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To be a successful school leader, you have to possess a certain amount of confidence. The overall direction of the school, the standards for others to follow, the issues above everyone else's pay grade – those are all down to you. Though as Jill Berry points out on page 71, that shouldn't preclude you from seeking to grow and become even better at what you do.

The role also requires you to inspire confidence in others, of course – and perhaps occasionally temper the urges of some whose confidence is liable to do more harm than good, as Anthony David observes on page 72.

As any school leader will know, the confidence of children can be a powerful, glorious thing to behold when given the right amount of encouragement and channelled in a positive way. On page 6 we talk to Palo Alto High School teacher Esther Wojcicki, who knows more about childhood confidence than most, having raised three daughters who went on to become the founder of a leading genetics testing company, a noted anthropologist and the CEO of YouTube. It's Wojcicki's belief that elements of her parenting approach can be productively applied to other contexts. To these ears, at least, hearing her describe her determination to instil in her daughters a sense of agency, independence and a confidence to learn from their mistakes invited comparisons to the teaching profession in a broader sense.

Falling teacher retention, rates (see page 58), the prospect of child assessments imposed from above that have met with fierce opposition (see page 44) and a sprawling accountability system seem to betray a current lack of confidence in the profession itself. School leaders need to feel confident in themselves – but at a certain point, others must be able to feel confident in them too.

Enjoy the issue,

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From the
makers of
Teach Primary

HIGHLIGHTS

6 'TRICK' QUESTIONS
Esther Wojcicki on
why her daughters'
upbringing could
inform your leadership

12 STEPPING UP
How well are your new
Y1s supported when
starting 'big school'?

58 BREAKING POINT
Improving teacher retention
can't happen without
tackling burnout

74 'PLEASE WELCOME...'
Make that next presentation
one to remember

9 School Improvement

- Pupil tracking
- First aid education
- Curriculum access

12 RETHINKING 'CHILD READINESS'

We often hear it asked whether children are 'ready' to start school – but should we be asking if schools are ready for their new starters?

14 GOING INCOGNITO

Mike Sharples examines the growth and potential applications of so-called 'stealth assessment'

17 STEADY PROGRESSION

Clare Elson looks back on the dramatic impact that daily supported reading had on her school's Y1 literacy outcomes

23 Buildings and Facilities

- School security
- Modular buildings
- Playground surfacing

27 SAFETY IN SEPARATION

How should schools look to protect pupils from the effects of food allergies?

29 THE PERFECT SETTING

Scott Lunn describes the architectural decisions taken when tasked with designing a new school with a brief to reign in its visual impact

32 NATURAL SURROUNDINGS

Mary Jackson outlines a series of steps for giving your outdoor spaces a new lease of life

37 Technology

- Web filtering
- Rural schools
- Whole school IT

40 SAFEGUARDING FOR THE NETWORK AGE

Ann Marie Christian examines what schools can be doing to help parents supervise their children's online lives

43 Community Engagement

- Utilise your parents' skills
- The March of the Four-Year-Olds
- How to be a good neighbour

46 TURN LIKES INTO ADMISSIONS

Ian Clifford shows how a modest online ad spend can boost your pupil roll

52 Legal & HR

- Your curriculum and the law
- Monitoring staff absence
- Intimidating conversations

56 LEADERS AT LOGGERHEADS

Jane Owens offers some advice for what to do if relations between the head and governing chair become strained

58 AT THE LIMIT

Steve Waters on why we can't tackle the teacher retention crisis without addressing staff burnout

61 FALSE PROSPECTUS

If aspiring teachers think the job's just about making learning fun, that's a failure of messaging, says Kevin Harcombe

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63 Budgeting

- How to (politely) say no
- SBP qualifications
- GDPR one year on

66 BIG SPENDERS

Capital spend decisions can have huge ramifications, notes Sue Birchall – so make sure yours are the right ones

69 Leadership

- Management versus leadership
- Preparing for moderation
- CPD for headteachers

72 "I PLAY BY MY OWN RULES, MAN"

Anthony David gives us a crash course in showing self-appointed mavericks who's boss

74 PARK THE POWERPOINT

Graham Shaw offers some pointers for those keen to sharpen their presentation skills



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“The most important person in children’s lives is their teacher”

Journalism educator Esther Wojcicki tells us why her approach to raising three highly successful daughters can be applied more widely

In your new book *How to Raise Successful People* you describe using the ‘TRICK’ approach to raise your daughters – what’s the thinking behind it?

‘TRICK’ stands for Trust, Respect, Independence, Collaboration and Kindness. I came up with that acronym from trying to figure out what I’d done in the classroom and with my parenting to help my three daughters become so successful [Anne, founder of genetic testing company 23andMe; Janet, an anthropologist and epidemiologist; and Susan, CEO of YouTube].

My goal when they were infants was that I wanted them to be as independent as possible and to be able to *think*, all of the time. They were effectively guinea pigs, since I didn’t know anybody else who was trying to do the same thing.

Kids’ confidence comes from feeling like they have some form of control and power. For example, after our family moved to Europe, Susan went to live in the Swiss Alps with a French-speaking family for a week at the age of five and thought nothing of it. She already had that sense of ‘I can do it,’ even then. If parents believe in their kids and are prepared to give them opportunities for decision-making, that empowers them.

How did your own approach compare with that of other parents? Did you ever discuss it with them?

My kids and I had friends who would often come over. Their parenting styles were quite different to mine, but I never tried to proselytise or change anyone’s ideas. What I did stemmed from my own childhood, which I describe in the book – I wanted my children to always feel that they had control of their lives, and that they possessed the skills necessary to think their way out of anything.

I do remember telling other parents that the most important person in their children’s lives was their teacher, and that during the earliest phase of their

children’s lives, those parents effectively were the teacher. I recall some parents saying they planned to wait until their children started school, which was when they’d really start learning, but my theory was that that was too late. I wanted my children to be excited about learning, excited about life, and empowered to pursue whatever interested them.

You’ve previously suggested that the TRICK approach can be applied to the running of organisations, including school structures – what would that look like?

It would involve giving teachers respect and some control over the curriculum they teach. They’re typically implementers of a curriculum decided by somebody else, with the result that many teachers complain of not having opportunities to be creative. At the same time, teachers can provide the kids with opportunities to work together in small groups on something they care about.

Schools lean towards teaching children to follow instructions, which I do believe is a positive thing – but there should also be chances for them to be creative.

My goal would therefore be to set aside 20% of the time in a school day or week for ‘moonshot time’, where kids get to work on their own projects, be it colouring, coding an app – anything not actively harmful or dangerous that they can independently choose and pursue for themselves. If you give students opportunities to be creative for 20% of the time, it follows that you can also give teachers opportunities to be creative for 20% of *their* time, be it by themselves or alongside colleagues.

If an idea doesn’t work

out first time round, it’s okay to try again, or attempt something else altogether. The idea is to encourage situations which help children understand that learning and creativity happen when we’re making mistakes. Some teachers might reason there aren’t enough hours in the day for ‘moonshot time’, but could it be that they’re spending time on things that aren’t actually that productive for the kids? Perhaps those kids will end up being more productive and engaged in what they’re doing if they have opportunities to think outside the box.

As someone very close to the culture of Silicon Valley [Google co-founder Sergey Brin is the former husband of daughter Anne and president of YouTube parent company Alphabet] what are your thoughts on how technology is currently being used in classrooms?

Google’s G Suite for Education is very useful for the collaborative classwork I try to encourage, in that students can edit each other’s work, partner on different types of projects and contribute remotely.



The Wojcicki daughters (LtR) Anne, Janet and Susan



Images courtesy of Esther Wojcicki and Jo Sittenfeld

The input on all the newspapers and magazines my students produce comes via Google Docs [Wojcicki was instrumental in the launch of GoogleEdu and the Google Teacher Academy].

But there are also many other companies out there that encourage what I call the '4 Cs' that are really important for the 21st century – collaboration, communication, critical thinking and creativity. Adobe has a new collaborative design app called Spark, which is free and easy to use, and another called Adobe Premiere Rush for editing videos.

What about technology use outside of school – if the TRICK philosophy is being practised at home, is there a risk that children will independently choose to spend the majority of their time on their smartphone or games console? Is that even a problem?

I do think that there should be limits on screen time. Before the age of 5 it should be extremely limited, and I don't think there should be any screen time at all

before the age of two – none. At 5 and above, screen time limits can become a collaborative project, where the parent says, 'Here's a selection of things you can play and engage with online – you get to pick which ones you'd like to do.'

I'd try to ensure that children don't just learn how to be entertained playing a game, but also learn about the wider world and how to answer any questions they might have. *'Maybe you can get the answers online? Show me how you'd submit a question. How should you evaluate the answers to that question?'* What I don't agree with is simply giving kids lots of independence and letting them do whatever they want online – that way lies a rabbit hole.

You'd like to see TRICK principles embedded in every classroom, but given broader education policy trends in the US and elsewhere, realistically, how far are we from that happening?

I think we're closer than we've ever been before, but that doesn't mean it's going to

happen next year. Everybody's now aware that kids need creativity and innovation to play a role in changing the 21st century. Kids in private schools are already receiving this type of creative education – my focus is on the public schools where 95% of the kids are. It needs to be accessible to everybody, everywhere, because you never know where that next creative leap is going to come from.

That's what '20% moonshot time' can do. Employers want people who are innovative and creative, but that doesn't necessarily come from people who get perfect test scores. Arguably the most creative people are those who didn't get perfect scores, but thought for themselves and went against the system. Let's give kids opportunities to be creative within the system, and let's encourage it for 20% of the time.

***How to Raise Successful People: Simple Lessons for Radical Results* is available now, published by Hutchinson**

CAREER TIMELINE

1959

Begins undergraduate studies at UC Berkeley on a scholarship

1984

Begins teaching English and journalism at Palo Alto High School, California

2002

Recognised as 'California Teacher of the Year' by the California Commission

2009

Honoured by the Columbia Scholastic Press Association

2013

Awarded honorary doctorate from Palo Alto University

2015

Co-authors the book *Moonshots in Education: Launching Blended Learning in the Classroom*

“THEY DON'T FEEL LIKE A NEW TEACHER.”

Jake Howarth-Brown, Headteacher
Little Mead Primary Academy, Bristol

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THE PSM GUIDE TO... School Improvement

“DO WHAT HAS IMPACT – DITCH THE REST”

If you believe that assumptions regarding pupil assessment require a rethink, then take heart, says James Pembroke – things are about to get better...

The removal of levels in 2014 presented schools with an opportunity to reassess the purpose and value of the data teachers collect. Old orthodoxies were crumbling; the flawed assumption of linear progress, with its ‘points per year’ and simplistic flight paths, was gone. The pernicious, de-professionalising Assessing Pupils’ Progress, with its soul-sapping tick lists of learning objectives, could now be consigned to the assessment dustbin of history.

Schools finally had the freedom to explore and develop more meaningful approaches that placed the needs of teachers and pupils, rather than the demands of external agencies, at the heart of assessment. This was the hard reset schools so desperately needed.

