

The final update for the Autumn Term. Please pass on any information to the relevant governors.

- a) Urgent Matters - DAG Survey ( All ) PLEASE RESPOND
- b) Volunteers Sought - Schools' Forum ( Secondary ) : Free Open Forum Governor Discussions ( All )
- c) Consultations ( All unless indicated ) - Children & Young People's Plan : School Calendar 2006/07 : Proposed Changes to Funding of Statements ( Finance ) : Education Outside the Classroom Manifesto
- d) Meetings in the future ( All ) - Change of date of DAG Annual Assembly : Spring Term Area DAG Meetings
- 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 ) - NGC/NASG Merger : 2 governor pleas for assistance ( Foundation + Pre-School ) : School Improvement Partners ( CoGs ) : Safeguarding Children in Recruitment Process ( Personnel ) : French Residential Centre

..... and finally

- a) Urgent Matters ( All )

DAG Survey. This has been sent to all schools and is also available on our website. It may not be the best time of the year for this (!!!) but DAG would really appreciate feedback on this survey from as many governors and schools as possible. We are doing this at the present moment for a number of reasons:

- the structure of the Local Education Authority and its operation within Devon County Council is being radically changed from next April
- there are possible changes to school organisation if the current White Paper becomes law
- NGC and NASG are to combine into one new organisation in 2006. This is bound to change the services they offer
- I have indicated that I would like to ' move on ' after the Spring Assembly and relinquish my current role.

The DAG Executive is holding a planning day in late January to decide on the future portfolio of services it offers to Governors and the most effective way of delivering them. In order to do this as well as possible, we have devised the Survey to find out what you use and value most about DAG's services. It should only take a matter of minutes to complete and return! We will welcome your returns even if you do not use DAG's services as this also provides us with important information. It would be wonderful to have the survey returned this term. However, bearing in mind the Christmas break, we have put the final return date as Monday January 16th 2006. 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

(i) Schools' Forum - Secondary Governor Representative. Thanks to all those who offered to fill the Primary vacancy. Pam Barnard ( Sandford ) has taken the vacancy and Malcolm Dobbins ( Marpool, Exmouth ) will act as first substitute in event of absence of any of the primary reps. We currently have a full complement of secondary governors on the 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.

(ii) Involvement in a recorded governor discussion for Teachers' TV. Available Light Production Company is running 2 free half-day workshops for School Governors on Saturday 21st January 2006, at 'The i' at Monks Park Secondary School Filton Road, Horfield, Bristol BS7 0XZ - for primary school governors from 9.00 - 12.30 and for secondary school governors from 1.00 - 5.00. Refreshments will be provided. Both sessions will be filmed for Teachers' TV and will be led by Judy Burgess. Places on the workshops will be allocated on a first come, first served basis. The primary session will help Governors to improve their understanding of the 'Every Child Matters' agenda. Discussion will be focused in particular on two of ECM's five outcomes: 'Safeguarding Children' and 'Making a Positive Contribution', by looking at two short programmes made for Teachers' TV. The secondary session will be on the subjects of 'Implementing the 14-19 Curriculum' and 'Inclusion'. If you are interested please contact Debbie Clapshaw at [debbie.clapshaw@devon.gov.uk](mailto:debbie.clapshaw@devon.gov.uk)

- c) Consultations

(i) Devon ( All ) Children and Young People's Plan - the 3-year overarching Strategic Plan drawn together by the Children's Trust led by Devon County Council. The structure of the CYPP reflects the five key outcome areas incorporated in Every Child Matters and is informed by the key aims and targets of that document. It also pulls together the major strategic goals incorporated within our local plans, including the Community Strategy, the Vision for Learning and Devon County Council's Strategic Plan. You are invited to comment on the draft. A number of questions appear at the back of the document, and you will see that responses can be made electronically on the Children's Trust website. You may wish to comment individually or collectively through your Local Learning Community. Appropriate weblinks are: Draft CYPP:

[www.devonchildrenstrust.org.uk/consultation\\_draft\\_cypp.pdf](http://www.devonchildrenstrust.org.uk/consultation_draft_cypp.pdf) Consultation Response form:

[www.devonchildrenstrust.org.uk/cypp\\_consultation\\_response-2.dot](http://www.devonchildrenstrust.org.uk/cypp_consultation_response-2.dot)

(ii) Devon ( All ) School Calendar for the 2006/07 Academic Year. Please note that the proposals suggest some changes from the normal pattern with three half-term holidays, each of one week; a Christmas holiday running between 20 December-1 January, inclusive, and an Easter holiday running between 7-18 April, inclusive, which would be detached from the Easter Bank Holidays. The Summer holiday in 2007 would run from 26 July-2 September, inclusive. Deadline for responses March 5th

(iii) Devon ( Finance) Proposed Changes to Funding of Statements - quite controversial!! There has clearly been great interest and debate and officers have circulated responses to all the questions raised in consultation meetings. In view of the discussion generated locally the deadline for consultation responses has been extended to the end of this week ( 16 December ).

