

**Devon Association of Governors  
DAG Conference 2008 “Tomorrows’ Schools”  
Exeter – 29 March 2008**

**PRESENTATION TO THE DAG 2008 CONFERENCE**

**ANNE WHITELEY**

**Director of Devon Children & Young People’s Services**

- Thank you to all 5,500 Governors of schools in Devon for all their support for our young children.
- She echoed Phil Revell’s comments that DAG has a very strong national profile and she values her working relationship with DAG. The future is all ours to share – DAG has representatives on the Children’s Trust and many initiatives / committees and bodies in Devon.
- She feels passionately about individual children in our county and what we are doing to make a difference in their lives.
- So, what is the context for us in Devon over the next five years? The work/change that Devon is already doing reflects on some of those experiences – not ‘done to’ by national government. Must use our experience to bring about influences.
- Value education – enjoyment and learning should go hand-in-hand.
- Young people need play space, cycleway, healthy living, things to do, and to be listened to by adults. Children from all areas and backgrounds should be sharing views.

**Things to hold on to as we go into the future:**

- Parental involvement is important – local people solving local issues.
- Volunteerism – how do you get the right balance? Need to ensure that we maintain the elements of volunteerism.
- Need to hold on to strategic views and ethos.
- Need to hold on to the responsibility of School Improvement.
- Need to hold Headteachers to account.

**Change is coming**

- Change is already here.
- There is a changing role for schools and Local Authorities.
- This change is already seen in Devon – debates with national departments around Academy Programmes and Specialist Schools.
- Changing landscapes – eg Federations.
- Absolutely need more collaborative working, sharing of skills, experiences, sectors etc. Partnerships with a purpose, All-through Schools (model for Sherford).

### **Work actively going on in Devon**

- Three Federations in Devon already and all very different, and some more in the embryo stage.
- Governors working towards all-through schools.
- Dartmouth working with a life coach exploring models of leadership.
- Changing role of commissioning in Local Authorities. In Devon commissioning at every level locally.
- Need shared understanding of rural and urban needs
- Vision to have everything as local as possible.
- Commissioning at local level is the way forward
- Dartmouth/Kingsbridge are good examples of different organisations coming together to make positive impact on what is available to young people.
- Using initiatives to inform. Kingsbridge Learning Community commissioned training for Governors and is now considering sharing initiatives.
- Federations already up and running are good examples. First Federation had two open days for other Governors to see what is happening.
- There is a huge agenda and a lot to do. Devon is talking to key organisations nationally to shape their own agenda – again DAG is involved at all levels. Succession Planning with NCSL. Training for Governors is a real issue.
- Devon produced a lot of material around Federations. There is already a great deal going on in this area.
- Governors need to be looking at the role of Governing Bodies – there needs to be debate/discussion going on as soon as possible. GBs are likely to reduce, have strategic focus and work collaboratively with other schools, other agencies and other organisations. There is likely to be change soon.
- Mandatory training is a very real issue and it needs to happen and be seen to happen.

### **What will stay the same?**

- Governors are committed to seeing schools at their best; Governors are a force for change locally and nationally; Governors CAN make things happen. Relationships between Governors and Headteachers are crucial. The Local Authority has a role too with Governors and DAG in going forward.

### **In a nutshell**

- Fewer Governors
- Fewer Governing Bodies
- Governors focussing on training, self-governance, Academies and an holistic approach to ECM.