



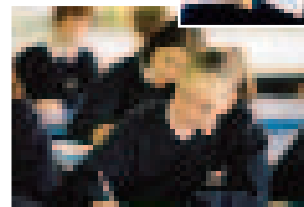
DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL

Achieving Excellence

A Vision for Learning in Devon

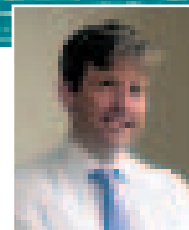


By 2010 we will have strong and mature communities of schools, working with parents and a broad range of partners, and enabled and supported by Devon County Council, to secure the successful and rounded development of all children and young people.



A VISION FOR LEARNING: ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE

From Devon's Director of Education, Phil Norrey



Devon has prepared its ground carefully to produce rich long-term results. It started with the Schools' Forum planning day in November 2003, and the launch of the 'year of conversations' in January 2004: heads, governors, staff, parents and young people were invited to contribute their thinking so that we could all build on the first principles that had been agreed. Partners from other agencies and other sectors of education were also asked to support the development of something we could all own and recognise.

Hundreds of people thought about the issues and took the debate forward, building up a groundswell of response which was remarkably consistent in its agreement on the emerging themes and priorities, some of which chime with central government policy but some which do not. Commitment went beyond boundaries of interest: primary school governors were telling us how important it is to take forward adult basic skills; secondaries were urging us to invest in early years; 'educators' were emphasising the need to work with other agencies.

In November 2004 the Schools' Forum revisited the Vision to fine-tune it, and to debate and propose priorities.

Our collective purpose is presented in this document.

From Devon's Executive Member for Children and Young People, John Smith



As the new Executive Member for Children and Young People, I am delighted to endorse the Vision for Learning set out in this document. I was one of the three Executive members with some responsibility for children and young people in the previous county council and was involved in key events which led to the shaping of this vision. It is only fitting that I pay tribute to the work of Councillors Saxon Spence and John Hart in that process. The degree of agreement between the politicians, teachers, governors, parents and children who took part in the consultation gives me every confidence that we can now go on to do the hard bit: turning the vision into reality.

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*Learning is making
connections and
closing the gaps in
your brain*
Year 5 pupil



VISIONS AND VALUES: A FOUNDATION FOR PLANNING

2005/2006 will be a year focusing on change management.

The Children Act 2004 has triggered significant shifts for everyone working with children.

We will all be planning to promote children's wellbeing, expressed as five outcomes:

▶▶ **be healthy**

▶▶ **stay safe**

▶▶ **enjoy and achieve**

▶▶ **make a positive contribution**

▶▶ **achieve economic wellbeing**

By 2008 all authorities must, by law, have Children's Trusts, Directors and lead members for Children's Services. It is anticipated that most will achieve this by 2006, as well as addressing a duty to establish new local Safeguarding Children Boards.

The first single **Children and Young People Plan (CYPP)** must be produced for 2006/09.

The CYPP for 2005/06 will be both a prototype (in getting to grips with the guidance and the key indicators) and a transition plan (in identifying areas where change is desirable to make a firm foundation for 2006).

It is seen as fundamentally important that the CYPP is able to build on a strong and shared vision.

The commitment schools and other partners have given to establishing a collective view, with first principles and priorities for action, was not undertaken for that purpose, but for our own purposes: to agree the Devon way to address the issues that are meaningful for us. It now offers the additional advantage of a backdrop for our Plan.

The **Vision for Learning** was broad in its approach, recognising the needs of the whole child, but it retains a focus on the enjoyment and achievement which are the main aims of the educational community. It will be published alongside the 2005/06 transition plan, with a sister document, a **Vision for Wellbeing**, which will have greater focus on the other four outcomes.