And yet, in many schools, things got worse. Levels were re-badged and further subdivided into micro steps of

progress that required even more frequent data drops. Meanwhile, APP was absorbed into increasingly complex tracking systems with long lists of learning objectives to be RAG-rated, scored and weighted in order to generate summative judgements on the teacher’s behalf. It was assessment by numbers, and the impact on workload was huge.

How do we counteract this? First, we need to have an honest conversation about the impact and limitations of data, and then we need

to be brave. We can start by taking reassurance from these key sources:

1. The final report of the Commission on Assessment Without Levels (see tinyurl.com/commission-levels) tells us “There’s no point in collecting ‘data’ that provides no information about genuine learning.”
2. The report produced by the Data Management Review Group (see tinyurl.com/dmrg-report) encourages schools to “Be ruthless: only collect what is needed to support outcomes for children. Always ask why data is needed.”



3. Page 14 of Ofsted's latest school inspection handbook (see tinyurl.com/ofsted-ihb) states "There are no predetermined expectations on how schools present performance information or data."

The key audiences – teachers, senior leaders, parents, governors, external agencies – may differ in their demands, but it's vital that we collect data once, and use often. Teacher assessment for core subjects should be collected no more than three times per year. This may be supported by standardised assessment to provide external reference, but any such tests should be proportionate and well aligned with the school's curriculum. We also need to seriously consider the value and workload implications of tracking long lists of learning objectives.

Useful data for teachers includes pupil contextual information, prior attainment, standardised scores, and question level analysis. A narrative descriptor of learning – indicating whether pupils are working below, at or above expectations – is suitable for parents. For governors and others, the proportions of current cohorts working at or above expectations compared to a previous statutory assessment will be useful. For pupil characteristic groups, where numbers are often small, tracking average standardised scores will be more meaningful.

With Ofsted proposing that they'll no longer be looking at internal tracking data, schools effectively have licence to repurpose their systems. Do what has impact and ditch the rest.

James Pembroke is a data analyst and advisor with 14 years' experience within the primary, secondary and post-16 education sectors. He blogs regularly about data and assessment and works with Insight (insighttracking.com) to help schools across the country make sense of their data

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ARE YOU READY TO TEACH FIRST AID?

First Aid has now been approved as part of the PSHE curriculum, but teaching it to children can be a challenge, says Emma Hammett...

First aid training encourages children to be self-reliant. It empowers them with invaluable skills for helping both themselves and others in medical emergencies, and they love the practical nature involved with learning it.

The government has now recognised just how important first aid is, hence their approval for it to be a mandatory element of the new PSHE curriculum. Primary school children will be introduced to age-appropriate basic first aid, which will include learning how to call for an ambulance, and helping with common occurrences such as burns, choking, or putting someone who's unconscious and breathing into the recovery position.

HOW SHOULD FIRST AID BE TAUGHT?

First aid is a complex specialist subject. Its concepts can be introduced to pupils by existing school staff, or external experts can be brought in, though both options will have cost and resource implications.

A common misconception is that first aid can be taught to large numbers simultaneously, such as in a school assembly. However, this runs the risk of children misunderstanding or misapplying first aid techniques – which could be potentially dangerous, if children who have only half-listened subsequently attempt to practise poorly-grasped skills on each other or younger siblings.

Ideally, practical first aid courses should be taught at an age-appropriate level to groups of up to 16 children. This way, trainers can ensure everyone is actively involved and has fully understood everything they're learning. Any practical training should always be age appropriate

and tailored to the requirements of the school, the needs of the pupils and, of course, the scope of your budget.

Professional organisations come armed with mannequins, defibrillators, choking aids, bandages and other teaching aids, to make the teaching a truly engaging, memorable and enjoyable experience. Providers such as First Aid for Life, St John Ambulance, the British Red Cross and the British Heart Foundation will all provide invaluable accompanying teaching resources to enhance the practical training pupils receive.

THE ONLINE OPTION

It's also possible to equip larger groups of students with first aid skills via online modular pre-learning materials. First Aid for Life offers a series of age appropriate modular learning packages that enable students to learn such skills in school, alongside supporting resources for teachers (see tinyurl.com/FAFL-resources). This can be followed up with hands-on training and Q&A sessions which are ideal for consolidating the knowledge previously learnt online.

When first aid is taught in a practical way, by first aid experts, children's engagement levels soar. They love the hands-on nature of the subject and the opportunities to use those mannequins and master those defibrillators.

Emma Hammett is a registered general nurse and the founder/CEO of the first aid training provider First Aid for Life

 @firstaidforlife
 firstaidforlife.org.uk

Every curriculum should be accessible

Your buildings might be compliant with the Equality Act, but can the same be said for the teaching and learning that goes on inside them?

All schools are required to develop plans for improving access in relation to their curriculum, as well as their physical environment. We mustn't discriminate against pupils in the provision of education, access to benefits and use of facilities or services by excluding them, or subjecting them to some form of detriment.

One example that comes to mind was the school I saw with a class that included one pupil who was a wheelchair user. The class was scheduled for an off-site swimming session, but the school couldn't afford to rent a minibus with a wheelchair lift. The child in question was simply left back at school to read in the library.

We can avoid such discrimination by regularly reviewing practices, policies and procedures. All staff must be fully aware of the requirements set out in the Equality Act and their implications for the school. Providing an accessible curriculum is all about enabling disabled children and young people to fulfil their potential. Disabled children have the same right to a quality education as everyone else – thus, we must ensure

that they have positive, fulfilling experiences in lessons, in sport and across any extra-curricular activities.

The way in which the classroom is organised can play an important part in this. A curriculum needs to set learning challenges that are suitable for the diversity of learners, including those with SEN, and teachers must be sufficiently equipped to respond to those diverse learning needs. The importance of effective staff training can't be overestimated.

During my own access audits of primary schools, I've found that barriers to accessing the curriculum tend to centre around lack of support, insufficient time for collaborative planning, no clear leadership in relation to SEN issues and a lack of appropriate training opportunities. I've encountered teachers who felt that their ITT hadn't adequately equipped them for appropriately supporting pupils with SEN, and that CPD which might remedy this wasn't readily accessible.



Other areas of concern involve child-centred barriers, such as the nature of the child's SEN. Sensory impairments or moderate general learning disabilities can be perceived by teachers as substantial barriers to access, as can regularly missing school through frequent or long-term illness.

The reasonable adjustments schools will already be making for their disabled

pupils will likely include auxiliary aids, such as coloured overlays for dyslexic pupils, pen grips, adapted PE equipment, adapted keyboards and computer software. Many reasonable adjustments of this type are inexpensive, and will more often involve a change in practice, rather than the provision of costly special equipment or additional staff. A school's duty to make reasonable adjustments is an anticipatory one owed to disabled pupils generally. Schools therefore need to think in advance about what their disabled pupils might require, and what adjustments might need to be made for them to fully access the curriculum.

In my experience, however, considerable progress has been made in recent years – not just in classroom teaching, but also in after-school provision and extracurricular activities, such as trips and visits. Schools are increasingly adapting their teaching methods in ways that respond to the strengths and needs of pupils through differentiation of the curriculum. Schools are generally more organised, and a more transparent ethos now prevails, whereby young people and their families are involved in key decision making regarding the school day and beyond.

Lesley Mifsud is head access auditor and CEO at EA Audits

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LET'S RETHINK THE IDEA OF 'CHILD READINESS'

Rather than discuss 'children's readiness for school', we should consider whether schools are ready for their new children, writes Clare Devlin...

How prepared is your school for its new intake of Reception or Year 1 children? Are you aware and mindful of the many hurdles that 4- and 5-year-old children have to overcome as they transition from pre-school to primary school?

Children, like adults, enjoy and are stimulated by novelty and change. That first day of school following the transfer to 'big school' is a landmark in the process of growing up. Children look forward to change, even when they're apprehensive, but as noted in the 1967 Plowden report on primary education, "If change is to stimulate and not to dishearten, it must be carefully prepared and not too sudden."

A BIG ORDEAL

It's important that leaders and headteachers support their Reception and Year 1 teachers with the development of meaningful transition and settling-in programmes. Teachers need time to get to know the stage of development that each child has reached. They must understand where the children are in relation to their language acquisition, communication skills, physical abilities, social skills and emotional development before they can accurately construct appropriate learning programmes.

The information required should, in the first instance, be obtained from parents and pre-school centres. Teachers should also have time to collect and analyse their own observations of the children while they engage in well-planned play experiences, as it's only then that comprehensive plans for learning can be finalised.

However, all too often, detailed planning has already been submitted to leadership teams before the children have even entered the school. When this happens, teachers tend to dismiss what they find out about the children in their anxiety to teach to the previously submitted plans. Teachers regularly report feeling powerless during this process, so perhaps leadership teams could look at alternative planning approaches and submission timeframes for their Reception and foundation stage teachers?

EXEMPLARY PRACTICE

Often, when children are transitioning from preschool to primary school, much good work will have already been done by the preschool teams, Reception and Year 1 teachers. Children will be given opportunities to visit their new school and meet their new teacher, the uniform will be displayed and information about the children will have been passed to the Year 1 teacher.

One extremely useful exercise is for the Year 1 teacher to spend time in a preschool environment observing the children's competencies, abilities, routines and interests. It's not essential that the Year 1 teacher visit or spend time in all feeder preschools; the main purpose of such visits is for Year 1 teachers to absorb how learning takes place in an environment that's less formal than their primary classroom.

There's currently a real danger that our Reception and Year 1 classes are moving too fast and too soon towards formal learning in literacy and numeracy, to the detriment of supporting secure development in the physical, social, emotional and communication domains.

In Britain, children enter formal schooling much earlier than they do anywhere else in the world – yet by the age of 7, children around the world typically demonstrate equal and, in some cases higher, levels of ability across all areas. We must therefore question our continued focus on formal learning, testing and labelling at such an early stage in children's lives.

A VIRTUOUS CYCLE

At this critical transition stage, securing children's emotional well-being is paramount.

Tizzard et al (1988) found that initial success during the Reception class year led to a virtuous cycle, whereby those pupils who made the greatest progress remained high achievers throughout their primary schooling.

We also know from the work of Professor Ferre Laevers at Leuven University in Belgium that high levels of



engagement and involvement correlate strongly with deep level learning. He demonstrated through his research that children will struggle to reach high levels of involvement if their emotional well-being isn't secure.

Consider what young children have to get to grips with before they can feel emotionally secure and ready to engage in formal learning. They have to go to school every day and stay for longer hours. Many have to take a packed lunch and only eat when the bell rings. The bell itself is one of the scariest things in many schools, ringing loudly and unexpectedly.

Going to the gym, changing clothes, lining up, waiting, being still and having to be quiet (often with one finger on the lips) are all major tasks, and quite unnatural for young

children. And then there's registration time, playtime, work time, lunchtime, toilet time, home time; all terminology and routines that take time for children to get used to.

What about the sheer size of many school buildings? If you're 4, they can seem enormous. Children also have to get used to leaving friends behind, making new friends and the presence of bigger children and many more adults. They have to quickly familiarise themselves with different teaching methods that employ fewer child-led approaches and more formal instruction,

and which place greater emphasis on formal literacy, numeracy and recording using pencils and small tools.

