



NIAO Governance Guidance Published

A new Audit Office guide on best practice in School Governance has been launched by Northern Ireland's Comptroller & Auditor General, Dorinnia Carville, the Permanent Secretary of the Department of Education, Dr Mark Browne, and Chief Executive of the Education Authority, Sara Long.

The Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) guide was developed in recognition of the challenges facing Board members who, while volunteers acting in an unpaid capacity, are accountable to the Department of Education or Education Authority for their use of public money and for ensuring the best outcomes for learners.

A web story on the launch of the guide can be viewed [here](#) and the guide is available for download [here](#).

DE Publishes Corporate Plan

The Department of Education has published Every CHILD, its Corporate Plan for 2023-28 which puts children and young people at the centre of its strategic

priorities.

At the heart of the plan is the Department's new vision that "Every child and young person is happy, learning and succeeding" and is underpinned by five new child-centred strategic priorities.

Speaking following publication of the plan, Dr Mark Browne, Permanent Secretary of the Department of Education, said: "*I believe this plan sets out an ambitious and transformative programme of work for the next five years...It is also my hope that the importance of education in our society will be recognised through the commitment of the necessary future investment to support the pursuit of our ambitious vision.*"

The full Every CHILD Corporate Plan, including an easy read version, can be accessed [here](#).

GBA Meeting to Discuss Student Mobility

Following the Economic and Social Research Institute's [recently published report](#) on Student Mobility in Ireland and Northern Ireland, the GBA met with Professor Pol O Dochartaigh, Chairperson of the Universities Ireland Working Group, established to look at barriers to student mobility, to highlight the inequities and barriers facing applicants applying to undergraduate courses.

Changes to the CAO Common Grading scheme and the equivalence of three A Level grades with Leaving Certificate results are under consideration. The GBA also urged HEIs to improve communications with CEAIG staff to disseminate up-to-date information and materials.

Area Planning - Development of Operational Plan 2 now underway

Operational Plan 2: 2024-26 and Specialist Provision in Mainstream Schools

The Area Planning Local Groups reconvened in September to analyse future need and develop workstreams for Operational Plan 2: 2024-26 (click [here](#) for more information on Operational Plans).

If you are considering a significant change to your school that may require a Development Proposal, it is essential for conversations to take place about this during the planning year through the Area Planning Governance structures, please [contact us](#) if this is the case for your school.

Specialist Provision in Mainstream Schools

Area Planning Local Groups also identify pressure areas for places for pupils with Special Educational Needs. If your school is interested in this type of provision, or would like more information, please [contact us](#)

Background

[Specialist provision in a mainstream school](#) provides a modified learning environment with an enhanced Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR) suited to a pupil's learning profile. Pupils, where appropriate, also benefit from experiencing a level of inclusion, commensurate with their level of need, within mainstream classes.

Development Proposals and Decisions

The Permanent Secretary of Education recently announced decisions on a number of Development Proposals including proposals in the post-primary sector for the Causeway and Mid Down areas. For a full list of decisions and proposals awaiting a decision, please click [here](#).

Live Consultations

[Integrated Education Act Action Plan: 31st August 2023 - 31st October 2023](#)

The Integrated Education Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 became law on the 26th October 2022, placing a duty on the Department of Education (DE) to prepare,

publish and maintain a strategy for integrated education, including an Action Plan to deliver on the strategy.

The GBA has submitted views to the Integrated Education Act Steering Group on the Action Plan and will be submitting a response to this consultation to provide our comments and raise key concerns. **We would welcome your views on the future direction of the plan and encourage schools to respond individually.**

[Relationships and Sexuality Education \(RSE\) Consultation: 1st September 2023 - 24th November 2023](#)

The Department of Education has launched a consultation on the circumstances and arrangements which would enable a parent/carer to excuse their child from receiving age-appropriate, comprehensive and scientifically accurate education on sexual and reproductive health and rights, covering prevention of early pregnancy and access to abortion.

Following an analysis of the consultation findings, the Department will publish its overall response to the consultation and develop guidance on the arrangements to have a child excused from specific classes by 1 January 2024.

[Statutory Guidance on the Reduction and Management of Restrictive Practices in Educational Settings in Northern Ireland: 5th September 2023 - 3rd November 2023](#)

The Department has launched a consultation seeking views on its Statutory Guidance on the Reduction and Management of Restrictive Practices in Educational Settings in Northern Ireland.

