

The first update for the Spring Term should be read in conjunction with the Checklist that should arrive in your school this week. Somewhat less frantic than the Autumn Term!! Please pass on any information to the relevant governors.

- a) Urgent Matters - DAG Survey - PLEASE RESPOND ( All )
- b) Volunteers Sought - Schools' Forum ( Secondary )
- c) Consultations ( All ) - Education Outside the Classroom Manifesto
- d) Meetings in the future ( All ) - DAG Annual Assembly : Spring Term Area DAG Meetings : 2 Judy Burgess Workshops
- e) Arrived in schools (i) paper (ii) by e-mail NB Governors are reminded that they can access information about the weekly distribution of e-mails / paperwork to schools by going in to <http://www4.devon.gov.uk/eal/distribution/index.html>
- f) New Items on Websites (i) DAG ( [www.devon.gov.uk/dag](http://www.devon.gov.uk/dag) ) ( ii ) others
- g) Papers available from me
- h) Brief items ( All unless indicated ) - Ted Wragg's Memorial Service : Education White Paper : NGC Meeting with Schools' Minister - Education White paper and Extended Schools : Budget Settlement ( Finance ) : School Transport : Teaching Assistant Grading Scheme ( Personnel ) : Admissions

a) Urgent Matters - DAG Survey Thanks to all those of you who have already replied. If you or your school GB has not yet done so PLEASE RESPOND!! The survey and an accompanying letter has been sent to all schools and is also available on our website ( [www.devon.gov.uk/dag](http://www.devon.gov.uk/dag) ). If you have any difficulties accessing it please let me know and I will forward a copy. It should only take a matter of minutes to complete and return! Remember, we will welcome your returns even if you do not use DAG's services as this also provides us with important information. The final return date is next Monday ( January 16th ). You can return it by email to [DAG@fortfield.eclipse.co.uk](mailto:DAG@fortfield.eclipse.co.uk) or by post to: Jo Frith, Flat 4, No 6 Fortfield Terrace, Sidmouth, Devon EX10 8NT

b) Volunteers Sought - Schools' Forum - Secondary Governor Representative. We currently have a full complement of secondary governors on the Schools' Forum but no first substitute. Any secondary governor interested in taking this on or finding out more ( you receive all the papers and are invited to attend all meetings and to play a full role whenever one of the secondary representatives is unable to attend ) please let me know. Of all the representative groups I am involved with the Forum seems to me to be the most interesting and rewarding.

c) Consultations ( All ) - Education Outside the Classroom Manifesto - details in DAG December Governor Update. DfES Deadline 30 January 2006. Deadline for comment to NGC 16 January 2006

d) Meetings in the future ( All )

(i) Reminder of important diary date with national speaker – DAG Annual Assembly will be held on Saturday March 18th from 10.00 - 1.00 at County Hall. Full details will be circulated to all schools later this month.

(ii) DAG Area Meetings taking place this term are open to any governor wherever they live, though they will obviously be most convenient to those living in the Local Learning Communities near the venues. More detailed information should be in schools.

Wed. Jan. 25th	KEVICC, Totnes
Thu. Jan. 26th	Teignmouth CC
Wed. Feb. 1st	Bridestowe Primary
Thu. Feb. 2nd	Lapford Primary

(iii) 2 very interesting half-day workshops led by Judy Burgess. Available Light Productions (on behalf of Teachers' TV) are running 2 free half-day workshops for School Governors on Saturday 28th January at the Crossmead Conference Centre, Barley Lane, Exeter. The sessions will be filmed for Teachers' TV, and will be chaired by former head of Devon Governor Services, Judy Burgess. Places on the workshops will be allocated on a first come, first served basis. Refreshments will be provided. Travel expenses will be paid for those coming from 10 miles or further away, and cases of hardship will be considered individually.

The morning session will be for primary governors and will run from 9am - 12.30pm. It will deal with the question of whether data and statistics are a true reflection of a school's performance. The afternoon session will be for secondary governors and will run from 1pm - 5pm. It will help governors to improve their understanding of the 'Every Child Matters' agenda, in particular 'Enjoying and Achieving'.