TAKING PRECEDENCE

At the time of writing, the DfE is proposing to run a national baseline assessment pilot later in the year. This will entail carrying out 20-minute one-to-one tasks with individual pupils during their first six weeks in reception class. After much consideration, the DfE opted to remove the testing and

measuring of self-regulation from its baseline assessment, agreeing that observational assessment would be more suited to this content area.

The baseline assessment will thus now focus on tasks

relating to mathematics, literacy, communication and language. Whilst I agree that self-regulation shouldn't be tested, I fear that we're in danger of valuing what we assess, rather than assessing what we value. The danger is that mathematics and literacy will now take even more precedence over social and emotional development.

I believe that we should refrain from formally testing children as they enter reception and Year 1. Children at this stage are already experiencing many changes without having to endure a test – one that's likely to be administered to the children out of context and in an unfamiliar environment. Teachers, given appropriate training and understanding of child development, can readily collect the same information about children via observation over the course of a carefully planned and developmentally appropriate settling-in period.

Transition is not a bad thing, but we do need to think more carefully about what change means for children – and we need to plan more carefully, so that the transition process can be smoother for, and supportive of, children.

Clare Devlin is a provider of primary and Early Years training for individuals, early years settings, primary schools and other organisations

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“We’re in danger of valuing what we assess, rather than assessing what we value”



STEALTH ASSESSMENT

Mike Sharples examines how practical it is to assess learning processes unobtrusively

As people play computer games – to explore simulated worlds, combat foes and overcome challenges – the computer software monitors their progress. It continually collects data about players' actions, making inferences about their goals and strategies to set appropriate new challenges. This approach of continually tracking a person's progress while providing immediate automated responses has been termed 'stealth assessment' and it is starting to be applied to educational games and simulations.

The claim is that stealth assessment can test hard-to-measure aspects of learning, such as perseverance, creativity and strategic thinking. It can also collect information about students' learning states and processes without asking them to stop and take a test. In principle, stealth assessment techniques could provide teachers with continual data on how each learner is progressing.

INQUIRY LEARNING

The term 'stealth assessment' was first used by Valerie Shute in 2005 to describe the automated assessment process in a system named Smithtown to teach principles of microeconomics (for example, the laws of supply and demand). Students explored the Smithtown simulated world and altered variables, such as the price of coffee and the incomes of inhabitants. They engaged in inquiry learning by forming hypotheses and testing predictions. The software employed methods from artificial intelligence to monitor and analyze the students' actions, giving them feedback to support their inquiry skills without disrupting the game.

Stealth assessment extends adaptive teaching by making continual adjustments to a simulated environment rather than selecting a path or exercise based on the diagnosis of a learner's knowledge and misconceptions. The adjustments are based on the learner's actions while playing the game, such as

what evidence the learner collects in the simulated world before making a prediction, or which game characters the learner asks for help. The assessment is embedded within the flow of the game and the student may not be aware that this dynamic process of monitoring and response is taking place.

The principles of stealth assessment (see panel) can be complex when carried out by computer, but are just what a good human sports coach would do in teaching tennis or soccer. The coach watches the students as they practise the game and gives new challenges for each student matched to the level of ability. These are part of the game play (such as a serve in tennis or a penalty kick in soccer) rather than a separate test. All the time, the coach is forming an understanding of each student's skills and weaknesses.

ASSESSMENT DESIGN

The pedagogy that underlies stealth assessment is competency learning. The teacher (in the case of stealth learning, the computer) estimates what the student knows and can do, continually providing tasks and assessment that are matched to the student's competency. To do this, the teacher or teaching system must diagnose how the student is performing on specific problems and then infer levels of competency across a network of skills. The objective is to detect the student's problem-solving skills involving knowledge, comprehension and application, while also uncovering the higher level abilities of creativity and critical thinking.

A successful method of developing stealth assessment games is through 'evidence-centred design'. First, the educational game designer needs to determine what knowledge, skills and competencies will be assessed so that they can be built into the gameplay. These attributes cannot be assessed directly (since the game has no direct way of knowing what the student is

thinking, and the stealth approach does not set explicit tests of knowledge), so the designer has to work out which behaviours and interactions will provide evidence of a player's knowledge, skills and competencies.

The games designer then chooses actions that are appropriate to the player's abilities: setting goals to be achieved, managing conflict, introducing challenges. The designer builds measures of success and failure into the game as the learner undertakes a mission or solves a game problem. These measures link together to form a network of probabilities that the learner has gained the desired skill or reached the required level of competency.



OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Stealth assessment works best when the assessment strategies, game and simulated world are all developed together through a process of evidence-centred design that applies not only to the assessment but also the gameplay (so that the game elements are included to stimulate engagement and learning). A less successful approach is to add dynamic assessment to an existing game or simulation.

Stealth assessment techniques can give learners immediate feedback on their actions and provide teachers with information on how each learner is developing skills of inquiry, critical thinking, decision-making and creativity. This work is at an early stage, and it is not yet clear whether the methods of stealth assessment need to be developed afresh for each game and topic, or whether general methods of design can be adopted.

ASSESSMENT IN PRACTICE

An example of a computer game that employs stealth assessment is *Portal 2* (thinkwithportals.com), developed by Valve Corporation. The player takes the role of Chell, who has to explore an advanced science laboratory, realized as a complex mechanized maze and find an exit door by using a set of tools. Educational aims are for the user to learn aspects of physics, gain visual-spatial skills and develop critical thinking abilities.

Another, very different, example is TAALES (see bit.ly/2EDiaVT). This analyzes the lexical properties of students' essays (such as word frequency and use of academic language) to assess the students' vocabulary knowledge. Stealth assessment of student essays with TAALES is being coupled to a system that helps the students to improve their essay-writing skills.

Shute and colleagues embedded stealth assessment in the educational game *Use Your Brainz*, for middle-school students to learn skills of problem solving (see fla.st/2SbaEo2). A study with 55 school students over three days (an hour a day) showed that the stealth assessment by the computer matched standard measures of problem-solving ability. But there still needs to be a large-scale trial to validate the approach.

CONCLUSIONS

The term 'stealth assessment' provokes debate. Is it ethical to design a computer system that monitors students' actions, assessing their skills of problem solving or creativity while purporting to give them an entertaining game? Would it be more acceptable if the students know they are being continually monitored and assessed – which, after all, is exactly what a good human coach does?

For research projects, these systems can, and should, be developed within strict ethical guidelines that include telling the learners how they are being monitored, how the information will be used and gaining informed and willing consent from the participants. But stealth assessment is already being embedded into commercial games and might, for example, be used without players' knowledge to assess insurance risks.

Stealth assessment offers engaging ways to teach competencies, such as creativity, problem solving, persistence and collaboration, by incorporating dynamic assessment and feedback into computer games. The methods need to be introduced with care and sensitivity,

PRINCIPLES OF STEALTH ASSESSMENT

The key principles of stealth assessment are that:

- The software analyzes the activities of students within a computer game or simulation
- The system continually adjusts the structure of the game to support learning, for example by offering new challenges matched to the student's performance
- The system maintains the flow of the game, so that teaching and assessment are part of the game and not separate tests or exams
- The system builds a dynamic model of the learners to indicate their abilities and competencies
- It is intended to reduce learners' anxiety about taking tests by blurring the distinction between assessment and learning while carrying out an accurate diagnosis.

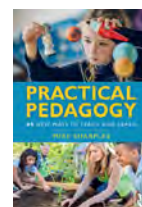
but early results show promise in combining the engagement of simulation games with the diagnostic power of dynamic assessment.



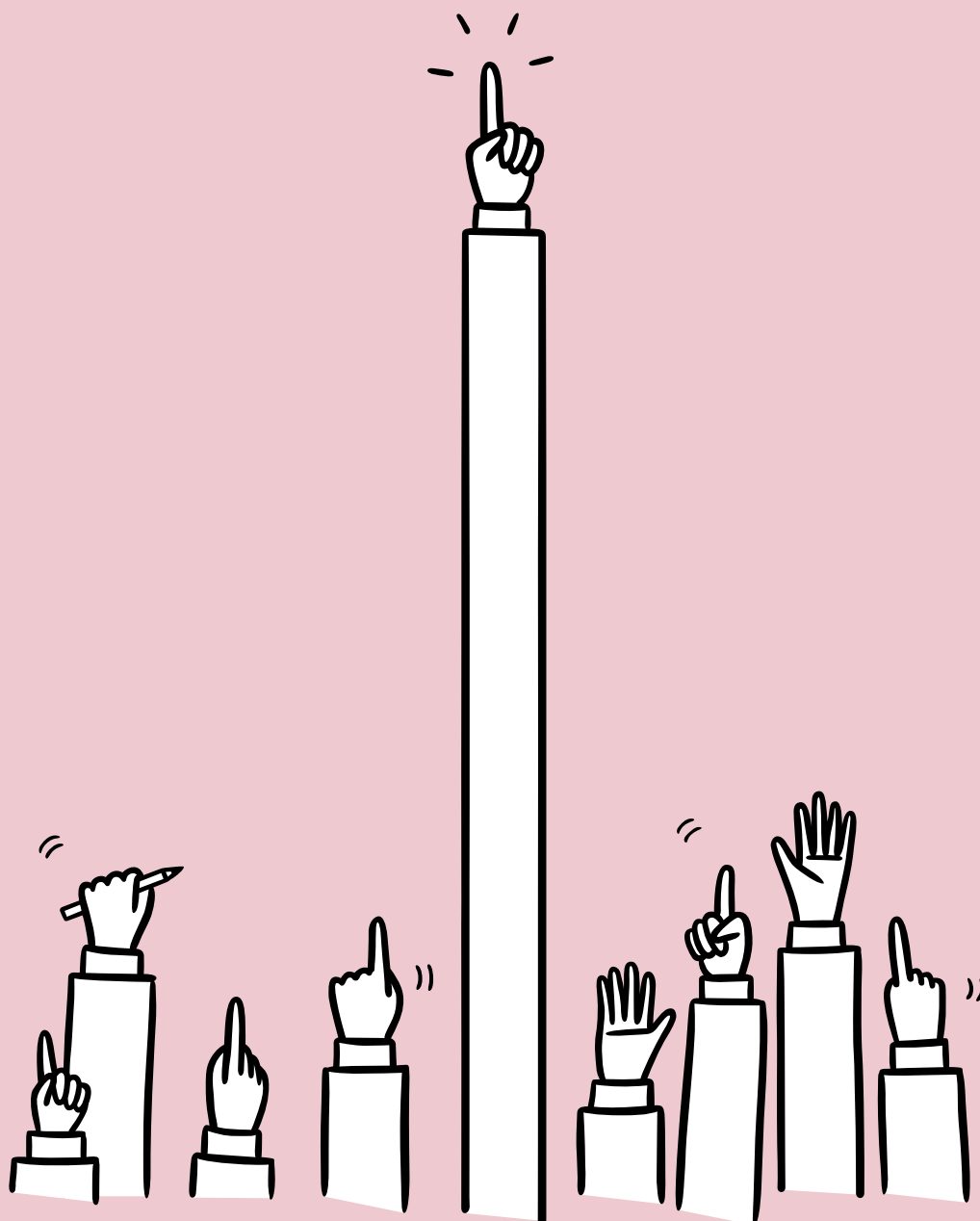
Mike Sharples is Emeritus Professor of Educational Technology at The Open University and Honorary Visiting Professor at Anglia Ruskin University, Centre for Innovation in Higher Education.

