

News from Leadership & Governance: September 2011

In this edition:

- Letter from the Director
- Northamptonshire Local Safeguarding Children Board
- Jargon Buster
- Revised Early Years Foundation Framework
- School Profile
- Community Cohesion
- Internal Audit of Primary Schools
- Volunteer Reading Help
- Agenda items for the Autumn Governing Body meetings



Letter from the Director

I originally joined Northamptonshire County Council in 2008 lured by a sense that something different was happening in the county. Since then, I cannot believe how far we have come. The determination and professionalism of colleagues across the organisation has been a real inspiration. We have tackled some really difficult issues and we are now in the process of delivering the most challenging budget in our history, but by always focussing on what is best for our residents, we have helped to make Northamptonshire County Council one of the best in the country.

So, next we need to become far more nimble and savvy and not be afraid to take risks – where appropriate. My role in all of this is simple: to do everything I can to ensure we deliver the best services possible – first time and every time.

As the new lead for the Customers, Communities and Learning Directorate I look forward to meeting as many school governors as possible during the course of the academic year and wish you all success in your forthcoming terms.

I therefore hope to welcome you to the forthcoming “Director’s Address” on Thursday 17th November. This will be an ideal opportunity for me to share with you my plans and objectives for schools for the forthcoming year and also hear your views and responses to changes in education and resources.

Your dedication to the voluntary role of school governor is not only appreciated by myself and my team, but most importantly by the children in your schools who benefit from your commitment, wise decisions and the unfailing support you give.

Alex Hopkins
 Director of Customers, Communities and Learning

Northamptonshire Local Safeguarding Children Board

A recommendation from a recent audit of referrals relates to the use of Northamptonshire’s Multi Agency Referral Form. Any child protection referrals (Level 4 – Northamptonshire Vulnerability Matrix and Threshold Criteria) made to Northamptonshire County Council Initial Contacts Team should be made on the Multi Agency Referral Form (copy attached).

The Initial Contacts Team details for referrals and advice:

E-mail: CYPSSinitialcontacts@northamptonshire.gov.uk

Call: 0300 126 1006

If you require an urgent response, and phone lines are busy, please e-mail and mark your referral ‘Urgent – Level 4’. Out of Hours Team: 01604 626938

Northamptonshire Local Safeguarding Children Board Child Protection Inter-Agency Procedures can be found at: www.lscbnorthamptonshire.org.uk

- Northamptonshire Integrated Working Procedures (including Vulnerability Matrix and Threshold Criteria) has a direct link on the home page
- Multi Agency Referral Form (paper and on-line copies) has a link on home page via ‘Reporting Concerns’ box

Your local contact is:

<p>Jill Sneddon Operational LADO Senior Education Welfare Officer/Safeguarding Adult and Children’s Services William Knibb Centre Kettering Tel; 01604 361384</p>	<p>Christine Churchman Operational LADO Senior Education Welfare Officer/Safeguarding Adult and Children’s Services Century House Northampton Tel: 01604 364022</p>
---	---

Jargon Buster “Reception Year”

This is the introductory year in primary school. Some children enter Reception Year in September, aged four. Others start in January or April, aged five and complete one or two terms before moving to Year 1. Some children start off with half day sessions. In state primary school Reception Year classes there must be one adult for every 13 children.

Revised Early Years Foundation Framework: Core Purpose of Children's Centres

On Thursday 6 July the Department for Education (DfE) made two announcements in relation to early years education. The first was a consultation on the new Early Years Foundation Framework. This revision follows the recommendations in the [Tickell Review](#). The EYFS Framework is a formal consultation with a closing date of 30 September 2011. The full consultation documents can be found via the attached link - [EYFS Framework Consultation](#)

At the same time the DfE has also published a discussion paper on what it thinks is the core purpose of Children's Centres. The DfE's view is that establishing a core purpose – which it thinks should be focussed on:

Improving outcomes for young children and their families, with a particular focus on the most disadvantaged families, in order to reduce inequalities in:

- child development and school readiness;

Supported by improved:

- parenting aspirations, self esteem and parenting skills;
- child and family health and life chances.

The full document and DfE statement can be viewed via the attached link - [DfE Core Purpose Documents](#) This is a discussion document rather than a formal consultation so although there is an online form to send views it does not have a three month deadline.

DfE School Profile - still exists in theory

Following numerous enquires from governing bodies, we'd like to take this opportunity to confirm that the completion of the School Profile IS STATUTORY - Ofsted's view is that The School Profile has replaced the annual meeting for parents and the governors' annual report for parents.

All schools must publish a school profile. Non maintained schools / independent school and academies are not required to complete one and will not be able to log to the secure School Profile website. However only 30% of schools have published a Profile at any time and the DfE is reviewing its policy. The facility to write profiles does still exist and there is still a link via Schools Finder.

All maintained schools except nurseries therefore need to publish a School Profile designed to communicate a school's progress, priorities and performance to the parents. At least one update per academic year is recommended.