The Statutory Guidance aims to provide clarity on the use of restrictive and supportive practices in educational settings, with a view to reducing and minimising the use of restrictive practices, wherever possible. The Statutory Guidance makes clear that restrictive practices should only ever be used when it is necessary and proportionate to do so, in order to keep children, young people, and others from coming to harm.



GBA Learning Exchange Visits

Cardiff, Wales - North West Migrants' Forum

The GBA recently attended a two-day learning exchange to Cardiff, Wales, organised by the North West Migrants' Forum (NWMF) as part of their [Black Heritage in NI: Hidden History Project](#). NI delegates (photographed below) included NWMF staff, representatives from the various NI education sectors, political representatives and academics.

During the trip, delegates met with Welsh Government Officials, academics, and practitioners to learn about Welsh curriculum reform and the work that has been undertaken to help realise aspirations for an education system that develops pupils' understanding of diversity, with all learning areas reflecting the experiences of all citizens from all backgrounds and cultures.

Presenters included Professor Charlotte Williams OBE, Chair of the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Communities Group of the Welsh Government, who gave us an overview of the work of the group in providing recommendations for reinforcing the teaching of past / present experiences and contributions of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities across Wales.

We also visited Cardiff and Vale College, and St. Paul's Church in Wales Primary School to hear about their implementation of the curriculum, challenges faced and the progress that they have made in imbedding an anti-racist curriculum.

The NI delegates will meet again in December to explore how we can use our knowledge gained in Wales to contribute to the development of an anti-racist Northern Ireland.



Left to right: Amir Kalhor, Conor Sharkey, Dr Philip McDermot, Gary Middleton, Beverly Simpson, Brendan Corr, Dean Pymble, Lilian Seenoi Barr, Leon Andrews, Professor Charlotte Williams, Riaz Hassan, Chantelle Haughton, Stephen Aiken, Naomi Green, Rachel Ferguson, Jessica Clarke, Paul Sceeny, Jayne Millar, Dr Helen McNally

Goethe-Institut London - German as a Foreign Language

The [Goethe-Institut London](#), funded by the Foreign Office of the Federal Republic of Germany, has invited the GBA on a study visit to Berlin.

The GBA's Chief Executive, Nuala O'Neill, will join policy makers from across the UK and Ireland to visit Berlin in November. The aim of the visit is to strengthen the status of German as a foreign language in the UK by providing an insight into the German education system, foreign language teachings as well as German Culture.

We would welcome the opportunity to speak to member schools with German language Departments as to ways we can use the visit to help support them.

We will share our experiences from the visits with you in future newsletter editions.

Shared Education

Shared Education Stakeholder Forum

The Shared Education Stakeholder Forum, led by the Department of Education and the Education Authority, met this month to discuss various pertinent matters including:

- The exploration of new partnerships as well as the enhancement of existing partnerships.
- Overcoming barriers to Shared Education, e.g. restrictive funding models.
- Moving beyond the concept of Shared Education as a mechanism of bringing together two communities, traditionally associated with NI, and looking at a more multicultural, multifaceted model.
- Greater synchronisation of Shared Education with Area Planning.

Shared Education Hub

The Education Authority's Shared Education Hub is available [here](#). The purpose of the site includes developing an understanding of Shared Education, building the capacity of the school system to deliver effective Shared Education and to provide a platform for sharing best practice and exploration of new approaches.

The site is also home to a number of TPL modules and various other resources that can be used by schools to deliver Shared Education.

CCEA also provides various Shared Education resources for schools, aligned with the Northern Ireland Curriculum. Please click [here](#) for more information.

School Governor Reconstitution - Controlled and Maintained Schools

For your information, DE and EA will jointly launch a recruitment campaign on 06 November 2023 inviting applications for school governor positions in all controlled and maintained schools.

You can follow the 'Governor Reconstitution' conversation on social media, including Twitter / X by following @education_ni and @Ed_Authority and by using the #schoolgovNI campaign hashtag.

DE will issue a Circular in due course about the arrangements for the election of parent and teacher governors as part of the reconstitution of school BoGs. The Circular will be issued to all schools and will be available on the DE website. Schools will be contacted about the governor reconstitution process in the coming weeks by DE, EA and CCMS as appropriate.

Advertising of Teaching & Non-Teaching Vacancies on the GBA Website

The GBA provides a free advertising service for our member schools. Job vacancies are posted on our website and Twitter page. The Education Authority website also links to the GBA jobs section.

If you would like us to host a vacancy for your school, **please contact us, using our job template and allow at least one working day for posts to be uploaded.**

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