This article is based on an extract from his book *Practical Pedagogy*, published by Routledge; *PSM* readers can receive a 20% discount and free delivery when ordering from routledge.com by entering the code **A016**; offer ends **31/07/19**

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“Our non-readers have steadily progressed”

Clare Elson recounts how Daily Supported Reading enabled the Y1 staff of one Stevenage Academy to realise significant gains in pupils' literacy

Daily Supported Reading (DSR) was first implemented at Roebuck Academy beginning in January 2017, and we're now in our second year of following this approach to the teaching of reading. The school's headteacher, Lynsey Young, was already familiar with DSR from her previous school, and was keen to adopt it at Roebuck Academy upon being successfully appointed.

DSR sets out to help Y1 children develop as confident readers, and aims to encourage a love of reading for pleasure by providing opportunities to access wide range of different texts. In order to work, DSR calls for careful planning, training and a regular time commitment on the part of all adults throughout the school.

The staff at Roebuck Academy were trained by Richard Boxall of the Hackney Learning Trust. As the DSR lead, I was required to attend an intensive three-hour training session to ensure I had the confidence and skills necessary to oversee the required planning, assessment and further training of teachers and TAs.

As its name suggests, the programme is designed to be delivered on a daily basis. For half an hour each day, Y1 teachers and TAs will teach groups of up to six children across the year to read in a structured, systematic and rigorous way. As well as seeing that children are taught vital decoding skills, DSR aims to ensure that there's a sharpened focus on the front-loading of text, so that children are able to master comprehension skills at a crucial stage of their reading development.

Pupils with SEND are able to access texts in a way that involves repetition,



which has helped their long-term memory, and the programme's had a marked impact on Pupil Premium children, who demonstrated significant improvements in their reading skills compared to 2016 – according to our attainment data, the gains made amounted to as much as 20%. The apparent success of the programme has been monitored by our governors via further data analysis and several learning walks.

We've also extended fluent readers by developing reading comprehension skills, and seen a significant increase in the proportion of children entering Y2 who are able to access more complex texts and demonstrate improved decoding skills.

Y1 teacher Jenny Townley has observed first-hand the benefits of DSR with her own class. “Daily Supported Reading has been instrumental in raising our children's confidence and attainment levels,” she says. “We have watched nervous non-readers steadily progress and quickly become confident and independent. What a joy! Benchmarking the children at the end of their Reception year allowed them to be immediately placed in a group where they were able to access the texts

presented to them. That meant we were able to start from the first week of term and have rarely missed a session – it's made a huge difference.”

We're now excited at the prospect of having been invited to become a DSR hub school. This means that Roebuck will soon be sharing its DSR practice through visiting other schools and giving visitors opportunities to observe the programme in action. We'll also be sharing good practice with other school leaders and working closely alongside the Hackney Learning Trust.

The Hackney Learning Trust itself recently noted that “It's a testament to the hard work by Clare and the team that the children are engaged and enthusiastic about their reading. Through DSR they are developing early reading skills, as well as keeping the story at the heart of reading. We look forward to developing DSR with Roebuck as a hub school.”

Clare Elson is a teacher at Roebuck Academy in Stevenage; more details about DSR, contact Richard Boxall at richard.boxall@learningtrust.co.uk

 roebuck.herts.sch.uk

START YOUR LANGUAGE LEARNING EARLY

The government is trying to address the declining popularity of MFL at GCSE and A Level, but it's at primary level that real progress will be made, says Mala Henry...

The fall in pupils studying foreign languages at GCSE and A Level continues to cause concern and unease. According to BBC research undertaken in February this year (see tinyurl.com/bbc-mfl-19), uptake in foreign languages at GCSE has declined between 30 and 50% in some parts of England since 2013.

Students disclosed that languages are seen as a 'high risk' subject both by themselves and their schools, and that many believe "It is harder to get a good grade in a language." The report further revealed that foreign language learning is currently at its lowest level in UK secondary schools since the turn of the millennium.

To help boost Britain's linguistic skills, Schools Minister Nick Gibb in April unveiled a target for getting three in four secondary starters studying one language at GCSE and taking the exam, starting from this September. Will this change make any difference, or do we perhaps need to go back to grassroots and address what's really happening and being achieved at primary level?

CITIZENS OF THE WORLD

Despite the government making language learning compulsory for children between the ages of 7 to 11 back in 2014, little progress has been made, with a good number of primaries still struggling. The British Council's Language Trends 2018 report (see tinyurl.com/bc-lt-18) stated that, "Languages remain a marginal subject which many primary schools find challenging to deliver alongside many other competing demands. The lack of consistency between primary schools, in a context where secondary schools take pupils from many different feeders, is one of the barriers to smooth transition and hinders coherent progression in learning."

Research produced by scientists and language experts over a number of years has repeatedly shown that introducing foreign languages to young learners has significant benefits. Among those experts is Patricia Kuhl – a professor of speech



and hearing sciences who has gained international recognition for her research into early language acquisition and brain development and studies of how young children learn.

Kuhl's work has played a major role in demonstrating how early exposure to language alters the brain. As she explains in a TED talk titled 'The Linguistic Genius of Babies', "Babies all over the world are what I like to describe as 'citizens of the world.' They can discriminate all the sounds of all languages, no matter what country we're testing and what language we're using ... When babies listen, what they're doing is taking statistics on the language that they hear. Why is it that some adults pronounce French with a foreign accent and toddlers will not? Because they no longer perceive sounds the way they did as infants. Now they hear the sounds through the filter of English, and as a result they have a foreign accent."

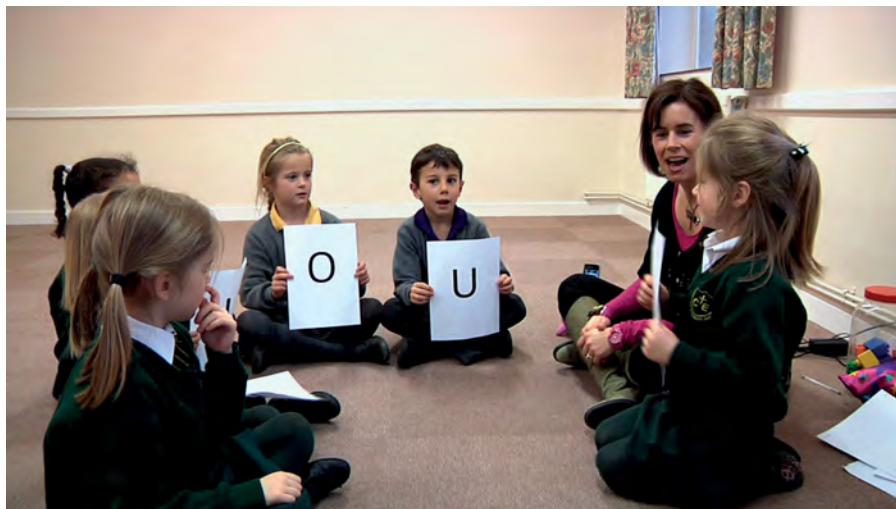
Early language learning is the key to success at GCSE and A Level, but it needs to be delivered in a similar way to the

other learning taking place at that age. The primary classroom teacher is of crucial importance here – they will have a relationship with their pupils, will understand their learning styles and needs, and can encourage and promote languages in the classroom.

Sadly, what they don't have in many cases are the language and linguistic skills needed to deliver it. Training and the availability of resources thus become the essential ingredients for success.

CROSS-CURRICULAR LEARNING

La Jolie Ronde Languages for Children has a long and proven track record of successfully teaching French and Spanish to young children since being established in 1983. Children from as young as 5 are able to start learning through the La Jolie Ronde structured programme, and there are other programmes available for 0 to 3 and 3 to 4 year olds, enabling children to join the programme at a starting point appropriate to their age.



Children will proceed to absorb words, phrases and pronunciation through repeated exposure to the language, and through being taught in a relaxed environment with the aid of fun teaching methods. Young learners benefit more from being exposed to language and text through songs and stories, rather than simply working at word level and acquiring vocabulary.

Children will happily join in with engaging action songs and role play activities for the enjoyment they offer. An added bonus is that early language learning can also help them to develop other skills and reinforce their learning in other subject areas, such as PSHCE, PE, geography, literacy, music and dance. For these reasons alone, early years and primary are key times to make language learning a bigger part of the school week.

NATURALLY EMBEDDED

Issues that primary schools will likely need to manage include a lack of specialist teachers, an absence of good training opportunities, time constraints and budget restrictions, not to mention quality teaching materials.

La Jolie Ronde's Scheme of Work for non-specialist teachers is specifically designed to address and solve each of these hurdles. Written in accordance with

the MFL Programme of Study requirement, it's an affordable, flexible 4-year programme that provides support to teachers with no previous experience of teaching foreign languages, while also serving as a guide for more experienced staff who can modify it to suit their needs.

One of the Scheme's biggest benefits is that everything is already pre-prepared and planned in a consistent and easy to follow format. Each lesson contains a set of learning outcomes, a link to the relevant Programme of Study objectives, suggested core vocabulary and details of the accompanying CDs and track numbers to be used in lessons, so that pupils can hear correct accents and pronunciations.

Split into two schemes, for years 3/4 and 5/6, the lessons themselves are broadly divided into four 15-minute units, with each unit giving details of the teaching sequence suggested and pupil activity. Tailor-made training courses are also available, while pupil activity books prepared for each year are perfect for showing progression.


La Jolie Ronde programmes are developed and carefully prepared with the transition to secondary language learning in mind. Children who receive the learning experience of La Jolie Ronde classes and programmes take away with



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Perfect for the non-specialist teacher and an aid to the more experienced, the Scheme of Work consists of two halves - one for years 3 and 4, and another for years 5 and 6. The Scheme includes detailed lesson plans, resource CDs, songs and poems, IWB activities and digital sound files for embedding pronunciation.



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them happy memories of language learning that's been 'naturally' embedded from the start, mirroring their experience of the other school subjects they're taught. This helps to form a vital and positive foundation, and will give the pupils added confidence when the time comes for them to approach languages at secondary school.

Mala Henry is Marketing Manager for La Jolie Ronde

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Our products provide opportunities for children to play together. Whether it's time spent sitting quietly in a playhouse or digging in the sandpit, it's always good to encourage interaction. Outdoor shelters can not only give teachers a way of taking lessons outside, but will also serve as a safe, covered area in which children can sit and chat with friends.

