

Governor Mark

Many governors will be familiar with a wide range of quality marks available to schools. Many schools already have recognition for high quality provision in aspects of school life such as ArtsMark, ActiveMark, NaaceMark, InclusionMark, or recognition from the Basic Skills Agency or IIP accreditation. The list is merely an example of some of the ways in which schools assess themselves against best practice and seek to be recognized for achieving high quality. Certificates and plaques adorn the reception areas of many schools.

In recognition of the vital role that governing bodies play in school improvement a national quality mark has been developed to help to identify and recognize high quality governance. This project is supported by the DCSF and is due to be launched in the spring. Before you read and wonder how the pursuit of such an award might add to your workload please be reassured that, as with all quality marks, this is entirely optional no-one will be pressurizing governing bodies to seek accreditation. However, the document which has been prepared which identifies the standards is a very useful tool for all governing bodies to evaluate their performance against best practice. This standards document is free and is currently available on our website and has the same basis as the course we run on Governing Body Self Evaluation.

Governor Mark has been designed to recognise the quality of the contribution to school leadership and management

governing bodies make. It is managed by GLM, a partnership of three local authority governor services teams, Cambridgeshire, Oxfordshire and Warwickshire. Governor Mark is:



- based on the Ofsted descriptors for governance in the 2003-05 Framework, the best articulation so far of what good governance looks like;
- a non-prescriptive model which measures the working practices of the governing body and more importantly their impact on school performance;
- a scheme that recognizes that there are many approaches to achieving sustainable excellence in school governance within the leadership and management structure of the school;
- a mechanism to achieve accreditation against an agreed quality standard.

Schools are able to access free of charge the quality standards criteria, which are more important than the accreditation award. Assessment against the criteria for accreditation will be externally verified and last for a period of 3 years. A charge will be made for accreditation.

Governor Mark documents are available at www.educationbradford.com and follow the link for Governors.

National Training for Clerks to Governors

Congratulations to the ten clerks who completed the training course last term. They join the forty-nine clerks who have completed the course since it was introduced in 2003. The course provides clerks with a wealth of information on: the roles and responsibilities of governors; agenda setting and minute taking; the role of the clerk as advisor and storing and retrieving information. It is taught over four three-hour sessions, with background reading and assessments to be completed between sessions. The course is also a 20 credit module on the Certificate in Continuing Studies in School Governance offered in conjunction with Bradford University. The next course is due to begin on 26 February - for more information contact School Governor Service on (01274) 385629.

serco

Note PAD

Education Bradford

A regular news sheet for Governors of Schools throughout the Bradford District

Education Bradford
School Governor Service

FEBRUARY 2008



To Achieve School Improvement through the Effective Governance of Schools

Annual Governor Conference 2008: The Governing Body - Fit For Purpose?

Further to our January edition of Notepad we have now arranged the details of our Annual Conference. The theme of the Conference will be following up on last years challenge of what Governing Bodies might look like in the future and is particularly timely given that the DCSF currently have proposals in the Children's Plan for strengthened accountability and governance.

The Conference will take place on 14 June 2008 when our Keynote Speaker will be Professor John Adams current Vice President of The National Governors Association (NGA). John has recently given up office as the Chair of the newly-formed National Governors' Association (created by a merger between the National Governors' Council and the National Association of School Governors) and has previously been Chair of NASG and NAGM.

In addition to membership of a range of governmental advisory and working groups,

recent activities have included giving evidence to the School Teachers' Pay Review Body (STRB) and to three Select Committees of the House of Commons - most recently on the 2005 Education White Paper.

In 2002 John was part of a ministerial delegation to the Russian Parliament to advise on the introduction of school governing bodies throughout the Russian Federation, and in 2004 undertook a lecture tour to South Africa under the aegis of the University of Pretoria, to share his experience of governance and good practice from the UK.

Related activities include acting as an inaugural panel member and judge for the National Teachers Awards, NCPTA Gold Star Awards and the National Clerks Awards.

Please note the change of date to 14 June 2008. To book a place please ring School Governor Service on 01274 385629.

THE ITEMS COVERED IN THIS ISSUE:

- > Discretionary School Transport Provision: Consultation
- > Education Strategy Group (ESG)
- > Guide to the Law for Governors
- > Admissions forum - Parent Governor vacancies
- > School Improvement Partners (SIPs) - Spring Term Visits to Primary Schools
- > Governing Body Data

> Bradford Black and Asian Governors Forum

> The Diana Award

> The Teaching Award 2008

> Governor Mark

> Governor Training Spring Term 2008

> National Training for Clerks to Governors

Governor Training Spring Term 2008

You still have time to book a place on the following courses. Unless otherwise stated the courses run 7.15 - 9.15pm at Future House.