To encourage children to grow into well-rounded, confident adults fulfilling their potential in work and play, having well-grounded beliefs and sound morals, tolerant of the beliefs and lifestyles of others
Parent

THIS IS WHAT DEVON BELIEVES

▶ **we should have high expectations for every child**

- every child needs to experience success and be motivated to discover his or her particular strengths;
- all of us involved in providing education must focus on the needs of learners not the institutions in which we work;
- our expectations as educators will sit alongside the work of partner agencies, so that we collaborate effectively to meet all the needs of children and young people and their families;
- every child matters: from the educationally vulnerable to the gifted and talented;
- our remit extends to raising aspirations in whole communities.

▶ **in supporting this, only excellence is good enough**

- we can work together to achieve it;
- we can dare to be different: if we believe there is a Devon way, which is preferable, we will take it;
- there is great benefit from active participation of parents/carers as educators and as learners;
- we will be innovative in exploring ways of working and ways of learning;
- if a child, school or area is experiencing serious and protracted difficulties we will explore bold solutions. We are not afraid to take risks;
- teachers, learning support staff and other staff in schools are central to raising achievement and we must value and support them at different stages in their careers, attracting and motivating them to work in Devon.

▶ **all children must have the best possible start**

- we can build on our best practice in multi-agency initiatives which closely involve parents and carers;
- in a county which has a diversity of providers for early years we must seek innovative ways to promote coherence across the Foundation Stage;
- we should promote a consistency of benefit to the child from 'educare' proposals.

▶ **a child's development is best supported within a rounded vision of the opportunities available**

- a commitment to literacy, numeracy or other specific targets should be in the context of a broad curriculum;
- all children, during their school days, should have access to creative and sporting opportunities, and outdoor and residential experiences;
- children's natural interest in their environment should be promoted, so that they learn to enjoy and value it and to understand how they can care for it as adults;
- children need to be comfortable and confident to contribute to a society which welcomes racial equality, values diversity and is tolerant of difference.



Forest School Case Study

Pupils from Winkleigh Primary have enjoyed taking part in Forest School activities. The programmes enable pupils to develop confidence, self-esteem and communication skills by taking part in challenging but achievable tasks in a local woodland setting.

Ofsted recently commended Winkleigh for the contribution made by the Forest School and other environmental activities in raising standards across the curriculum.

▶ **we can maximise educational benefit by building capacity across groups of schools, so that learning communities can collaborate and learn from each other**

- we strongly believe that parents should feel comfortable sending their children to their local school;
- schools can do their best for all pupils only by working together;
- Local Learning Communities should build on and extend the strengths of Academic Councils;
- other learning networks can also be promoted as appropriate;
- the potential of ICT must be developed and exploited to the full.

Stoke Hill Middle Healthy Eating Pilot

Staff at Stoke Hill Middle School say they have noticed a big improvement in pupils' concentration and behaviour since taking part in the Fresh Start healthy lunch pilot.

Stoke Hill was one of 23 schools to introduce the new, healthier menus and ban heavily-processed food full of fat, salt and sugar.

The Fresh Start menus are being rolled out to primary schools across the county from September.

Teachers at Stoke Hill say the afternoons are more settled now and pupils are better behaved.

Their concentration has improved, they are more alert and better able to apply themselves to language and written work.

Headteacher Roy Souter said: "One mother said it was clear her children were less hungry and irritable when they got home at the end of the day.

"The children are now more willing to try new things as well.

"Whereas before they were leaving lots more on their plates, they are now getting used to eating more and different vegetables."

▶ we must prepare children to be healthy adults

- we should continue to promote a strong partnership with health authorities, seeking to develop new ways of working;
- the recommendations of the review of the primary catering service should be implemented;
- we should sustain and extend support for physical exercise, green travel plans and sports activities;
- we should work with partners to promote emotional and mental health;
- we should step up concerted efforts to equip young people for life in a practical way, through awareness of and positive approaches to sexual health, preventing pregnancy and preventing substance abuse, in a framework of relationships and ethics.

