functions:

1. Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction. 
2. Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the performance management of staff: and 
3. Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent. 

These are all corporate responsibilities

Extract from Department for Education (DfE)  
[Governance Handbook](#) October 2020 Section 1  
& Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA)  
[Academy Trust Handbook](#) new version for 01/09/23



3

## Curriculum- National & school's

'The national curriculum is a set of subjects and standards used by [primary and secondary schools](#) so children learn the same things. It covers what subjects are taught and the standards children should reach in each subject.'

Ref: [The national curriculum: Overview - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Each school's curriculum is unique, comprised of learning & experiences -

- Lessons
- School routines
- School events
- Learning outside the classroom

ref: nga Curriculum effectiveness- Guide, Apr22



4

## Basic curriculum in school

- Maintained schools: must include the national curriculum. Academies & free schools can devise their own
- 6<sup>th</sup> forms (in schools and trusts) – must follow 16-19 study programmes guidance
- The national curriculum sets out the subjects and associated programmes of study that must be taught at each key stage.



5

## Curriculum Requirements

- The national curriculum is compulsory for all maintained schools. Academies and free schools are allowed to devise their own curriculum, but it has to be broad and balanced.
- Alternative provision needs to ensure a 'good education'
  - 'good academic attainment on par with mainstream schools – particularly in English, maths and science (including IT) with appropriate accreditation and qualifications'. [Ref: alternative provision statutory guidance 2014](#)
- Disapplication- is the decision not to apply elements of NC in certain circumstances e.g for individual pupils.



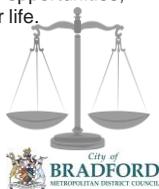
6

## Broad & Balanced

- The curriculum for a maintained school or maintained nursery school satisfies the requirements of this section if it is a balanced and broadly based curriculum which—
- (a) promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society, and
- (b) prepares pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.

[Ref. Education Act 2002](#)

Broad and balanced inspires pupils to learn. The range of subjects and courses helps pupils acquire knowledge, understanding and skills in all aspects of education



7

## Role of governors

### 6.5 Education

#### 6.5.1 The curriculum

21. Education legislation requires that the school curriculum be balanced and broadly based, and should:

- promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society; and
- prepare pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.



8

## Who has responsibility for the curriculum?

- Executive leaders, the board and where applicable and to a limited extent LA
- Trust boards in MAT need to decide to centralise curriculum or allow each academy the flexibility to develop their own - check scheme of delegation for local board level of responsibility.

[Ref. Governance Handbook Oct 2020](#)



9

## The Curriculum Requirements Primary

### Compulsory national curriculum subjects at maintained Primary schools are:-

- English
- Maths
- Science
- Design and technology
- History
- Geography
- Art and design
- Music
- Physical education (PE), including swimming
- Computing
- Ancient and modern foreign languages (at key stage 2)
- EYFS statutory Framework
- All schools must provide a daily act of collective worship and must deliver [religious education \(RE\)](#) but parents can ask for their children to be taken out of the whole lesson or part of it



10

## Curriculum Requirements secondary

Compulsory national curriculum subjects at maintained Secondary schools in **KS3** are:-

- English
- Maths
- Science
- History
- Geography
- Modern foreign languages
- Design and technology
- Art and design
- Careers Education
- Music
- Physical education
- Citizenship
- Computing
- Daily act of collective worship, [religious education \(RE\)](#) and [sex education](#) but parents can ask for their children to be taken out of the whole lesson or part of it.



11

## Curriculum Requirements 3

Compulsory national curriculum subjects at maintained Secondary schools in **KS4** are:-

- Core Subjects:-
  - English
  - maths
  - science
- Foundation Subjects:-
  - computing
  - physical education
  - citizenship
- And must provide Religious and Sex education
- And careers education and guidance
- Schools must also offer at least one subject from each of these areas:-
  - arts
  - design and technology
  - humanities
  - modern foreign languages
- + daily act of collective worship



12

## Academy Requirements

Academies have to teach 'a broad and balanced curriculum' It must include :-

- English, Maths and Science
- Careers Education and guidance in secondary provision
- Religious Education and they must hold a daily act of collective worship
- They must follow the EYFS framework

An academy which narrowed the curriculum would be challenged by Ofsted to justify their decision

In secondary academies the need to increase the number of pupils attaining the English Baccalaureate is a government target for 2025 (90% of pupils)



13

## In addition

**All schools** have to actively promote the 4 British Values:-

- Democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs

And to ensure that children are taught SMSC (Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural education).

