

Welcome ...

..to the third edition of the Hartlepool Governor. This time we feature new government guidance on the role of the clerk and include an article on the Tees Valley's museums partnership programme for schools entitled Making a Mark. In addition we have the usual updates and reminders for governors.



The Role of the Clerk

Following publication of its Competency Framework for Governance in January, the DfE has now produced a Clerking Competency Framework (April 2017). The DfE recognises that professional quality clerking is about much more than taking minutes to record the discussions and decisions of the board. It provides an invaluable contribution to the efficiency, effectiveness, productivity and compliance of the board. Professional quality clerking is critical to the effectiveness of a board in fulfilling its core functions of ensuring of ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction; holding executive leaders to account; and, overseeing financial performance of the school. It also provides governing boards with expert advice on governance, procedures and directly contributes to its efficient conduct.

Whilst governors who receive this newsletter will be serving on schools which currently buy into the LA's professional clerking service, several schools will appoint clerks to support some of their committees. The Clerking Competency Framework along with the DfE Governance Handbook provides useful guidance to support this role. The Framework highlights the role of the clerk in relation to the six key features of effective governance set out in the Governance Handbook including:

Strategic Leadership

- supports and challenges the chair to ensure the board focuses on strategic rather than operational matters.
- encourages the chair to ensure that meetings are planned efficiently over the course of the school year
- ensures that papers and reports are received in a timely manner and that minutes contain clear records of debate and decisions.

Accountability

- supports the board in holding executive leaders to account
- helps them identify information they require and questions to ask.

People

- supports the board to recruit, induct and train individuals with the right set of skills
- reports on vacancies and appointments and maintains comprehensive membership records
- encourages the maintenance of up to date skills audits and training records.

Structures

- ensures the board is properly constituted
- records the structure, membership and terms of reference of each committee
- helps the organisation to avoid lack of clarity or duplication that leads to ineffective governance
- provides impartial advice and support around appropriate governance structures and schemes of delegation

Compliance

- provides support to ensure compliance and understanding of consequences on non-compliance with relevant legal frameworks, contractual obligations and governance requirements. This includes ensuring proper procedures are followed and statutory policies are in place.

Evaluation

- provides an audit trail to contribute to any review of effectiveness of the board's governance including comprehensive minutes, records of attendance and actions taken to address skills gaps. https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/609971/Clerking_competency_framework.pdf



Meeting Dates for 2017-18

Although schools will be sharply focussed on exams and assessments at this time of year it is important to start planning ahead for the 2017-18 academic year. At this term's round of governing body meetings we will be encouraging governors to set their meeting dates for the whole of next year. This not only represents efficient forward planning but also helps ensure that schools can as far as possible secure their preferred dates for the services of the Governor Support Team.

Museums and Schools Programme

Since 2012 the national museums and schools programme has provided DfE funding to a partnership of museums across the Tees Valley including the Museum and Art Gallery in Hartlepool. The museums have developed a high quality set of programmes for schools. These support history projects from the Stone Age to the Saxons and key themes in Science, Geography, Art and English, all with a local flavour. This year nearly 6,000 students will have taken part in Making a Mark across the region.

Where we live and grow up plays a huge role in our lives. It doesn't just shape the opportunities we have, it forms part of our personalities and the way we understand the world. Whilst it's relatively easy to draw on students' every day experiences of their local neighbourhood to make sure that classroom learning in Maths or Geography is meaningful for them, it can be less easy for History. A key resource for teachers is their local museums, which can prove exciting, first-hand experiences for students to explore the significant events, stories and people of the immediate area's past. Making a Mark sessions are offered by all Tees Valley museums. For more information go to the Making a Mark website and chose a museum from the list on the right.

<http://www.npg.org.uk/whatson/makingamark/primary>

A recent edition of Primary History (Autumn 16) included an article on teaching local history featuring the Tees Valley museums and their free online resource for teachers. This term they have been working with local primary schools to develop a toolkit for using the online resources to create exhibitions in school. The free toolkit was made available from early May.

<http://www.npg.org.uk/whatson/makingamark/teaching-resources/>

Training Update

Governors have recently been sent details of an additional training session this term. Following feedback from the presentation at the autumn term briefing on emotional wellbeing, Jacqui Braithwaite and Dr Jennifer Gilling are hosting a half day workshop around '**What Constitutes an Emotionally Healthy School**'. The session will run from 9.30am to 12.00 noon on Thursday 22nd June at CETL.

Effective induction for new governors is essential in order to help them understand their role, feel valued by the school and provide effective support and challenge. We were extremely pleased that 41 new governors have attended our two induction sessions this year and we would like to remind those who attended of the follow-up sessions which are scheduled for 26th June (6.00 pm) and the 30th June (9.30am).

As well as formal training, induction should include support from the outset from the school and the

governing body. We are looking to issue further guidance around this shortly but as initial steps it is suggested that the Headteacher and Chair arrange to formally welcome a new governors with a introductory meeting and a walk around school, invite them to a governor meeting as an observer, prior to their formal appointment and perhaps appoint a governor mentor to help show them the ropes.

In Brief

Governor Recruitment

Still on the subject of governor recruitment, our Team has recently placed articles in the Hartlepool Enterprise News - an online newsletter for local businesses to encourage local business leaders to get involved in school governance. Any responses from this we will pass on to interested schools and academies.

National Funding Formula

Governors may have heard about the Government's intention to introduce a National Funding Formula from 2018-19. This will relate to core revenue funding for mainstream schools. There will be separate formulas to calculate Early Years and High Needs funding. The latest round of consultation was completed in March and at the time of publication the Government's response to this is still awaited. The Council's Finance Team is closely monitoring the situation and we hope to provide an update in the next newsletter.

Email Reminder

Schools are increasingly looking to cut down on paper work by emailing reports, policies and papers out to governors. Some schools also have secure governor sections on their websites where they post papers. It would help us enormously in supporting schools to reduce costs and also with our distribution of the newsletter, training and other information if you could let us have your email address and sign up to receive these electronically. Post your email address to:

governor.support@hartlepool.gov.uk

Hartlepool Schools Forum

We recently sent out invitations to governors of Maintained Primary schools for nominations to serve on the Hartlepool Schools Forum. Following this process, Chris Simmons has been appointed as the governor representative on the Forum with Andrew Millward acting as substitute.

Thank You

The Governor Support Team would like to thank you for your continued support to the service. We endeavour to maintain a high quality and responsive service to schools in accordance with the Competency Framework and your Service Level Agreement. We are also happy to look at other areas where schools may feel you need our support or guidance.