


January 2010

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School governor recruitment campaign

There are 4,180 school governor posts in Leicestershire and inevitably vacancies for new governors fall due on a regular basis. At the beginning of November 2009 there were over 600 vacancies throughout the county. Virtually anyone over the age of 18, subject to the usual safeguarding checks, can become a governor and it is an excellent way of contributing to the community and assisting in raising the already high standards of education in the county.

Your school may have little difficulty in recruiting governors: whenever vacancies occur there may be a number of candidates willing to step forward so elections for parent and staff governors are contested with enthusiasm.

Unfortunately at some schools and in some areas there are almost always vacancies; as a consequence the governing body and therefore the school community is weaker. To address this problem Governor Development Service (GDS) is now promoting a recruitment campaign, supported by additional finance provided by the Schools' (Funding) Forum.



The campaign will include press releases to local newspapers and community publications, adverts, interviews and releases to local radio. We are also hoping to have case studies available for the press and radio giving details of the experiences of governors, both young and not so young, outlining:

- ◆ the tasks they have undertaken as governors;
- ◆ how they feel the children within their schools have benefited from the efforts of the governors;
- ◆ how they feel they have personally gained from their time as a governor.

As a governor you are probably in the best position to know the type of people who can take on the responsibilities of governorship and contribute to school communities throughout Leicestershire.



If you know of anyone who may be interested in becoming a governor, even if there are no vacancies at your school, please encourage them to visit our website www.leics.gov.uk/governors for

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School Improvement Partners

Headteachers and governors are now familiar with the role of School Improvement Partners (SIPs) as they offer support and challenge to the school.

There are opportunities for governors to meet with the SIP at their termly visits to the school and also during the Headteachers' Performance Management. SIPs also present their Annual Report to Governors in person during the summer term.

The role of SIPs is likely to evolve as a result of the Government White Paper and the Local Authority will continue to implement national initiatives with the best interests of Leicestershire in mind.

At the outset, regulations stipulated that SIPs should be allocated to an individual school for no more than three years. This was soon changed to a five year maximum, but the White Paper again suggests a maximum of three years. With this in mind we are currently planning for around 50% of schools to have a change of SIP from September 2010, with the remainder changing in September 2011. An exception

to this would be where a SIP has been working with a school for less than two years.

In planning for this change we are moving towards having a team of SIPs working in each of three regions of the county. Each team will include a Senior School Development Adviser/SIP as well as primary, secondary and special school SIPs.

Also in each region, there will be a balance of SDA/SIPs who are full-time employees of the Local Authority and external SIPs who work for us on a part-time basis. We feel that this structure will strengthen the team work within each region as well as reducing our carbon footprint.

Further details of these proposals will be given at the Headteachers' briefings in the spring term (19-21 January 2010).

If you have any questions about School Improvement Partners please contact Stephen Gleave, School Development Adviser and School Improvement Partner by emailing stephen.gleave@leics.gov.uk or telephoning 0116 305 6425.

Provision of information under the Freedom of Information Act

The Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 2000 came into force on 1 January 2005 and deals with access to official information.

The Act provides individuals or organisations with the right to request information held by a public authority. The request must be made in writing either by letter fax or email.

Recently, GDS was asked to provide names of governors and their schools. Under the FOI Act we were obliged to provide this information. Please be assured that this was the only information we provided.

GDS treats all such requests very seriously and we do not disclose information without considering whether we are required to under the FOI Act and if there are restrictions on providing the information requested under the Data Protection Act.

If governors have any concerns regarding this please contact GDS (contact details are on the back page).



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School governor recruitment campaign (continued from front page)

more information or call us on 0116 305 6435. We can then pass their details to one of the nominating bodies who are always looking for suitable candidates.

Once appointed a governor will be able to engage in the induction training offered and even if they have little or no knowledge of governorship at the outset, they can rapidly become a valued member of a governing body.

The new Ofsted framework

The new Ofsted framework, which came into force in September 2009, identifies three areas of school life that must be at least satisfactory for the school to pass its inspection. These areas are attainment, safeguarding children and equal opportunities.