All primary schools are legally required to teach Relationships Education and all secondary schools Relationships and Sex Education (replacing previous Sex Education)

Health Education also became compulsory in all primary and secondary schools from September 2020



14

## RHE and RSHE

These subjects:-

- Relationships and health education (RHE) for primary aged pupils
- relationships, sex and health education (RSHE) for secondary schools.
- Primary schools can deliver sex education but parents have the same right to withdraw pupils as for secondary schools
- They cannot withdraw children from science lessons which describe the development of the human body



15

## National Curriculum example

Pupils should be taught to:

- understand what algorithms are; how they are implemented as programs on digital devices; and that programs execute by following precise and unambiguous instructions
- create and debug simple programs
- use logical reasoning to predict the behaviour of simple programs
- use technology purposefully to create, organise, store, manipulate and retrieve digital content
- recognise common uses of information technology beyond school
- use technology safely and respectfully, keeping personal information private; identify where to go for help and support when they have concerns about content or contact on the internet or other online technologies.

**Can governors identify this curriculum? Which Key Stage?**

Answer: [National curriculum in England: computing programmes of study - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk) KS1



16

## Cultural Education

- Legislation requires that the curriculum should 'promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society;

ref: Governance Handbook

- In 2013, when curriculum content was updated, a paper was published giving details of what cultural education should include, which can be accessed [here](#)
- As governors have you discussed the cultural education needs of learners?



17

## Cultural education



- By age 7 including: story telling, making short animations, music making, dance
- By age 11 incl: create design compose. Visits each KS to cultural institutions and venues. Op to gain qualification in Arts Awards
- By age 16 incl : attended professional concerts and plays. Taken part in artistic performance. Watched and learned about films from outside Mainstream 'Hollywood blockbusters'.

Ref: Cultural Education DfE DiCM&S July 2013



18

## Education White Paper

By 2030 every child will be taught a broad **and ambitious curriculum** in a school with high expectations and strong standards of behaviour

- Oak National Academy will be an arms length national curriculum body which will work with teachers to create and improve packages of optional, free adaptable digital curriculum resources and video lessons that are effectively sequenced to help teachers deliver an evidence-based, high-quality curriculum. Each subject will have a choice of resources, providing variety for teachers.
- The aim is to reduce teacher workload and ensure excellence and provide support for RQT (Recently Qualified Teachers)



19

- Will use evidence from the Education Endowment Federation research and also liaise with teacher trainers and professional development providers
- School week in maintained schools to be 32.5 hours minimum by September 2023
- a network of modern foreign language hubs, and effective professional development for language teachers
- updating plans to support sport and music education and producing a new cultural education plan
- a new careers programme for primary schools in areas of disadvantage and improved professional development for teachers and leaders on careers education



20

## Ofsted

The school website – where details of the curriculum *must* be posted - will be checked by them before the school is aware of the planned visit.

Is your curriculum on your website? For each year group and each subject?

Are you expecting Ofsted in the near future?



21

## Ofsted

### Intent, Implementation and Impact

**Intent** – How is (the curriculum) designed to meet the needs of the pupils in the school and to deliver the knowledge and skills they need

**Implementation** – this covers the quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Impact** – Pupil achievement and readiness for the next stage of their education



22

## Intent, Implementation and Impact

Governors need to consider the aims and ethos of their school and consider the direction in which it is going. (intent)

Is the curriculum meeting those aims and that ethos and, if not, what needs to be done? Are the needs of your demographic being met? (implementation) That will impact on curriculum intent.



23

- Teachers have **expert knowledge** of the subjects that they teach. If they do not, they are supported to address gaps in their knowledge so that pupils are not disadvantaged by ineffective teaching.
- The subject curriculum is designed and delivered in a way that allows pupils to transfer key knowledge to long-term memory. It is **sequenced** so that new knowledge and skills build on what has been taught before and pupils can work towards clearly defined end points.

**Are governors confident that these are in place?  
How do you know?**



24

## School Demographic

To be considered when considering how the curriculum reflects your school vision

- What are your baseline levels?
- Are there concerns about the range of experiences your learners receive? Is this used to add them where needed?
- How well do your Pupil Premium and SEND pupils learn across the curriculum – is there any reason for weakness that could be linked to the school demographic, thus adapt the curriculum?
- Are there changes to the types of SEND children that are attending, such as more with autism or SEMH?



