

Leading to the future

Information for School Governors

SUMMER 2023

Welcome to the Summer Term edition of Leading Magazine

In 2019, we launched the 'Belonging Strategy', in this we described the ambition that, 'every child will have a sense of belonging in their school or setting and that there is the right support in place to enable every child to succeed.' For some young people the 'right support' to enable them to succeed in their school or setting might mean that they need some time out of school to re-engage in their learning. This is where Alternative Provision options might be considered. In this article, we will explore the Alternative Provision offer available across the borough, what responsibilities schools have when using these, the role governors can play in ensuring this provision is safe and appropriate, and the support that is in place.

Alternative Provision (or 'AP' for short) is defined by the Department for Education as a setting that provides education for children who can't go to a mainstream school. This does not include special schools for children with an Education, Health and Care Plan. There are several different reasons why a young person might go to Alternative Provision, this includes:

- Illness, both physical and mental
- Emotional or social needs that display as poor behaviour in school
- Disengagement from learning
- Permanent Exclusion

Some alternative provisions are registered with the Department for Education (DfE), this means they are subject to Ofsted inspections and therefore have a greater level of accountability. Examples of registered alternative provisions include the Linden Centre, Kickstart and SEEDs School. To access the Linden Centre or Kickstart, schools would make a referral to the Fair Access Panel requesting a place. For SEEDs School, the mainstream school can approach directly and request a place.

Other alternative provisions aren't registered with the DfE, this is perfectly fine, acceptable



and legal as long as they don't hit the criteria for registration. It is expected that schools commissioning alternative provision for their young people check with an unregistered provider that they aren't meeting the criteria for registration and therefore operating illegally.

Top tip #1 – Check that any alternative provider you are using isn't operating illegally.

The criteria for DfE registration are:

Providing full time education for 5 or more pupils of compulsory school age

OR

Provide full time education to one pupil with an EHCP or one pupil who is looked after by a local authority.

Ofsted consider 18 hours or more, including travel and breaks, to constitute full time education

Offsite Alternative Provisions can offer a curriculum that it isn't possible to deliver on a mainstream school site. This will include vocational programmes that can be used to



re-engage young people by focusing on a vocational subject that meets their interest such as motor vehicle or hair and beauty. Other Alternative Provisions will offer a curriculum based with a foundation in a sport or activity, such as Arthog Outreach which bases learning around the outdoors or Brightstar Boxing which uses boxing as the foundation.

One of the most common reasons for sending a pupil to alternative provision is to meet their social, emotional or mental health needs. House 1 offers a re-engagement programme for secondary aged young people with high levels of anxiety. Other provisions, including the Linden Centre and AFC Telford will focus on unpicking the needs of young people and making recommendations back to schools as to how best to meet these needs.

Top tip #2 – Get parental permission

The Headteacher does have the power to 'direct a young person offsite' for their education, this would include the use of alternative provisions. However, it is always better to work with parents and agree the outcomes before a young person starts at a provision.

If referring to the fair access panel for a place at the Linden Centre, Kickstart or House 1, then you will need a parental signature for the case to be heard.

With the exception of some young people allocated a full –time place at Kickstart through the fair access panel, all other young people attending alternative provisions remain on roll in their mainstream school. This means the mainstream school retains responsibility for the young person, including their safeguarding,

attendance and quality of education. The school therefore need to ensure it has mechanisms to review the placement.

Top tip #3

Ensure that you retain responsibility for any young person on roll at your school attending alternative provision, this includes:

- Ensuring there is a personalised plan of intervention in place for the young person
- Monitoring their attendance and recording school registers accurately
- Ensuring Safeguarding and Health & Safety arrangement at the AP are adequate
- Review the provision to judge the quality of the education being delivered.

The Ofsted Handbook (September 2022 inspections) describes how schools will be evaluated on their use of alternative provision on inspection. This includes:

361. Inspectors will evaluate how well a school continues to take responsibility for its pupils who attend alternative or off-site provision. Inspectors need to be assured that leaders have ensured that the alternative provision is a suitable and safe placement that will meet pupils' academic/vocational/technical needs, pastoral needs and, if appropriate, SEND needs....