(iv) National ( All ) Education Outside the Classroom Manifesto. DfES is consulting on the vision and aims that will underpin the Education Outside the Classroom Manifesto, announced by Ruth Kelly earlier this year. It is intended to be a 'movement', or joint undertaking which many stakeholders create and to which anyone, including providers, voluntary organisations, youth groups, schools and local authorities can sign up. The main aim of the Manifesto is to provide all children and young people with a variety of high quality learning experiences outside a classroom environment, whether that be during school, after school or during holidays. The consultation can be found at: [www.dfes.gov.uk/consultations/](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/consultations/) Responses may be made online at:

<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/consultations/> or sent by email to: [eotcmanifesto.consultation@dfes.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:eotcmanifesto.consultation@dfes.gsi.gov.uk). Written responses should be sent to: Consultation Unit, Area 1A, Castle View House, East Lane, Runcorn, Cheshire WA7 2GJ. DfES Deadline 30 January 2006. Deadline for comment to NGC 16 January 2006

d) Meetings in the future ( All )

(i) Please note a change of date for our Annual Assembly which will now be held on Saturday March 18th ( NOT 25th ) from 10.00 - 1.00 at County Hall. Full details to follow early next term.

(ii) Area Meetings will take place next term as below - they are open to any governor wherever they live, though they will obviously be most convenient to those living near the venues. Full details next term.

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

e) Arrived in schools

(i) paper

- Conference Times, a summary of the Achievement through Collaboration Conference which looked at the central issue of working together across services and across learning communities. Well worth a read

- DfES Spectrum

(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>

- DAG Survey and covering letter [ see section a) above ]

- School Funding Issues - Answers to questions from the recent consultation evenings which centred on the formula [ see above c) (iii) ]

f) New Items on Websites

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

- DAG Survey and covering letter [ see section a) above ]

- Short Report on NGC AGM November 2005

- Minutes of November DAG Executive meeting

- NGC December Bulletin Board

- DAG AGM Papers (!) including Top Tips for running GB meetings

- Area Meetings Feedback from earlier this term. There are still a few unanswered questions on these but, hopefully, lots of useful detail to frequently asked governor questions at the moment.

(ii) on the DCC website

- Excellence for All Children - Devon's Strategy for Inclusion  
[www.devon.gov.uk/index/learning/plans\\_and\\_priorities.htm](http://www.devon.gov.uk/index/learning/plans_and_priorities.htm)

g) Papers available from me

Top Tips for running GB meetings - ideas from you pulled together from various meetings into a single brief document. No blinding lights, but some good common sense!

TEN documents. These are independent and from no particular political perspective that I can detect. I do feel that they help to give a counterbalance to media presentation of educational issues. They will often state that the media have given disproportionate emphasis to a small element of recommendations / findings ... and often the negative / controversial ones.

- The Protection of Children Act 1999: A practical guide to the Act for all organisations working with

children This is a useful guide for all organisations unfamiliar or uncertain about the details of how to ensure that people working with children, in either a paid or voluntary capacity, are suitably checked from a child protection perspective. The guide clearly explains the process for organisations with statutory duties in regard to vetting, but also provides logical examples to illustrate "greyer" areas of the vetting process.

- Making Every Child Matter: The policy briefing summarises the comprehensive report on findings from 69 inspections undertaken by the Social Services Inspectorate and the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) between April 2003 and March 2005.

- Learning Behaviour This briefing summarises the key issues addressed and the main recommendations of the Report of The Practitioners' Group on School Behaviour and Discipline, chaired by Sir Alan Steer, and published by the DfES on 21 October 2005. Neil Davies ( Chair NGC ) was a key member of the group. " Their Report contains a balanced and positive approach to promoting good behaviour in schools, and there is full recognition that this requires schools to take action on a broad front and involve staff, governors, parents and pupils. One of the key messages from these successful practitioners, and therefore one that should be taken notice of, is that children learn respect by receiving it. " HIGHLY RECOMMENDED

- Ofsted: Annual Report 2004 / 2005 The report provides an overview of the quality and standards of education and care in England, based upon evidence from inspections undertaken during the academic year 2004/2005.

- Education Outside the Classroom Manifesto This policy briefing summarises key points from the above consultation [ see above c) (iv) ]

- Childcare Bill This policy briefing summarises the Childcare Bill, introduced to Parliament on 8 November 2005, and its implications for local authorities. The Bill is intended to implement aspects of the Government's Ten Year Strategy for Childcare, and proposes several new duties for local authorities designed to promote high quality and integrated early years services in the interests of parents.