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Our sandpit range offers a huge variety of ways to play in sand. Large ground sandpits give children the chance to take their shoes and socks off and get in, outdoor covered sandpits are usable in all weathers and a table sandpits can be a

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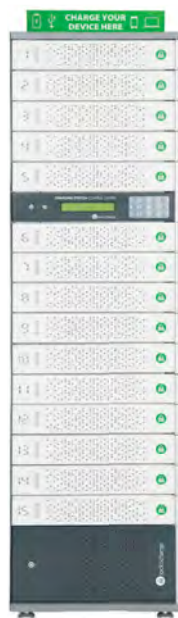
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Buildings & Facilities

PREPARE FOR THE UNEXPECTED

How can schools look to factor in the unforeseeable when devising their safety policies? Sue Corrick shares her thoughts..

In schools, everyone has a role to play in the implementation of an effective security strategy. There can often be a great deal of focus placed on security strategies that are generally strong and well-rounded, but which won't always account for unexpected situations.

Being well prepared starts with understanding your school's building(s) and the specific needs of those using them. It's often noted, but there really is no 'one size fits all' solution when it comes to school safety. Every school building requires a bespoke and meticulous security strategy that gives due consideration to the impact on pupils and teachers.

ABSCONDERS

Antisocial behaviour can be the root cause of numerous issues pertaining to site security and pupil safety. Children attempting to leave school premises – or indeed succeeding – will uncover safety challenges that may not have previously been accounted for.

There may be a temptation to prevent absconders by padlocking fire escapes or positioning push-pad emergency exit controls out of children's reach, but this will immediately raise fire safety issues. If it's the case that pupils can leave the premises via an unsecured emergency exit, a risk assessment should be carried out in partnership with local safety code experts to see how those unauthorized exits can be managed safely.

Possible solutions might include ensuring that reports of unauthorized exits are effectively communicated, or



a system of layered security. It's essential that every such situation is carefully evaluated and that the requirements for ensuring pupil safety are clearly understood by all.

INTERNAL RISK

Creating a safe and secure environment also requires careful planning of internal security from all angles. This is a complex undertaking that calls for a holistic approach and plan that's both pragmatic and sensitive to the financial resources available.

In the case of pupils absconding, electronic access locks and PINcode hardware can provide additional security for areas needing closer supervision, which might include supply cupboards or science labs containing hazardous chemicals. It's possible via electronic means to admit only authorised personnel, while still providing enough flexibility for multiple persons to access said areas without a physical key.

Delayed egress systems, on the other hand, are becoming increasingly common in US schools. Should a pupil (or member of staff, or visitor) attempt an authorised exit from the building, an alarm is automatically triggered on a 15-second second delay, giving staff time to respond. This hardware is typically linked to the school's fire alarm, thus providing a useful system override during a fire emergency.

These systems are yet to be CE marked to the required standard here in the UK, where we're still waiting on the harmonisation of standard BS EN 13637 concerning the performance and testing of electronically controlled exit systems. At the time of writing, it could be at least another year until the standard is published and exit devices become CE certified.

With all that in mind, the importance of staff training can't be understated. To minimise risk, schools may need to have multiple security measures in place, all operating in conjunction. Above all, schools should ensure that staff possess a clear understanding of all existing security systems and procedures, and any others it plans to adopt.

Sue Corrick is EMEA Product Manager at Allegion UK and a school governor

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FIND THE RIGHT MODULAR STRUCTURE

There are many benefits to be had from specifying modular buildings – and now an easy way to find the right one for you, says Russell McCarten

Many of us will be familiar with the old fashioned 'huts' we used to inhabit as school children. At the time, those prefabricated buildings served a purpose – to allow for a relatively pain-free, quick and easy expansion of premises in a cost-effective manner. This same ethos still applies to schools' requirements today, but the solutions available are far more modern and practical, and arguably much easier on the eye.

Schools looking for options in terms of modular buildings would do well to consider ESPO's Modular Buildings Framework 953 (see tinyurl.com/espo-953). There are myriad building options out there to choose from, which is where the ESPO framework comes into play. It seeks to present those options more clearly by organising them into five key building types, one of which is 'education'. The other four consist of healthcare, catering, accommodation and 'other', the aim being to cover pretty much all popular modular building eventualities. The framework further includes options to either hire a modular building or buy one outright, providing further flexibility.

Framework 953 enables suppliers to provide 'off-the-shelf' standardised buildings (which customers can either buy or hire via a direct award process) or ones that are more highly specified and tailored towards particular build specifications via a further competition process.

The fact that many leading providers and well-respected names in the industry are signed up to the framework is testament to the public sector's continuing demand for modular buildings. It remains the case that they can be significantly cheaper than traditional buildings, which is, of course, a key consideration for those working within

the education sector.

The flexibility of current modular systems is impressive. Though classed as 'prefabricated' buildings, to distinguish them from permanent structures, the utility they can provide is worlds away from the modular buildings stereotype that persists in the popular imagination. These structures are modern, light-filled and airy, while simultaneously strong and reliable.

Constructed off-site to a desired specification for onward delivery to the customer, modular buildings boast a number of other advantages over costly permanent structures. Because they're manufactured in a dedicated facility, schools can avoid delays caused by weather conditions and other on-site challenges, thus ensuring a more dependable build programme. Those factory conditions can also ensure a consistent quality of product, with modules being closely monitored throughout the construction process.

Specifying modular buildings can also help cut down on waste, with material supplies easier to control and virtually all waste being recycled. The manufacturing of modules can commence while the site and its foundations are prepared on site, significantly speeding up the build process. The delivery and installation of modules is furthermore quick, thus reducing the impact of construction work on the school's operations. Finally, modular buildings are easy to expand at a later date, and can be relocated when needed.

Russell McCarten is a Category Manager at the professional buying organisation ESPO

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Choose the right playground surface

Eleanor Wyborn explains why the most safety-conscious approach to playground surfacing isn't necessarily always the most appropriate...

When it comes to playground surfaces, there's so much choice available that it can be a daunting task to work out exactly what's right for your play area. Too often, schools will end up spending unnecessary time on meetings and getting quotations for things that simply aren't suited to their specific needs.

Protective safety surfacing, for example, is frequently seen in public play areas – usually in the form of loose fill materials such as woodchip, or a synthetic surface that can be produced in tiles, layered or applied as a wet-pour solution. With safety naturally among your foremost concerns, you might feel that this is the type of surface you need. However, safety surfacing is only designed to reduce the severity of fall injuries, and does little to reduce the overall number of accidents experienced in a play environment.

Its provision should be viewed in perspective. Safety surfacing will certainly reduce the risk of severe head injury where play equipment is present, but these types of falls from equipment occur very rarely among children over the age of 5. It's therefore much better suited to early years settings, where the risk of such injuries will be higher, or in areas containing equipment over a certain height.

If you're considering fitting a protective safety surface, check that the suppliers you contact can provide written assurance that their products are compliant with the European Standard EN1177 pertaining to playground equipment, and that it's intended for an appropriate site as outlined in European Standard

EN1176. Copies of appropriate test certificates should be supplied on request.

The traditional route

If the children are going to be using your play area primarily for sports and ball games, a traditional grass, tarmac or concrete surface will often suffice, but these age-old solutions aren't without issues. Tarmac and concrete surfaces have long lifespans, but these can be shortened by invasive plants such as knotweed, or tree roots forcing their way up through the surface and causing cracks. Watch out for such issues – if you catch them quickly, you may be able to take action before they cause accidents and/or additional expense.

One obvious sign that tarmac is due for renewal is when a noticeable quantity of loose gravel forms on its surface, due to the bitumen losing its grip on the embedded aggregate. This gravel will eventually cause slips on the playground, making resurfacing all but inevitable (and likely costly). It's lengthy process, however – with careful monitoring, you may be able to

resurface smaller portions of the area over a span of years, thus spreading the cost over several budget periods. Alternatively, consider dressing your tarmac or concrete with a set of anti-slip thermoplastic playground markings. These can make play safer by zoning activities and reducing the risk of slip-related accidents.

Every type of playground surface has its own set of strengths and disadvantages, with no one type able to serve as the best fit for all purposes. The best place to start when embarking on a playground surfacing project is to first identify who'll be using the play area and how they'll be using it. That will lead towards identifying what specific strengths you'll need from your chosen surface, and allow you to take steps and make plans for mitigating any potential pitfalls.

Eleanor Wyborn is marketing director at Thermapply Ltd.

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REDUCE THE RISK OF ALLERGIC REACTIONS

Mike Hardman from Alliance Online discusses steps that can be taken to help prevent food-based allergic reactions at your school

No, you're not 'allergic to maths'. You're just being bone idle."

My old maths teacher was right. I was indeed being lazy, despite my best efforts to claim 'mathematical hypersensitivity'. Teachers naturally continue to encounter similar comments in the course of educating the next generation, but allergies have, in fact, become something of a media-fuelled trending topic.

Allergy awareness has been increasingly discussed over the last five years or so, but became a national talking point in wake of two widely reported allergy-related deaths in late 2018. The catering and hospitality industry has subsequently seen an influx of meal preparation products aimed at combating cross contamination and promoting allergen safety.

With allergy rates among children on the rise – between 6% and 8% of children are currently thought to be affected by food allergies – it's vital that schools have in place the protocols and equipment they need to prevent allergic reactions, which can range from mild irritation to full anaphylactic shock. Given that schools are required to provide safe, sheltered environments for pupils to learn in, headteachers and kitchen staff alike must ensure that foods which may aggravate documented allergies are mitigated, or that alternatives are prepared separately with care.

What other options are available for promoting an allergen-free catering

environment, and what further measures can schools take to prevent allergy reactions? At Alliance Online, we believe the following three areas are key to ensuring child safety:

SEPARATION

Use of storage containers is widely considered best practice for preventing food contamination prior to cooking. Utilising gastronorms and other receptacles is the best way of isolating foods, and known allergy triggers in particular. Implement an easy-to-follow, colour coding sticker system, so that kitchen staff have a quick visual indicator as to the contents of various storage devices.

FAILURE TO PREPARE

Food with the potential to induce allergies should ideally be prepared with equipment specifically designated for that purpose. Said items shouldn't be nominated and set aside each day but be permanently reserved for that use only, since washed apparatus can still contain trace amounts of food particles. Products such as the 'Allergen Saf-T-Zone' chopping board set are perfectly suited to such environments and situations.

NOW, WE'RE COOKING

Finally, schools and kitchen staff need to consider cookware. To guarantee meals that are safe for all, it's sensible to purchase and use specific allergen-free cookware. Our allergen cookware from Pujadas adheres to a universal purple colour code, so that employees can immediately identify that these are for cooking allergen-free meals. Having separate saucepans and stockpots to hand will both minimise the chances of cross-contamination and help reassure parents that the school's main priority is their children's safety.



Mike Hardman is marketing manager at Alliance Online



@allianceonline



allianceonline.co.uk



JUN
10

Registrations are now open for the seventh annual Healthy Eating Week organised by the British Nutrition Foundation.

