



This has been the year of the General Election, and education has featured low on the priorities. My attentions have been focussed in three areas:

- School Partnerships
- The issue of selection
- Development work in our schools

1. School Partnerships

I have regularly attended the ISSP Partnerships Forum, where FIDS has been instrumental in pushing three areas :-

- the setting up of an ISSP website, to publicise all the partnerships we do and also. This has been achieved – it now needs putting into practice.
- the foundation of Primary School Partnerships ( a FIDS initiative). The latter acquired limited funding from the government to 'pump prime' these partnerships and 4 of our members received funding. The Partnership Forum now 'has legs'. It will be interesting to see how its work develops.
- Sports Partnerships have been brought under the wing of the ISSP. Because of my background as Chair of HMC Sports Sub committee for 10 years, I was able to lead on this and met with Guin Batten (Youth Sport Trust) and Kevin Doble (representing ISC). There were three meetings, and proposals were accepted by ISSP.

***I remain concerned as to how effectively ISSP is communicated with members of ISC organisations and how much weight it is given. Since it is now attended by a Government Minister, it needs to be given more support.***

2. The Issue of Selection

Through discussion with Civitas ,the think tank and Anastasia de Waal, their Deputy Director, FIDS has pushed for a debate on selection. This led to the publication of ' The Ins and Outs of Selective Schools- a Debate', which was launched by Civitas at the House of Commons. David Davies and Tristram Hunt launched the debate.

3. Development Work in our schools

Because our schools have different traditions and often different social bases to the traditional 'public' schools, I organised a development directors conference. 18 attended and it seems to have gone down well. The sessions were :-

- i. Investing in development
- ii. Contacting alumni
- iii. Building a professional network
- iv. Running a campaign

These topics were suggested by the schools, and all were led by personnel at the schools.

4. I was invited to speak at the Westminster Education Forum on behalf of FIDS, and this proved a useful platform and networking opportunity .
5. My other actions have been administrative –
  - i. stimulating blogs ( only partially successful),
  - ii. sorting out admin of finances
  - iii. communicating with members - always very frustrating since Heads are so busy that FIDS business and responses are very slow or non-existent. This is particularly tricky when arranging events and dates ( eh the annual Conference).
  - iv. Arranging admin for reorganisation of FIDS Company – retirement of Directors and appointment of others.
6. Issues going forward :-
  - Committee numbers
  - Strategy for new electoral situation
  - Membership numbers
  - Public and schools perception.

I would like to finish this report by asking a question .We started in 2005 with an enthusiastic though long term vision to change perceptions and relationships of the independent day schools – and I still feel the same. Many of the original team of Heads are now retiring or have retired. ***Do the new Heads share that enthusiasm ?***

Stephen Smith, May 2015