- Ofsted Inspection & the SEF (9.30 - 11.30am):** Friday 22 February
- Governors Responsibilities for Personnel Issues:** Tuesday 26 February
- Role of the Named / Link Governor:** Thursday 28 February
- Role of Staff Governor (4.30 - 6.30pm):** Monday 3 March
- Role of Foundation Governor:** Thursday 6 March
- About Parent Governors (1.00 - 3.00pm):** Monday 10 March
- Role of Community & LA Governors:** Thursday 13 March



To book your place please ring School Governor Service on (01274) 385629 or e-mail school.governor@educationbradford.com

Notepad is a regular news sheet produced for all governors of schools throughout the Bradford District. It is intended to be a brief and cost effective way of providing all school governors with up-to-date information about services, local and regional activities, and training opportunities.

Notepad is compiled and produced by School Governor Service, Education Bradford, Future House, Bolling Road, Bradford, West Yorkshire, BD4 7EB. John Hesketh, Linda Townsend, Diane MacBairdy and Geoffrey Green are happy to provide any further information you may need about any item appearing in this issue. We can be contacted at the above address, Tel 01274 385629, Fax 01274 385624, e-mail: school.governor@educationbradford.com

School Governor Forums

Every governing body has the opportunity to appoint two representatives to attend the Governor Forums which take place in the second half of each term. The Forums were created to give an opportunity for governors to find out more about their statutory responsibilities and to learn about new initiatives both locally and nationally through presentations from a variety of teams within Education Bradford and Bradford Council. Presentations given recently have included: the Family Learning Team; School Funding and Target Setting. Items for future agendas include: Succession Planning and Head Teacher Recruitment; the new Early Years and Foundation

Stage Framework and an update on Building Schools for the Future (BSF).

As a result of discussions at the Governors Advisory Group (GAG) a questionnaire was sent to all Forum representatives towards the end of last term in order to ensure the Forums continue to be of value to governors. The responses have been collated and were discussed at the GAG meeting at the beginning of January. The future of the Forums will be an agenda item on the next round of Forums which take place at the end of February. For further information please ring School Governor Service on 01274 385629.

Discretionary School Transport Provision: Consultation

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 extended statutory entitlement to Free School Travel for children from low-income families and placed new duties on Local Authorities to consider the transport needs of all pupils. In response, Bradford Council is considering a number of proposed changes to discretionary entitlement within the School Transport Policy. In light of the new duties coupled with the Every Child Matters agenda, a range of discretionary options have been proposed and following Consultation running 4 February to 14 March 2008, Elected Members will decide on any amendment to the Policy.

The District wide consultation is being carried out to consider whether discretionary transport entitlement to the following pupils should be extended:-

- SEN and disabled pupils attending work experience placement, exams and school trips outside the normal school day
- children attending Primary Behaviour Units, TRACKS PRU and the Newlands Unit for pregnant school girls.
- children who travel to school from more than one parental address.

In order to fund the additional entitlement, the alteration or possible removal of free transport on religious/denominational grounds is proposed.

Letters of consultation have been sent to all faith schools, relevant bodies and elected members across the District outlining the proposals. Governors' comments, suggestions and ideas are welcomed.

Please contact Angela Ackroyd angela.ackroyd@bradford.gov.uk with your comments and views.

School Improvement Partners (SIPs): Spring Term Visits to Primary Schools

This term SIPs will visit schools to undertake the School Improvement Dialogue (SID). This is a discussion which takes place each year to determine the key strengths within the school and the progress that is being made in areas for development. As part of this discussion the school is placed in one of four categories of support. The report which is produced following this visit is copied to the Chair of Governors and during the summer term the SIP will attend a governors meeting to discuss it.

Details of the visits being made to schools are included in a letter sent to head teachers from the Head of Service, a copy of which can be found on www.bradfordschools.net

The Diana Award

What is the Diana Award?

The Diana Award recognises the selfless and positive contributions made by tens of thousands of young people to their schools, communities, families or friends. The UK Government's Memorial Committee, chaired by Gordon Brown, founded the Award in 1999 as a prestigious and lasting celebration of the late Princess Diana and her work.

Diana Award Holders raise money for charity and get involved in campaigns. They care for family members and those who are less able to fend for themselves. They overcome their own, often grave, personal difficulties and still find the strength and enthusiasm to give that little bit extra to their schools and communities.

