

ICT Developments

During the busy Barnstaple Fair week, Devon's Traveller Education Service provided laptop computers and experienced ICT staff so that Travelling students were able to access this area of the curriculum. For us it is very much in its developmental infancy in the concept of distance learning. The venue for the afternoon was kindly provided by the Seven Brethren Leisure Centre. This year the theme was science and principally aimed at Key Stage 3 students. There was a rotational system for the students to use the computers. The learning packages included many interactive CD Roms. These introductions to ICT are followed through each winter with sessions for parents. We have found that this increases their engagement with their children's education and enhances their own literacy skills.

Travellers Health Matters - Doesn't it?

This was the title of a one-day conference held last term, 27th November, at St Cuthbert's Centre Buckfast. The day, jointly funded and run by DCTES and North and East Devon Health Forum was organised promote multi-agency approaches to health and health care for Travellers in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay. A wide group of participants from health authorities, social services and education in the South West were able to hear presentations from Prof. Lesley Doyal, University of Bristol and Patrice Van Cleemput, Sheffield University who have both recently been involved in research concerned with Traveller Health Issues. Later in the day there were workshops, including case study discussions and groups for developing locality based action and recommendations.

Dr Gabriel Scally Director of Health NHS SW commented in his plenary on the success of the day. If you are interested to read a full report about the conference, its outcomes and recommendations it will be available from the DCTES after its launch in March.

RESOURCES

Just a reminder:

Boxed selections of resources are coming around schools. If you would like your school to have priority in viewing our new initiative, please contact us. The schools in East Devon who have seen the selection box so far have given it the thumbs up !

A more comprehensive list of resources available for loan is also on this [website](#):

Don't forget our resources room is open Wednesday afternoons in term time at Watts Road, Plymouth. [Contact us](#) to make a appointment if you would like to visit at a different time.

If you would like a member of the team to come into school with the resources to do a session with students or staff - please [contact us](#).

THE RIDE, PLYMOUTH, PL9 7JT

The new Plymouth Gypsy Site was nearly ready when the last DCTES newsletter was issued. It is now open and fully occupied and the families are waiting for phase 2 (April 2002) when the site will finally be finished.

In the mean time, they have settled in and are very happy and pleased with the current amenities. Sue Damella, from Plymouth City's Housing Department is hoping that, when the site is completed, it may be possible to provide a small play area for the children living on the Ride.

Resource Base at Watts Road

The DCTES resource base at Watts Road is open for visitors on Wednesday afternoons between 1-4.30pm. There is a reference library and archive of books, magazines, press cuttings, videos, photographs and artefacts. There are exhibitions available for loan as well as books and other materials. Please note that we are just upstairs from the Religious and Cultural Resource Base. So why not make it a joint visit ? We will be pleased to see you.

WORKING PARTNERSHIP EAL & DCTES

Since the Government introduced its dispersal policy for Asylum Seekers, a partnership has developed between the EAL Service and the DCTES to address the needs of Roma families in Plymouth. EAL has facilitated English Language development and communication with the families.

DCTES have supported the families in gaining access to;-

- Schools school / home link
- Health EWO liaison
- Uniform buying

' if you use suitable materials, language and a suitable range of activities, equal opportunities really can be introduced to the classroom and Roma learners can be included not excluded from the learning process'

Respect Festival

On Sunday 28th October, the TES, once again took part in the Plymouth Respect Festival held at the Guildhall. This was a family fun day to promote racial equality, cultural awareness and respect for ethnic diversity.

There were workshops, stalls and various activities, as well as dancing and music on stage. A variety of ethnic foods were available for people to try. The TES had an exhibition stand and ran competitions for children which were well supported.

EDUCATING EBONY

Ebony, who is now 17, is a year 13 pupil at Stoke Damerel Community College, in Plymouth which she attends through the week spending two days at Plymouth College of Art and Design as part of a two year course. She completed her first year of the course passing her City and Guilds in Vehicle Body Competencies, part one. There are 12 people on the course and Ebony is the only girl.

At a special presentation ceremony the Mayor of Plymouth presented Ebony with a certificate of attendance for Vehicle Refinishing.

Eventually Ebony wants to make a career out of the course. She has already begun purchasing the necessary equipment such as an air brushing compressor and projector for future use.

No doubt Ebony's success will be an inspiration to others in future years.

Stop Press!

