

DEVON ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNORS MONTHLY NEWSLETTER –NOVEMBER 2008

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)
- Gentle reminders – Primary
- Gentle reminders – Secondary

THIS IS THE THIRD NEWSLETTER TO BE ISSUED USING ONLY TWO ROUTES – DAG WEBSITE AND THE DAG INTERMEDIARY GOVERNOR. the number of igs is now 140, and i am very grateful to all who have signed up. that still means however there are 220 schools we are not in direct contact with. TO ENSURE WE REACH THE MAXIMUM NUMBER OF GOVERNORS PLEASE PASS THIS ON TO YOUR FELLOW GOVERNORS

DAG

AREA MEETINGS. Ivan Godfrey conducted 4 Area Meetings in September and October. They were as lively as ever, generated a number of discussions on challenging issues and as always Ivan will produce a detailed report, which will go on to the website. I will alert IGs when that happens.

Ivan is already planning meetings for next term. Please keep your eyes on the DAG website for final details. They will take place between 21 January – 5 February in place in Exeter, North Devon, Central Devon and South Devon

JUDITH JOHNSON the Head of Learning and Schools briefed the most recent Devon Education Forum on her initial observations on how DEF is doing and those notes are available on the DAG website.

REPRESENTATIVES / LA COMMITTEES - Carol Woodhouse has volunteered to be a Secondary Governor for the Devon Education Forum (DEF), which now brings us up to complement in that sector. We still seek a reserve Governor for the Primary Sector. Please let me know if you would be interested in representing DAG on this very important Forum.

There was a tremendous response to our request for DAG Reps on the ICT in Schools' Committee. Thank you everybody who expressed an interest. We have appointed Alan Morbey as the Primary Rep and Chris Vile as the Secondary Rep.

We still however want a Governor from a Community School to sit on the Local Admissions Forum which is a mandatory body set up under the School Standards and Framework Act 1988. The Forum facilitates discussion between all admission authorities (Voluntary Aided, Foundation and LA Community Schools) on how best to organise admissions in the local area, in order to meet as many parents' preferences as possible, and to reach agreement about difficult issues, such as providing school places and sharing pupils with challenging behaviour. The Devon Forum meets approximately 3 times a year at regular intervals at County Hall, Exeter. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday 20 November 2008 at 10.30 am.

Meanwhile The School Organisation Forum is considering the criteria that should be applied to the prioritisation of Area reviews within the (PCP) Primary Capital Programme. An example of such criteria can be found in Section 4.13 on page 18 within the online document <http://www.devon.gov.uk/cypsp-pcp-strategyforchange-120608.pdf> The Forum's task group meets early in November and is now seeking contributions as to suggested criteria on how best to prioritise reviews.

Kelvin Lacy is the DAG representative on this task group and will take forward all comments and suggestions made to him via email at kelvin.lacy@sky.com

Terms of reference and minutes of the School Organisation Forum can be found online at http://www.devon.gov.uk/index/learning/education_consultations_notices/school-organisation/schoolorganisationforum.htm

DAG 2009 CONFERENCE Plans are beginning to firm up for next year's Conference which 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.

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. We are keen to continue that involvement, so if you have any groups (hand bell ringers / Morris Dancers / choirs etc) at your schools whom you would like to promote, celebrate and see perform on a wider stage please let me know at your earliest convenience. DAG will pay reasonable expenses and make a contribution to school funds.

The Conference is once again being supported by NPS (SW). DAG is most grateful for that support

RECOGNISING YOUR PTA

Governors are reminded of the National Confederation of Parent Teacher Associations (NCPTA) Gold Star Reward Scheme for 2009, together with The Learning, Education and Parental Partnership (LEAPP) Award scheme for 2009. More details from www.ncpta.org.uk/awards. Your PTA could be rewarded to the tune of £1000

RECOGNISING YOUR CLERK AND THE WORK OF YOUR GB

2009 sees a biennial opportunity courtesy of the NGA to recognise the wonderful (and essential!!) work of our Clerks to Governors. Details are contained in the September edition of Matters Arising. There are also details on the NGA website www.nga.org.uk and on the DAG website

In addition the NGA intends rewarding Governing Bodies which have excelled in three specific areas: *Challenging Circumstances, Support for Governance and Exceptional Projects*. Please see Matters Arising and the NGA website for further details. Any further details will be placed on the DAG website too.

CHILDREN IN CARE

The Power Point Presentation by David Theobald, which he gave to the DAG Executive Committee in September is now available on the DAG website

GENERAL

The Chairman and EO attended a meeting with Plymouth and Torbay Governors on 22 October

DAG is delighted to report that it has established contact with the Cornwall Governors' Network and the Chair and EO will be meeting one of its Area Leaders later on this month, and Rupert Butler is attending the Cornish Conference on November 8th.

The Chair, Vice Chair and EO are meeting with Judith Johnson on 19 November.

The EO and Ivan Godfrey are meeting the Heads' Associations on 2 December to look at a number of issues, including how to strengthen Governors' contributions to LLCs

LA

Extended schools' full core offer

Devon met the September 2008 targets for the Extended Schools' full core offer and Philippa Court and Hilary Burrow from CYPS were invited to a reception with DCSF Minister Beverley Hughes last week. All schools identified as providing the full core offer got a personal letter from Beverley Hughes. Contact Philippa Court on philippa.court@devon.gov.uk

Building Schools for the Future

We will be submitting an Expression of Interest next month in entering the BSF programme. Devon schools were originally placed in the last three waves of the 15-20 year programme. But we are now optimistic that Devon will be advanced in the programme. A decision on which local authorities proceed will be made in early 2009. Schools identified as being on the county's priority list will need, through their governors, to agree a Memorandum of Understanding before being included in a project proposal. Contact Vic Ebdon on vic.ebdon@devon.gov.uk

You are advised that:

The Governing Body of Woodbury C of E Primary School, Woodbury, Exeter has issued a Public Notice, following consultation, on the proposal to enlarge the school from 140 places to 168 places with effect from 20 April 2009.