Anyone interested should contact Amy Carter (0117 908 4433) [acarter@availablelight.tv](mailto:acarter@availablelight.tv) or by post at: Available Light Productions, The Victorian Arcade, 3a Boyce's Avenue, Clifton, Bristol BS8 4AA to reserve a place. They should give their name, school, school's phone number, their role on the GB ( e.g. Chair, Parent Governor etc. ) and a contact phone number.

e) Arrived in schools

(i) paper

- Spring Term Checklist

(ii) by e-mail NB Governors are reminded that they can access information about the weekly distribution of e-mails / paperwork to schools by going in to <http://www4.devon.gov.uk/eal/distribution/index.html>

f) New Items on Websites

(i) DAG ( [www.devon.gov.uk/dag](http://www.devon.gov.uk/dag) )

- NGC January Bulletin

- NGC Spring Newsletter

- Education White Paper - a very useful summary from Dr. Phil Norrey as presented to a seminar in November ( in the DAG Documents Miscellaneous section )

( ii ) others - nil!!

g) Papers available from me

Once again some very interesting papers from TEN ( The Education Network ). I have added a few main comments from TEN which seem, in some cases, to reinforce views we hear from governors.

- School Admissions Codes of Practice ( at the heart of the White Paper controversy - see also item h) (vii) ).

A written ministerial statement before Christmas announced that the DfES has published a summary of responses to the consultation on revisions to the school admissions and school admissions appeals codes of practice and that it has been decided not to revise the codes of practice at this time. TEN comment " The consultation closed exactly one week before publication of the Schools White Paper (see TEN briefing 81/05), which provoked considerable anxiety about whether there were sufficiently robust arrangements in place to effectively safeguard fair admissions in the face of the proposal for Trust schools. In particular, the concern focused on the increase in school autonomy and the prospect of a far larger number of schools becoming their own admissions authority. Allaying such fears would almost certainly require a significant strengthening of the role of local authorities and the admissions forums, though this would be seen by others as diminishing the promised autonomy. This is obviously an issue which is likely to be central to the forthcoming legislation. The decision to proceed with regulations giving priority to looked after children is very welcome. "

- The Information Sharing Index. This summarises the DfES policy statement announcing of a fully operational information sharing index to support the work of children's services to be introduced in all areas of England by the end of 2008. The new national index for children will cost £224 million, and will provide a tool to support better communication among practitioners across education, health, social care and youth offending.

- Race Equality in Education. This summarises key points from the above report published by Ofsted on 22 November 2005. The report examines work on race equality in education in schools, including how schools are meeting the requirements of the Race Relations Amendment Act. The report highlights good practice in both schools and local education authorities in England.

- Duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of looked after children - Statutory Guidance. This discusses the Statutory Guidance on the duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of looked after children, now in a final version following consultation on a draft in early 2005.

- Remodelling the School Workforce - Ofsted Report. This summarises a recent report by Ofsted on the implementation of the national workforce agreement. It particularly relates to school practice but there are also recommendations for local authorities and implications for school governing bodies. TEN comment " The report indicates that the national agreement has indeed impacted positively on the workload of teachers and support staff, but also that senior managers had benefited the least, and headteachers, in particular, continued to sustain a heavy workload. A whole school approach to remodelling is commended but, although many schools have perceived a significant change in workforce culture and are monitoring the changes they have made, few are as yet evaluating the impact of their actions on raising standards. Similarly, local authorities' support for workforce reform is sound and well-established, but they are urged to do more to monitor its impact on schools. The role of governing bodies in supporting schools is also seen as under-developed in this area. "

h) Brief items ( All unless indicated )

(i) Ted Wragg's memorial service will be held on Saturday 4 February 2006 at 11.00 am in Exeter Cathedral.

