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We're once again in that bracing part of the year where we've just about reacclimatised to the working week, have tentatively imagined what might be in store for us over the next 12 months and ... perhaps started feeling a bit tired. As Farihah Anwar-Simmons notes on page 77, January often isn't easy for school staff, but the right kind of encouragement from leadership can help brighten the gloom.

That said, the New Year can also be seen as a good time to take stock and ponder the gains to be had from starting something new. Maybe you've toyed with the idea of embracing a new form of school evaluation, like peer review (page 14). Perhaps the cold winds of January have even prompted you to consider taking your teaching career abroad (page 62).

While we hope this issue can provide you with some inspiration and useful ideas, we also want to examine some persistent issues that aren't going away any time soon. News of the government's additional £350 million to support children with SEND emerged just as we were going to press, but Jules Daulby's observations of how the system is currently struggling to cope with demand (page 12) still very much still apply. Elsewhere this issue, starting on page 50 we take an extended look at the present state of things with regards to the nation's poverty rates, and the impact that deprivation and lack of engagement can have within school settings.

To end things on a more upbeat note, if you're planning to make the trip to London's ExCeL for this year's Bett Show, we'll be there too. Stand F101 is where you'll find us, so do stop by and say hello.

Enjoy the issue,

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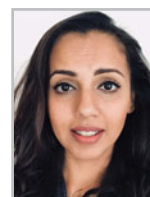
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consultant

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PUBLISHER: Helen Tudor

PUBLISHED BY: Maze Media (2000) Ltd,
25 Phoenix Court, Hawkins Rd,
Colchester, Essex, CO2 8JY.

TEL: 01206 505900

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“I wanted it to be a genuine school improvement role”

Former National Schools Commissioner, Sir David Carter, reflects on what the role taught him...

What were the main things that struck you during your time as National Schools Commissioner that you hadn't previously appreciated?

When I took on the job and became based at the DfE in London, rather than the South West, I wanted it to be a genuine school improvement role. I was going to be employed as a civil servant, advising ministers and supporting conversations about policy – but would I be able to look myself in the mirror and know that the role was all about helping schools get better? Absolutely.

The Civil Service states that they try to recruit the 'brightest and the best', and I saw that all the time. There were a number of people there who'd come out of teaching to join the team, and the quality of the people I worked with, who enabled me to do the job the way I wanted to do it, was really good.

Finally, looking back at the start of that time, I'd never had the opportunity to work with ministers before. I ultimately worked for three Secretaries of State – Nicky Morgan, Justine Greening and Damian Hinds – but also alongside Lord Nash and Lord Agnew, who held the academies brief. That was really exciting, and quite challenging at times, but I was able to build relationships. My advice would be sought; it didn't feel tokenistic, but genuinely a case of 'Tell us what you think about this particular issue.'

Was there anything you saw MATs doing in terms of tackling the teacher recruitment issue during your time as NSC that struck you as especially innovative or different?

I don't think there's a 'right' way for a MAT to manage its recruitment needs – or indeed any single model or blueprint for what a MAT should be. My concern would be that you end up with an approach that prompts people to think, 'Oh, so *that's* how you do it.' The different contexts, phases and starting points MATs operate within are all hugely important.

That said, there are several things that the MATs I have most faith in consistently do. One is seeing their workforce as a unified entity, and using that to inform decisions on how their most effective practitioners can be deployed for greatest impact. Another thing good MATs do is utilise what can be described as 'the MAT dividend'; if you're a MAT of 10 schools, there will be

some things which, given sufficient time, funding and capacity, you can do more quickly than any one school can by itself.

The third thing is how they engage with Good and Outstanding maintained schools that are reticent about joining trusts. If those schools have great results and great outcomes, why should they join? One reason is the staffing capacity that the school will bring to the trust, but there can also be an opportunity for the school to pioneer innovative practice and inform the curriculum. Effective trusts will make that clear when asking such schools to join them.

Is there a risk of a zero sum game occurring, where some MATs will be reluctant to part with talented leaders who can potentially boost outcomes elsewhere? Can educational talent and expertise be distributed more equitably?

There can be a chance that some governors, particularly those who have been with a school for some time prior to it joining a trust, will say 'You're not having our teachers.' Their mindset will still be focused more on the school and pupils they know best, rather than all the kids in the trust. There's some challenge around that, but I think it's ultimately for the governance to agree on how its workforce should be deployed.

The second issue is more complicated. Consider some of the high level expertise in the SEN sphere



CAREER TIMELINE

1982
Graduates from Royal Holloway College in an honours degree in music; proceeds to train as a PE and music teacher

1997
Assumes first headship at Circencester Deer Park School in Gloucestershire

2004
Appointed principal of John Cabot City Technology College

2007
Becomes CEO of the Cabot Learning Federation multi-academy trust



around child psychology or speech and language therapy – with many specialists no longer employed by LAs, some, though not all, will be moving into MATs. What worries me about that is if there's an area where one individual has been *the* go-to for speech and language, and they now work for a trust. Will all schools outside the trust no longer have access to that person's expertise?

One of the challenges to be met here is that a MAT employing a workforce possessing great expertise can contribute to being a system leader. The MAT can be the route through which other schools – which may well never join the trust, for whatever reason – can access the support they need.

There has been some criticism of MATs in terms of the interests represented at their operating level and how they can be held to account, especially by parents. Is the MAT accountability system something that could be tightened up?

Yes. I believe there's still a sense of confusion amongst many parental bodies about what a MAT is and how it functions. I acknowledge that can be a challenge, but it's one that the MAT concerned has to solve. One thing I've seen some trusts do is produce an annual MAT board report for parents outlining what the MAT does and how its money is used, backed up by open meetings. It's an approach that can be really useful in helping people understand what's a complex model.

I think there's a wider issue concerning transparency. One of the problems we have with the system is that people reach their own conclusions about things that may or may not be true. There aren't hundreds of trusts behaving badly; it's a very small percentage, but because some aspects of the MAT decision-making process isn't as clear as people would like it to be, those people will decide for themselves as to whether there's something going on or not.

That small percentage can still generate a lot of noise. Did you find that tough to manage as an NSC?

It's true that when things go wrong, as in some recent high profile cases, it can be pretty catastrophic for the schools, communities and children involved.

The role I had was one of finding such schools new sponsors, and I see the DfE's response to the Wakefield City Academies Trust issue as one of its success stories. We managed to find new sponsors for those schools and move them in very quickly, so that by the start of the following academic year, all 21 schools had a new sponsor in place.

The relationship between regional schools commissioners and the ESFA is now much closer and better than it used to be. During the time I worked there, both were working together very effectively on looking into such cases and identifying trusts we should be worried about before things went wrong. I'm not involved any more, but I've no doubt that work continues to move at pace.

 @Carter6D

 ambitionschoolleadership.org.uk

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Appointed
Regional Schools
Commissioner for
South-West
England; becomes
NSC later that
year

2018
Joins Ambition
School
Leadership and
the Institute for
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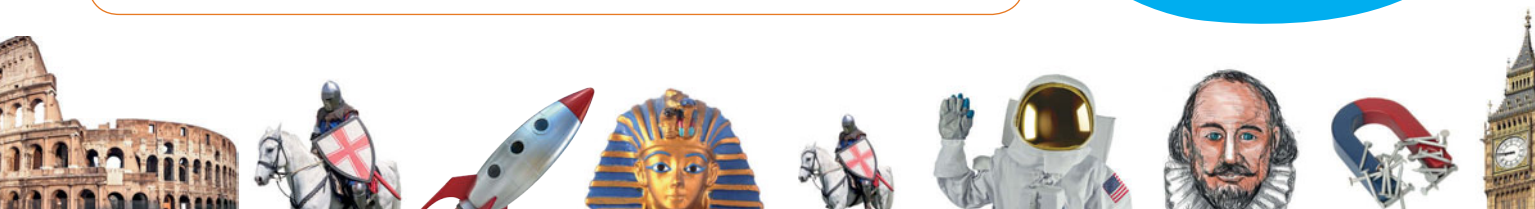
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School Improvement

WHY ACTIVE PUPILS MAKE FOR ACTIVE LEARNERS

How one school sought to extend physical activity into the classroom



At Malton Primary School we follow a whole school approach to general physical activity, with traditional break times and PE learning – but we also embrace the use of physical activity as a pedagogical tool, rather than seeing it as something distinct from classroom learning.

At break and lunch times children choose whether to take part in physical activities and decide how active they're going to be. By incorporating physical activity into 'learning time' and using it to enhance learning that's already taking place, there's no opt out. The children come to simply see it as part of the learning process.

ACTIVE STARTERS

We use 'active starters', so that the first three to four minutes of a lesson incorporate some form of physical

activity. This might involve, for example, using the body to spell words linked to the classroom topic, using low level activity to ignite the learning experience at the start of the lesson. We'll also use 'brain boosters' after 20 to 30 minutes of sedentary work. These are short, three to four-minute bursts of physical activity, again linked to the relevant topic, which help improve the children's concentration, levels of engagement and ability to focus.

Another part of our approach is how we've configured our classroom environments. If there are 25 children within a class, there won't be 25 tables and chairs. Instead, we'll have 16 tables and chairs and spaces where children can work while standing.

Our work in this area has been a long-term project that began with the introduction of Sport Premium funding. We then took a more proactive approach to active learning from 2015 onwards, initially with our changes to the classroom

environment. Our thinking was that instead of attempting to change 25 individual behaviours in 25 different ways, the environment can do some of the work for you.

A PRAGMATIC APPROACH

Overall, the staff at the school have been very receptive and supportive of active learning. It can be a challenging thing for teachers to integrate into their practice, but ours have been highly supported. We've not asked them to incorporate physical activity within the confines of a Victorian classroom where space is limited, and we've sought to be pragmatic. Teachers aren't required to 'do' active learning at set times, but get to decide on what works for them and their pupils throughout the day.

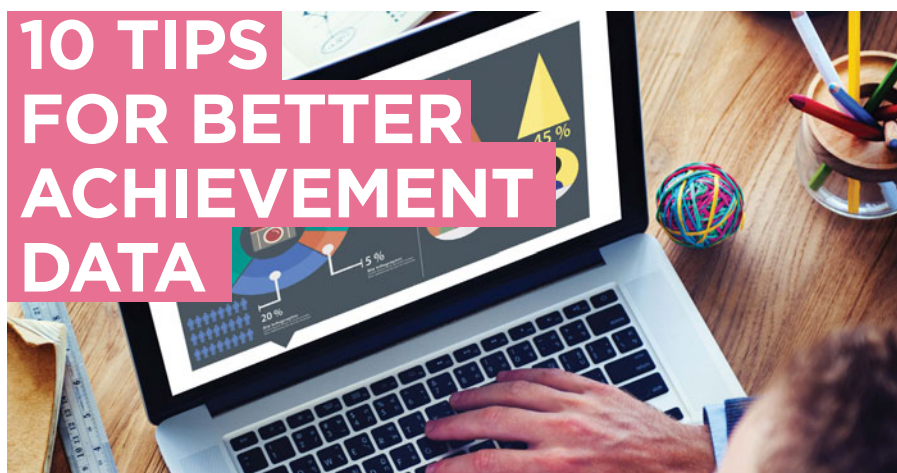
We also include subject warm-ups as part of the children's PE lessons. As well as helping to incorporate some wider learning into those lessons, these take away the need for class teachers to teach them the nuts and bolts of particular activities. The children will be familiar with them already, allowing the teacher to focus on delivering the learning content.

Ultimately, we're engaged in an iterative process that continues to involve regular tinkering. The biggest impact it's had for us so far is on the children's learning behaviours and engagement. We've seen a significant reduction in cases of extreme and disruptive classroom behaviour, and behaviour across the school's shared spaces has improved. The children are now increasingly more engaged in, and more excited by their learning.

Richard Allman is PE lead at Malton Community Primary School, North Yorkshire; readers can learn more about the school's active learning approach in a webinar that's accessible via tinyurl.com/malton-pal

 maltonprimary.org

10 TIPS FOR BETTER ACHIEVEMENT DATA



Are your important pupil outcome insights getting lost? Here's how make things clearer for everyone...

1. KEEP THINGS ORGANISED

Ensure there's a clear sense of structure to your data, so that you can access any information relating to the whole school, followed by each key stage, year group, class, group and pupil.

2. REMEMBER THE VITAL STATISTICS

Whatever system you use, you must be able at any point in the year to show the percentage of pupils below, at, or above the expected standard – as well as those pupils making below expected, expected, or accelerated progress. You should be able to then break this down into groups, such as boys, girls, more able pupils, children with SEND and so on.

3. USE COLOURS

Different shades can indicate degrees of significance, but don't overdo it. Set viable and commonly accepted thresholds, such as, for example, the point at which a pupil starts making accelerated progress.

4. INCLUDE PUPIL NUMBERS AND PERCENTAGES

Remember that percentages with small cohorts can be misleading, and that some pupils may be counted in data more than once. A disadvantaged boy with SEND who is also a persistent absentee could potentially be affecting your data multiple times. By the same token, that '100% of disadvantaged pupils in 6T making more than expected progress' may represent just one pupil.

5. TAILOR YOUR DATA TO DIFFERENT AUDIENCES

The same data set is unlikely to serve pupils, parents, teachers, senior leaders, governors, Ofsted and LAs equally well. Everybody likes a summative overview of distilled 'big message' data presented over a page or two – the finer detail can sit beneath this.

6. ANALYSE THE DATA AND EXTRACT KEY MESSAGES

There's no point in just presenting a load of numbers – formulate a narrative.

7. FORMULATE A RESPONSE

What patterns or performances warrant further action or a strategy? Which are things that you should just monitor and keep an eye on?

8. ENSURE YOUR TEACHER ASSESSMENTS ARE ACCURATE

Fail to do this, and it'll be 'rubbish in, rubbish out'. Get involved in in-school and school-to-school moderation, and perhaps attend some LA training, to ensure accuracy in your teacher assessments.

9. DON'T EXPECT THE DATA TO EXPLAIN EVERYTHING

Data is useful for quantifying performance, but it can't tell us everything about the human beings behind the numbers. There may well be one or more 'back stories'. If you opt to highlight any outliers, make sure you can refer to case studies of actions taken with them.

10. THE SAME ADVICE APPLIES ELSEWHERE

The principles above are equally relevant to other forms of data collection, such as attendance, persistent absence, exclusions, parent surveys and so forth.

Grahame Smith is school improvement manager at Havering School Improvement Services

 [@HES_organuk](https://twitter.com/HES_organuk)
 hes.org.uk

“8 billion people could read my writing!”

Ashley Clayton describes how a blogging project at a Lancashire primary opened pupils' eyes to the rewards of writing for an audience...

Gillibrand Primary School is situated in Chorley, Lancashire. We currently have 210 pupils on roll, were graded Outstanding by Ofsted in 2016 and continue to seek ways in which we can improve, develop and build on our success.

We're part of a 14-strong cluster of schools in the Chorley area. At one of our regular cluster meetings, the suggestion was put forward to embark on a blogging project in conjunction with the former headteacher (and as @DeputyMitchell, noted tweeter), David Mitchell. My computing subject leader, Mr Thomas, and I decided that blogging could be a new and exciting way of inspiring and motivating our children to write – not just in school, but at home and for a larger audience. I could see that the potential of such a project could be huge for everyone across the school, while helping to further raise our pupils' standards of writing.

Mr Thomas proceeded to undertake training for our whole school blogging project with Deputy Mitchell in September this year, and it's marked the start of an amazing journey. Our staff have embraced the project, working hard to ensure that its aims and intentions are accurately translated to the children.

All of us at the school believe it will have a transformative effect on our children's attitudes to writing – each of our classes are now blogging regularly, uploading posts that variously consist of poems, factual articles and stories.

I've been further amazed and impressed at the power of Twitter to support children in not only their learning, but also their hunger to produce writing and share it with others. We've been able to establish links with other schools via the blog; they comment on our work and we comment on theirs.

The children have managed to attract positive comments from people across social media – including a tweet from author Anthony Horowitz, who complimented one of our pupils on some artwork she'd created inspired by his novel *Stormbreaker* (see tinyurl.com/gps-aht). As one of our pupils commented to us, “8 billion people could read my writing!”

As a headteacher, I can't measure the project's impact in terms of data just yet, but I can see the effect it's already had on the children. At a recent school disco, an excited Year 5 child thanked me for commenting on her writing, and told me how she'd edited it and added more to make it even better – wow!

As the project continues to grow, we're seeing more parents and relatives leaving comments on their children's written work, which in turn the children are replying to. Even people as far away as Australia have left comments on the blogs, which has motivated the

children to further edit and improve their work.

Children wanting to write, parents encouraging that writing – this can only be a good thing. I'm looking forward to reporting on the long term impact the project has had, and seeing just how much our children's writing has improved as a result of it.

Ashley Clayton is the headteacher of Gillibrand Primary School; you can read the children's blogs for yourself at gillibrandblogs.net

 @Gillibrand_Sch

 gillibrand.lancs.sch.uk



“THINGS ARE BECOMING MORE OF A STRUGGLE”

Every primary school wants its children with SEND to achieve more – so why do barriers keep getting put in the way, asks Jules Daulby...

Ofsted's 2017/18 annual report was unusual in that it not only mentioned SEND provision in schools, but did so extensively. There have been times when it's almost as though this group of children with the most need have barely existed in reports and policy announcements, aside from a cursory nod – and despite those in the SEND world waving, trying not to drown.

While it's encouraging to know that the inspectorate is focusing on those children who can find education most challenging, it's also concerning – though no surprise to those who have worked on the mainstream SEND frontline – just how neglected Chief Inspector Amanda Spielman has found these children to be.

Ofsted has now recognised that children with SEND are being disproportionately excluded and off-rolled, which is refreshing, but for those who have been campaigning on the issue for some time, the regulator has come to this realisation a little late in the day. I

also worry that Ofsted is laying the blame on schools, when it's actually an ongoing funding crisis and increased accountability measures that have created a perfect storm of problems.

Nowhere does the report mention poverty, asset-stripped LAs and a fragmented school system that's become so complicated, even Einstein would have struggled to understand it. It feels like we're playing a game of Jenga, and that the tower could collapse at any moment.

DOING MORE WITH LESS

Despite continuing hardship, there's a lot of excellent practice out there and many leaders who are creating a culture of support and putting endless energy into meeting the needs of SEND children in the best way possible.

What schools tell me, however, is that things are becoming more and more of a struggle. Their budgets are being squeezed dry, and while they're adamant

that they'll remain inclusive, they know on a business level that it's ultimately expensive to educate children who require specialist support to thrive, and that the available funding no longer matches the provision required.

Recent research by the NAHT found that 94% of schools now find it harder to secure funding for children with SEND compared with two years ago. Many schools will tell you that they're being expected to do more and more using their budgets for complex children, but with less money and with external support mechanisms thin on the ground.

Schools that welcome all children also feel a sense of injustice that other establishments 'down the road' are telling parents that they can't meet the needs of their child. I recently heard of one school that told a parent, whose child had SEND and was also a wheelchair user, that some of their lessons were timetabled upstairs, and that the school was therefore not appropriate for them. This practice should be challenged – but as a parent, would you even know this is illegal? And in any case, who would want their child to attend a school where they weren't welcome? It should be the job of Ofsted, regional schools commissioners and the DfE to fight this battle, not parents.

Ultimately, however, the main positive takeaway from Ofsted's report is that it's taking notice, and that leaders who are confidently overseeing an inclusive culture have nothing to fear from inspections. That aside, there's a need for Ofsted to be more aware of schools' varying contexts and value those which, against the odds, are doing the right thing.

In the absence of enough money, what does the 'right thing' look like – and what can be changed at a policy level to move national SEND provision in the right direction?





1. INTEGRITY

A zero tolerance approach should be directed at the minority of schools that actively don't welcome children with SEND, as it's both illegal and shameful. Ofsted needs to get a handle on this by rewarding the many schools that do include all children in their communities, but more importantly, by also identifying the comparative lack of children with SEND in certain settings.

Instead of giving them an Outstanding tag, they should be highlighting any instances where there are markedly fewer children with EHCPs or receiving SEN support attending a school compared with its neighbours. This could include analysing a school's use of isolation, detentions, off-rolling and fixed term or permanent exclusions. Do children with SEND seem disproportionately affected?

2. ACCOUNTABILITY

Ofsted must be clearer in its myth busting that progress for children with SEND can be measured in different ways. What should it look like for children with SEND? What does Ofsted expect to see? Schools that have succeeded in Ofsted's eyes will have a deep understanding of how SEND children make progress, and will use individualised programmes with high expectations based on knowledge of the child and their capacity to learn. Case studies will be presented to inspectors that show how they value children who don't meet inappropriate national markers and recognise their achievements – no matter how small the steps.

3. PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

All staff should receive SEND training, whether they be classroom-based or not. Leaders must ensure SEND is embedded within the curriculum, ideally through a process in which teachers are coached in inclusive pedagogy by experts in the field. There's much untapped expertise among experienced teachers, SENCOs and specialists that schools aren't currently making the most of. Existing in-house talent could be utilised via a 'reflective practitioner' system, which would enable teachers to become skilled in the teaching and learning of children with SEND and give them the agency to make informed decisions.

5. PARENT PARTNERSHIPS

Inclusive schools work with parents and carers. Parents are the experts in their child, but also in the relevant SEND, having often spent hours researching and speaking to paediatricians and other experts in the field. A school that recognises this will benefit hugely in terms of staff training and its ability to build knowledge and expertise.

6. TEACHING ASSISTANTS

If you haven't already, read Rob Webster's Maximising TAs research (maximisingtas.co.uk). He has shown how, when used well, TAs can benefit children with SEND in many different ways and help close the gap (though not, it should be noted, as substitute teachers).

7. AWARENESS OF THE LAW

This is fundamental if leaders are to understand the rights of the child. If a child has SEND (and especially if they have an EHCP) they must receive the support they need. LAs ought to be

'WE HAVE TO DO BETTER FOR PUPILS WITH SEND'

The SEND-specific concerns highlighted in Ofsted's 2017/18 annual report included:

- Parents having to go to 'extreme lengths' to obtain EHCPs
- Gaps in outcomes for children with SEND continuing to widen
- Disproportionate exclusion rates of SEND pupils
- Off-rolling of SEND pupils
- Fewer high need SEN units within mainstream schools
- Refusals by LAs to agree statutory assessments rising by a third

monitoring this, and schools must adhere to their statutory duties. What interests me, however, are those leaders who can do this brilliantly while being creative and innovative in their approaches. Rather than having just one TA take sole responsibility for the child, there should be a whole school structure in place where everyone feels ownership for all children.

Concerns over funding to meet a child's needs should never be communicated to parents, and it's a leader's duty to ensure LAs don't make parents feel guilty. Any battles should be fought behind closed doors, with the expectation for parent and child that their needs will be met regardless.

 primaryleaders.com

READ MORE ONLINE:
'Better SEND without the spend'
primaryleaders.com/send-spend



Jules Daulby is an education consultant specialising in inclusion and literacy

 @JulesDaulby

LET'S GET BETTER, TOGETHER

Adam Lowing recalls his journey from being a sceptic of peer review in schools to a passionate advocate of its transformative potential

When it comes to carrying out quality assurance with respect to your teaching and learning, management and outcomes, what should you do? You can engage the services of an expert consultant and be given solutions applicable for today, but then have to rely on constant ongoing input, with no opportunity to develop your own problem solving.