The main document schools need to refer to is "The Evaluation Schedule for Schools". The section on outcomes in the inspection judgement form closely follows the principles of Every Child Matters. Pupil attainment is always central to Ofsted's judgement of a school; the new framework emphasises children's enjoyment of their learning and the progress they make, taking into account contextual factors. The framework also assesses how safe children feel, the extent to which they adopt healthy lifestyles, contribute to the school and wider community and develop the skills they will need to achieve economic wellbeing.

Other key documents are "Briefing for section 5 inspectors on safeguarding children" and "Inspecting equalities - Guidance for section 5 inspectors".

Headteachers and governing bodies need to familiarise themselves with these three documents and use them to assess their own performance against the Ofsted criteria. The results of this assessment should inform the SEF, the school's development planning process and performance management of the headteacher and staff.

Leicestershire CYPS has provided briefings for headteachers and chairs of governors on the new framework, so your school should be aware of the requirements. Through

committees, governors need to work with the headteacher to ensure that all their policies and practices, particularly in the areas of safeguarding and equal opportunities, are reviewed and that they meet Ofsted standards.

Understanding the new Ofsted framework - a workshop for governors

GDS are offering this **free** workshop, in addition to the published Training and Development Programme, at various locations around the county. Participants will gain knowledge, understanding and skills in a variety of areas relating to the Ofsted framework through presentations, group activities, discussion, practical models and examples.

Sessions for all types of schools

For each of the following dates and venues there will be a **morning session** (9.30am-12noon) and an **evening session** (6.30-9.00pm):

Tues 23 Feb	Leicester Stage Hotel, Wigston
Wed 24 Feb	Hinckley Island Hotel, Hinckley
Thur 25 Feb	Compass Hotel, Loughborough
Tues 2 Mar	Scalford Hall, Melton Mowbray
Wed 3 Mar	Snibston Discovery Park, Coalville
Thur 4 Mar	The Three Swans, Market Harborough

Sessions for specific types of schools

These are **evening sessions only** (6.30-9.00pm):

Primary	Mon 8 Mar	Hilton Hotel, Braunstone
Secondary	Tues 9 Mar	Hilton Hotel, Braunstone
Special	Wed 10 Mar	Dorothy Goodman School, Hinckley

Sessions for all types of schools + safeguarding

These are **full day workshops** (9.30am - 3.30pm), covering the new Ofsted framework in the morning and safeguarding children in the afternoon (lunch will be provided):

Sat 27 Feb	Hilton Hotel, Braunstone
Sat 6 Mar	Hilton Hotel, Braunstone

Booking

Full details have been sent to your headteacher, chair of governors, link governor and clerk to governors. Please see the flyer for details on how to book your place.

‘Every School Working in Partnership; because no school can do it alone’

The title of this article is taken directly from the heading of Chapter 3 of the White Paper, published at the end of last June, entitled ‘Your child, your schools, our future: building a 21st century schools system’.

There is an acknowledgement in the White Paper that no school can meet the needs of all of its pupils alone. The government will require schools to work in partnership not only with other schools but also with wider children’s services, so that the Pupil and Parent Guarantees can be delivered.



There is a commitment that where schools wish to work in partnerships they will be able to do so. Legislation is proposed requiring schools to collaborate and schools are being told that they do not merely have a responsibility for the children on their roll but across the community. Where schools wish to pool funds and resources to achieve better value they will be supported in this aim.

Why don’t schools collaborate?

There is sometimes a perception that collaboration is forced on schools externally. There is a desire by some schools and particularly some governing bodies to hoard talent and as a consequence headteachers have not been allowed to share and develop their skills. Data shows that when there is a collaboration between an effective school and a school facing difficulties both benefit and improve.

Already many governing bodies are thinking about how, by working with other schools, the outcomes for their students and the wider community can be enhanced. Some partner primary schools are working together with their secondary school to share specialist teaching resources in music, art, design or sport. The need to offer primary school children a foreign language has encouraged smaller schools to collaborate and share a language teacher. The cascading of specialist skills and talents from secondary schools to primaries enables the more efficient use of resources throughout the community and eases the transition into secondary education for younger pupils.

Individual schools have often found it challenging to provide extended services, but in collaboration with neighbouring schools a far greater range of activities can be offered.

