

21, OCTOBER 2008

From Anne Whiteley

It seems no sooner do we get back to work after the summer holidays than half-term is upon us. Hopefully we may enjoy some decent weather next week and I wish you all a restful break. It will no doubt be enhanced for our secondary colleagues by the abolition of Key Stage 3 SATs.

CYPS has had some more excellent news too. We've been nationally recognised for our work in strategic commissioning. We have been short-listed for the prestigious Beacon Status awarded jointly by three Government departments. This accolade recognises the pioneering work we are doing in ensuring services are tailored to the needs of local communities, families and individual children and young people across Devon. A decision will be announced in March 2009 following a visit to Devon by national inspectors - who will see the work going on at Wilcombe Primary and children's centre in Tiverton - and a presentation by the county council in London.

I was very pleased to see so many of you at the Achievement through Collaboration conferences in Saunton and Dawlish. I think the decision to run two conferences for the first time this year was justified by the number of people present. Over 250 people attended with 150 schools represented. Again Sue Clarke and her team did a great job in organising a fascinating day and we are preparing a special *Headlines* booklet as usual with the highlights all featured. My thanks must also go to all the young people who helped out with hosting the conference and performing for us. As always they did themselves, their schools and Devon proud.

Nearly 140 schools took part in DEAR Day earlier this month. Drop Everything and Read Day was organised by Roger Kirk and the Devon Gets Reading team and, I think, gave us a real focus for the Year of Reading.

Schools, children's centres and a range of other settings took part, including a briefing meeting at County Hall for officers and members who read two poems, and we've had some very positive reports back. We asked for a simple return on what young people decided to read and we will collate this and publish the results Devon-wide.

I would like to highlight the work of the Voyager PRU and Tipton St John Primary and pay tribute to Bryce Wilby and Penny Burnside and their teams. Ofsted inspectors said Voyager, which works with excluded pupils and those at risk of exclusion, allows youngsters to 'take off' with their learning and delivers outstanding results. Tipton's work on the national gifted and talented Classroom Quality Standards is featured in the new DCSF G and T Leading Teacher Handbook and the school features on the front cover.

Finally, just another brief reminder that the teachers' pay award of 2.45 per cent from September 1, 2008 will be included in October's salaries with a month's arrears. Unfortunately we received official confirmation of the agreement from the Local Government Employers too late to include it in September's salaries.



Building Schools for the Future

We will be submitting an Expression of Interest next month in entering the BSF programme. Devon schools were originally placed in the last three waves of the 15-20 year programme. But we are now optimistic that Devon will be advanced in the programme. A decision on which local authorities proceed will be made in early 2009. Schools identified as being on the county's priority list will need, through their governors, to agree a Memorandum of Understanding before being included in a project proposal.

Contact Vic Ebdon on vic.ebdon@devon.gov.uk

Federation Open Week

Devon has a thriving Federation Network and all five of our 'hard' federations will open their doors to visitors during the week November 10-14. You can find out more about why schools choose to federate, the wide variety of federations in Devon, the day to day running of a federation, the role of a federation governor, how leadership works across the schools and the benefits for children and staff.

More information is available from:

<http://www.devon.gov.uk/devon-federation-open-week.pdf>

Contact Sue Clarke at sue.clarke@devon.gov.uk

Data sets for every Learning Community

Learning Community chairs will discuss the usefulness of these new data sets at their next meeting on November 11.

They can be accessed by individual schools using protected passwords which are available through your LC chair or from Sue Newson. This headline data provides information across a range of school generated data collated across learning community areas.

Contact Sue Clarke at sue.clarke@devon.gov.uk or Sue Newson at sue.newson@devon.gov.uk

Extended schools' full core offer

Devon met the September 2008 targets for the Extended Schools' full core offer and Philippa Court and Hilary Burrow from CYPS were invited to a reception with DCSF Minister Beverley Hughes last week. All schools identified as providing the full core offer got a personal letter from Beverley Hughes and now have their details publicised on direct.gov.

Contact Philippa Court on philippa.court@devon.gov.uk

Devon Strategic Partnership Conference

The Devon Strategic Partnership - which represents public, private, community, faith and voluntary sectors in the county – is inviting schools to send five pupils each to its conference at Sandy Park in Exeter on November 7. The date coincides with Takeover Day where organisations are invited to celebrate the contribution of children to society. There will be a morning workshop for children aged eight to 16 to explore how they see the future and then present their findings to the conference.

Contact Rachel Henderson on rachel.henderson@devon.gov.uk