

First update for the Summer Term. I would stress the importance of acting within the May 13th deadline upon the first item under urgent matters.

- a) Urgent Matters - 3-Year Budgets / Fair Funding (CoG + Finance) - PLEASE ACT!! : School Self-Evaluation (All)
 - b) Volunteers Sought - DAG Executive (All)
 - c) Consultations - 3-Year Budget (CoG + Finance) : Devon Music Strategy (interested governors) : Children's Workforce Strategy (Curriculum)
 - d) Meetings in near future - Chairs ' Round A Table (Senior Governors) : Torbay Annual Conference (All) : Autumn Overnight Conference - ' The Child at the Centre ' (All)
 - 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 - New Relationship with Schools (CoG) : Schools' Forums (Finance) : PC rental / leasing (ICT) : Wildlife Gardens (All) : Workforce Remodelling (Personnel) : School Meals (Finance) : Elections (All)

..... and finally a real groan!!

a) Urgent Matters

(i) Fair Funding / 3-Year Budgets. Very soon your school should be receiving several papers from the Schools' Forum which we would urge you to act upon. They could well have an impact on your funding levels for the next 3 years. Responses must be submitted to the DfES by May 13th so the timetable is tight.

The first is the Schools' Forum response to the DfES consultation on 3-Year budgets. Although initially attractive we believe there are some major flaws in the detailed proposals and have identified them in our response. The more Devon schools that can submit a response the more weight that will be given to our views. The Schools' Forum is not asking the full GB to discuss these matters in detail. It is our view that if the headteacher and CoG / Chair of Finance are supportive of the views expressed (or wish to make changes to fit their needs) they could submit the response either as it stands or amended to the DfES.

The second paper relates to Devon's continuing struggle to get Fair Funding for its pupils. Despite considerably increased spending on education and some victories in our campaign on Fair Funding, Devon pupils are now further behind the national average in funding per pupil than some years ago. In response to this we have drafted a letter to the Secretary of State asking her to address this issue within the context of the 3-Year Budget proposals. We urge you to support our letter with a letter from your school - 370 Devon letters will have more impact than one!!!

(ii) School Self-Evaluation. From September 1st this year OFSTED will base its inspection visits on the online Self-Evaluation Form prepared by the school. Governors should understand and play a role in the development of this form. Details have been sent in to schools and this year's Annual Review Visits have been based upon the development of this process. One of this term's Just for Governors Teachers' TV programmes highlights governor work in self-evaluation. Just to remind you that from Sept. 1st OFSTED will operate very differently

- a maximum of 2 working days' notice of an inspection
- reduced paperwork
- shorter (2 day?) more focussed inspections with smaller teams
- more frequent inspections (once every 3 years)
- main emphasis on school self-evaluation as the starting point for the inspection
- much shorter, simpler reports
- greater HMI involvement
- schools will be inspected on the contribution they make to the ' 5 outcomes ' within the Every Child Matters agenda

b) Volunteers Sought

At the AGM a new DAG Executive was elected (details on website soon). The Executive is always willing to consider co-opting other governors interested in joining.

c) Consultation

(i) DfES 3-Year Budget - see Urgent Item 1 - PLEASE RESPOND

(ii) Devon Draft Music Strategy This was sent to schools on 10 March. The deadline for responses has been extended to the end of May. The expectation is that each school should decide who is involved in the response. A wide range of responses is envisaged, including from other agencies local and national. (Julian Lloyd Webber has already offered a supportive comment.) As it is a strategy document, and many heads and governors have expressed intense interest in what is happening to the music service, it is hoped that Governors will see a copy and, in some cases, be involved in a formal response.

(iii) Children's Workforce Strategy The strategy seeks to launch a wide debate that will, along with emerging

good practice, inform the further development of the strategy. Consultation documents and the response form are available on the DfES consultation website at: www.dfes.gov.uk/consultations/ The consultation closes on 22 July 2005 and sets out the Government's vision of a world - class children's workforce. (Further details in section g)

d) Meetings in near future

- (i) Chairs 'Round A Table meetings with the new Deputy Director for Education, Deborah Magill
 - 16 May - Tiverton Hotel 6.30p.m. to 9.00p.m. (registration / refreshments from 6.00)
 - 18 May - Buckfast Abbey 6.30p.m. to 9.00p.m. (registration / refreshments from 6.00)
 - 21 May - Crossmead, Exeter 10.00a.m. to 12.30p.m. (registration / refreshments from 9.30)
 - 25 May - Barnstaple Hotel 6.30p.m. to 9.00p.m. (registration / refreshments from 6.00)

(ii) Torbay Annual Governors' Conference on Saturday May 7th a.m. with inputs on the Children's Services agenda, Extended Schools and the new OFSTED framework. Anyone interested in attending please let me know asap.

