



National Governors' Association

Annual Report

November 2009 – October 2010

CONTENTS

1. Introduction	2
2. Current Organisation	3
3. 2010 – 2013 Strategic Plan	4
4. Achievements & Developments	6

1. Introduction

NGA has had another very busy year consolidating its position as the national body that represents school governors in England.

The organisation's finances have strengthened with the audited accounts showing a year end surplus of some £36,000 at 31 March 2010. Further information on the financial position is available in 'The report of the Trustees and Audited Financial Statement for the year ended 31 March 2010'.

At the end of January Emma Knights joined the organisation as the Chief Executive, and NGA's strategic plan was reviewed and revised. In March the Board agreed the organisation's aims and objectives as follows.

The **National Governors' Association** aims to improve the well-being of children and young people by promoting high standards in all our schools, and improving the effectiveness of their governing bodies.

We do this by:

1. Providing information and advice to governors - **EXPERT**
2. Ensuring the voices of governors are heard – **REPRESENTATIVE**
3. Being recognised as the leading organisation on school governance, exercising influence through high quality policy publications and communications, and through appropriate partnerships - **INFLUENTIAL**
4. Being a sustainable, well-managed and successful organisation through effective internal operations, sound financial management, and the development of the organisation, its business and its people - **SECURE and HEALTHY**

A new three year strategic plan has been developed, building on the plan from 2009, and is covered in section 3.

This year the Board has invested in its own development with a training session to evaluate its effectiveness, and has streamlined the way business is conducted at Board meetings. In addition we have set up two additional committees for finance and personnel matters, and in consequence the Officers' Group is able to meet less frequently. Some members of the Board continue to volunteer to represent the organisation at a national level, but I am pleased that the Chief Executive and Policy Manager are increasingly able to carry out this function.

I would like to thank the rest of the members of Board for their flexibility and commitment to NGA, without which, as I believe this report makes clear, the organisation would not be going from strength to strength. I would also like to acknowledge the invaluable roles played by Baroness Howe, our President, and John Adams, our Vice-President.

Clare Collins
Chair
1st November 2010

2. Current Organisation

Members of the NGA Board (7 November 2009 – 5 November 2010)

	Name	General / Regional	Region Represented	Role
1	Stephen Adamson	General		Vice Chair & Chair of Policy Committee
2	Patricia Astwood	Regional	Yorkshire and Humberside	
3	Judith Bennett	General		Honorary Secretary
4.	Mark Blois	General		
5	Clare Collins	General		Chair
6	Terry Douris	General		
7	Duncan Haworth	General		
8	Siddique Hussain	Regional	West Midlands	
9	Judy Leggett	Regional (until 13 October 2010)	East of England	Honorary Treasurer & Chair of Finance Committee
10	Fred Manning	Regional	East Midlands	
11	Susan Marsh	Regional	North West	
12	Paul Mason	General		
13	Doris Neville Davies	Regional	South East	Vice Chair & Chair of Personnel Committee
14	John Pay	Regional	South West	
15	Frank Ridley	Regional	North East	
16	Lesley Stout	Regional	London	
17	Richard Thompson	General		Chair of Communications Committee
18	Joyce Woodham	Regional (from 14 October 2010)	East of England	
19	Carol Woodhouse	General		
	Baroness Howe of Idlicote	President		
	Professor John Adams	Vice President		

NGA Staff

Chief Executive	Phil Revell (until December 2009) Emma Knights (from January 2010)
Policy Manager	Gillian Allcroft
Office Manager	Dawn Pheasey
Communications Manager	Pardeep Mattu (from May 2010)
Finance Officer	Lisa Richards
Administrative Assistant	Sam Curtis
Membership Officer	Anthea Koerbin (until March 2010)
Membership Assistant	Adele Cotterill (from March 2010)

3. Strategic Plan 2010/13

NGA's top priority over the coming three years is to increase the profile of the organisation.

To achieve this we need to focus on:

- increasing our income from all sources. We aim to improve our marketing and to increase our membership. We also aim to explore and better exploit the contracting and bidding culture, and opportunities presented by Government policy changes. **SECURE & HEALTHY**
- developing our policy and public affairs work as part of a communications strategy. We need to clarify our key messages and understand what governors want us to achieve. **INFLUENTIAL & REPRESENTATIVE**
- establishing NGA as the independent source of information, support and a representative voice for governors and governing bodies. Our aim should be to establish the NGA brand to the point where school governors automatically look to us for information, guidance and support. **EXPERT & REPRESENTATIVE**

High priority will continue to be given to the quality of our products and services in order ensure NGA is an organisation that others want to join or fund.