▶ we should all invest time in discussion of and planning for patterns of education in Devon

- whilst the local authority retains its presumption against closure of small schools, we should rise to the challenge of falling rolls by considering with schools how we might respond;
- we should also explore how spare capacity in premises could be used to enable children's services to develop locally.

► **Devon County Council, as local authority for Education and for Children’s Services, should establish a role which clearly supports and values learning within the wider context which demonstrates that achievement is part of wellbeing**

- the wider remit of the local authority can support schools in placing learning locally within the context of community partnerships, and the imperative for agencies to work together to promote children’s wellbeing;
- it should in particular take a lead on working with all partners to improve the life chances of young people in public care;
- the local authority has a key role in linking the development of the Children’s Trust (particularly in its commissioning role) with the part schools or groups of schools can play in supporting children’s wellbeing;
- the local authority should not be afraid to show leadership and take the hard decisions;
- it should work with school managers and governors in practical ways to build capacity, for example in choice of supplies and services;
- it should promote ways to listen to the voice of children and young people, engaging them in planning services.

On-line Ordering Case Study

Ashburton Primary School has become one of the first in the UK to order goods online from the new Devon schools’ purchasing portal: www.buydevon.gov.uk.

The system eliminates paperwork and saves time and money. Ashburton Primary School bought three violins from a Wiltshire-based supplier of musical instruments and sheet music.

A teacher or administrator can order supplies via any internet-connected computer from a list of suppliers. The selection, ordering, invoicing and payment can all then happen online. The system links seamlessly into the school’s accounting systems and at the same time provides useful up-to-date information on what is being bought.

Ashburton administrator, Helen Vogel, said: “Ordering these violins has been very simple, with delivery within four days of ordering.

“The system streamlines our ordering process, allowing us to choose the best value-for-money supplier with the least amount of administrative effort.”



photo courtesy of Torbay Herald Express

GETTING THE GROUND WORK RIGHT

In 2004 Schools' Forum representatives met in a number of workshops to discuss the consultation responses with county councillors and senior officers. These points emerged strongly from across the workshops:

- there is a need for cultural change across the educational community; we need to be both ambitious, keeping the big picture in view, and incremental, in achieving what can be done year on year;
- to underpin this, good communications are essential; we need to gather and use data more effectively, be better at disseminating best practice and establish processes to remind everyone of the Vision and the progress we are making;
- Local Learning Communities (to develop from Academic Councils) are an important vehicle for cultural change and radical thinking. They should not and need not impede other networking groups, but are the natural arena to address successful transition for pupils, collaboration between local schools, and the links between the educational community and other local agencies;

Bideford Learning Community

Bideford Learning Community, comprising Bideford College and the eleven partner primary schools, is bringing together professionals from education, health, social services and other partner agencies to provide the best possible services for children and young people.

Devon Children's Trust initiatives, including information sharing and assessment and early intervention work, are securely linked to those in School Improvement. Underpinning the work is a commitment to respecting children's and parents' and carers' voices. Although in its early stages, the potential for innovative work for all children and young people is exciting.

Central to the initiative is the recognition that this improves attainment for all children.

- we should ensure that the role of Colleges of Further Education is recognised and maximised in implementing the Vision;
- similarly, the role of the Library and Information Service should be further considered and developed.

- more consideration should be given to the voice and role of children and young people: children are by nature innovative and have an important part to play in developing services and helping us to improve what they experience;

Involving Young People

Over the summer of 2003 youth crime in South Devon rose by 70%. During this period a number of youth centres were closed because of staff shortages.

Over the autumn of 2003 and the early spring of 2004 youth workers, using a range of methods, started to engage young people in discussions about their school holidays, what they did and more importantly what they would like to do. Efforts were made to engage particular groups and individuals in the debate.

As a result a number of young people's planning groups were formed. These groups, facilitated by youth workers, put together an Easter school holiday programme. This involved opening youth centres during the day rather than evenings, and organising day trips and residentials. The young people costed the activities, made bookings, produced publicity, established a code of conduct and negotiated grants toward the cost of the programme. The programme engaged over 120 different young people and aggregated attendances were over 650. Youth crime fell by 35% compared with the previous year.