(iii) Autumn Term Major DGS/DAG overnight conference on the theme ' The Child at the Centre ' ... an investigation of the Every Child Matters agenda. Fri. Oct 14th 6.00p.m. to Sat. Oct. 15th 4.00p.m. National speakers. Full details in Devon Governor. Book early to be assured of your place.

e) Arrived in schools (i) paper (ii) by e-mail

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(i) Paper copies

- Summer Term Checklist
- Training Programme April 2004 - March 2005 shows courses which governors from your school have attended during the past year.
- Healthy Food For All - a leaflet setting out some of the changes that are planned and detailing how schools can be supported in ensuring children have healthier, tastier food.
- Annual Payment for Clerks to Governing Bodies - advice to schools

(ii) By e-mail

- Extended Schools Update - an update on both national developments and the delivery of Extended Schools within Devon. It gives contact details for all the support staff working on Extended Schools' matters www4.devon.gov.uk/eal/docs/apr05/0517028.doc (I can forward a copy by e-mail if you wish)
- Active Redeployment Strategy - information about the scheme and how it will be co-ordinated www4.devon.gov.uk/eal/docs/apr05/0517010.doc
- General advice on procedures at election times

http://www.devon.gov.uk/index/your_council/decision_making/constitution/part10.htm

f) New Items on Websites

(i) DAG (www.devon.gov.uk/dag) NB change of address and the facility to use a search engine to find relevant materials.

- NGC Summer Term Newsletter
- NGC Manifesto
- NGC/DfES good practice guide to developing an Allowances Policy for governing bodies (an issue on which Devon governors have expressed considerable concern)
- NGC April Bulletin Board
- NGC Meetings section ' Short Report on NGC Spring Conference, 23rd April 2005 '
- NGC Briefings sections ' Briefing on proposals for 3-Year Budgets '
- NGC letters section ' Letter from Colin Humphreys, HMI, about the new OFSTED arrangements and the role of Self-Evaluation '
- NASG Manifesto

These are all PDF items and need to be viewed with Adobe Acrobat Reader either 6.0 or 7.0.

(ii) others

The Governorline website (www.governorline.info) is recommended, in particular a feature on Key Issues, which includes matters such as conflict between Head and Chair of Governors, and teacher absence.

g) Papers available from me

(i) Extended Schools Update - an update on both national developments and the delivery of Extended Schools within Devon.

(ii) from The Education Network (TEN)

- Education Improvement Partnerships (EIPs). The prospectus for Education Improvement Partnerships (formerly known as foundation partnerships) was published by the DfES on 30 March 2005. The initiative is one of the eight key reforms set out in The Five Year Strategy for Children and Learners, and aims to enable groups of schools to work together to take collective responsibility for raising standards for children and young people in their local area. The prospectus can be obtained by clicking on the link below:

<http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/sie/si/educationimprovementpartnerships/>

TEN comments " Ultimately, participation in EIPs remains voluntary. Whilst the pressure to act collectively may be great, it is clear from experience that some schools are quite capable of resisting it. It seems very likely that some powerful incentives will need to be created – probably financial - to ensure that self-interest of some institutions is not allowed to disrupt effective partnerships having the capacity to act on behalf of all children and young people. "

- Children's Workforce Strategy This policy briefing summarises key points from the above consultation issued by the DfES on 1 April 2005. The consultation closes on 22 July 2005 and sets out the Government's vision of a world - class children's workforce. The strategy seeks to launch a wide debate that will, along with emerging good practice, inform the further development of the strategy. Consultation documents and the response form are available on the DfES consultation website at: www.dfes.gov.uk/consultations/

- Common Core of Skills and Knowledge for the Children's Workforce This policy briefing summarises key points from the above prospectus, which has been published as a linked document to the Children's Workforce Strategy and the Common Assessment Framework. The prospectus was published by the DfES on 1 April 2005, following the consultation on the Green Paper, Every Child Matters, which strongly supported the proposition that everyone working with children, young people and families should have a common set of skills and knowledge. The prospectus can be obtained by clicking on the link below: www.dfes.gov.uk/commoncore/