363. Inspectors will normally visit a sample of any part-time unregistered alternative providers during the inspection, as directed by the relevant Ofsted region. This may be completed remotely. This is to assess the adequacy of the school's quality assurance process....

If all of this sounds complex, don't worry, help is at hand...

Telford & Wrekin Council have published a guide, 'Commissioning Alternative Provision – Advice for Schools, Commissioners and Alternative Providers', in January 2023. This outlines the responsibilities for schools, providers and the Local Authority.

This guide also includes a possible Quality Assurance framework for Alternative Provisions, this is the one we use when we quality assurance provisions that we have commissioned. This is available for schools to use if they want to, but not compulsory, if for example, you have developed your own as a school or trust.

We have also published an Alternative Provision Directory, this is web based and includes the details of the alternative provision offers in Telford and Wrekin and those within a reasonable distance of the borough. This can be found at:

https://www.telford.gov.uk/info/21820/alternative_provision_directory

Finally, to consider the role of the governing body. Governors should have an oversight of the use of alternative provision within school, they should have an understanding of which alternative provisions are used and the reasons why. They should ensure that the school is undertaking quality assurance checks; in particular in relation to safeguarding, health and safety, and that the provision is meeting the academic needs of each young person.

Some young people attending an alternative provision will be in education for fewer than the prescribed hours and therefore will need a modified timetable. Governors should also be monitoring the use of modified timetables to ensure that these are only used as short term intervention, are reviewed regularly, have parental permission and are only used where a child has a medical need.

Top tip #4

Questions for governors to ask (of details to be included in the headteacher's report:

- Which alternative provisions are used and how many young people are attending each?
- What specific needs of young people are being met by the alternative provision and therefore is the curriculum in school appropriate?
- How is school monitoring the safeguarding, health and safety, attendance and quality of education at the alternative provisions?
- How are parents, and the young people involved in decision making, are their views taken into account?

Andy Cooke - Service Delivery Manager Pupil Support Services

Arthog Outreach

Arthog Outreach has a long history of providing alternative provision, right from the start, before we used the term 'alternative provision', we had BTEC students who would only attend school when there was an outreach day.

Over the years our flexibility and ability to engage with young people in a different ways has led to a growth in the offer and the numbers attending. We now have a variety of groups, with nurturing and inclusion at the heart of the offer, as we help find a provision that works, as well as alternative work placements. Working alongside our colleagues in other council services, such as social services we help with families and young people in crisis.

We have recently started a very successful provision working with primary students at risk of exclusion. The young people experience amazing days, where positive interactions and relationships can be shared back with the child's setting.



The importance of speech, language and communication for lifelong learning

'Communication is fundamental to children's development; children need to be able to understand and be understood. Communication is the foundation of relationships and is essential for learning, play and social interaction.'

The Communication Trust

There are close links between language development and areas of social disadvantage. Many children growing up in these areas have poor language skills; their spoken language is like that of a younger child, however with the right support some can develop and catch up. Social disadvantage does not predict language development but is strongly associated and so is a risk factor for poor language skills.

- As many as 50% of children in some areas of social disadvantage start school without the language they need for learning.
- In areas of social disadvantage children and young people are more than twice as likely to have SLCN (this study found that the likelihood of being identified as having SLCN is 2.3 times greater for children eligible for free school meals and living in areas of deprivation). However, without support, these language difficulties can persist throughout schooling.
- Around half of primary school aged children in some areas of social disadvantage have poor language skills.
- In one secondary school in an area of social disadvantage, 83% of students had poor language. (Speech and Language UK)

Nationally there are challenges around children's speech and language development and locally we have long waiting lists for speech and language assessments. Working with health partners we are proactively putting interventions in place to support children's speech, language and communication development from nursery through to secondary. It is now an expectation that these interventions will be used prior to a referral being accepted (unless there are concerns in the one of the following areas: eating, drinking or swallowing difficulties; stammering / stuttering; selective mutism; voice).

What are we doing to support speech, language and communication in the Early Years Foundation Stage?