Alternatively, you could enter into short-term, piecemeal local collaboration that's only good for the duration of the relationship, and could be tainted by familiarity or local politics. Or your school can use a safe, coaching-based peer review model – one that allows you and your leadership team to accurately evaluate areas of development and enable a self-sustaining growth culture to thrive. The choice is yours...

DEEPER UNDERSTANDING

What do we mean by 'peer review' in relation to school evaluation? My own experiences are based on having it used it for the past seven years and my association with the education charity Challenge Partners. I first came across the organisation as a sceptical class teacher and middle leader, after being told that they would be visiting our school, and in the time since have come to value highly the approach that they facilitate.

I've now had dealings with them at four different schools, the latter two as headteacher, and would recommend a peer review model to any school. As I move into my fifth year of headship,

I remain a passionate advocate of this form of quality assurance, and believe it's made a huge difference to the schools I've been involved with, and to myself and my colleagues.

Challenge Partners is an organisation that currently works with over 435 schools, split into 35 regional hubs, and has peer review at its heart. The form of quality assurance it can provide is, I believe, perhaps the biggest single factor in one of the schools I led receiving an Outstanding Ofsted judgement in leadership/management in September 2017.

Why? Because instead of being a process of quality assurance that's 'done to you' by professionals who are some distance from the coalface, the Challenge Partners approach sees you apply it to yourself, while receiving coaching support from practitioner peers facilitated by an expert lead reviewer. This not only enables growth in the personal skills of the leaders taking part, but also helps foster a much deeper understanding of your context.

RIGOUR AND TRANSPARENCY

So how does peer review actually work in practice? I'll use Challenge Partners' Quality Assurance Review as an illustrative example. A team of senior leaders from outside your local region, who are led by a lead reviewer with current Ofsted experience, will visit your school and proceed to spend two and a half days helping your leadership team evaluate its 'School Improvement Strategies (Leadership and

Management)', 'Teaching, Learning and Assessment' and 'Outcomes'.

Working in partnership with your leadership team, they will follow a timetable created by the host school. Time is spent in classrooms going through and understanding achievement data, meeting with leaders, looking at books and speaking to children. Via safe and discursive dialogue, it's established what things are going well in the school, and any areas of development. At the end of this rigorous and transparent process there will be a final meeting, where the review team pull together their shared findings for the lead reviewer to then capture in a final report.

Whilst far from being an inspection, estimates are made against a framework with similarities to the Ofsted framework. It's then up to the host school to share the evaluation feedback with staff as they see fit. The attitude throughout is that this is your school, and for leaders to share the information with their team. My own approach has been share it openly with colleagues – they ought to understand the overall evaluation, since they're the people who can make a difference at the next step.

There's no 'one size fits all' form of quality assurance; different approaches serve different purposes at different times. School improvement partners or LA/MAT reviews may add value in certain ways, but it's likely that these approaches will be based on someone sharing their expertise which can create a parent/child-style relationship to some degree. In effect, you're relying on perceived wisdom that's handed to you – yet surely you and your school understand best what may or may not work and why, given your circumstances?

INSPIRATION AND CLARITY

In terms professional development, hosting a peer review is only half of the benefit. Having your leaders visit other schools as part of peer review teams affords massive additional learning

“Every leader will self-evaluate to some extent, but peer review creates time and space to stop and see things with absolute focus.”

opportunities. They get to spend hours with someone possessing current inspection experience and can discover how evaluation works from their perspective. You get the great privilege of going into other schools and seeing excellent practice.

Then there are the skills you can develop in coaching, supporting and challenging senior colleagues. For leaders, becoming involved in peer reviews is the best CPD I can imagine. Other accredited leadership programmes are available – and some are excellent – but there's no other experience that can replicate these peer reviews.

On a more personal note, my involvement with them has given me considerable inspiration and clarity when making the next step in my career and moving towards headship. I've been lucky enough to visit a wide range of settings – when you help other schools evaluate themselves against national benchmarks, you end up returning to your own setting seeing things through fresh eyes and wanting to apply what you've learnt.

Every leader will self-evaluate to some extent, but peer review – potentially conducted on an annual basis – creates time and space to stop and see things with absolute focus. There's a reason why athletes have coaches. They make a real difference to their performance, and that's how I see school peer review. Your own evaluation skills will grow over time, but a peer review will always leave you in a better place for self-understanding.

POSITIVE CHANGE

The impact of school peer reviews can be massive, and provide the spark needed for substantial school improvement. They're far more than simple, harsh 'mocksteds' that only provide summative judgements with no developmental aspects. By giving schools an objective framework to use and establishing a safe approach, peer reviews provide freedom for leaders to reflect on not only their own contexts but also common themes that drive all school improvement.

When I first heard about peer reviews as a class teacher and middle leader, my biggest concern was that they'd be used as a blunt instrument to hammer colleagues and destroy good work that was in progress. In my experience since then, they've done the exact opposite – serving instead as a catalyst for significant positive change for schools and leaders.

Schools have the most potential to support themselves and other schools in terms of evaluation and development. By working together in this manner, schools can foster knowledge and skills transfer between themselves, with the result that all involved become stronger.

THE PEER REVIEW PROCESS



DAY 1 – PRE-REVIEW ANALYSIS (PM)
Examine school's self evaluation documentation, development plan, achievement data (end of Key Stage and in year) and anything else pertinent to help form key questions.

DAY 2 – DAY IN SCHOOL (WHOLE DAY)
Observe lessons with leadership team. Look at books, meet to discuss teaching and learning, analyse outcomes and talk to children.

DAY 3 – MORNING IN SCHOOL (AM)
Observe lessons and carry out a learning walk across the school, examining central theme. Hold final meeting with leadership team and share findings together.



Adam Lowing is headteacher at Whitehill Primary in Graysend in Kent and leads the Insight Hub as part of Challenge Partners.

 @ChallengePartnr
 challengepartners.org



Supercharge your SCIENCE LESSONS

Primary Science is an important part of the school development agenda – and luckily, there are lots of places you can look to for support

1

KEEP IT PRACTICAL

Hands-on learning is more memorable for children of all ages. It's important that children become independent scientists, able to lead their own enquiries, and for that they'll need to build up their practical skills. See stem.org.uk for free ideas for practical investigations; activities are searchable by age group, topic or cross-curricular theme.

2

SEND IT HOME

Build links between home and school by sending simple, fun science investigations home for families to try together. These activities can create moments of awe and wonder, reinforce the idea that science can happen anywhere and give children valuable opportunities to talk about science beyond the classroom. See science-sparks.com for some great ideas.

3

STUDENT TECHNICIANS

There are lots of physical resources to manage in science. Why not appoint some student science technicians to help with the day-to-day organisation of your science-related equipment? Could you ask your local secondary school's science technicians to pass on a few tips and lend you some of their specialist items?

4

FREE ONLINE CPD

Update your subject knowledge at reachoutcpd.com, where you'll find short, online CPD units developed with Imperial College London that support teachers and aim to cover every year group and primary science topic. Help your colleagues teach science with confidence.

5

PROMOTE SCIENTIFIC THINKING

Explorify (explorify.wellcome.ac.uk) is a free resource of engaging, creative science activities designed to spark curiosity, discussion and debate. Activities on offer will definitely get your class thinking and talking about science in a lively and enthusiastic way.

6

CELEBRATE CHILD-LED ENQUIRY

Join the Great Science Share on Tuesday 18th June 2019 (greatscienceshare.org). This is a national campaign, which works to raise the profile of primary science and engineering whilst celebrating the process of working scientifically, and developing aspirations towards careers in science and engineering.

7

ASSESS TO PLAN

To maximise learning opportunities, build your planning around the assessment information your children give you through Assessment for Learning. For a raft of AFL strategies, visit tinyurl.com/psstt-taps, where you can explore an interactive PDF containing examples of AFL strategies in practice.

8

MODERATE

Moderation can be used to promote professional dialogue around standards, inspire new ideas and develop quality assurance so teachers can become more confident in their judgements. Schools can then benchmark against external exemplars, such as those for Y1 to Y6 collected by The Association of Science Education – further details can be found at ase.org.uk/plan.

9

SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT

The Primary Science Quality Mark (psqm.org.uk) is a unique award programme that aims to develop and celebrate the profile of science teaching, learning and leadership in primary schools. Science subject leaders join a local PSQM hub, and are then supported through a process of needs analysis, action planning and developing science within the school.

10

TAKE IT OUTSIDE

The health, emotional and social benefits of working outside are widely known. Much of the science curriculum can be investigated through outdoor contexts, so take as many opportunities as you can to move your learning outside.



Claire Seeley is a primary school teacher and Independent Primary Science Consultant. She is a fellow of the Primary Science Teaching Trust and a member of the Association of Science Education Primary Committee

 @seeley_claire

 claireseeleyprimaryscience.com





MOVE THE SUBJECT ON

Claire Seeley takes a closer look at the impact of the Primary Science Quality Mark on one award-winning school in Ipswich...

DEVELOPMENT

The Primary Science Quality Mark is a highly successful and unique award programme intended to develop and celebrate the profile of science teaching, learning and leadership in primary schools. After joining their local PSQM hub, science subject leaders will receive support and professional development in achieving a Primary Science Quality Mark award for their schools.

I am the Suffolk Hub leader for PSQM, and first began working with Sam Ridsdale, subject leader at St Matthew's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, in September 2017. One year later, I was keen to see what impact the process has had on science at the school.

St Matthews is a large, diverse and multicultural church school located in Ipswich, Suffolk with 420 pupils on roll. Sam explained to me that before the start of the process, science had been low on the school's agenda, with no clear direction in terms of planning and assessment.

ANALYSIS

"PSQM gave me the authority I needed to move the subject on," he says. "We took the opportunity as a whole school, and now have a way of teaching science which is focused around children's questions. We always start a block of science by doing a mind-map with the children to find out what they know. We ask children what they would like to find out, and then we plan from that."

During the needs analysis and action planning phases of the PSQM process, Sam had identified that the school needed to work on developing scientific oracy. In my visit to Y1 I could see the benefits of this work. After a chat with Detective Dog to establish their mission, the children were off conducting their own practical investigations – looking for clues to discover which objects were similar or different. The children then used these observations to put their objects into groups.

ENRICHMENT

There was a really enthusiastic buzz from the children as they got on with the important business of investigating. Sam explained how vital a sound vocabulary is for children, enabling them to pose questions or explain their ideas – something which the whole school has since embraced.

The energy that Sam was able to nurture through the Primary Science Quality Mark process is still very evident, one term on from when they secured the award. The school works together to create moments of curriculum enrichment, and this term was no different, with a school-wide project exploring seed dispersal.

Across the school, the children made and tested their own seed designs and explored seeds in the natural world. It's clear to see that the Primary Science Quality Mark has made a lasting impact, challenging and equipping the staff to create more dynamic opportunities for great science learning for years to come.

EUREKA!

Equipment and resources that can make your lessons go with a bang

Cover the bases

Outstanding Science is a subscription-based service that provides access to a wide range of teaching resources designed around the primary science curriculum. There's no limit to the number of resources that can be downloaded, nor the number of users registered to a single school account. Packages can be priced according to key stage or year group, and there's the option to road test some sample resources before committing. outstandingscience.co.uk



Get up close

Available from TTS, the Flex-View Digital Microscope



comes supplied with an observation board and features a straightforward USB connection. Once plugged into a nearby PC it can serve as a handheld or hands-free 250x magnification device with adjustable light intensity, and also be used to capture photos and video via the included software tts-group.co.uk

Here comes the sun

The STEM in Action: Sunny Sandbox Exploration Kit is a self-contained, weather-themed resource package aimed at Y1 learners, designed to provide up to 150 minutes of teaching time spread across five lessons of between 20 and 30 minutes' duration.



Best suited to classes and after-school clubs of 24 to 30 learners, the contents include activity cards,

plastic trays, materials kits, 200 plastic straws and much more. teachers just need to supply four AA batteries. hope-education.co.uk

For more information, visit psqm.org.uk

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Jeff Taylor, Headteacher at Lander Road Primary School

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3

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4

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5

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Years 3–5	Termly assessments for use across autumn, spring and summer		
Year 6	Autumn and spring assessments available to pre-order for 2019/2020		

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Head of English | Oriol High School, West Sussex

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Buildings & Facilities

ARE YOUR WASHROOMS READY FOR AN OVERHAUL?

Chris Davy tells us how schools should go about upgrading and replacing an existing pupil toilet facility



These days, when schools decide to replace a washroom, budgetary constraints are a big issue. They've got to do their research and find a good installation company that's credible, has lots of case studies available to view and relevant knowledge of the education sector.

As a specialist installer, we've sometimes found ourselves competing for school projects with local builders. Quite often their quote will be cheaper, but the school's likely to end up with a product that's not fit for purpose. Take the wall finishes – where we might apply Altro WhiteRock cladding for a wipe-clean finish, other companies might simply paint the walls and leave it at that.

The main point of difference is toilet cubicles. We'll supply units made from compact grade laminate, which is impervious to water. A builder, on the other hand, might specify melamine faced chipboard, which can blow, allow water to seep in and need replacing within a matter of months.

Installers used to working in schools will be aware of the issues involved with carrying out projects in the holidays compared to time term. If the project is scheduled for a half term break, the installer should be on-site at either end of that week to maximise the time available. Schools will also want to ensure that the installers working on the project, even if it's outside term-time, are all DBS checked.

SAFEGUARDING

Nine times out of 10, the work will involve an existing space that the school is trying to improve. That might, for example, involve removing urinals in favour of toilet cubicles that provide more privacy, but usually it'll be a case of general refurbishment.

In terms of environment, the space has got to be safe, warm, inviting and not scary. Many pupil toilets are quite old, with high cubicle units and doors. Consider your safeguarding responsibilities, and make sure that pupils aren't likely to get stuck on their own or hidden away. There should be no areas where bullying can take place – it's possible to make the space reasonably open, while still allowing children privacy.

As well as being safe, the new washroom will obviously need to be hygienic. It's now possible to specify low noise, low energy use hand driers and air sterile units – wall-mounted devices that combat smells and germs by continuously sucking air and replenishing the space with air that's bacteria-free. Schools should use water-efficient taps and cisterns, and ensure that all fittings meet the WRAS industry standard (see wras.co.uk) to prevent contamination of the water supply.

How long a washroom lasts will depend on how heavily it's used. The aspect that tends to wear out fastest is the flooring, which should be maintained and cleaned using appropriate products and cleaning regimes. A 'cap and cove' flooring configuration is preferable to flat lay, which will produce dead spaces and corners where dirt can accumulate. Ultimately, you get what you pay for – wherever possible, specify quality components from a supplier that has trade accounts with major manufacturers and can pick the most suitable products.

Finally, schools now have lots of flexibility when it comes to a washroom's colour scheme. Some schools may want their building interiors to match their corporate colours or apply printed graphics to their cubicles, while others will prefer a more muted colour scheme in order to produce a more calm environment – it's all down to their individual choice.

Chris Davy is the director of County Washrooms – a washroom and toilet refurbishment contractor based in Chelmsford, Essex

 [@CountyWashrooms](https://twitter.com/CountyWashrooms)
 countywashrooms.co.uk



“A POOL IS WORTH EVERY PENNY”

Russell Slatford, headmaster of Bournemouth Collegiate School, shares his thoughts on the importance of school swimming facilities and their value to the local community

As a dad, I want nothing more than my children to be safe and happy. I was therefore somewhat shocked to recently read that there are over 400 deaths each year from drowning in the UK and that it's the third highest cause of death in children in this country.

Bournemouth Collegiate School, where I have the great privilege of being the headmaster, is a small independent school split over two sites – the younger ones on a campus close to Sandbanks, with the older ones, including boarders, in a beautiful old building situated on the coast five miles to the east. Each school site has an indoor pool, which means that every week pupils from aged two to 18 have the opportunity to swim.

Having read that startling death toll from drowning, I began to reflect on the importance of our school swimming pools and looked up some facts. It seems that over 45% of school children in this country don't get offered swimming at school, so it's perhaps therefore not surprising that nearly 40% of children leaving primary school can't swim.

Pools aren't easy, or indeed cheap facilities to run for a school. Any school that has a pool will know the high cost of maintaining and running one – but when faced with statistics like this, it's worth every penny, surely?

It's long been proven that swimming is one of the best all-round sports – great for cardiovascular, balanced skeletal development, flexibility and developing a strong core. I also like the fact that it

teaches discipline, control and focus, particularly among those pupils who swim competitively. Competitive swimmers – of which we're fortunate to have many – show a level of dedication and commitment that's right up there for school sports.

In the last few years we've had a Paralympic Champion in Alice Tai, a British record breaker in Kayla van der Merve and most recently Leon, a young lad in Year 10 who was named Para Swim Talent Athlete of the Year. Their approach, and that of many other swimmers at school, rubs off on others; their focus and commitment sets a tone for pupils across the school.

Both of our pool facilities aren't just used by pupils at BCS, but also many others in our community, including local scout groups and nearby primary schools for swimming lessons. I recently visited our senior pool on a Sunday afternoon and found it packed with members of the local lifesaving group, who use the pool in winter and the sea in summer.

Swimming isn't just about keeping our children safe, helping them to grow up fit and healthy or teaching them the value of resilience and dedication – it's also great fun. There's much to be said for having at pool at school, and at BCS we're very fortunate to have two.

Russell Slatford is the headmaster of Bournemouth Collegiate School

 [@BCSPrep](https://twitter.com/BCSPrep)
 bournemouthcollegiateschool.co.uk

Heat your buildings for less

Well-specified insulation will help keep your buildings warm and your bills manageable – so how can you tell if yours is performing as it should be?

Continued hikes in energy and building maintenance costs have made it a challenge for schools to keep their buildings warm while reigning in their expenditure. A better understanding of your buildings' energy consumption and scope for efficiency improvements can be had via ESPO's Framework 343 – Energy Performance of Buildings (see tinyurl.com/espo-343). The services covered by this framework can provide schools with both a Display Energy Certificate and a 10-year plan for improving their buildings' overall energy efficiency.

The latter is hugely important. Heat naturally radiates from warm to cold areas, resulting in a loss of heat and energy; the more heat that escapes, the higher your utility bills will be. Schools have long been advised of simple energy saving strategies, such as reducing building temperatures by 1°C to save 5-10% off their annual utility bills, only heating buildings when needed and regularly reviewing their utility costs. Beyond that, however, there's more that schools can do to reduce their costs during colder months:

Short-term – savings within 3 years

- Install a smart heating system that will give you more control over how your utilities are operated. This added functionality can include the ability to set optimum start/stop times, fine tune thermostats, establish different temperature zones and automatically compensate for the weather outside.
- Display signs around the school that encourage energy efficiency with messages about, for example, powering down computers overnight and turning off lights when areas aren't in use.

- Fit energy meters to highlight where and when energy is being used the most – especially around catering equipment, large ovens, dishwashers, lifts and pools.
- Seal gaps, holes, cracks and any other openings in your buildings that will allow heated air to escape

Medium-term – savings within 3 to 7 years

- Review your roof insulation. The most effective type will depend on your needs – insulation for pitched and flat roofs, for example, is available in

many different forms, such as blanket, fibre, spray and sheet and more besides.


- Check the level of insulation in your windows and walls, where you'll find a similarly wide range of solutions available. These include glazing specifically designed for energy efficiency, as well as different forms of cavity and solid wall insulation.


Long Term – savings after 7 years

- If a mains gas supply is available in your area, try getting your school connected to it – you'll pay less for your heating in the long term compared to coal, oil and liquefied petroleum gas supplies. Further details can be found in ESPO Framework 192 – Mains Gas (see tinyurl.com/espo-192).
- If you are already on mains gas but wish to make the jump to more renewable technologies, consider changing your system to a biomass boiler, a combined heating and power system, an air source heat pump or a ground source heat pump.
- Consider supplementing your existing system with a photovoltaic panel system for producing electricity from your roof. Assistance with this can be obtained through ESPO Framework 2838 - Renewable Energy Solutions (Microgeneration) via tinyurl.com/espo-2838.



Laura Southwood is Assistant Procurement Officer at the professional buying organisation ESPO; additional input by Ashley Crawford, managing director of Complete Certification (cc-ltd.co)

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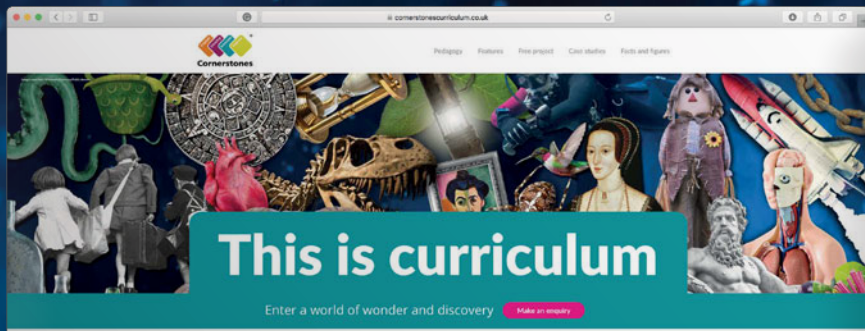


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— Roulla Gabriel, Headteacher, Hockley Heath

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MISSION ACCOMPLISHED

The going may have been arduous at times, but budgetary constraints and some very inclement weather weren't going to derail the expansion of Totley Primary School...



Major construction projects often involve having to negotiate a few issues on the way to completion. When it came to the £2.1 million expansion of Totley Primary School, the company charged with completing the project, ENGIE, found itself having to overcome two considerable challenges early on in the process.

ENGIE first became involved in the project after winning the tender for a design and build contract from Sheffield City Council in November 2017, effectively coming on board after the design process had already progressed to a fairly advanced stage. However, as Sean Corcoran, regional director for ENGIE's places and communities division

explains, "While we were successful, the price was still above the council's budget. That led to a value engineering exercise of reviewing the build and seeing what we could change in terms of specifications and end user requirements."

The aim of the project was to attach a new single-storey block to the school's existing main building and construct a separate two-storey block containing classroom facilities, a new staffroom and a media studio. The school's grounds were also to be overhauled with the addition of a multi use games area (MUGA), an expanded car parking facility and a new permanent route for service and emergency vehicles.

After consulting closely with Sheffield City Council and the school, ENGIE was eventually able to identify an impressive £115,000 of savings. These included swapping out a steel staircase for one made of concrete, incorporating insulation into the roof structure, installing UPVC fall pipes in place of the aluminium ones originally specified and adjusting the design and fencing of the MUGA, among numerous other changes.

With the adjustments made and the budget duly met, work on the site began in January 2018 with completion scheduled for August that year. With the school needing to be ready in time for its new intake in September, there would be little room for delays – but the team were about to hit a serious snag.



CHANGE OF PLAN

"During the first six weeks, the weather was terrible," remembers Corcoran. Indeed, anyone with memories of the UK's 2018 'Beast from the East' cold wave will be able to sympathise. "We had snow, rain – you can imagine the difficulty of digging in those conditions while trying to keep the site organised and safe, especially with children around. We did lose time in that early period."

The original plan had been to construct the new two-storey teaching block on the school's rear play area – a space heavily used during daily break and lunch times, and vital for school's sports provision. The aforementioned MUGA and reworked car park were meanwhile intended to go at the front of the building.

With the complications presented by the weather conditions and the very real prospect of losing yet more valuable time, it soon became clear that the only way to free up the space at the rear and get started on the teaching building was to complete the MUGA first and provide the children with an alternative play area. Priorities therefore shifted to the MUGA and carpark areas, both of which were completed and handed over to the school that April.