Taking place between 10th and 14th June 2019, the week will see workplaces, schools and nurseries invited to complete five health challenges – 'Have breakfast', 'Have 5 a day', 'Drink plenty', 'Get active' and newly added this year, 'Sleep well'. Organisers are hoping to build on the success of last year's event, which saw participation from 4,600 schools and nurseries and over 1,400 workplaces and universities. foodafactoflife.org.uk



School food charity Mary's Meals has teamed up with Tilda

Foodservice to launch a new recipe book containing contributions from a number of award-winning school chefs and caterers. Inspired by Mary's Meals' work providing daily meals to impoverished school children in 17 countries across Africa, Asia and Latin America, the featured recipes are inspired by said regions' cuisines, with smokey pulled chicken, Indian lamb koftas with coconut rice and Asian sweet potato curry among the highlights.

tildatogether.com



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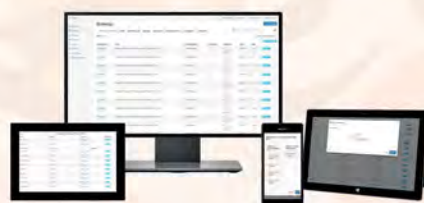
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THE PERFECT SETTING

Architect and project lead Scott Lunn talks us through the unusual design configuration of a new build school in County Durham...



The work we carried out for Wynyard Church of England Primary School was a project funded by Education & Skills Funding Agency. We came on board in September 2017, after an outline feasibility scheme had been drawn up that included a basic design outline for a two form entry primary school over two storeys.

We took on that design during the project's bidding stage, and working alongside the construction firm ISG, looked at how we could build further efficiencies into the plan and help them create a more competitive bid to win the job – which we were ultimately successful in doing.

SIGNIFICANT ALTERATIONS

Wynyard CoE is a new school that was formed as part of a wider residential development, areas of which were being built while we were on site. As the new school building took shape, the school itself was set up and began operating in temporary accommodation approximately a mile away from the site.

Having secured the bid, we liaised with the Diocese of Durham to sign off on the design and ensure it was something they could work with. There was also the need for us to meet various technical requirements set by the DfE and comply

with BB103 guidelines (see tinyurl.com/psm-bb103)

As the project progressed, the design changed in several ways that might have outwardly seemed quite minor, but actually amounted to fairly significant alterations. One particular headache was that the initial feasibility had proposed a retaining wall along two sides of the building that included a 'notch', where the wall came in and juttied back out again. The reason for it being there was to comply with DfE's very specific environment targets, as the area in question would otherwise lack any access to natural light.

Ourselves and ISG were able to come up with a way of building the retaining

wall in a straight line for less, without the need for a 'kink', but that meant adding more area into the building – which unfortunately fell outside the procurement restrictions we were under. However, following a lengthy exchange with the DfE, we eventually reached a compromise and designated the unlit area as a non-usable void – for the moment, at least. Otherwise, the process of implementing the design was a fairly smooth one.

UNUSUAL CONFIGURATION

The building has a somewhat unusual configuration, in that it appears to be a single story building from certain perspectives because of how the levels are worked. This was a deliberate decision in response to planning issues which had been picked up in the feasibility design – being a fairly large building surrounded by fairly small detached residential properties, there was some concern from residents over the school's visual impact. The decision was therefore made to sink the building slightly into the surrounding land in order to make it less visually obtrusive. As you approach the school from the car park, you're looking at what appears to be a single-storey building.

The planners were keen to see a building that fitted into its surroundings and matched the neighbouring context, which prompted us to opt for brick building materials similar to those used for the local housing. We were encouraged specify a slate roof, but chose to go with metal instead.

The primary reason was down to cost, but it also allowed us to put a much shallower roof pitch on the building to further reduce its visual impact. Being a fairly wide school building, the apex of a pitched slate roof would be necessarily quite tall. The roof was then coloured brown/bronze rather than grey, to prevent it from looking too industrial.

LOCAL BENEFITS

Visitors enter the building via the upper level, which is where the reception and admin areas are located. Walking through, the KS2 classrooms are situated on the top floor, most of which have direct access to outside space, which is quite rare to see on the upper storeys of primary schools.

As you move downstairs, you're essentially entering a semi basement. At the rear of the building is the hall, alongside a studio space and dining hall – the latter of which occupies a relatively high space in which we were able to install high level windows that let in plenty of light. The library area is situated off a main corridor that's easily accessible – while it unfortunately lacks

natural light due to design constraints, it's still a pleasant, open space.

Also nearby is the aforementioned void space, which the Diocese and school ended up converting into changing rooms via a separate contract to create added value. The site of the school includes a full-sized football pitch intended for use by both the school and the local community, but no changing facilities had been planned in. The void space proved to be ideal, thus benefiting both the school and local residents.

To the front, there's lower ground level exterior access where the KS1, early years and foundation areas are located, giving them direct access out onto the play areas.





NATURAL VENTILATION

Our approach to the building's heating and ventilation wasn't as different as one might think, given the semi-subterranean design. To comply with the ESFA's fairly stringent energy performance and ventilation requirements, we made use of natural ventilation heat recovery units which sit above the ceilings in the classrooms.

These are small units that connect to louvres above the windows and monitor the rooms' CO2 levels. When those levels rise above a certain mark, the vent will activate and provide additional support. The system isn't intended to work separately from opening the windows to let in natural ventilation, but rather complement that. If it's a cold day outside and opening the windows is impractical, that's when the unit takes over ventilation duties, avoiding the need to let cold air in and warm air out. On warmer days the classroom windows can be opened as normal, while the units lie dormant.

We were still able to ventilate the hall space using natural ventilation through the use of three wind cowl. The kitchen is ventilated mechanically, as tends to be the case in most school catering facilities, with extracts from the kitchen taken to a plant room directly above on the upper level, before being expelled from the building.

Taken as a whole, I think the building works really well in its context. Between the way the levels have been worked, the surrounding landscape and our efforts at matching the building's aesthetics with those of the neighbouring residences, the school sits very well in its setting. The school officially opened in its new home in January this year – I understand that the staff and pupils were excited to move in and are very happy in their new surroundings.



Scott Lunn is an architect and associate at Watson Batty Architects

Plan your LANDSCAPING

If the time has come to make better use of your outdoor space, ensure that your aims are fully thought through before you start, says Mary Jackson

1

WHERE ARE YOU NOW?

The first step of the process is to evaluate what you already have in place. Are different outdoor areas being used in different ways? Do some places get too hot in summer or exposed to biting winds in the winter? How do people feel about the grounds? Do they reflect the ethos of the school?

2

GROUP INVOLVEMENT

The key to developing successful school grounds is to invite input from lots of different groups. However, real engagement ought to consist of more than simply asking pupils to draw pictures of what they'd like to see; it's about tapping in to their expertise as the grounds' main users.

3

DECIDE WHERE YOU WANT TO BE

The next step is to consider your end goals. What would you like to be able to do outside? What experiences do you want your pupils to have? At this stage, don't think about the things you want to have, as this can limit what you end up with – focus more on your desired outcomes.

4

DECIDE YOUR PRIORITIES

Perhaps you want grounds that will enable your pupils to get close to nature. Maybe you want your pupils to be challenged through play, to learn about risk taking and how to play well with others. Or will your main focus be on taking learning outside or developing your pupils' forest skills?

5

SEEK INSPIRATION

Check out the free resources on the Learning through Landscapes website (see ltl.org.uk/free-resources), or those created for Outdoor Classroom Day (outdoorclassroomday.org.uk) and International School Grounds Month (international.schoolgrounds.org/ismg) – these will help you appreciate the scope of how much you can do with classes outside.

6

PLAN YOUR ROUTE

In this stage, consider the changes you need to make in order to meet your objectives. These might entail physical alterations, but could equally involve changing the attitudes of staff or providing extra training. Consider the whole site, not just parts, so that everything works together. Then focus on your first priority.

7

DEVELOP YOUR IDEAS

Don't simply copy an arrangement you've seen elsewhere – review what your specific needs are, and then search for pictures of different features and spaces that will help inspire the change. At this point you may need to bring on board a specialist; a wildlife or play specialist for a specific feature, or a landscape architect for a more complex project.

8

MAKE THE CHANGES

At this point, we've reached the fourth stage of your project. You may find that some of the things you need to do and the changes you need to make can be done by yourselves, such as creating a growing area or as creating a bug hotel; others, such as creating an amphitheatre for example, will require more specialist skills.

9

KEEP GOING

Ensure your staff receive the training they'll need to make the most of the changes, and ensure that your grounds staff are fully informed of how you intend to use your new outdoor space in future. You can download a guide to maintaining your school grounds in a way that supports pollinating insects via our Polli:Nation website – see polli-nation.co.uk

10

START AGAIN

Finally, conclude the process by returning to stage one and asking yourself 'Where are we now?' Review what you've done, compare the end result with your original objectives and assess the impact that it's had across the whole school. Then start planning your next project!

Mary Jackson is the projects manager at Learning through Landscapes

 @ltl_news
 ltl.org.uk





EXTENDING A WELCOME TO WILDLIFE

Mary Jackson looks at how a number of settings across the country have put the information opposite into practice and become 'Polli:Nation schools'

SURVEYING

As part of Polli:Nation – a partnership project led by Learning through Landscapes funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund – more than 250 schools have used our simple process to develop their grounds for the benefit of pollinating insects and allowing pupils to study them more easily. It's a process that can be used by any school, whatever their priorities. The following case study shows just one possible priority.

The initial 'Where are they now?' stage took the form of a survey to find out what insects were already living in, or visiting, the schools' grounds. The schools also looked at what lessons and activities they were already taking outside.

PLANNING

The Teachers wanted to make their lessons come alive, as pupils learned about the importance of pollinators to our food production and the health of the planet. The project also served to show that the pupils themselves could do something to make a real difference.

For the 'How can we get there?' stage, the pupils investigated the needs of the pollinating insects and planned how their grounds could be changed to accommodate these. Their suggestions included adding areas of long grass or meadows, placing planters of growing beds on urban sites and constructing bug hotels and bee hives. Staff also examined the range of teaching resources available via the Polli:Nation website and identified activities they could use in lessons and clubs.

ACTIONING

These suggestions were then actioned during the 'Making the changes' stage, which saw pupils, staff, parents and other volunteers turn the plans into a reality. The schools were supported in these efforts by Learning through Landscapes facilitators, who led them through the process and provided them with technical advice and practical support.

Once the changes had been made, the schools returned to the 'Where are we now?' stage, re-surveyed their grounds to establish if there were more insects and there were more clubs and lessons outside. The schools were also issued with guides explaining how to effectively maintain their newly developed grounds – copies of which are freely available from the Polli:Nation website, alongside a range of survey, lesson and activity materials.

GET SET, GROW

Gardening supplies and equipment that can unlock your outdoor space's potential for planting and natural study

Play and Work Gloves for Children

Protect small hands against injuries from thorns, nettles and sharp stones with the aid of these children's gardening gloves. The latex foam coating helps to maintain grip, while the breathable nylon back will keep wearers' hands cool.

Available in blue or pink, they're priced from £2.75 a pair.

eurekadirect.co.uk/gardening



Insect Habitat Study Centre

Give the study of insects in your outdoor spaces an illuminating focal point with this study centre. Available from TTS, it measures 80cm high and features five different chambers, including a 'big bug' magnified area, and comes supplied with all the components needed for mounting to a wall, or indeed any other vertical surfaces your space may be able to provide. Priced from £161.94, including VAT.

tts-group.co.uk



Shaded Classic Planter

This versatile planter from Schoolscapes is designed with an open centred roof that will let in rain and sun for the benefit of your plants, while at the same time providing overhead shelter for any children using its integrated seating. It also includes a geotextile liner, intended to let water drain through while preventing the growth of weeds, and comes with a 10-year guarantee. schoolscapes.co.uk



For more information, visit polli-nation.co.uk

How should schools spend their Sport Premium funding?

