

Governor Mark Assessor Newsletter



governance, leadership and management

...achieving excellence in schools

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First Primary School achieves Governor Mark

We offer our congratulations to Crosshall Infants School, St Neots in Cambridgeshire, which is the first primary school in the country to achieve the Governor Mark award.

The assessor for Crosshall Infants said: 'The Governing Body is a major influence on leadership within the school....quality of provision is a driving force for this governing body.'

Other key features of the assessment included:

- There are high levels of trust;
- Target setting is rigorous with clear GB involvement;
- Individual governors lead by example;
- The GB is committed to self review;
- There is high commitment and a good team culture.

Impact statements showed very significant engagement with the SEF and school

improvement plan, good development of the learning environment, and good use of data by the GB to question and challenge staff.

As an example of best practice, this governing body has a **highly effective clerk** who acts as a fulcrum for all GB organisational processes. The Clerk has also been influential in supporting new governors.

No governing body is perfect and this GB will be seeking to strengthen their medium and long term financial planning as well as some aspects of monitoring progress made by children between the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1.

New date for Assessor Training

We have been receiving requests for some time to hold further training events for potential Governor Mark Assessors. Our hesitation has arisen from the need to be sensitive to assessors already in place who have not yet been deployed.

Nevertheless we are holding an Assessor Training day in Bristol on Monday 10th November, and we have had interest in this from colleagues in Wales, where as yet we have no assessor in place. As before, the event will be led by Gail Tatcher from TQMI and the cost is £375 per place.

If you are aware of others who would benefit from this event, please ask them to be in touch with us at info@glmpartnership.org.

Our intention is that existing assessors will be offered Governor Mark work before any new recruits.

Are you out there?

Assessors will have been contacted during the summer term asking for confirmation of contact details etc. **Nearly half of you have not yet replied.** We are anxious to maintain good communications with you because while applications may be slow at the moment, this will not always be so.

Top Tips for Governing Bodies

- Make the strategic impact of the governing body the central focus of the application - do more work on this than anything else;
- Go out of your way to show the governing body steering the application process and not the head teacher;
- Engagement of the governing body as a whole with the SEF and school improvement carries more weight than committed individuals who visit the school;
- If data (e.g. RAISE online) shows anomalies or issues, this is not a problem. Having no minutes showing governors talking about them, however, is a problem.

2009 Conference for Governor Mark Assessors

We are pleased to confirm details for this event. It will take place at Bermuda Park Innovation Centre, Nuneaton, Warwickshire, on **Friday 23rd January 2009**. This event is free to registered Governor Mark assessors, but **booking is essential**.

The Draft Programme

- 10.00 Welcome
- 10.15 **How was it for you?** - delegates sharing experiences of engagement with governing bodies who are working with Governor Mark, drawing out lessons. Those assessors in attendance who have had the opportunity to carry out an assessment will be asked to prepare a very short summary of their view of the process and impact.
- 11.15 Break
- 11.45 **Where next for the Standards?** - presentation and discussion. Colleagues will have been asked to think about ideas to move the Governor Mark award forward during November and December. Suggestions and proposals collected will inform this session and will be circulated beforehand. Our aim is to come to shared values and vision for the next stage of Governor Mark.
- 1.00 Lunch
- 1.45 **Evaluating Governance** - This workshop will use examples of Governor Mark applications to develop skills in analysing the quality of governance and the questions and approach that a subsequent assessment will need.
- 2.45 Refreshments
- 3.00 **Professional development** - How can I be a more effective Governor Mark Assessor?
- 4.00 Close of the day

Influences

During the next six months Governor Mark will be subject to a review, in consultation with all of you, our assessors. This is to further encourage governing bodies to engage with the Standards, as well as sharpening its impact. Three issues in particular are already having an influence.

- First, the **Ministerial Review Group on Governance**, one of whose areas of concern is the need to strengthen the strategic impact of governing bodies;
- Secondly, the **Financial Management Standards in Schools (FMSIS)**, whose impact has been to challenge governing bodies on their processes, such as agendas, terms of reference and other areas of statutory compliance. This may give scope to reduce the focus on these processes within the Governor Mark assessment.
- Thirdly, of course we have **developing experience** as more governing bodies are assessed. This shows the developmental impact of going for the award, particularly in the governing body's strategic role.

NEWS

There is a slight amendment to the application process. We now request all applications to be forwarded electronically, as we will no longer be able to process applications by hard copy. The list of documents required is:

- Application/contacts
- Evidence grid
- Impact statements
- RAISE online report
- SEF
- Date of last Ofsted visit

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