

**Aims:**

To become the **centre of expertise for inclusivity** in South Devon and beyond  
 To raise **educational achievement** .

Dear Parents,

I am writing to introduce myself to you. My name is Jill Bruley and I have recently been appointed to coordinate the newly formed "Totnes Schools Federation". It is a post, which I consider to be an exciting opportunity for all involved. As part of my role, it is my responsibility to involve you wherever possible and to keep you informed of the projects' progress.

**What is the Federation?**

Some of you may have already heard of the Federation and are wondering what exactly it is. We are one of twenty such Federations, distributed throughout the country. Each Federation has been formed by groups of schools, to look at ways of working together on particular areas of teaching and learning. Through a federated approach and mutual understanding, a sharing of ideas and resources, it is believed that schools can gain in strength and efficiency, thus improving education in its widest sense.

Our Federation is a combination of three, closely located and already linked schools: Bidwell Brook Special School, King Edward VI Community College and Dartington Primary School.

**Why these three school?**

As many of you will be aware, the three schools involved are not only geographically close but they also have a history of working together on a number of projects. Most recently, they have been involved in a very successful three year pilot project - "Inclusion Matters", funded by the LEA. This encouraged mainstream and special school staff and pupils to work together and to share ideas, skills and resources. Although the funding for this project has now ended, much of the good work continues informally. By joining the schools in a more formal way, as a Federation, we can continue to build on this excellent foundation.

**What is our vision?**

Through a collaborative approach we believe we could become the recognised centre for inclusive teaching and learning in South Devon and beyond.

**What are our aims?****We aim to raise the educational achievement at the transition points of Key Stage 1/2 and 2/3.**

The transition between one phase and another, e.g. key stage 2 (primary phase) to key stage 3 (secondary phase), or special school to mainstream, can be daunting for pupils. This can sometimes affect their confidence and self esteem, which may in turn affect their achievement. By sharing expertise, resources and skills we hope to make transition a smoother, more positive experience.

This will be done in a number of ways:

- . **Teachers** to experience the transitional challenges by swapping schools.
- . **Teachers** share ideas, expertise and resources to facilitate inclusivity across the whole ability from special educational needs to gifted and talented.
- . **Teacher Training** programmes to incorporate teaching across all three schools.
- . **Teaching Assistant Training** programmes to be developed further and roles redefined and redeveloped.

In the first year we will concentrate on English teaching and learning, in the second year Maths and in the third year Science. Also:

**We aim to improve the perception of the school as a learning environment and to improve teaching and learning strategies in order to improve behaviour management.**

**We aim to develop 14-19 provision for students from Bidwell Brook and KEVICC.**

## **What have we done so far?**

Three teachers, one from each school, have elected to work together to plan and deliver English teaching and learning to a group of students at Key Stage 2 and 3. The teachers involved in this first year of the project are Judy Findlay from Bidwell Brook School, Ruth Nixey from Dartington Primary School and Jane Richardson from KEVICC; all are very experienced teachers, who have a wealth of knowledge and expertise to share and they each have responsibility in their own school for the delivery of this area of the curriculum. In preparation they have shadowed each other, in order to get a feel for the various different school environments, teaching and learning styles and routines. They have then spent time together, preparing sessions, sharing their knowledge of useful strategies and materials to help the whole range of ability and are now in the process of teaching in each other's school for one literacy hour per week. They will also, on a weekly basis, liaise to evaluate, plan and share experiences in order to ensure continuity and progress.

We have also had our first meeting of Federated Governors, a body representative of each of the three schools, appointed to support the objectives of the Federation by supporting the Headteachers and myself in the implementation.

Even though this project is in its infancy, many innovative ideas have already been discussed and we are all very positive that it will create a partnership which will benefit all those involved.

Yours sincerely

Jill Bruley  
Federation Co-ordinator

We are delighted and excited to be part of this federation and we really look forward to this new partnership.

Headteachers of the Totnes Schools Federation.