

Issue 5 – September 2010

News from the Leadership & Governance Team

Governor Briefings

The format for briefings for Link Governors and Chairs of Governors will be changing in the autumn term, see the separate e-TNG “Governor Briefings” or the county council website;

www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/schoolgovernors for more information.

Governor Training

The details of the forthcoming governor training schedule for the spring term are now available on the county council website:

www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/schoolgovernors

Please note that all scheduled training for the spring term will be delivered at **Britannia House in Northampton:**

Rushmills
Bedford Rd
Northampton
NN4 7YB

This is a county council building which is an ideal training facility, centrally located in the county offering refreshments, comfortable training rooms and easy parking for all delegates. “In-house” governor training can still be delivered at your school, at your request.

Director’s Annual Address

The Director of the Children and Young People’s Service (CYPS); Paul Burnett, is hosting the Director’s Annual Address at

7pm on Thursday 18th November at Britannia House in Northampton.

This event will be a great opportunity to hear the Director’s key priorities for the 2010/2011 academic year and the progress and improvement of schools in the county.

Awards

The event will also be an opportunity to recognise the work of governors throughout Northamptonshire. We are now offering you the chance to nominate governors who you feel have made an exceptional contribution to their school and have gone the extra mile in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities.

Nominations

If you’d like to nominate a governor, please send your submissions to the Leadership & Governance team:

governors@northamptonshire.gov.uk stating the name of the governor, the school they support and why you think they are deserving of recognition, please send your submissions by Friday 5th November.

More Information

There’s more information about this event in the Director’s Annual Report to Governors - Autumn term 2010 and on the county council web site:
www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/schoolgovernors

Becoming an Academy

Northamptonshire School for Boys (NSB) became the first school in Northamptonshire to take advantage of the Academies Act 2010 and became an Academy on 10th August.



CPD - Continuous Professional Development

Please find below the link to the CPD pages on the county council website. All the training courses for governors, teachers and practitioners for the spring term 2011 are now available via this link.

www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/cpdlasi

Governor pages – NCC website

Governors are often directed to the governor service web pages on the county council's website. The Leadership & Governance team are pleased to inform you that many governors are obviously using this route to obtain information.

In July there were over 11,000 hits on the governor pages, compared to over 5,000 hits in April. As a comparison, other pages in July generated the following hits:

- CPD Directory = 15,226
- Early Years & Childcare Directory = 4,941
- Renew your library book = 4,670
- Bus timetables = 5,562

The Leadership & Governance team is planning to include more information and latest news on the governor web pages so keep

www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/governorserVICES as one of your "favourites" when accessing the internet.

Libraries as a source of information

Please note that hard copies of governor communications such as "The Northamptonshire Governor" and the "Directors Report to Governors" will no longer be produced. All communication will therefore be electronic.

If you have colleagues or governors who have no means of accessing information electronically at home, it's possible for them to access the local authority website and e-mails via their local library. Library staff will be happy to help them connect and even set up their own e-mail address if they need help in doing this.

Schools

All of our electronic communication is also available to download from the governor pages on the county council's website. If you or a colleague are not able to do this at home, or are not within easy reach of a library, then colleagues at your school will be able to print off a hard copy as required.

Please note, if you are planning to change your e-mail address please inform us at governors@northamptonshire.gov.uk to continue to receive information from the Leadership & Governance team.

This term's jargon buster – "Quorum"

The quorum for a meeting of the governing body and its committees is the minimum number of their members who must, by law, be present before the meeting can begin or continue. Governing bodies and their committees should expect to achieve a better attendance than this minimum. The teamwork of the governing body and its committees is liable to be reduced if a substantial proportion of their members are not associated with their decisions.