Following the Easter break the young people's planning groups reviewed the programme and identified what had gone well and what needed improvement. They then started to plan for the summer school holiday. In preparation, older teenagers were trained to run activities for 11 to 13 year olds. Youth centres were open during the day and at weekends. The number of day trips and residentials was increased. The opportunities were proactively marketed to young people thought to be at particular risk. Over 230 different young people took part and aggregated attendances were over 2,100. Youth crime fell by over 80% compared with the previous year.

There was a concern for making progress with some challenging and immediate priorities, which already demand high levels of partnership, innovation and practical steps, particularly:

- improving the life chances of Looked After Children;
- workforce remodelling;
- addressing the challenge of public service efficiencies.

The Forum also put forward in some detail its priority Action Points for 2005/06, for 2006/09 and longer-term. These will be incorporated into detailed Directorate and service planning. The full reports of all the preparatory, consultative and concluding work on the Vision for Learning and its priorities can be found on

www.devon.gov.uk/index/learning/plans_and_priorities/vision_for_learning.htm

It will be important to build up momentum if the Vision is not to sit and gather dust. Implementation will be taken forward through living documents, which analyse progress, and result in regular, evidence-based and updated plans. If they are to continue to shine brightly, the commitments of the Vision will need to be seen continually reflected in Community Strategies, high level Local Authority plans and schools' own Development Plans.

The broad strategies which will promote the momentum are set out in the second part of this document, and have influenced the development of the CYPP.

Life doesn't always go either smoothly or speedily: aspirations can't be converted to reality overnight; grand plans take time and have setbacks along the way.

The Forum's message to the Director was to "hold faith with the Vision".

And to all partners "Don't lose sight of the good that will emerge".

Classroom of the future

Devon was one of just 12 LEAs chosen by the DfES to design and develop three Classrooms of the Future at Witheridge and Winkleigh Primary Schools and Chulmleigh Community College. The aim of the project was to challenge current thinking about school building design.

The focus of the Devon schemes was to create innovative learning environments that would engage, stimulate and inspire both children and adult learners.

They were designed to provide greater learning opportunities for people living in rural areas and reduce social exclusion with an IT-rich environment enabling learners to connect with other centres.



The college's Classroom of the Future has subsequently received an award from the Devon Environmental Business Initiative.

A classroom space where a sense of awe and wonder, enjoyment and fun are fostered and coupled with a thirst for discovery

Parent

VISION INTO ACTION (1)

In response to the views of schools and other partners the strategies in Section 1 will be pursued as priorities, being included in the transition plan for 2005/06 and then, where appropriate, developed through the 2006/09 CYPP.

They are not in order of importance, but the first nine are in response to the over-arching points raised during the Schools' Forum planning day in November 2004; the subsequent proposals are in response both to direct feedback from schools during consultation, and from discussions with their representatives in the November Workshops.

- 1 a review of how the Directorate collects, collates and uses data: collected once; used many times; accessible when needed; updated and verified regularly
- 2 an audit of consultation models already used with children and young people, with the aims of drawing on best and transferable practice to achieve universal coverage
- 3 involvement of parent associations and other partnerships to consider how best to extend parental engagement in school and local authority planning
- 4 a review of essential information on policy, to include regularly revised Who's Who contact lists with email and telephone details; Link officers for Learning Communities as new two-way information conduits and trouble-shooters; regular updates for Governors on progress on Vision, and introduction of a regular bulletin for Heads

Crediton Learning Community

The Crediton Learning Community has launched a project on healthy eating and lifestyles across all its schools and communities.

The HEAL project brings together school staff, parents, governors and local people in an effort to bring about changes that will benefit schools, children, families and the wider community.

The Primary Care Trust and Mid Devon District Council are among the many partners taking part in the project which uses the Effective Partnership with Parents or EPPa model developed in Devon.

