



# governor briefing

January 2010

**n|g|a** National  
Governors'  
Association

**AS YOUR** Governing Board and senior management team get to grips with Ofsted's new school inspection framework, now is the time to consider how your PTA will be able to assist in fulfilling the enhanced focus on engaging with parents and carers (A4.4).

## Parents and the new self evaluation framework

OUTSTANDING schools are described as having a 'highly positive relationship with all groups of parents and carers, particularly those groups of parents and carers who might traditionally find working with the school difficult'.

### Inspectors should evaluate<sup>1</sup>:

- the extent to which the school takes account of parents' and carer's views and how well they are involved in contributing to decision-making about whole-school matters
- the extent to which the school enables parents and carers to support, and make decisions about, their own children's learning, well-being and development
- the quality of the school's communication with parents and carers

"The importance of a good relationship between a school and its parents and carers is considerable. Ofsted places significant emphasis on this and since September our school inspections have included a specific judgement about the effectiveness of a school's engagement with parents and carers. A strong PTA can make an important contribution to building these productive relationships."

*Patrick Leeson, Director, Education Ofsted.*

The NCPTA annual member survey consistently shows that a third of PTAs are already undertaking activities aimed at increasing parental participation in learning. And there are good reasons for working with your PTA:

- **Additional resource:** engaging all parents can be a large undertaking especially where needs are varied. Your PTA may be able to provide an important additional resource to help deliver a range of parental engagement initiatives
- **Understanding parents' needs:** a PTA may be able to provide insight into the needs of parents. The existing relationship between the PTA and staff can prove a useful route for raising awareness of parents' needs. And if you want to consult parents, then the PTA may be able to help using its existing relationship with parents
- **Overcoming barriers to participation:** for some parents, who lack confidence, support offered by a fellow parent may be preferable
- **Creativity:** your PTA can bring a fresh approach to engaging parents in learning. Parents may be able to bring skills to a project which might not be available in school
- **Additional funding:** any kind of activity will probably require some level of funding which might be difficult for the school to provide. A PTA which could at least in part fund the activity will be a great benefit

<sup>1</sup>The evaluation schedule for schools, Ofsted (July 2009)



Outstanding examples of what your PTA may be able to offer include Cardiff High School where the PTA identified that minority ethnic parents were isolated within the school community. The PTA has been working for over a year to build a greater sense of shared ownership with minority ethnic parents. This has involved building links with local minority ethnic community and religious groups, engaging with local community leaders as a means of influencing parents and ensuring PTA events better reflect the ethnic background of all parents. The outcome has been far greater engagement with minority ethnic parents including participation in PTA events and the school's first governor from a minority ethnic background.

The Friends Association of South Avenue Junior School in Kent has received funding from the Campaign for Learning which it is using to run a family film club. Headteacher, Rachael Egan highlights that by providing 'new learning opportunities for parents and children to enjoy together, it is our intention that this will increase parental involvement, benefiting the children with their education and inspiring parents to consider exploring avenues for further learning themselves'.

Get the ball rolling by meeting with members of the PTA committee to discuss the school's current engagement with parents and carers and to share any specific targets. Look at what the PTA already does and what it could do to explore how it might be able to help you achieve these targets.

## **NCPTA Awards 2010**

IF YOU ARE looking for funding to work in partnership with your PTA, NCPTA has six grants to give away. The LEAPP (Learning, Education and Parental Partnership) Awards provide six grants of £1,000 each to enable PTAs and schools to develop projects that engage parents in their children's learning.

Also, the Gold Star Rewards recognise PTA achievement with two £1,000 cash rewards in four categories: PTA Fundraising Achievement, Changing the Life of the School, Achievement in Parental Involvement and Working with Your Local Community. The Gold Star Rewards provide governors with an opportunity to celebrate PTA success and raise local and national awareness of how the school is working with parents.

The deadline for applications is Friday 5 March 2010. See [www.ncpta.org.uk](http://www.ncpta.org.uk) for further details.

## **NCPTA Membership**

THE NCPTA Member Survey 2009 once again confirmed that PTAs highly value the services we offer; 89% of NCPTA members rate our service as excellent or good and 88% of PTAs think NCPTA membership is good value for money.

Your PTA can join NCPTA for as little as £56 per year. This includes £10 million public liability insurance for all PTA events. If you would like to set up a PTA in your school we can provide you with a free comprehensive start-up pack and local support. Visit [www.ncpta.org.uk](http://www.ncpta.org.uk) for more information or call the NCPTA Advice Line on 01732 375460.

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