



**Report on the
Controlled Schools' Support Council's
engagement with Boards of Governors of
controlled schools**

December 2018 – June 2019

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Executive Summary

The Controlled Schools' Support Council (CSSC) initiated a governor engagement session delivered during meetings at the request of governors of individual member schools within the controlled sector. The following report provides an analysis of the discussions during the 103 engagement sessions which took place from December 2018 to June 2019.

This provided an opportunity to clarify the functions of CSSC as determined by the Executive. Governors highlighted issues which were concerning them in their role and relevant to the functions of CSSC. Governors expressed their strong support for the work CSSC was undertaking and affirmed that CSSC should continue to robustly represent the interests of the controlled sector and support individual schools where appropriate, building on the good work already undertaken and the successes achieved.

Advocacy

There was a strong agreement and support from governors across schools for the advocacy role carried out by CSSC. Schools described and illustrated a continued need for advocacy at all levels within education and they especially valued this role at individual school level. This was seen to be especially important in the present period of financial austerity and during this period of transformational change across the education system in Northern Ireland.

Ethos

School Governors were of the opinion that further work needed to be done by CSSC in developing and maintain a collective ethos to support school development and contribute to school attainment.

Governance

There were specific requests from governors as to clarity of the governor's role and the remit they had within specific governance tasks.

Raising Standards

Schools recognised the need to build capacity and capability to bring about change, however, there were many factors which need to be mitigated to enable progress to be realised. Governors expressed the view that a variety of issues which reflect the challenges being faced by schools, were raised during the meetings.

The School's Estate

Considerable concern was expressed by governors regarding their individual school estates and the outworking of area planning.

Recommendations for CSSC, which have evolved from the governor engagement sessions are included in appendix 1, with comments from CSSC on the action planned or taken in response to these. This engagement exercise with governors demonstrates the willingness of CSSC to co-design and co-produce the CSSC programme of work. CSSC considers it vital to continue to keep in touch with its stakeholders enabling them to feedback their concerns and issues and in doing so shape policy and actions.

1 Introduction

1.1. This report highlights the major outcomes arising out of discussions with boards of governors in controlled schools.

The Controlled Schools' Support Council (CSSC) supports controlled schools, which are open to all faiths and none, in providing high quality education for children and young people to enable them to learn, develop and grow together, within the ethos of non-denominational Christian values and principles.

CSSC has welcomed the participation of governors in this venture as together in the fulfilment of our vision we seek to develop the CSSC programme of work which will impact directly, in a supportive manner, leadership, management and best practice in controlled schools.

This report distils issues raised by school governors and thereafter identifies recommendations.

1.2.

Period of survey	December 2018 – March 2019 (ongoing)	
Number of schools included in report	103	
Type of school involved	nursery	3
	primary	84
	post-primary – selective	7
	post-primary – non selective	5
	special	4
Number of governors in attendance	circa 736	

Schools which took part in the engagement events (Dec 18 –Jun19) are listed in Appendix 2.

1.3. **Methodology**

Schools were invited to participate in this process whereby boards of governors were able to articulate their views on a variety of matters in order to inform CSSC planning and advocacy work. A standard pro-forma was used to help direct discussion but not to restrict governors expressing their views (Appendix 3).

A number of CSSC associates were engaged to attend school governor meetings in addition to CSSC officers. The associate or officer attending scripted a summary response of each meeting which informed an interim report prepared by a lead associate and subsequently this final report. A school support officer within CSSC co-ordinated these activities.

2. Key issues identified by controlled schools

2.1. The nature of the engagement process meant that boards of governors tended to focus on localised issues rather than regional issues. The governors generally had a deeper understanding of those issues impacting them locally and which were deemed to demand their attention. Regional issues were acknowledged to be important but were seen to be out of their control. Two major issues formed a backdrop to the majority of issues discussed by almost all of the participating schools namely, austerity and action short of strike. It is against this backdrop that the following areas were highlighted.

2.2. School budgets

Most governors reported that managing school budgets tended to over-ride other governor responsibilities. Many of them reported that they were managing deficit budgets which were increasing. Illustrating this they stated that austerity has given rise to detrimental impacts in the area of classroom management, for example, increasing class sizes, cut-backs in provision for Special Educational Needs (SEN), increasing use of school budgets to support the maintenance of the school building, a reduction in staffing to save money, and a limited ability to purchase classroom resources.

Many school governors reported that they were using voluntary parent contributions to subsidise school budgets.

