

This is the second update for the Autumn Term - can't believe how much is in here again!! Please pass on any information to the relevant governors.

- a) Urgent Matters - Staffing Structure Review (CoG / Personnel) : OFSTED (CoG/All) : Primary Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme (All)
 - b) Volunteers Sought - (i) DAG Assistant Secretary (All) (ii) Secondary / Special School Parent Governor Representative (iii) DAG Representative for Changing our Futures Group - outdoor activities and environmental awareness (All)
 - c) Consultations (All) - Children's Centres in Devon : Youth Green Paper Youth Matters : New Fire Safety Guidance for Schools : Foundation Status for Primary Schools
 - d) Meetings in the future - Link Governors : Looking after your Head
 - 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) (ii) others
 - g) Papers available from me
 - h) Brief items (All unless indicated) - Dr. Phil Norrey : Children's Trust (ALL Parent Governors at your school) : Sponsorship for Primaries : Comparative Financial Statistics (Finance) : Absences : Newspaper Photos : Extended Schools : Healthy Eating : Child Protection : Building Schools for the Future (Secondary)

..... and finally

a) Urgent Matters

(i) Staffing Structure Review (CoG / Personnel) Governing Bodies need to ensure that this is proceeding within the timetable laid out in the Guidance Pack in schools and that they are giving their headteacher as much support as they can. The NGC Briefing Paper on our website gives a good guide as to what governors need to do. At its recent meeting the Devon Schools' Forum praised the Guidance Pack produced by the LEA. It also decided unanimously to write to Ruth Kelly outlining a series of objections to the timetable for the implementation of TLR posts and asking for the deadline to be extended to Easter 2006 as has happened in Wales. Members from primary, secondary and special schools, as well as governors, all voiced their concerns about the timetable. They said this was one of the biggest changes in education in 30 years and yet the Government wanted it completed in three months - on top of other major pieces of work like job evaluation, self-evaluation for Ofsted, workforce remodelling and attempts to strike a work-life balance.

Headteachers and Governors in Devon feel very strongly that this is a fundamentally important exercise which could bring great benefit if it is not rushed. The strong language of the Schools' Forum minutes on this issue is, to say the least, unusual!!

If you wish to raise your concerns you might wish to consider writing to the Secretary of State and/or your MP (copy to Ben Bradshaw, the only Labour MP within the LEA area and to me).

One minor detail. Make sure you get TLR2 and TLR1 posts the right way around. Unlike UPS awards which go upwards 1 > 2 > 3 these are the other way around. TLR2 is the lower financial award and TLR1 the higher – an error in your structure plan could be costly!!

(ii) OFSTED (CoG/All) The new inspection regime (Section 5 school inspections) is now underway. In contrast to the previous Framework, Local Authorities are not notified in advance of inspections. Performance data, self-evaluation systems and achievement of the most vulnerable groups of pupils are the new cornerstones of inspection set within the context of the 5 outcomes of the Every Child Matters. By letting the LEA know as soon as your school is notified of an inspection they can have someone at the ready should you want any advice or support.

(iii) Primary Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme (All) Since the 2002 amendment to the 1998 Education Act Local Authorities are obliged to have a co-ordinated admissions scheme. Devon has introduced the co-ordinated scheme for 2006. Issues that will impact on schools include overall 10% decline in children in primary schools. There are going to be some places in Devon that will even see a 25% decline in numbers, whilst other areas will see an increase in roll. Admission procedures this year will be markedly different and schools need to be well aware of the changes and how they will affect them. A paper copy with details has been sent together with a draft copy of the First Step Primary Admissions Booklet for 2006. It is really important that your school checks that the details about it in the draft booklet are accurate before it goes to final print. The accompanying letter explains, amongst other things, what the co-ordinated scheme is, gives key dates within the scheme, suggests how to manage parental enquires from now on and sets out the action points for your school.

The closing date for primary applications is January 20, 2006. An on-line application process has been extended to include primary admissions this year. The website address is the same - www.devon.gov.uk/admissionsonline and applications for primary places will be accepted from November after the First Step booklet has been distributed and the secondary closing date has passed.

