

DAG MONTHLY NEWSLETTER – AUGUST 2007

As per last newsletter, I have laid out this month's newsletter order as follows:

DAG
NGA
DCSF

DAG

Welcome back to the new school year, after what I hope was a relaxing summer break. I hope too the new academic year is fulfilling and rewarding for everybody.

DAG wishes to send its warmest congratulations to the students in Devon for their successes in the recent round of A levels and GCSEs.

You will have heard that Exeter has been awarded Unitary Status. Well almost. They still have to provide a stronger case on a couple of important issues. You would wish to know that the DAG Executive registered further concern that an "extension" was being afforded to Exeter City Council. The Executive's view is that the bid either stood up by the due date or it did not.

DAG was closely involved in the latest Alternative Portfolio processes and look forward to further participation in future schemes. I hold a "bank" of names of Governors who wish to be involved in such matters, but there is always room for additional bodies. Please contact me if you wish to add your name.

DAG has appointed a new website manager, and he has been tasked with having us up and running by March 2008. This website will be totally independent of Devon County Council, who currently host and "populate", at our request, for us. If you have any ideas about what you would like to see on it, please let me know.

Ivan Godfrey will be conducted 4 Area Meetings this half term and the dates and venues are as follows

Tues. Sep 25	Clyst Vale CC	Clyst Vale, Crediton and Exeter LLCs
Wed. Sep 26	Tiverton High School	Culm Valley and Tiverton LLCs
Thu. Sep 27	The King's School OSM	Axe Valley, Exmouth, Honiton, Ottery-St-Mary and Sidmouth LLCs
Tues. Oct 2	The Park School	Barnstaple, Braunton, Bideford, Ilfracombe and Torrington LLCs

As many of you know, Ivan has been nominated for a national award as Governor of the Year, and will be attending a ceremony in October. The full list of nominations can be found at www.teachingawards.com/winners/list?o=3&year=7&type=reg. There is an opportunity for individual Governors to leave a message of congratulations and support for an outstanding Governor and gentleman at this website. DAG does hope you will be able to participate.

DAG is pleased to recognise the celebration of more than 200 years of service to children by nine Devon headteachers, who are leaving their schools, and who attended an event hosted held by the county's schools chief, Anne Whiteley:

- Di Brice has spent 34 years teaching children in Devon and is retiring as head of Whimple Primary while June Tamlyn from Georgham Primary has 30 years service in the county.

- David Fieldsend has 29 years service in Devon, the last 22 as head of Wembury Primary, while Jill Bevis, the head of Highampton Primary, has been teaching in Devon for 28 years.
- Tim Nias, the head of Goodleigh Primary, has 22 years' service and Alan White from Woolser Primary has spent 21 years in Devon schools.
- Pat Smethurst, the head of St Nicholas Primary in Sidmouth, has been a head or deputy head in Devon for 19 years while Sue Noden from St Peter's Primary in Budleigh has been a head in Devon for 15 years.
- Roger Grose is leaving Mrs Ethelston's Primary in Uplyme after 10 years as head there.

They were all invited to a special buffet supper in Exeter with colleagues whose combined service totals 208 years and presented with long service certificates by the Chairman of Devon County Council.

Mrs Whiteley told them:

"I wanted to acknowledge the years of service you have given to the education of Devon's young people and its communities."

"You are at the very centre of what we do in giving life chances to our young people and contributing to raising standards of learning and attainment."

"I want to say a very personal thank you for your commitment and professionalism."

"Some of you will have taught several generations of children from the same family. Whenever I visit schools I am always struck by the passion our teachers have for learning, their commitment to our children and young people and how they open up their horizons. Every one of Devon's 374 schools is unique but every one is committed to raising aspirations and achievement for our young people and ensuring they have the brightest possible future. You have all made a massive contribution to that hugely worthwhile goal."

In addition DAG is aware of the retirement of Dr Colin Pope, who was headteacher of Knowles Hill School for 16 years.

We echo Anne Whiteley's sentiments and wish them all well in the future.

DAG is always pleased to recognise individual or corporate outstanding achievement and would ask GBs to bring to our attention a person/organisation they consider worthy of a special mention, on the website and/or through the monthly newsletter

This part of the newsletter is specifically for Primary Governors whose schools are in West Devon Borough Council or in the vicinity of Tavistock. Are you aware of the Mary Budding Trust? The Trust's Objectives are to support children with special needs aged 11 or under, by the provision of grants and equipment, some examples of which include:

- Providing a ramp for wheelchair users
- Purchasing special writing platforms
- Obtaining bicycles to assist children with co-ordination and balance
- Giving families access to respite care

and much more. If you need to know more please contact the Trust's Hon Sec, Mrs Ann McDonald on a.mcd@tiscali.co.uk

Meanwhile, if you are aware of any other local / area specific initiatives you would like to advertise, please let me know.

Did you know?

- **The Guide** to the Law (GttL) is now paperless. The latest version is on a CD which will be available through your schools. Please note that this replaces the previous paper version which should be destroyed. However, if you have paper versions of the Statutory Instruments you will need to retain them, as they are not on the CD. The intention is that there will be two updates per year now that it is relatively simple to re-issue the complete Guide. The CD has other documents as well as the GttL and has been formatted so that you can click on the menu to select the item you want. Depending on the speed of your computer, it can take a while to select and load files from a CD, and you may find this too slow for your use. If you load the CD and then click on the "Esc" button on your keyboard, you can use the normal Windows Explorer method to copy files from the CD onto your computer. If this is all complete gobbledegook and you **do** want to copy files from the CD onto your computer then please contact your Clerks who, hopefully (!) will be able to talk you through how to do it. Please don't be daunted by the new method of working, it's really a lot easier to use than the paper version because of the search facilities.
- **From August** 2007, new teachers and those returning to the profession have to complete a suitability form listing any past crimes, no matter how old and register it with the General Teaching Council. Only minor one-off convictions such as driving without due care and attention or possession of a Class C drug will not be listed. The aim of the new checks is to filter out people unsuitable to teach before they get into the classroom.
- **From September** 1 2007, there are some changes to the Guidance on Education-Related Parenting Contracts, Parenting Orders and Penalty Notices. More info at www.dfes.gov.uk/schoolattendance/otherinitiatives/parentingcontracts.cfm
- **Devon has** a County Junior Choir and it is recruiting children from ages 7 – 13 (Y3 – Y8). Further info can be found on www.dccjc.org.uk

When the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is introduced in September 2008, Ofsted inspectors will for the first time be making almost identical judgements and publishing similar styles of reports for all providers who work with children aged 0–5.