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

The closing date for responding to the notice is 5:00pm on Thursday, 4th December 2008. Responses to Graham Gerdes, Chairman of Governors, Woodbury C of E Primary School, Castle Lane, Woodbury, Exeter, Devon, EX5 1NB. Or by e-mail to admin@woodbury.devon.sch.uk

Furthermore:

The Governing Body of Holsworthy C of E Primary School is consulting on the proposal to enlarge the school from 280 places to 315 places with effect from 1 September 2009.

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

The closing date for responding to the consultation is 5:00pm on Friday, 19 December 2008. Responses to Reverend Michael Reynolds, Chairman of Governors, Holsworthy C of E Primary School, Sanders Lane, Holsworthy, EX22 6HD. Or by e-mail to admin@holsworthy-primary.devon.sch.uk

FEDERATION VISITS

You may be considering Federating your school and if so you will be interested to know that the 5 Devon Federations will be opening their doors to visitors between 10 and 14 November as follows:

Monday 10th First Federation – Blackpool VC Primary & Chudleigh Knighton VC Primary

Tuesday 11th Chulmleigh Federation – Primary & Community College

Wednesday 12th West Exmoor Federation – Lynton, Parracombe & Kentisbury primary schools
(VA/VC/Community)

Thursday 13th The Tavistock Church Federation – St Peter's VA Junior and St Rumon's VC Infant

Friday 14th The Dartmouth Federation – Primary & Community College

To learn more and book a visit please contact Sue Newson at sue.newson@devon.gov.uk

DCSF

There are 4 live consultations on the DCSF Website, though two complete very shortly

Of particular note is the Consultation on A New Way of Handling Parents' Complaints About Schools issues. It closes on 21 November. Governors/ GBs are encouraged to participate and DAG would request that they are informed of your views. Thank you.

NGA

This year's Annual Report of NGA's Activities, November 2007 - October 2008, is now on the website, under Events/2008 AGM.

The NGA Board Bulletin for November is on the DAG Website.

Don Paterson and David Tall attended the NGA Conference and AGM held in London on 8 November. There is a short report from the outgoing Chair on the DAG website, meanwhile I highlight two interesting snippets and news:

- The results of the election of General Directors held on 8 November was: Judith Bennett, Carol Woodhouse, Stephen Adamson, Clare Collins, Paul Mason, Colleen Arnold, Terry Douris, Duncan Haworth and Richard Thompson.
- The School Profile – time-consuming, mostly unvisited by parents and generally unloved – was to be abolished. Unfortunately no timescale has been published.

The following is the latest update from NGA on the Ministerial Review into Governance. *“The Ministerial Review into Governance Group, on which the NGA has two representatives, has now met three times, with a further meeting scheduled for the autumn. At the second meeting NGA presented some very quickly gathered anecdotal research on GB size and skills, which was welcomed. A robust discussion took place on what it means for GBs to “be strategic” and on how much the GB role should be defined from the centre. The July meeting listened to our presentations about “governance” in other sectors. The meeting also touched on the issue of paid governors: the majority of contributors to the debate believed that this was not the way to go and that the spirit of volunteering and “giving something back” was to be preserved.”* We still await details on any national consultative process

GENTLE REMINDERS (PRIMARY)

The LA is interested in hearing if any primary schools are allowing a greater pupil voice to the governing body, possibly through school councils, pupil committees or through your own ideas. If you are already doing this we would like to know what you have in place and how it is going. Please email jane.lucas@devon.gov.uk with your replies.

There is an active consultation with parents, schools, pre-schools and all interested bodies on whether Devon county schools should move to a single point of entry for Reception classes. All schools will be welcome to contribute their views and Learning Communities may also wish to comment. Comments should be addressed to andrew.brent@devon.gov.uk

This year’s Y6s will now be in compulsory education or training until they are 18.

Every PS is being offered a free copy of *The Communication Cookbook*. See www.ican.org.uk/cookbook for further details

In addition every reception child can receive a free poetry anthology and picture book. Visit www.booktime.org.uk for more details.

Appetite for Action Day will take place on 23 January 2009 and is aimed at KS2 pupils. See www.appetiteforaction.org.uk for an update.

The DCSF has published guidance on how to deal with mental health problems among teachers at www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications (DCSF - 00380-2008)

Remember it is now only a little over 2 years (September 2010) before all primary schools are due to have foreign language teaching in place across KS2, with progression from Y3 – Y6.

Primary School Improvement Partners (SIPs) will undertake two visits to schools this term. Within this visit, statutory targets for the end of KS2 in 2010 will be agreed. It is therefore important Governors and the HT discuss these targets before the SIP visit. A Primary Briefing Paper has been distributed electronically to schools

GENTLE REMINDERS (SECONDARY)

This year’s Y7s will now be in compulsory education or training until they are 17.

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

Daley Thompson is supporting Olympic-themed resources for schools at 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

David Tall Executive Officer to DAG

10 November 2008