Some governors perceived inequalities exist between budget allocations in areas of high deprivation compared to allocations to schools in other areas.

Governors voiced concern regarding the late notice of budget allocation which they felt impacted negatively on forward planning and others highlighted the complexity of the Local Management of Schools (LMS) system.

Governors expressed their concern and highlighted the conflict of managing a budget within the required 5% tolerances and managing a budget in the best interests of children and young people. They expressed the challenge of 'managing a budget in such austere conditions'. One school expressed their concern regarding the potential loss of any surplus budget they currently have as they knew the funds would be needed in the near future.

In general governors expressed their concern about the inadequacy of funding levels and about the current absence of political leadership in Northern Ireland.

2.3. Maintenance

This was a key issue for many schools which voiced concern regarding the lack of capital investment and funding for minor work schemes and maintenance. Governors were frustrated at the length of time taken to have repairs completed, along with the quality of workmanship. The lack of expediency to deal with health and safety issues was also raised as a major concern.

2.4. Education Authority (EA)

EA support was described by many respondents as 'disjointed' and 'variable'. Governors indicated that communication between schools and EA officers was 'disjointed' at best and on occasions schools found it impossible to get access to EA staff. One school described 'an increasing distance between schools and EA'. There was a 'disconnect' and there was 'a lack of response when needed'. Some schools voiced their concern regarding 'integrity' and 'consistency' of advice passed on from EA in areas such as HR and budget planning. Concern was also raised in respect of lack of knowledge of who to contact in relation to specific issues.

2.5. Area Planning

Governors raised concerns regarding the 'lack of direction' in area planning, one governor went as far to say that there were 'too many controlled schools in the one area'. A few schools voiced concerns they had regarding sustainability.

Schools also raised awareness of the need for additional accommodation and the disappointment experienced by unfulfilled promises of new builds.

2.6. Professional support

The majority of governors noted a lack of professional support for themselves and for school staff. They spoke of 'limited support' from EA on professional, educational issues. Concern was also raised in respect of funding to release staff to attend when CPD courses were available. This was a widespread and significant opinion expressed by most schools during the engagement process.

2.7. Delayed support for SEN

This issue had significant prominence during discussions with boards of governors. School Principals cited examples of clear need but this was marked by a very slow response from EA. A recurring theme across the primary sector was that schools were only permitted to refer a small number of pupils in any one year for EA support through the statutory assessment process. Schools highlighted the slow response rate from the educational psychology service. A number of schools highlighted the challenges experienced with children who had complex needs and that there was a 'lack of transparency' in the statutory assessment process. One school also expressed concern regarding the challenges they face in addressing special educational needs with newcomer children.

2.8. Pupil health and well-being

This was a key issue for primary schools where counselling support was not funded for schools by the Department of Education (DE). With the increase in social, emotional and behavioural issues there has been a concomitant increase in the barriers to learning faced by children and young people. Some schools have requested that parents support them

financially to engage private counselling services. Governors were strongly supportive of DE funded core provision in this area for all phases.

2.9. Nursery provision

A significant number of primary schools described the obstacles in their way to secure either additional nursery places or to establish nursery provision. They felt the decision-making process lacked transparency. They encouraged CSSC to engage with them in their requests for provision and to provide them with guidance and support. Some schools described creative ways for controlled and maintained sectors to work together to gain shared nursery provision in/for a local community instead of seeking separate provision.

2.10. Temporary variation to admissions and enrolment numbers

A number of schools cited examples describing the manner in which temporary variations had been issued to some schools recently. They remarked that they were unclear as to the rationale for such decisions. They questioned the transparency of the decision making process and the application of the concept of equality.

One school indicated that they had found the new admissions process difficult to 'transverse'.

2.11. Reconstitution of boards of governors

At the time of this engagement school boards of governors had just been reconstituted. Both former and new members were particularly concerned about the voluntary nature of the work compared to the highly responsible and accountable nature of the role. Governors sought reassurance that the necessary mechanisms were in place at EA to assist them to carry out their functions, that they were 'fit-for-purpose' and that governors would be offered professional and timely responses to requests for support. Governors stated that in some cases policies and procedures emanating from Department of Education (DE) and EA appeared to be counterproductive, for example, governors wanted to take action in the interests of the common good but felt they were being restricted from doing so because of conflicting policy and interests. Governors also voiced concern that the introduction of new policies without appropriate training and support, places additional stress on Principals.