You will find examples of Award Holders' outstanding work on the website but, as a rule, if a young person makes a positive and significant impact on other people's lives, they will almost certainly be eligible for this unique Award.

To find out who is eligible for an award, for further information and to download a nomination form please go to <http://www.diana-award.org.uk>



Education Strategy Group (ESG)

The ESG provides the forum for key stakeholders, including parents, head teachers, governors, and school staff, to engage with the Council in shaping education policy for the district.

The ESG is chaired by Donna Pankhurst, chair of a secondary school governing body. Cllr Colin Gill the Executive Member, and Kath Tunstall the Strategic Director of Services for Children and Young People attend meetings and ensure that views are taken back into Council decision making bodies.

The ESG is committed to taking their debate to the wider public, in the form of a series of "Big Conversations" on the things that matter most in the district. The emphasis is on group discussion

and everyone making a contribution.

You are welcome to attend the next two events, which will look at:

The Local Authority's strategy for different types of schools (including Academies, Trust schools, Federations)

On Tuesday 4 March 2008, 4.30pm, The Banqueting Suite, City Hall, Bradford BD1 1HY

Social Cohesion

Tuesday 13 May, 4.30pm Beckfoot School, Wagon Lane, Bingley, BD16 1EE

Please contact Jackie Walters 01274 431933 or email Jessica.bromwich@bradford.gov.uk to book a place at these events or for more information.

Guide to the Law for Governors

The new edition of the Guide to the Law is now available. 15 copies of the CD-Rom will be sent to each school to be distributed to all governors and the clerk to governors during the first two weeks of February. If your school requires additional copies these can be ordered by the school through prolog. If your school does not receive the new guide please contact Steve Jones at the DCSF: steve.jones@dcsf.gov.uk Once you receive your new version of the CD Rom please destroy the old one.

Governing Body Data

The Governing Body Checklist is sent to all clerks to governors each year to enable them to record compliance of the governing body with statutory duties. Thank you to clerks who returned the checklist for their school. The checklists show that an increased number of governing bodies now have a clear process in place for clerking committees. However, they also show that many governing bodies are not compliant with their legal responsibilities in the following areas:

- Agreeing terms of reference for all committees - this should be done at the first meeting of each school year and in addition to being a statutory requirement enables roles to be clarified
- Reviewing the School's Pay Policy - this should be done on an annual basis to enable clarity of decision making
- Conducting an annual pay review for all teaching staff - teaching staff should receive a pay statement in the autumn term each year detailing any pay changes
- Appointing performance management governors

Each of the above is included in the recommended schedule of meetings in the Briefing Notes which are sent to all clerks, head teachers, chairs and Forum representatives on a termly basis. The Briefing Notes also provide more detailed information on any changes to legislation together with recommended actions for governing bodies. They are also available on our website: www.educationbradford.com/governors.

Admission Forum - Parent Governor Vacancies

The Admission Forum plays a key role in ensuring a fair admissions system that promotes clear and easily understood admission arrangements for all maintained primary and secondary schools in the Bradford district. The Forum is responsible for monitoring compliance with the School Admissions Code of Practice and considers how to deal with difficult admission issues and ways in which

admission arrangements can be improved.

The Forum meets around once a term and is made up of head teachers, governors, LA representatives, CE and RC diocese and community representatives. There are currently two vacancies for Parent Governors (who can represent any primary or secondary school) and two vacancies for

voluntary-aided representatives (which must be either a head teacher or governor, but not a governor appointed by the local authority).

If you are interested in representing your school on the Admission Forum, please contact Val Jordan, Admissions Manager, Education Bradford on 01274 385607 or email val.jordan@educationbradford.com

Bradford Black and Asian Governors Forum

The next Forum will take place on 17 April at Future House from 6.00 - 8.00pm. Please contact School governor Service to reserve a place. Jani Rashid will lead an item on Community Cohesion. To book a place please ring School Governor Service on 01274 385629 or email school.governor@educationbradford.com

The Teaching Awards 2008

The Teaching Awards is an annual celebration of teaching and learning. You can nominate a school (nomination for the DCSF Teaching Award for Sustainable Schools), teachers, head teachers, teaching assistants and school governors for a Teaching Award and anyone can nominate.

The DCSF award for School Governance acknowledges the vital role that governors play within the whole school community and is open to all school governors. Do you know an outstanding governor? Go to www.teachingawards.com and make your nomination. Closing date for nominations is 1 March 2008.