Inclusion Review

There are four events planned for September for head teachers and chairs of governors:

- Sept 23rd :4pm - 6pm
Sanders Gate, Wellingborough



- Sept 28th : 4pm - 6pm
Riverside House, Towcester
- Sept 29th :10am - 11-30am
Sturtridge suite, Northampton Saints
rugby ground, Northampton
- Sept 30th 10am - 11-30am Firdale
PDC, Corby

These events are the ideal opportunity to feedback on the Inclusion Review and its proposals. For more information, contact Anne Hodson, SEN Policy Strategy & Performance Manager, e-mail: ahodson@northamptonshire.gov.uk

Do you work with an outstanding Governing Body or Clerk?

Every two years the National Governors' Association (NGA) runs national awards for outstanding school governance. Two awards are run by the NGA: the Clerks' Award and the Governing Body Award. The Clerks' Award has been offered bi-annually since 2002/3, and the award for Governing Body began in 2008/9.

The awards aim to celebrate good school governance and spread examples of best practice throughout the school governor community. Don't let great work go unnoticed! NGA wants to thank good governors for their time and efforts in contributing to school improvement. The nominators of short-listed applicants will be invited to a prestigious national awards ceremony in March 2011. For more information on how to apply, see www.nga.org.uk (and click on the Awards tab) or e-mail awards@nga.org.uk

The closing date for entries is 15 November.

Faith Schools – Succession Planning

The Diocese of Peterborough is offering training and advice sessions for aspiring heads considering applying for a post in a Church of England school – please pass this information on to colleagues in school who may be considering leadership in the future in a faith school.

The session will cover key areas such as: *What's different about a C. E. School?; Do I have to be an Anglican?; Why is there an extra inspection?; What might happen on the interview / selection day?* This session is designed to provide information and dispel myths about being the Head of a C. E. School, for those considering Headship, whether currently in a church school or not. It will be led by Peter Goringe, who is an ex-Church School Head.

There are two sessions planned – each session is identical:
Wednesday 17th November – Peterborough
4pm-6pm
Wednesday 24th November – Northampton
4pm-6pm

For more information on course content, locations, booking procedure and cost, please call the Diocesan Education Office on 01604 887006 or click on www.peterborough-education.org.uk

Internal Audit of Primary Schools

Throughout 2009/10 the county council's audit team visited twenty primary schools in Northamptonshire.

They were chosen according to criteria based on pupil numbers and whether or not they had previously been subject to an audit.

Objectives

To assess that controls were in place to ensure compliance with statutory and Local Authority requirements and whether systems were in place to ensure that the costs of payroll were monitored and controlled.

Approach

The audit findings were summarised as a brief report which could then be presented to governors – its recommended that you check with your school to determine whether they were subject to the audit and the outcome of this.

Conclusions

The audit established that the control over Personnel and Payroll in the schools visited was not adequate. Here are a few of the key weaknesses identified :

Governance of personnel and payroll;

Appropriate terms of reference were not in place for all committees dealing with personnel issues.

Some schools had not formally set out which responsibilities for staffing were delegated to the Head Teacher.

A Pay Policy was not always in place.

Some schools did not have Safer

Recruitment training certificates on file.

Evidencing of pre-employment checks:

A “Disclosure of Criminal Conviction” form was not held on file for all new employees.

CRB clearance was not confirmed for all new staff before their start date;

List 99 checks were not completed for all new employees whose CRB clearance had not been confirmed.

Two references were not obtained for all new employees.

Schools did not always check that new employees had received medical clearance.

Main recommendations

Improvements are required as many of the areas where weaknesses were identified are contained within the Financial Management Standards, the Safer Recruitment Initiative and Northamptonshire County Council’s HR Policy.

If you would like support with ensuring that your school is meeting its statutory obligations in this respect you should contact your HR provider. If you buy back your HR support from the County Council then your HR Advisor will be happy to arrange a “health check” for you.

And finally...

Don’t forget to make full use of the hyperlinks within the newsletter to access more information.

You can also view our web pages – School Governors. If you need any help or advice please contact us on 01604 365087 or governors@northamptonshire.gov.uk