2.12. Additional Comments

Some governors called for a review of transport in their local area while several schools raised serious safety concerns regarding traffic issues.

2.13. Sub-categories of CSSC schools

Within the major phases of school types, nursery, primary, post primary and special schools, governors identified other sub-categories which had a degree of commonality around them based on context and issues faced. These sub-categories included rural schools, small schools and border schools. Governors voiced the unique difficulties these schools faced

and requested that CSSC become more familiar with these issues and cater for them through bespoke support.

3. CSSC representation and support

This section details governors' responses in respect of how CSSC might best represent their interests against the five major functional areas – advocacy, ethos, governance, raising standards and schools estate.

3.1. Advocacy

- 3.1.1. School governors continued to welcome the advocacy function carried out by CSSC. They affirmed the strong need for robust representation at all levels within DE/EA/ETI whilst simultaneously working with the other sectoral bodies and trade union representatives. To achieve effective representation they asserted the need to listen to schools and be responsive to their pressures. Governors commented, 'get to know more about our school needs and then you will be in a better place to represent us'. It was suggested that a sub-committee of CSSC could comprise representative chairpersons of boards of governors and that they could serve as a useful voice for schools speaking into the Council itself.
- 3.1.2. Schools recognised the importance of advocating for the controlled sector as a whole. However individual schools want to have support from CSSC for specific, localised issues impacting upon the governance of their school.
- 3.1.3. Significantly, at this moment in time, the vast majority of schools spoke passionately about the inadequacy of their budgets to deliver 'baseline education'. They requested continued support and representation by CSSC to DE highlighting their concerns. Some spoke favourably about the joint meeting with the Catholic Council for Maintained Schools (CCMS) at the Westminster Northern Ireland Affairs Committee.
- 3.1.4. There was a view expressed by some governors that on occasions DE policy and procedures often made it difficult for them to carry out their role. They encouraged CSSC to advocate on their behalf with DE and EA based on the findings from these discussions.
- 3.1.5. Schools were very concerned and critical of the DE proposal that pupils with a statement of SEN would be considered supernumerary only for their year of admission (year 1/year 8) due to the consequential detrimental impact this could have on school budgets.
- 3.1.6. At the present time governors and Principals welcomed the support of CSSC to advocate in respect of issues with which they are dealing and were not receiving support and advice from EA in a timely manner. In seeking support from EA governors reported that they found it difficult to make meaningful contact. They

also found subsequent advice and direction from EA to be often delayed and at times confusing.

3.1.7. Governors from school constituencies within the controlled sector requested specific support from CSSC. In the main these were small schools, rural schools and border schools. Governors presented their arguments for such consideration highlighting the common issues and concerns which unified them.

3.1.8. There was a recognition by governors of the workload faced by school leaders in the present educational climate. They encouraged CSSC to advocate on behalf of all school staff in the interests of the well-being of both staff and pupils.

3.1.9. At this stage of CSSC's development it might be timely to remind controlled schools of the extent of its remit. There remains some confusion over what CSSC can and cannot do.

3.1.10. **Recommendations**

1. Regular and meaningful contact should be maintained between CSSC and controlled schools to enable advocacy to be representative of need and to increase CSSC's understanding of issues impacting schools. CSSC should regularly consult and engage with governors and schools' Principals on development work in progress to ascertain key areas requiring support and advocacy and continue the cooperation and co-design of policy and development work.
2. Opportunities should be sought to further develop the links between CSSC and schools, for example, co-ordination of cluster schools.
3. The roles and responsibilities between CSSC and EA should be clarified and developed in the light of school governor comments. CSSC should re-issue a statement of its role in supporting schools in the controlled sector.
4. Consider establishing advocacy forums for specific constituencies, for example, small, rural or border schools. This would inform advocacy within the area planning arena.
5. Conduct research to enable CSSC to state its view on appropriate budgetary provision for education and for each phase.

3.2 Ethos

3.2.1 Whilst governors recognised the significance of developing a 'controlled school ethos' it did not appear to be a priority for them at this time. Their focus tended to be on austerity, localised building and health and safety issues and their immediate impacts. Therefore discussion was limited in this functional area acknowledging that more work needed to be done. New governors were particularly unaware of the significance of a controlled ethos.

3.2.2 Some school governors were aware of the new 'Ethos toolkit' developed by CSSC and a few had attended CSSC seminars to raise awareness of the resource and the support available.

