

## **DEVON ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNORS MONTHLY NEWSLETTER – FEBRUARY 2009**

The order of this newsletter is as follows:

- Devon Association of Governors (DAG)
- Local Authority (LA)
- National Governors' Association (NGA)
- Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF)
- Primary Snippets
- Secondary Snippets

### **DAG**

#### **AREA MEETINGS.**

**The last of our 4 Spring** Area Meetings takes place at Broadclyst Primary School, Wed 4 Feb for the Clyst Vale and Exeter LLCs. Meeting takes place 7.00 - 9.00p.m. with refreshments available from 6.30

**The Meeting is open** to all and not restricted to named LLCs . There may still be time to book with Ivan Godfrey [sueivan@godfreyi.freeserve.co.uk](mailto:sueivan@godfreyi.freeserve.co.uk)

#### **AWAY DAY**

A number of the DAG Executive and 3 guest Governors attended an Away Day on 31 January to assess progress and look at future structures. The ideas and proposals from that meeting will be taken forward at the next Executive Meeting. We are very grateful to Pam Barnard, Mike Canham and Ray Davison for giving up a valuable Saturday to assist our deliberations.

#### **AGM**

**This year's AGM will be held at 1800 on Thursday 12 March 2009** in the Garden Room of the West of England School for the partially sighted. Please let David Tall know if you intend attending so that he can make the necessary domestic arrangements. Meanwhile please keep an eye on the DAG Website, where you will have the opportunity to cast any votes / ask any questions about DAG Finances / Executive Committee Membership. [www.dag.gb.com](http://www.dag.gb.com)

#### **CONFERENCE**

**The plans for the 2009 Conference** are almost complete. It will be held on 4 July at County Hall. We have secured the services of Sue Palmer, renowned for her book "Toxic Childhood". She is noted as a brilliant public speaker and we consider her attendance as something of a coup. In addition we are delighted that Chris Keates the Secretary of the NASUWT will also speak. Our third speaker is David Triggs the CEO of THE academies Enterprise Trust in Essex. Mr Triggs is also the Principal of Greensward Academy.

**Online application** is available from 6 February. We anticipate a "sell out" so to ensure your attendance you are advised to book early.

**The theme for the Conference** will be "Self improvement = School Improvement"

**Although it is planned to be an all day event** the programme will be designed so that Governors can dip in and out and attend at their convenience

**One of the highlights of last year's Conference** was the contribution from a number of our youngsters. This year we are really delighted to have secured the services of Whitchurch Primary School who will launch the day with their award-winning anthem D.E.V.O.N., and Mary Tavy PS's Gospel Choir.

**This year we are holding a Poetry Competition** and invite EVERY school to participate. There will be prizes for the winning schools from the 3 sectors and the LA have kindly offered to publish a digest of the poems the children produce. DAG has written to the Primary, Special and Secondary Heads' Association inviting them to support this competitions but Governors have a part to play too. The first words of the poem must be "Devon inspires me to....."

**The Conference is once again being supported by NPS (SW).** DAG is most grateful for that support and to Cornwall and Devon Connexions and Pecorama, Beer who have offered generous prizes to support the day and particularly our help to recognise our youngsters' contributions.

## **REPRESENTATIVES / LA COMMITTEES-**

**Although we are currently fully complemented on various bodies** DAG is aware of the following upcoming vacancies Schools' Commissioning Forum; Schools' Organisational Forum; Learning and Achievement Board and Schools' Funding Group. If you wish to learn more please contact David Tall.

**Additionally** you will note from the website that several people double up on various Committees and it would be great to spread the burden / skills base, so if you have a particular interest, do please let me know and I will negotiate succession or even increased representation.

### ***RECOGNISING YOUR CLERK***

**A total of 159 Clerks were nominated nationally for the 2009 Clerk of the Year Award.** DAG highlighted in the January newsletter that 2 Clerks to Devon GBs have been short listed (1 other on the list). Maggie Dunlop Clerk to Clyst Heath Primary GB and Ann Inman, Clerk to Horrabridge Primary GB, will be interviewed for the next stage this month.