With the time pressure continuing to ratchet up, however, the team was unable to wait for the MUGA to be completed. The decision was therefore taken to erect a hoarding within the rear play area during the February half term, and effectively share the space with the school for several weeks while the MUGA



took shape. "That enabled us to start the two-storey extension on time," reflects Corcoran. "Had we not, we'd have missed the slot for completion that September."

The reconfigured site was now accessed via a new school entrance, which would later become the planned service and emergency vehicle route. By the time the finishing touches were being applied to the MUGA, work on the school's rear extension was well underway. As the school decanted the rear play area and moved the pupils into the now completed MUGA, the construction team removed the temporary hoardings and took over the rear play area in its entirety until the new teaching block and extension were nearing completion.

Happily for the team, the project proceeded smoothly thereafter. "We were lucky in some respects that the

biggest issues came right at the start of the scheme," reflects Corcoran. "We were responsible for the build, but the headteacher and council were extremely understanding and keen to work with us. It was very much a three-way team effort to get the scheme completed on time."

To heat the buildings efficiently, a Monodraft mechanical ventilation and heat recovery system was installed, alongside a gas central heating system with radiators situated throughout the school's new rooms. The use of timber structurally insulated panels helped the finished building to achieve a BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) rating of 'very good', and exceed the project's air tightness requirement of 3 to reach 2.7. The team also installed photovoltaic panels onto the roof area of the two-storey building to provide additional electrical power.

PUPIL ENGAGEMENT

In common with other build companies used to working with schools, ENGIE helped to make the project a learning experience for pupils via the efforts of its community engagement team. According to Corcoran, "They'll visit the school and address the children in assembly – detail the risks and dangers and various 'dos and don'ts' of working and operating around a building site."

"The community team will then typically organise school activities on a monthly basis, sometimes alongside our ENGIE mascot to keep things entertaining. It all helps keep the children aware of and interested in what's going on, while also keeping the school's staff, informed of what we're doing and the progress we're making."

As it was, the work progressed throughout spring and summer with no further adverse incidents to speak of, and was ultimately completed, against all the earlier odds, both within budget and on time.

"You can see when you walk around just what a lovely educational space it is now," Corcoran remarks. "The new classroom facilities they've got, the new circulation spaces – it's all got to help in terms of their education."

From somewhat difficult beginnings then, a positive outcome. The school's 2018/19 intake was received with ease, by a school now using facilities that do exactly what they were intended to.

 @ENGIE_UK
 engie.co.uk



AT A GLANCE

SCOPE OF PROJECT:

- Construction of a single-storey block attached to the main building, containing classroom and library facilities
- Construction of a separate two-storey block containing classrooms, a staffroom, a media studio, a science room and other ancillary spaces
- Installation of a multi-use games area
- Addition of a new, 32-space car park
- Enhanced cycle parking for pupils
- A new permanent route for service and emergency vehicles

BUDGET AND TIMEFRAME:

- Construction Value - £2,100,000
- Commencement – 8th January 2018
- Completion – 31st August 2018



A noisy classroom affects both children & teachers!

Unwanted classroom noise disrupts learning and impacts on:



Concentration



Stress Levels



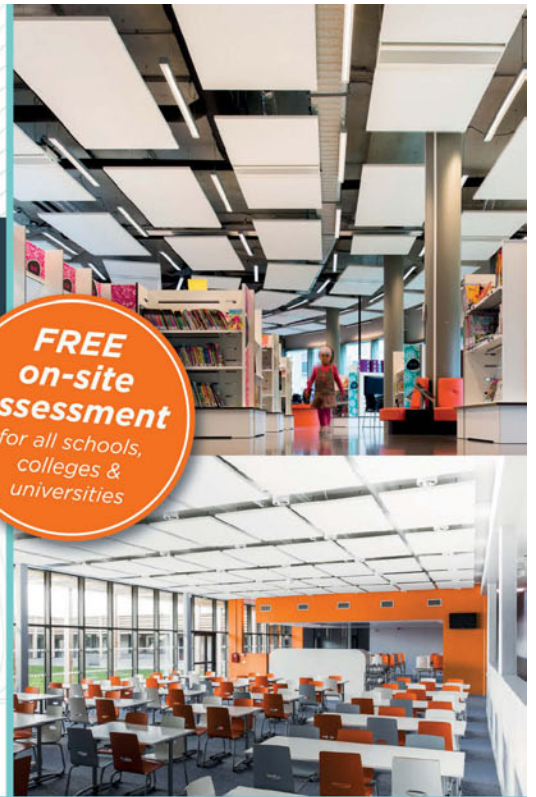
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MAKE FOOD EDUCATION PART OF YOUR CULTURE

'Family dining' lunchtimes, after-school cookery – for Hannah Wilson, food in school is something to be taken seriously...



When recruiting staff and students ahead of Aureus School's opening, I had to make some big decisions early on about whether we would contract out our cleaning and catering or take some of these operations in-house. I decided it was too much in our first year to try and do both ourselves, but wanted to establish food education as part of our culture from day one, so I chose to embed this in our foundations.

Research shows that healthy children learn better. We are committed to ensuring that every student has access to an excellent quality meal as an integral part of each school day, enjoyed in a family dining style, where students and staff will sit together and share experiences.

Our vision at Aureus is to educate the whole child through offering a holistic education that includes mindful mornings, values-led leadership and global citizenship. We want our food education and our food culture to equally empower, educate and inspire our students to prepare them for successful lives.

Every parent, teacher and school surely wants children to be healthy and happy, but do we really offer meaningful

food education? I'm sure we've all worked in establishments where students arrive in the morning eating crisps and consuming energy drinks; bulk buy sweets to sell to their friends at break time; skip lunchtime meals to play football; and rush out of the gate at the end of the day to buy chicken and chips.

Moreover, most of us will have experienced schools where staff often don't get to eat at all. At Aureus, all of our staff and students eat a hot nutritious meal together every day. Everyone has a role – the students lay the table and serve each other, and all staff stop what they're doing and sit down to eat alongside them. We sit at the same tables for six weeks at a time, and thus get to really know each other.

It's our ambition to ensure that every Aureus student leaves our school with not only the practical skills to look after themselves, make great food choices and understand the importance of food in their lives – but also passionate about good food and with an understanding of how to eat well, no matter their budget.

Over the past year, we've endeavoured to have our teachers and food services team collaborate on delivering our National Curriculum requirements, and have developed an after-school offer where children can learn how to grow and cook their own food, supported by a school garden.

We regularly hear from staff and students that our community time and family dining service is their favourite part of each day. For me, that's a beautiful confirmation that our values are absolutely at the heart of everything we do.



Hannah Wilson is headteacher of Aureus School in Didcot and co-founder of #WomenEd

@thehopefulht

thehopefulheadteacher.blog

Bad produce

A report recently published by the Soil Association has criticised the government's School Fruit and Veg scheme for 4- to 6-year-olds, accusing it of spending £40 million on 'Teaching kids to dislike fruit and veg' due to the low quality produce children are presented with. According to Rob Percival, the organisation's head of food policy, "Data shows that it contains higher pesticide residues than equivalent produce found on supermarket shelves, including pesticides associated with a negative effect upon children's cognitive development."



soilassociation.org

Greenwich triumph

For the second year running, The Royal Borough of Greenwich has found itself top of the 'Good Food for London' league table, which charts the progress of London's 33 boroughs in making the city's food system healthier and more sustainable. As well as working to tackle poor nutrition among residents, the past year saw Royal Greenwich tackle 'holiday hunger' by providing free, nutritious meals to children when not in school and unable to access free lunches.



goodfoodingreenwich.org



How well can you communicate in an emergency?

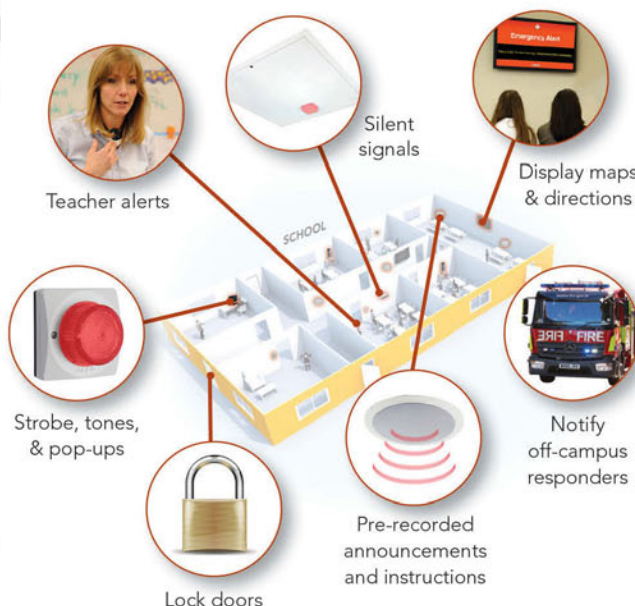
Communication technology that helps keep staff and students aware, focused, and out of harm's way is part of a strong Emergency Preparedness Plan (EPP). What's more, it should cover:



1. **...activation:** Multiple ways for staff to activate an alert
2. **...notification:** Redundant ways to inform responders
3. **...response:** A suite of effective, automated actions

Does yours?

If it's time to update your school's communication technology, give us a call. We make it easier to learn in classrooms and to manage bells, paging, alerting, and response across campus. To learn how to build strong EPP-ready communication infrastructure, download the **free guide** at gofrontrow.com/psm-conductor.



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In my role as Family Liaison at a primary special school, I find Aukids an invaluable resource for all our parents/carers that we work with. Karen Wilson, Cheshire.



I work at a primary school in Stockport as the SENDCo. I did enjoy the 10 Tactics for win-win schooling. Love the magazine – thank you. Kate Entwistle, Cheshire.



Access Our Archive for These Articles:

- ★ Say No Without the Volcano!
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HOW SECURE IS YOUR CLOUD STORAGE?

The advantages of cloud storage are widely known at this point, but are there any school-friendly features that make some solutions better for your setting than others?

The first thing to do before choosing a potential cloud computing provider is carry out an audit. Areas the this audit should cover will include:

- What data is being held and where?
- How much storage capacity are you currently using?
- How much storage capacity do you have overall?
- What is your current setup costing in terms of IT support and staff time?
- Is your broadband sufficiently fast enough?

With the audit carried out, you'll then have a series of questions to consider. When comparing suppliers, ask about the size of the company's existing

customer base and how long it's been in the business. Can it provide you with 'uptime' 100% of the time? After all, just 10 minutes of a lesson spent being unable to access or save work is potentially a lesson ruined.

In terms of overall costs, it's possible that your audit may have identified the need to upgrade your broadband before anything else can be done. With the cloud service itself, the consideration isn't so much the total cost of ownership but rather the cost per user, per service or an amalgamation of the two, since cloud platforms are essentially subscription-based services.

Bear in mind, however, that whatever the costs of moving to the cloud might entail, there will be potential cost savings to be had too –

in IT maintenance, for instance, staff time and upfront purchases of replacement servers.

CAPACITY AND ACCESS

How much storage space will you be provided with, compared to how much your school needs? This is where your audit will again prove useful. Will it be scalable – i.e. can you decide to pay

for and use more space as you need it? One crucial detail is whether you can go over the limit before arranging more space; that is, will there be a sort of overdraft facility?



You'll also need to know what options there are for granting staff access to your storage facility and setting privileges. Ideally, this will be based around a system of policies or 'personas'. That will mean, for example, that a member of SLT who's responsible for pupil data collection will enjoy more privileges than colleagues who aren't. Depending on your staff structure, it may be that a member of your admin staff is the only individual who needs a high level of access.

SECURITY

Backups should take place automatically and utilise several different remote locations. In effect, you want to be assured that if the cloud company's main server fails, your data will still exist on another one. Following the introduction of GDPR there will also need to be some robust security arrangements in place.

Perhaps the best reference here is the DfE guidance 'Cloud software services: how schools should protect data' which can be found at tinyurl.com/dfe-cloud-schools. This explains the cloud providers self-certification scheme run by the DfE to ensure that cloud providers operating in the education sector are in compliance with data protection legislation. Finally, it's also worth referring to the DfE guidance 'Cloud computing: how schools can move services to the cloud' - see tinyurl.com/dfe-cloud-advice for more details.

Terry Freedman is an independent education technology consultant and writer

 [@terryfreedman](https://twitter.com/terryfreedman)
 [ictineducation.org](https://www.ictineducation.org)



WHAT EVERY ONLINE POLICY NEEDS

Adele Abbiss looks at schools' online safeguarding obligations, and at how the specifics of their approach should be communicated to parents

A good starting point when devising your school's online safety policy would be to consult three key government documents: Keeping Children Safe in Education (tinyurl.com/dfe-kcsie), Working Together to Safeguard Children (tinyurl.com/dfe-wtsc) and the Prevent duty guidance (tinyurl.com/hmho-pg).

It's not so much that schools will choose to ignore or neglect their safeguarding responsibilities - more that potential online risks and the solutions intended to guard against them are constantly evolving. Technology can suddenly present entirely new risks that were never previously there, such as the potential for strangers to interact with children who might be livestreaming. There's often a time lapse between the appearance of new advancements and capabilities, and schools' understanding of them, with the result that schools can find themselves under increasing pressure to play catch-up.

Most adults will have clear, established divisions between their work and home lives, and digital and non-digital activities. Those boundaries in a child's life are far more blurred, with often little distinction between the worlds they inhabit online and offline. Gone are the days when bullying would stop once children left the playground. There's now a whole new, technology-assisted realm in which children may continue to be abused wherever they are and at any time of day.

Online bullying can affect a child's mental health and their performance at school, meaning schools have a duty of care when it comes to their online safety and wellbeing. With legislation now

requiring schools to appropriately filter and monitor their IT systems, every school will benefit from having technologies in place that can detect online behavioural trends and concerns, and highlight instances where intervention may be called for.

Teachers can also educate parents on their responsibilities when it comes to cyberbullying, though it should be made clear that the responsibility doesn't sit with them alone. Tackling the issue will take more than one subset of people, and there's the added challenge when addressing online safety that children will often know more about the technology and means involved than the adults around them. That's why it's important for parents and teachers to regularly communicate with their children and comprehend what they're doing online, why they're doing it and who they're talking to.

The way in which schools should communicate their safeguarding policy will vary, depending on their wider practice and procedures. Some schools will opt to publish the policy on their website and encourage parents to read them; others may choose to email the policy to parents and update them in the event of any important changes. In any case, communicating the policy clearly can be a tremendous reassurance for parents, letting them know that there are rigorous safeguarding policies in place.

Adele Abbiss is an online safety expert at the internet safety company Smoothwall

 [@Smoothwall](https://twitter.com/Smoothwall)
 [smoothwall.com](https://www.smoothwall.com)

Can you justify the cost of a 3D printer?

Early experiences with new technologies aren't quite as central to the classroom as they once were, says Gary Spracklen...

While 3D printing is still a relatively new technology, it's already had an impact on the manufacturing sector. The resulting reduction in tooling costs and increased pace of product development have already changed the game in meaningful ways, but the biggest changes have yet to come. So is now the time for your school to get involved in the 3D printing revolution?

I can still recall the joy I felt as a child from discovering the latest technology in school. It was at primary school that I first used a graphical user interface, CD-ROM media and an inkjet colour printer – all of which felt revolutionary at the time. At secondary I accessed the internet for the first time and made use of CAD tools in my D&T classes.

However, as technology has continued to progress and consumer electronics have become cheaper (while school budgets have got smaller), classrooms are now less likely to be the place where children get to experience new technology first. In many cases this is an understandable evolution, since the technology that children are most likely to carry on their person – be that a tablet, smartphone or smartwatch – is almost unrecognisable in terms of processing power than the devices I used in my classrooms all those years ago. It's what's led to 'Bring Your Own Device' policies becoming increasingly commonplace – but I've yet to come across a 'Bring Your Own 3D Printer' school.

Compared to mobile devices, gaming consoles and to a lesser

degree, virtual reality headsets and programmable drones, 3D printing remains relatively niche. In 2017, only half a million 3D printing units were sold globally; to put that into perspective, 216 million iPhones were sold over the same period. Yet while the numbers are small for now, they're growing – fast.

Today's desktop 3D printers are cheaper and better than ever, and continue to improve. However, the educational benefits of purchasing a machine for use in school have to extend beyond just the novelty of seeing a machine print in 3D for the first time. For that, you can simply watch a YouTube video.

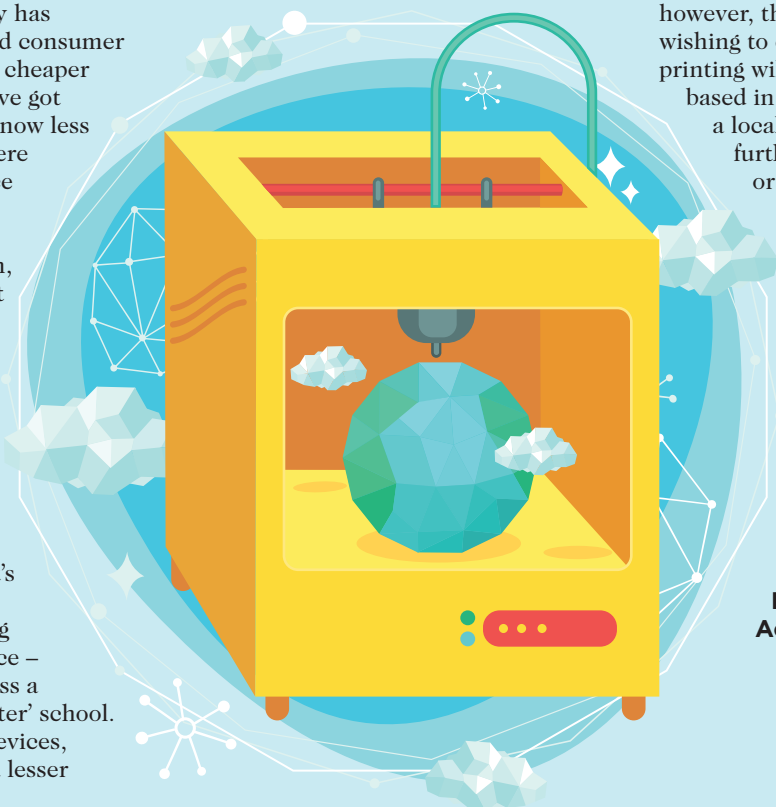
To link the device with learning, you'll need to develop pupils' CAD design skills in order to generate the STL files that tell 3D printers what to

do. For some, this will be where the challenge sits. Creating an STL file can be a complex task that involves industry standard software applications such as AutoCAD or Solidworks – both of which are expensive and require powerful computer hardware in order to run properly. Thankfully, however, there are some alternative solutions available for primary schools. SketchUp (sketchup.com) and Purple Mash (2simple.com/purple-mash) are two tools I'd highly recommend to help you get started on your 3D Printing journey.

In terms of whether your school can justify the cost of a 3D printer, there may well be a dedicated core group of 'primary school enthusiasts' who would benefit from having a dedicated machine available in their own setting. It's much more likely, however, that primary schools wishing to explore the world of 3D printing will seek to share a device based in the D&T department of a local secondary school, further education college or university.

In short, only buy a 3D printer if you've designed something in 3D to print – if not, borrow someone else's...

Gary Spracklen is headteacher at The Prince of Wales School, Dorchester, a former Digital Educator of the Year and a member of the government's Educational Technology Action Group



“THE POSSIBILITIES ARE ENDLESS”

Matthew Murray explains how virtual reality could help us deal with some of the biggest problems facing education in the UK

The technologies that will change the world in the next 10 to 20 years have probably already been invented; they just need to become cheaper. One such technology is virtual reality, or VR – computer-generated experiences that immerse the user's sight and hearing.

The technology is already mainstream, with people across the world using it to play video games and watch movies. And as the price of VR headsets falls over the coming years they'll likely find their way into our schools, which could have interesting implications.

THE BENEFITS

The growth of VR in education opens up the prospect of reverse field trips, where learners are taken on virtual tours of simulated environments. This is a significant development, because VR could have important benefits for children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

A key aspect of the attainment gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils is the so-called 'word gap' – the difference in the number of words that certain groups of children know. According to the DfE's 2017 social mobility plan, most disadvantaged pupils are almost a year and a half behind their more affluent peers in early language acquisition by the age of three. A further study published by Oxford University Press found that over 80% of primary and secondary teachers believe children with poorer vocabulary have difficulties accessing standardised tests, such as SATs and GCSEs.

The range of words that a child develops is shaped to a large extent by their experiences outside of the classroom. Children from more affluent backgrounds are more likely to visit different countries, witness a range of environments and be exposed to more poetry, literature, music and art. They gain a wider range of vocabulary through a wider range of experiences. Often, disadvantaged children do not know words because they simply

haven't encountered them.

Imagine being able to give children the kind of experiences they wouldn't normally have access to. Imagine being able to visit any country; see deserts, oceans and the polar ice caps. Placing children into unfamiliar settings will necessitate their acquisition of language in order to describe the environments they find themselves in. Children will be more likely to then understand this vocabulary, because they'll be able to see the words in action and in context.

VR could also help raise the aspirations of disadvantaged pupils. There are no limits to the experiences VR can generate – only our imaginations. We'd be able to put children into the role of a doctor or pilot, which could help raise their aspirations by increasing their self-efficacy in such roles, and thus their ability to imagine themselves doing these things. VR won't be a silver bullet in closing the attainment gap, but it could certainly help.

VR technology has advantages over listening to something being read aloud or watching a screen, because it's so immersive. VR is perceptually surrounding, so that no matter where a learner looks, they'll be seeing the contents of a virtual environment. In an educational context, this means that pupils can be surrounded by a learning environment free from distractions outside their field of vision; a potentially useful aid for children who struggle with their concentration.


VR could make a big difference across subjects. Imagine being able to turn gravity on and off during a science lesson, or a history lesson where you could take a tour around Pompeii or board a Viking longship. Applications such as these could help teachers really bring lessons to life.

Yet despite all the potential the technology offers, the introduction of VR into classrooms across the UK may be a slower process than its developers might hope.

THE COSTS

The biggest barrier schools need to overcome in adopting VR is cost. Just like smartphones and other mass produced technologies, VR headsets vary greatly in terms of quality and price. At the low end of the market, headsets designed to work with smartphones, such as the Samsung Gear VR, can be acquired for as little as £30. However, these takes on the technology represent something of a compromise, and are thought by some to be more prone to inducing motion sickness in users.

Genuine VR headsets, such as Oculus Rift can set you back well over £500 per headset. However, that doesn't include the cost of the motion controllers you'll need to fully operate them, nor the reasonably powerful PC you'll need for the technology to run at all. And that's before you even get to the physical space required for users to experience the movement and motion-tracking aspects of VR safely.



“VR won't be a silver bullet in closing the attainment gap, but it could certainly help”

Regardless, many VR developers see education as a potentially lucrative market, and have made moves to take an early share of it. Last year saw the makers of the HTC Vive – a market leading product at the high-spec/high-cost end of the spectrum – announce a 'Vive Group Edition Bundle' aimed at schools in China. It contained 10 headsets for the price of 49,999 yuan (around £5,700), representing a saving of around 40% when compared to buying individual headsets.

But whether it's high spec or low spec, prices across the market will continue to fall in the long term. When the latest generation of consumer level VR technology first launched at the middle of the decade, the combined cost of the headset, accompanying computer and other necessary components came to over £3,000. A similar high-end package will now set you back something close to £1,000.

