

Best Practice Guidance

Guidance for Governors about science

Context

In England governing boards have an important role to play in ensuring that provision for science is appropriate to the needs of the pupils and meets all legal requirements. They are responsible for setting the strategic direction of the school, monitoring progress and ensuring value for money through actions such as: agreeing a budget, including staffing, facilities and resources; agreeing the priorities for the school improvement plan; standards; approving the policy for appraisal of staff and ensuring that it is linked to school priorities and the provision of suitable CPD; safeguarding including health and safety; appointing staff. Science makes specific contributions and has particular needs in these areas, which governors need to be aware of.

There are no school governors in Scotland, but the government is to publish an education bill in 2018 that will reform how schools are run

In Wales the implementation of the Donaldson Curriculum will be in place by 2022, and may affect the role of governors

Science is not a core subject in Northern Ireland, at KS3 it is a General Learning Area which has to be taught, this is not the case for KS4

The position of ASE

- All schools are entitled to be supported by well-informed governors who can provide effective challenge and support in relation to science.
- It is the role of the governing board to be proactive in providing challenge to the Headteacher and school leadership team, to evaluate evidence about standards and resourcing in the science curriculum in their school and, where there are deficiencies, to facilitate and monitor improvements.
- The contribution science makes to the curriculum and the requirements for safe and effective teaching of science should be understood by governing boards, as should the implications of its status, in England, as a core subject. Decisions about budgets, policies, staffing and curriculum should be informed by this understanding and by the most recent recommendations and requirements. Governors can use the guidance on resourcing and benchmarks for:
 - practical science
[Primary school resources for working scientifically](#)

Secondary school resources for working scientifically

- facilities, including access to outside space, laboratories, staffing, including technician support in secondary schools

Primary benchmark for resourcing science

Secondary benchmarks and staffing guidelines

- provision of high quality careers advice to pupils
- professional development of staff and the guidance found in the Standard for Teacher's Professional Development
- Governors should recognise the benefits of involvement in professional bodies including active ASE membership. They should look for evidence of teachers' and technicians' commitment to professional development by recognising the award of Chartered Science Teacher, Registered Scientist and Registered Science Technician. These registers should be taken into account when appointing staff, and performance management.
- Raising the profile of science and celebrating good practice can be achieved by working towards, for example, Primary Science Quality Mark (PSQM) (www.psqm.org.uk) or Science Mark, a quality mark for secondary school or college science departments <https://www.stem.org.uk/science-mark>
- Science leaders can support their governing bodies with information and present their case more effectively if they are well informed. The ASE is committed to providing the resources science leaders need to do this.

Best practice should seek to include

- Systems, such as a science governor, meetings with key members of staff, visits to science lessons and presentations at governing board meetings, to ensure that governors are well informed about science and able to fulfil their responsibilities
- Routine inclusion of science in discussions of assessment, data, standards and self-evaluation. Checking primary science teacher assessment, using appropriate systems and processes.
- Support for governors to help them ask the right questions can be found

<http://www.questionsforgovernors.co.uk/> (Wellcome)

- A systematic approach to the professional development of staff involved in teaching, leading or supporting the provision of science, including subject-specific induction of new staff and support for involvement in the professional science associations
- Essential membership of CLEAPSS or its equivalent to ensure that there is appropriate advice and support for staff and the governing board's duties under the

1974 H&SW Act and that its subsequent Regulations, in respect of science are discharged.

<http://primary.cleapss.org.uk/>

<http://science.cleapss.org.uk/>

<http://www.sserc.org.uk>

Further links

- [Governance Handbook](#)
- [Standard for teacher PD](#)
- [Careers advice](#)