### ***GENERAL***

**The Chair and EO are meeting Judith Johnson** on 24 February.

**The next DAG Executive Committee Meeting** is being held on 12 March 2009, following the AGM

**The Chair and EO are attending the NGA SW Regional Meeting** on 14 March

**The Chair and EO are meeting** Torbay and Plymouth Governors Reps on 18 March

**The EO has attended the North of England Education Conference** in Chester 7 – 9 January and his notes are on the website

**The EO met members** of Minority Groups' Committees on 20 January and further meetings are planned

### **LA**

**The Governing Body of Holsworthy C of E Primary School** has issued a Public Notice, following consultation, on the proposal to enlarge the school from 280 places to 315 places with effect from 1 September 2009.

The Public Notice can be accessed on line at: <http://www.consultationfinder.com/devon> by typing 'Holsworthy' into the 'Keyword' box and selecting 'all' in the status box. The website will be updated as matters progress.

The closing date for responding to the notice is 5:00pm on Thursday, 12 February 2009. Responses to Karen Crockwell, School Organisation, Children & Young People's Services, Devon County Council, Room 120, County Hall, Topsham Road, Exeter, EX2 4QG or by email: [schoolconsultations@devon.gov.uk](mailto:schoolconsultations@devon.gov.uk).

**The Governing Body of Sparkwell All Saints C of E Primary School** wishes to consult on the future of the school.

The consultation booklet can be accessed on line at: <http://www.consultationfinder.com/devon> by typing 'Sparkwell' into the 'Keyword' box and selecting 'all' in the status box. The website will be updated with further information as matters progress.

The closing date for responding to the consultation is 5:00pm on Friday 20 March 2009. Please send responses to Mrs Margaret Kingwell, Chair of Governors, Sparkwell All Saints C of E Primary School, Sparkwell, Plymouth, Devon PL7 5DB or by e-mail to [admin@sparkwell-primary.devon.sch.uk](mailto:admin@sparkwell-primary.devon.sch.uk)

**DAG is delighted to note that Littleham Primary School** in Exmouth has been nominated for an award in the national Every Child a Reader programme to recognise a big improvement in reading and has achieved great success in teaching pupils who initially have difficulty with reading.

A party from the school will travel to London next Thursday (29) for a 'showbiz-style' ceremony at which they will learn if they have won the award.

The school's headteacher, Penny Hickman said: "Reading Recovery is a special programme which is very strong in our school.

"It is a great honour to be nominated for this award and we are all excited about the ceremony next week.

"The progress many of our children have made on the scheme has been very significant. Some of them have started Reading Recovery having great difficulty reading and, by the time they are seven, are achieving at or above national expectations.

"Their success in reading also gives them much more confidence in their work across all the subjects in the curriculum."

Mrs Hickman will be joined in London by the school's Reading Recovery teacher Sara Thornhill, pupil Adam Frost and his father.

Devon County Council's Primary Strategy Consultant and Reading Recovery Teacher Leader, Janet Ferris, said Reading Recovery was a specialist programme, which was widely used in Devon.

Children were taught individually by a specially trained teacher for 30 minutes a day for 12 to 20 weeks.

At Littleham there had been a significant rise for both reading and writing for all children in the SATs tests they sat at seven-years-old.

In 2007, 39 per cent achieved the expected Level 2 in reading but this had risen to 60 per cent in 2008 with 30 per cent exceeding national expectations.

Similar gains were also made in writing with 60 per cent reaching age-expected levels in 2008 - double the 2007 figure of 31 per cent.

Mrs Ferris said: "I am delighted the hard work and effort put in by the children and staff at Littleham, and the success it has brought them, has been recognised nationally."

Local county councillor Eileen Wragg said: "I am absolutely delighted for the school.

"There is a real sense of pride in the school and in the community and this can only help to enhance that."

**The annual Tellus Survey** provides information to Government, schools, local authorities and the agencies that help them to deliver the best possible services to young people. It is crucial in helping to understand and overcome issues that are important to children and young people: for example worries and concerns such as how safe they feel in school and their local area; about exams and tests; about what would help them learn better and whether they know where to go for help when they have a problem – including issues such as drug misuse, alcohol, bullying and neglect.