Working together, as well as improving the teaching and learning opportunities for the children directly, can also enhance education within the school indirectly. For example, how often are heads and deputies engaged in duties that are far removed from teaching and learning because there is no one else at the school who can discharge what are often administrative, financial or premises related tasks?

Today, 60% of secondary schools and 13% of primaries employ a School Business Manager (SBM) who rapidly becomes a valued member of the Senior Leadership Team. Whilst small primary schools could not individually employ an SBM, a geographic grouping of five schools each using the services of an SBM one day per week is clearly achievable. As a consequence, the school is buying into a specialist resource previously not available. Efficiencies and savings usually follow and the additional costs are covered within four or five years.

Perhaps even more importantly the work/life balance of the senior members of staff improves as they can concentrate on the educational rather than the administrative parts of their roles. Another side effect is that the information made available to governors can be improved allowing them to more effectively discharge their responsibilities.



Different schools and governing bodies may be happy to work with neighbouring schools in a loose and informal federation. As the benefits of such a collaboration become apparent governing bodies, working with their headteachers, may see long term benefits of formulating more rigid associations, particularly if central government in pursuing the objectives of the White Paper gives more encouragement and incentives to schools to work together.

Usually a headteacher or principal will introduce the concept of collaborative working to a

‘Every School Working in Partnership; because no school can do it alone’ (continued)

governing body but there is no reason why an individual governor cannot start the ball rolling by suggesting how the school might benefit from working with other schools and governing bodies. Sometimes the impetus for a partnership grows out of extended services provision.

Governing bodies that are interested in working in collaboration can contact Governor Development Service (GDS) for initial advice and we can signpost assistance that is available, put you in touch with schools that are already benefiting from these developments or with schools in your area with similar aspirations.

Workforce reform for a 21st century school

The briefing papers for spring term 2010, issued by GDS to clerks and chairs of schools with a GDS Service Level Agreement, contains a paper for governors on workforce reform.

The purpose of this briefing paper is to provide governors with an update on recent workforce reform developments. It discusses reforms implemented since the agreement ‘Raising Standards and Tackling Workload: A National Agreement’ as well as two pieces of legislation currently before Parliament. Key action points for governors are to ensure:

- their school workforce receives its statutory entitlements
- the headteacher complies with the duties imposed by regulations and receives the benefits conferred upon them.

For more details please refer to the briefing paper, available from your clerk or chair. Alternatively you can download the briefing paper document from the GDS website:

www.leics.gov.uk/index/education/support_for_schools/governors.htm

There is a link to the document under ‘Useful Information’ dated 20 November 2009.

We will be pleased to hear from schools and governing bodies about any experiences of working in collaboration, good or bad, that we can publish in a future edition of the Leicestershire Governor newsletter.

The CAF team are here to help

Did you know that Ofsted inspections now include a criteria regarding the Common Assessment Framework (CAF), which is considered part of ‘Targeted Safeguarding’, stating ‘implementation of Common Assessment Framework (CAF) is crucial in identifying early preventative support to children in need’?

Lord Laming’s recommendations from the impact of the Baby Peter case state there is a need for a strong focus on multi-agency working. Schools are seen as key partners for their role in preventing abuse through education, recognising early warning signs and reporting concerns appropriately.

The CAF team, based at County Hall, are here to help you. We can advise on services that will be able to offer help. We also bring those services together at a multi-agency forum to discuss and review a child’s needs, share information and form an action plan for a co-ordinated approach.

The CAF team can also find out who else is involved, source new services based on need, obtain referral forms or assessment information, support lead professionals to progress action and ask for informal advice from specialists.

Further information can be found on the website www.leics.gov.uk/commonassessmentframework or contact:

CAF Team
Room 101
County Hall
Glenfield
Leicester
LE3 8RA
☎ 0116 305 8727
✉ caf@leics.gov.uk

Report from the Chair of the Association of Leicestershire Governors (ALG)

The Association held the autumn term meeting at the end of October and elected Officers for the year 2009/10.

Chair: Sylvia Bosworth
Vice Chair: Marjorie Graham
Secretary: Jean Lewis
Treasurer: Vacancy (Sylvia Bosworth will do this pro tem)

Other executive committee members: Phil Smith, John Herbert, Geoff Rawnsley, Graham Wilson.