With the Primary PE and Sport Premium having been given a boost last autumn, we look at how schools can spend it wisely...



ALI OLIVER
Chief Executive of the
Youth Sport Trust

There's so much potential for what schools can achieve with this extra funding – it presents the best chance we have in a generation to really transform PE and harness its potential to improve children's wellbeing.

This generation is facing a health crisis, as it experiences the lowest levels of physical, social and emotional wellbeing on record, so we must be ambitious. By 2020, we want to see every primary school teacher professionally developed to help teach physical literacy with the same skill and passion as language literacy and numeracy. For all the training a primary school teacher receives, they often get very little guidance on how to educate their pupils in and through movement, exercise and physical activity.

Children's first formative experiences of PE at primary school has an impact which can last a lifetime. Get it right, and we'll transform the life chances of a generation. Get it wrong, and too many children will continue to miss out on the benefits that physical activity brings to their health, happiness and wellbeing.

 @youthsporttrust
 youthsporttrust.org



BRYN LLEWELLYN
Former teacher and school leader,
founder of Tagtiv8

When the long-awaited announcement about PE and Sport Premium Funding was made last term, schools were suddenly inundated with emails from sport coaching companies outlining their services. Savvier teachers and school leadership teams confined said emails to their junk and spam folders.

Fortunately, a number of schools now seem to be following their lead, and are looking to providers who can offer them a win/win when it comes to their health and education provision – solutions based on actual research, rather than a case study and a few testimonials.

The ideas underpinning Tagtiv8 were formed when I was working as a teacher and school leader. Tagtiv8 isn't a PE scheme, but a programme designed to deliver learning in mathematics and English through physical activity. Yes, we do have some anecdotes and smiles, it's true – but they're now backed up by genuine research undertaken at Leeds Beckett University, which shows the impact Tagtiv8 can have – you can read more about it at tinyurl.com/tagtiv8-research.

 @Tagtiv8
 tagtiv8.com





STEVE BUSBY
Strategy Director,
The PE Passport

You might be tempted to join others in looking outside the box, but don't – at least not initially. Your chief priority should be on ensuring that the standard of teaching and learning at your school is good to outstanding.

Get the best advice you can from others, be it your LEA advisor or an independent consultant; it's also worth involving a named governor at this stage. Use the self-evaluation audit template developed by the Association for Physical Education and the Youth Sport Trust (tinyurl.com/pepp-impact) to ensure that your use of the Sport Premium is accurately reported and consistent with the priorities of your school development plan.

Involve all staff in the process and give pupils a voice too. If your staff want to adopt a particular scheme, make sure it can produce data that demonstrates impact. If there's demand among your pupils for a broader curriculum, get them to suggest areas that might excite and challenge them, and be sure to allocate plenty of time for supporting and monitoring your Sport Premium activities.

 @pe_passport
 primarypepassport.co.uk



ACTIVE TEACHING

Ian Pickles,
imoves

The doubling of the PE and Sport Premium funding

should be a welcome boost for all schools, but it comes with the expectation that schools will engage pupils in at least 30 minutes of structured activity each day (half the minimum 60 minutes of daily physical activity recommended for all 5 to 18-year-olds by the Chief Medical Officer).

Activity is now known to considerably boost cognitive learning and academic performance. Small blasts of regular activity throughout the day will contribute higher grades, improved behaviour and healthier, happier children. Primary-aged children on average sit for four to five hours per day, which we now know can be detrimental to their learning and wellbeing. Put simply, activity not only makes them fitter and healthier, it also improves their sense of well-being, behaviour and learning.

imoves uses a three-step process to help schools manage change and adopt a more active timetable, facilitated by their existing workforce.

STEP 1 - THE 'WHY DO IT?'

This is all about the current mindset of your school relating to physical activity. Step 1 calls for senior leadership buy-in to whole school improvement, so that the long-term benefits of activity across health, wellness and learning can be realised. Many schools are making huge strides in doing this already. Schemes to encourage active travel to and from school and Change4Life after-school



clubs are popular, but a number of schools are now starting to look at the curriculum itself, to see how activity can be incorporated into lessons and raise standards in parallel.

STEP 2 - TRY IT OUT

Pilot some ideas with a few teachers who possess the necessary tools and expertise. These could include daily 'activity blasts' and lessons that incorporate elements of active learning.

STEP 3 - ROLL-OUT

By gathering your success stories to build momentum with peers, major strides can

be made in improving your school's learning, wellness and health through just a few easy changes. It's with that in mind that imoves recently developed its 'Active Classroom' series, which comprises over a thousand lessons and activities that are easy to use and include both active breaks and active lessons across a range of subjects, including literacy, science, PHSE and mindfulness.

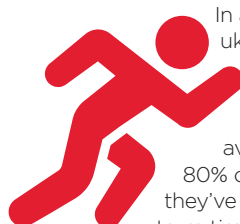
To find out more about how imoves works and to trial some of the lessons, visit imoves.com or follow @imovesactive

£5.1 billion

AMOUNT SPENT BY NHS ENGLAND ON ILLNESS RELATING TO EXCESS WEIGHT AND OBESITY IN 2014/15
Source: HM Government

16%

OF CHILDREN AGED 2 TO 15 ARE OBESE (defined as having a BMI of 30+)
Source: Health Survey for England, 2016



In a 2017 survey, the ukactive Research Institute found that British schoolchildren on average lose around 80% of the fitness they've gained during term time due to 'inactive summer holidays'. The study further found that pupils living in deprived areas had worse fitness levels to begin with, and saw a larger decline in their fitness levels over the holidays compared with those attending schools in less deprived areas. ukactive.com



Launched by the BBC in partnership with the Premier League, the Super Movers fitness initiative provides schools with video-based lesson resources aimed at encouraging KS1/2 teachers to adopt a physically active approach to learning in the classroom. Subjects covered by the videos include PSHE, languages, numeracy and literacy, with most lasting between two and a half and three minutes.
bbc.co.uk/supermovers



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IMPROVE YOUR ONLINE BEHAVIOURS

Web filters will keep trivial and harmful material away from pupils while in school – but improving online behaviours will require more, says Gary Spracklen...

Children and young people today are using the immense power of digital media to explore, connect, create, and learn in ways never before imagined. This power bestows young people with extraordinary opportunities, but also presents them with many potential pitfalls.

As school leaders, we have both a moral and legal responsibility to protect pupils from harmful content. The DfE's statutory 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' guidance (see tinyurl.com/kcsie) obliges schools and colleges in England to "Ensure appropriate filters and appropriate monitoring systems are in place. Children should not be able to access harmful or inappropriate material from the school or college's IT system." However, schools also need to, "Be careful that 'over blocking' does not lead to unreasonable restrictions as to what children can be taught with regards to online teaching and safeguarding."

THE TECHNICAL OPTIONS

Many will seek to address those requirements with on-premises hardware appliances through companies like SmoothWall (smoothwall.com), or via cloud-based solutions like Securly (securly.com). I myself like the flexibility offered by Securly, and love how I can use its dashboard to assign granular policies to my Google Apps Organizational Units. I have Securly report student (and staff) activity by their Google ID, with its Audit Trail feature allowing me to drill deep into an individual student's screen-time in a matter of seconds.

Protecting children involves much more than just using the right technological tools, though. As school leaders, we need to cultivate positive and responsible behaviours among pupils and staff alike. Children and young people



need to learn – and teachers need to teach – digital literacy and citizenship skills, so that schools can support their pupils to act responsibly and use the internet in better ways.

For me, the go-to place for supporting this work is SWGfL (swgfl.org.uk), which has produced schemes of learning for foundation stage through to key stage 5. These are based on the free Digital Citizenship curriculum developed by Common Sense Media (see commonsense.org), which empowers learners to think critically, behave safely, and participate responsibly in our digital world. These 21st-century skills are essential for children and young people if they're to harness the full potential of technology for learning.

GOING FURTHER

SWGfL's Digital Literacy & Citizenship schemes of learning offer a comprehensive, yet balanced approach in addressing safety and security concerns, including ethics and behaviour issues, as well as digital literacy skills. They include child-centred, media-rich lesson materials that emphasise skill building, critical thinking, ethical discussion, media creation, and decision making.

Schools can opt to use the curriculum as a complete package for a specific year group or key stage, or select individual lessons for use across the curriculum. There are five suggested lessons for each year group from foundation up to key stage 3, and 20 lessons at key stages 4 and 5, thus giving teachers and leaders flexibility in how they can be used. You can find out more about SWGfL's Digital Literacy Curriculum at digital-literacy.org.uk.

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



"IT CAN BE HARD TO RAISE ASPIRATIONS"

Shrewd use of edtech helped Stewartstown Primary School overcome some of the challenges confronting many rural settings...

Rural schools have been under the spotlight recently, with their distance from population centres, falling pupil numbers and shrinking budgets combining to make conditions increasingly unsustainable for many. Despite these challenges, however, one small school in Stewartstown, County Tyrone in Northern Ireland has managed to not just survive in its rural setting but thrive.

Despite having less than 50 pupils on roll, Stewartstown Primary School has gained international acclaim for its excellence in maths, with none of its pupils currently underachieving in the subject following a drive to raise standards. According to the school's principal, Kendra Bolton, the key to Stewartstown's success has been to place technology at the heart of learning, while using its rural surroundings to its advantage.

"Our main challenges at Stewartstown Primary School result from budgetary constraints," she says. "Cuts aren't an issue for rural primaries alone, but we experience a different range of financial pressures compared to urban schools. Transport, for example, is a huge cost and our low pupil roll directly impacts our funding. Despite having fewer pupils, many of our overheads are the same as those in medium sized schools."

She continues, "A lack of diversity is another potential challenge. Many of our pupils' families have always lived locally, meaning there's a lack of different experiences amongst the children. It can therefore be harder to get them to understand the lives of those elsewhere and raise aspirations."

THE SOLUTION

Confronted by these multiple challenges, the school found a solution. "Technology allows every child to access the curriculum in a supportive way through different media, allowing learning to be truly personalised," Bolton says. "It's an instant motivator, keeping children engaged whilst furthering their knowledge of key concepts. We're fortunate at Stewartstown to have a full class set of iPads and laptops; when shared between only three classes, every child still has access to a good range of resources."

"Through the online maths resource Mathletics we've been able to engage the pupils in activities like the November Numeracy Challenge, which we've entered the past two years. Last year we were the worldwide winners and this year placed second worldwide, topping the UK leader boards. Quite a remarkable achievement for such a small school!"