You can find out what is currently happening in you area by accessing the following site which shows you, amongst other things, the number of children living in your area who go to other schools. It makes for fascinating reading!!!!

<http://www.devon.gov.uk/eal/dgfl/spplanning/index.html>

b) Volunteers Sought

(i) DAG Assistant Secretary (All) - we are very keen to find someone prepared to support DAG with, amongst other things, the clerking of Executive and Area Meetings. See last month's update and/or contact me for details of honorarium etc.

(ii) Secondary / Special School Parent Governor Representative – see last month's update

(iii) DAG Representative for Changing our Futures Group – outdoor activities and environmental awareness (All) Ingrid Fisher (Assistant Director) is currently chair of a DCC Officer action group to consider a project to develop a cross-Directorate educational strategy which encompasses outdoor activities and environmental awareness, with the view to producing a strategy to promote an awareness of sustainability amongst children and young people, help them to enjoy outdoor activities and give them a better understanding of the environment. A governor volunteer is sought to work with this high level group. If you are interested please let me know.

c) Consultations -

(i) From LEA A paper has been sent in to schools to promote discussions / responses around developing Children's Centres in Devon. This is a major initiative which will affect all areas. The purpose is to improve the outcomes for the children of Devon. This is one of the first steps of the consultation process. There are a series of attached papers designed to inform discussions and gain responses. Deadline for responses November 30th.

(ii) Youth Green Paper Youth Matters (see Oct. NGC Bulletin Board + last update for details - deadline half-term)

(iii) New Fire Safety Guidance for Schools - see Oct. NGC Bulletin Board for details

(iv) Foundation Status for Primary Schools - see Oct. NGC Bulletin.

d) Meetings in the future

(i) Link Governor Meetings after half term - the theme is the New Relationship with Schools and all that this encompasses, including the new Ofsted Framework for Inspection.

3 November - Exeter

8 November - Ashburton

15 November - Barnstaple (all 7-9.30pm)

(ii) Headteacher Worklife Balance Next term Governor Services are offering four training sessions for governors around the county entitled 'Looking After Your Head', during which they will try to establish where some best practice is already taking place. Details in the Devon Governor.

e) Arrived in schools (by no means a complete list!!)

(i) paper

- Staffing Structure Review Pack [see a) (i)]

- Primary Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme [see a) (iii)]

- Link Governor Meetings - details + booking form [see d)

(i)]

- Job Evaluation within Devon County Council - a paper copy of this letter has been sent to Schools for the attention of the Headteacher and the Chair of Governors asking that JE questionnaires should be returned.

- A letter, leaflet + poster from the Implementation Review Unit about reducing bureaucracy (!!)

- This month's DfES Spectrum

- Achieving Excellence - a vision for an inclusive education system in Devon

(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>

- Details of a 3-month trial provided by the University of Bristol School of Education, which provides concise summaries of government and agency (including Ofsted) reports and guidance.

www4.devon.gov.uk/eal/docs/oct05/0541021.doc

- Emergency Procedures and Plans This document contains essential information on the LEA's procedures in emergency situations and provides a model School Emergency Plan which Governing Bodies are asked to consider when drawing up their own plans. www4.devon.gov.uk/eal/dgfl/manage.html

f) New Items on Websites

(i) DAG [NGC Section] (www.devon.gov.uk/dag)

- Briefing on Staffing Structure Review [Reports / Commentaries]

- Brief Report on DfES / OFSTED Governors' Conference [Meetings]

- October Bulletin Board [Bulletin Boards]

(ii) others

- A letter from Jacqui Smith at the DfES in response to letters of concern from Devon about current levels of teacher stress. <http://www4.devon.gov.uk/eal/docs/sep05/0539020a.doc>

- Some Additional Resources on Statutory Pay Guidance, Model Pay Policy, The Education Review of Staffing Structure 2005 amongst other things can be found on www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/payandperformance/pay/2005

You might find these useful for school structure plans.

