

## ***From Anne Whiteley***

I hope you all had a relaxing break over the Easter school holidays and were able to make the most of the few fine days that we enjoyed. Following last week's strike action by the NUT, colleagues in primary schools will now be plunged into SATs almost immediately with the exam season also getting under way in secondary schools. I wish you all every success.

The first stage of the Boundary Committee's review of local government in Devon has now been completed. The Boundary Committee will be reporting to the Government on whether an alternative unitary council or councils should be created to replace the existing county and district council system. Devon County Council has proposed sweeping away the existing structure and replacing it with one unitary council to serve the existing county with Plymouth and Torbay remaining as unitary authorities.

Obviously other councils have also submitted their broad concepts. The Boundary Committee will consider these concepts in detail over the next 12 weeks. Members will then identify a preferred concept and conduct local consultation through July to September before reaching a recommendation for the Secretary of State towards Christmas 2008. The Secretary of State will then decide whether to implement the Boundary Committee's recommendation with the new unitary Councils to be set up by April 2010. I am sure many of you will have a view on this change that you may wish to submit to the Boundary Committee during the consultation and I will keep you notified of how to do that.

I am delighted to report that our new Director of Learning and Schools, Judith Johnson, took up her post last week. She has planned a programme of visits for this term and is intending to visit at least two schools a week over the coming months.

Yesterday I had the great pleasure of attending the launch of Devon Gets Reading by Michael Morpurgo. He entranced a class of Year 4 pupils from St Sidwell's Primary School in Exeter who spent part of the autumn term studying his books. We are hoping this high profile launch will get the National Year of Reading in Devon off to a good start and I know that our coordinator, Roger Kirk, has a number of events planned to ensure we give literacy an even higher profile.

Finally I would like to pay tribute to Shan Maiden, the headteacher of Bridestowe Primary School. Shan died over the Easter break following a long illness during which she continued to work. Debbie Pritchard represented us at the funeral last Tuesday which was attended by many villagers and colleagues. Shan will be sorely missed and I know you would want to join me in sending condolences both to her family and the staff and children at Bridestowe.



### ***Prestigious award for Exwick Heights school building***

Devon has won a prestigious environmental award for the new Exwick Heights Primary School building in Exeter.

The school won the Best Environmental Project in the South West Built in Quality Awards of the Local Authority Building Control Association. It will now go forward to national competition. The project was also a finalist in the Best Community Project category. Chris Cooper oversaw the project for CYPs and NPS were our technical consultants.

Contact Vic Ebdon on [vic.ebdon@devon.gov.uk](mailto:vic.ebdon@devon.gov.uk)

### ***Schools and the Children's Trust***

The DCSF has published new guidance for consultation on the relationships between schools and Children's Trusts. Many of you will know that schools are not currently classed as 'duty to cooperate partners' in the Children's Trust arrangements. However the DCSF now says there must be a step change in the involvement of schools in Children's Trusts. The new document will be discussed by our heads' liaison group.

Contact Debbie Pritchard on [debbie.pritchard@devon.gov.uk](mailto:debbie.pritchard@devon.gov.uk)

### ***More schools federate***

St Rumon's Infants and St Peter's Junior in Tavistock have decided to federate from September. A number of other schools across the county have formally registered an interest in exploring federation and are looking for prospective partners. Sue Clarke is the first point of contact for any school which wants to consider federation or other formal partnerships.

Contact Sue Clarke on [sue.clarke@devon.gov.uk](mailto:sue.clarke@devon.gov.uk)

### ***D and T Teaching Excellence Rewarded***

Gilly Browning from Devon Education Service was one of the winners in the prestigious Design and Technology Association Awards for teachers and trainers who have made outstanding contributions to D&T education. Gilly was one of 26 winners from across the country who were presented with their awards by the BBC's Technology correspondent, Rory Cellan-Jones. The awards give professional recognition to individuals nominated by their colleagues for their work in design and technology education across six different categories. Gilly's award was for Subject Teacher Training in Design and Technology.

Contact Gilly Browning on [gilly.browning@devon.gov.uk](mailto:gilly.browning@devon.gov.uk)