

From Anne Whiteley

The launch of the Fair Funding campaign just before half-term was extremely successful and attracted wide coverage from the media.

First off I would like to thank Roy Souter for hosting the launch at Stoke Hill Junior School in Exeter and to Gary Chown and David Fitzsimmons for representing DAPH and DASH and to Don Paterson and Josh Wright for speaking on behalf of DAG and the teaching unions.

I think this united front from Devon's schools, with support from SHAD and the Devon Education Forum, played very well with the media. The new leadership of Devon County Council, including John Hart, Christine Channon and Andrea Davis, are fully behind the campaign as are the main opposition parties. We need the public to be in no doubt that this is an all-party effort if we are to win the maximum support, which is what is needed to influence our national politicians.

We have set up a dedicated website which you can access on <http://www.fairfundingfordevonschools.org.uk/>

We have also launched a petition on the Downing Street website which can be viewed and signed at <http://petitions.number10.gov.uk/handsup4schools/>

The petition reads:

We the undersigned petition the Prime Minister to implement a fairer education funding formula that recognises every child matters equally and ends the postcode lottery of education funding in this country, so that every child receives the same opportunity and quality of education wherever they live.

This petition has been posted by Hands Up for Fairer School Funding, a campaign launched by schools in Devon to persuade Government to tackle the inequalities in funding for schools and end the post-code lottery that affects young people in many parts of England.

Please do all you can to encourage your parents and your local community to get behind this campaign. The petition is attracting a great deal of attention and a big effort before Christmas should see thousands of people sign up. Then we can really begin to make an impact with our national politicians.

Last Monday, Vic Ebdon, Simon Niles, Geoff Tew and I went to London to meet representatives from Partnerships for Schools and the Office of the Schools Commissioner. Our BSF Readiness to Deliver submission was well received. We believe that by the middle of November a recommendation will be put to Ministers and we can expect a formal announcement by the end of the month.



Safeguarding and CRB checks

As you all know, it is the statutory responsibility of each school to carry out CRB checks on all staff and volunteers employed or associated with the school from March 2002 onwards. Schools should also be aware that it is best practice to CRB check all adults who have been employed or have volunteered at the school prior to March 2002, so that schools can be satisfied that they have taken all reasonable checks to safeguard children.

Safeguarding children and safer recruitment practices are key areas for Ofsted under the new inspection regime. It is vital that all school records are up to date and that the school central record complies with the statutory requirements. Further information is available on the Schools' Personnel Service Policy Pages at

<http://staff.devon.gov.uk/cr/er/gap/schoolspersonnel/saferworkingpracticesschools.htm> or from the Schools' Personnel Helpline on <mailto:schoolspersonnelhelpline@devon.gov.uk> or 01392 384567

The future for the LDP

Since its launch in April, the Devon Learning and Development Partnership (LDP) has become a familiar name for the range of specialist improvement and inclusion services it offers schools. The LDP's profile will be boosted this half term by two more steps in its development. First, the job of Head of the LDP will be advertised nationally. We hope the prospect of leading the LDP's unique breadth of expertise will attract a field of outstanding candidates.

Second, we are taking a close look at how to put the LDP in the strongest position to face a really challenging future by carrying out an appraisal of options for the organisation's future business model. Following consultation with the Headteachers' Liaison Group and the Commissioning Board of DEF, an assessment panel of stakeholders – including DAPH, DASH, SHAD and DAG – will assess three broad options for their potential to deliver the firmest foundation for the LDP's future. The options are:

- *the LDP operating as now, as a **business unit within DCC**;*
- *a **local authority controlled company** (operating for profit, not-for-profit, or merging with an existing local authority company);*
- *a **joint venture partnership** (with a private or third sector partner, operating either for profit or not-for-profit).*

The detailed specifications of the options are being developed now. The assessment panel will meet in mid-December to identify the best option and make a recommendation to a CYPS Programme Board chaired by myself. We'll make sure to keep you up to date with the process as it unfolds.

More information from Judith Johnson on judith.johnson@devon.gov.uk