- Comparative Financial Statistics [see h) (iv)] <https://sfb.teachernet.gov.uk/login.aspx>
- Extended Schools; Access to Opportunities and Services for All - a Prospectus.

www.teachernet.gov.uk/extendedschools

- NSPCC materials on Child Protection [see h) (ix)] www.tmmuk.com/ngc/document.asp?id=78
- Building Schools for the Future [see h) (x)] www.4ps.gov.uk

g) Papers available from me by e-mail - please let me know if you want them

(i) Materials handed out at Area Meetings which include

- Background info. on Staffing Structure Review
- A School Governors' Guide to LSC
- A paper on New School Funding Arrangements

(ii) The Change for Children Newsletter 9. This edition is focussed on the Youth Green Paper - Youth Matters and includes interviews with colleagues as well as the views of young people. Also highlighted is the new statutory guidance published under the Children Act (2004)

(iii) The following commentary papers from The Education Network

- Sure Start Children's Centres - a briefing that summarises the DfES guidance for local authorities on the planning needed to develop phase 2 of the Government's strategy for establishing a children's centre for every community.

- The cost of a free education - a briefing that summarises key points from this campaign document released jointly by Barnardo's, Child Poverty Action Group, Citizens Advice, End Child Poverty, the Family Welfare Association, the Harpur Trust, One Parent Families, the National Union of Teachers and Save the Children. The campaign highlights the costs families face when sending their children to school. This paper sets out a number of recommendations for policy change to help support low-income families in this context.

- Engaging the Voluntary and Community Sectors in Children's Trusts

- Schools Causing Concern 2005 Guidance ... includes clarification on the misinterpretation that schools will have only one year to come out of special measures

- Single Inspectorate for Children and Learners Summary – a briefing that describes the DfES consultation on implementing the Government's commitment to have a single inspectorate for children principally through the merger of Ofsted with the children's work of the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI).

- SACREs and self - evaluation: a guide - a policy briefing that summarises key points from the document published by Ofsted as a guide to self-evaluation for Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education (SACREs).

- Ready Steady Change: training materials for engagement with children and young people. The implementation of Every Child Matters challenges authorities to engage with children & young people effectively. These new training packages, funded by the DfES, will prove an important resource.

- English 2000-05: A review of inspection evidence – policy briefing summarising key points from the recent OFSTED report which evaluates changes in provision for English across primary and secondary schools over the period 2000-05. It draws attention to improvements in standards and teaching and highlights weaknesses in provision in some schools. This is the first in a new series of subject reports to be released by Ofsted, as subjects are no longer reported in detail by school inspections.

h) Brief items

(i) Congratulations to Dr Phil Norrey on his nomination for the post of Chief Executive of Devon County Council. Details with regard to the timing and brief for the appointment of a new Director of Children's services will follow soon.

(ii) Children's Trust - message to be passed on to ALL parent governors at your school, please. Peter Martin is a Parent Representative on the Devon Children's Trust Board. Part of his responsibility is to inform parents about the Children's Trust. He also needs to get feedback from parents to help him represent their views. To assist him in this he has set up a msn group for Devon Parents at <http://groups.msn.com/Devon-Parents>. Parent governors are asked to visit this site and pass on comments to Peter.

(iii) Sponsorship in primaries. A request from a governor of a primary school. " At our school we are in the early stages of considering setting up a friends of the school group and exploring sponsorship opportunities, primarily from local businesses. It would be helpful to know of any other schools who have tried to do this. " If you can help this school and are prepared to have your details forwarded to the school please let me know.

(iv) Comparative Statistics The comparative financial statistics for 2004/5 have been produced. The statistics should be treated with some care as they depend on the correct financial coding of income and expenditure. Distortions can occur because of such issues as SEN Funding. Your School Finance Officer can help with the interpretation of data. There is a national benchmarking website set up by the Audit Commission on Teachernet. Use the Guest Login if you are not sure of your schools Login. Website as follows: <https://sfb.teachernet.gov.uk/login.aspx> Details on how to download information are available on the following web page: <http://www.devon.gov.uk/resources/fseal/schools/financeinfodist.doc>

(v) The ' Absence Target ' for 2006/2007 will need to be set by the HT and Governors and submitted to the LEA as part of the SaLTs return (School and Local Authority Target Setting, formally known as the EDP Education

Development Plan) in December.

