

The Duston School – Finalists in The National Governing Body of the Year for 2011

The governance of The Duston School is outstanding and is the result of the work of a successful IEB, including SLT. It provided excellent strategic support and challenged myself as head teacher and an already outstanding Senior Leadership Team in securing rapid school improvement. This led to substantially improved outcomes for the school, including higher levels of attainment and achievement and a higher quality of provision. Together with the Senior Team, the IEB developed a clear vision for the future of the school, with an innovative approach to a new model of governance, which has been implemented within a Trust Status. The transition stage was highly successful in maintaining the momentum for change.

The governance of the school is a role model for this county, and even nationally. We are keen to share the good practice of this school and nominating this school for this award will further promote this aspiration. The governors at the school have high levels of skills and knowledge and are passionate about improving the life chances of the young people they serve. They have the highest expectations of both staff and students. The governing body has supported the development of the award winning leadership team (National Outstanding SLT for TES, 2009).

The highly effective CoGs has built a climate of trust and openness between the GB and the Senior Leadership Team. Together, leaders have driven innovation and change in the school. They are a dedicated team with excellent organisational practices and have considerable capacity to improve the school further. There is no complacency on the part of governors and they continue to look for new ways to enhance the learning experience for the young people in the local community.

Working alongside the Senior Leaders the governing body have brought together a highly influential group of Foundation Trustees, who have strengthened governance even further and leveraged significant opportunities for students and staff. The trustees include the corporate director for children and young people, the Director of Inclusion Quality Mark (IQM) Ltd and senior managers of construction, computing and logistics companies. The trustees and governors together have facilitated employer engagement and work related learning, regularly engaging with students in school and supporting improving and staff development opportunities have been provided. Additional resources have been negotiated to support innovative projects, including the teaching of circus skills to gifted and talented students and the cost of Johnny Ball supporting World Maths Day activities.

April 2011, Jane Herriman