

### **Lesley Burton, School Business Manager, St John's CE Primary School, Bradford**

St John's CE Primary School is located in the Bierley area of Bradford. The school is a Foundation School that was originally affiliated to the old St. John's Church in the town, which is now used for purposes other than worship. The school has developed a strong bond with St. Christopher's Church in Holme Wood and regularly seeks to maintain this valuable link in a variety of ways. As the school had relocated to Bierley, it is a bi-parochial church school. This means that the school will serve the Christian Education needs of two parishes, Tong/Holme Wood and Bierley. The bond which the school has with Holme Wood has been extended to include Bierley and has made the school's Christian influence stronger as a result.

Lesley took time over the recent Easter 2016 holiday to look at her own practice and carry out a self-assessment against the NASBM Professional Standards using the NASBM self-assessment tool. The aim of undertaking this is to support her overall self-development. Lesley will take the self-assessment to her appraisal to outline to the Head teacher at the school (her manager) both her strengths and those areas where Lesley has identified development opportunities. So far, the standards have shown that she might benefit from learning more about the ICT side of the Infrastructure discipline. Currently, the school has excellent ICT support from an independent consultancy, and as a result Lesley has needed less specialist knowledge in ICT compared to other areas within the Professional Standards. Lesley believes it would benefit her to know more about ICT in order to challenge assumptions and better understand future needs so they can be forecasted and budgeted for. Lesley has also reflected on the CIPFA course, which is held by CIPFA on behalf of NASBM. Lesley feels that the course prepared her particularly well for the asset register and disaster recovery elements of the Infrastructure discipline.

In terms of the impact upon the school, Lesley believes that the Professional Standards are changing her own practice already and also the way that she thinks of her role overall, which is having a positive impact across the school. The Professional Standards have not only highlighted the specific ICT elements for further personal continuing development, but also provided her with confidence and a platform to focus on the strategic side of her role which is needed in the school and is where she feels her skills lie:

'The standards have helped me to look at priorities for my own team's improvement and understand better their needs and the necessity for their development to ensure the support function is outstanding.'

Following on from the work Lesley has carried out in her self-assessment she also sees potential in using the Professional Standards as the template for appraisals both for herself and potentially other SBM colleagues in other schools. Furthermore, both Lesley and her colleague are presenting on NASBM Professional Standards at a City Conference of SBMs during May 2016, such is their belief that the Professional Standards provide an excellent framework for the profession to work from and to aspire SBM colleagues who wish to progress their career. Lesley also believes the presentation will assist those SBMs who are not sure about the future of their role, and also provide motivation to others.

Lesley also currently mentors two aspiring SBMs and has provided a variety of learning opportunities for her mentees. One example is in financial reporting where the mentee developed the financial report for the LA on the basis of a number of sources which have to be presented within a single document. Lesley believes the Professional Standards will be helpful to her in supporting aspiring SBMs like the two she mentors: “In order to develop as a professional you need to have a benchmark for your performance, The NASBM professional standards provide a clear blueprint for the profession and set out to both established and aspiring SBM professionals what is required and the skills that are need to deliver the role.”