

# Governor Mark Assessor Newsletter



...achieving excellence in schools

No. 2

March / April 2008

## The First Governor Mark Award

On 6 February Banbury School received its assessment visit, and we are delighted to say that this governing body is the first in the country to receive Governor Mark.

This is a governing body that is hugely committed and supportive of the school. In particular they led a consultation to transform the image of the school through the introduction of a new uniform (see photo on the right). This included the setting aside of funds to provide a new blazer for every student.

The impact on morale, behaviour and pride in

the school since its introduction in September 2007 has been huge.

Improving behaviour is a development area for the school, and this is a really good example of a governing body's impact on school improvement.

Other exemplary work includes governor visits and leading of assemblies, a really good governor handbook, and the setting of tough targets to push things further forward.

This is a good but not perfect governing body. Governor Mark has raised areas for improve-



ment, in particular the engagement of the governing body as a whole with ongoing improvement priorities.

Nevertheless the award is well deserved and the Governing Body at Banbury are to be congratulated.

### Don't wait for Governor Mark to come to you!

Whilst we are pleased to see the first award, it is of course just one! We are aware of other schools whose evidence-gathering is well underway.

However, with over 70 of you as trained assessors up and down the country, and perhaps wondering if you will ever be asked to make an assessment, we are working hard to get the award widely known.

Publicity will help, but is not enough. The most powerful recommendation will be from schools that have achieved the award and found it to be developmental.

You can help us. By raising the profile of Governor Mark with schools you are working with, its value will become more widely appreciated and more schools will start to work with the Standards.

There are ways in which you as a trained assessor can help a school prepare their application. Whilst you would not then do the assessment of a school you have worked with, assessors will become active more quickly, and such consultancy is something schools will pay for. Examples of what can be done can be found on page 2

## Working with Governing Bodies on Governor Mark

Many of you are already engaged with training of governing bodies as a local authority governor services co-ordinator.

Others have opportunities to deliver governor training independently, and can also offer support as a consultant.

These are two strings you can add to your bow that will provide topics for in-house training or support, either within a service level agreement, or as a piece of work commissioned by a school.

These tools also will strengthen your knowledge of the framework, and increase the use of the standards.

### Preparing for Governor Mark - Stage 1

First, for a governing body who are thinking of taking on Governor Mark, a trainer or consultant can use part of the framework as a self evaluation tool.

Attached with this newsletter is an example using Section 7 ('Strengths and Weaknesses'), which contains some brief guidance helping a governing body get a feel for what they need to do.

### Preparing for Governor Mark - Stage 2

Secondly, once a governing body is nearing completion they are likely to benefit from a trained assessor going through their evidence and offering guidance as to whether the standard has been reached, and what more needs to be done. We know that some schools would wish to commission this guidance to be sure they will make the grade under formal assessment.

Clearly Governor Mark is a demanding award, and it will take some time for a school to prepare their submission. These are ways we can and should help them.

## Impact Statement on School Improvement - a Key Area

We have been able to engage with several schools in the early roll out of Governor Mark, and there are some lessons. If Governor Mark is about impact, and these are governing bodies of good schools, it stands to reason that the Impact Statement on School Improvement may represent the biggest challenge.

This is important because there are many schools that do outstanding work on school improvement and are disappointed that they are not entitled to apply for the award.

Examples of how this issue affects a Governor Mark assessment include:

- Governing bodies not seeing the RAISEonline report from their school, i.e. they see data provided from within the school only;
- Key issues for Action (e.g Standards at KS3) not appearing as discussion at GB meetings, either main meetings or committees;
- Good work on school improvement going on in a committee, but not included in the Impact Statement.

If you have the opportunity to help a governing body prepare for an assessment, you can use the training and consultancy tools referred to above. The purpose of Governor Mark is to see governance improve and these are steps we can take to help this happen.

Welcome to the second Governor Mark Assessor Newsletter. If you have not received the first one, it can be accessed on our website at [www.glmpartnership.org](http://www.glmpartnership.org); contact by email is through [gmmckay@aol.com](mailto:gmmckay@aol.com)