

DAG MONTHLY NEWSLETTER – OCTOBER 2007

The newsletter order is as follows:

- DAG
- LA
- NGA
- DCSF

DAG

The DAG Executive is holding an Away Day on Saturday 24 November. We would welcome the attendance of non-Executive governors to contribute to our deliberations. If you wish to attend please let David Tall know at dmmrtall@mvdartmoor.freeserve.co.uk

The DAG Chair, David Tall and Rupert Butler attended the Regional NGA Meeting on 20 October. Phil Revell, the CEO to NGA attended and updated those present of the NGA's immediate and long term plans. Phil is one of the Guest Speakers at next year's DAG Assembly.

We await with interest feedback from the Queen's Speech.

Governors will know of the recent National Teaching Awards event, which included a nomination for Ivan Godfrey as Governor of the Year. The eventual winner was Lynette Kirk. Lynette, a governor for 18 years, has been Chair of Governors for five years at Belle Vue Girls' School in Bradford, and we congratulate her on her success.

Devon did have a winner at the above awards and DAG is delighted to report that Mr Ian Jamison, who teaches at Kingsbridge Community College, was selected as Secondary Teacher of the Year. Mr Jamison's "citation" reads:

A teacher who can make pupils feel what the Teaching Awards judges called "tangible excitement" as they enter his lessons has to be an exceptional teacher. And when the subject is religious education – not normally a student favourite you know this has to be a very exceptional teacher indeed. Since arriving at Kingsbridge, Ian has shaken the religious studies department upside down. He has brought into school representatives from faiths as far apart as Pagans and the Church Army, taken a group of sixth formers to India to study Buddhism, Hinduism and Sikhism, and led an expedition up a local moorland, when students were studying the concept of pilgrimage. He has fundamentally remodelled the curriculum, and his GCSE students somehow manage to get through their course in half the usual time, and still do well. He is a teacher of unusual appearance and unusual approaches. His personal experience of Hinduism, and deep love of Eastern and Western music, means that he brings a personal perspective to what he teaches, but what pupils respond to are his challenging lessons, his respect for them as individuals, and the way he makes them all feel they can achieve. He is also sensitive in how he approaches his subject. Students point out that he did not mark a recent Year Nine project on the Holocaust, feeling it was inappropriate to give marks for such a subject. Yet he is also tough. His classroom is crammed with posters, artefacts and challenging questions, and pupils have to pay attention. If their mobile phone goes off during a lesson, they have to stand on a model of an elephant at the front of the room! "You would never not hand work in," says one student. "He makes you want to do it for you."

Ian has studied co-operative learning techniques in the United States, and introduced them to Kingsbridge where they have had a big impact on the school. He also uses brain-based teaching techniques, and runs an interactive website where pupils can get homework help and ask him questions. For his A level students he runs an intensive cramming weekend at his own home. He is also a sixth form tutor, runs the in-service training schedule for colleagues at school, and has written a well-regarded A-level textbook. The Teaching Awards judges believe his innovative and thoughtful approaches to teaching could have an influence far beyond his immediate school. "He could be fundamental in inspiring, challenging and motivating a whole range of teachers and learners in the future."

This is a brilliant achievement, and our Chairman has written to Mr Jamison to congratulate him.

DAG also congratulates everyone associated with St Andrew's Church of England Primary School, Buckland Monachorum, which has been "spotlighted" by Ofsted for outstanding success in inspections carried out in 2006-07. There are other reasons to celebrate various achievements by Devon schools and these can be viewed at www.devon.gov.uk/press-browse

There is a very important vacancy on an LA committee which DAG hopes a Parent Governor would consider taking on. It is on the Local Admission Forum and the appointment would be for a period of 4 years. The Forum meets 3 times a year starting at 10.30 am and the next 3 meetings have been arranged for: 29 November 2007, 27 March 2008

and 15 July 2008 at County Hall. The meetings are normally concluded by lunchtime. If you are interested please contact David Tall immediately. Thank you.

LA

Following consultation, Devon County Council Local Authority has issued a Public Notice to invite proposals to establish a new mainstream primary school in the new community of Sherford, South Hams. It is proposed that the school should open from the start of the Autumn Term 2009 and that the school should provide 420 places by September 2012 and that the number of places be implemented in stages, in line with the development of the new community, from 1 September 2009. The new school will provide a 30 FTE place nursery, which will allow it to develop childcare to meet the needs of parents locally.

