

2017; the SGA's 20th Anniversary year

In 2017 the Surrey Governors' Association enjoyed a good solid year. Set up in September 1997 as an independent, non-political and non-sectarian organisation the SGA has continually sought to develop links with all bodies connected with education in Surrey and to facilitate the provision of relevant information for the benefit of all Surrey School Governors. From the beginning, the main purpose of the Association was the sharing of information via a termly newsletter and two conferences a year. These are still at the core of our mission.

Over twenty years links have been forged with the many bodies and the Association's executive has been instrumental in creating affiliations and forming strong relationships, working to maintain and strengthen ties over the years. In the ever-changing face of education policy and management, some links have come and gone but the SGA continues to grow and work with all those who are current activists in the Surrey education environment. Many members of the SGA executive sit on many committees and working groups or meet regularly with leaders of these bodies. Regular face to face contact helps keep Surrey Governors updated and informed and helps to provide these bodies with the current views of governors as well.

This information exchange not only takes place at our conferences but also through the SGA bulletins and our web site www.surreygovernors.org.uk which is regularly updated with the latest information from various educational sources to help keep governors informed.

Managing our key links with the main influencers is part of my role as SGA chair. I have termly meetings with the Assistant Director of Education for Surrey County Council, the Cabinet Member for

Education and the Head of Governance consultancy at Babcock 4S. We have also created an 'as needed' facility to meet with the Deputy Director Regional Schools Commissioner. We maintain strong links with the National Governors Association and members of the SGA executive attend regional and national meetings.



Many members of the executive, in addition to their role as serving school governors, are on such committees as the Schools Forum, Surrey Admissions Forum, Surrey Educational Trust and the 4S Partnership Board. SGA also holds the elections for governor representatives on the Schools Forum and the Education and Skills Board.

The work and time our executive spend with these and other educational organisations helps to feed back to our bulletin and website as well as into the

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Spring Conference

Denbies Winery, Dorking

May 2018

**Exact date to be confirmed
depending on availability of speakers**

**Further details will be advised by email
and will appear on the SGA website**

www.surreygovernors.org.uk

**For bookings contact the SGA Administrator,
Sheila Danson at surreygovernors@hotmail.com**

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conferences. They also provide the conduit for information from school governors to feed back to these organisations. With this in mind, we highly value meeting with and listening to all SGA members so we can highlight their concerns and opinions.

In January SGA held an extra general meeting in Chertsey for Surrey Governors to meet with Surrey County Council Education Leaders to discuss 'Surrey Education in Partnership'. This focused on the principle of school led initiatives. The questions were many and varied and Surrey County Council subsequently prepared and provided a detailed paper in response. That was just one example of where the SGA is effective in facilitating dialogue between decision makers in education and those affected by their policies. Our Spring conference at Denbies was well received and featured items on Education in Partnership, Schools Working in Partnerships other than MATS and Leadership for Learning Without Limits.

We have also amended the SGA constitution to include the term governance so all trustees in academies trusts who are governors can be included as members. This is inline with changes made by the NGA. The executive has also re-formalised our agendas and set a new annual timetable for meetings.

As we move towards a school-led system, there will be some real challenges and I am confident that our hard working and dedicated team will be doing all they can to ensure a smooth passage whilst maintaining effective communication for all Surrey Governors. Keep a look out for our articles and communications, keep an eye on our emails to schools and Clerks and please remember that we value your feedback to support our lobbying.

The executive is only too aware that all the work by governors across the education platform is becoming more arduous and onerous but is still done by you; a body of unpaid volunteers.

I feel that it is entirely fitting on our twentieth anniversary that we acknowledge the support, work and dedication of the various SGA executive committees who over the years have supported

their Surrey colleagues through a minefield of change. As a relatively new boy, I cannot list all those Surrey governors, but I can recognise their hard work by naming the chairs they selected to lead them and the valuable work they have done over the years.

Sept.1997 - June 2000 Jill Marsden

June 2000 - June 2003 Dennis Marshall

June 2003 - June 2007 Doris Neville-Davies

June 2007 - June 2010 Ernest Shannon

June 2010 - June 2013 Philip Miller

June 2013 - June 2015 Karen Stainsby

June 2015 - Dec. 2016 Doris Neville-Davies

Dec 2016 - Geoffrey Hackett

While my appreciation goes to every member, past and present, for their work on behalf of the governors and children in Surrey my executive would all wish to join me in thanking the work our administrator Sheila Danson does in supporting, organising, and recording the executive. We would be lost without her

As it is the 20th Anniversary Chairs report I am going to list the executive members here for as I have said many have served for many of the years that SGA has served you: -

Rosemary Hucker (Treasurer), Doris Neville-Davies, David Barter, Fred Greaves, Ginny Hicks, Sandy Horvath, Tracey Hudson-Foreman, Glenys Mason, Philip Miller, Graeme Ross, Eileen Perryer, Collin Taylor, Richard Wagner

If you can spare a little extra time and would like to play an active part on the SGA Executive please contact us through Sheila. You will be very welcome. Last of all I would like everyone to recognise that every governor in Surrey plays a vital role in maintaining and improving the standards of education for every child in Surrey, a role we can all recognise, appreciate and applaud.