For the financial year from April 2010, we agreed the following activities to meet the organisation's objectives:

Meeting objective 1: Providing information and advice to promote high standards in the exercise by governors and governing bodies of their responsibilities – **EXPERT**

- 1.1 Deliver and further develop our web information and electronic newsletters for governors .
- 1.2 Deliver and further develop our publications for governors .
- 1.3 Explore the possibility of providing training to governors and continue to support others who do train governors
- 1.4 Continue the legal service, and explore the feasibility of formalising and expanding other aspects of our advice service to governors
- 1.5 Promote examples of successful practice of school governance, with partners where relevant

Meeting objective 2: Ensuring the voices of governors are heard – **REPRESENTATIVE**

- 2.1 Hold national events at which governors can express their views (these events also contribute to objective 1) and at the AGM vote on resolutions
- 2.2 Hold regional events at which governors can express their views (these events also contribute to objective 1)
- 2.3 Carry out regular surveys of governors, where possible in collaboration with partners
- 2.4 Support the development of local associations of governing bodies, and their ability to influence at local level (this will support all other objectives)
- 2.5 Represent governors' views on government and partner groups, at both regional and national level (this contributes to objective 3)

Meeting objective 3: Being recognised as the leading organisation on school governance, exercising influence through high quality policy publications and communications, and through appropriate partnerships - **INFLUENTIAL**

- 3.1 Monitor and analyse data, developments and research on school governance (and report this to Governors, contributing to objective 1), and where possible collaborate with research into school governance and engage governors in it;
- 3.2 Develop policies and position statements on the key issues, drawing on this evidence and the views of Governors, and disseminate them;
- 3.3 Lobby Government and opposition in the light of this intelligence, including working in partnership where appropriate;
- 3.4 Undertake effective media and public affairs work to ensure school governance remains high on the political agenda;
- 3.5 Raise the profile of the organisation – its services, its policies and the role of Governors - through the communications strategy, and marketing strategy (this will also contribute to objective 4).

Meeting Objective 4: Being a sustainable, well-managed and successful organisation through effective internal operations, sound financial management, and the development of the organisation, its business and its people - **SECURE and HEALTHY**

- 4.1 Develop new business proposals with appropriate income generation plans
- 4.2 Increase membership income through expanding the membership numbers, in particular the number of governing bodies which are in membership (this should also contribute to objective 2)
- 4.3 Widen funding sources and secure longer term funding, and build reserves.
- 4.4 Continue to ensure sound financial systems and effective financial management.
- 4.5 Ensure the staff group is capable and well supported to deliver core services, including through training, support, development and good communication.
- 4.6 Ensure stable and effective governance of the organisation.

Progress against these objectives will be reported to the next Board meeting, but many of these activities feature in the report of achievements in the following section.

4. Achievements and Developments in 2010

We have just carried out a survey of members which closed at the end of October and would like to thank those members who completed the survey. We are still in the process of analysing the results but have included a few headline figures to evidence some of the statements below.

Information and advice

The three new NGA guides - *Welcome to Clerking, Chairs' Handbook*, and *Support and Challenge* - sold very well and had to be re-printed to keep up with the orders. Our well-established publication for new governors *Welcome to Governance* continues to be the most widely used induction pack in England.

The legal service provided in partnership with Anthony Collins Solicitors for governing body GOLD members has now been in place for a year, supplementing the advice provided by our Policy Manager Gillian Allcroft, and reported in September's edition of *Matters Arising*.

The e-newsletter sent to members each Friday during term-time has now entered its second year, and continues to be very well received. This year we also developed Q&As for both the SATs boycott and the new academies. All these services scored well in the survey – higher than 3 - when members were asked to rate them from 1 (unsatisfactory) to 4 (very satisfactory), but the Q&As were just top of the table with an average score of just over 3.5. They were followed very closely by the e-newsletter and guides, all at just below 3.5.

We revised our Code of Practice for governing bodies with input from many members and advertised this more widely than in previous years, with the result that more governing bodies adopted a code of practice this September. We intend to expand this approach to other guidance and template documents as much as capacity allows. Our website was rated as satisfactory on average in the survey, but we have plans over the next six months to improve both the content and the ease with which the content can be found.

We are also currently considering what contribution NGA can make to ensuring affordable, good quality training is available to its members.

Representing the voice of governors

The Annual Conference held on the same day as the AGM at which this report is being presented is a free event for members at which governors can express their views. We are pleased to have a full conference and an excellent line-up of speakers, including Lord Hill, the Under-Secretary of State for Education. We also increased the attendance at our regional meetings in October 2010 by holding seminar sessions on the new academies alongside the business meetings.

