

CONFERENCE : 7 SEPTEMBER 2009 **KEY NOTE SPEAKERS: BIOGRAPHIES**

County Councillor Jane Pitman, OBE DL

Jane has been an elected Member of Hertfordshire County Council representing the rural division of Braughing since 1985. During this time she has been Executive Member of various departments including Social Services, Environment, Libraries and Culture and Adult Care Services.

Jane became Lead Member for Children Services in 2005 and from that time onwards, the interests of children and young people have been at the centre of all of her efforts to improve services for children, especially the most vulnerable.

As a testament to her valuable commitment and role in all the hard work that is done throughout children's services in Hertfordshire Jane was honoured earlier this year with the award of an OBE.

PROFESSOR CHARLES DESFORGES OBE BSc Lond PhD Lanc

Charles Desforges is an emeritus professor at the University of Exeter. He served on the National Education Research Forum (NERF) which worked to shape national strategy for educational research, and he chaired the NERF research priorities group. He is also a research adviser to various government bodies here and overseas. Other current work involves supporting the professional development of head teachers and promoting teacher research on lesson development.

From 1998 to 2002 Charles was the Director of the Teaching and Learning Research Programme of the Economic and Social Research Council, the largest coordinated programme of social research ever mounted in the UK.

Prior to that, he was Deputy Vice-Chancellor at the University of Exeter and also the Director of the School of Education.

Earlier in his working life he taught school science for ten years (1963-1973). Since then he has been a university researcher focusing on classroom learning.

He has published extensively in the field of teaching and learning, and was editor of the British Journal of Educational Psychology for five years. Recent publications include 'Numeracy and Beyond' (2000) (with Martin Hughes), 'Teaching and Learning' (2002) (with Richard Fox), and a report of a research review conducted for the DfES entitled 'The impact of parental involvement on pupil achievement'. This is available on the DfES website as Research Report No. 433 (2003). He is currently working on a research project on leadership in small schools and on a review of research literature on children with moderate learning difficulties in KS3 and 4.

Professor Desforges was awarded an OBE in the 2004 New Years Honours List for Services to Education.

Dirk Uitterdijk

Dirk Uitterdijk is originally from Holland and now lives with his wife Rose and three teenage children in Chester. He first came to England in 1981 to study at Moorlands College and after working for a church he joined the Children's Society as a community development worker.

Dirk was trained in working with fathers by the American NCPL and was one of just twenty parenting 'Trainer of Trainers' to be given his certificate in the House of Commons in 2003. He started work for the YMCA in 1997 as the first YMCA England Parenting Development Adviser and started over 110 different projects; working with parents of teenagers, starting the YMCA Dads & Lads initiative, a 'Parent & Child' special needs project, helping young fathers and Asian fathers.

All these national initiatives were funded by the Home Office Family Policy Unit and DFES 'Strengthening Families'.

After a successful ten years with the YMCA, where he initiated over 110 different projects, Dirk started up his own consultancy working with, amongst others, children's centres. His most recent work has been with a national YMCA England 'Schools Extended services' initiative.

Dirk also works part time for the Fatherhood Institute as their Regional Development Officer and has just completed an audit of early years services in ten children's centres in Birmingham.

Dirk enjoys playing the drums, watching and occasionally playing football, supporting Chelsea F.C. and viewing 'the greatest show on earth' – his children (and perhaps one day his grandchildren) growing up!

SUE PALMER: BIOGRAPHY

Sue Palmer, a former primary headteacher, is an independent writer and consultant on primary education, notably literacy. She has written over 200 books, TV programmes and software packages for children and teachers, and has acted as an independent consultant to the DCSF, National Literacy Trust, Basic Skills Agency, numerous educational publishers and the BBC. Well known to UK teachers for her inservice courses and articles in the educational press, she has a regular column in *TES* and *Child Education*. In 2004, she collaborated with Early Years specialist Ros Bayley to produce *Foundations of Literacy*, now in its third edition.

Sue's best-selling book *Toxic Childhood: how modern life is damaging our children... and what we can do about it* [Orion 2006] was her first for a more general audience, and helped spark a national debate about the nature of contemporary childhood. It was followed by a 'self-help' book for parents, *Detoxing Childhood*, and *21st Century Boys: how modern life can drive them off the rails, and how we can get them back on track*, published in May 2009.

Sue is actively involved in many campaigns relating to children's well-being and mental health. She is regularly consulted by action groups and politicians, has spoken at conferences around the world, and was named among the top twenty most influential people in British education in the *Evening Standard's* 2008 *Influentials* list.

Sue is a patron of the English Speaking Board, the Scottish Pre-School Play Association and the Children's Football Alliance. She is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, a Trustee and Fellow of the English Association, Chair of the Scottish Play Policy Forum and President of Montessori AMI UK.