(ii) The Education White Paper - Higher Standards, Better Schools for All - can be found at: <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/publications/schoolswhitepaper> The NGC briefing on the White Paper is posted on the NGC website, [www.ngc.org.uk](http://www.ngc.org.uk), in the Consultations and Policy section, under Briefing Reports. NGC presented oral evidence on the Education White Paper to the Select Committee, together with NASG and NCPTA, on 12th December. The many concerns raised by governors about admissions, Trust Schools and the threat to the stakeholder model of governance were among the issues covered. NGC's written evidence to the Select Committee is also posted on the NGC website.

(iii) NGC, NASG and NCOGS met with Jacqui Smith, Minister for Schools on 15th December. Some time was spent raising the concerns of governors about various proposals in the White Paper. Among other issues, the governors' side pointed out that none of them had heard the desire to become independent, as a Trust or Foundation School, expressed by anyone. The Minister said she had and offered the name of one school that was keen to embrace a more independent future. The remainder of the meeting centred on Extended Schools and concerns governors may have about their role and responsibilities in regard to extended services. It was clear that governors needed good and clear information and the Minister was shown a draft copy of Extended Schools - A

Guide for Governors. NGC and NRT had worked, together with NASG and NCOGS, on this publication. The Minister felt that it was very useful. (The Guide will be available in mid-January from NGC).

(iv) Devon's Budget Settlement ( Finance ). The Government has announced that Devon's schools' grant for the coming financial year will rise by 6.5 per cent. That is slightly better than we were expecting. The Government's figures show guaranteed funding will rise to £3,335 per pupil in the next financial year and £3,551 the year after. However, as you all know, Devon still lags well behind the national average for pupil spend.

(v) School Transport. The County Council Executive has confirmed its approval of a change to operate a distance criterion for free home to school transport of two miles, rather than three as at present, to all primary age children over eight, to be phased in over the next three years, with implementation at the earliest date possible

(vi) New Teaching Assistant Model Grading Scheme ( Personnel ) The scheme and guidance has been posted on the Schools' Policies Home Page:

[http://www4.devon.gov.uk/private/corporate/policy/hr/schools/ta\\_grading/homepage.shtml](http://www4.devon.gov.uk/private/corporate/policy/hr/schools/ta_grading/homepage.shtml) A full copy of the Scheme and associated guidance will be posted shortly on the Remodelling in Devon website and will replace the draft job descriptions currently available: [http://www.devon.gov.uk/dcs/improve/remodel/pay\\_and\\_conditions.htm](http://www.devon.gov.uk/dcs/improve/remodel/pay_and_conditions.htm) This provides an avenue for the scheme to be viewed on a publicly accessible site. The information includes full job descriptions, person specifications, grading information and guidance on the timescales for implementation.

(vii) Admissions. DfES conducted a consultation over the summer on proposed changes to the Admissions Code of Practice. One of the main changes proposed was the requirement to give priority to "looked after children". The draft Code also gave guidance on good and bad practice in over-subscription criteria and contained a proposed annex of acceptable over-subscription criteria. The consultation ended on 18 October 2005. The DfES announced on 14 December that they would not be revising the whole Code at this time. However, Regulations will be laid to require admission authorities to give priority to "looked after children". This requirement will come into force for all admissions from September 2007 onwards. Also from 2007 it will no longer be possible for schools to introduce selection by aptitude in design and technology or information technology.

..... and finally

A genuine e-mail I received from a governor on our e-mail network

Our e-mail address has changed because we have that wonderful thing called broadband. It only took 26 days to set up and if you want to talk to me about the pain of setting it up and the numerous calls I spent to BT's helpline and the hours I spent being told my call was important to them please phone me for counselling.

Otherwise - if you don't believe you know me from Adam I apologise as I have picked this up from an address book that is largely controlled by my children so I presume most of you are prawn providers and when I find you I will sue you.

If you want to continue I think this is because you believe you either know and/or love:

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Zen B... (no-one could!)

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Otherwise - assume we are spam and treat us with the contempt we so richly deserve

Cheers

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