3.2.3 Recommendations

6. Publish the CSSC 'Ethos Toolkit' which supports schools in evaluating and developing ethos.
7. Develop work in ethos to enable schools to translate ethos and values across the work of governors, the Principal, school leaders, middle managers and staff.

3.3 Governance

3.3.1 Governors were aware of the high level of commitment required to exercise this role. In many cases governors undertook the role as a 'public servant' wishing to serve the community in which they were based. However they were increasingly aware of their accountability which they believe has been heightened through the ETI inspection process.

3.3.2 Feedback from governors made it clear that they are dedicated and want to be effective in fulfilling their role. To do so they were requesting professional, appropriate and timely training. In terms of exercising their governance role they wanted to understand more clearly the balance between responsibility and accountability set within present policy arrangements. Many of the reports from school governors mentioned that they felt that the level of accountability was unreasonable.

3.3.3 Many of the newly appointed governors, following reconstitution, were unaware of the significance of their roles, especially with regard to time commitment and accountability. New governors were particularly concerned about accessing early training to enable them to carry out their role effectively.

3.3.4 Many reports recorded the unease expressed by governors and Principals at circumstances in the present educational landscape. Specifically they mentioned austerity, the restructuring of administration, support from EA, and how these impacted unfavourably upon the way they were able to exercise governance in their schools. Some schools recorded that there remained a difficulty in recruiting the full complement of governors and for this reason reconstitution was slow.

3.3.5 Governors cited changes in practice with regards to the appointment of new governors. As a result some people who had served as governors on schools for a significant period were removed due to a perceived conflict of interest.

3.3.6 Recommendations

8. In conjunction with EA, CSSC should continue to support governors to exercise their role.
9. CSSC should contribute to the review of the appointment process of governors following the recent reconstitution process.
10. Conduct research into the interplay of decision making, responsibility and accountability in areas of specific governance tasks, for example, budgeting, discipline, SEN, curriculum, RSE/RE.

3.4 Raising standards

- 3.4.1 Some schools displayed a lack of awareness, understanding and focus in relation to raising standards. Some schools explained that they were 'well down the way' with regards to this. Others suggested that budgetary restrictions prevented them from implementing or continuing with the good practice they had developed. Others remarked that most of their current work was about maintaining the progress made, rather than developing further.
- 3.4.2 CSSC was commented on favourably with regards to the impact the organisation was having, bearing in mind the limited level of support schools reported that they received from EA. Many schools commented favourably on CSSC's raising standards programme last year acknowledging, for example, the 'Taking Boys Seriously' conference carried out in partnership with the Ulster University which highlighted good practice in developing positive attitudes and raising aspiration and attainment. This work was commended and governors encouraged CSSC to continue to engage in this type of work.
- 3.4.3 Schools cited that they would value best practice sessions/seminars located across the region. Other schools suggested that clusters could be developed around schools facing similar issues.

3.4.4 Recommendations

11. Continue to work in partnership with EA to provide 'best practice' seminars.
12. Continue to work in partnership with EA to provide 'best practice' seminars.
13. Develop cluster schools within geographical areas.
14. Conduct research to demonstrate how ethos can contribute to raising standards and improve school performance across a variety of outcomes.

3.5 Schools' estate

3.5.1 Most schools spoke of concern in respect of area planning and capital development.

3.5.2 Area planning

The process of rationalisation was seen as targeting controlled schools. Controlled schools view other sectors as being better positioned due to the longer establishment of other sectoral bodies. During the existence of the Education and Library Boards controlled schools believed they were not given due attention and priority.

3.5.3 Capital development

Controlled schools also considered that changing DE criteria for capital priorities was continuously working to their detriment. With annual changes to the criteria for allocating 'new builds' schools find it very difficult to plan ahead. It was stated that the new system was not transparent. Priority status within legacy regions is not recognised and consequently schools do not know their position regarding building programmes. Many schools considered themselves as 'back of the queue' for refurbishment compared to other sectors.

As a result of less investment in schools and delays in progressing capital works schools reported an increase in tenant maintenance costs. Some schools have been on the Priority 1 list for new builds for over twenty years only to be surpassed by others, due to the implementation of new criteria.

3.5.4 Recommendations

15. CSSC should continue to provide support and advocate on behalf of schools in respect of area planning and the schools' estate.
16. Conduct research into the real impact of school rationalisation, especially in relation to small, rural schools.