Geoffrey Hackett

Chair, Surrey Governors Association

SGA Conference Reports

Maria Dawes



Deputy School Commissioner for the South East and South London Region

Why Big is Beautiful

Maria Dawes told our conference that that 32% of the 3,200 schools in the area - which embraces Surrey and 21 other local authorities - are now academies.

That means some 2,200 are not. The Government's view is this situation won't last long, because the country is cheerfully moving to a school-led system for improving education. In practice, ever-shrinking support from local authorities, budgets that do not keep pace with inflation, plus rising costs along with increasing responsibilities means that we simply have to group together to share services and support one another.

Department for Education says it is relaxed about whether those grouping are via Multi-Academy Trusts or other structures, but then forces all schools that it deems to be failing to join a MAT and no other type.

In our region, 79% of academies are in MATs, with three quarters of those in small MATs of up to 3 schools. The clear policy is that the days of the small MAT are ending, while the stand-alone academies will be required to form and grow a MAT or join a larger one.

Lord Agnew (as from August, the minister with national oversight of governance and the school system) puts the minimum size for viability as 5,000 pupils under one control, with a suggestion that up to 10,000 is good.

In the words of Sir David Carter, National Schools Commissioner "We encourage the best leaders to take responsibility for more schools and to bring their

expertise in school improvement to benefit more children."

For schools that converted to academies expecting to remain so autonomous that they were almost independent, life may change.

Maria sees the larger MATs that emerge as standardising their governance, HR policies and financial systems but only introducing modest centralisation of how matters proceed in the classroom.

Benefits are seen as "Greater equality of experience for children. Effective practice across the MAT is evidence-led. It leads to economies of scale in terms of time, resources and speed of school improvement."

Effective groupings will, in her view:

- Empower middle leaders
- Ensure their academies work together
- Adapt strategies to an academy's context
- Work with and learn from other schools
- Deploy expertise strategically
- Coach improvement in teaching and learning
- Evolve some non-negotiables
- Use inquiry-based learning to accelerate improvement
- Know their impact.

She noted that 95% of Surrey's academies are good or outstanding, matching the level for the county overall and ahead of the region's 90%. Proponents of the MAT system point to this as proof of their effectiveness in taking on the mantle of school improvement that she drove through in her previous role in Surrey, when we pulled the dismal figure of 26% of our children getting a poor education down to today's 5%.

The argument goes that MATs now take on the worst-rated schools, and their success in bringing about significant improvement is demonstrated by that 95% good or better across their groupings. With that perspective, we can only expect the authorities to press on with their demolition of local authority responsibility for schools and the encouragement of MATs.

Copies of the presentations can be found at:

<https://www.surreygovernors.org.uk/>

Meetings and Conferences

Richard Wagner

SGA Executive

Delivering Education in Partnership

Raising standards and reducing inequality in a schools-led system

A presentation given jointly by **Mary Lewis** Surrey County Council Cabinet Member for Education and **Liz Mills** Assistant Director, Schools and Learning

Mary began the session by introducing herself, giving a brief resume of her background in education and pointing out that she had been a school governor before the SGA was formed. Mary was aware that she had come back into education as a cabinet member at a time when important initiatives were in the offing for everyone involved in education.



She carefully set out the commitment of the LA to the introduction of a new management style with the emphasis on a schools-led system which she set out in detail. Schools-led initiatives were also outlined in Maria Dawes' earlier presentation. Mary recommended that governors should encourage school leaders to back the new schools-led approach confirming that Surrey had the resources to take on the challenges presented by these new initiatives in the world of education. She then handed on to Liz Mills, Assistant Director for Schools and Learning, who was able to add some more 'meat to the bone'.



Liz Mills gave us a very interesting talk on how learners needs would/could be met in a School-led environment. Liz said the statutory duties of the LA remain the same, but the funding has changed. Safeguarding was at the core of everything they do. Children should be Safe, Seen and Heard.

95% of our schools are either good or outstanding

which, for the 3rd largest education planning area, is an achievement to be proud of. However, outcomes for disadvantaged children are disappointing. The LA are committed to reducing the gap in education, health and wellbeing outcomes between disadvantaged and

vulnerable children and their peers. The number of children in need of support is growing.