The Tellus survey gives children in years 6, 8 and 10 the chance to make sure their views on their lives and the services that they receive are understood and known.

The Tellus "one stop portal" holds information about the Tellus4 survey, including the timetable and FAQs. It also hosts the consultation page where you can share your views on Tellus4 with the research team. The live portal can be accessed at [www.tellussurvey.org.uk](http://www.tellussurvey.org.uk).

The Tellus4 survey will be carried out in the autumn term this year with the help of the National Foundation for Educational Research. In 2008 insufficient schools in Devon responded for the results to be statistically reliable so Devon's figures are based on an average of statistical neighbours; we want something more meaningful for the future.

The Tellus4 research team have valued the insights that have so far been gathered through the Tellus consultation events. Please find time to log on [www.tellussurvey.org.uk](http://www.tellussurvey.org.uk) and share your views

**During the spring and summer** of this year Devon County Council has further developed its online booking system for various training courses, we would now like to take the opportunity to encourage all delegates via this method.

This one time registration will improve all future training applications and an added benefit of this new process is that we are now able to identify course venues and dates at the time of your booking. Your school administrator may already be aware of this system and therefore may be able to complete the booking for you.

Please go to [www.devon.gov.uk/onlinebookings](http://www.devon.gov.uk/onlinebookings) to book, but please do not hesitate to contact Emma Huxtable at [emma.huxtable@devon.gov.uk](mailto:emma.huxtable@devon.gov.uk) if you require any more information.

**The recent Single Point of Entry consultation has now concluded** and it appears that some misunderstanding exists about the right to defer the start date of a child's education. The following are notes made by Christina Mabin who sits on the Local Admissions Forum. "The points of entry are earliest point at which a child can be admitted to school. Currently in Devon schools admit children at two points of entry – September and January. Therefore children who are 5 years old between 1 September and 28/29 February are admitted in September and those who are 5 years olds between 1 March and 31 August are admitted in January. There are a few schools in Devon who currently operate a single point of entry. This means that all children are admitted just once during the academic year in September.

Legally children do not have to begin school until the term following their 5<sup>th</sup> birthdays and all parents have a statutory right to defer admission until the term after the fifth birthday. This right is not affected by any admission policy.

Following LA informal discussions there was a recommendation to defer any formal consultation until the outcome of the national Rose review is known (end of March). The interim report was recently published which indicated that entry into reception class in the September following the child's fourth birthday should become the norm. There was also a recommendation to endorse steps to clarify for parents their entitlements in respect of when children can start school." These notes are forwarded as part of the clarification process

### NGA

**We continue to receive regular updates** from John Pay our Regional Director and we welcome these links very much and most recently John reports "I had an excellent meeting recently with Peter Cloke who is the Deputy Regional Director of the Government Office for the South West and the Director for Children and Learners. Peter explained that GOSW have no specific responsibility for Governance although, naturally, they have a keen interest. At the moment he is looking at the situation of Governance and Governing Bodies in FE Colleges/Establishments."

**The following has been received from the NGA** "A government agency has asked the NGA if we can provide a sample of governors willing to take part in a telephone interview about a specific policy. Sorry to be cagey, but it is important that the sample group do not self select, and that we do NOT get a sample restricted to those with strong views about the policy area in question. If you are willing to give 15 minutes of your time, to be telephoned on your home number by a researcher from Mori, then please send an e-mail to me giving your consent. We will then use our records to let the agency have a contact list. Please volunteer if you can; despite the way we sometimes feel about the government's inability to listen, it is through exercises like this that we can give real feedback and ensure the governor voice is heard. Contact me at: [phil.revell@nga.org.uk](mailto:phil.revell@nga.org.uk)"

**The next NGA AGM** will be held on 7 November 2009 in Birmingham. DAG will be represented

**The NGA has produced a number of its weekly newsletters.** They have been e-mailed to all members for whom the NGA hold e-mail addresses, whilst the monthly Board Bulletin (BB) is sent to Local Associations. I always forward the BB to IGs, and place it on our website, but if you would also like the weekly newsletter please let me know.