4. Training for governors

4.1 Most schools did not have a high regard for the training provided by EA. Governors reported that courses were difficult to get access to, that only two places in most cases were afforded to a Board of Governors. Governors expressed the view that priority of access should have been afforded to new governors whilst previous governors could have been given refresher courses. Governors were critical that no hospitality was provided to volunteers who had often arrived at the training course straight from work.

4.2 In view of the significant amount of training to be undertaken governors raised a number of issues including: location of training, timing of training, variable quality of training and availability of some critical training sessions, for example, recruitment and selection.

Governors reported that courses were difficult to get access to, that only two places in most cases were afforded to a Board of Governors. Where alternative venues were offered these were not always realistic in terms of travelling distances. Governors expressed the view that priority of access should have been afforded to new governors whilst previous governors could have been given refresher courses.

Governors were critical when no hospitality was provided to volunteers who had often arrived at a training course straight from work.

Experienced governors conveyed that some refresher training did not vary significantly from the original training and they would prefer that refresher training addressed relevant changes.

4.3 Governors would appreciate signposting to relevant documentation re policies/procedures/guidance associated with training courses. Governors also suggested a reduction in the use of PowerPoints and of technical terms would be beneficial.

4.4 Some governors suggested that a seminar on the management of school budgets was also essential and should be mandatory.

4.5 Specifically governors of small schools suggested that training should be provided on budget, shared education, curriculum, learning and teaching and class sizes.

4.6 Generally governors thought other types of training could be provided on an interest basis such as ethos and values, mental health and wellbeing, discipline, attendance at work, SEN, ADHD, child protection, how to apply for grant funding, courses on model policies, RSE, social media bullying. They would also welcome support on governor procedures for example effective record keeping.

4.7 Governors welcomed the availability of online training, however some were cautious stating that e-courses remove the opportunity to interact with course leaders, as well as the ability to network.

4.8 Governors would welcome improvement in the administration of training, a Principal requested a process by which governors could complete online booking for themselves.

4.9 Recommendations

17. Advocate for EA to explore creative ways to train and develop governors including off the shelf training materials in particular interest areas using e-learning packages.
18. Advocate for EA to co-ordinate training in rural schools using clusters and local venues.
19. CSSC should develop a welcome meeting for new governors with some pertinent initial training.

5. Communication with governors

- 5.1. Governors expressed their thanks for the opportunity to meet with representatives of CSSC during this engagement process. The overwhelming school experience of CSSC has been positive. Governors particularly welcomed the face-to-face opportunity to meet with associates and officers. Principals, in particular, articulated their thanks to the schools' support officers (SSOs) who had been in contact with them and had, in many instances, attended their schools. Governors stressed that for many schools, SSOs were more readily available than EA staff.
- 5.2. Governors suggested that the value of CSSC will be recognised as CSSC gets to know their schools and are well informed to advocate on their behalf.
- 5.3. CSSC should reflect on the strategy employed to engage with its governors and schools. The outcome of this engagement exercise tended to focus on localised issues rather than the regional issues. The 'big-ticket' or regional issues were seldom explored by governors except when drawn to their attention.
- 5.4. Communication needs to be two way. Therefore, since governors were magnanimous in rehearsing their stories it is important that as CSSC engages with other education stakeholders on behalf of the sector that the outcomes of such contact are fed back to the controlled schools. It is important to report involvement and success. Feedback to schools, whether on a general issue or a particular issue, should be timely.
- 5.5. Communication methods preferred by governors were varied. However in most cases emails were provided for use by CSSC. In very few cases, emails were not provided and many governors asked the Principal to be the mediator of communication.

5.6. Recommendations

20. CSSC to reflect on the most appropriate modus operandi to engage with schools.

21. A governor sub-committee could inform policy of CSSC.
22. Continued and heightened media presence both within and beyond the organisation to maintain a high media profile for the sector.

6. Concluding remarks

CSSC has welcomed this opportunity to listen to governors in controlled schools and would wish to thank those schools and governors who engaged in the process. Recommendations for CSSC, which have evolved from the governor engagement sessions are included in appendix 1, with comments from CSSC on the action planned or taken in response to these.

Governors are highly committed and want to be effective in fulfilling their role, to do this they expressed their desire to avail of professional, appropriate and timely training.

Governors expressed their appreciation at the efforts made by CSSC to listen to the governor voice and embraced a variety of means to continue further communication.

Appendix 1

Recommendations for CSSC

The engagement with boards of governors resulted in a number of recommendations which will be used to inform the work of CSSC.