As you see we are a committee of seven at the moment and would warmly welcome new members, especially someone who could fill the Treasurer vacancy. This is not an onerous task; receiving subscriptions and paying expenses being the main requirements. We welcome Graham Wilson as a new executive member and thank him for his offer to design a website for ALG.

Thank you to all those governing bodies which have joined ALG for this academic year. Part of the subscription enables us to be members of the National Governors' Association and so have a voice at regional and national level.

Marjorie Graham and Sylvia Bosworth attended the NGA Conference in Birmingham on 7 November where Christine Gilbert, HM Chief Inspector of Schools, was the main speaker.

She gave a comprehensive overview of the new Ofsted framework for inspections and what the focus of inspection will be. Safeguarding is an

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G
governing
our future
better together

important component, together with the expectation that governors will be rigorous and effective in raising standards through:

- ◆ having a single minded focus on what matters;
- ◆ contributing to the SEF;
- ◆ monitoring and evaluating;
- ◆ understanding and using data;
- ◆ rigorously challenging and supporting leaders and managers, holding them to account.

Governors will have a much stronger role at inspection and will be evaluated on how effectively they shape the direction of the school.

A further presentation by Judy Hardagon, chief executive of the School Food Trust, spoke about the importance of food standards and nutritional standards in schools leading to benefits for pupil's health and well being. Governors are responsible for these standards and will be inspected on compliance. Governors were asked to look at the content of lunches and snacks, and the environment for children taking school lunches. Further information can be found on the School Food Trust's website www.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk.

ALG will continue to work for the children and governors of Leicestershire and hope more of you will join our Association.

Sylvia Bosworth
Chair ALG

☎ 0116 2431877

✉ sylviabosworth@aol.com

Internal Audit efficiency database

The Internal Audit service updated their efficiency database for schools and colleges in the autumn term 2009. This has been quoted as being a "good practice" example of an LA working closely with its schools on the efficiency agenda in the recent Audit Commission report "Valuable Lessons". The database contains over 140 potential efficiency savings for schools and colleges to consider. For example, effective use of email for non-confidential mail such as governors' meetings agendas. The Governor Development Service (GDS) briefing papers for spring term 2010 (issued to clerks and chairs of schools with a GDS Service Level Agreement) contains more details and examples for efficiencies within governance.

The full database is available online as a Word and a Powerpoint document:

http://www.leics.gov.uk/efficiency_savings_revised_sept_2009.doc

http://www.leics.gov.uk/efficiency_savings_powerpoint_2009.ppt

Chairs' Mentoring Scheme

The Chairs' Mentoring Scheme was successfully launched in September 2009, when nine experienced chairs of governors attended the training for mentors session.

The course was led by Eilis Field, School Development Adviser responsible for leadership development and supported by staff from Governor Development Service.

The first part of the session covered discussions about various areas, including:

- ♦ the importance of the role of the chair of governors;
- ♦ how mentoring can help develop skills and confidence needed for the role;
- ♦ skills that mentors need to possess;

- ♦ what mentoring is and how it is different from other roles e.g. coaching, counselling, providing directional advice.

The governors were then divided into groups and participated in role plays covering three different scenarios. The session finished with a discussion about the role plays and the appropriate responses to the issues raised by those scenarios.

It was clear to all that mentoring could help chairs of governors in a variety of circumstances. Some of the benefits include developing skills needed to be an effective chair of governors, having someone to sound out and develop ideas and increase confidence in dealing with new situations.

Feedback from governors about the training was excellent.

At the time of going to press, seven chairs of governors had requested support from the scheme and all had been matched to a mentor.

If you are a chair of governors new to the role or are facing new situations where support from another chair would be useful, the Chairs' Mentoring Scheme may be what you're looking for.

If you would like support from the scheme, are interested in undergoing training to become a mentor or would like further information about the scheme, please contact Rajni Kachhela, Office Manager, GDS

☎ 0116 305 6518

✉ rajni.kachhela@leics.gov.uk

Revised 'Snow Desk' guidance

Following the heavy snowfall last February, the LA has reviewed its procedures and guidance to schools regarding closures due to inclement weather. The snowfall in February was some of the heaviest affecting the whole county for nearly 18 years. This had a considerable impact on schools and transport across the region. In reviewing the guidance we have listened to the feedback from schools, the general public and also BBC Radio Leicester who operate the 'snow desk' school closure line.

