

This is almost certainly the final update for the Spring Term. There are only a few school days in April before the holiday starts and the checklist should arrive at the very end of April. Please pass on any information to the relevant governors. Also, I am using rich text instead of plain text - please let me know whether this is helpful or not!!

On a personal note, this is my final update in charge - thanks for your interest, support and, at times, patience over the years!! DAG is in the process of finding a fellow governor who will take responsibility for producing the Updates in the future. The new DAG contact person (and Executive Officer for DAG) will be Jo Frith who can be contacted at dag@fortfield.eclipse.co.uk . Jo will not, however, be producing the Updates.

- a) Urgent Matters (All) - School Profile : GB Reconstitution Deadline : Spring Term Area Meeting Feedback
- b) Volunteers Sought (All) - Secretary for DAG Executive : Governors interested in Extended Schools Agenda
- c) Consultations (Secondary) - School Organisation
- d) Meetings in the future (All) - Link Governors
- 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) - National Governors' Association : CYPS (or is it KIPS?) : Headteacher Performance Management (Personnel) : Book on how to be a good CoG (CoG) : Pupil involvement in staff interviews (Personnel) : Governor role in school self-evaluation (CoG) : Healthy Eating : Specialist Status (Secondary)

a) Urgent Matters

(i) Your school can now be working on The School Profile - go to school.profile@dfes.gsi.gov.uk for details about how to access it.

(ii) All governors who went through the 'reconstitution barrier' (i.e. were appointed or elected on or before 1st Sept 03), have to end their term of office on 31 August 06. Make sure you are prepared for this!!

(iii) Do have a look at the Feedback from the Spring Term Area Meetings on the website - lots of detailed information about current issues.

b) Volunteers Sought

(i) DAG is still urgently seeking a Secretary to minute its Executive and Area Meetings. It is a role with an honorarium that could be ideally undertaken by someone who is currently a clerk to a GB. Details of the role can be found in the DAG Exec. Minutes section of the website. Please contact Jo Frith at dag@fortfield.eclipse.co.uk if you are interested (or know someone who is) or would like further details.

(ii) DAG has developed its own network of contacts for those governors with a particular interest in Extended Schools. If you would like to join it, please contact Andy Mulcock at andy.mulcock@virgin.net

c) Consultation (Secondary) School Organisation - Consultation on Secondary School Competitions Guidance Changes involving a number of school organisation issues including matters arising from the implementation of the 2005 Education Act provisions for competitions for new secondary schools. The consultation can be found at: www.dfes.gov.uk/consultations/ Responses may be made online at: <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/consultations/> or sent by email to: schoolcompetitions.consultations@dfes.gsi.gov.uk . Written responses should be sent to: David Shand, DfES, Room 5.87, Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BT. DfES Deadline 14 May 2006. Deadline for comments to NGA 24 April 2006.

d) Meetings in the future

Advance notice of next term's Link Governor Meetings - your chance to meet Anne Whiteley, the new Director of Devon's Services for Children and Young People who will share her vision for how the new directorate will work with schools and answer questions.

Refreshments from 6.30p.m. with each meeting from 7pm to 9pm.

Tuesday 9 May - The Barnstaple Hotel

Thursday 11 May - The Crossmead Centre, Exeter

Wednesday 17 May - Glazebrook House Hotel, South Brent

Please book a place at the venue / date most convenient to you. Child minding and travel expenses are payable.

e) Arrived in schools

(i) paper 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>

- Devon Governor

- Governors' pack re Extended schools Hard copies were mailed to all CoGs in early March and distributed at the DAG Assembly. Additional copies are available to order from the newly formed National

Governors' Association. NGA apologises for the long wait, particularly to those who placed orders weeks ago, but getting the Minister to sign it off was, apparently, a long process!!

- Devon Services to Schools - the Alternative Portfolio.
- Headlines - information sheet for HTs and CoGs sent on February 28. Useful info. about new arrangements at County Hall and the Joint Area Review for Devon
- Headlines in March together with a separate document setting out plans for the new directorate. Also at <http://www4.devon.gov.uk/eal/docs/mar06/0609012a.doc>

(ii) by e-mail

- Standards Funds Grant 5B - School Meals Grant More info on this grant which is intended to support the transformation of school meals. <http://www4.devon.gov.uk/eal/docs/feb06/0605013.doc>
- Extended Services Update to the letter sent in January. <http://www4.devon.gov.uk/eal/docs/mar06/0609011.doc>

f) New Items on Websites

(i) DAG (www.devon.gov.uk/dag)

- Minutes of January DAG Executive Meeting
- Role Specifications for tasks within the DAG Executive
- NGA March Bulletin Board
- Spring Term Area Meetings Feedback (FULL OF INFORMATION - DO HAVE A LOOK!!)