- Common Assessment Framework Summary This policy briefing summarises key points from the above document published by the DfES on 1 April 2005, alongside the Children's Workforce Strategy and the Common Core of Skills and Knowledge. The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) offers a new standardised approach to assessing children's and young people's needs for services to help practitioners from a range of backgrounds identify problems sooner and work together more effectively to tackle them. The CAF is published for local trialling by authorities in 2005-2006. Full copies of the Framework can be obtained by clicking on the link below: <http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/key-documents/>

(iii) Report on the first meeting of an advisory group looking at improving the Guide to the Law attended by NASG

(iv) A paper on property responsibilities produced by a senior secondary governor within the county

h) Brief items

(i) The new version of NRwS, A New Relationship with Schools – Next Steps, is now available. It looks at what NRwS means for Schools, Local Authorities, Parents and Pupils, and Governors. It can be ordered from: DfES Publications, PO Box 5050, Sherwood Park, Annesley, Nottingham, NG15 0DJ; tel: 0845 6022260; fax: 0845 6033360; e-mail: dfes@prolog.uk.com, quoting reference: DfES-1288-2005DOC-EN.

(ii) Schools Forums The Schools Forums Conferences held last autumn, attended by many of our members, have resulted in the Schools Forum web pages being re-vamped. They include: 1. Information on Schools Forums, including induction and training materials for new Schools Forum members; 2. Research and Good Practice; 3. LEA and School Funding Guides; 4. Latest news, correspondence and useful links. The site can be accessed from www.teachernet.gov.uk/school

(iii) PC rental / leasing A small primary school governor (no sizeism intended!) would welcome comments, ideas or feedback from schools that have experience of procuring PCs via rental or leasing. His school is minded to use this route rather than purchase for several new PCs. Please let me have any comments and I will forward them

(iv) Wildlife garden Another small primary school governor seeks advice for a working party of parents who are currently planning to redesign the garden area at the school and are considering including an area to be set aside as a wildlife garden. Are there any other Devon schools that have already established wildlife gardens that they could perhaps visit/talk to for ideas, best practice, things to avoid etc.?

(v) Workforce Remodelling NGC/NASG report that at a recent meeting with the National Remodelling Team they discussed the response to Pack III of Guidance for Governors, issues which needed addressing further (PPA time, dedicated headship time and invigilation), and began planning a fourth guidance pack for governors. The pack will aim to look at the issues mentioned above, extended schools and other relevant concerns. It should be ready for distribution in mid May.

(vi) Transforming school meals - details of funding commitments The Secretary of State for Education and Skills announced on 30 March 2005 a package of measures to help transform school meals over the next three years, including additional funding of £220 million for schools and local education authorities. The £220 million breaks down as follows:

- £30 million in each of the three years 2005-06 to 2007-08 in grants to schools. This funding will be paid to all maintained schools by local authorities on the basis of a formula determined by central government. It will not be ring-fenced but is intended to help meet transitional costs for schools in developing/improving their "whole school" approach to food. This might include, for example, revisiting the whole school approach, reviewing meals provision (particularly in the light of new nutritional standards), retraining school meals staff or preparing for "healthy schools" accreditation.

- £30/50/50 million over the three years 2005-06 to 2007-08 in grant to LEAs. This funding will be paid to LEAs and ring-fenced for improving the quality of school meals and other food provided by schools (if any). Funding will be available to all LEAs to support schools, with an emphasis on schools in deprived areas and schools starting from a low base. The first call on this money will be transition funding to help schools provide meals with

ingredients costing 50p or more in primary schools, and 60p or more in secondary schools.

- Further details of the distribution of both grants will be announced in due course. Both grants are intended to provide transitional funding and will be available for a three year period.

- In addition £60 million from the Big Lottery Fund and the Department for Education and Skills will enable a new School Food Trust to give independent support and advice to schools and parents to improve the standard of school meals

(vii) For those of you locked in hermetically sealed cages it may have slipped your notice that May 5th is election day! Obtaining the detail and implications of the parties' education policies is not always easy. Governors have, though, the NGC and NASG manifestos that set out national governor views on key educational issues together with the materials collated from schools that have informed Devon's Vision for Learning. Use these to question and challenge candidates for both national and county council elections.

..... and finally to make you groan!!

Police arrested two kids yesterday. One was drinking battery acid, the other was eating fireworks. They charged one and let the other one off.

A man went to the doctor's with a cucumber in his left ear, and a carrot in his right ear and a banana up his nose.

"What's wrong with me?" he asked.

"Simple," said the doctor. "You're not eating properly. "