Parents can get access to Schools Finder - so it is publicly visible, but remember it does not look good if there is a published version but it is a couple of years old or not complete at all. Governors can access the

site via <http://schoolsfinder.direct.gov.uk/>

Schools can log in via <https://schoolprofile.teachernet.gov.uk/> If schools cannot remember their password, they can click on the link <https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/Account/RequestNewPassword>

Community Cohesion

Following enquires from schools, we have included the guidance from the Guide to the Law for Governors, which is available to download from the Department for Education's website: www.education.gov.uk

67. The Education and Inspections Act 2006 placed a duty on the governing bodies of maintained schools to promote community cohesion. The duty came into effect in September 2007. Alongside this, Ofsted has inspected schools' contributions to promoting community cohesion since September 2008.

68. In July 2007 the Government published non-statutory guidance for schools on the duty to promote community cohesion. The guidance defines community cohesion and outlines the role for schools in promoting community cohesion, describing the work that many schools already do to promote it as examples of good practice. The duty to promote community cohesion links closely with the duty to promote well-being and in particular with the "making a positive contribution" and "achieving economic well-being" Every Child Matters outcomes. The guidance also suggests how schools can encourage community cohesion through teaching and learning, raising the attainment of all pupils and providing a means for children, young people and their families to interact with people from different backgrounds.

Internal Audit of Primary Schools

As part of the 2011/12 Audit Plan a thematic audit was undertaken on Governance and Financial Management in Primary Schools during the period March to April 2011. It is recognised that schools have local management however the local authority needs to be aware of how well schools comply with legislation, Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) policies and guidance issued to them.

The audit was performed by visiting each selected school for one day. Discussions were held with the Head teacher and the Bursar and records examined in the school. The findings were discussed with the Head teacher and the Bursar at the conclusion of the audit and agreed in principle. A short summary report was drafted which could then be presented to the Governors. Fifteen schools were visited in 2011, this is a reduction from 20 schools in 2010.

Conclusions

Whilst it is recognised that specific areas of Governance Procedures and Policies, Financial Management, Insurance, Personnel and Health Safety have improved since the 2010/11 audit, the 2011 audit established that the control over Governance and Financial Management in the schools audited was still not adequate in some areas, particularly in relation to Health and Safety matters. This is disappointing particularly as schools have been encouraged during the current year to complete their own self assessments by using the templates on the internet developed by Internal Audit to check their Internal Controls. However, the direction of travel does appear to show consistent improvements.

Volunteer Reading Help - raising literacy standards in Northants

VRH is a national charity that has been working with schools since 1973 to offer children one-to-one literacy support through trained volunteers from their local community. They work with over 50 primary schools in the Northamptonshire area and would like to encourage more to contact them about their service, as they have volunteers trained and ready to place this term.

They work closely with the Local Authority on specific projects in the area, including a current pilot to work with Looked After Children who are at risk of falling behind with their reading. They have also set up partnerships where secondary schools are sponsoring feeder primary schools to sign up to

their service to support children who lack reading confidence in year six, ready for their transition to secondary school. In Daventry, the Extended Services Team is helping to fund the scheme in their primary schools.

Whether you would like to apply as an individual school for their support, or find out more about the projects listed above, they'd like to hear from you. Their service leaflet is attached for more information on their scheme or you can visit their website at www.vrh.org.uk Alternatively please call Chris Thomas, Manager of the Northamptonshire branch on 0845 450 0338.

Agenda items for the 2011 Autumn Governing Body meetings

For a list of agenda items, simply go www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/schoolgovernors click on the section headed "Clerks" and under the heading, "Latest News" click on "Agenda items for the Autumn term agenda 2011"

Communication

Can you please help us to keep all governors informed by cascading this newsletter or directing them to the governor pages on the county council website www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/schoolgovernors Don't forget to make full use of the hyperlinks within the newsletter to access more information.

Leadership & Governance team

Support and assistance is just a phone call away. The Leadership & Governance team is available to help from 9am-5pm, Monday-Friday.

Call on 01604 365087

e-mail: governors@northamptonshire.gov.uk

Rose Kinley: Principal Improvement Manager- Leadership & Governance

Martin Lawrence: School Governance Advisor

Esther Bushell: School Governance & Workforce Development Advisor

Teresa Elkin: Governor Training Co-ordinator

Diane Woliter: Recruitment, Retention & Trainee Teacher Advisor

Lesley Eldridge: NQT, AST & Lead Teacher Co-ordinator

Mark Pevy: Governor Trainer

Vicki Snook: Senior Administrator

Jane Hall: Governance Administrator

Sally Holmes: Clerking Administrator

Training courses and bookings: cpd@northamptonshire.gov.uk

Please Note

Information contained in this issue of The Northamptonshire Governor was correct at the time of publication.

Please be aware that things are currently changing on a frequent basis.

Editorial team

The Northamptonshire Governor is published by the Leadership & Governance team at Northamptonshire County Council and edited by Teresa Elkin and colleagues in the team. The editorial team reserve the right to edit any submitted material. The articles printed and views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Leadership & Governance team. Items are accurate to the best of our knowledge but we do not take responsibility for any errors in information provided to us for inclusion. Unless specially stated, all the contents of this newsletter are copyright to the Customers, Communities and Learning Directorate.