We notify members of relevant consultations and seek their input. We regularly request feedback and views on both practice and policy through the weekly e-newsletter, the Bulletin Board produced for local associations, and in *Matters Arising*. We would very much like to thank those members who have shared their views and experience with us, and would welcome more input from the membership. In practice much of our information about the views of governors comes from our Board members, regional meetings, local association events to which we are invited (14 attended so far this year), and from those who telephone the office for information or advice. Of the members who completed our survey 82% felt NGA represented their views, and of those who had seen the manifesto we published during the election period, 88% agreed with its contents. There will be some issues that not all members will agree upon. However we are committed over the following

year to reviewing our mechanisms for seeking the views of members in our policy making process and ensuring that we are prioritising the issues of most importance to governors. We are listening to the views of the recently formed Special Schools Governors' Forum.

We have been asked to chair or speak at a number of other national conferences, and to attend those of other partners, such as Governor Wales and Independent Academies Association. In the last few months references to NGA in the national media have been increasing.

Exercising influence

NGA has representatives on a large number of national groups. We are particularly pleased to have been invited by the Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove, to be part of his Education Partnership, a confidential forum for the DfE to engage partners in debate and the development and implementation of schools policy, particularly its implications for the school workforce. Other groups regularly attended include the DCSF/DfE Advisory Group on Governance (AGOG), the DCSF/DfE School Funding Implementation Group (SFIG) and sub-groups, and more recently the DfE Ministerial Task and Finish Group on School Improvement. A number of groups which were attended earlier in the year are now defunct or shortly to be abolished: Criminal Records Bureau Education Advisory Group, DCSF Capital Strategy Consultative Group, DCSF Joining Up Partners Group, DCSF New Relationship with Schools Consultative Group, DCSF Ministerial Stakeholder Group on Behaviour and Attendance, and the General Teaching Council for England.

We work closely with a number of key partners, in particular the School Governors' One Stop Shop, the National Co-ordinators of Governor Services, and the headteacher unions (ASCL and NAHT). We also attend a number of National College's advisory groups, covering topics such as Succession Planning, Diversity and NPQH Re-design. We are active members of the Education and Employers Taskforce, and we have been working with a wide range of education groups, including Teachers TV. We jointly organised a conference with the Local Government Information Unit (LGiU) and collaborated with them on a guide to academies and are currently organising an event with the Local Government Association to consider the future of local authority support for schools.

During the SATs boycott in the Spring, NGA was in discussions with the then DCSF about guidance for governors, and although we were unsuccessful in fully convincing the Department of our approach, many local authorities were using our Q&As and some reported them to be the most helpful advice available.

We seek to influence members of all political parties. We actively lobbied parliament during the passage of the Academies Bill with the help of our President, Baroness Howe, and were pleased that changes were implemented on two of the areas on which we lobbied, consultation and parent governors, as well as Special Education Needs. Our recent submission on 'Reducing the bureaucracy of governance' has been praised by a variety of partners.

We submitted the following responses to formal consultations

Consultation issued by:	Consultation Title	Date Responded
School Teachers' Pay Review Body (STRB)	Teachers' Pay and Conditions	January 2010
Department for Children Schools and Families	Accreditation of School Providers and Schools Groups and on Academy Sponsor Selection	January 2010

National Governors' Association
Annual Report 2010

Department for Children Schools and Families	Regulations and Guidance on School Governing Bodies' Power to Refer Pupils to Off-site Provision to Receive Education or Training to Improve their Behaviour	March 2010
Department for Children Schools and Families	Public Consultation on the Introduction of the Pupil and Parent Guarantees	April 2010
Department Children Schools and Families	Consultation on the future distribution of school funding	June 2010
STRB	Headteachers' pay and conditions	July 2010
Department for Education	Capital Review – Call for evidence	September 2010
House of Commons Education Select Committee	Behaviour and Attendance	September 2010
House of Commons Education Select Committee	Ofsted	September 2010
Department for Education	Consultation on School Funding 2011-12: Introducing a Pupil Premium	October 2010

Sustainable organisation

We are pleased to report that our membership continues to grow.

Categories of membership	% increase Oct 09 – October 2010
Individual	29%
GB Standard	4%
GB GOLD	51%
Corporate £200	8%
Local Associations	4%

The membership base is particularly important as advertising income is falling and there will be fewer opportunities to obtain project work from quangos. We continue to give a high priority to marketing our publications and membership to governing bodies. We have increased the benefits given to GOLD membership, the most recent being the addition of 20% discount on governor liability insurance taken out with Alan Boswell.

We would like to thank our current sponsors for their support:
Randstad Education, TES Prime, and Towergate Education.

We do not underestimate the challenges of the coming year, but we enter it well-placed to make the best of the opportunities.

Emma Knights
Chief Executive
1 November 2010