In the short-term, though, schools may be able to help their children access VR without having to purchase what's still relatively expensive hardware. A handful of technology firms have already begun delivering VR experiences in some UK schools at far lower cost. Google, through its Expeditions Pioneer Program, has even provided one-off educational sessions to schools across the country for free. These admittedly aren't permanent solutions, but they can provide children with a taste of virtual experiences, and may yet help promote the technology across the education sector.

As VR becomes ever more accessible in the years to come, it's disadvantaged pupils who stand to benefit the most. They'll gain access to experiences previously only available to a certain proportion of school children, and we'll see the technology gradually help level the playing field.

Ultimately, the impact of VR will depend on how much we invest in it. If the penetration of VR in UK schools remains patchy and teacher training in the area lacklustre, then its potential won't be realised. If, however, we choose to make the most of VR, then the possibilities are endless. We'd be able to give children learning experiences that would once have seemed impossible.



Matthew Murray is a primary teacher in Manchester and creator of the site 2 Stars and

a Wish, where he regularly posts ideas for using songs, videos and poetry to teach literacy and guided reading

 @2_starsandawish

 2starsandawish.com

JARGON BUSTER

VR makes up one strand of a wave of immersive technologies soon set to become mainstream. Here are a few other related terms you might encounter:

AUGMENTED REALITY (AR)

Overlays virtual objects on a real-world environment when viewed through a camera and digital display – think Pokemon Go

MIXED REALITY (MR)

Doesn't just overlay, but

anchors virtual objects to the real world and allows users to interact with said objects


HAPTIC TECHNOLOGY

Recreates the sensation of touch by applying forces, vibrations or motions to devices held or worn by the user



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Cordwalles Junior School, Surrey

EVENT DETAILS

WHERE: Bett is hosted at ExCeL London, Royal Victoria Dock.

WHEN: The show takes place between Wednesday 23rd and Saturday 26th January, and is open from 10am to 6pm every day, except for Saturday when the event ends at 3pm.

CONTACT: Registration for Bett is free of charge if you register in advance. Visit bettshow.com to register for your ticket.

The time of year is approaching when leading edtech companies, teachers, academics, innovators and policymakers gather in London for the Bett Show.

Last year, more than 850 leading companies, 100 edtech startups and over 34,000 attendees came to find inspiration and discuss the future of education.

In 2019 the event will take place from 23rd-26th January at the ExCeL London. The show caters to the broad spectrum of teachers' and school leaders' needs. From tech newbies to tech experts, the show presents the trailblazing work of innovators and teachers in the field. The aim of this year's Bett Arena talks is to provide visitors with learner-focused sessions offering a balance of practical advice and inspiration.

As the Fourth Industrial Revolution continues apace, the future workforce will need to adapt and develop new skills. Creativity and interpersonal skills will be every bit as important as digital skills, and Arena sessions will be exploring this topic. For young people, the future won't just be about getting a job: it will

What's happening at the Bett Show 2019?

Get the low-down on what to expect at this year's jam-packed event



also be about creating jobs. There will be some great examples of schools and colleges helping foster the next generation of entrepreneurs.

Arena sessions will also explore SEN and neurodiversity, right from Early Years through to further and higher education. The event will showcase some of the best assistive tech ensuring greater accessibility for students of all learning needs.

Bett won't be just about big, shiny hardware – everyone knows schools are working to a tight budget, so part of the showcase will cover free resources, apps, and tech for institutions who have had to

become increasingly cost-conscious.

Similarly, it won't all be about classroom tech: there will be showcases of hardware and software to support wider school infrastructure and back office. Senior leadership teams need to make the right choices for their institutions, as well as improvements to existing tech.

Those attending Bett in January will also find the show's sister event The Education Show (taking place on 24th-25th January) in the same venue this year. While edtech remains core to Bett, the Education Show will continue to focus on all other forms of school equipment and supplies.

With both events under one roof, school leaders, business managers and teachers can save valuable time by being able to purchase their school essentials in one place. Bett will also be coinciding with Learnit – a brand new conference for the global learning ecosystem, exploring the current state and future of learning around the world. Learnit will be taking place between 23rd-25th January at the QEII Centre and Central Hall in Westminster, bringing together over 150 international speakers.

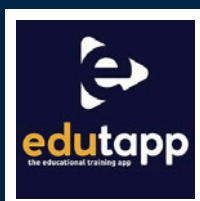


3 TO WATCH MOBILE APPS

EDUTAPP STAND A431

A training app designed to support the professional development of school staff, Edutapp grants access a regularly updated library of video and audio tutorials that cover a wide range of important and topical subjects. Leaders can use Edutapp to monitor staff's progress and assign tailored packages of content relevant to their specific training needs.

edutapp.co.uk



TAPESTRY STAND F62

Conceived as an online learning journal, Tapestry helps practitioners capture the experiences of children from EYFS to KS2 while monitoring their development and learning. Text and visual media uploaded via Tapestry can be shared directly with families via computers and mobile devices, thus avoiding the costly and time intensive process of updating a physical scrapbook or binder.

tapestry.info



SQUAD IN TOUCH STAND G354

PE leads in settings with an extensive sports offering will want to take a closer look at Squad in Touch. Not only will it assist with organising fixtures, tracking pupil performance and administering after-school clubs, it can also be used to communicate with parents and share best practice with fellow PE practitioners.

squadintouch.co.uk



Travel to Mars from your desk

Kate Howell, Google for Education UK marketing manager, explains the company's plans for this year's show

Google will be showcasing all things education at our stand this year. We will also be announcing something big, as we preview a new launch for schools for the first time globally.

With 25m users of Chromebooks in schools worldwide, we'll be unveiling some of our newest models with flip-screen and stylus capabilities. Our G Suite for Education team will be on hand to demonstrate our latest features, such as locked mode for administering quizzes, and our biggest revamp of Classroom since we launched it four years ago.

For those new to our tools, join us to participate in one of our rolling demonstrations by teachers who will be showing you tips and tricks for saving time and going paperless every day at school.

At the heart of our presence is our famed Teaching Theatre. Here we invite schools to share their amazing stories around best practice, technology in the classroom and the measured impacts they have seen.

Come and hear directly from students about what engages them most in their learning, and from teachers about tips on collaborating and reducing workload. Filey Junior School in York has helped improve student performance by over 20% in written work using a peer assessment model with students collaborating in Google Docs. In Finland, remote schools have been using our Jamboard app and board to connect students in all corners of the country with one another.

Google's mission is to make the world's information accessible and useful for everyone. Come along to see how we are building our products to become more user-friendly. For example, see how our text-to-speak function makes web pages easier to digest (and hear).

Our latest launches in Expeditions include Expeditions AR and Tour Creator. Visit the Great Wall of China or the Grand Canyon without leaving the showroom floor, and see how to create your own tours. While you're on a travel buzz, meet



our team from Google Earth who will be showcasing how students can head underwater to learn more about our oceans and travel to Mars with NASA.

Helping children be safe and confident explorers of the online world is a core endeavour for our team. Drop by to explore Interland and see how you can teach pupils about safety, respect and kindness online. Learn more about privacy and security with Google, and how your data is encrypted automatically on its way to the data centres through shark-proof, underwater cables.

Fancy yourself a pro at hoops? Make sure to visit the basketball court during your visit to Bett, where our wearable machine learning trackers will help give you tips for perfecting your slam dunks. We look forward to meeting you!

Visit Google at stand C230





CYPHER LEARNING STAND F302

The CYPHER LEARNING team will be giving attendees valuable insights into 21st century e-learning, while showcasing the newest features of its learning management system

platform, NEO. Designed for schools and universities, it can be used for content authoring, competency-based learning, gamification and automation, and aims to improve student engagement while making teachers' lives easier. neolms.com

EXPLORIFY STAND G306

This free resource contains a series of videos and engaging, hands-on science activities to spark curiosity, discussion and debate. Much of its content requires little

preparation and be completed in only 15 minutes. Start using Explorify, and your class will soon begin to demonstrate improved vocabulary, enhanced observation and increased confidence in sharing new ideas. explorify.wellcome.ac.uk



How to survive Bett *Yes, you'll still be knackered, but here's how to conquer the show like a pro...*



TREAT YOUR FEET

Those miles of meticulously vacuumed plush purple carpet may look inviting, but they don't hide the fact that ultimately, you're spending the day walking back and forth across a cold and unforgiving concrete floor. We can't state this enough – wear comfortable shoes!



STAY HYDRATED

Bett is an unforgiving desert and will punish you if you don't stay hydrated, especially if you've had one or two bevies in the hotel bar the night before. Don't forget the lip balm and hand cream too – there's not much natural air inside the centre, so things can get pretty dry.



CHARGE UP

Bett may be a shrine to technology, but with so many tech-savvy people trying to access the wifi, don't rely on a fast connection. It can take an age to send that tweet, so don't forget to bring your portable charger and save yourself the £1.50 it costs to use ExCeL's charge boxes.



USE THE CLOAKROOM

Bett is held in January, so if you're travelling from afar, you'll want to bring a coat. Don't lug it around with you all day, though. ExCeL has two cloakrooms – one either side of the building – where you can leave luggage and coats (but not electronics) for £1 per item.



WEAR YOUR FITBIT

Last year, the editor of PSM's sister title, Teach Primary, racked up nearly 8,000 steps around the hallowed halls of Bett. Wear a tracker, then bask in the glow of knowing that you've done at least a week's worth of activity in just a few hours – and can thus treat yourself to a takeaway...



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Q+A



ALLEN TSUI

Academic enrichment programme leader at Willow Brook Primary Academy in Leyton, London

What technology is available to your pupils?

When I started at Willow Brook at the end of 2015 the school had over 100 netbooks. Due to a combination of factors, these devices were so poor in their performance that children and teachers didn't make full use of them. At their worst, they would take nearly 30 minutes to boot up. In my previous role in a mid-sized government department I was involved in delivering a PC to desktop programme for over 8,000 workstations, so I was able

to use this experience to organise a 24-seat computing suite for the school.

We also invested in five laptops for every class and refurbished all of the netbooks by installing the Oracle-based Ubuntu operating system which was more efficient in terms of boot-up time. Now every class has access to one device per three children.

Where does computing fit in your timetable?

In 2016, the school decided to employ a former secondary school computing teacher to lead the subject. This enables every class from Y1 to Y6 to have an hour-long computing session every week. We also have a very active after-school cross-curricular programme that is free for all children to attend. This includes two clubs dedicated to coding and digital literacy skills.

What computing projects have pupils been involved with?

We took part in the Mayor of London's RE:CODE London project, working with the Institute of Imagination and Lego Education UK. During UK Parliament Week 2017, a senior representative of Lego UK invited the school to perform a demonstration to a member of Parliament's Science and Technology Committee.

Some of the children who represented the school were those who were not always able to access the National Curriculum independently. The experience of building programmable robots with Lego Education UK showed how using such technology enables every pupil to demonstrate their skills and abilities to an exceptionally high standard.

We've recently introduced the use of Pi-Tops so that we can teach more physical computing. We will also be using VR data compiled by NASA to take the children on a virtual journey to Mars.

What effect have you seen on attainment?

Children in Y6 have, for three years in a row, achieved test scores significantly above local and national performance in a part of London which is regarded by many as being one of the most deprived neighbourhoods in the UK. At a time complicated by issues of globalisation and a constantly evolving employment landscape, our pupils need to be equipped with the skills to future-proof them.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Watch Allen's talk in the Bett Arena at 11.15am on Wednesday 23rd January



DOODLEMATHS STAND E100

Discover the power inside DoodleMaths and its sister apps, DoodleTables, DoodleEnglish and DoodleSpell: Proxima. Powerful in-built algorithms that set appropriate work for each child, so they have a personalised learning programme; carefully authored content, developed by educators; a guarantee of progress – all wrapped up in a fun and engaging interface. The company's stand will have demos, competitions and guest speakers, and offer a place to rest weary feet and talk all things maths and English with the friendly Doodlemaths team. doodlemaths.com

FRONTROW STAND A152

Are you looking for greater pupil attainment, less stress for teachers, more efficiency for heads, and improved safety for the entire school? Then it's worth paying a visit to FrontRow's stand and seeing how its audiovisual technology can help you create a school where everyone is thriving, informed, and safer. On display will be the company's newest audiovisual classroom solution, which unites voice and media amplification, video display control, automated lesson capture and site-wide communication.

gofrontrow.com



VIEWSONIC STAND D180

The visual display specialist will be showcasing its latest education solutions, including the ViewBoard front of class interactive digital whiteboard and myViewBoard – a hybrid cloud software platform that seeks to bridge traditional and modern pedagogies and help teachers create engaging, collaborative learning experiences for students. Visitors to the company's stand will get to see first hand how its open, agnostic and secure platforms prioritise ease of use and have contemporary pedagogies at their heart. viewsonic.com

4 SEND HIGHLIGHTS

1. TECH SOLUTIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH SEN

Noa Nitzan of the Israel-based non-profit disability services provider Beit Issie Shapiro will talk about how cutting-edge technologies and inclusive design can boost classroom participation.

23rd January, Bett Arena, 11.15am

2. CLASS CHARTS – BREAKING BEHAVIOUR BARRIERS

Find out how how artificial intelligence can be used to tackle negative behaviour and low level disruption.

24th January, Solutions Den 1, 12.20pm

3. UNDERSTANDING DYSLEXIA

Learn about the important role people with dyslexia will play in the future at this presentation by Made By Dyslexia founder Kate Griggs, featuring a video-link contribution by Sir Richard Branson.

25th January, Bett Arena, 4:30pm

4. ACCESSIBILITY AT APPLE

A chance to hear Apple's global accessibility policy and initiatives director, Sarah Herrlinger, discuss the company's approach to accessible design and its efforts to make its devices usable by all.

24th January, Bett Arena, 12pm



EES FOR SCHOOLS

STAND POD6

EES for Schools is a leading provider of school support services, delivering software, training and professional services to over 4,500 schools in 20 countries. EES for Schools is also a market leader in the provision of pupil progress solutions, with its Target Tracker monitoring and assessment software currently seeing use in over a quarter of all English primary schools. The company was also recently honoured for second time at the Education Investor Awards, winning 'Education Business Services', having previously won 'School Improvement Service' in 2016. eesforschools.org

Light at the end of the tunnel

Katie Wilmore of The Diana Award explains what Bett attendees can learn about peer-led anti-bullying



At Bett 2019 I'll be presenting an engaging insight into some of the thousands of schools the Diana Award has worked with to embed peer-led anti-bullying approaches. I'll explore some inspirational case studies, and you'll come away with some practical tips and advice on how to replicate them in your school.

A peer-led anti-bullying strategy is grounded in the notion that young people often find it easier to confide in one another about bullying, rather than adults. Young people are best placed to understand the challenges their peers are facing, particularly online, and their energy and enthusiasm can help create a sustainable, whole school approach to tackling bullying.

We help schools select a group of students – ideally spanning various ages and friendship groups, while including young people with different experiences of bullying – and then train them to become anti-bullying ambassadors. The training is suitable for ages 7 and up, and takes place over a day.

One quote that sticks in my mind is from a young person we spoke to recently, who said that having anti-bullying ambassadors in school was like 'Seeing the light at the end of a very long, dark tunnel' – which is a brilliant example of the positive impact anti-bullying ambassadors can have.

Katie Wilmore's presentation, 'The Power of Peer: empowering young people to tackle bullying', takes place on 25th January 2019 at 3.45pm in The Bett Arena

@DianAward

diana-award.org.uk

SBL PICKS

1. ARBOR MIS

Looking to move away from your current MIS in favour of something else? Former school leaders Stephen Higgins and Tim Ward will be extolling the virtues of Arbor MIS and guiding visitors through its ability to automate and streamline routine administrative tasks in areas such as attendance, behaviour and interventions.

23rd January, Solutions Den 1, 11.40am

2. GDPR: ARE SCHOOLS SINKING OR SWIMMING?

If you're curious about the after-effects of last year's GDPR revolution, this presentation by Groupeall's data protection officer Steve Baines will explore the results of a nationwide survey into how schools have fared with subject access requests and the like.

24th January, Solutions Den 1, 11am

3. EDTECH IMPACT SURGERY

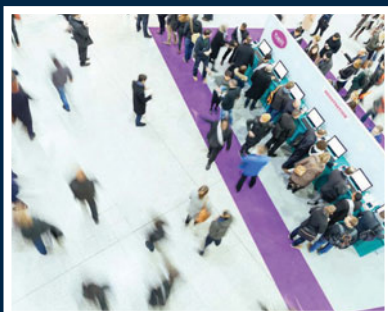
Find out if your school is getting value for money on its edtech via this concise surgery delivered by Edtech Impact founder Michael Forshaw, which will outline how to go about conducting an in-school impact study.

23rd January, Peer to Peer Connect, 2:45pm

4. HELP THE DfE IMPROVE

Fancy telling the DfE face to face how the services it provides to your school or trust can be improved? You'll get the chance to do just that at these daily informal discussion sessions – visit smartsurvey.co.uk/s/BETT2019 before the show to register your interest.

23rd to 25th January, Peer to Peer Connect, 3pm each day



Q+A



JOEL HELLERMARK

Founder and CEO, Sanna Labs

How would you describe the mission statement of Sanna Labs?

To bring the benefits of AI to education. We're probably missing out on several Einsteins and Marie Curies, since education isn't democratized. If we could provide personalised education to all students worldwide, society as a whole would benefit from the global talent that would be brought forward.

Education is also a meta-problem; by democratizing education we would decrease inequalities. Our vision is to personalise education for everyone, everywhere, which our mission will enable us to achieve.

In what practical, everyday ways will the realisation of your company's goals benefit schools and teachers?

Students' engagement and proficiency will increase by being provided with the

right explanation, question or video at the right moment, in a way that's adapted to each particular individual. AI will assist teachers with data-heavy tasks, such as correcting assessments or analysing why a particular student is struggling with a certain concept. AI can find patterns in student data that are impossible for humans to find and help to identify students' knowledge gaps. We can then recommend the right explanations to fill those knowledge gaps, enabling students to move on to more difficult concepts and freeing up teachers to focus on what's truly important – the teaching.

Can you describe what a classroom utilising AI interventions will look like to pupils and teachers?

What the classroom will look like is difficult to say – there are so many things that we believe will change the way we learn, but one of them is the 'flipped classroom' model. With the access that children, students and learners now have to technology, students can go through 'lectures' in their own time that are personalised for those allowed to watch, read or listen at their own pace. In the classroom, there will be more problem solving, where the student has access to his or her teacher and peers who can provide help and explanations.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Joel Hellermark's presentation, 'Personalizing Education at Scale with AI', takes place on 23rd January 2019 at 3.45pm in The Bett Arena

PSM
RECOMMENDS

EPSON STAND D270

With schools becoming ever more budget-conscious, every saving can help. At Bett, Epson will be highlighting the economical benefits of its WorkForce and EcoTank printer families, which promise to help schools save on both their energy bills and print overheads. The pictured ET-M2140 belongs to Epson's mono EcoTank



range, and is pitched as able to save users an average of 90% on their ink costs.

epson.co.uk

NEWTON INTERNATIONAL STAND D192

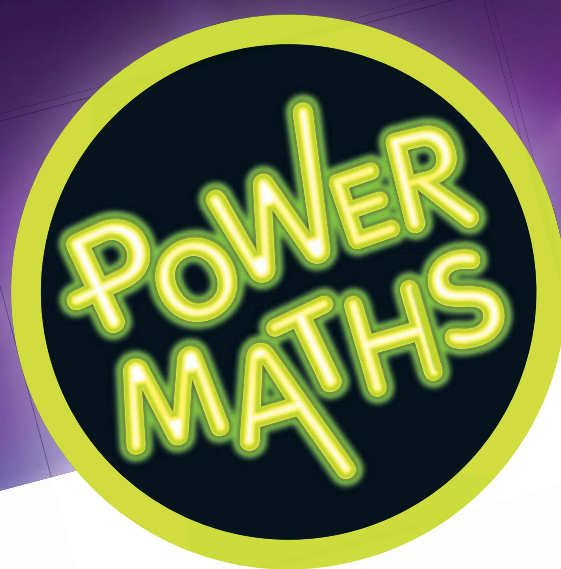
For its Bett debut, Newton International will be bringing along a mobile classroom. Originating in Norway, the 'Newton concept' is effectively a self-contained classroom specifically designed for STEM teaching that can be shipped out to settings as a turn-key solution. Those taking delivery of a 'Newton room' get to then join the Newton network, via which they can share ideas and practice, and obtain a range of teaching plans and other resources.

newtonroom.com



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EDUQ&A

Why don't my pupils listen?

Invisible barriers to learning may be lurking in your classroom — and in your pupils' brains...



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Is it me or is it them?

It's both. And neither.

Fundamentally, trying to communicate with immature brains in an acoustically-difficult classroom with a human voice is the issue. We've known for over 20 years from university research that the average pupil misses 25% of what the teacher says. Imagine trying to read the news with every fourth letter missing. You'd give up and tune out, just like some pupils do.

But why do they miss so much?

There's a clue in the research. On average, pupils with normal hearing and full English fluency miss every fourth word. But pupils farthest from the teacher can miss about 40%! Distance between pupils and you, each other, and media sources is a prime culprit. Other barriers include background noise from heating systems, other classes and traffic; sound reverberating from hard floors, tables, and windows; and children's psychoacoustic limitations.

Why care about a few missed words?

As teachers, we're trying to develop children's brains, and children's ears are among the most important pathways to the brain. Even in pupil-centered classrooms, we know 45% to 66% of the day is spent in listening activities. With half of education delivered via sound, we need to worry about any barrier to clear audio. Creating a better learning environment demands that we create a better listening environment.

I understand perfectly well in my classroom; why can't they?

To most adults, these obstacles aren't much at all. Because we can derive meaning from context — in sentences — even when we can't from isolated words, we often don't mind bad acoustic conditions. But children's brains aren't 'baked' in auditory terms until they're about 14 years old. Classroom speech is not conversational, and much of the vocabulary, concepts, and content is inevitably unfamiliar to listeners whose knowledge and brains are still developing.

I'm a professional — I know how to project my voice, don't I?

It's almost insulting that our 'teacher voice' is somehow lacking, but here are the facts: primary pupils need your voice to be 15dB above background noise to understand most of what you say. But to achieve that for the pupils farthest from you at any moment, you'd need to 'project' at 109dB in a typical room — about the same loudness as a car horn. It's unsustainable, and it's why teachers have five times the normal rate of vocal health problems.

Are there any other consequences of a typical classroom listening environment?

Many common, but seemingly unrelated problems that worry teachers, technologists, and administrators can be eased by solving the problem of the classroom listening environment. These include under-engaged pupils, classroom management struggles, disappointing attainment, time shortage, difficulty effecting school-level change, technologists' training burden, teacher fatigue and retention, and more besides.

What can be done if I can't change my students, my voice, or my room?

Many UK schools have corrected the listening-learning problem using FrontRow classroom audio technology — sometimes also called 'soundfield.' In short, you wear a small wireless microphone which sends your voice to a digital receiver and speakers clearly audible by pupils. Some schools also boost participation with pupil microphones, save time with AV control options and automated lesson capture, or link with a school-wide communication network for efficiency and safety.

