



In this week's edition...

ANNOUNCEMENTS, INFO & UPDATES	AUDIENCE	TASK
Introduction	Headteachers & SBMs	Action
2021/2022 INSET Days confirmed	Headteachers	Info
Staffing in the Central Team	All	Info
Academic Mentors	Heads and SBMs of schools in North Somerset	Action
Catering Update	Headteachers & SBMs	Info
Writing Competition for Primary School Pupils	Primary Headteachers	Info
COVID UPDATES	AUDIENCE	TASK
Daytime cleaning arrangements	Headteachers & SBMs	Action
FINANCE UPDATES	AUDIENCE	TASK
Draft response to North Somerset Council fair funding consultation for 2022-23	Headteachers & SBMs	Action
Submitted budgets on Orovia and PSF	Headteachers & SBMs	Info
Monthly Finance Checklist	SBMs	Action
FOCUS ON GOVERNANCE	All	Info
Governance Update	Chairs & Clerks	Info



Introduction

Many of you will know that we have been supporting St Mary's CE Primary School in Portbury following the absence and then departure of their Headteacher. I am very glad to confirm that following our approach, Wraxall CE Primary School will now be providing leadership support for St Mary's. I am extremely grateful to governors at Wraxall for facilitating this support and to Amy Townsend, Head at Wraxall and now Acting Head at St Mary's for reorganising her team and personally providing this capacity. I am always impressed by Amy's energy, imagination and attention to detail and I am sure that both schools will thrive under these interim arrangements. It has also been a great pleasure for me working with the staff and governors at St Mary's who have shown themselves to be open to new ideas and very willing to work as a team across the schools. This is the capacity that being a Trust should bring and it matters most when the chips are down.

Our admissions consultation is now open. Two of our schools (High Down Infants and Yatton Infants) are consulting on reducing their Planned Admissions Numbers. This reflects the rather grim short-term demographic forecasts in North Somerset. I would like to note the strong leadership that leaders and governors in these schools have shown. Although this will be difficult it is always better to take charge of events and this will be less painful than the alternative. As a Trust we are engaging with North Somerset Council to explore what other actions can be taken.

With best wishes,

Gary

2021/2022 INSET Days confirmed

Thank you for your feedback on the INSETs. The following days are now confirmed.

Primary Dates

Thursday 1st Sept
Friday 2nd Sept
Monday 31st Oct - Trust INSET for primary
Tuesday 3rd Jan
Monday 5th June

Secondary Dates

Thursday 1st Sept
Friday 2nd Sept
Further day in term 1/2
Tuesday 3rd Jan
Friday 10th Feb Shared secondary INSET

It is great to see primaries and secondaries working in partnership over these dates. Secondary schools have requested a further INSET day because so many of their INSETs have been taken up with COVID testing and vaccination and this has limited training opportunities. This will be confirmed by Trustees ASAP.

Staffing in the Central Team

We are pleased to welcome Thomas McGreavy to the Central Finance Team as Finance Apprentice. Tom will be starting his AAT (Association of Accounting Technicians) journey in January with BPP and we are delighted to have him on board.



Academic Mentors

As part of the National Tutoring Programme, three different funded routes have been developed for schools to access tutoring. These routes have been developed to maximise take up, ease of access and overall quality of delivery. Schools are expected to access a mix of these routes to best meet the diverse needs of their pupils.

One of these routes is Academic Mentors.

Overview: Academic Mentors are salaried members of staff and will work alongside teachers to provide a range of interventions, focusing on small group and one-to-one sessions. They will provide support tailored to schools, including subject-specific work, revision lessons and additional support. Academic Mentors are graduates or teachers who undergo intensive training before being placed in a school.

Eligibility: The Academic Mentor Programme is targeted to support schools that have pupils who need the most help and that meet set qualification criteria. Based on feedback, the eligibility criteria to qualify for an Academic Mentor has been updated to ensure that the impact of the programme can be as far reaching as possible.

You can now qualify for an Academic Mentor if your school meets any of the criteria below:

- You accessed the Academic Mentor Programme last year
- You are located in one of the 118 LADs or opportunity areas listed here - **North Somerset is listed as one of the Local Authority Districts with the lowest proportions of pupils attending OfSTED Good and Outstanding schools**
- Your school Pupil Premium percentage is over 30% (new criteria)

Funding: 95% of the Academic Mentor's salary will be subsidised in AY 2021/22. Schools will need to fund the remaining 5% through other budgets, for example Recovery Premium or Pupil Premium.

Requesting a Tutor/Academic Mentor through NTP is accessed through a single gateway into the service - nationaltutoring.org.uk. Schools are invited to register and follow the online process. Once you have registered you will receive a call from an Engagement Manager who will be available to help. Schools who have registered will additionally have access to a detailed User Handbook and a series of video tutorials are available on their [YouTube channel](#).

We encourage schools in North Somerset to consider this opportunity. However, at this point in time, we are not aware of any schools that have requested an academic mentor so we would welcome your feedback about the process and any other requirements to being able to access this funding that you encounter as part of the process.