(ii) others

- TES website (<http://www.tes.co.uk/Governors/>) Message from the editor, Judith Judd " Essential reading for school governors: As the Spring term is well underway, you will need to know how to achieve the new Financial Management Standard. And you can keep up to date on the Education Bill; get school profiles up and running; and read wise words on how to safeguard children. Plus useful websites and addresses. All in the latest edition of the Governor's Information Network briefing. "
- Children's Trust Bulletins at <http://www.devonchildrenstrust.org.uk/practitioners/prac-bulletins.htm>
- all dcs newsletters including Workforce Reform at <http://www.devon.gov.uk/dcs/newlett.htm>

g) Papers available from me

- 2 letters received via 2 local MPs from the Minister for Education, Jacqui Smith, in response to our concerns about the Education Bill. They are different ... so it nails the lie about stock answers going to everyone!!!
- GOSW Change for Children Newsletter 10
- A number of TEN summary documents including:
 - School Admissions - a proposal from CSN* (formerly TEN)
 - Code of Practice on the Duty to Promote Disability Equality which comes into force in December 2006.
 - Supporting Parents, Safeguarding Children This briefing summarises a special study to assess the extent to which agencies are being effective in ensuring that problems that undermine people's ability to parent their children are recognised and addressed
 - Evaluation reports on the Behaviour Improvement Programme (BIP) and the Behaviour and Education Support Teams (BESTs). This briefing summarises the research and main findings of these two reports commissioned by the DfES.
 - Children's Workforce Strategy This briefing outlines the Government's response to the consultation on its strategy to build a world-class workforce for children and young people. This response includes proposals for both immediate and longer-term action, and serves to illustrate the links between workforce reform and other initiatives designed to improve outcomes for children and young people.
 - Role of district councils in improving outcomes for children. This briefing summarises a guidance document published by the DfES in response to requests for further guidance on the roles and contributions district and county councils can make to delivering better outcomes for children. It is intended to help partners as they identify their priorities for joint planning and action in support of the Every Child Matters agenda.
 - Education and Inspections Bill. This briefing summarises the Bill published on 28 February, which gives effect to proposals in the White Paper, Higher Standards, Better Schools For All, the 14-19 Education and Skills White Paper and the Youth Matters Green Paper; it also provides for the enlargement of Ofsted to create a single inspectorate for children and learners.
 - Young People's Views on Leaving Care. This briefing summarises a report setting out the views of young people with first-hand experience of what it is like leaving care, or being in the process of doing so.
 - Tackling child obesity - First steps. The Audit Commission, the Healthcare Commission and the National Audit Office have together published a report on progress towards the Government's public service agreement target on childhood obesity: to bring to a halt the current increase in child obesity by 2010.
 - Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Bill. This briefing summarises the Bill which provides the legislative framework for a new vetting and barring scheme for people who work with children and vulnerable adults.
 - Shaping a Fairer Future - the report of the Women and Work Commission. This briefing summarises the report which examines the persistent pay and opportunity gap between women and men, and sets out a comprehensive list of policy recommendations aimed at reducing gender inequality in the labour market.

h) Brief items

(i) The final stage of the merger leading to the single National Governors' Association, the amalgamation of the two former NASG and NGC offices will be taking place during this week. From Thursday 30th March all NGA staff will be based in one office. The new address will be: National Governors' Association, 2nd Floor, SBQ1, 29 Smallbrook Queensway, Birmingham B5 4HG (Tel: 0121-643-5787). There will be some short term disruption to communications as NGA completes the move. Following the move NGA staff will all have new email addresses which will be issued when the system is operational. The old email addresses will continue to operate for several months to smooth the transition.

(ii) The new Directorate for Children's and Young Peoples' Services (CYPS ... and already spoken about as "KIPS") comes in to being on April 1st. A document setting out plans for the new directorate can be found at <http://www4.devon.gov.uk/eal/docs/mar06/0609012a.doc>

(iii) Headteacher Performance Management. The current arrangements for supporting governors with headteacher performance management end with the current round of visits. Dcs has sent a letter to schools outlining what it can offer to governors to support their work in Performance Management (NB look at comments on this topic in the Spring Term Area Meetings Feedback).

(iv) A useful book on how to be a good CoG. Jane Phillips (formerly Chair of NASG) has asked me to pass on this message. " Last year, in my NASG capacity, I was involved in a project which has now come to fruition and I'd appreciate a mention on your network. Pearson Education, in collaboration with a very worthwhile organisation called Common Purpose has published a book called 'How to be an even better chair - Sensible advice from the public and charity sectors'. I was a small cog working with some very big wheels - and the resultant book is really rather good. It covers many of the difficult areas for Chairs of Governors - and shows that these are replicated throughout the public sector! It has a light style but covers the big issues - like the relationship with the head, the relationship with the board - and what they call 'the difficult stuff'. More details on <http://www.pearsoned.co.uk/Bookshop/detail.asp?item=100000000103295>

(v) Pupils involved in interview process when appointing staff - request for info. from an Executive member of NGA. " I've been asked to consult about involvement of pupils in the staff appointment process. In essence:

Does this still happen?