All Early Years Settings, school nurseries, nursery schools and reception classes have been able to access free of charge the Early Years Talk Boost intervention (Speech and Language UK) training and toolkit. This intervention is suitable for children who are 3 and 4 years old, as many reception children are still 4 when they arrive this intervention maybe the best fit for them. So far 67 settings have accessed this training. Having been allocated funding via the 'Family Hub' programme we will be able to continue to offer this training for the next 2 years, this will ensure that more training and packs can be offered to each setting and new and more practitioners can be trained to use the tool. If your school has yet to access the Early Years Talk Boost training or the 'Stoke Speaks Out' speech and language assessment another tool that we are offering to all EYFS settings please contact talkingchildcare@telford.gov.uk



Early Years Talk Boost Pack



Children from Lilleshall Primary engage with Tizzy

"What a fun time our children have had with Early Talk Boost activities. They have really enjoyed the activities, particularly talking about food and building sentences, singing songs and listening to the stories about Jake and Tizzy.

The children have learned good sitting and listening skills and have been fully engaged in all the activities.”

What are we doing to support speech, language and communication in Key Stages 1 and 2?

The Local Authority have been working in collaboration with parents, education setting staff, specialists in speech, language and communication and commissioners of services to develop a plan to improve services for children with speech, language, and communication needs.

Following research into the efficacy of a number of available programmes, Talk Boost was selected to be rolled out across the borough and funding has been provided to enable all schools in Telford and Wrekin to access free training and resources for the TalkBoost KS1 and KS2 programmes from Speech and Language UK.

Talk Boost KS1 is a targeted intervention for 4-7 year old children with language that is delayed, including children in Reception classes. The programme is delivered in primary schools by classroom teachers and teaching assistants and provides a structured programme that boosts children’s progress in language and communication by an average of 9 – 18 months after a ten week intervention

The Key Stage 1 training and resources have been fully funded by Shropshire Community Health NHS Trust and roll out commenced in March 2022 with training still ongoing. To date, 49 settings have accessed the training.



Key stage 2 training and resources has been funded by the Local Authority SEND team through the Covid recovery fund (COMF). To date, 41 settings have accessed the KS2 training and resources.

Informal feedback so far has been very positive and having accessed one programme, they are keen to implement the others:

Apley Wood Primary

‘The staff have really enjoyed delivering the Talk Boost KS1 programme – it is well structured, easy to follow and beautifully resourced. The children have been engaged throughout and have made considerable progress from their baseline assessments.’

The impact of the intervention programmes is being monitored. Members of the LSAT team are delivering the training and are available to support schools in ensuring high quality delivery. Each school has access to a secure online tracker and once data has been uploaded, the LSAT team will use it to monitor progress and effectiveness and to develop further training and support.

What are we doing to support speech, language and communication beyond Key Stage 2?

The majority of speech and language programmes are based on the principle of early intervention and therefore there are fewer resources available for KS3 and beyond. However, through our close work with Speech and Language UK, we have been invited to be part of a pilot of TalkBoost Y7 and four of our secondary schools are participating over the Spring and Summer terms. It is anticipated that once the programme is published, we will support all our secondary schools to undertake the training and deliver the intervention where needed. Once support in Key Stages 1-3 has been fully established and embedded, we will look at opportunities for supporting our older students.

The importance of speech, language and communication for lifelong learning cannot be underestimated and in Telford and Wrekin we are working together to find ways to support children to develop key skills in these areas throughout their time in education.

Lisa Seymour, Early Years & Childcare Team Leader and Sarah Court, LSAT Team Leader



Talk Boost KS2 is a targeted intervention aimed at children 7-10 year old children with delayed language, aiming to boost their language skills helping them to catch up with their peers. The programme aims to accelerate children’s progress in language and communication, after an eight week intervention.

Appointing a headteacher

Appointing a new headteacher is one of the most important decisions for governors to make. Get it wrong, and the consequences for the school could be very serious. The process is also important for the new head and all those who apply. The headteacher's resignation can be an important strategic moment and can be an opportunity for governing boards to change things substantially.

Before beginning any recruitment process, the governing body must in the first instance notify the Local Authority in writing that there is pending head teacher vacancy (this also applies for any deputy head teacher vacancy).

General issues

Appointing a new headteacher is very resource-intensive. It can distract governors/trustees from their usual governing work. The procedure is very complex and events can disrupt it. For example, candidates may drop out at the last minute or Ofsted may decide to begin an inspection during the selection process.