FrontRow will be exhibiting at the Bett Show at A152;
to find out more, visit www.gofrontrow.com/tp

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Community Engagement

HOW TO **ATTRACT** SPONSORS AND PARTNERS

From specialist advice to regular revenue streams, there are many benefits to be had from developing partnerships with local businesses and other organisations, says Justin Smith

Any fundraising plan for an aspirational project should include multiple routes to funding, from traditional grant funding and lettings income, to crowdfunding and business sponsorships. Engaging closely with community and local business can bring myriad benefits to all parties, but schools should be crystal clear on what they're looking for from a relationship with a partner business.

You'll need a clear idea of the type of support you're seeking – donations or expert advice, for example – as well as what benefits you can offer to the business. Any potential donations or financial support should be linked to specific projects; sponsors are far more likely to engage with a school if they can see directly what impact on the children their input will have.

Some businesses may prefer a low-level, 'light touch' association with a local school, whilst others might be willing to offer more tangible, overt support. A business may well be motivated for purely altruistic reasons, or to meet its CSR (corporate social responsibility) obligations. Either way, it's crucial that the school understands what it can offer in return – a website entry in a school's 'Business Sponsorship Directory', for instance, or a mention in the school newsletter. Schools also need to understand the sponsor's expectations, and establish ground rules as to how involved the partner can expect to be in the project they're supporting.

Schools will also want to consider how the partnership is perceived by the community, perhaps by canvassing the views of the PTA and other parent groups via a questionnaire. Care should be taken when choosing which organisations to approach with sponsorship opportunities, as both parties can be susceptible to reputational damage.

With income generation continuing to present a challenge for schools, many savvy school business leaders now look to engage with outside supporters and sponsors when it comes to funding new initiatives and projects.



Schools naturally need to apply due diligence with any commercial relationships. The safest and most obvious place to start is with suppliers. Every school will already have trading relationships in place with different suppliers that typically rely on a degree of trust developed over a number of years. The alternative is to seek out businesses that might be able to provide a specific service or form of support. Parents might also be able to suggest suitable partners. Much may depend on the school's location; a high concentration of nearby tech companies will offer different opportunities to those in areas situated in traditional industry heartlands.

You could introduce different sponsorship packages for various needs and budgets. 'Bronze', 'Silver' and 'Gold' packages could allow partner businesses to support the school in return for a sliding scale of promotion and advertising opportunities. These might range from appearances in the annual music show's programme to repeat mentions in the school's social media channels. Hosting a business directory on the school website will give selected businesses an opportunity to raise their profile for an annual fee. There are great examples of education/business partnerships out there, such as the 'Premium Partners' initiative run by Castle and Marlwood Schools' in Gloucestershire.

If enough time, coordinated effort and thought is invested upfront, your school can build lucrative and sustainable relationships with business that have a real, appreciably positive impact on your children's lives.

Justin Smith is an ISBL fellow and founder of Chameleon Training & Consultancy

 @jus_chameleon
 chameleon-training.co.uk



WE HAD TO THINK CREATIVELY

Clare Elson describes how Roebuck Academy developed an ambitious school partnership project with far-reaching impact

In October 2018, Roebuck Academy became the first primary school in Stevenage to be awarded Artsmark Platinum award by the Arts council (see artsmark.org.uk). We began working on an action plan for achieving this back in July 2016, which centred on improving our music provision. However, due to the necessity of focusing on standards in reading, writing and maths, we were faced with both time constraints and a prioritising of staff training in core subjects, rather than the arts. There were also budget restraints to bear in mind. If we were going to implement our action plan, we would have to think creatively.

I therefore approached other primary and secondary schools in the local area to gauge their interest. At our initial meetings we brainstormed various ideas linked to improving music provision, before auditing the skills of staff in all the schools to highlight where our collective expertise lay.

We then launched our journey with a 'Let's Celebrate Music day', to give our Artsmark project a community feel. Planning the day helped to further strengthen the partnerships we'd established and disseminate the good practice we'd encountered. The day was a huge success, and has since become an annual event that's embedded within our curriculum.

The partnerships we've formed with other schools have changed our approach to curriculum design at Roebuck Academy, in that it's become more

informed by the influences and vision of a wider group of teachers. We now regularly work with other schools when planning whole school arts events, and have been able to incorporate new practices and activities, such as DJing and electronic music composition, with the help and expertise of key staff. Collaborating on projects has enabled us to share arts resources across schools, while also affording opportunities for pupils to develop their peer support and social skills and grow in confidence.

Our goals with these partnerships became wider in scope over time, and have now expanded the opportunities we can give our pupils and staff far beyond what we had originally envisaged. We're also extremely grateful for the help we've received from the team at Stevenage Music Service, which included visits from young composers who served as aspirational role models for our pupils.

A further benefit of the partnerships is that local secondary schools now plan and invite us along to various special days throughout the year, which has helped ease our children's transitions into secondary school. We hope to form combined secondary and primary school councils in the near future, and channel the positive impact of our collaborative work into other aspects of our curriculum, our CPD provision and other subjects, such as science.

Clare Elson is a teacher at Roebuck Academy

Involve parents in your mental health provision

Michelle Doyle Wildman offers some suggestions for how leaders and business managers can work with parents to improve the children's mental support available in schools

Emotional wellbeing and good mental health is something we all strive for – not just in ourselves, but in our children too. Yet according to Parentkind's latest annual survey, three in five parents worry about their child's emotional wellbeing and mental health at school, and significant proportions report that their children have experienced stress relating to homework (42%) and exams (41%). More than a third say that their child has suffered from anxiety (38%) and bullying (33%).

The picture remains sketchy in terms of how parents feel their schools have dealt with mental health issues. For example, around one in five parents say their child suffers from depression; more than a quarter of this group, and a third of those who report their child as being bullied, say they aren't satisfied with the way they've been helped by their school in addressing such issues. According to these

parents, schools are reportedly better able to help children with other serious mental health concerns such as self-harming, eating disorders and substance misuse – which the parents say affect around one in 10.

The pressures faced by our children and young people today are certainly of concern. Whether it be a school's high expectations of its pupils (as highlighted by over half of the survey's respondents) or pressure felt by children to constantly engage with social media as a result of something that's happened at school (reported by nearly a quarter of parents), schools have a responsibility to work with parents on finding a solution. It's simply not acceptable that any young people be left to fall through the net.

Parentkind believes that school leaders and business managers can play an instrumental role in driving change, and should adopt a proactive approach to listening to parents' concerns and taking steps to address them.

By putting in place an effective parental engagement strategy, every



parent's voice can be heard with the result that serious issues relating to children's mental health may be identified earlier. Bringing parents into decision-making processes concerning their child in school will help teachers ensure that the right professional support is put in place as soon as possible.

Mental health and emotional wellbeing should also be prioritised in budget discussions, alongside the implementation of appropriate funding strategies that will ensure sufficient investment is made in school-based services. At the same time, schools should provide parents with access to timely and up-to-date points of advice and resources. Charities such as YoungMinds, MindEd and Place2Be, for example, offer a range of resources that children and parents will find helpful. Making these known and easily obtainable will be an important step in getting them the support they need.

Building resilience and grit is part of growing up. Understanding how to bounce back from a knock is a critical life lesson. But if we're to fully address the growing mental health pressures our children currently face, parents should be encouraged and

supported in forming partnerships with school leaders. Together, both groups can establish positive strategies that will enable every child to achieve their potential – but not at the cost of their mental health and emotional wellbeing.

Michelle Doyle Wildman is acting CEO of Parentkind

 @Parentkind
 parentkind.org.uk



“IF THE SCHOOL DIDN'T CARE ENOUGH, HE'D CARE EVEN LESS”

Rob Carpenter looks back on the lessons one school learned from a pupil contending with more difficulties than most...

Tommy is a climber' was one of the first exchanges I had with a member of staff, days before Foxfield Primary School was placed into special measures. It was an understatement.

The oldest of two siblings, Tommy lived with his mum and stepdad in a council flat on the infamous Glyndon estate. The Glyndon Estate is not a comfortable place to grow up. The estate featured in a Channel 5 documentary, *Gangland*, shown in 2016. Just making the programme proved to be so dangerous that its producer, Paul Blake, had to revise the format after someone was seriously hurt mid-filming. In the end, it was decided that getting gangs to record footage of themselves was the best way forward, rather than exposing cameramen to the dangers of filming some of London's most notorious criminals.

The documentary featured gang members talking openly about their lives, including seeing people stabbed, shot and fighting with police. Since the documentary was first shown, two of the members have died. There is a dark side in some communities, to which our schools offer a very contrasting environment.

TOMMY THE CHILD

This is the environment in which Tommy was growing up. Sometimes, after school, the boys on the estate – some as young as eight and nine – play 'gangs', using pretend knives and role-playing anti-social behaviour. Staff at Foxfield Primary School had been asked by community police officers to identify these young boys from CCTV footage. There were genuine concerns that exposure to such dysfunctional, antisocial behaviour may lead to an increase in violence for the next generation.

Like many of the 'Woolwich Boys' profiled in the documentary and other

media, Tommy didn't see his dad too much. When he did spend an occasional weekend with him, the school knew that Mondays were going to be tough. Not that Tommy cared too much about school in 2014. The curriculum offered was dull and uninspiring, the teaching did not take into account Tommy's learning challenges or interests, and too few staff saw beyond Tommy's home situation to understand Tommy the child.

So Tommy did what Tommy liked to do, and that was climb.

When Foxfield was rebuilt in 2014, they designed a large, open concrete play space surrounded on two sides by residual earth banked up against the wall. This created a five-metre drop from the top of the bank overlooking the playground. The building contractors installed a six-foot high wooden fence around the bank, with a gate at the bottom to deter pupils from climbing over and potentially falling off the five-metre wall that surrounded the play space.

They failed to consider that, for pupils like Tommy, jumping over the fence and dangling off the wall offered a better alternative to staying in lessons – especially those he hated. Tommy was also inclined to scale the fence and walk along the top of the drop when he was upset or angry. It gave him control in a world where Tommy had little – especially when he found out that mum was pregnant again.

SUBTLE CHANGES

The first few weeks after new leadership arrived at Foxfield were occupied with dealing with situations involving Tommy or other pupils behaving in similar ways. Risk assessments were put in place, health and safety checks undertaken and a new, higher fence erected to deter Tommy from climbing. These are the kinds of behaviours that schools in crisis

exhibit; they are reactive and strategic, what some would describe as 'putting one's house in order'. It didn't stop Tommy from being angry, though.

Like all the pupils I have ever known in Tommy's situation, he was a smart kid. He noticed how teachers' body language shifted towards certain pupils – how some pupils' actions elicited effusive nods in agreement, while others received tacit



acknowledgement of learning tasks. He was even disposed to notice the type of feedback he received in his learning books compared to other pupils – it was as if the school didn't care enough about him, so he would care even less about the school, and then some!

The strategy for turning around Tommy's attitude towards school was not a conscious one but, over the next two terms, Tommy noticed subtle behaviour changes that helped him.

Firstly, the school stopped arguing with mum or, even worse, avoiding her altogether, and began to engage on her level. They met regularly and the school listened to her. This revealed health worries she had about her expected baby and the extent to which Tommy was anxious about this.

Staff learnt that Tommy wanted to speak more about the positive relationship he had with his dad and granddad, even though he didn't see them too often. This led to the school setting up structured times when Tommy could come and talk about family life.

Listening to Tommy's concerns also revealed some health issues that he had. Home life wasn't always easy. His bedroom was damp and he had asthma, which flared up during specific weather conditions. This allowed the school to offer some health interventions and work more closely to help Tommy just feel a bit better about coming to school. Tommy's attendance improved and, as his behaviour got better, teachers stopped rejoicing inside when Tommy was off sick. Instead, they followed up to find out where he was.

corridor at the front of the building, down into the bowels of the school on the ground floor. This was nearer to Tommy's classroom but also located more centrally to the dining hall, playground and other social spaces.

The leadership office became an open-plan space where teachers would meet to plan or meet informally. This modelled 'open to learning' leadership, but also leadership through relationships. Whether Tommy wanted to test staff, or whether he was curious about the changes taking place at the school, he started to pop in quietly – always unannounced, just to say 'hello', and then he would leave.

Recognising the social benefits to Tommy of these brief exchanges, staff began to engage him in conversation, firstly inquiring about family and home, then about

Like all the pupils I have known in Tommy's situation, he was a smart kid.

his learning: challenges, likes, successes and those 'useful learning mistakes'. Gradually, slowly, Tommy built trust and learned to trust.

The school then put in place some structure around when Tommy could come into the leadership space. He was allowed to come in during break times, to share good learning, and when he was in crisis, Tommy was allowed to sit quietly and reflect. Just knowing that he had a space he could use to calm down made a difference. Instead of climbing the fence to walk along the wall, Tommy would come inside the leadership office and sit.

Between 2014 and 2017, these episodes of crisis became fewer and fewer. Tommy learnt to regulate his behaviour – and also learnt to be a learner.

SOCIAL BENEFITS

Undoubtedly, though, what made the biggest difference for Tommy during this period was the relationship he began to form with staff. Shortly after the school was placed in special measures, the leadership team took the decision to move the leadership office away from the coded, tucked-away



Rob Carpenter is CEO of the Inspire Partnership – a family of five schools within Greenwich and Medway; this article is an edited extract taken from his book *A Manifesto for Excellence in Schools*, published by Bloomsbury

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“FOOD IS BEING STOLEN”

Ros McNeil discusses the worrying findings of a recent NEU poll into the impact of pupil poverty within schools

In late November 2018, we conducted a nationwide poll of 1,026 NUS members which canvassed their views on the impact of childhood poverty within schools. We were concerned that the situation was already grave, with significant numbers of children living under the poverty line – but what surprised us in the responses we received was that the picture in relation to children’s lack of clothing and food is becoming worse.

Many teachers wanted to tell us about coats and shoes. More than once, we read of children who had asked their teachers for help in fixing their shoes with Sellotape, elastic bands and glue, because they knew their parents couldn’t afford to buy them a new pair and they didn’t want to worry them.

What surprised us less was that schools remain extremely worried about their budgets. Teachers and heads told us about measures they had put in place to try and support families struggling on very low incomes. There is an acute awareness in their schools of how vital that support is, and the funding needed to provide it, but that funding is now at risk. A number of schools told us that they had been providing additional food for families in poverty, but were no longer able to do so because of funding cuts.

We know that many individual teachers are spending their own money on food for children, particularly in primary schools. We know of teachers who have paid for sports equipment and classroom items out of their own pockets, and of some who have passed on clothes from their own children.

PASTORAL SUPPORT

Another area of considerable concern is the lack of funding for pastoral support. Children in poverty need people checking that they’re okay. They need teachers with enough capacity to follow up on what might have happened to them at the weekend, or to pick up on warning signs based on what the child may or may not be saying.

But these pastoral systems inevitably require time investment on the part of teachers and classroom assistants if they’re to be run well. Staffing reductions driven by those funding cuts have led to withdrawals of pastoral support that’s very often linked to children who are vulnerable and from families falling below the poverty line.

I think it’s legitimate to highlight the level of emotional pressure all this can have on teachers and heads, who will have originally have entered the profession to support young people. Having had to witness such levels of deprivation, only to then see the funding needed to address the issue pared back, many have come to the conclusion that the government is seriously out of touch.

“Children had asked their teachers for help in fixing their shoes”

Part of our intention with this poll was to check that we were up to date and confident in the basis of our policy, so one of the things we asked was what issues impacted on children’s education the most as a result of poverty. The issue cited most frequently, by 85% of respondents, was behaviour – after all, it’s harder to be motivated, pay attention and sit quietly if you’re hungry, cold or haven’t slept well.

Absence came second, cited by 83%. One teacher told us that after spells of heavy rain, the absence rate in their school would worsen due to children not having spare clothes and shoes that would be dry the following day. This is serious – if children can’t attend school, we’re reducing their entitlement to education.

‘POVERTY-PROOFING’

Schools should be constantly asking whether they have done enough to understand their pupil intake and the

context of the families belonging to their community. They can be occasions, such as World Book Day, where children are asked to dress up and bring in charitable donations, which for some families will be extremely challenging.

We’re aware of some interesting initiatives that have been organised in the North East, which are aimed at ‘poverty-proofing’ the school day. These involve looking at certain aspects of schools’ regular activities that can be potentially shaming for pupils who live in low income families. There are steps that schools can take to ensure they handle such situations sensitively – simply asking for voluntary contributions towards sports trips or day trips will place a tough burden on those families who are struggling.

However, these points have to be placed within the wider context of school funding cuts. Many headteachers would prefer not to engage in these types of fundraising activities, but simply feel they haven’t got any choice. We know of heads who are all too aware that some of their families will struggle to contribute and worry that they’re letting their child down, but fundraising is something that certain schools simply have to do. Not for PTA activities or ancillary extras, but for core elements of their education offering.

SPEAKING OUT

Many primary heads have already spoken out and said that these funding cuts have got to stop – that they’re undermining the quality of education, as well as schools’ ability to challenge inequality and respond to the wide range of life experiences that young people can be deeply affected by.

It’s our view, it’s important that more primary heads feel able to join them and see challenging these funding cuts as something that it’s okay to do. We want to see educators come together and send the message to government that schools can’t be run with budgets as they currently are.

THE NATIONAL PICTURE

4.1m children in the UK currently live in poverty – 500,000 more than in 2013

365,000 UK children lived in destitution at some point during 2017

24% The poverty rate among children in working families

49% The percentage of children in lone parent families living in poverty

Source: 'UK Poverty 2018' report by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation – see tinyurl.com/psm-jrf-p18

Challenging the funding cuts has to be the priority, because of their impact on children's mental health and experiences of living in poverty. However, we're also intent on continuing to highlight the harsh realities for many children, in a way that doesn't feel shaming or embarrassing. Heads that we've spoken to are very clear about this – these are proud families who are working really hard to give their kids a great start in life.

Because much of what we're talking about is actually in-work poverty, which is why we also have to highlight the need for a higher living wage, and restore the protections that a good social security system must provide to all of us if we fall on hard times.

We know what drives child poverty, and we know what policies reduce it. What the government must do now is make responsible choices and listen to those primary headteachers who are proud, but concerned advocates of their local communities.

Ros McNeil is an assistant general secretary of the NEU

 @NEUnion
 neu.org.uk

VOICES FROM THE FRONTLINE

Selected quotes from respondents the NEU's November poll – download the full findings via tinyurl.com/psm-neu-poverty

- “One student wore his trousers backwards as he didn't want anyone to know he had holes in the knees.”
- “We are having more incidents of food being stolen from lunch boxes – I have to keep them in my classroom now to stop this happening.”
- “We run our own food bank sourced by students and staff within the school. We have had to provide laundry facilities for some students to wash their uniform.”

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EDUQ&A

Should we be teaching maths differently?

Rebecca Klemm, PhD, founder of NumbersAlive!, outlines her approach to numeracy



What is your teaching background?

I have taught numerical, mathematical and critical thinking for over 40 years to learners of all ages, from pre-school to graduate school. The common thread of my teaching has been mentoring through life relevance and storytelling. I focus on the question being investigated, and then lead learners through the design-thinking process – providing the skills and tools needed to address the question as originally perceived, and adjusted once initial efforts suggest possible alternatives.

What principles underlie the NumbersAlive! approach?

NumbersAlive! is sensitive to the often 'hidden' questions of "When will I ever use this stuff?" or "Why do I have to do this?" Leading with realistic applications implicitly addresses such questions, so they're rarely asked. Practice is important to skill develop in most disciplines, but maths is often taught with a focus on the 'doing' without considering the end goal. My mother taught piano by asking her students to

select a piece they wanted to be able to play – the selected piece would then be brought out regularly to reinforce that goal. Practising scales was never the end goal, but rather a necessary step toward playing the piece. I adopted the same approach to teaching.

I was always intrigued by a *New Yorker* cartoon that showed numbers sitting on a stage above the caption, 'We'll now let the numbers speak for themselves.' I was struck by the frequency of that statement and the visualisation hit me like a cold shower. With an interest in theatre, I wrote a musical where the numbers were the characters, telling their own stories and demonstrating their role in human endeavours. The name NumbersAlive! seemed perfect, as it suggests maths is a living, useful subject rather than a mysterious, abstract discipline involving seemingly infinite doses of worksheets.

What sets it apart from other maths resources?

I simplify sophisticated maths through observation, discovery, and creation. I ask students to

invent maths which responds to the basic question of why maths exists. The same could be asked about any language. Whatever their origin, languages become more complicated and confusing over time due to human migration and invention. We teach young children to count from 1 to 10 or higher, as if 10 is a new character rather than a multi-digit number 'word.' We then wonder why students don't understand our current place-value system.

I created small and soft magnetic numbers so that small hands could construct maths in a fun and friendly way and realise that rearranging the same numbers creates different 'number words' of varying value (i.e. 23 versus 32). NumbersAlive! also uses a lot of geometry, because arithmetic and multidimensional geometry should be able to talk together, rather than be treated separately as if they're distinct disciplines.

What materials do schools receive by signing up to a NumbersAlive subscription?

Our subscription series is still in development, but will include curriculum-linked actual life activities. We recently launched a free video learning series called *The Numbers Show*, starring Zero and the Digits, which includes 8- to 12-minute videos alongside extensive cross-disciplinary learning guides, scavenger hunt questions that users can use in their own games, and episode-specific activities. The subscription series will take the ideas introduced in the videos and move them to more formal lessons that will help teachers and parents lead learners through practical applications in disciplines they may not understand.

To find out more, email info@numbersalive.org, visit numbersalive.org or follow @numbersalive

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OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND YOU

Laura Williams looks at how to proceed when a staff absence seems linked to work-related injury or illness

The management of occupational health referrals can be a complex and sensitive task. Having worked closely with a number of providers – both good and bad – I’ve found that the below tips generally get me as close as I need to be in order to move forward with an absence management process.

1. BE DISCERNING

Don’t undertake referrals as ‘standard’, especially in cases of short-term absence. Discuss with your employee whether a referral will be of real benefit. If the employee doesn’t indicate that there’s an underlying problem, and says their absence record is simply a matter of unfortunate timing or circumstance, there’s little point in referring at the first opportunity. You can always reconsider a referral at a later stage.

2. BE PRECISE

On the referral form, stick with factual statements to ensure you’ve not written anything that could be construed as discriminatory. Use of subjective language may change the tone of the referral and unwittingly undermine what’s supposed to be a supportive process. Provide as much information as you can in relation to the role the employee undertakes, along with a copy of the current job description. This context is essential for occupational health to provide you with the best advice that they can.

3. ASK ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

Most services use template referral forms, but there will usually be a box for adding further questions you’d like to have answered. If not already covered elsewhere on the form, these might include the following:



- What's the likelihood of a return to work?
- What should the return to work Look like, in terms of possible duties and facilitation?
- What reasonable adjustments, if any, should you be considering as an employer both pre- and post- return?
- Is the employee's condition likely to affect their future attendance or performance?
- Is a further assessment needed or recommended?

4. BE REALISTIC

As an employer you're obliged to act reasonably, but also have a duty to balance what's right for the employee with what's right for the organisation. The recommendations of a report will often become a starting point for discussion and negotiation. You're not obliged to follow the advice of occupational health, but should you choose not to, you must be clear as to your reasons why. Ensure you've considered local policy and precedent, as you'll be expected to justify your decision to the employee, their representative and quite possibly a tribunal.

5. OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH IS NO 'HALL OF PROPHECIES'

Occupational health can provide you with an informed medical opinion, but they can't predict the future with any more certainty than you. What you need from the report is assistance in determining what's reasonable for you to do, and to expect in relation to the employee and their condition. The report will ideally allow you to set both realistic and reasonable targets, and determine ways in which you can move forward in all scenarios – whether that be a return to work, or progression to the next stage of the process.