More information is available on www.mosaic-ed.com

- 5 development of work with FE Colleges and other agencies supporting young people in enjoying, achieving, making a positive contribution to other communities and preparing for economic wellbeing; innovative cross-partnership approaches will be reviewed and publicised; the Directorate's capacity in promoting skills and enterprise will be stepped up
- 6 a more coherent approach to work with Looked After Children, building capacity within the Children's Services Division
- 7 an alternative portfolio of goods and services to schools will be introduced in 2006 to coincide with three year budgets for schools; in preparation, schools will be supported in procurement and purchasing skills to build capacity in soliciting and securing best value solutions. This must be achieved without destabilising key local authority services, which most schools rely on, and in the context of support for schools post-Gershon

- 8 continuation of a proactive approach at the leading edge of workforce remodelling, which looks beyond the practical next steps to the bigger picture of work-life balance, the challenge of meeting the whole needs of children, and the value placed on all staff's contributions. Specific support will be given to schools addressing workforce remodelling aspirations at the same time as managing falling rolls

Ifracombe Junior Workforce Remodelling

Ifracombe C of E Junior School, with 536 pupils, has been working on a workforce remodelling project.

The School Change Team, or SCT, included representatives from all staff groups as well as governors.

The results have included a wider distribution of leadership, wider involvement of staff in school development, improved communication and consultation throughout the school, a more relevant curriculum, positive and creative use of all staff talents, autonomy and control for LSAs and MTAs, less pressure on the head and deputy to be the driving force behind the change process, improved morale throughout the whole school, teachers' 10% Planning, Preparation and Assessment time and cost effective CPD with tangible results.

The school has a number of tips for colleagues including:

- Ensure the SCT representatives get regular opportunities to update the whole staff on the issues they are working on.
- Ensure that the SCT consult the groups of people they represent.
- Have more than one proposal to present to staff for comments or a final decision so they have choice.
- Don't keep changing the team as it takes time for certain individuals to find their voice.
- Give guidance and training in problem-solving techniques before looking at problems themselves. When the SCT has the tools the head can leave them to it, having agreed the success criteria that need to be met.
- Always keep it simple – look for ways to get rid of barriers not make them.

- 9 the Single Plan will include references to support from the Library and Information Service in signposting and support materials, particularly for pre-school children
- 10 strategies will be developed to promote a culture of innovation including new ways of commissioning services for school improvement including support for pilots, networking and shared leadership; supplementary routes to valuing schools' achievements (e.g. profiling of groups of schools and recognition for the broader opportunities they encourage children to take); and a feasibility study on an Innovations Centre and Innovations Awards
- 11 the authority, in partnership with school representatives, will explore the implications and potential for developing Foundation Stage (age 3-6) Units and Foundation Stage Partnerships (schools without maintained nurseries operating alongside voluntary or private providers) and present proposals to roll these out where practicable

A Pilot Foundation Stage Partnership

Chulmleigh Primary School set up its Foundation Stage Unit to formalise its previously good, informal arrangements with the local pre-school.

Staff are now working together to produce Foundation Stage profiles and sharing learning resources. Children from three to the end of the reception year benefit from a carefully planned continuity of educational experience with a qualified teacher involved in their education throughout the Foundation Stage.

They are taught in a specialist unit staffed by adults trained to teach in the early years and all staff get to know the children really well.

Former pre-school staff benefit from training available to teaching assistants and the early years SENCo and the school SENCo work closely together.

The school is confident it can deliver high quality Foundation Stage education and childcare, within a seamless setting, and provide a coherent structure for parents and families.