Governor/trustee involvement

The outgoing headteacher will almost certainly be a governor/trustee and their involvement needs to be managed carefully. Deciding who will, and can be involved might also be challenging to ensure a broad range of governors are represented in making the decision.

Time and timing

Organising scheduling and deadlines needs careful thought. Important matters to consider are: the time available to complete the selection process; the start date for the new headteacher; and the latest date on which the new headteacher can resign to start at the school.

Governors/trustee availability and important events in the school calendar are also important considerations. You may end up with a selection panel comprising governors/trustees who are available rather than those who would do it well.

Recruitment

Preparing a job specification and person profile using pre-prepared specifications/profiles is relatively common, although governors/trustees should try to link these descriptions to the context of the school.



Deciding how to advertise is important; placing advertisements could be expensive. Visits to the school often have to be arranged at short notice and governors/trustees are not always available to accompany applicants. The current headteacher accompanying applicants could be problematic, eg when the headteacher is 'acting' and has applied for the post.

Shortlisting candidates needs to be done carefully. If none of the applicants meet the criteria, it is better to re-advertise than continue. However, if only one or two candidates meet the criteria, governors may be faced with a tricky decision – some of the panel may want to re-advertise, but there is no guarantee of a bigger field if you do. The truth is governors only need one good candidate.

Using selection activities/tasks as part of the process.

Asking the candidates to observe a lesson and give feedback to the teacher is fairly widely used and highly valued as is asking candidates to give an assembly. Other activities include in-tray tasks, analysing and reporting on financial or pupil attainment data, and giving presentations.

Choosing and scheduling activities is important and governors need to decide how many activities to use and why, when to schedule them, how to score them and weight the scores, and decide who should do the scoring.

The interview

The range of questions selected is important. The interview can predict performance in post and give a sense of governing board-headteacher relationships in the future.

Deciding who to appoint can be relatively straightforward – the best candidate often 'emerges' during the process. It may however be a moment of conflict. Importantly, the panel may have to decide not to appoint rather than to appoint a candidate who later turns out to be unsuitable for the post.

Post-decision activities

Governors/trustees need to be told about the decision and their agreement secured. All candidates and the school staff also need to be informed. Those activities have to be carefully sequenced. Salary matters and the starting date also have to be settled.

Top tips for appointing a new headteacher

- Get the support you need. The School Governance Service will help governing boards with certain aspects of the appointment of the headteacher. This can include advice on advertising and the recruitment process as well as the interview format. The School Governance Service will liaise with other services within the Local Authority to ensure governing bodies are provided with accurate information on finance, pay scales and job descriptions.
- Keep a clear head. The process is likely to be complex. When the headteacher resigns don't panic, see it as an opportunity.
- How you organise the process will tell candidates a lot about the governing board and the school. It will affect the eagerness of good candidates to accept a job offer.
- If you're the chair, don't do all the appointing work yourself. It's a good idea to delegate tasks.
- The process is very resource intensive. Don't underestimate the time and energy it will take and make sure the governing board continues governing the school while the appointing process is taking place. A good governing board is likely to be good at appointing a good headteacher. A governing board that is usually wise, perceptive, prudent and self-aware is likely to bring those qualities to the appointing process.
- Think about advertising. Get advice if you're not sure. It can be difficult to get it right.
- Think carefully about how you organise visits to the school. The applicants will learn a lot from how the visit is handled.
- Anticipate the 'resignation moment'. Your excellent headteacher won't go on forever. Appointing a new headteacher is likely to fall in any governor/trustee's two terms in post.
- Appoint a good headteacher, not the best applicant. Don't be over-optimistic about a candidate's future potential. Don't settle for second best, be ready to repeat the process if you need to.

Safer Recruitment training

There is a legal requirement in place for interview panels to have at least one member who has received Safer Recruitment training (this includes headteacher selection panels); good practice is that you should note who this person is on each interview panel. Details of Safer Recruitment Training can be found on the back page of this magazine. It is recommended that more than one member of the governing board completes this training.

Sources: NGA and School Governance Service

Policies required by schools

Are your policies up to date?

Schools and trusts are required to hold certain policies and other documents.