- Bichard Inquiry Recommendations: Second Progress report. This policy briefing summarises the recent progress and forward plans relating to the implementation of the recommendations of the Bichard Inquiry, held after the tragic deaths of Holly Wells and Jessica Chapman in 2003. " It is good to see that Sir Michael Bichard's recommendation that a progress report towards his recommendations be issued by the Government at six and 12 months has been met by the Government. This second progress report clearly identifies the range of progress made across statutory agencies and, where applicable, their partners since the first report was delivered. "

- Learning Mentors and Co-ordinators. This policy briefing summarises a guide for planners and decision makers in schools and local authorities to help them sustain and develop successful learning mentor provision, within the context of the Every Child Matters agenda and the New Relationship with Schools. " Learning mentors have been playing an important and effective role in improving outcomes for young people. Research, for example, has shown that pupils receiving support from learning mentors were one and a half times more likely to achieve five or more GCSEs at grades A\* to C than young people with similar prior attainment who had not been mentored. In short, the guide concludes that learning mentor provision 'works'. The guide also stresses the success of the learning mentor co-ordinator role and the skills and experience which have been built up in this area over the past few years. "

- Safeguarding Children in Education: Dealing with allegations of abuse against teachers and other staff. This policy briefing summarises the new guidance issued by DfES on 21 November 2005. The guidance introduces new arrangements for dealing with allegations of abuse made against a teacher or other member of staff or volunteer in an education setting. It aims to ensure that any allegation is dealt with fairly, quickly, and consistently, in a way that provides effective protection for the child and at the same time supports the person who is the subject of the allegation.

h) Brief items ( All unless indicated )

- (i) NGC/NASG Merger A message from NGC. " Following the vote at the NGC Annual General Meeting on 12th November, the National Governors' Association will come into being early in 2006. There is still much work to do over practicalities and in other respects, but thanks must be sent out to the many people who contributed views over recent months. "

- (ii) 2 governor queries - please pass any advice on to me and I will forward it.

- from a Secretary to Foundation Governors. " I have recently taken on the role of Secretary to the Foundation Governors. The Foundation Governors have a completely different role to the ordinary school governors. Foundation Governors are a body of trustees (from town council, Devon County Council and co-opted) who manage a portfolio of investments on the schools behalf, they also disburse money to students and the school for educational activities/facilities which do not fall within the remit of the school budget. I have been asked by the committee to see if I could find some training for myself to help me with my new role. If there are any other schools who have a similar situation and who may be able to offer advice, please get in touch. "

- re pre-schools. " If there is someone out there who has had experience in setting up a Pre-school which is run and controlled by the GB it would be appreciated. Our planned pre-school will be within the Primary school complex but it will be an entirely separate enterprise and probably set up as a charity. All funding will be by way of parental fees and vouchers and the GB will have to organise a separate committee to run it. Any advice would be welcome. "

- (iii) School Improvement Partners (SIPs) Advertisements have been placed for these posts and recruitment is

underway. Most SIPs will do about 19 days work each year and so the position is open to serving Headteachers. Anne Burrell, Regional Coordinator for SIPs in the South West, outlined the way that School Improvement Partners would work to primary heads at a recent meeting. This is a significant change in the way that school improvement will be tackled. If it builds upon my recent personal experience of an Annual Review Visit it should be a very positive process.

(iv) You may recall that by the end of this term each school should have nominated a governor for online training following the Bichard Enquiry which recommended that head teachers and school governors should receive training on how to ensure that interviews to appoint staff reflect the importance of safeguarding children and that, from a date to be agreed, no interview panel to appoint staff working in schools should be convened without at least one member being properly trained. Schools have been sent this information.

" Safer Recruitment is an online training course, commissioned by the DfES and developed by NCSL, in response to the Bichard Enquiry. The aim by Spring 2006 is to have one person on every interview panel who has successfully completed this training.

The online training tool provides information on a safer school culture and valuable advice and guidance to strengthen safeguards against employing unsuitable people in schools. The training will help schools demonstrate that they have effective recruitment and selection processes in place.

Ofsted will be reviewing recruitment practices as part of their inspection process and it will be important that schools can demonstrate good practice. At this stage, just one governor per school can be nominated to carry out the online training. It is for governing bodies to decide which of their members should be nominated. Governing bodies should ensure that the nominee is the most appropriate (i.e. the person likely to be involved in most interviews). It is important that a member of the governing body undertakes this training.

An online application form will be available on the Safer Recruitment website [www.ncsl.org.uk/saferrecruitment](http://www.ncsl.org.uk/saferrecruitment) and schools will need to complete this on behalf of their nominated governor. The governor will then receive information in the post about how to access the training. "

(v) I have received info. about a residential centre for English school pupils not far from Dinan in Brittany. Further details at [www.centrelepage.com](http://www.centrelepage.com)

..... and finally it's the time of year when we get sappy over animals so

Man, to friend, "I've really had it with my dog: he'll chase anyone on a bike."

Friend, "What are you going to do? Have him put down?"

Man, "No, I think I'll just take his bike away."

"Doctor, Doctor, I think I am a dog." "How long have you felt like this?"

"Ever since I was a puppy"

Thousands of years ago cats were worshipped as gods. Cats have never forgotten this.

I love my cat. My cat does not care.

What's the difference between cats and dogs? Dogs have owners, cats have staff.

What do you get if you cross a cat with a gorilla? An animal that puts you out at night.