One of the key changes is the introduction of four telephone lines for schools to report closures rather than the one line that was operated previously.

This should help reduce the difficulty schools found in getting through to report their school closure due to lines being engaged.

Further work has involved working with the Highways Department to ensure gritting routes are suitably close to schools and giving schools the opportunity to purchase a salt bin for their school site so paths can be cleared in the event of snow and ice.



Revised guidance was issued to schools in December 2009 online via EIS (Electronic Information Service).

The guidance also clarifies the responsibilities of staff in the event of unexpected school closures.

Whilst it may be that we don't experience heavy snowfall again for a number of years, these closure guidelines are also useful for schools to follow in the event of having to close for any other unexpected reason.

If you have any queries please contact Dan Jewson, Committee Support & Administration Manager

☎ 0116 305 6309

✉ dan.jewson@leics.gov.uk

Leicestershire Healthy Schools and new Healthy Schools enhancement model

In ten years the National Healthy Schools Programme has become one of the country's most widely embraced initiatives in schools.

The Leicestershire Healthy Schools Local Programme enjoys a unique position because of its close working relationships with nearly all of our schools and the successful partnerships it has established with numerous services that are involved in the children and young people's health and wellbeing agenda in the local area.

The health and wellbeing of children and young people has become a more significant feature in Ofsted inspections since September 2009. We are keen to support our schools in ensuring that this aspect of an inspection produces a successful outcome.

As at October 2009, 231

schools in Leicestershire had achieved National Healthy Schools Status, which can help them in preparing evidence for inspectors, but it is our desire to accelerate the progress of the remaining 56 schools in order for Leicestershire to effectively engage in the next stage in the development of the programme.

From January 2010, we will be seeking to invite schools that have already achieved National Healthy School Status to move on to the next stage of development, which is the Healthy Schools enhancement model. It asks schools to reflect and build upon the 41 criteria that they have already met to become a Healthy School, to make plans to meet the proposed pupil wellbeing indicators and to develop a three-year plan that embeds an outcomes based model for both universal and targeted health interventions.

This will be a mixture of school-based, local and national priorities, which will be flexibly developed by schools with key partners including the Children and Young People's Service, the Primary Care Trust, parents/carers as well as children and young people themselves.

Once again, because of the successes of the local programme, Leicestershire is well placed to embrace this initiative which can have a major impact on the health and wellbeing agenda we are pursuing locally, including addressing health inequalities.

If you would like to find out more about healthy schools and the new Healthy Schools enhancement model contact Jane Roberts, Healthy Schools Manager

☎ 0116 3053196

✉ jane.roberts@leics.gov.uk

School council engages with the governing body

The school council at Broom Leys Primary School, Coalville, has an annual budget to spend, at its discretion, on improvements to the school.

Concerned by the pressure on the playground at lunchtimes, the children investigated various possibilities, drew up a plan for playground furniture and costed it at £10,000, taking into account 'best value' by seeking quotes from a number of manufacturers.

Council members approached the governing body and made a detailed presentation. Impressed by the quality of the proposal, governors allocated the £8,500 'Progression Premium', which the school had been awarded by the DCSF in recognition of the good progress made by pupils in 2008 (this was an aspect of the Making Good Progress Pilot).

For their part, the school council put their £1,500 budget towards the project to make up the £10,000.

Most of the new playground equipment is now in place, including a traversing wall, musical instruments and a ball chute.



“It would never happen at our school!”

These were the confident words spoken by a governor of a fairly large primary school during a discussion with a fellow governor about exclusions. Like many primary school governors, he believed that exclusions wouldn't happen in primary schools and were the province of secondary schools.

Unfortunately, shortly after this conversation took place, a five year-old child in the Foundation Stage at the school picked up a child's chair, without any preamble or warning, and hurled it at the unsuspecting class teacher. Then he went on to create major disruption within the classroom, endangering the safety of his peers. This quickly became the pattern of behaviour and remained so even though the school used systems of support. The headteacher felt that her only option was to exclude.

Completely unprepared for such an eventuality, one might even say naïve, an exclusions panel

was formed from within the governing body.