- To help maintained schools and inspectors prepare for this, there is to be a change to the way that inspectors report on the Foundation Stage (for children aged 3–5) in schools.
- Starting this September, inspection reports will include a separate section that deals only with the Foundation Stage, so that parents will find it easier to identify what schools are doing for these young pupils in particular.
- Adrian Gray, Assistant Divisional Manager in Ofsted's Institutional Inspections and Frameworks Division, encourages schools to start preparing now, and says “We hope that schools will see the changes we are making to Foundation Stage inspection reports as a chance to lay solid foundations in preparation for the

introduction of the EYFS, and perhaps review how they evaluate their provision for the Foundation Stage in their self-evaluation forms.”

You can read more about the EYFS in Changing Childcare in the current issue of Ofsted News.

Meanwhile schools' own target setting to be inspected as follows:

The need to balance challenge and realism when setting targets will be familiar to all school leaders. However, recent studies have shown that some schools are better at setting challenging yet realistic whole school targets (that is, for the end of Key Stages 2, 3 and 4), and thus are able to secure greater improvement in outcomes for students.

Ofsted wants to ensure that inspection focuses on this important aspect of school improvement, so from September, in their self-evaluation forms, schools will be prompted to respond to the question ‘*How effectively are challenging targets being used to raise standards for all learners?*’ Schools will also be asked to provide evidence to support their responses.

Inspectors will, in turn, consider whether a school’s targets are challenging enough to raise standards, whether they are sufficiently realistic to be achievable, and whether they are helping to raise standards overall and for the lowest attaining pupils in particular. A judgement will be included in the inspection judgements form attached to inspection reports.

You can read more about how Ofsted inspects schools on its website www.ofsted.gov.uk

Arrangements are underway for next year’s Assembly. We hope to revamp the format and processes. There will be changes, but one constant will be the guest speaker slot and we are delighted that Anne Whiteley will present the local view and Phil Revell, the CEO of the NGA will be our other speaker.

NGA

Phil Revell has asked for the following message to be passed to Associations:

“Can I just say how delighted I am to be joining the NGA – representing the biggest volunteer group in the country. As an ex-teacher who spent four years as a governor, I am only too well aware of the vital work that governors do, and I am determined to work as hard as I can on your behalf, supporting the work you do and working with the Birmingham team and the board to raise the profile of governance.

There are some changes planned for the next twelve months, and I hope that you will see a better, more effective NGA emerge as a result. I welcome any feedback that you choose to send my way – both positive and negative.

I hope to meet as many of you as possible over the next year, and I certainly intend to get to as many regional events as possible – providing I am invited!”

There are three important NGA events taking place before Christmas:

- The next NGA Conference takes place on 22 September at Austin Court, 80 Cambridge Street, Birmingham, B1 2NP. Keynote speakers are Jim Gamble, Chief Executive of CLEOPS, the new body set up to investigate and prevent child pornography and Phil Revell the CEO of NGA. The draft programme can be found on the NGA website in What’s New. If you would like to attend the Conference please fill in the Booking Form

on the NGA website, or contact the NGA office at governorhq@nga.org.uk, or ring on 0121-643-5787.

- There is a Regional NGA Meeting planned for 20 October and to be held in Devon. Details will be passed directly to schools, so please ask your AO / Sec to keep an eye open for this information to be communicated to you.
- The NGA AGM will be held in London on 17 November. Please look out for further information

DCSF

All Secondary Schools should be aware that new guidance has been released by the former DfES that draws together the three main areas of Specialist Schools Programme. Further info from www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/specialistschools

Every publicly funded secondary school can select 20 free books from a list of 170. More info from www.sla.org.uk/boys-into-books-overview.php

Are you aware of the putting the Ooo into food initiative? There is the opportunity to win attractive prizes of cooking equipment. See www.britishfoodfortnight.co.uk

We are all conscious of the need to save resources and recycle and whilst each GB will have policies on these issues, some additional help may be available through leaflets 00368-2007LEF-EN and 00369-2007LEF-EN and available via www.teachernet.gov.uk/sustainableschools

I will close with some more jargon busting which I hope you will find useful:

CAMHS Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service www.youngminds.org.uk/camhs

Children's Centres Sure Start Children's Centres are "places where children under 5 years old and their families can receive seamless holistic integrated services and information. And where they can access help from multi-disciplinary teams of professionals."
www.surestart.gov.uk

Competitive tendering Obtaining quotes from two or more suppliers before awarding contracts. See www.devon.gov.uk/procedures_tenders.htm for further guidance but note for a given estimated value of contract of:

- Above £1000 and up to £2500 you will need two oral quotations
- Above £2500 (£5000 for works) and up to £10000, you will need three written quotes

That's all for now, remembering that items which cannot wait for the monthly digest will be communicated direct to your schools and marked for The Chair / Clerk. Please ensure your AO / Sec passes anything to you.

Yours

David Tall
EO to DAG