DCTES has survived OFSTED in the 3 authorities. Don't forget ! If your school is about to be inspected we are there to give support if you have Travellers on roll. [Contact us](#) as soon as you hear !

Staff Development

Since the last newsletter, the team as a group and individuals have received training in these areas:

- First Aid
- Managing Relationships
- E. L. S
- Mental Health Core Knowledge Course
- Services to Individuals Conference
- Community Partnership Day Conference

Statistics

Statistics for the academic year 2000 - 2001 were drawn together in the service's annual report. A few nuggets from the report are recorded here:

- Number of Traveller children contacted over the year : 551
- Number of schools with Traveller children on roll: 73
- Attendance rates: Primary 85 % Secondary 83 % (Well above our target !)
- Number of 3+4 year old Traveller children accessing pre-school: 23 = 27 %
- Improved GCSE results.

We were pleased that children from Fairground, Gypsy and New Traveller families all achieved some GCSEs last year.

Despite the considerable achievements of a significant number of children, there were still 124 Traveller children who were not able to access school at all. This was overwhelmingly due to lack of site accommodation and forced swift movement. So there is still much work to do, particularly in working with other departments and agencies, to try to address this issue.

Working Together

The DCTES, working in joint partnership with Connexions and Traveller Liaison Officer, Peter Blayney are planning to produce a good practice guide for working with Travellers both in schools and beyond. The Connexions Service now has personal advisers with a Traveller specialism throughout the consortium. These PA's met the DCTES team and Peter Blayney during last term to discuss ways we can help each other to provide the best opportunities for young Travellers. Hopefully by the summer term there will be a draft guide that will come to be used by all.

Award from the Showmen's Guild

At a reception in Barnstaple in September, the Showmen from the Westcountry officially recognised the work of the Service. After 16 years of co-operative working to develop the distance learning scheme, the team was presented with a certificate of appreciation for distinguished services to the western section of the Guild.

Preparation for Best Value

Next year the TES will under go its Best Value Review and preparations are already under way to gather the data required. Thanks to those schools who completed the section on the service in last term's school survey. Also last term the team went through the BEM self assessment exercise for a second time. This is a gruelling experience to say the least, but worth it for the opportunity to reflect and discuss core aspects of work. Too often day to day business leaves no time for standing back and considering essentials.

Membership of two benchmarking groups has provided further scope for thinking. It is fascinating to learn more of the

different ways other services work and the differences in the rural and urban contexts. As always for these groups, the challenge is to identify areas of similarity to be worth comparison.

Torbay

After the Summer support work at the Torbay regatta fairs, the TES has been collaborating with the Literacy Consultants to promote awareness of books with Gypsy and Traveller perspectives. The Literacy Folio (No.49) prepared with the Devon Literacy team has been sent to all Torbay Schools and is to be followed up by a training session for primary school Literacy Co-ordinators in February. We hope to house a collection of resources in the Torbay Professional Centre for permanent teacher reference.

Ottery Health Initiative

This year for the first time the DCTES in collaboration with the East Devon Health Authority launched two "drop-in sessions" at Ottery St Mary during Bonfire fair week. These took place where the school bus parks to give support to the Showmen's children on their distance learning work.

A health visitor was on hand to offer advice to the families with pre-school children whilst the youth health worker set up fun activities centred on healthy eating and exercise.

Great fun was had by all and some very ingenious collages were produced by the children from the selection of pasta, pulses, vegetables and fruit provided. And yes, even the adults joined in showing off their skipping prowess in the car-park ! It is hoped that the sessions will become a regular event at Ottery in November.

Our grateful thanks go to Bindi and Jill from East Devon Health Authority and John from the St John's Ambulance who came along to one of the sessions to provide advice on First Aid (Olivia discovered he's very good at Maths too as she worked on her school pack!).

Training

DCTES continues to offer [training](#). In the coming term, sessions will be given to the following groups:

- School Administrators
- Teaching Assistants
- Early Years Workers - given as joint training with the English as an Additional Language Service
- N.Q.T's
- Literacy Co-ordinators in Torbay

In March Cathy Kiddle is giving a workshop on "Policy to Practice" at a Nexus Conference on Traveller Education in London.

Welcome to Wolfgang Hug

After brief encounters with Wolfgang as a colleague during his time working in Devon, we are now pleased to find that he will be overseeing our work in Plymouth as part of his new role. We look forward to working with him.