Laura Williams is a former MAT chief operations officer and school business manager, and the founder of LJ Business Consultancy

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HOW TO KEEP YOUR NQTS

Is your NQT weighing up whether to stay or go? Andy Griffith offers some suggestions for helping them cope with the profession's early challenges...

Do you remember your first year as a teacher? For me, it was 30 years ago. Despite the hours I put in I sometimes experienced the cold sweat of being underprepared, but I was lucky in having a supportive line manager and headteacher. With less support around me, I might have felt isolated. I might have even questioned if teaching was for me.

How you design the learning journey for NQTS is vital. A poorly designed first year in teaching might take someone to breaking point, rather than giving them a firm foundation – but what's the criteria for excellent design? I'd like to offer a few ideas which might help in relation to something called cognitive overload.

In our latest book, *The Learning Imperative*, Mark Burns and I define cognitive overload as "An umbrella term for the inability of individuals or teams to absorb new information because their processing powers have been overwhelmed." It's something common in many workplaces today, as information can flow through numerous channels. For teachers, it can be school and government policies, books, blogs, Twitter. What do I read? What should I prioritise? Over time, teachers will learn how to navigate through this fog, but when you first join the profession it's a real 'pea soup'.

The antidote to cognitive overload is clarity and good organisation. Ensure that you or another school leader help NQTS to be clear about their key priorities and how to plan learning for children. Who could they co-plan lessons, topics and units of work with? Hopefully, that person – you or their mentor/phase leader – will help them

plan backwards: to develop a clear vision of what they'd like the children's work to look like before beginning to teach that topic. Planning backwards means we can carefully plan the steps towards that destination and identify what tools and strategies will be required.

Another good strategy is to help NQTS improve their organisation and time management. Kanban is great for this – it only requires a bundle of Post-it notes, a writing surface and four columns: 'TO DO', 'ACTION', 'WAITING' and 'DONE'. Every task awaiting completion gets written on individual Post-its and is placed in the 'TO DO' column. Only tasks that can be tackled within 24 hours then get moved to 'ACTION'.

Many NQTS underestimate how long various tasks will take, so using this system alongside an experienced teacher can help them get a better grasp on what's achievable. Any 'TO DO' items requiring permission or further information go into the 'WAITING' column. Finally, there's the satisfaction of moving items to the 'DONE' column once completed – something that sets it apart from the traditional to-do list.

Addressing cognitive overload issues with collaborative backward planning and efficient time management will improve NQTS' teaching and wellbeing, and may ultimately boost both your own NQT retention and their career progression.

Andy Griffith is an author, co-director of MALIT Ltd. and co-creator of the Outstanding Teaching Intervention with Osiris Educational

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Difficult conversations ... without the stress

If the prospect of having to face a difficult conversation is causing you sleepless nights, try Sonia Gill's three confidence-boosting strategies

It's perfectly natural to feel stressed, anxious or nervous at the thought of having to confront a difficult conversation, but there are a few simple techniques that can help you carry yourself with more confidence:

1. Strike a pose

Our bodies and brains notice what the other is doing, with the result that our physicality can affect the hormones circulating in our bodies and how we feel. There's a great TED Talk by Amy Cuddy, in which she discusses the science behind this and recommends holding a Superman/woman pose to help reduce stress and increase your confidence – arms up in the air, forming a 'V' shape as if you've just won something.

You might want to avoid doing this in public, but if you know you have a tricky conversation coming up, try to steal a few minutes and aim to strike this pose in private – even in a toilet cubicle, if needs be! Amy's full TED Talk, titled 'Fake it Till You Make it', can be viewed via tinyurl.com/ted-cuddy-fake.

2. Breathe

It sounds so easy that you might dismiss this idea – but it's precisely because it's so easy that you'll want to remember it. When you're nervous, anxious or stressed, your breathing is likely to become shallower and faster. This in turn tells your brain that you're stressed, thus forming a negative feedback loop.

Whether you notice this happening or not, take a few moments to take three slow, deep breaths. Count to five on the way in and five on the way out, focusing on your breathing. This tells your body that you're calmer, and can reduce your nerves and anxiety. As long as you're subtle about it, you can



potentially even do this during a difficult conversation that might arise unexpectedly.

3. Daydream

When helping people become more successful at having difficult conversations, I've often found that they'll enter the room with strong feelings about how their conversations are going to go. I recently worked with someone who was expecting a conversation to be a bit of a verbal fight; the person I was working with wasn't aggressive, but he did convey a nervous energy. This wasn't conscious on his part – quite the opposite – but nonetheless it was clearly there. After being made aware of this, and how it could affect his perceptions of a given situation, his conversation went far better than he'd expected. Why? Because he didn't enter into the conversation with existing preconceptions.

It's natural to imagine a conversation going badly, but that can become a self-fulfilling prophecy. To counteract this, imagine the conversation going as well as you can possibly imagine – even if it's just a little bit better. It might help to describe the conversation you're about to have to a trusted friend or colleague; ask them to be your 'positive police' and interject if, at any point, you're negatively describing how you expect the conversation to go.

Sonia Gill is founder of the consultancy Heads Up, and author of the books *Successful Difficult Conversations in School* and *Journey to Outstanding*; for more advice, register with the Heads Up TV video channel and newsletter (ukheadsup.com/headsupTV)

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KEEP A LID ON YOUR SUPPLY TEACHER COSTS

Between agency fees and lack of certainty over how you'll need them, supply teacher costs can quickly escalate – here's how to stop them spiralling out of control...

A budget is only as good as the moment it's written – something that's especially true when it comes to school staffing. Schools don't have the luxury of being able to cover staff absence – particularly where teachers are concerned – by simply leaving the work to be 'picked up' when the absentee returns to work. The immediacy of need means there has to be a cover strategy in place, which will, of course, cost money.

The decision as to what this strategy should look like will have to be made at the start of the financial year. Will the school choose a staff absence policy, buy in to the LA-excepted items scheme or budget for supply, even though the costs are unknown? The cost of staff absence is increasing, and just one teacher absence per week can be expensive. Take the following example:

*Cost for supply = £165 per day
One teacher absent for one week = £6,270*

The decision on how to manage this needs to be a joint one that takes into account strategy, probability and cost. It should also be informed by an historical view, although this won't necessarily be an indication of what will definitely happen moving forward. In the majority of schools the staff make-up will change year on year, which is why your cover strategy should be annually reviewed.

COST ANALYSIS

A dynamic, up-to-date staffing structure should contain an element of absence cost within it and signpost to the staff wellbeing policy. To help analyse some of the costs involved, set a three-year budget that considers the following:

The probability of maternity/paternity leave If you have a young staff the probability of this will be medium to high,

so you may wish to consider an excepted items policy.

Work/Life balance The pressures exerted on staff in addition to standard expectations will vary depending on the school's situation. If this is the case at your setting, you might want to consider taking out absence insurance.

An historical analysis Your absence record will affect any insurance premiums you choose to pay for – though you may be able to use this to gain additional insight into your staff needs and plan accordingly.

Ongoing training needs An awareness of staff development needs that span more than one financial year will allow you to write the relevant costs into your CPD budget, rather than relying on your overstretched supply pot.

Planned visits/residentials Forward planning for those events that will need supply will let you cost up the cover required by any given trip and plan accordingly – including whether or not it can still go ahead.

There are also some other 'easy wins', through which you can minimise disruption to your students' learning experience. If you have any part-time staff, they might be willing to agree a supply contract for cover, which means your supply will be covered by someone that staff and students in the school already know. You could also consider appointing cover supervisors, or offer some of your TAs the opportunity to train for and sign a higher level teaching assistant cover contract, so they can fill such roles when needed.

Be sensitive to

the limits of any strategies you may already have in place. For instance, insurance policies often include an excess, with the result that payouts can fall significantly short of need. Equally, having a cover strategy in place can still carry risks if the people it relies on are themselves ever absent, on leave or



unable to cover due to other unforeseen factors. Ultimately, you'll still need another plan in place as part of your risk management.

If you've tried and exhausted all the options above but still require some form of supply cover, how should you go about ensuring continuity while demonstrating best value and staying within your budget?

SUPPLY AGENCIES

It's important to remember that supply agencies are businesses, and therefore subject to the same industry pressures encountered in other sectors – which is something you can use to your advantage. Aim to secure best value and buy in from agencies by stressing to them the importance of recognising the school's specific requirements, and the

overriding need among your pupils for consistency and continuity.

The costs that you can expect to receive from supply agencies will vary, but essentially follow the same principles. Understand these, and your negotiations will exert more power and sway.

Day-to-day cover costs You can often negotiate a better daily cover rate if you and the agency are prepared to agree on a 'preferred supplier' contract.

Long-term supply rates These tend to work out as cheaper than day-to-day rates, so try to negotiate a long-term rate at the outset, even if you're unsure as to the length of the absence in question.

Temp-to-perm rates This is a charge levied on a school when a temporary teacher is taken onto the school's permanent staff. These can be extremely high, and should always be known about in advance. Be wary of them, since schools have often been caught out when taking on former agency staff who previously worked at their school while on their old agency's books. That can be seen by the agency concerned as having facilitated an

 primaryleaders.com

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primaryleaders.com/supply-pool

introduction, and thus trigger a temp-to-perm fee.

Finally, it's worth noting some recent work carried out by the Crown Commercial Service (CCS) as part of the DfE's current efforts to reduce schools' supply costs. The CCS' new framework, 'RM3826 / Supply Teachers and Temporary Staff in Educational Establishments' is now live and can be found at tinyurl.com/rm3826. This is a new initiative that aims to provide a compliant and cost effective way for schools to recruit staff, particularly into temporary posts.

Suppliers have been encouraged to sign up to the framework, through which there will be transparency in costs and no temp to permanent fees if employees remain in post after 12 weeks. It may well be that your preferred supplier is already signed up to the framework, and that you might be able to negotiate a better rate than what you're currently paying.

On its own, the CCS supply framework can't eliminate the unpredictable nature of supply, the fluctuating costs involved and the inherent difficulties there are with accurate forecasting and budgeting – but it will at least help you avoid any nasty surprises and therefore give your budget a little more stability.

Of course, there's a whole other side to the supply equation, which is how to manage the disruption to learning it can cause – but we'll save that for another article another time...



Sue Birchall is a consultant, speaker, writer, trainer and business manager at The Malling School, Kent





WHAT IT TAKES TO TEACH ABROAD

Could the next phase of your career take you to a different country? Tom Arnold explains what international schools are looking for...

People who move from the UK to teach in an international school will be leaving certain challenges behind, but also picking up some new ones. There's perhaps less of a challenge in terms of the students you'll be dealing with directly – class sizes tend to be smaller, and you can usually expect fewer social challenges within the classroom.

The children will generally come from 'wealthy' to 'very wealthy' families, but that can come with its own set of challenges. These will be fee-paying parents, typically British ex-pats or local families, and what international schools demand of their staff will be partly driven by their expectations. Having made the move myself, the main difference I found was being able to focus more on the teaching. Some

classroom management will obviously still be needed to maintain an environment conducive to teaching and learning, but I found myself having to draw far less on the well-honed classroom

management skills I'd developed while working in the English state sector.

LOCAL DEMAND

After completing a PGCE, I taught in England for just under four years as a secondary mathematics teacher before going to work for a London-based educational recruitment company. After taking some time out and working at an international school, I eventually set up an international teacher recruitment agency of my own – Compass Education Consultancy.

We work predominantly with British international schools. Aside from some slight variations – using International Baccalaureate diplomas instead of A Levels, for example – they will generally mirror the curriculum, outlook, standards and expectations found in UK schools. Our work predominantly fall within mainland Europe, the Middle East and South East Asia, though we have previously carried out work in parts of Africa, Central and South America.

The vast majority of British international schools are 3 to 18 through schools running from foundation stage to KS5. Previously, the main driving force in the growth of international education was ex-pat families, whether it be employees of oil companies, members of diplomatic circles and so forth. Now, the growth has shifted more to local families with a desire for their children to be bilingual, to be able to access British universities or to study a curriculum perceived to be more rigorous, which is what the English National Curriculum is currently being sold as.

DO YOUR RESEARCH

On the whole, it's unusual for a school to tell us they want someone with prior experience of the independent sector – they'll more typically want someone who's completed a PGCE or equivalent course and can meet the school's teaching standards.

In terms of where the highest demand is, among European countries it tends to be in Spain. In the vast majority of the Spanish international schools we work with, around 80% of the student population will be from local families wanting their children to be bilingual and educated in the 'British way'. From the British teacher's perspective, the average teacher's salary in Spain will invariably involve taking a pay cut, but this can be weighed up against the more affordable lifestyle.

As far as the Middle East is concerned, Dubai is the most popular location for teachers. As many reading this will already know, the United Arab Emirates remains a culturally conservative country, but one that's seen as more accommodating for Western expats and widely considered to be one of safer places in which to take advantage of the tax-free salaries the Middle East has to offer.

My advice to any member of teaching staff considering moving abroad is to do as much research as possible on the school they're going to. Look at the accreditations it has, which inspection bodies it's inspected by and whether you might have the opportunity to scrutinise its last inspection report, just as you would if you were moving schools within the UK. Accreditation by an organisation such as the Council of British International Schools (COBIS) can give reassurance that a school is regularly inspected, observed and held accountable for the way it operates.

WHAT TO WATCH FOR

As a primary head, moving to an international through school will entail being at the same level as a fellow head of secondary and potentially reporting to a whole school deputy, who will in turn report to a whole school principal. If you're used to being the 'top person' at your school, the different hierarchy and decision-making structure will take some getting used to. At the same time, though, there will be more in the way of organisational support than might be the case if you were moving between schools in the UK.

One of the key things we hear from teachers who are currently working abroad and have approached us for assistance moving elsewhere is that they've received little CPD at their school.

We work with many British international schools that offer very good CPD provision, but it's a reason people often give us for wanting to move on. For those thinking of teaching abroad, there can be this assumption, when perusing international schools' brochures, that there will be plenty of CPD on offer once they're there, and often there's not.

"The 'for profit' element can be quite a challenge for those heads who haven't experienced it before"

Another issue to watch out for are schools that aren't completely up-to-date with curriculum developments in the UK. For some, particularly if they've been with a school for, say, three to five years, it can feel as though their careers have stagnated. That's something that could present issues if, for example, someone is applying to return to the UK and there have been significant changes to the numeracy strategy that they're not up to speed with.

LESSONS LEARNED

If I was a teacher planning to work abroad, knowing what I know now I'd look to ask two key questions at interview – what opportunities are there for professional development, and in what ways can I take my career forward?



On the whole, placements at international schools will generally be offered on a one- or two-year contract. In Europe you can expect a one-year contract, while two-year contracts are more common in the Middle East and Asia, given the extra costs of relocation.

Teachers who work well and form a productive relationship with their schools can usually expect to have their contracts extended.

Most of the candidates we work with who are going abroad for the first time will end up moving elsewhere at the conclusion of their contract. Every candidate is different, but those that choose to return back to the UK will do so mainly for family considerations, occasionally due to homesickness and sometimes because it's simply not for them. But from what I've seen, the next step for the greater proportion will be to either extend their contract, or look elsewhere in the world and stay on the 'international circuit'.



Tom Arnold is the founder and director of Compass Education Consultancy

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THE SECRET LIFE OF TEACHERS

Laura Mcinerney explains how an anonymous polling app can reveal your teachers' hidden habits...

What have you always wanted to know about teachers but been afraid to ask? For me, I've always been curious as to where they eat their lunch – in the staffroom, in the dining hall, alone in their classroom? And does it matter for your morale?

With a third of teachers leaving the profession within five years, the answers to these questions could unlock the secrets of retention. After all, if we find that teachers who eat together also achieve together, then it's easy to encourage such behaviours!

That's why Professor Becky Allen and I joined forces to create Teacher Tapp, a free daily app that asks teachers to answer three questions at the end of their working day. The questions change each day, they take around 30 seconds to answer, and afterwards you get to see what everyone else has written about their working day. From this we've been able to find out all kinds of juicy things about the secret lives of teachers...

A THIRD OF PRIMARY TEACHERS WERE ASKED TO CHEAT DURING THE SATS EXAMS

Everyone hears the rumours, but reliable data about test cheating is rare. If you ask people whether they cheated, most will say 'no', regardless of the truth. However, we probed to see if teachers would admit to being asked to cheat – and we found that one in three was pressured to do so.

Most commonly they were told to provide an unwarranted reader, point out mistakes or give the class extra time. This does not mean a third of all teachers did cheat in the exams, but it does show the pressure is widespread.

PRIMARY TEACHERS DO A LOT OF 'POINTLESS' MARKING

On average, teachers mark for at least three hours per week,

although some teachers report as high as 15 hours in a week. If no one would find out about the level of marking – not Ofsted, senior leaders or parents – then just 13% of primary teachers said they'd continue with the amount of time they spend marking. One in 12 said they wouldn't do any marking at all if they could get away with it!

MARKING IN FRONT OF THE TELLY IS COMMON

On any given night, around 40% of teachers across the country mark their pupils' work while sitting in front of the telly. Female primary teachers are more likely to do this than male ones, and female teachers who have children are the most telly-marking of all, with around half ticking while watching on any given evening.

EMAILS TAKE UP ALMOST A WHOLE TEACHING DAY EACH WEEK

Speaking with a primary headteacher at an event, she guesstimated that her staff 'send about 10 emails a day and read about 20'. Assuming that writing an email takes three minutes, and reading one takes two minutes, that's about six hours a week – equivalent to a whole teaching day.

Happily, we found primary classroom teachers are less afflicted by email fatigue than secondary colleagues. Almost all reported sending and reading fewer than 10 emails per day. However, this changes as teachers become more senior. The majority of primary heads received over 30 emails per day, and around 30% sent out that many each day too.

SOME SCHOOLS ARE INTRODUCING OUT-OF-HOURS EMAIL POLICIES

We've increasingly seen schools say they have introduced limits on when people can send or receive messages. However, this is still rare in primary schools. Only 5% have banned emails outside of working hours, and only 7% don't allow 'all staff' emails.

PRIMARY TEACHERS SPEND LOTS OF TIME SEARCHING FOR RESOURCES ONLINE

While a quarter of secondary colleagues spend no time at all online, the vast majority of primary teachers spend at least one hour per week looking for resources online, and one in six spends over three hours per week on it. Remember: anything you do for three hours per week is equivalent to doing it for almost three working weeks per year.

NAUGHTY CHILDREN ARE (MOSTLY) PRICELESS

People like to believe that all children are worth their weight in gold but, in economic terms, some children are probably worth more than others. For example, we



“A third of primary teachers were asked to cheat during the SATs exams”

asked how much of their salary teachers would be willing to forego if it meant they could get rid of the child they find most difficult to teach. Lots of teachers were horrified by the question, with several arguing it was inappropriate to put a cost on children. On the other hand, 18% of teachers did say they would give up a cash value ranging from £99 to over £1,000.

Later, we circled back to the idea of cash-for-kids and asked another question: ‘If your headteacher wanted to increase your average class size by five pupils, how much do you think your salary should rise as fair compensation?’ This time, people were much happier to answer – with two-thirds of teachers recording a price they would want to take in the children, ranging from £200 to £2,000 per child. And this time we received zero complaints about equating children to money. Why?

Probably because humans have different psychological reactions to losses versus gains, and to inclusions versus exclusions. It goes to show, however, that many of us can put cash values onto children, even if it’s uncomfortable to admit it!

FEMALE TEACHERS ASK FOR PAY RISES FAR LESS OFTEN THAN MEN

Not only do men report that they have asked for pay rises more often than women, we found that women feel far more uncomfortable at the thought of doing so. 82% of women said they wouldn’t negotiate salary when offered a job, compared to only 61% of men. For headteachers, that gap widens even more dramatically. Just 20% of female heads said they would haggle over their pay, while a whopping 55% of men were prepared to battle.

HALF OF TEACHERS WOULD LIKE TO DROP TO A FOUR-DAY WEEK

As job pressures load up, it’s not surprising that so many teachers would like an additional breather day each week. The government is fond of this approach, and has pushed part-time work through its flexible working roadshows.

But here’s a scary thought – if just 40% of teachers dropped one day per week, we would need an additional 40,000 teachers to take their place. That’s more than we train in a year.

PRIMARY TEACHERS CAN MAKE MONEY OUT OF PERSONAL TUTORING

One in 12 primary teachers said they have made money this year by working as a personal tutor outside of their school. Tutoring is less common than for secondary colleagues (30% of maths teachers do some paid personal tutoring), but it’s still a way to boost your pay packet – which half of primary teachers said is at a lower rate than they’d like.



Laura McInerney is an education journalist and co-founder of Teacher Tapp; you can download the app for free via the App Store and Google Play



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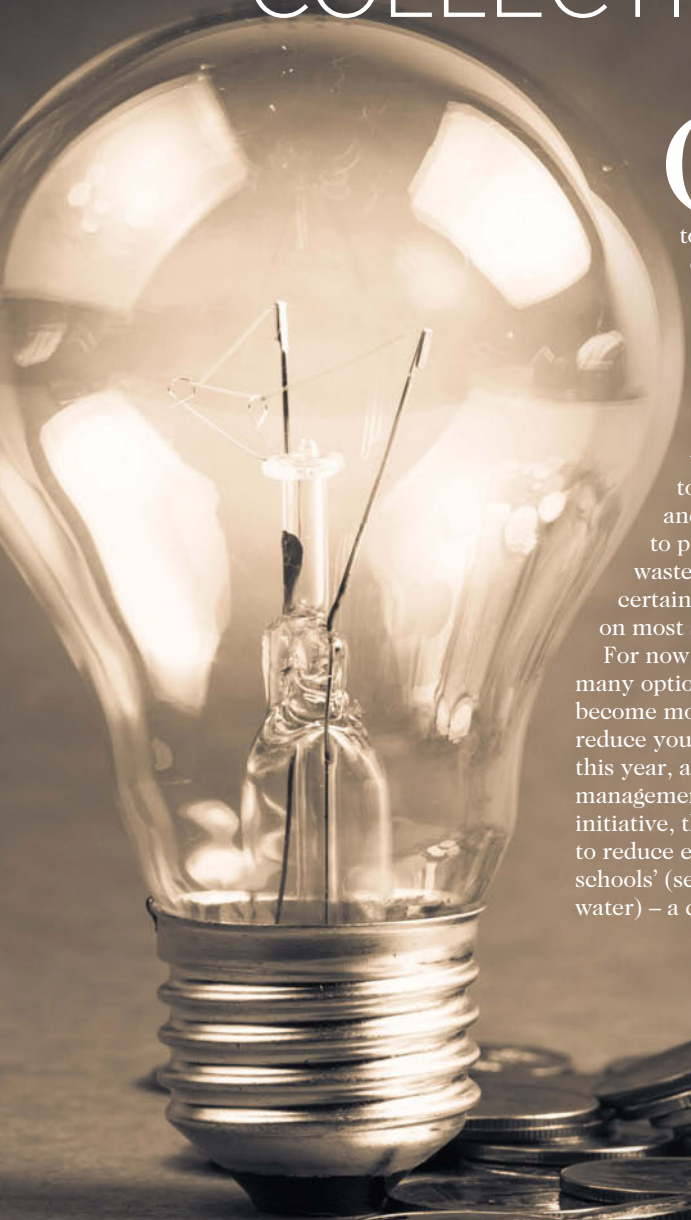
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PURCHASE YOUR ENERGY COLLECTIVELY

Louise Hatswell outlines why, when it comes to striking a good deal with energy suppliers, schools are best off forming a united front...