The partnership with Babcock was coming to an end, so alternatives will have to be found. Peer to peer support will be the key. Schools will support each other via local partnerships and professional networks. School leaders will be driving forward school improvement. Partnerships will drive sustainability. The LA needs to be a really good partner.

All but 16 of Surrey's 389 schools are already collaborating to a greater or lesser extent.

Governors have a key role in developing capacity to assist other schools and improve standards.

Governors need to tackle the cultural challenge moving from competition to co-operation. Every school had been asked to identify where they could be capacity givers and/or capacity takers.

The LA communicate with Governors at the termly Chairs' meetings, Partnership Board, SGA meetings and with Governor representatives on Schools Forum and Select committees.

Primary Resource

An online resource "Primary Purpose" had been developed by Surrey's Primary National leaders of Education, which offers advice, training, coaching and ideas to enhance their outcomes for children. A similar tool is available to Special schools and is under consideration for the Secondary sector.

Governors should consider how we can enhance and support this approach.

National Funding Formula

The minimum per pupil funding for 2018/19 Funding will be £4,600 – Secondary & £3,300 – Primary. Surrey schools will gain £14m. No school will lose funding. Funding for the high needs block is forecast to be £17m short in 2018/19 and with the number of high needs children increasing it was an ongoing problem. This was a national issue which would be taken up with the Government.

Strategic School Improvement Fund

The LA had submitted bids for targeted improvements.

School Improvement

The funds will be held by the LA. Phase councils will have to map out how to access the money.

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<https://www.surreygovernors.org.uk/>

Meetings and Conferences

Sheila Danson

'Better Governor': Set the Sat Nav for 2020

Steve Barker

*Head of the Governance Consultancy,
Babcock 4S*

Steve Barker began by sharing with Surrey Governors that he had been a governor for 28 years, and had adhered to a suggestion by the first SGA Chair Jill Marsden to attend governor training. **Better Governor is "my baby" to Steve, launched in November 2015, with the aim of improving governance, as he stated "communication is important to governors". Information is also important for clerks who are "unsung heroes" and an integral part of governance.**

Steve informed governors of changes in governance, including expectations on the way that governors fulfil their role, rather than a demand on time. As 95% of Schools are at 'Good' in Surrey, this was an indicator, according to Steve, that "we are good governors". The main message, and to myself, the most important, being that governance has become a 'knowledge economy', governors need to have knowledge of their Schools etc, and will encompass effective governance 2017 and beyond.

A total of 600 Schools are currently subscribing to Better Governor. There is an option to become a free registered user, and to be involved in an online forum with questions normally answered within 24 hours, with Steve answering even on a Sunday.

The DfE 'A Competency Framework for Governance' has been published (January 2017), with key themes of national education policy and the local education context as one of the elements



of knowledge required for effective governance. This makes sense with linking this to Better Governor, as the information available fulfils this objective.

Up-to-date information is also important, with Steve pointing out information for that week included Inspection Data Summary Report (IDSR), which is similar to RAISEOnline, Senior Leadership teams can filter individual pupil data, with governors not analysing data, but interrogating. Statutory duty in force from 1st January 2018 to raise awareness for

Technical education and apprenticeships to give students information on apprenticeships, Steve noted that some institutions were poaching students on courses elsewhere.

With MATs and Associate Schools, governors were informed of a Schools Week article mentioning National Schools Commissioner Sir David Carter, which was checked and not published by Better Governor.

Steve's final comment was that the Ofsted Framework would change in September 2019.

Copies of the presentations can be found at: <https://www.surreygovernors.org.uk/> Meetings and Conferences

Tracey Hudson-Foreman
SGA Executive

Showing a lead; into a Schools-led System (Walkies?)

There are times when all the stars align and the opportunity for an effective and life changing shift arise. The events that precipitate such potential seismic changes often go unnoticed by some, are denied by others, are inevitably speculated on by all, while many fear the potential change on offer.

We may be forgiven for assuming that the only subject of current National interest is Brexit, yet an equally major initiative was on the SGA's 20th Anniversary Conference agenda 25th November 2017 and not by accident; A schools-led system.

Such an initiative has been in the offing for some time, has been demanded by some for a lifetime and to some it is everything they have wanted; the perfect solution. Its time is, for many reasons, now.

However, it does need to be seized upon or it could disappear for another lifetime. It will also need a great deal of planning and support and it will need careful implementation and shared ownership. If it can be properly applied and followed it could be extremely successful.

For years now, we have heard of reforms in education changes that will take us to the top of the world's educational league. But despite the numerous trickles, sometimes floods, of well-intentioned initiatives from the DfE and many others in the hierarchy of education, our results overall have taken us further away from winning gold or silver and left us wondering why. There have been exceptions of course. Surrey with 95% good or outstanding schools across the county being one. There have been some fantastic turnarounds from schools in different parts of the country but nothing to send us further up in the league of International education standards and sadly too much that pushes us further down the world ratings.