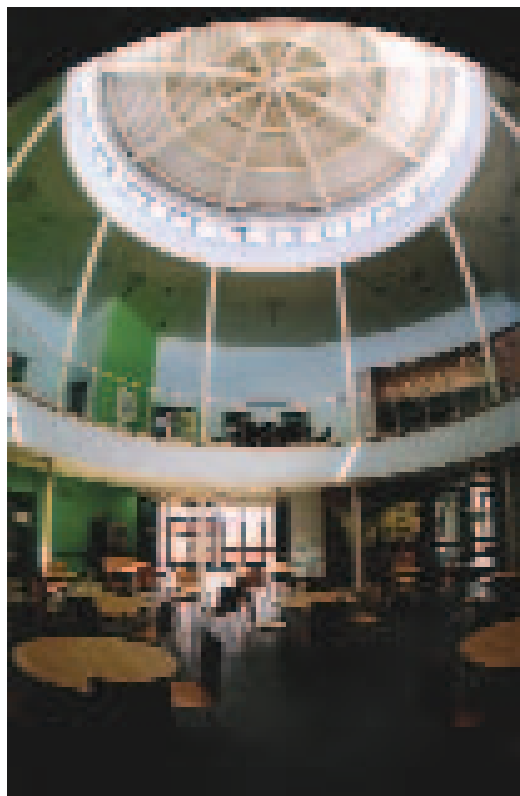
- 12 a Specialist Foundation Stage Adviser will be recruited in 2005/06 to work with the Early Years Team and increase capacity to support schools and pre-school providers
- 13 early intervention strategies will be developed to address the needs of vulnerable children of all ages, but mindful of the particular value of action during prenatal stage or infancy
- 14 a view will be taken across health, safety and wellbeing to provide best advice and support to governors and managers to meet pupils' needs and best interests and fulfil statutory duties. This will incorporate a closer partnership with health through a joint post, a review of health and safety advice, and a coherent view of all initiatives to promote healthy lifestyles including school travel plans, sports developments, catering review recommendations and the Healthy Schools Award. Healthy Youth Work and Healthy Early Years Awards will be explored
- 15 Task Groups will be established to draft proposals for our aspirations for learners, parents, staff and governors. These will be developed and agreed in 2005/06 and presented in the first CYPP as the Devon Promise
- 16 the local authority will plan to support schools in localities with falling rolls through
 - immediate action through budget surgeries to support school governors and managers;
 - an Active Redeployment policy to support and where possible retain experienced staff;
 - longer-term discussions with groups of schools about proactive response to projected patterns
- 17 discuss with DAG and headteacher representatives
 - how Governors can best engage in developing Local Learning Communities;
 - how the county council can work with schools toward a 'compact' to reflect the value-added from the devolved LLC funding
- 18 Devon County Council will consider how best to advise and support schools in playing a pivotal part in community planning, and in raising the profile of 'enjoying and achieving' and 'making a positive contribution' within community strategies

VISION INTO ACTION (2)

The Schools' Forum suggested that the following should be medium to longer term objectives, although they will undoubtedly build on earlier work:

- comprehensive discussion on and review of what constitutes 'good quality', with explicit messages;
- more duties shared with learning communities, building on the Compact;
- local authorities developing their own 'learning communities';
- developmental work with partners (continuing) on disseminating good practice: within five years, modelling and exchanging should be embedded in systems and practice;
- developing and using longer-term measures for outcomes for young people leaving public care;
- pursuing possible flexibilities across resources used for transport, ICT (including 'virtual learning communities') and curriculum delivery;
- planning in greater detail for raising wider community issues, e.g. healthy lifestyles, educational opportunities for vulnerable adults, compensating for what could in the interim diminish by way of wider community education;
- rolling out the professional development proposals including refresher time, shadowing and secondments for teachers and school managers, lead learner groups for Heads, and specific proposals to support Deputy Heads;
- during this time there should be continual checking out of the Vision and planning objectives, communication on achievements, and audit of needs, views and activities.