The following table outlines the recommendations grouped thematically, and provides comment from CSSC on the action planned, or taken, in response to the recommendations. CSSC welcomes on-going feedback from governors to inform its strategic planning and operations and is committed to providing high quality support in representing the interests of individual controlled schools and the sector as a whole.

Figure 1: Recommendations from CSSC’s engagement with boards of governors

Recommendation	Source	Action
Advocacy		
<p>Regular and meaningful contact should be maintained between CSSC and controlled schools to enable advocacy to be representative of need and to increase CSSC’s understanding of issues impacting schools.</p> <p>CSSC should regularly consult and engage with governors and school Principals on development work in progress to ascertain key areas requiring support and advocacy and continue the cooperation and co-design of policy and development work.</p>	<p>Engagement with Boards of Governors</p>	<p>CSSC’s schools’ support officers are dedicated to supporting schools and make contact with member schools at the beginning of each school year. They are regularly contacted directly by schools. For any school which is unsure of who their schools’ support officer is, CSSC’s website has an interactive map which enables schools to find their contact details</p> <p>CSSC will continue to consult with schools and advocate on their behalf. Responses representing the interests of controlled schools have been submitted to all consultations relating to issues that are relevant to the sector.</p> <p>CSSC communicates with schools on a regular basis and welcomes feedback.</p>

Opportunities should be sought to further develop the links between CSSC and schools, for example, co-ordination of cluster schools.	Engagement with Boards of Governors	CSSC is conscious of the significant number of school clusters which already exist and is mindful of not duplicating or adding to an already complex web of partnerships. Where appropriate, in the context of raising standards and in partnership with EA, CSSC will seek to promote collaboration between schools
The roles and responsibilities between CSSC and EA should be clarified and developed in the light of school governor comments. CSSC should re-issue a statement of its role in supporting schools in the controlled sector.	Engagement with Boards of Governors	CSSC and EA will review the MOU and associated Protocols by March 2020. Information will be shared in future newsletters and on the website, or via schools' support officers about the respective roles and responsibilities of CSSC and EA. This insight will form part of the communications review.
Consider establishing advocacy forums for specific constituencies, for example, small, rural or border schools. This would inform advocacy within the area planning arena.	Engagement with Boards of Governors	CSSC senior management team will consider this recommendation.
Carry out research to enable CSSC to state its view on appropriate budgetary provision for education and for each phase.	Engagement with Boards of Governors	This recommendation will be considered as part of CSSC's review of the research plan.
Ethos		
Publish the 'Ethos Toolkit' which supports schools in developing and evaluating ethos.	Engagement with Boards of Governors	Work is underway to design and publish the CSSC Ethos toolkit. A launch with the Permanent Secretary is planned to take place on 24 October 2019. Schools will be provided with a hard copy and the toolkit will be published on the CSSC website.

<p>Develop work in ethos to enable schools to translate ethos and values across the work of governors, the Principal, school leaders, middle managers and staff.</p>	<p>Engagement with Boards of Governors</p>	<p>This work has commenced and a pilot support initiative is underway. This will be evaluated and progressed as appropriate. 2 pilot training sessions for governors on ethos in controlled schools have taken place and a further 4 venues have been identified to deliver ethos governor training within this business year. Two events are planned for November 2019 and two for February 2020.</p>
<p>Governance</p>		
<p>In conjunction with EA continue to support governors to exercise their role.</p>	<p>Engagement with Boards of Governors</p>	<p>CSSC welcomes the recent appointment of a dedicated governor support team within EA.</p> <p>CSSC will continue to work in partnership with EA to support governors in controlled schools. CSSC has reconfigured the deployment of schools' support officers to more closely align with EA Localities to further enhance effective collaboration.</p> <p>The Memorandum of Understanding and associated Protocols, agreed between EA and CSSC, will be reviewed in 2019/20.</p>
<p>Contribute to a review of the appointment process of governors following the recent reconstitution process.</p>	<p>Engagement with Boards of Governors</p>	<p>CSSC has submitted a response to the DE, EA and CCMS joint review of the governor nomination process. Themes emerging from common operational aspects were discussed with EA at a meeting on 04/07/19. Further engagement is planned to take place with EA in relation to aspects of the reconstitution process specific to controlled schools.</p>
<p>Carry out research into the interplay of decision making, responsibility and accountability in areas of specific governance</p>	<p>Engagement with Boards of Governors</p>	<p>This recommendation will be considered as part of CSSC's review of the research plan for the coming years.</p>