Governing boards should be aware that:

- the drafting of school policies can be delegated to any member of school staff (unless stated otherwise)
- there is no requirement for all policies to be reviewed annually
- not all policies need to be signed off by the full governing board

Using a policy schedule will help boards review their policies in a timely manner. The schedules, available for maintained schools and academy trusts, also provide links to useful guidance associated with each policy.

Questions for governors

Approving policies

- Do we have a policy schedule that means we review all policies as often as the law requires? Would we realise if we had not approved a policy for years?
- Is this policy dictated by the local authority or a multi-academy trust or is it written by school staff? (If governors have no power to change it they may wish to approve it quickly and move on.)
- Are we reviewing some policies too often or spending too long discussing policies that do not have much impact?
- Do we give most time to the policies that really affect the education and wellbeing of the children?
- Do we need to keep all our policies or could some be scrapped or merged together?
- Are we rubber-stamping policies without questioning their purpose?
- Are governors checking the grammar, spelling and minutiae of policies but not checking their overall impact on the children's education?
- How do we check that policies are being implemented in school and are having the desired impact?

If you would like a copy of the policy schedule template please [email schoolgovernance@telford.gov.uk](mailto:schoolgovernance@telford.gov.uk)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statutory-policies-for-schools-and-academy-trusts/statutory-policies-for-schools-and-academy-trusts#list-of-policies>



School sports

New standard for school sports will see girls and boys offered the same sports

The Government is setting out new standards for equal access to sports, making it clear that girls and boys should be offered the same sports during PE and extracurricular time in schools. Schools that successfully deliver equal opportunities for girls and boys will be rewarded through the School Games Mark, which will assess parity of provision in PE and extracurricular sport.

Schools are also being asked to offer a minimum of two hours curriculum PE time and Government will provide support to schools on how to do this through the upcoming refresh of the School Sport Action Plan. Alongside this work, Ofsted will be publishing a report into PE in the coming months, which will inform future inspections and set out what they believe is possible in terms of offering high quality PE and equal access to sports.

The full package was announced to coincide with International Women's Day (Wed 8 March) and includes:

- Equal access to sports in school – setting out that offering girls and boys the same sports, where it is wanted is the new standard.
- Delivering a minimum 2 hours of curriculum PE – with more support being offered through a refreshed School Sport Action Plan.
- Expansion of the Schools Games Mark – to reward parity of provision for girls – this kitemark scheme, delivered by the Youth Sport Trust, recognises schools that create positive sporting experiences across all sports for young people, supporting them to be active for 60 minutes a day.

- Over £600 million across the next two years for the PE and Sport Premium – a funding commitment to improve the quality of PE and sports in primary schools to help children benefit from regular activity.
- A new digital tool for PE and Sport Premium – to support schools in using the funding to the best advantage of their pupils
- £22 million for two years of further funding for the School Games Organiser network (SGO) – Annually the 450 strong SGO workforce supports 2.2m participation opportunities for children including 28,000 competitive school sport events.

Up to £57 million funding for the opening school facilities programme – to open up more school sport facilities outside of school hours especially targeted at girls, disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs.

Sports Premium update

The PE and Sport Premium is designed to help children get an active start in life by improving the quality of PE and sports in primary schools. Headteachers can choose how best to spend this funding including on teacher training, offering more opportunities for pupils to take part in competition and widening the range of sports for both boys and girls including football, tennis, cricket and hockey.

Schools will receive updated guidance this summer setting out how to use the funding to the best advantage of their pupils. A new digital tool will be introduced for schools to report on their spending of the PE and Sport Premium and allow the Government to understand where further guidance is needed.

[Read more about the proposals.](#)



DfE guidance the role of governing body in school food

The governing board are responsible for the provision of school food. As a governor you play a crucial role in creating and embedding a great school food culture.

It is the statutory responsibility of the governing body and trustees to ensure the [School Food Standards](#) are being met and [Ofsted](#) are putting a much greater focus on how schools are creating a culture and ethos of healthy eating.

A great school food culture improves children's health and academic performance. Increasing the take-up of school meals is also better for your school's finances. A half-empty dining hall – like a half-empty restaurant – is certain to lose money.

Getting more families to choose school meals requires a cultural change within your school. It means:

- providing tasty food that looks good and is nutritious
- creating a positive dining experience
- getting the price right
- allowing children to eat with their friends
- and instilling a love of cooking and growing

The headteacher can lead this transformation but they also need support from their governors and leadership team.