*Vision goes hand in hand
with leadership*
Headteacher



APPENDIX 1: DEVELOPING THE VISION

► 2004: Report on a year of conversations

1.0 Developing the Vision

- 1.1 The Vision for Learning in Devon grew from a meeting of the Schools' Forum with elected members and officers on 14 November 2003.
- 1.2 After that there was a formal launch, with all schools invited to the Great Hall of Exeter University on 6 January 2004 to hear representatives of the Forum set out what they had agreed was important to them.
- 1.3 Over the year meetings were held across the County: Directors' Conferences of heads and governors; discussions formal and informal, with headteachers' groups and governors and other stakeholders; a website for young people; the publication of potential Action points with further feedback and discussion; and then a second planning meeting of the Schools' Forum in November 2004.
- 1.4 In all, 167 schools (46%) participated individually in the discussions and contributed ideas. Others contributed to discussions held locally; the head and governor representatives on the Forum, with other colleagues from other organisations also on that body, overviewed the process in ongoing debate with the Director. The main themes and the first principles held firm throughout, and through the year views were tested on how to identify practical steps and prioritise them.
- 1.5 The debate was from the start in the forefront of educational thinking. The Vision incorporated a strong commitment to working with other agencies, particularly Health and Social Services authorities; it placed value on a broad curriculum, recognising that far from distracting the eye from standards, this would support raising achievement; it insisted that we must encourage children and young people to adopt healthy lifestyles; it recognised that the wellbeing of children is rooted in their families and communities, and that for those who are from time to time not secure in those roots the County Council and its schools have a special responsibility.
- 1.6 And as the discussion matured the context was changing. At the Forum meeting in 2003 it was envisaged that the Vision would give a common strength to education stakeholders in Devon to underpin a Single Education Plan. The publication of *Every Child Matters* and the Children Bill indicated that the legislative frameworks would extend. This would in fact encompass the broader strengths of Devon's Vision. There would now be a Single Plan for Children and Young People (CYPP), and the Children Act 2004 set a duty on a number of agencies to work together to achieve five key outcomes for them.

2.0 Report of the Schools' Forum meeting on 14 November 2004

2.1 The meeting started with an overview by Phil Norrey, explaining the changing context and the implications of the Children Act. Morning workshops followed, discussing how the Key Notes could be taken forward, with the opportunity to influence timing and priorities. In the afternoon, different working groups discussed how the Devon Promise might be shaped.

2.2 A number of proposals emerged from across the workshops:

- there is a need for cultural change across the educational community. Innovative approaches and strong team work are fundamental to success, whether this be across agencies, within and between schools, or between DCC and schools;
- cultural change is ambitious and incremental; it is the big picture. To underpin it good communications are essential, and this can be partly achieved by small steps:
 - ensure key contacts are known;
 - use the Link Officers as conduits of information and feedback;
 - keep everyone aware of the Vision and what is in hand; keep checking it out;
 - get better at disseminating best practice;
 - use data more effectively.
- The role of Local Learning Communities: these were seen as an important vehicle for cultural change and radical thinking.
 - they should not and need not prevent other networking groups;
 - it was important to establish what outcomes were anticipated from any groups, i.e. not 'networking for networking's sake';
 - more thought is needed on the role of Governors in LLCs;
 - 'learning for all benefits all': a concern that LLCs might not interest themselves in community aspirations.
- a concern for some immediate and ongoing priorities, already demanding high levels of partnership, innovation and practical steps, notably
 - improving life chances of Looked After Children;
 - workforce remodelling;
 - seeking efficiencies (e.g. procurement practice).
- the Vision as presented to date needs more emphasis on some areas
 - the place of creativity through the arts in raising achievement;
 - disability issues;
 - the voice and role of children and young people: children are innovative; How do we listen to them? How can they shape their activities? How do schools communicate with their pupils?
 - the role of the Library and Information Service: educational impact, e.g. Bookstart, self-help materials; information, e.g. signposting;
 - the contribution of Colleges of Further Education to learner-centred provision.
- hold to the vision – whatever the delays and setbacks. "Don't lose sight of the good which will emerge".