Further information is available here: <https://nationaltutoring.org.uk/schools/schools-faqs/>

Catering Update

As you are aware, the catering and hospitality industry as a whole is facing substantial challenges. The food supply chain, both in the UK and globally, continues to be very challenging with the pressure of availability driving higher prices. Food inflation is running at an unprecedented level, with the expectation of further rises. This is due to many publicised factors such as Brexit and its effect on the exchange rate, demand for energy, driver shortages and the disruption Covid-19 continues to cause. Aspens have therefore had to make some changes to their pricing structure:

Secondary Schools: Main meal options and some products will remain the same price, 55p and 99p offers will remain but there will be a blended tariff increase of 5%. FSM and Duty Meal net food costs will increase from £1.10 to £1.16.

Primary Schools: Paid meals to increase from £2.25 to £2.35. Net food cost charges will increase from 85p to 90p for FSM & UIFSM and for staff meals will increase from 92p to 97p.

[The School Meals Cost calculator](#) for Primary Schools has been updated to reflect the increase in meal cost for FSM and UIFSM pupils and should be used to support you with your next budget monitor.

Writing Competition for Primary School Pupils

Children's Author Andy Huxtable has recently released a series of books called the Charlie Ant Series aimed towards children between the ages of 4 and 9 years. The books navigate the ideas of friendship and courage.

A competition for primary school children is running until 31 December in which they can design and/or write about a new character, with the opportunity to win a signed copy of the books, a £100 Amazon voucher AND the chance for their character to feature in an upcoming book within the series.

Click [here](#) to download the leaflet and [here](#) to download the competition entry form.

COVID UPDATES

Daytime cleaning arrangements

As you will know we extended our daytime cleaning/janitor arrangements until the end of term 2. Given the current prevalence of the virus and the new strain we have asked Glen Cleaning to extend the current arrangements until the end of term 4. Should the situation improve, or Government guidance change ahead of this date we can give notice of an earlier end date.

Schools with daytime cleaning or janitor arrangements that are not provided by Glen Cleaning are also recommended to extend to the end of term 4.

We recognise that this has financial implications for your budget and recommend that you adjust your financial projections accordingly.

Please contact the Trust Services Team if you wish to discuss your cleaning arrangements.

Draft response to North Somerset Council fair funding consultation for 2022-23

North Somerset Council have issued their [consultation of fair funding arrangements for the 2022-23 financial year](#).

The Central Team have produced a [draft response to the consultation](#) and will submit the response on the deadline date of 17th December. Please contact me if you would like to make any changes or additions to the Central Team's draft response and feel free to use the draft response to submit your own response if you wish.

Louise Malik

Submitted budgets on Orovia and PSF

Firstly, the accounts for the 2020-21 financial year are complete and your final revenue and capital balances can be found on a new Income and Expenditure Scenario and Budget Forecast for 2021-22. These may vary by a few pounds to the balances on the final August 2021 budget monitor on Orovia due to rounding.

Secondly, we have uploaded your 2021-22 budgets into PSF. Firstly, we have uploaded the original submitted budget on Orovia as the 'Approved Budget'. We have then taken your submitted budget on Orovia and recreated it with the final 2020-21 balances and resubmitted it. Finally, we have uploaded this new version of your submitted budget from Orovia into PSF as the 'Revised Working Budget'. There are a few schools who submitted their original budget on Orovia without pulling through last minute changes to their staffing scenario. This means that the budget version of their staffing scenario is different to the staffing costs in their submitted budget forecast, and that the revised budget we have generated has picked up the updated version. This does show the importance of pulling through updates into the budget forecast before final submission and also the value of generating copies of all budget scenarios (Employees, Funding and Income & Expenditure) immediately after submitting your original budget to use as working copies.

Monthly Finance Checklist

Please could you ensure that your Monthly Finance Checklist, including credit card template and statements and Fixed Asset Templates, are returned for November by the end of the week please.

Thank you.

Sue Warneford Thomson



Governance Update

SOURCE: THE KEY:

- Headteacher Union and Exam Boards advise DfE to reconsider “risky” proposals to reform Modern Foreign Languages (Tes).
- Research shows link between ability grouping at 7 yoa and behavioural and emotional problems in children (The Guardian).
- Sec. of State for Education calls on schools to increase diversity of governors.
- DfE pushes Teacher Training Reforms back to 2024 (Tes).
- Heads face gender pay gap of over £17k by age 60 (Tes).

SOURCE: NGA:

- Priority themes for 2022 = Greener Governance; Pupil Wellbeing; Leadership Development
- Gender Pay Gap in school leadership has worsened over the last decade.
 - Men paid 2.4% more than women @ teacher level
 - Men paid 12% more than women @ Headteacher level
 - Ages 35 - 39 difference in average salary = £2760
 - Ages 40 - 44 difference in average salary = £4024
- Relaunch of Chairs of Gov Development Programme

SOURCE: DfE:

- Covid-19 Qualifications Fund claim form is now live. Open until 10/1/22 for Private Candidate Support Grant and Priority Appeals.
Open till 4/3/22 for costs incurred during 1/10/21 to 25/2/22; and 6/4/22 for costs incurred 28/2/22 to 31/3/22.
- Covid-19 Workforce Fund re-opened. Eligible schools can claim for costs incurred covering staff absence 22/11/21 to 17/12/21.
- Fake emails being sent to education sector settings asking them to order Omicron PCR tests; guidance = ignore and delete.

John Purcell