25

## School Demographic (Contd)

- Is your school demographic changing and, if so, are there plans in place to develop or amend the curriculum to match the new needs identified?
- Has there been any analysis of the performance of different groups across the years? Such as ethnicity, gender or summer born children.



26

## Use of curriculum to improve attendance and learning

- Many schools are currently facing increased attendance issues and behavioural problems
- Are there any patterns of specific days when more children are not attending and similarly are there any days or times of day when more behavioural issues arise?
- As an example, if it was noted that in Y6 girls were regularly not attending on Thursday mornings and that is the day when PE is taught – are they unhappy about doing PE? This is also seen in secondary schools.
- Or do you have some boys who do not behave well during reading lessons?



27

## Alternative settings

- These are used for both short and long term placements when learners are unable to access mainstream provision
- Many children have behavioural issues which make the delivery of the curriculum difficult, but they still need to ensure that there is progression to a successful outcome for each learner.
- They have smaller groups and spend time on behaviour improvement.
- Ensuring that learners' interests are used to improve attention to work is vital for improvement in attitudes to learning. It is also used when planning support in mainstream schools and links to the ways in which subjects are taught.



28

## Ofsted view on delivery

When looking at the curriculum Ofsted will look at how teachers

- present information clearly, promote appropriate discussion, check pupils' understanding systematically, and identify misunderstandings and adapt teaching as necessary to correct these
- deliver in a way that allows pupils to transfer key knowledge to long-term memory. Teaching is sequenced so that new knowledge and skills build on what has been taught before and pupils can work towards clearly defined end points
- use assessment to check pupils' understanding to inform teaching, and to help pupils embed key concepts, use knowledge fluently and develop their understanding, and not simply memorise disconnected facts. (Ofsted handbook 2023)



29

## Evidence based planning of curriculum delivery

- Having looked at the demographic and the adaptations needed for each setting to ensure that the curriculum matches the needs of the learners
- The school leadership will then look at any changes that may be needed to ensure this. This is a management operation and not a governor decision, but governors need to have assurances that any new curricula are evidence based.
- Education Endowment Foundation among others, has guides to support school leaders in their choices.
- Governors can, however, ask on what evidence a specific change in the curriculum has been selected.



30

## Future Planning

- NGA propose that governors should consider curriculum needs and link these with financial planning.
- This is called Integrated curriculum and financial planning
- The process is included in their guidance document
- Then governors should monitor the plan effectively
- This has been produced because of the need to ensure adequate resources are spent on the curriculum.
- Is this something your board has done?



31

## Governor Responsibilities

Governors have to:-

- ensure that schools comply with their legal requirements on teaching the national or a broad and balanced curriculum
- Look at the allocation of resources and time to the wider curriculum and ensure that needs are met, including staff training and development needs, when budgets are prepared. e.g. the local agreed RE syllabus recommends 1 hour per week (not counting collective worship)
- Monitor the attainment and progress of children **in all year groups across the curriculum**
- Ensure that **all** subjects are considered when setting development plan targets



32

## Monitoring Outcomes - Generally

- Reports from curriculum leads
- School visits
- Feedback from children
- Questions about training for staff on curriculum knowledge in primary and effective recruitment of specialists in secondary
- Reports on quality of teaching and learning (not individual staff)
- Finance questions on resource needs
- Data



33

## Questioning Data

- Data on attainment and progress in each year group  
For all subjects
- Does the data suggest that the curriculum being followed in each subject from Foundation to KS3 is allowing the children to gain the necessary knowledge and skills?
- Is the way that the wider curriculum is taught effective?  
Are there any areas of concern where results are poor?



34

## Named Governors

- Linked to curriculum areas and/or development plan objectives – identified areas for development may relate to particular curriculum areas
- Feeding back via reports to ensure governors understand how the curriculum is being presented.
- Looking at outcomes for learners and questioning if progress and outcomes are good for all groups
- There could be one governor for the wider curriculum especially if new curricula are being developed in certain areas.



35

## Monitoring curriculum quality and delivery

This is important because

- The learners in your setting will only have one chance to access this year's learning so a poor year will have a lasting impact
- Learners need to understand the opportunities they have for the future and much of this is based on what they enjoy in their lessons
- Generational deprivation will continue unless all children are allowed to understand that they can aspire to do more
- Understanding aspects such as British values and how to form good relationships will help develop the wider community



36

## What now

- Know your vision
- Check website
- Use reports/plan reports
- Use school visits
- Use your data to inform
- Curriculum committee?
- Link Governors



37

38