2.3 Priorities were discussed and put forward by six workshops in three broad bands:

Priority 1: to start (or maintain) in 2005

Priority 2: 2006-2009

Priority 3: longer-term

It was recognised that some of the action points emerging from discussions during the year had been taken up immediately; and that there is clearly an overlap in time lines. The detailed feedback from 46 respondents on priority action points was given to the workshops as a starting point, in the context of the majority feedback of general support for the Vision's principles.



2.4 The priorities agreed on by the workshop participants were collated. It would be fair to say that contributors wanted to address a vast agenda as quickly as possible. This, not surprisingly, led to a weight of support for immediate action and short to medium-term planning priorities. It was more difficult for participants to gauge how the wide tranche of incoming policy change will affect planning objectives in the longer term.

2.5 In a 'finger on the pulse' exercise participants were also asked to pass in a card with one point recorded: the one most important thing they personally would want Devon to be known for. 37 'key point' cards were returned, which fell into three broad areas, with inevitable overlaps:

- Every Child Matters;
- a county with an aura of challenge and excitement;
- a county with a broad view of what is to be valued as learning achievement.

Every Child Matters

The largest number (18) wanted to see Devon known for its commitment to every child fulfilling his or her potential, irrespective of background or ability.

Innovation and challenge

14 want to see a county recognised as visionary and innovative (9 specific references) and able to 'think out of the box'.

Positive attitudes

Five, still in the spirit of (1) or (2), make specific reference to recognition for the value the 'learning community' of Devon is seen to place on positive attitudes (e.g. to cultural diversity) and to valuing all achievements; and to the value and support that Devon demonstrates for education and its schools.

The detailed comments can be seen on the Vision website at www.devon.gov.uk/index/learning/plans_and_priorities/vision_for_learning.htm

3.0 The Children Act and the Five Outcomes

3.1 The Children Act 2004 complements a raft of Education Acts: it recognises that if every child is to fulfil his or her potential, educational aspirations must sit alongside a number of positive health and social outcomes. The interests of different agencies and organisational structures must be set aside and the infant, child or young person placed at the centre of considerations. The wellbeing of children is expressed as five outcomes. They should:

- be healthy
- stay safe
- enjoy and achieve
- make a positive contribution
- achieve economic wellbeing

A Children's Commissioner for England will be appointed whose principal role is to promote awareness of the views and interests of children concerning the services they receive.

3.2 **The part schools can play in promoting the five outcomes goes far beyond their duties under legislation. It is, in fact, difficult to see how the objectives can be achieved without their co-operation with other agencies and with each other. This bears out the first principles of Devon's Vision for Learning (June 2004) that**

- **the needs of learners, not providers, must be central to planning;**
- **schools can only do their best for all pupils if they collaborate with each other and with other agencies;**
- **there is great benefit from active participation by parents/carers as educators and as learners.**

Schools usually have premises within communities and are also natural points of contact for parents.

At its meeting in November 2004 the Schools' Forum and other participants agreed that the Vision needed greater emphasis on input from children and young people. This is in tune with the function of the proposed Children's Commissioner and there is a role here for schools in particular to demonstrate how pupils are involved in planning for and commenting on activities and services.

4.0 The Devon Promise

There was consultation during 2004 on the concept of an 'entitlement' or 'learner pledge', and this had attracted almost universal support. It does, however, need careful management if false hopes are to be avoided. The Devon Promise, as set out in the Vision (June 2004), would be:

- by the age of seven children should have
- by the age of 14 young people should have
- by the age of 19 young people should have
- staff teaching in Devon's schools should have
- parents of children in Devon's schools should have
- Governors serving in Devon's schools should have

The discussions from six groups on the Forum Day in November were presented to a plenary and it was agreed that this was just a starting point: The Promises require detailed discussion with participation of a number of colleagues, and this needs to be launched early in the year.

Contacts

Phil Norrey

Education, Arts, Libraries and Children's Services Directorate
County Hall
Topsham Road
Exeter
EX2 4QG

01392 382039