(vi) Newspaper Photos Phil Norrey is frequently asked for advice on this topic. I copy part of a note he has sent to all schools. " A number of schools in Devon have adopted a policy which the LEA believes is good practice. At the beginning of the school year they write to parents detailing some of the occasions when newspaper photographers may be invited into school such as the annual Carol Service, Harvest Festival, sports days or prize- ceremonies. They then invite any parent who does not wish his or her child to appear and be identified in a newspaper photograph to opt out by returning a cut-off portion of the letter. The advice of the County Solicitor is that this would be sufficient defence to almost any parental complaint involving invasion of privacy or similar. The DfES has published guidance recommending schools not to identify children in photographs on school websites which I entirely support, and newspapers in Devon will not generally identify children in any photographs on their own websites. "

(vii) Extended Schools 'Core Offer' In June 2005 the DfES published, Extended Schools; Access to Opportunities and Services for All - a Prospectus. (www.teachernet.gov.uk/extendedschools) This document essentially brought a sharper focus to bear on the development of Extended Schools. In particular it established a 'core offer' which all schools would be expected to deliver with partner organisations. Jon Bell has written to schools to point out that it is important to realise that this does not mean that all schools have to develop these extended services themselves. Rather, schools are seen as being central, or at the heart of communities where these services are provided and are easily accessible.

(viii) Healthy Eating in Schools & Fresh Start Roll-Out Details of the proposed Devon roll-out local plans were presented and agreed at the Schools' Forum on Friday 30 September. Specific letters have been sent to relevant schools.

On this same topic NGC has written " You may have seen recent press coverage about the proposed new nutritional standards for school meals and the plan to ' ban junk food ' from vending machines, tuck shops and school lunches. You may also have seen the headline in the Sunday telegraph which said ' Governors who allow junk food in schools to face prosecution '. A number of NGC members have contacted NGC concerned that governors could face prosecution over school meals. NGC is requesting further information from the DfES about the comments reported in the Sunday Telegraph and will update members as soon as possible. "

(ix) The NSPCC is targeting schools as part of their biggest ever child protection training exercise. From 3 October 2005, schools across the country will receive complementary copies of EduCare, a child protection awareness distance learning programme. They have asked NGC to publicise the campaign to its members. The mailing is part of the NSPCC latest initiative, 'Talk 'til it stops', a campaign designed to mobilise people to take action to end child abuse. The campaign will encourage people to talk to each other if they are worried about a child. Further information can be downloaded from the General Policy section of the NGC website - via the attached links. <http://www.tmmuk.com/ngc/document.asp?id=78>

(x) Building Schools for the Future Prompted by NGC, 4ps, advisers to local authorities on BSF issues, has published a guide for governors. Building Schools for the Future - a guide for school governors and headteachers is available on the 4ps' website: www.4ps.gov.uk. Local authorities engaged in BSF projects will be sent hard copies to pass on to the schools involved - two copies per school.

..... and finally

The mildly serious bit - a good offer from Jane Phillips, former Chair of the National Association of School Governors

" Forget the hurry and bustle - and tap into your creative side. You too can make real, natural, unadulterated jam - jam where you can really taste the fruit - jam that reminds you of the uncomplicated days of your childhood - jam that captures the scents of summer - jam that is so seriously good that it can make you seriously bad! Novices can start with the simple (apricot and blackcurrant). Experts will want to try the more complex (apple and three flower jelly, quince jelly with spice). Visit www.jaminthecupboard.com to find out how. And if jam-making's not your scene - here's a unique Christmas / birthday / anytime present. Health warning! Beware - this jam can be addictive. "

.... and the less serious

Chuckles - Philosophy

Practice safe eating - use condiments

A day without sunshine is likenight!

Be nice to your kids - they'll choose your nursing home.

Borrow money from pessimists - they don't expect it back.

A man and a woman were sitting in a restaurant when the waitress noticed the man sliding down his chair and under the table. The woman appeared remarkably unconcerned but the waitress felt she ought to say something. "Excuse me," she said, "I think your husband just slid under the table." "No," replied the woman coldly. "He just walked in the door."

A wife was keeping a close watch on her new neighbours. "They seem devoted to each other," she told her husband. "He kisses her every time he goes out and even blows kisses to her from the window. Why don't you do that?"

"I hardly know the woman."