What then is the role of the governing body in exclusions? Are members of your governing body better prepared than those in this scenario? Does your governing body know about legislative changes and about the impact that a lack of knowledge could have on your school, staff and the majority of pupils?



Don't get caught out, exclusions can happen at any school and sometimes, as this case shows, without warning!

Don't neglect this important aspect of governor training: in the Governors' Guide to the Law it is considered a requirement that at least one governor will undertake training.

“Exclusions - A Governors' Guide” training is available through GDS. Please contact us for more details or see the published Training and Development Programme.

National Governors' Association (NGA)

The NGA headquarters moved in November 2009.

Their new contact details are:

36 Great Charles Street
Birmingham
B3 3JY

☎ 0121 237 3780

✉ governorhq@nga.org.uk

PRU Management Committee vacancy

There is a vacancy on the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) Management Committee.

The Committee meet once a term at County Hall and make occasional visits to the Unit.

If you are interested or would like further information please contact Wendy Hammond on 0116 3056362.

Additional course dates

The all day Induction Training for New Governors and the Performance Management courses have been so popular this year that they have been greatly over-subscribed. As a result, GDS have arranged more courses, in addition to those in the published Training and Development programme:

Course Title	Date	Time	Venue	Course Code
Induction Training for New Governors	Sat 23 Jan	9.30am - 4.30pm	Beaumanor Hall, Woodhouse	RG11t
	Sat 13 Mar	9.30am - 4.30pm	SkillBase, Desford	RG11u
Performance Management	Sat 6 Feb	10.00am - 12.30pm	Salvation Army, South Wigston	RG13e

For governors of schools that subscribe to the GDS Service Level Agreement, there is no additional charge to attend these courses. If your school does not subscribe, the Induction Training cost is £380 and Performance Management cost is £135. Your school will be invoiced. You can book on these, or any of the other published, courses by contacting GDS.

Modern Governor – e-learning for governors

As a governor in Leicestershire, you have free access to this e-learning service until **May 2010**.

This service is being funded on your behalf by Governor Development Service.

Modern Governor is an online programme of bite sized learning just for school governors.



The courses can be taken as a group by a governing body or individually by a governor on their own. The course catalogue now contains 13 modules:

- ◆ My role as a governor
- ◆ Community cohesion
- ◆ Preparing for Ofsted
- ◆ Health and safety
- ◆ Understanding school finance
- ◆ School recruitment and practices
- ◆ Children welfare basics
- ◆ Admissions and pupil discipline
- ◆ Becoming a school governor
- ◆ Some governors' questions answered
- ◆ Writing for the web
- ◆ Chairing governing body meetings
- ◆ Equality and diversity

Because the courses are online they are always available, which means that governors can fit the training round their schedules, not the other way around.

91% of Leicestershire governors who use the

service would recommend it to other school governors.

Accessing the service couldn't be easier, simply visit:

www.moderngovernor.com

Find the user name and

password boxes on the top right hand corner of the screen. Use your email address as your user name and choose a memorable password. Enter both in the boxes provided and click log in.

Safer Recruitment training - more e-learning for governors

From 1 November 2009, the hosting for online Safer Recruitment training changed from the National College (formerly NCSL) to the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC). The course content has not changed, other than updating to take account of the new Vetting and Barring Scheme.

Anyone who has previously completed the training and assessment and gained their completion certificate with the National College will not be required to retake the training as a result of this change. Your certificate remains valid for five years, after which time you will have to retake the training to ensure your knowledge and learning is up to date.

If you had registered but not completed the training you will now need to register with CWDC. Governors can now "self-register" rather than having to go through the headteacher, as was previously the case. This means that it is possible for all members of your governing body to undertake the training if they so wish.

There is no cost to undertake this training. The only requirement is to register and provide a valid email address, preferably one that is unique. The training consists of four modules and should take no more than five hours to complete, although this does not have to be done in one sitting.

To register log on to:

<http://elearning.cwdcouncil.org.uk/login/index.php>

Alternatively, offline training is available, details of which are on the Council's Electronic Information Service (EIS). Please speak to your school who can provide these details.

Leicestershire Family Support Strategy

Leicestershire County Council is now offering a range of parenting provision across the spectrum of need. These interventions are delivered both directly and through commissioned partners and are offered to parents and carers across Leicestershire.