tasks, for example, budgeting, discipline, SEN, curriculum, RSE/RE.		
Raising standards		
Continue to work with EA to provide ‘best practice’ seminars.	Engagement with Boards of Governors	CSSC will continue to work in partnership with EA to identify and promote evidence based effective practice. CSSC will use insights from school leaders and steering groups to ensure events are relevant to identified need.
Provide seminars for phases and sub-categories within phases across the controlled sector such as nursery, rural, border schools, primary and post-primary.	Engagement with Boards of Governors	A review of all events for 2018/19 has been undertaken by CSSC. Feedback from governors and schools has affirmed that phase specific events add value. The 2019/20 Programme of Work includes specific events for nursery, special, primary and post-primary schools.
Develop cluster schools within geographical areas.	Engagement with Boards of Governors	CSSC uses a cluster model to deliver its building capacity programme. Research confirms the positive impact of a network of support and collaboration for school improvement. Clusters are established on a ‘best fit’ basis each year to encourage collaboration and networking between controlled schools.
Carry out research to demonstrate how ethos can contribute to raising standards and successfully used to improve school performance across a variety of outcomes.	Engagement with Boards of Governors	CSSC’s 2019/20 programme of work commits to carrying out research in this area.
Schools’ estate		
CSSC should continue to provide support and advocate on behalf of schools in respect of area planning and the schools’ estate.	Engagement with Boards of Governors	CSSC officers are involved in area planning groups at all levels, representing the interests of the controlled sector and individual

		<p>controlled schools. Officers contribute to the development of the EA strategic area plan and annual action plans.</p> <p>CSSC will continue to provide support to controlled schools and will respond to the consultation processes associated with every development proposal relating to controlled schools and those which could have an impact on the controlled sector or individual controlled schools. Meetings are facilitated with individual schools and groups of schools as required.</p> <p>CSSC will continue to represent the interests of controlled schools in matters relating to the schools' estate, advocating on their behalf with the Education Authority and the Department of Education.</p>
Conduct research into the real impact of school rationalisation, especially in relation to small, rural schools.	Engagement with Boards of Governors	This recommendation will be considered as part of CSSC's review of the research plan for the coming years.
Training for governors		
Advocate for EA to explore creative ways to train and develop governors including off the shelf training materials in particular interest areas using e-learning packages.	Engagement with Boards of Governors	<p>CSSC is represented on the EA External Stakeholder Group for governor training. The views expressed by governors in relation to training have been shared with EA.</p> <p>A number of teams within EA are exploring alternative approaches to providing access to training. EA has confirmed that a number of on-line resources have been developed for recruitment and selection and are already in use. There is also a commitment to increasing the number of face-to-face course offered to meet the demand.</p> <p>Other on-line training includes a PowerPoint for Child Protection Strand 1, training awareness for governors. Short videos available</p>

		<p>include Child Protection, Every School a Good School, Induction, School Finances, School Development Planning, Using Data, 21st Century Governance, Becoming a School Governor, CSE Program 1 and CSE Program 2. The training needs of governors are being considered within the scope of the EA Educational Technology Services (ETS) project.</p> <p>CSSC will continue to work in collaboration with EA to highlight the needs of governors in controlled schools.</p>
Advocate for EA to co-ordinate training in rural schools using clusters and local venues.	Engagement with Boards of Governors	<p>This issue has been raised by CSSC through the EA External Stakeholder Group.</p> <p>EA has reviewed the distribution of venues and has added additional settings to try to ensure that local access is available in all regions.</p> <p>CSSC will continue to highlight the needs of governors in controlled schools to EA.</p>
CSSC should develop a welcome meeting for new governors with some pertinent initial training.	Engagement with Boards of Governors	<p>CSSC worked in partnership with the Transferor Representative Council (TRC) contributing to the TRC information evenings for transferor governors held in February/March 2019 to coincide with the reconstitution of governors. The CSSC input focused on the functions of the organisation and its role in developing and maintaining the collective ethos in the controlled sector.</p> <p>The EA programme of governor training includes induction training. CSSC will give further thought to this recommendation to consider how a welcome meeting could add value for governors in controlled schools without duplicating training provided by EA.</p>
Communication with governors		

CSSC to reflect on the most appropriate modus operandi to engage with schools.	Engagement with Boards of Governors	A review of the communications plan will explore ways of communicating with boards of governors.
A governor sub-committee could inform policy of CSSC.	Engagement with Boards of Governors	CSSC senior management team will consider this recommendation.
Continued and heightened media presence both within and beyond the organisation to maintain a high media profile for the sector.	Engagement with Boards of Governors	CSSC has a communications strategy in place to continue to raise the profile of the controlled sector.

