

20, JANUARY 2009

### **From Anne Whiteley**

A slightly belated Happy New Year to you and a warm welcome to those who have taken up headships in Devon this term. I hope you had a restful festive break and managed to avoid the horrible bugs that seemed to be very pervasive.

After the joy of Christmas we have been brought down to earth with a vengeance by our discussions about this year's Budget. We are already hearing from many of you that this year is going to be tough and next year will be even worse. The Devon Education Forum discussed the budget situation last week and agreed that, as one course of action, we should renew our campaign over Fair Funding to try to have as much impact as possible on the settlement for 2011 and onwards. We believe that a corporate campaign aimed at both audiences here in Devon but also MPs and other opinion formers in Westminster would be most successful and obviously we will rely heavily on your support and your lead in your local communities. This is very much at the early stages but I and my colleagues will want to work very closely with school representatives in formulating a campaign that has the best chances of success. As we say every year, despite our low funding our exam results in Devon speak for the skill and dedication of school staff and the hard work of our students. Last week's GCSE results prove the point again and my thanks to all of you in the secondary sector for the work you did in achieving such impressive improvements.

As you might expect, there was a very mixed response to our consultations about moving to one admission point for primary school entry. Given that the Rose Review of the primary curriculum is likely to recommend that entry into Reception in the September following a child's 4<sup>th</sup> birthday should become the norm, the county council's Executive Committee decided last week to postpone any changes in Devon until we are clearer about the national picture.

The services CYPS provides for the children and young people of Devon are good and getting better, according to our annual performance assessment, or APA, in which Ofsted concludes the overall effectiveness of our children's services is good. They say Devon County Council is making a good contribution to improving outcomes for children and young people in the county, the council's capacity to improve its services is good and its management of these services is good. The judgement will feed into the overall assessment of the county council's work which will be published later in the year. My thanks to all of you who contributed to this successful result.

In the last *Headlines* before Christmas I congratulated those schools which had been identified as outstanding by Ofsted in their annual report for 2007/08. Some schools which had received outstanding inspections last term were not included in the annual report as they missed the deadline and I look forward to highlighting their achievements when they are featured in the 2008/09 Ofsted annual report.



## ***Free lifestyle courses for overweight children***

Families with overweight children in North Devon will be able to take part in free lifestyle courses from next month. The courses are being run as part of a national initiative to help overweight seven to 13-year-olds and their families. Our North Devon PEDPASS Partnership is helping to run the courses which start in the week beginning February 2 at Braunton Community School (Mondays and Wednesdays), Great Torrington Community School (Tuesdays and Thursdays) and Ilfracombe Arts College (Tuesdays and Thursdays). Families will take part in two-hour sessions twice a week for 10 weeks. More information from Paul Marshall at [paul.marshall@devon.gov.uk](mailto:paul.marshall@devon.gov.uk)

## ***Rural Primary Federations Conference***

CYPS' Sue Clarke and Debbie Clapshaw will be speaking at a DCSF conference on rural primary school federations in Bristol on January 29. It's aimed at head and governors who are interested in federating and will look at the unique challenges facing rural primary schools and how federating can help. The conference will be workshop-based and delegates will have the opportunity to listen to heads who have already federated, to learn more about the process and to hear from DCSF and NCSL officials on the future of federations. To register visit: [www.livegroup.co.uk/federationsconference](http://www.livegroup.co.uk/federationsconference).

## ***National Recognition for Chris Dyer***

Chris Dyer, CYPS's Strategic Commissioner for the Capital Programme, has been elected to the national executive of a prestigious national body. The Education Buildings and Development Officers Group is the main means of children's services departments engaging with the DCSF on policy matters relating to school buildings and asset management. The most recent EBD OG conference was attended by six key senior officials from the Department. Chris's election is both a recognition by our peers of the contribution he has made in the sector over the years and also an opportunity for Devon to be influential at a national level.

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