Are pupils used in drawing up the person specification?

Do students sit on formal appointments panels?

If these things happen, it is only at secondary level?

Have you found it useful to involve pupils?

Please pass comments to me and I will forward them.

(vi) School self-evaluation - a further request from NGA. " We are particularly interested in how governors are involved in both the self-evaluation and the inspection. There seems to have been quite different experiences so far; some members have reported that no governors were spoken to at all as part of the inspection process and others said that they had had quite intense sessions with the inspectors in which it was clear they were expected to have detailed knowledge of the school. " Please pass comments to me and I will forward them.

(vii) Healthy Eating Every school should have a large, glossy manual on Devon's Healthy Schools Award. This shows through connections between the Ofsted Self Assessment Framework and Every Child Matters, how to attain the Award. It's the answer to everyone who likes to be told what to do, when and where. Ask to see your school's copy if you have not yet done so!

(viii) Specialist Status. Following the recent designation of Holsworthy College as a specialist school, the County Council was one of only 9 (out of 150) LEAs in England - and the only County Council - that had all its secondary schools designated as Specialist Schools. This status attracted extra Government money for both capital and revenue projects.

.... and finally some thoughts for you to ponder

Why isn't phonetic spelled the way it sounds?

Why isn't there another word for thesaurus?

Why is abbreviation such a long word?

Whose idea was it to put an 's' in the word 'lisp'.

Why is it so hard to remember the word 'mnemonic'?

THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF STATISTICS

Ten percent of all car thieves are left-handed. All polar bears are left-handed. If your car is stolen, there's a 10 percent chance it was nicked by a Polar bear.

A total of 4000 cans are opened around the world every second. Ten babies are conceived around the world every second. Each time you open a can, you stand a 1 in 400 chance of falling pregnant.

How many existentialists does it take to change a light bulb?

Two. One to screw it in, the other to notice how the light bulb symbolises a single, incandescent beacon of subjective reality in a nether world of endless absurdity.
How many boring people does it take to change a light bulb? One.

.... and some pure corn

Tom is trying out his new computer. He is having trouble so he calls over Harry to give him a hand. Harry switches on the computer then asks Tom for the password. "It is, DaffyDuckBugsBunnyTomandJerry".
"That's a very long password," says Harry.
"Yes," replies Tom. "But in the manual it says it has to be at least four characters."

A butcher backed into the bacon slicer and got a little behind in his orders.

Why do seagulls fly over the sea? Because if they flew over the bay they'd be bagels.

A vicar visits a little old lady who has just moved into his parish and finds she has a parrot with blue ribbons tied to each leg. "And what are these ribbons for?" asked the vicar "Well," says the old lady, "If I pull the left ribbon he sings 'Abide with Me' and if I pull the right ribbon he sings 'All Things Bright and Beautiful.'" "And what happens if you pull both ribbons at the same time?" enquires the vicar. "I fall off my perch!!!" says the parrot.

Man went to a shoot in the highlands. Needed gun dog. Hired one called "Teacher" for £5 day- because he collects grouse well and places them neatly in lines. He returned next year. Teacher n/a. Hired dog called "Co-ordinator" at £25 day because he collects grouse, places them neatly in line but this time in order of size. He returned the next year. Teacher and co-ordinator are not available. Hires dog called "Headteacher" at £500 day. Collects grouse, places them in line and makes sure all the other dogs do their collecting well. He returns again. The only dog available is named "Secretary of State for Education" and costs only £1 day. Why so cheap? She just sits in the corner and barks instructions.

Is a chicken crossing a road poultry in motion?

A man answers a knock at his front door. Outside is a six-foot ladybird which proceeds to head butt him, kick him in the groin, and stamp on his head. The man wakes up in hospital where he describes his ordeal to the doctor.
"You're the sixth case like this we've seen today," says the doctor. "There's a rather nasty bug going around."

A foreign visitor to England was having trouble with the pronunciation of words like 'enough', 'bough' and 'though'. He thought he was just getting the hang of it until he saw the newspaper headline 'Fete pronounced success'.

I bought a bureau the other day. I opened it up and 14 people fell out. It must have been a missing persons' bureau.

Going to bed the other night I noticed people in my shed stealing things. I phoned the police but was told no one was in the area to help. They said they would send someone over as soon as possible. I hung up.
A minute later I rang again. "Hello," I said, "I called you a minute ago because there were people in my shed. You don't have to hurry now, because I have shot them."
Within minutes there were half a dozen police cars in the area plus helicopters and an armed response unit. They caught the burglars red handed.
One of the officers said: "I thought you said you'd shot them." To which I replied: "I thought you said there was no one available."

Mahatma Gandhi walked barefoot everywhere and developed calluses over his feet. He also ate very little which made him rather frail, while his odd diet gave him bad breath - he was indeed a super-calloused fragile mystic plagued with halitosis.