This has been a long-term problem going back to the 1960's and despite some ups along the way the overall trend has been down. Some will shout about this improvement or that achievement and there have been many, but they are mostly isolated instances. The mundane routine pressure cooker of education which can make good conscientious practitioners ill also dissuades talented and ambitious people from becoming involved. This is both a shame and a waste for what finer profession or vocation is there than teaching, seeking to advance a better knowledge base so that future generations can seize the opportunities of life and create a better future for all?

Having used 'lead' and 'led' in the title of this article the word "walkies" sprang to mind. Those of more mature years will recognise the word "Walkies" as the catch-phrase of television's dog trainer Barbara Woodhouse. She taught owners of troublesome dogs how to persuade them to behave properly. The secret was in the training of both dogs and owners. The lady was an excellent animal trainer, though not specifically a trainer of dogs. She also knew only too well that the attitude of the owners affected the behaviour of their pets so Barbara, while looking at the dog, was training the owner, at which she was brilliantly successful. She just knew that all dogs are pack animals, that the humans are part of the pack and that they must be the leaders to engender the dog's loyalty.

While the challenge of how to achieve better value for more young people with less money may not be new to education and the public sector, solving the conundrum from the clients/customers view point certainly is. The same challenge within the commercial world is an old one that was mainly solved by forward thinking industry and commerce in the 1990's.

Since the 1960's, I have managed and directed many types of businesses, small and international, and have subsequently developed many training programmes to create and manage meaningful and lasting change in all types of business. So, I can explain the opportunity that has opened for education to get back to the top of the careers ladder, to be sought

after and applauded instead of avoided and derided. This is a real window of opportunity.

New initiatives pop up all the time in education and most go away again, are badly timed or are only supported by one of the tiers of management. A Schools-led system is equivalent to inverting the pyramid, flattening the structure or creating a customer focused business. And this time it's different which is why the conference 25th November was a landmark moment.

The event, called 'The Road to 2020', invited speakers - elected members, civil servants from the DfE, the Local Authority and a leading Surrey training provider to talk about

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how education plans to approach the challenges of the next decade. And, most importantly, of their own volition, the DfE and the LA speakers chose to talk about a Schools-Led System. All of them are in it together. Clearly on the table was an offer for a collaborative initiative endorsed by the very top of the educational hierarchy.

Now I know for decades teachers, head teacher's, governors, children, parents, and employees have all been saying if only they would listen to me or to us then education would be so much better. Now the focus of all practitioners can be on one thing and one thing only; delivering the best possible education for future generations, to *all* our children

Creating a 'flatter structure' does have some disadvantages. To truly make it work, irrespective of the job title or salary of those involved, it must be recognised that the only privilege goes to the customer or client.

It may also be no surprise but those who have shouted

loudest, "Why don't they listen to what we at the sharp end have to say?", will often turn out to be the biggest opponents of change. An inverted hierarchy does just that because there will be virtually no-one to moan about or moan to. All colleagues will be equally responsible together, all focused on the customer, the student.

What will be needed throughout is careful planning, a listening process, the creation of champions of change, the provision of suitable training on change management, maintaining a good sense of humour and willingness to try ideas that are alien to your normal practices.

The process of moving to a school-led system, though a difficult one with real challenges for us all, promises to be the most rewarding, forward-thinking and effective change in education for a generation.

[Walkies anyone?](#)

Geoffrey Hackett

LA Governor Vacancies

We are often advised of a number of LA governor vacancies at Surrey schools.

Banstead Community School, Banstead SM7 2BQ

Ability to work in a team. Strategic planning. Confidence to ask questions which hold the school to account, Good interpersonal skills, Ability to listen to other opinions. Willingness to learn and undertake training and development. Financial awareness

Bell Farm Primary School, Walton-on-Thames KT12 5NB

Experience of serving on a committee, IT systems & security skills

Cranleigh CofE Primary School, Cranleigh GU6 7AN

Strategic planning, experience of chairing a meeting, knowledge of local area

Powell Corderoy Primary School, Dorking RH4 3DF

Legal or project management skills, experience of youth or community work

Littleton CofE Infant School, Shepperton TW17 0QE Financial skills, Christian ethos

St Ignatius RC Primary School, Sunbury-On-Thames TW16 6QG Finance/resources background or Health & Safety knowledge

St Lawrence CofE (A) Primary School, Chobham GU24 8AB Legal knowledge or HR skills or Fundraising experience

St Pauls Primary School, Thames Ditton KT7 0LP Curriculum specialist

Walsh CofE Junior School, Ash GU12 6LT Financial planning experience or HR skills or Marketing/PR experience, Understanding of special educational needs, previous education/childcare experience

For further information, please contact Lisa James
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