One of the biggest non-staff expenditure items that SBLs have to deal with is gas and electricity. We're constantly warned about predicted increases in energy costs, adding yet more pressure to our already overstretched school budgets. Whilst we can make every effort to be more energy efficient and reduce our energy usage to prevent unnecessary waste, those rises will almost certainly have some impact on most schools.

For now, though, there are many options out there to help you become more energy efficient and reduce your energy costs. Earlier this year, as part of its 'Good estate management for schools' guidance initiative, the DfE published 'Tips to reduce energy and water use in schools' (see tinyurl.com/dfe-energy-water) – a document offering some

good, practical advice on saving energy and reducing wastage, which it says accounts for 20% of schools' energy use. With the average energy spend per primary pupil working out at £29.08, and £41 per secondary pupil, that's a significant amount.

Many LAs will buy their energy via tender on fixed rates annually. Schools are able to purchase their energy through those LA contracts, and historically many have done just that. However, this isn't necessarily the most cost effective way of procuring energy – due to the volatile nature of the energy market, the price may have been fixed when the market was high.

There are several energy procurement specialists that can work with schools to help them secure a better deal on their energy. The DfE's 'Deals for Schools' online resource (see tinyurl.com/dfe-deals-schools) includes links to several ways of procuring energy more effectively and to suppliers that can assist schools with energy efficiency projects. Interest-free loans are also

available, where repayments are offset against the savings schools make in their energy bills. The ISBL has an energy framework for education in partnership with energy procurement specialist Zenengi, which itself is an approved partner of both the ISBL and ASCL.

Further savings can be made by purchasing energy collaboratively. A recent example of this took place via the South Yorkshire School Business Leaders Group that I chair. My three schools had previously been with an LA energy contract, when we received notification from them that we should expect a 15% to 20% increase in costs the next financial year. The spend on energy across my three schools is around £100,000, so this increase would have represented a significant amount of money.

I posted on our online forum to see if any other schools were interested in potentially procuring their energy with me, to try and generate some savings by purchasing collaboratively. Six local schools eventually joined, and we tasked Zenengi with running the tender process for us, ensuring that all OJEU regulations were adhered to and that we were provided with the appropriate documentation.

The latter showed that our estimated costs compared with our current costs amounted to a percentage increase for my secondary school of just 6.7%, and we were also able to protect ourselves from any further increases by taking out a two-year contract. The saving for my secondary alone ranges from between £5,270 and £9,165 per year, based on the LA's 15 to 20% predicted increase – and potentially even more, if that contract cost were to increase again the following year.

To get the ball rolling on cutting down your own energy costs, first check the notice period on your current contract. Giving notice in plenty of time should then allow you to look at procuring the most cost effective deal.

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DISADVANTAGE SHOULDN'T BE A BARRIER

Amidst the ongoing funding crisis, the purpose of the Pupil Premium is at risk of being diluted, warns Donna Tandy...

The Pupil Premium is designed to support the learning and wellbeing of disadvantaged pupils. Unfortunately, however, the ongoing funding crisis means that many schools are being left with no option but to use significant proportions of their Pupil Premium allowance to sustain their core provision, thus preventing the funding from being used for its intended purpose.

That said, Pupil Premium shouldn't be the only driver for improving outcomes among eligible pupils. According to the EEF's Teaching and Learning Toolkit (see tinyurl.com/eef-tlt), the strategies able to make the biggest difference to learning don't necessarily require additional funding, but are rather features of quality first teaching such as high quality feedback, metacognition, mastery teaching and collaborative learning. At a time of financial strain in schools, it's important that these be explored as much as possible before looking at specific spending strands.

Having seen first-hand the struggles schools go through to establish the best use of any funding they're given and evaluate its outcomes, we as a trust have implemented a strategy to ensure the money we spend benefits identified pupils, the school as a whole, and where possible, the wider trust.



We've worked collectively to raise the profile of disadvantaged pupils and ensure our Pupil Premium funding is used effectively. Each academy

appoints a Pupil Premium Champion, often a senior leader, who has oversight of these children and supports all staff in ensuring the deficit of learning or experience is closed. We also have a Pupil Premium Charter that clearly outlines our trust-wide vision for disadvantaged pupils and our commitment to them. Key to this has been the development of excellent teachers and support staff to ensure all pupils have access to effective strands of research.

My role is to oversee these activities and support our leaders in evaluating the impact of their spending. Across our 15 schools, the percentage of eligible pupils ranges from 13% to 41%. With the context and needs of disadvantaged children differing from school to school, it's important that the academies are given autonomy to interpret those needs in the way that best suits their pupils (albeit within the vision, key principles and high expectations that underpin the trust's approach).

It's understandable why Pupil Premium might be used to try and alleviate immediate crises, rather than the longer term issues it was intended to tackle. But questions remain over how schools can balance their ability to keep their settings running smoothly and safely, with ensuring that disadvantage doesn't present barriers to lifelong success.

Donna Tandy is academy improvement partner at Focus Trust – a multi-academy trust based in the North West, made up of schools from across West Yorkshire and Greater Manchester

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 focus-trust.co.uk

How reliable is your expenses procedure?

Caroline Collins runs through the essentials that ought to underpin your staff expenses system

Sending staff out on external CPD opportunities is becoming more of a luxury than a necessity these days, as schools battle with shrinking budgets and higher staffing costs. Many SBMs will say that their CPD budget is among the first areas to be cut, and that new procedures now ensure that staff receive the CPD they need whilst ensuring the CPD budget remains balanced.

A model that a number of schools have decided to adopt is that of sending only one person to an event on the understanding that he or she will then deliver the training back at school to other staff members. If your school is able to send staff members out to seminars, conferences and other events, those trips must be cost-

effective. When teaching staff attend events, consideration often isn't given to the cost of supply cover; combined with the cost of the course and any expenses the teacher claims, it can turn out to be an expensive day.

When a classroom-based staff member requests attendance at an event, the school should look at:

- The cost of the event
- Whether the event links to their performance management
- The likelihood of the event providing sufficient outcomes
- Whether cover will be needed (and if so, the costs involved)
- The travel time needed to attend and the possibility of the teacher being reimbursed their expenses

By linking those together, you should be able to decide if the course is value for money and financially viable.

Schools should have clear policies on CPD and staff expenses, with the latter outlining what is and isn't acceptable for reimbursement. Ensure your CPD policy references the expenses policy, so that staff know from the outset what it means for them. A point that often gets overlooked is that travel reimbursement claims may only be made from a workplace address, not a home address – if a member of staff is claiming mileage, make sure those miles are from the school's postcode to the venue's postcode.

Governors ought to decide how much per mile can be reclaimed. This will often be around 45p per mile, which should be included in the policy along with a written statement that reimbursements will only be made where receipts are provided. Fuel claims can prove tricky, however, because it's highly unlikely that the member of staff will fill up with fuel on the day of the event. You might want to explain that you'll accept receipts with a different date, but within a specific timeframe – I'd personally recommend that this be no more than one month after the date of the CPD.

A good policy will clarify who can claim what. Ensure that there's no differentiation between teaching and non-teaching staff members, explain how to claim, state how long it will take for reimbursements to be made and make it clear that reimbursements will not be made if receipts aren't provided.

The SLT should work together on making sure that staff are provided with the CPD they need, while also keeping costs down. Find a procedure that works for your school, implement an effective policy and make sure your staff know about it.

Caroline Collins is head of school business strategy and resources at Miles Coverdale Primary School

 [@caroline_261](https://twitter.com/caroline_261)



“OUR ATTITUDE ISN’T TO CUT BACK EVERYTHING WE CAN”

Last year saw the DfE begin deploying school resource management advisors to help identify potential cost savings. Here, one SRMA tells us what that entails in practice...

The school resource management advisor (SRMA) scheme is one that’s structured around peer-to-peer support. We’re independent experts working within the sector, which means that we’re business managers at other schools ourselves – not financial specialists with no educational background who happen to be coming into your schools.

It’s not our intention to tell schools how to do run their financial affairs. Instead, we aim to work collaboratively with schools in order to help them manage their specific set of circumstances. Every situation will be different, of course, but what all the schools we visit have in common is that their budgets will be affected by some form of financial issue.

We want to try and understand what’s led them into that position, because that’s what SRMA deployments are ultimately for – schools that are either currently facing a budget deficit, or are soon likely to be. We want to explore how they’ve got there and what we can do to try and improve the situation, while at the same time improving outcomes for pupils.

IN THE SAME BOAT

I started my career qualifying as a public finance accountant and going on to work at KPMG for 12 years. I then briefly ran my own financial consulting business before moving into the education sector. My first job was as a bursar in a school in Brent, after which I worked in other settings as a school business manager for around 10 years. I’m currently a business manager at a MAT, while also undertaking business management reviews of special, primary and secondary schools at Herts for Learning.

As SRMAs, we’re in the same boat as you in our own schools, and similarly used to struggling with the resources we

have. As such, our attitude isn’t one of simply cutting back everything we can. Everything we do has to be carried out within the context of providing a better education for children and not letting standards slip.

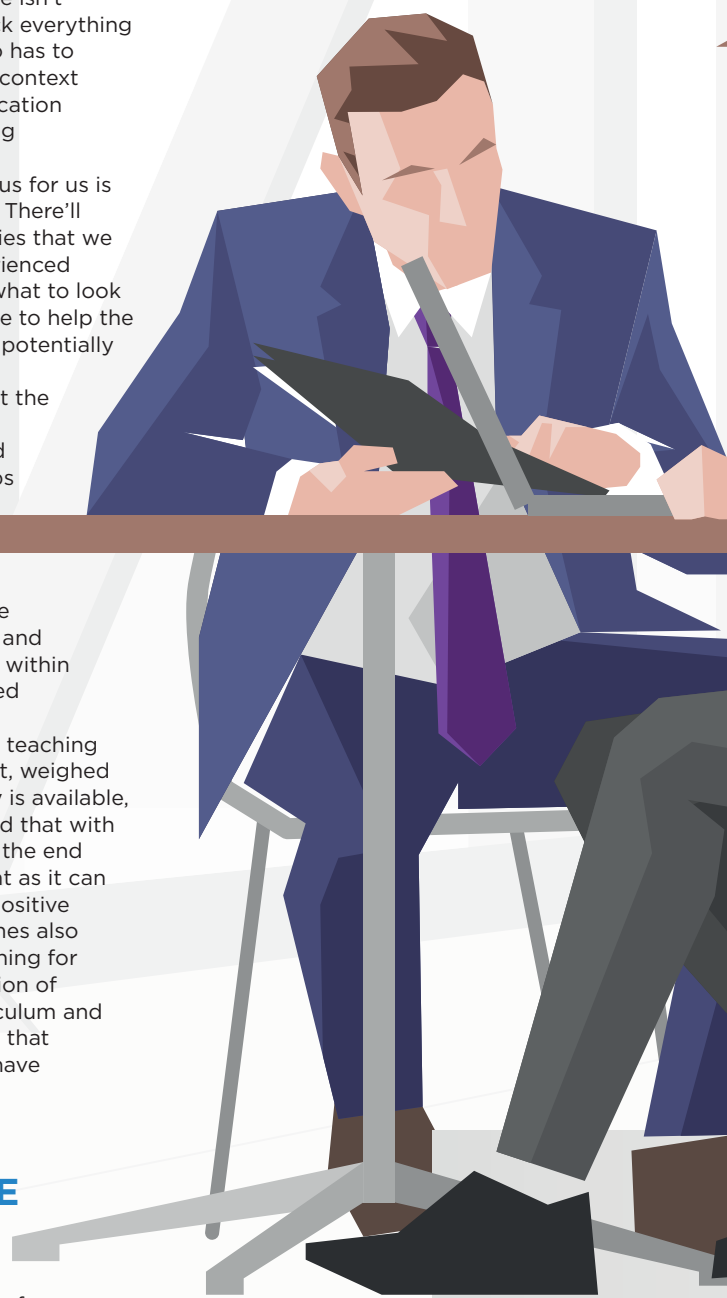
A particular area of focus for us is non-staffing expenditure. There’ll usually be some efficiencies that we can identify, and as experienced practitioners we’ll know what to look for. Any savings we’re able to help the school make can then be potentially invested into other areas.

Something else that’s at the heart of what we do is integrated curriculum and financial planning. Perhaps more familiar to secondary staff, this is a process whereby thought is given to how much time teachers spend teaching, and whether there’s any slack within that which can be assigned more effectively.

We’ll look at how many teaching periods need to be taught, weighed against how much money is available, and then negotiate around that with the school to ensure that the end arrangement is as efficient as it can be. It’s intended to be a positive process, and can sometimes also involve some form of training for finance staff, or a discussion of different integrated curriculum and financial planning models that headteachers might not have previously considered.

PAINTING THE PICTURE

SRMA visits are very intensive, taking place over a five-day period. We’ll receive a great deal of



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information upfront before heading out to the relevant trust or school, and will be expected to get our heads around the figures and statistics before we arrive so that our time on-site can be used productively through talking to people and examining possible ways forward.

Afterwards our reports and recommendations will go back to the ESFA, which will then work on those with the school on implementing them in the long term. For us, it's less about implementing change than it is about identifying efficiencies and opportunities in the first instance.

The sense we get from many schools is that budgets are tight and they feel underfunded. Many of us face a similar situation ourselves, but all we can do is recognise that there's currently a certain amount of money in the system, and seek ways of using that money as efficiently as we can. We can't influence how much schools receive, but as our reports ultimately go back to the DfE, they can at least get a better picture of the options schools have for trying to improve things.

DfE money has been spent on setting up the SRMA system itself, but I feel it's a good value initiative. For the schools we're visiting, the costs involved in the reviews are small when compared to the savings we can help identify. SRMAs can also help schools share new ideas and impart useful knowledge to staff, and there's always the possibility that I might discover something great that a particular school is doing which I can take back to my trust.

What we've often found, however, is that despite the level of information out there, many business managers still aren't aware of initiatives such as the national deals overseen by the Schools Commercial Team (see tinyurl.com/dfe-nat-deals), which aim to help schools secure efficiencies in their spending on, for example, stationery or energy. There's still some way to go in terms of transmitting that information, particularly in areas where schools may be more isolated and not part of any existing networks that might be receiving that information already.

We'll also look to discuss ideas around income generation with business managers. It can sometimes be the case that they have plenty of interesting ideas, but the school's

management hasn't listened to them as well as they might. With our help, business managers can be enabled to run with those income generation and savings ideas, and hopefully get their voices better heard at SLT level.

FIXED MINDSETS

It can sometimes be hard to know at first how open a school is to the advice we're giving. The situation has always been very different at each deployment I've done so far, but by and large they've all ultimately been receptive to the ideas we've presented. We may have been deployed by the DfE via the ESFA, but we're practitioners within the sector too, and have a degree of independence.

In my experience, it can be initially difficult to get some schools thinking about their financial affairs in a slightly different way. There can be a fixed mindset at first – 'We can't do that, we don't have enough money,' – but those discussions can be had and those viewpoints can be changed.

Overall, I've found the experience of being an SRMA challenging, but very interesting. Myself and my colleagues have already managed to secure significant savings for schools since the initiative began last year, and we hope to see the DfE put out some case studies at some point.

It's still early days for the SRMA system, but our current remit is probably about right, in that we focus on both a school's financial numbers and the curriculum. Five days is a short amount of time in which to complete what's an intensive process, but it's for the DfE to follow up on any longer term issues concerning a school's financial planning. My hope is that I and other SRMAs are able to present recommendations that can communicate to the DfE what those issues are, so that schools can be better supported in future.



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Primaryleaders.com has hundreds of articles written by headteachers and school business managers looking at how to run a successful school. New content is being added all the time, covering a wide range of issues from increasing school funds to mastering your budget management and getting the best out of difficult members of staff.

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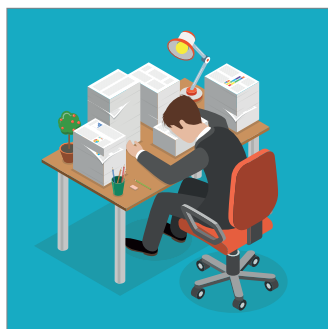
Missed an issue? On the website you can download a free electronic version of the previous edition of *Primary School Management*.

Weekly briefings

Get great advice from fellow leaders sent direct to your inbox by signing up to our weekly newsletter. Topics so far have included how to rethink your catering, and why heads need to stop micromanaging and start leading.



Staff Management



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WHAT'S TRENDING

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How to buy... stationery

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Stationery is a vital school resource, but there are some important factors to consider before making your purchases, says YPO's category buyer for stationery, Melanie Godley...

BE ORGANISED

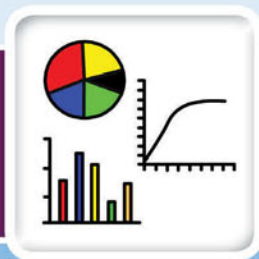
Have you ever waited until the last minute to order a product, only to find it's out of stock? The only reliable way to avoid this situation is to think ahead. We know teachers have a lot on their plate, and that last-minute orders sometimes can't be helped, but careful planning can do much to prevent unneeded stress. You could take advantage of weekly delivery slots, create an inventory list so that you can keep a close eye on your stock and make a note of what needs to be added to each delivery. Remember that product promotions don't just take place during summer, but all year round – the YPO Budget Stretcher promotion, for instance, begins in February and ends in June. We usually have about 900 products on sale with discounts of around 20%, so keep a close eye out and try to catch those opportunities before they're gone.

BE SUSTAINABLE

With the impact of plastics on the environment now firmly on the agenda, schools can help do their bit. It's important to consider environmental sustainability when making your purchases, whether it be the composition of the products themselves (if/how they use recyclable materials, for example) or opting for products with reduced or no plastic packaging. As you'd expect, there's now a much wider range of environmentally friendly stationery products available for schools to choose from – one example being glue sticks made from recycled materials, which can in turn be disposed of in your plastic recycling bins. YPO is taking steps to build on this by looking into ways of recycling heavily used items such as pens and other plastic stationery essentials. Other common stationery items have been made from recycled materials for some time, such as punch pockets.

GET BEST VALUE

Many members of staff will take it upon themselves to hunt out stationery bargains – but are there any other practical, less onerous ways of getting the best value for your money? You could place orders for the whole school, instead of individual departments or year groups, and distribute class packs once the supplies arrive. Don't be afraid to try a new brand when certain products are on promotion – if the item does the same job, why not give it a go? 'Own brand' stationery can work out as far cheaper than offerings well-known brands in the long run, but at the same time, 'value' shouldn't always be based on price alone. You might want to consider more expensive products if you know they'll last longer or perform better. Always think about how a given product will be used, and work out if it's worth paying a little more or not.



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For more information visit www.equalsoffice.co.uk Email admin@equalsoffice.co.uk or telephone 0191 272 1222

Pupils' emotional and mental health needs - new responsibilities, new solutions

A window of opportunity is opening. The government plans to spend an additional £1.4 billion on transforming children's mental health.

Responsibilities. Supporting pupils with emotional, behaviour and mental health issues by providing therapy, as well as including education on mental health in the curriculum.

The White Paper being drafted is likely to require that primary schools employ only counsellors or therapists registered with the HCPC or a register accredited by the Professional Standards Authority.



Managing risks: Using Play Therapy UK (PTUK) registrants removes the school's responsibility for any complaints arising through the registrant's work. PTUK checks the records of every registrant each year for safe and effective practice and adequate clinical supervision.

Solutions.

School friendly: select a member of your staff to be trained as a registered Play Therapist to Play Therapy UK's standards.

Effectiveness: the Integrative Holistic model used by PTUK registrants, produces a 71% to 84% positive change for a wide variety of presenting conditions.

Cost effective: only an average of 15.9 sessions were required to produce these outcomes,

Parent involvement; parents are an important agent of change. Our registrants meet and discuss their concerns and needs whenever possible.



Keeping costs low: there are two ways of being cost effective: Training your own staff is an investment that will be quickly returned.

Using the APAC/Leeds Beckett University placement scheme enables schools to test how well play therapy works in their school for up to two years at a very low cost. Some placements still available for this year.



More information and applications:
Dee Rose, APAC
Tel: 01825 761143

email: mokijep@majemail.com
www.playtherapy.org.uk
www.playtherapyregister.org.uk

BEWARE THE LAW OF DIMINISHING RETURNS

It's important for leaders to recognise when their schools have had too much of a good thing, advises Jeremy Hannay

In high school I had a great economics teacher who was brilliant at simplifying complex ideas. One of her lessons focussed on the law of diminishing returns – in economic terms, the point at which the level of profit or benefits gained becomes less than the amount of money or energy invested. To use one basic example, it means that adding more workers to a production line will eventually lead to a decrease in overall production. However, the example that has always stuck with me most concerned chocolate cake.

Now, I love chocolate cake. The first bite – delectable. The second, fantastic, but slightly less great. As I continue eating, I start noticing how full I am, how sweet the icing is and how I'm enjoying the cake less and less with each bite. The same cake that was delicious 10 mouthfuls ago is now making me feel slightly ill. That's the law in action – that things which can be helpful, productive or even essential can, if overused or abused, be the very things that will derail our schools and our people.

In a similar vein, it's important for school leaders to recognise all the mechanisms we have at our disposal for developing and

improving our organisations, yet also be fully aware of the point at which their effectiveness decreases and they start to become damaging.

You won't find many teachers who'd argue that all testing should be abolished, or that there should be no accountability at all. Just like chocolate cake in the life of this headteacher, most things in education have their place, including those we may not like as much. There are things we can control, such as monitoring arrangements, quality assurance measures, culture and CPD. Others, less so – Ofsted, national testing, funding. Those things within our control must be delicately managed and



led, while accounting for the nuances of our people, context, community, culture and capacity.

When speaking with school leaders across the country about the Three Bridges approach to improvement – decreasing accountability and monitoring measures, while increasing development models and professional agency – I often hear the phrase, ‘We’re just not there yet’. We didn’t make those changes to be revolutionary, or to fly in the face of tradition. We made them because we were having to deal with a recruitment and retention crisis, low staff morale and high levels of turnover. Our results were low and our accountability was high. We examined the low returns we were getting from traditional school development and wondered if there was another way.

We found that our troubles lay in the diminishing returns of our systems over time. One lesson observation can inform practice with valuable feedback from an external source; multiple observations can communicate a lack of trust, or suggest the observer is somehow superior. Sharing planning can translate to effective collaboration; scrutinising planning, or expecting it to be submitted in advance each week or term can create a culture of low self-efficacy and belief.

This examination of our systems led Three Bridges away from tradition and towards new systems that could drive improvement while helping uncover the best in our teachers and children. We must ask ourselves whether what we’re eating is best for our people, context, community, culture and capacity. If it is, how many bites can we take before it starts to become bad for us?

Jeremy Hannay is the headteacher of Three Bridges Primary School



WHAT DOES YOUR OFFICE SAY ABOUT YOU?

Make sure the place in school reserved for you alone sends out the right signals, says Jill Berry

Earlier in my career, there were a couple of occasions where I had to share an office. The roles that eventually gave me a room of my own were head of sixth form, deputy head and head. I soon found that the way you arrange your office and how you use it – including how often your door’s open or closed – reflects your leadership priorities and how you manage relationships.