**The following Governors were recognised with honours** in the New Year's Honours List. Jennifer Bell (Hackney), Allan Currall (Reading), Ronald Eunson (Newcastle-upon-Tyne), Susan Eunson (Newcastle-upon-Tyne), Laurence Hulbert (Sutton Coldfield), Zafar Iqbal (Birmingham), Jean Pratt (Aldershot), Donald Stringer (Stockton-on-Tees), Josephine Wakeham (Cornwall) and Stephanie Wilson (Hull).

### DCSF

**There are 8 live consultations** on the DCSF Website and whilst Consultations can be time consuming they are an important part of our democratic process. DAG is conscious that it may have a role to assist GBs in responding to consultations. DAG will NOT however participate in Consultations per se because it recognises that there will be a variety of different considerations / ideas, and the Executive feels that it cannot fairly represent every view / counter view nonetheless it might be able to take some of the pressure off GBs and assist the process. We will look at developing this assistance in the coming year. Meanwhile GBs are encouraged to participate in all Consultations. Of particular importance is consultation on the Vision for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and the Proposed Score Card. This consultation **ends 3 March 2009**. The Proposed Score Card seeks to replace the School Profile – but there is more to the consultation than that single issue. The most "pressing" Consultation about Home Education **ends on 20 February**

## **PRIMARY SNIPPETS**

**The Annual Animated Exeter** takes place from 9 – 13 Feb and the festival showcases the best of world animation, whilst supporting local animators. The Schools Week programme features special events and screenings. More information about the festival can be found at [www.exeter.gov.uk/animatedexeter](http://www.exeter.gov.uk/animatedexeter)

**If your school registers before 13 Feb**, it could win a prize through the Health for Kids Awards. [www.hfkawards.co.uk](http://www.hfkawards.co.uk) has more information

**World Maths Day is being held on 4 March** See [www.worldmathsday.com](http://www.worldmathsday.com)

**Remember it is now just 21 months (September 2010)** before all primary schools are due to have foreign language teaching in place across KS2, with progression from Y3 – Y6.

## **SECONDARY SNIPPETS**

**The English Chess Federation has launched** a national campaign to get more pupils playing chess with up to 10 free sets / school. To receive your sets e-mail [chessforschools@englishchess.org.uk](mailto:chessforschools@englishchess.org.uk)

**Daley Thompson is supporting Olympic-themed** resources for schools at [www.onyourmarks.london2012.com](http://www.onyourmarks.london2012.com)

**The renewed Secondary Frameworks have been developed** by the National Strategies. Science, maths, English and ICT are now online at [www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/secondary/frameworks](http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/secondary/frameworks)

**Secondary Governors may wish to be aware of the new exhibition**, Body Worlds and the Mirror of Time which is running at the O2 Arena until August 2009. Suitable for KS3 onwards. See [www.bodyworlds.com/en/prelude/education\\_uk](http://www.bodyworlds.com/en/prelude/education_uk) (Note underscore between education and uk)

The Imperial War Museum is offering teachers the chance to join Insite 2009, a free year-long CPD programme that includes expenses paid study visits to Germany and Hungary Closing date for applications is 27 February. [www.theirpast-yourfuture.org.uk/InSite](http://www.theirpast-yourfuture.org.uk/InSite)

**Last term it was announced that KS3 SATs** are no longer compulsory. This statement raised a few questions and answers have been extracted from the Secondary Teachers' Magazine and are outlined for Governors information:

- SATs papers can still be used if you wish, but you will have to pay for them from now on
- Schools will collect and submit teacher assessments in all 3 core subjects to the National Assessment Agency
- There is no change to the requirement that schools report to parents teacher assessment in ALL subjects

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**Eating Disorders Awareness Week** is being held from 23 – 28 Feb. [www.b-eat.co.uk](http://www.b-eat.co.uk) for more info

**World Maths Day is being held on 4 March** See [www.worldmathsday.com](http://www.worldmathsday.com)

David Tall Executive Officer to DAG

2 February 2009