The summary and full Public Notice and further information is available on line at: <http://www.consultationfinder.com/devon> and the website will continue to be updated as matters progress.

The deadline for receipt of proposals is 5:00pm on Tuesday, 12 February 2008

Governors would wish to know about a new support service being introduced by Children and Young People's Services.

Mediation is a positive method of resolving and managing conflict on an informal basis. The process has already been used successfully in two Devon schools and we are currently offering the service, on a pilot basis, to Headteachers and Governors who are managing conflict with parents.

The next edition of 'Governor', has been published and contains an article giving more information about mediation, how it can help you in cases of conflict, and further details of the CYPS service.

If you would like to find out more about the service first hand, Roger Morris, the Service Co-ordinator, along with either Di Brice, retired Head of Whimple Primary, or Brendan Harcourt, retired Head of Braunton Caen, would be happy to visit you at your Local Learning Community. Please contact sue.darbyshire@devon.gov.uk with suggested dates and times if you wish to take up this offer.

If you have any queries about mediation, the service CYPS are offering, or wish to discuss possible issues, please do not hesitate to contact Colin Mackenzie, Head of Strategic Infrastructures

NGA

There has been considerable reaction to DCSF's intention to claw back school budget "underspend". The NGA took this matter up directly with the minister and presented a dossier of evidence last week.

As a direct result of this lobbying (and lobbying by the heads' associations) these proposals have been withdrawn and NGA wishes to thank everyone who helped with the process, especially to those who provided us with such effective ammunition.

All that said, we still need to be vigilant because the Department is still determined to retain some aspects of clawback. Governors need to remember that the NGA is not against the principle of clawback, but believes it must be operated in a way that allows schools to make proper budget arrangements over the medium term.

NGA is not in favour of allowing schools simply to hold on to balances for the mythical rainy day.

DCSF

The following departmental consultations are live

[The Byron Review - Call for Evidence - Children and Young People's Version](#)

The Prime Minister asked Dr Tanya Byron to carry out an assessment of video games and the internet, and how they might affect children and young people. The review will be asking how Government, businesses and families can work together to ensure children and young people can stay safe when using these new technologies. This consultation is for children and young people under the age of 18. The Byron Review is an independent review supported by officials from the Department for Children, Schools and Families and the

Department for Culture Media and Sport.

Launch Date: 24 Oct 2007

Closing Date: 17 Dec 2007

[Bercow Review of Speech, Language and Communication Needs-Call for Evidence](#)

The Bercow Review is an independent review of services for children and young people with speech, language and communications needs. This consultation calls for evidence from all groups and individuals. The Bercow Review is an independent review supported by officials from the Department for Children, Schools and Families and the Department of Health.

Launch Date: 23 Oct 2007

Closing Date: 18 Jan 2008

[The Byron Review - Call for Evidence](#)

The Byron Review is an independent review of the risks to children from exposure to potentially harmful or inappropriate material on the internet and in video games. This consultation calls for evidence from all groups and individuals. The Byron Review is an independent review supported by officials from the Department for Children, Schools and Families and the Department for Culture Media and Sport.

Launch Date: 09 Oct 2007

Closing Date: 30 Nov 2007

[Key Stage 3 Test Absence Collection](#)

Ministers intend that, in May 2008, all maintained schools with key stage 3 test absence rates of 5% or above of the school's cohort for two consecutive years in either English, mathematics or science will provide the Department with reasons for the test absence. This consultation explains the rationale for the new duty and invites views on the method the Department is proposing for collecting the reasons for the test absence.

Launch Date: 01 Oct 2007

Closing Date: 21 Dec 2007

[Consultation On Draft Information As To Provision Of Education \(England\) Regulations 2008](#)

This consultation seeks views on draft Regulations which replace and consolidate The Education (Information as to Provision of Education)(England) Regulations 1999 (SI 1999/1066, as amended by SI 2003/190, SI 2005/346 and SI 2006/1033). They make one substantial amendment to those Regulations which changes and extends the period in which information on surplus places is to be provided to the Secretary of State. The draft Regulations also include a new requirement on local authorities to submit to the Secretary of State, information relating to secondary preferences submitted by applicants resident in their area and the offers they receive. These draft Regulations apply to England only.

Launch Date: 11 Sep 2007

Closing Date: 03 Dec 2007