A head I knew and respected once said to me, ‘Daytime is for people; evenings and weekends are for paper.’ That’s certainly how it was for me. As a head of sixth form, my office door was open whenever I was in there alone, unless I was negotiating an especially tricky telephone conversation. People would often call in and speak to me – to ask questions, tell me something, share a moan or a joke, and occasionally tears. Giving time to all this was important to me; the emails and the contents of my in-tray could wait until the end of the day.

Upon becoming a deputy, I surveyed the office layout I inherited from my predecessor. Walking through the door, the working desk was ahead of you with the deputy sat behind it. There was only one other chair in the room, on the opposite side of the desk facing her.

I opted to move the working desk so it was under the window; that way, I could look out into a courtyard area where

staff and students tended to circulate. It also meant that if someone came into the office to speak to me, I could turn to face them without the barrier of the desk between us. I additionally asked for two easy chairs and a low table for a corner of the room, so that when I met with staff, pupils or parents one-to-one we’d be sat next to each other, on comfortable chairs, with a table for our drinks – and occasionally a box of tissues...

As a head, I sought to arrange my new office in a similar way, with extra chairs for small group meetings. I gave some thought to what I wanted on the walls – artwork and photographs that lifted me and a noticeboard on which were displayed cards I’d received, as well as important information. I’ve always kept plants in my offices (I like greenery) and fresh flowers. There would always be fresh fruit too, so that I’d be tempted to nibble at that, rather than the cakes and biscuits that regularly made their way into the staffroom. I further asked to have my name on the door, rather than my title.

Think about it – what does your office say about you?

Jill Berry is a leadership consultant, author and former headteacher

Boost your STAFF'S MORALE

At a time of year when staff motivations tend to go through a slight dip, how should leaders look to lift spirits and attitudes?

The lights have been taken down, the tinsel packed away for another year and all that's left from the festive season is that last lingering bit of glitter that just won't let itself be swept away. January looms ahead – cold, dark and grey. The start of the spring term can be notoriously gloomy, so what can leaders do to boost morale and lift spirits?

1. Be present

Never underestimate the value of going for a walk, greeting staff and having those incidental conversations that take place in passing. Simply being visible and present at key times, whether it's in the playground, staffroom or popping into a few classrooms before the start of the day, can create a sense of camaraderie.

2. The power of words

Taking time to celebrate successes and say heartfelt 'well dones' and 'thank yous' can give colleagues an instant lift and help them feel valued. A private word of appreciation, a note left in a team member's pigeonhole or a more public announcement – whatever it is, let staff know that their efforts are appreciated. I once received a tiny handwritten note

from a previous headteacher congratulating me on a fantastic start to my year leader role. I still have it, and nine years later I continue to find encouragement in those sincere words.

3. Find time to talk

Getting to know staff as individuals takes time. Building in opportunities for professional discussions can be a powerful way to encourage and inspire. Enabling staff to talk about their own learning and aspirations while offering support and guidance can be energising. I was fortunate enough to sit in on some professional interviews and saw first-hand how, through skilled questioning, active listening and a genuine interest in staff development, my headteacher mentor motivated her team and spurred them on to achieve more, ultimately improving outcomes for the entire community.

4. Share the bigger picture

It's easy for us all to be bogged down with minutiae – the intricacies of planning for a wide range of abilities, the complexities of timetabling and arranging cover, the seemingly endless reports for stakeholders. Allowing everyone to step back and review the 'why' can help to restore balance and invigorate the team. Building in some space for 'blue sky thinking' could yield some pleasantly surprising results!

5. Quick wins

There are plenty of small, quick and easy perks that can serve to provide an instant lift. These can include snacks on the staffroom table, secret buddy schemes and offsite PPA. Meaningful ways of reducing workload can reap long-term rewards. Making a concerted effort to start and finish meetings promptly, reviewing the suitability of agenda items and ensuring CPD is well planned for all can help to alleviate frustration and spread a more positive atmosphere.

With the ever-increasing pressure and pace of school leadership, it's easy to focus on those never-ending 'to do' lists and forget the importance of looking after ourselves. We must take responsibility for our own wellbeing and find ways of replenishing our own energy reserves. Enjoy a sunset walk, go for a run, catch up with a friend. Set aside some guilt-free time to switch off and take care of yourself, because it's true what they say – you can't pour from an empty cup.

Fariyah Anwar-Simmons is a deputy headteacher

 @FariyahAnwar



ASSEMBLE YOUR DREAM TEAM

When it comes to forming an SLT, make sure yours is on side, representative and regularly renewed, says Anthony David

There are a number of stages involved in the formation of any leadership team. Rarely will you find yourself with the same leaders year after year, and in most cases – unless you're in a newly opened school – you'll have inherited an existing team. Here, I'll look at what establishing an SLT as a new head involves, when and why to review it, and how to grow new leaders when experienced leaders move on.

I recently met with four heads, all new to their schools, and each said something along the following lines: "I don't know how X got onto the leadership team – they don't even like the school, let alone want it to improve!"

Two of the headteachers felt that members of their teams were actively seeking to undermine their leadership, citing 'larger than life' personalities, inappropriate gossiping in the staff room and a harking back to the 'good old days'. Well, those 'good old days' are gone, and you're what's replaced them.

Staff-room gossip, however, directly contravenes section 8 the DfE's Teacher's Standards (tinyurl.com/psm-standards), which calls on staff to 'Develop effective professional relationships with colleagues.' What do you do in that instance?

NO CHURLISHNESS

The first thing to remember is that you were employed to deliver your vision. The school's governing body will have spent a great deal of time and energy recruiting you, and you must feel that you are in a position where you can lead – which means you don't have to retain the existing leadership team. They're the old guard.

You'll very quickly come to know the strengths of your team. Back in 1990s I worked with a headteacher who

dissolved her entire team and took on mainly the school's youngest teachers, since she felt they were the teachers with the most to prove and who had the best interests of the children at heart. She was right, and two years later a failing school was judged to be Good.

Equally, I remember the first leadership team I inherited. They were strong, with plenty of potential, but there was one rogue member. She made it clear that she intended to remain being a rogue and that 'I should get used to it'. Now, to be clear, I encourage professional challenge, but not churlish actions simply for the sake of it. As I did with the aforementioned new heads, I asked the question, 'How did she get onto the SLT?' The reality was that whilst she was intimidating, her practice was weak and within two terms she had left.



It's in those early days that you have to be at your strongest, while you shape the long-term team around you who you feel can help deliver your vision. In the case of those two headteachers who were struggling with rogue leaders of their own, the common thread was that the individuals concerned had holes in their practice that were significant enough to impact upon their capability, which they attempted to mask with overbearing personalities. Perhaps there's a correlation?

HEALTHY MIX

Once you've organised your team you must consider how you're going to shape it. Fair representation from across the school is important, as there's a risk that the SLT members can all come from the same Key Stage. In some primaries and all-through schools, it's critical that you include someone from the EYFS. Their curriculum and experience of the school will be radically different to the rest of your staff, with the result that their departmental team can become disenfranchised. Keeping them on the SLT will ensure they retain a meaningful stake in school development.

The shape of an SLT can also be determined by the stage you're at as a school. At various times I've had larger and smaller teams depending on need. Changing the team kept things fresh and focused on our learners' needs, rather than having it turn into a weekly club who met in the head's office. When I opened a new school we kept the SLT intentionally tight; only three years into our growth did I expand it to encourage new members. Which brings us to...

GROWING NEW LEADERS

The SLT can feel like a closed 'club'. Middle leaders might get the impression that there's no reasonable access into the upper echelons of school leadership, which not only limits their growth but may also deprive you of that additional energy new leaders bring to the team. You should be intentionally looking at who within your staff body has the potential to be a leader. Even if you have limited capacity for moving your SLT around – it can happen – that doesn't prevent you from inviting a middle leader to join your focus SLT meetings.

This can introduce them to the strategic dialogue within the room

“By definition, your most ambitious colleagues will be those who have applied for senior positions, making SLT potentially the most vulnerable team in the school”

that's distinct from the 'training monologue' that typically characterises weekly staff development meetings, because tempers can flare in the SLT. Confidential items will be discussed and ideas will be floated, so it's important that an element of professional confidentiality is maintained by those present. You wouldn't expect a member of SLT to speak inappropriately in a staff meeting, and equally you wouldn't expect them to share confidential information. Attending SLT meetings as a guest can be an effective soft introduction and ease your way towards growing the team if you feel it's appropriate.

If your team is working successfully, then your deputies or heads of school should be moving on to headship themselves. In six years of being a headteacher I've managed to grow three heads of school and two headteachers. We haven't lost momentum as a school, since I'm constantly looking for and challenging those who could potentially take up leadership positions when gaps inevitably arise. Importantly, I've grown my local network of 'headteacher friends' with my own staff. The first time someone moved on filled me with some fear, but my policy now is to enjoy the energy the team brings in the moment rather than worrying about how to fill any gaps, as I know there are people waiting to step up. Indeed, some are quite keen to!

Leadership teams reflect where a school is at, as well as the reality that ambitious staff will inevitably move on. By definition, your most ambitious colleagues will be those who have applied for senior positions, making SLT potentially the most vulnerable team in the school. Understanding that movement in the SLT will allow you the space to change its make-up, so that it best reflects the needs of the school and presents opportunities for potential new leaders.

Even if you have what you consider to be a strong team that already reflects the school's needs, you should still be

looking to all staff for growth. Because if they're ambitious and you don't accommodate that ambition, somebody else will.

5 POINTS TO REMEMBER

- 1 It's your school – if you've inherited SLT colleagues who aren't on board with you or your vision, change them.
- 2 A good SLT should be representative of the whole school and contain a mix of specialisms.
- 3 When looking to appoint someone new, familiarise them with SLT protocol by first inviting them to a meeting or two.
- 4 Smaller, more consistent teams may be better when a school is new; a different, larger team may be more suitable when a school expands.
- 5 Don't be too concerned when ambitious SLT members move to different schools – you've developed successful leaders, and others will want to follow them.



Anthony David is an experienced headteacher, executive

headteacher and educational writer and speaker

CREATE A CULTURE THAT WORKS

The problems we're seeing with respect to staff wellbeing and mental health won't go away unless heads start getting proactive, writes Mark Solomons...

We're in the midst of a teacher crisis. Recruitment targets have been missed since 2012, and over a fifth of new teachers are currently leaving within their first two years. We see regular headlines and reports that highlight the increasing mental ill-health of staff, with one 2018 teacher survey from Leeds Beckett University finding that 54% of respondents reported having poor mental health (see tinyurl.com/lbu-tmh18).

Recent research from the University of Exeter (see tinyurl.com/exeter-tmh18) has further found that primary school teachers are at significantly higher risk of encountering long-term mental health problems compared to professionals in other sectors, with almost a third experiencing worryingly high levels of psychological distress.

With these and other school challenges adding to a general sense of doom, it's hardly surprising to see the growing number of staff wanting to join those who have already left the profession. When you add in higher staff costs and lower real terms funding to the mix, the future doesn't look rosy at all.

INCOMING CHANGES

The proposed changes to the Ofsted Framework in 2019 provide one possible bright spot, however, and hope that change is on its way. It's a positive sign that Amanda Spielman has already rejected suggestions to put the new

framework's introduction back a year, even before consultation.

As welcome as these incoming changes might be – if and when they arrive – there are a number of steps that all leaders can take in the interim to tackle some of the aforementioned issues, and create an inclusive and collaborative culture that will see more staff enjoy their work, thrive, and deliver improved outcomes for pupils. Indeed, many leaders are taking action already – but are they looking in the right place?

“Accountability has to be matched with an awareness of psychological safety”

PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

Schools are challenging places with – quite rightly – a high level of personal accountability expected from staff at all levels. Even as we (hopefully) move to a broader focus beyond testing and data, there will always be a need to deliver strong academic outcomes.

Yet this high level of accountability has to be matched with an awareness of psychological safety. In practice, this amounts to creating a climate in which people are comfortable with being and expressing themselves. In such a climate, staff will feel able to try new approaches, make mistakes, learn from those mistakes, feel free to speak up without fear of reprisal and have their views listened to.

According to Harvard Professor Amy Edmondson, an organisation that can combine high levels of accountability with a high degree of psychological safety will find itself in a 'learning zone', whereby “The focus is on collaboration and learning in the service of high performance outcomes.” (see tinyurl.com/psm-hbr-

ace). This is the type of culture that leaders should look to create – one where wellbeing is simply part of the organisation's daily routine.

Organisations that neglect to provide sufficient psychological safety risk entering an 'anxiety zone' in which “People fear to offer tentative ideas, try new things, or ask colleagues for help, even though they know great work requires all three.” In such a culture, staff will be perpetually fearful and worry extensively about failure.

CREATE THE RIGHT CULTURE

In November 2018, health secretary Matt Hancock launched a new government initiative that urged employers to ‘help improve the health of their staff and the nation,’ via staff perks such as free fruit, bicycle loans and counselling.

There's nothing necessarily wrong with pursuing any of those activities, but they're unlikely to make much difference if the right culture isn't already in place. What they have in common is that they tackle symptoms, rather than causes. They can be filed alongside ‘wellbeing days’, mindfulness training and similar strategies, used to tick some ‘wellbeing boxes’ and pointed to as evidence that an organisation is working to ‘solve’ the current crisis.

By all means, organise a wellbeing inset day. Arrange opportunities for staff to collectively partake in physical exercise. Hold a yoga session. But if wellbeing among staff at your school is poor the day before that inset session, it'll remain poor the day after. Instead, focus on the behaviour of your leaders, and the extent to which they actively involve, inform and engage staff in what's going on throughout the school. Here follow nine ways in which you can start building that type of culture right now...



teachwire.net

ONLINE RESOURCE:

'Build Your Wellbeing Culture – Staff Development Checklist for Primary SLT'
teachwire.com/wellbeing-culture

1) INVOLVE STAFF IN DECISIONS THAT AFFECT THEM

Start at the beginning with the school's purpose, vision and values. To what extent were these co-created with staff? Have you explicitly agreed the everyday behaviours that would be seen if said values are lived every day?

2) KEEP STAFF IN THE LOOP

Listen to staff feedback and suggestions, and where you disagree or would prefer to follow an alternative course of action, always explain why. This doesn't mean involving staff in spurious or lengthy after-school meetings, but rather asking them to only attend meetings where necessary – meetings that start and finish at agreed times.

3) SHOW YOUR OWN VULNERABILITY

Everyone makes mistakes, so own up to yours. Share those moments when you got something wrong with others and talk to them about what you learnt.

4) ADOPT BEHAVIOURS THAT REDUCE STAFF STRESS

In 2007, researchers at Goldsmiths College, University of London set out a series of management behaviours and competencies that could help build a culture where staff thrive (see tinyurl.com/psm-gsm-mc) – try sharing these with your leaders and making them form part of your own performance management and appraisal objectives.

5) MODEL WHAT YOU WANT TO SEE HAPPENING

As well as demonstrating effective leadership behaviours, this might also include taking breaks in the staff room, endeavouring not to work through lunch, leaving at reasonable times and not sending emails during evenings and weekends – they can always be saved as drafts or sent via a timed delay.

6) MAKE PRAISE CENTRAL TO YOUR CULTURE

Staff and leaders alike will tend to focus on the things that don't get done, rather than those that do. You might already give shout-outs, issue certificates, send congratulatory emails or even distribute 'well done' cards, which can help – but more effective still is when senior and middle leaders proactively seek out those members of staff doing the right thing each day in order to acknowledge their efforts.

7) ENGAGE WITH LEADERS AND STAFF EVERY DAY

Create opportunities for productive conversations to be had, and provide staff with greater autonomy by encouraging them to make their own decisions.

8) RECRUIT FOR ATTITUDE AND CULTURE FIT

Beyond seeking someone that possesses the right kind of knowledge, take time to properly induct and onboard your new recruits so that they fully understand the culture you want them to adopt.

9) ASK, 'WHAT WOULD THE BEST SCHOOL IN THE WORLD DO?'

Too often I hear, "We can't do that," or "There isn't the time!" Instead, think about what you *can* do.

Contemplating what 'the best school in the world' would do in a given situation doesn't mean you have to match it, but it can serve as a good way of shifting thinking and raising aspirations.



Mark Solomons is a school governor, author, leadership consultant and

the founder of School Wellbeing Accelerator

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BEFORE YOU BUY

1. RESEARCH YOUR OPTIONS

Ask yourself what you are looking for in a supplier. Are you spending hours looking for the cheapest prices each year, or do you want to build a long-term relationship with a supplier that you can trust?

2. BUY CHEAP, BUY TWICE

While budgets are extremely important, the cheapest books are often the first to fall apart. Exercise books go through a lot during the academic year, so they need to be made from quality materials that will stand the test of time.

3. A SHINING EXAMPLE

The printed materials you purchase can be perceived as a reflection on your reputation. The addition of your school name and crest can really make your books stand out from the crowd and encourage children to take ownership of the standard of their work.

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Reviewed by: John Dabell

According to research, four out of 10 pupils in their first year of secondary school have such a limited vocabulary that it affects their learning. The word gap is more accurately a chasm, especially when you consider that as students progress through school they need to be adding at least 3,000 new words to their vocabulary per year.

One resource that can help is Bedrock Vocabulary – a superb online programme which teaches academic vocabulary explicitly, whilst ensuring consistent reading of aspirational texts. It focuses on powerful Tier 2 words, i.e. robust, academic vocabulary that students are likely to encounter across all subjects and content areas. Expertly written texts are included, with which teachers can engage pupils across a wide range of topics, such as the history of rap, Alan Turing, the Berlin Wall and classic myths and tales like King Midas and The Golden Touch.

What makes Bedrock so useful is the way it contextualises advanced vocabulary and embeds new words in rich and meaningful exercises and texts, thus allowing students to discover the words themselves through a variety of literacy activities and both fiction and non-fiction texts. The texts in question are read to students using clear and authentic voices, which are far better than the robotic tones often used elsewhere.



Bedrock is a truly robust vocabulary system because it explains the meanings of sophisticated words through multiple contexts, and reinforces those meanings through thought-provoking, playful, and interactive learning moments. These deliberately test, probe, push and move literacy forward, with no shortcuts, so students can be assured of plenty of challenge.

There are three to five words in each 20-minute lesson (e.g. 'epitomise', 'sage' and 'voracious'), five or more lessons in each topic, and 13 topics in a block, with each block taking one academic year. In the lessons students read about words, think with images, explore antonyms and synonyms, use their imaginations, play with sentences and quiz themselves. It's full-on learning, and I especially like the smartphone text messaging feature. Naturally, the system analyses results and provides feedback on each student, enabling you to track their progress.

Shortlisted as a finalist for the Bett Awards 2019, Bedrock is a slick and stylish system that will open many literacy doors.



VERDICT

- ✓ Research-driven and based on best practice (e.g. spaced learning)
- ✓ Exposes students to challenging vocabulary with plenty of reinforcement
- ✓ Encourages students to think more about what words mean
- ✓ A consistent, relevant and well-designed vocabulary curriculum
- ✓ Greatly improves students' ability to comprehend written text

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Reviewed by: John Dabell

When asked to list their top concerns regarding their child's safety, parents are most concerned about bullying, followed closely by road accidents. Britain actually has one of the best road safety records in the world, but road traffic accidents continue to be one of the main causes of death and injury to school age children. In 2017, there were over 15,000 child casualties aged 15 or under.

Teaching road safety is therefore incredibly important, yet astonishingly, traffic education isn't included in the national curriculum. It's therefore down to schools to teach it, normally within PSHE and citizenship, which is why it's worth looking at 5Alive-Roadwise – an inclusive and well-planned programme for easy implementation across your school.

The programme contains a series of year-specific project booklets, each containing four dynamic and purposeful workshops that cover awareness and knowledge of traffic; safe strategies for crossing the road; visibility; and understanding the meaning of signs and symbols. The planning, notes and photocopyables that accompany the workshops are impeccable, and richly loaded with ideas, questions, scenarios and things to do.

These are supported by author video guidance for staff and a number of informative PowerPoint presentations for class use. Also included is a 72-page

music activity book and a road crossing song CD. There are also bookmarks for every child featuring the 5alive road safety steps.

The most effective road safety programmes are ones that encourage child-centred activities which promote play, social interaction, self-awareness, personal reflection and exploration of the world. These actively engage pupils, satisfy their natural curiosity and encourage informed decision making.

This is what 5alive-Roadwise achieves. It gives children opportunities to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes to help them make informed and safe decisions in traffic, and makes an important contribution to their health and wellbeing. 5alive-Roadwise will help develop pupils' understanding of the dangers of traffic so that they develop safer strategies and become more roadwise.

It's brilliant for incorporating into pupil road safety committees and supporting junior road safety officers, and will help you actively engage children in developing skills that focus on identifying and responding safely to risk situations.

We all need to be passionate about supporting children to be wiser and safer on the roads, and 5alive-Roadwise is a vital resource, offering sound counsel and inspiration.



PSM
PRIMARY SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

VERDICT

- ✓ Makes pupils aware of the importance of safety and the dangers associated with traffic
- ✓ Helps children take responsibility for their own safety and consider the needs of others
- ✓ Ideal for building into your school's road safety policy
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EMBRACE PARENT POWER

Instead of drawing a veil over criticism from parents, be honest and give them a productive space in which their views can be shared, advises Emily Tenenbaum

Love them or loathe them, parents are an integral part of the school community. Supportive parents can be the making of a school and have a huge impact on children's learning – yet when parents are unhappy about some element of school life, the response from school leaders can often be to batten down the hatches and

adopt a defensive stance.

It's an understandable human reaction to criticism, but one that often puts up barriers to whole school progress. Granted, parents will highlight issues that aren't always based on the full story, they aren't necessarily trained educators and they aren't always right, but that's not the same as always being wrong.

CRITICAL FRIENDS

When parents have concerns it's our duty as educators to listen – really *listen* – and then consider carefully whether there's any validity to their concerns. If said concerns relate to your leadership, do you have a trusted 'critical friend' who can be honest and help you see things from a different perspective? If not, then perhaps it's time to consider why. It can be lonely at the top, but are you secure enough as a leader to welcome feedback from those less senior?

Those who actually experience your leadership on a daily basis?

Becoming a school governor is another way in which parents can exert some impact on school leadership. The governance system in schools should be a powerful tool that helps drive a school's strategic direction. In your own setting, are parent governors embraced or are they 'managed' within the governance structure? Do you provide them with the truth, or a carefully cultivated narrative?

If it's just the latter, then how are they going to be able to offer meaningful contributions without a full and unedited disclosure?

MOVING FORWARD

It's also worth considering how the wider parental community can feed into the governance system. If you don't already, consider setting up regular parent forums – meetings that give parents an opportunity to discuss issues publicly and, where relevant, with a collective voice. Setting aside a public forum for known critics may sound like a nightmare, but there's value to be had in letting people have their say in a controlled environment. Moving those moans and rumours off the playground and social media feeds and into a constructive debate will give you an opportunity to respond to issues publicly, and demonstrate a genuine desire to move the school forward as a community.

Embracing parental views can be uncomfortable at times, but opening up to the positive power of parental feedback can have a huge positive impact on a school's wellbeing. As a teacher, it's obvious to me from children's behaviour and language when they have a parent at home who's reinforcing a negative view of the school. Moving these views into a more productive space is the key to improving both parties' long-term relationship with education.

As educators, it's surely our duty to model what effective leadership and learning looks like – that we don't always agree, but that we listen to others, value their opinions and, more importantly, that we aren't scared to admit when we can do better.

Emily Tenenbaum is a primary school teacher based in Hampshire





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