

Stop Press

Two pieces of information for passing to your Governing Bodies and Headteachers.

- *School Performance Information*

The summary page of "Improving Performance Step by Step" will not be available until after Easter as there has been a delay in the QCA providing validated 2002 Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 results to LEAs. Although the overall school results have been published, the LEA needs the individual pupil results in order to calculate percentages at higher levels and gender splits, etc. In the meantime, the provisional figures, along with other performance data, can be accessed on the internet by going to www.norfolkesinet.org.uk and, from the left-hand column, selecting "School Management", then "School Management Resources". The site is protected by a password, which is available from the Headteacher. Mrs Chris Jackson, Management Information Centre.

- *New Compositions of Governing Bodies.*

At the time of writing this newsletter, we are still awaiting the guidance from the Department for Education and Skills, concerning the compositions of Governing Bodies under the new Education Act. Latest information indicates it will be May before we receive the official guidance. Please pass this information on to your Governing Bodies and the Headteacher so that they are aware of the situation. We will send out the information as soon as possible, after we have received it.

The *Norfolk Parent Partnership Service* has updated their information pack for parents of children with special educational needs. All schools will receive two copies of the pack. Please look out for these as one pack is for the governors. If you require additional copies or individual booklets please telephone Elizabeth Fletcher at the Parent Partnership Service on 01603 281044 or visit their website at www.norfolkparentpartnership.org.uk

Celebrating Susan's success

Susan Smith, Clerk to the Governing Body of Sprowston High School, deserves a round of applause. You may remember reading in the last Clerk's Newsletter about the NAGM Award for Outstanding Clerks. Susan's name was entered for the award and she was 'absolutely astonished' to be chosen as the Eastern Regional finalist. Susan says that Clerks (and

their Governors) are such committed people that it is wonderful that their hard work is being acknowledged

and that something like this just enhances everyone's self-esteem. A representative from NAGM has recently visited the School to interview both Susan and the Chair of Governors and to inspect the paperwork for the Governing Body. The finalists will be chosen before the end of March. There were over 500 nominations nationwide with a number from Norfolk. A report on an interview with Susan can be seen below.

Interview With Susan

Susan first became a minuting secretary at Sprowston High School in September 1995 and became the Clerk to the Governors when the Bursar at the school retired in 1996. Susan reports that when she first became a clerk she soon found out where she could get help. She used the Governor Support Service helpline and found that she learnt a lot of tips from attending the clerk's training sessions.

Susan says that the most important aspects of the Clerk's role is to build up a good relationship with all the governors, especially the Chair and the Headteacher. The part of the role she enjoys most is the help she can give to governors by making things easier for them. She does this by being very organised. Susan has also attended governor training sessions to make sure she is well-informed about current issues etc. (The Governor Support Service would be very pleased for clerks to attend any of the training courses on offer).

Susan's advice to a new clerk is 'Don't Worry' and 'Ask'. There are always a lot of people around who will be pleased to help a new clerk, such as the Chair of Governors, Headteacher and (of course) The Governor Support Service (thank you, Susan, for that plug).

TOP TIP

It seems appropriate this time to take our top tip from Susan. At each full governing body meeting there is an agenda item which is the 'clerk's slot'. This is the time for reminders about dates of committee meetings which are coming up, anything in the school that governors might enjoy attending, informing them of new governor documents that have arrived in the school, and a chat about training needs and training feedback. Thank you Susan for this 'Top Tip'.

Sorry about the cancellation

The Governor Support Service very reluctantly had to cancel a course recently because not enough governors booked on it to make it feasible to run. Information received later indicated that several governors intended

to come along to the course on the night, without prior booking. This is a bit of a 'chicken and egg' dilemma. Governors cannot attend the course if it is not running and it cannot run if not enough governors are booked on it. Please be sure that governors DO BOOK the courses they would like to attend. Details of where to book are at the end of this newsletter.

New Procedures for Governing Bodies

We have not received information concerning the new Procedures for Governing Bodies. The consultation stage has been carried out so we hope it will not be too long before we receive the final version. This is to give you prior warning that we are expecting a deregulation of the procedure for electing the Chair and Vice-Chair. We would suggest that an item be placed on the agenda for the Summer Term meeting to enable the governors to consider and agree how they would like to carry out their election of chair and vice chair.

The Annual Report to Parents

The Governor Support Service would again like to receive copies of the Annual Reports to Parents. Although there is no prize this year there will still be a competition to pick the best ones in the Primary and Secondary phases. The winners will have the pleasure of knowing what a 'good job' they did and we will be able to share the winning entries with any schools looking for examples of good practice. Please send your entries to Sue Platt, Development Officer, Governor Support Service (address at the end of this newsletter) or e-mail them to sue.platt.edu@norfolk.gov.uk by the 31 May 2003.

Reminder No. 1

A governor of a school who also works in that school cannot become Chair of the Governing Body nor chair any of the committee meetings.

Governing Body Self Review

By now, you should have received copies of the Governing Body Self Review document. Following the success of the school self review process, it was thought to be a useful and a natural extension to involve governing bodies in the process, by providing a self evaluation framework for them. It will be a useful tool in helping each governing body to evaluate its own effectiveness. The new School Self Review form includes a grade for school governance and the self review tool is intended to assist governors to agree a grade for the overall effectiveness of the governing body. It is hoped that the whole governing body will take part in the self review process. It is intended to be supportive and should not take longer than one meeting. If, following the self review process, governing

bodies need support then the Governor Support Service will be happy to discuss the matter. We can also assist in helping Governing Bodies to draw up individual governing body development plans, based on the issues identified from the self-review process.

Reminder No: 2

The Governor Support Service suggests that, during the late Spring or early Summer, governing bodies would be well advised to review the membership of the group of governors appointed to carry out the review of the head's performance. The governing body is then in a position to take action to fill places, in advance, where these are likely to occur. The names of the appointed governors will also be available for entering on to the booking form which is needed to request an external adviser.

Suggested agenda items for Summer Term

- Apologies for absence (list all those present at the meeting)
- Minutes of the last meeting
- Matters arising
- Correspondence
- Headteacher's Report
- Committee reports
- Approval of any budget revision (unless delegated to Finance Committee)
- Approval of School Fund Account
- Feedback from governor training
- Governing Body Self Review
- School based items (see list below)
- Election of Chair / Vice-chair of Governors (see earlier item)
- Any other business (not for lengthy discussion or vote)
- Date, time of next meeting

Additional items for inclusion:

review of: • OFSTED Action Plan • School Improvement Development Plan • Pay Policy • Performance Management Policy and its impact on pupil attainment • staff professional development • pupil attendance • the year's work of the governing body • governor training and consideration of future training needed.

report on agreed School Self-Review grade
summary of RDA note of visit
school prospectus
approval of Annual Report to Parents, where applicable.

Western Area Clerks' Association (WACA).

The Association is hosting a meeting on Tuesday 8 April at which Anne Genge, Adviser for Governor Effectiveness, will talk about the Governing Body Self Review Document. The meeting will be held at Greyfriars Primary School, London Road, King's Lynn and will start at 3.40 p.m. New clerks (or more experienced ones) in the west who are interested in joining the Association – please ring Michael Fillenham on 01553 764924.

To contact the Governor Support Service you can telephone 01603 433276. Ask for the Governor Support Service and/or the name of the person you wish to speak to (if you know it). Or you can:
Fax: 01603 700236 e-mail: governorsupport.edu@norfolk.gov.uk Website: www.norfolkesinet.org.uk
Post: Governor Support Service, Professional Development Centre, Woodside Road, Norwich, NR7 9QL