

What makes a good Clerk?

- A good clerk will have professional integrity. We generally work for several boards and are trusted to handle a range of confidential and sensitive matters.
- A good clerk will carry out a governance audit upon their appointment. They will identify where the gaps are, advise of areas of non-compliance and quickly put them right.
- A good clerk will (also very quickly) – regardless of your setting – interpret your Articles of Association / Scheme of Delegation / Terms of Reference documents to ensure that they can advise the board on procedural and legal matters.
- A good clerk will instigate an efficient and effective triangulation of working between themselves, the chair and the executive leader. This involves regular meetings - between scheduled board meetings - in order to influence governance priorities.
- A good clerk will anticipate issues. A good clerk will give the chair the 'heads up' about something fundamental which may compromise the compliance or regulatory proceedings of the board – and this involves making sure meetings are quorate at the eleventh hour. A good clerk has no hidden agenda (excuse the pun).
- A good clerk will correspond directly with your auditors and solicitors. They speak our language! During audit periods, we will provide all of the required information within tight timescales. If compliance requirements are not met, we will ensure that they are rectified.
- A good clerk will steer your board to ask the right questions at meetings and structure that challenge so that the minutes reflect the important work of the board. Ofsted won't care about a super-duper numbering system involving roman numerals. They will care, however, that the board are operating as they should be.
- A good clerk will insist on regular skills audit exercises – and maybe even analyse them for you – and advise on the recruitment and training needs of your board.
- A good clerk will save you money. How? Because a good clerk cares about the school's finances and the use of public spends. We see many situations we try to put right, such as costly training subscriptions not being utilised. The clerk will already be familiar - through their expertise - with a range of training options available nationally, not just locally. There's also the matter of the professional contacts we have.
- A good clerk will be professionally insured.
- A good clerk will speak up at meetings. If a governor or executive leader is making a proposal which is not within the correct, legal framework, we will hit that unmute button and say so.
- A good clerk will have excellent knowledge of the education sector and keep abreast of government directives. Due to the work we do with other boards, we will ensure that the statutory needs – bespoke to your educational setting – are met.
- A good clerk will respond to emails and action requests late in the evening – even though we are repeatedly reminded of the importance of staff / teacher wellbeing and to not make contact outside of 'working hours'.
- A good clerk will support, advise and champion other clerks, regardless of their status, pay, ability or place of work. We do this simply in recognition of the importance of great governance and to raise the profile of the vital role of the clerk to the board.