The Department for Education recommends that all governors “work with the senior leadership team to develop a whole school food policy that sets out the school's approach to its provision of food, food education



(including practical cooking), the role of the catering team as part of the wider school team and the school's strategy to increase the take-up of school lunches.

There are also many national and local authority initiatives which schools can access, including:

- [Change4Life](#)
- [National School Meals Week](#)
- [British Nutrition Foundation Healthy Eating Week](#)

Other initiatives and programmes, to help schools transform food culture and promote healthy lifestyles, are showcased at What Works Well.

Your school has a unique role to help children learn and develop good healthy eating habits for life, creating happier, healthier adults of the future.

Use the link below to read more about how this links to governors roles and responsibilities

[School food: guidance for governors – GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/school-food-guidance-for-governors)

#happyplaytimes@holmerlake



Holmer Lake Primary School has invested in the OPAL programme to improve opportunities for physical activity, socialisation, cooperation, coordination, resilience, creativity, imagination and enjoyment through improved play.

OPAL is based on the idea that, as well as learning through good teaching, children also learn when they play. As 20% of their time in school is playtime, we want to make sure that this amount of time (equivalent to 1.4 years of primary school) is as good as possible.

There are many proven benefits for schools that carry out the OPAL Primary Programme. They usually include: more enjoyment of school, less teaching time lost to disputes between children, fewer accidents and greatly improved behaviour.

The experiences the school is fostering are essential for children's physical and mental wellbeing and are in line with all current good practice advice on health and safety, wellbeing and development.

Amazing play, everyday, for every child.

Professional development for governors



Spring and Summer Term courses 2023		
Taking the Chair part 4 (GO 504)	20/03/2023	4.30pm to 6.30pm
Pupil Premium Network Meeting (CPD 721)	21/03/2023	4.30pm to 5.30pm
AET Making Sense of Autism – an introduction to Autism for Governors (LSAT 514)	21/03/2023	6pm to 7.30pm
Accredited Safer Recruitment Training	23/03/2023	9am to 4.30pm
Designated Teachers & Governors for Children in Care Network (compulsory school age) (GO 503)	29/03/2023	4pm to 5.30pm
Employee Investigations Training	19/04/2023	2.30pm to 5pm
Understanding School Finances (GO 508)	25/04/2023	9.15am to 12noon
Managing Sexual Violence & Sexual Harassment in Schools (SG 201)	25/04/2023	1pm to 4pm
Safeguarding Refresher Training for all Governors (SG 206)	26/04/2023	4pm to 5.30pm
Newly Appointed Safeguarding Governor Induction Training (SG 103)	09/05/2023	9.15am to 3.30pm
Raising Awareness of Prevent (SG 101)	11/05/2023	9.30am to 11am
Accredited Safer Recruitment Training	11/05/2023	9am to 4.30pm
The Importance of the Early Years Foundation Stage in Schools (GO 603)	23/05/2023	5.30pm to 7pm
Governors' Responsibilities for Exclusions (SG 104)	25/05/2023	5pm to 7pm
Designated Safeguarding Leads' and Safeguarding Governors' Termly Update (SG 106)	07/06/2023	4pm to 5.30pm
Virtual School Conference for Designated Teachers and Nominated Governors for Children in Care (CPD 620)	09/06/2023	8.30am to 4pm
Governors' Responsibilities for SEND (LSAT 212)	14/06/2023	5pm to 7pm
Safer Recruitment Administration	14/06/2023	3pm to 5.30pm
Raising Awareness of Prevent (SG 101)	21/06/2023	1pm to 2.30pm
Induction Training for New Governors (GO 502)	22/06/2023	9.30am to 3.30pm
Pupil Premium Network Meeting (CPD 721)	10/07/2023	4pm to 5.30pm

To book a place on a course, please contact your school or academy

For further information on courses please contact:

School Improvement email: cpdschoolimprovement@telford.gov.uk tel: 01952 382465

All highlighted courses above must be booked through Ollie or via email to co-operative.admin@telford.gov.uk

Contact us...

To contact School Governance, please email schoolgovernance@telford.gov.uk or telephone **01952 380808**