Appendix 2 Engagement meetings with controlled schools

Aghadrumsee Primary School
Anahilt Primary School
Antrim Grammar School
Ardstraw Jubilee Primary School
Artigarvan Primary School
Augher Central Primary School
Ballycarrickmaddy PS
Ballyclare High School
Ballyholme Primary School
Ballynahinch Primary School
Ballywalter Primary School
Banbridge Academy
Belfast Model School for Girls
Black Mountain Primary School
Bleary Primary School
Bloomfield Collegiate
Bloomfield Road Primary School
Blythefield Primary School
Bocombra Primary School
Botanic Primary School
Brackenagh West Primary School
Bronte Primary School
Brownlow Integrated College
Cairncastle Primary School
Cairnshill Primary School
Carrickfergus Academy
Carrowreagh Primary School
Cedar Lodge Special School
Clandeboyne Primary School
Cliftonville Integrated Primary School
Coagh Primary School
Cooley Primary School
Cortamlet Primary School
Cregagh Primary School
Doagh Primary School
Donaghadee Primary School
Donemana Primary School
Downshire NS
Dromara Primary School
Dromore Central Primary School
Dromore High School
Dromore Primary School
Drumachose Primary School
Drumrane Primary School

Duneane Primary School
Dungannon PS
Dunmurry Primary School
Dunseverick Primary School
Eden Primary School Ballymoney
Edenderry Nursery
Edenderry Primary School Banbridge
Fairview Primary School (Ballyclare)
Fane Street Primary School
Fleming Fulton Special School
Garryduff Primary School
Glenlola Collegiate
Glynn Primary School
Groggan Primary School
Grosvenor Grammar
Hamiltonsbawn PS
Harmony Hill Primary School
Harpurs Hill Primary School
Harryville Primary School
Hollybank Primary School
Kilbride Central Primary School
Kilcooley Primary School
Kings Park Primary School Lurgan
Kirkinriola Primary School
Kirkistown Primary School
Knockahollet Primary School
Knockbreda Nursery School
Larne and Inver Primary School
Ligoniel Primary School
Limavady High School
Linn Primary School
Lisnagelvin Primary School
Markethill Primary School
Millburn Primary School Coleraine
Moat PS Lisnaskea
Moorfields Primary School
Newbuildings Primary School
Newcastle Primary School
Old Warren Primary School
Park Hall
Portaferry Integrated Primary School
Poyntzpass Primary School
Rasharkin Primary School
Rathcoole Primary School
Richmount Primary School
Rosstulla Special School
Seaview Primary School

Six Mile Integrated Primary School
Spa Primary School
Strabane Academy
Strabane Primary School
Straid PS
Templepatrick Primary School
Thompson Primary School
Tildarg Primary School
Tonagh Primary School
Victoria Park Primary School
Willowbridge School
Windsor Hill Primary School

Appendix 3 Governor meeting pro-forma



Governor meeting

Brief notes should be taken during the meeting and the following pro forma completed.

Name of school	
Name of associate	
Date of meeting	
Number of governors present	

1. What are the key issues for your school at this time?

Details of governor response.

2. How can CSSC best represent and support you within each of the functional areas?

Details of governor response.

3. How can CSSC best represent and support the controlled sector strategically at a regional level?

Details of governor response.

4. EA has responsibility for training of BOGs. CSSC has representation on the Stakeholders group. The main aim of the group is to contribute to the development of the Board of Governors training programme.

Are there other areas you feel should be covered within the EA Training and Support Programme?

Details of governor response.

5. What is the most effective way for CSSC to communicate with governors?

Details of governor response.

6. If you are happy to receive communication from CSSC by email can you please complete the contact details information sheet.

Details of governor response.

7. One of CSSC'S key functions is to identify encourage and nominate governors to controlled schools. EA has recently completed the process of reconstituting boards of governors. CSSC would like to support EA by establishing a list of individuals who would be interested in being considered for the role of governor in order to fill vacancies that may arise during the next four year period.

Do you know of anyone who would be interested in becoming a school governor?

Details of governor response.

Any other comments.