For additional information please contact:

Gareth Moore: Incredible Years Parenting Referral Coordinator on 0116 3055459, or

Duty Worker: Fun & Families on 0116 2234254

How the Family Information Service (FIS) can help your school

The FIS is part of Leicestershire County Council's Children & Young People Service (CYPS). We provide free and impartial information, advice and guidance to families and practitioners regarding children and young people aged 0-20 years.

The FIS understands that schools have an ever-increasing agenda and workload, one of which is the Extended Schools 2010 requirements to deliver advice and guidance to parents and ensuring they have easy access to other services.

FIS resources are available to support school staff in having an holistic approach to families and their needs. One resource is Parenting Top Tips, which provides useful information on all aspects of family life.

The information is split in to three age ranges (0-5 years, 5-13 years and 13-19 years) and covers five broad themes dealing with lots of subjects and issues that face families. The 'top tips' are really easy to use and give you access to other websites and resources that provide family information.

Another resource due to be released in the Spring Term 2010, is Leicestershire Parent Know How Directory. This website will be like 'Google' for families and practitioners to find support services and organisations in your locality. Your school will be contacted in the spring term about how the

'Learning Together to be Safe' toolkit

In August 2009, the DCSF, in conjunction with the Association of Colleges (AOC) and the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), published "Learning Together to be Safe: A toolkit to help colleges contribute to the prevention of violent extremism".

This toolkit supplements the guidance to local partners on preventing violent extremism, published by the Government in February 2008. It gives more practical advice specifically focused on the education context and is the product of discussions with young people, teachers, local authorities, police and community representatives across England.

The toolkit is for all general further education and sixth form colleges in England but a version is also available for schools. Contents cover:

- ◆ understanding the issues
- ◆ leadership and values
- ◆ teaching, learning and the curriculum
- ◆ managing risk and responding to events

The nature and extent of the threat from violent extremism will vary across the country. However all communities are affected, whether directly or indirectly, and in an increasingly interconnected world it is important that young people are equipped with the knowledge and skills they need for the future, regardless of where they go to college. It is therefore important that all colleges are aware of the issues and consider what actions are appropriate, in conjunction with local partners.



A PDF version of the toolkit can be downloaded from www.dius.gov.uk/~media/publications/L/learning-together-to-be-safe-online-version

new directory can be incorporated in to your school's website.

The aim of these resources is to make information easier to find and more straightforward for both families and practitioners.

By working with the FIS, using and promoting its resources, schools can demonstrate that they are working in partnership with other services to provide information to families. Schools will be able to evidence that

they are meeting their statutory duty, whilst helping to reduce duplication of information across CYPS and provide better customer service to families.

To find out more information on the FIS and what it provides:
visit www.Leics.gov.uk/family
email family@leics.gov.uk
call 0116 305 6545



Parent Partnership Service (PPS)

Could you support a family with a child who has special educational needs? The PPS are looking for volunteers to become independent parental supporters. Free training, starting on 1 March 2010, will be provided; one day a week over four weeks from 10.00am to 2.30pm. On completion of the course you will be required to commit to supporting families who have children with SEN on a regular basis and attend at least three future support sessions throughout the year.

For more information call 0116 2752097 or email parent-partnership-service@leics.gov.uk

International Schools Award

As a Community Governor with a link to Modern Foreign Languages at Thomas Estley Community College, I felt honoured to have been asked to attend a prestigious awards ceremony to collect the International Schools Award on behalf of the school.

Over 700 schools won the award and a representative from each school was invited to attend the ceremony at The Brewery, London on 16th October 2009.

The awards were presented by George Alagiah who also gave a very moving speech focusing on 'The Power of Opportunity'.

One of the great things about the day for me was that the majority of people attending were teachers and when I explained that I was a governor it was great that the response I got was that it was a lovely idea for a governor to collect the award on behalf of their school.

Sandra Boocock



GDS team

Support and assistance is just a phone call away. The Governor Development Service team is available to help with your questions from 8.30 am - 5.00 pm (4.30 pm on Fridays).

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This newsletter is available in large print or via email, please contact Governor Development Service by telephoning 0116 305 6517 or emailing governors@leics.gov.uk

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