"As pupils compete in the Live Mathletics section of the resource against other pupils in real time, they're able to see where their fellow competitors are located, giving a real sense of excitement to maths and helping them to gain an understanding of other children around the globe learning the same way they are. Pupils can also compete against their own classmates in live, head-on challenges. It can be competitive at times, but very stimulating for the pupils!"

 stewartstownps.org

Devise an effective whole school IT strategy

Terry Freedman explains how to get everyone on the same digital page

An IT strategy is meant to underpin the day-to-day use and future planning of the school's IT. As such, it's a management tool rather than a technical one. When putting together yours, it's important to consider three key questions...

Does it contain an overarching vision statement?

This might resemble something along the lines of: "All pupils are confident and competent in using technology, and safe from technology-related harm. Teachers' workload is reduced through the efficient use of technology, and our use of technology conforms to legal requirements."

Needless to say, that's not intended to be a model vision statement – only your school can create the best one for you.

Is it future-proof?

The vision statement above is, however, very broad, and thus effectively future-proof. Ideally, your whole school IT strategy won't need revising for three to five years, so try and avoid being too specific about the technology itself. If you think about it, that vision statement would be as relevant in a school that's using virtual assistants as one still using dial-up modems. Well, almost...

Is every aspect of the school's IT covered?

Unpick that vision statement and you'll see that it relates to every aspect of the school's technology. The part about reducing teacher workload, for example, could cover marking, registration, even how school dinners are paid for. It also extends to giving parents remote access to their children's work – if they can log in at any time to see teachers' comments, it can save teachers time otherwise spent on the phone.

Guiding principles

The most up-to-date technology won't be much use if it keeps breaking down, or nobody knows how to use it. Straight away, there's a principle you should adhere to, which is that there needs to be first class technical support in place and a good CPD programme.

Another guiding principle covers the act of purchasing. If, for example, you're an Apple school, and a member of staff with purchasing powers wishes to buy a set of Windows laptops, they should be asked to justify that in terms of the school's IT vision statement. Buying Windows laptops in that instance could potentially reduce people's competence, and thus confidence, while increasing teacher workload through having to deal with two different operating systems.

Is it effective?

An effective IT strategy will need to tick a number of different boxes. It has to be relevant to all staff and pupils

in the course of their daily routines, and all IT and support systems (e.g. technical staff and CPD) will need to be fit for purpose.

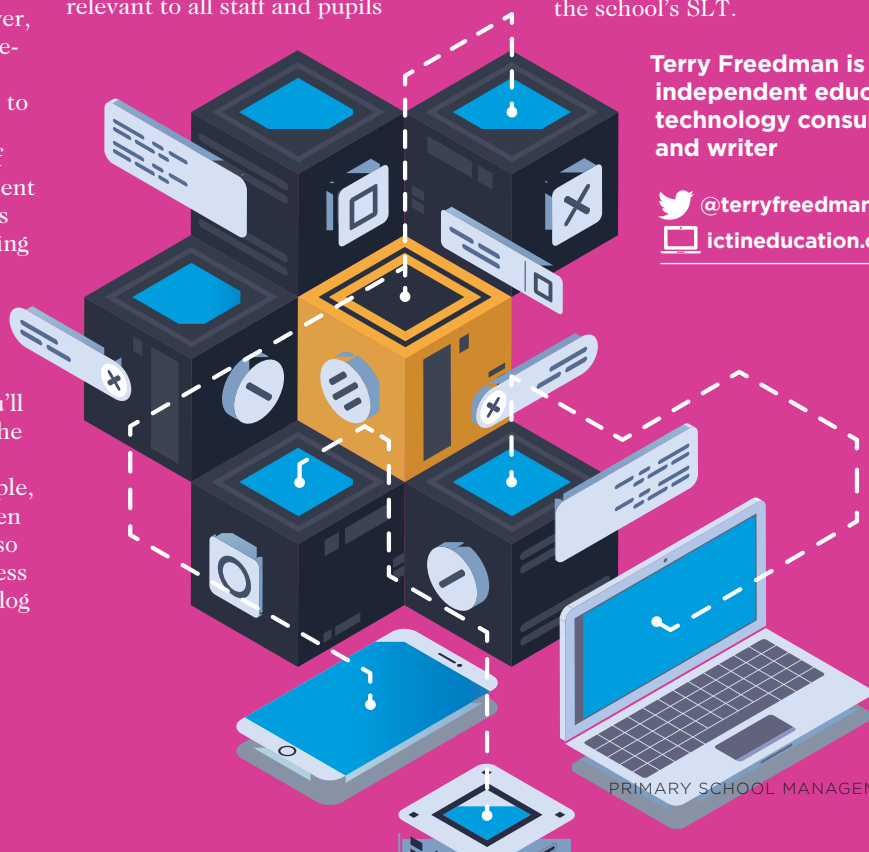
Purchases will need to be carried out in a planned way. Budgets ought to be allocated in such a way that hardware can be replaced or added to on a rolling basis, rather than in a panic when lots of things start breaking down at once.

Your IT strategy should enable the school to achieve its overall aims, while ensuring that 'the IT' itself remains virtually invisible. Nobody wonders whether the lights will come on when they flick the switch; why should they have to be wary about whether the school's IT will work? Your IT strategy should see to it that the school's IT is regularly evaluated and potentially changed according to an objective process that involves multiple members of staff, not just the personal preferences of one person.

Above all, your IT strategy should be seen as the responsibility of the school's SLT.

Terry Freedman is an independent education technology consultant and writer

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ARE YOUR PUPILS SAFE FROM ONLINE HARMS?

As children's online lives become ever more complex, schools, parents and platform holders all have a role to play in managing the potential risks, says Ann Marie Christian...

Schools' current online safeguarding obligations, as set out in the DfE's Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance (see tinyurl.com/dfe-kcsie), requires them to uphold a duty of care towards their pupils. It includes, for example, the requirement for staff to attend annual child protection training, so that they can spot the signs that young people may be at risk of, or subject to harm by another person child or adult.

Since the latest update to the KCSiE documents in 2018, those guidelines now also contain guidance for schools on teaching online safety and training teachers in how to spot signs of a child who is at risk of abuse or suffering online abuse. This reflects a realisation on the part of government that safeguarding for schools extends beyond what they're able to address face-to-face and into the virtual world.

SAFEGUARDING INCONSISTENCIES

The KCSiE guidance addresses online safety in Annex C, which describes online safety risks as falling into three categories:

- **CONTENT** – exposure to harmful or inappropriate material
- **CONTACT** – risks arising from exposure with other online users, such as adults posing as children, as well as influences such as commercial advertising
- **CONDUCT** – issues arising from online behaviour that causes harm, such as the sending of explicit messages and online bullying

In practice, the above risks will often stem from an online incident that's happened outside of school, and intersect with schools' traditional duty of care in complex ways. However, there can be inconsistencies depending on how forthcoming parents are with information that might shed light on the incident.

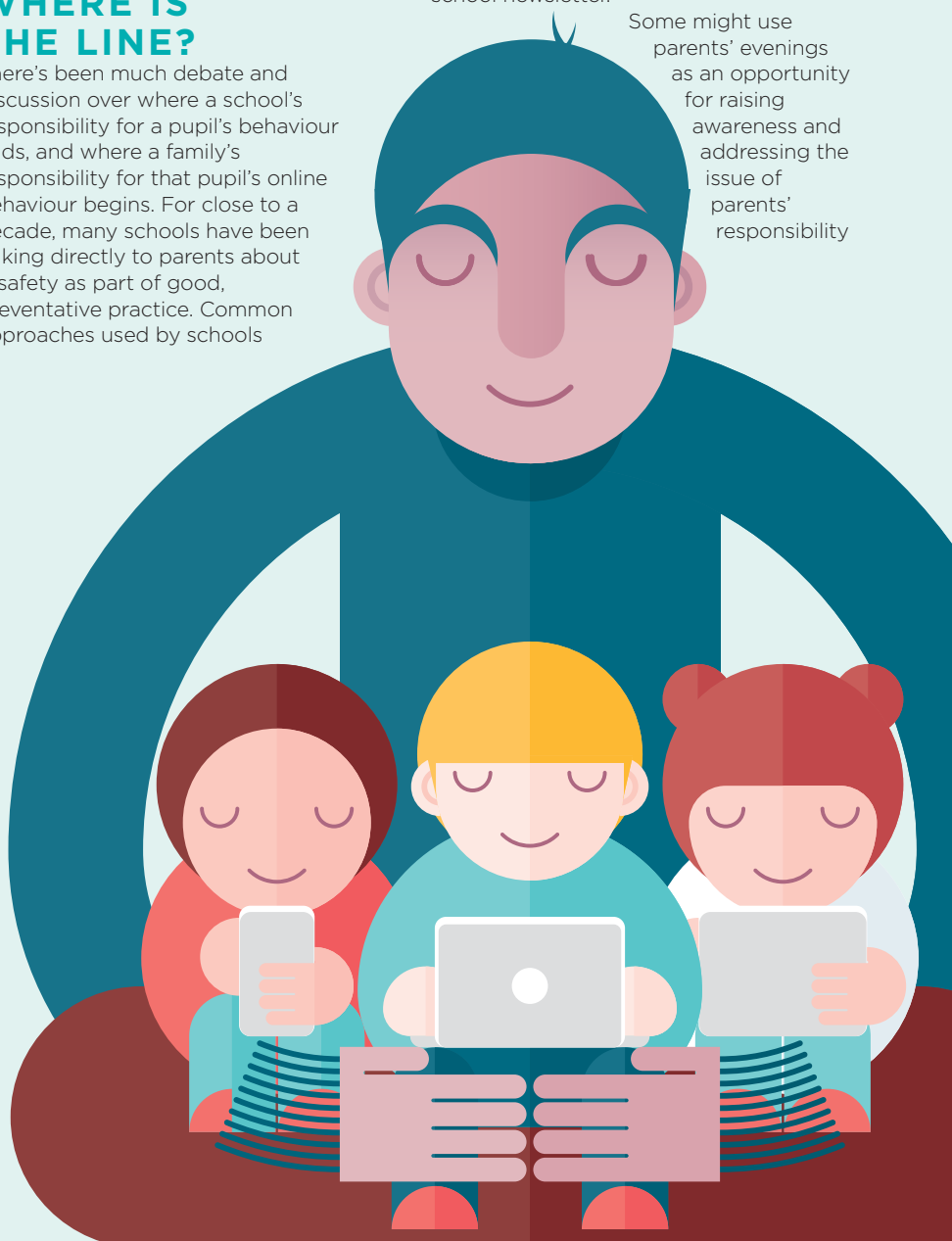
Some parents will be more helpful than others, while some may not even be aware that anything's happened at all, because of how removed they are from their children's lives online.

WHERE IS THE LINE?

There's been much debate and discussion over where a school's responsibility for a pupil's behaviour ends, and where a family's responsibility for that pupil's online behaviour begins. For close to a decade, many schools have been talking directly to parents about e-safety as part of good, preventative practice. Common approaches used by schools

include presenting parents with online safeguarding awareness and resources from well known websites (such as childnet.com), inviting parents in for online safety classes and sending out links concerning online safety via the school newsletter.

Some might use parents' evenings as an opportunity for raising awareness and addressing the issue of parents' responsibility



for their children's online activities and how seriously it should be taken. Because it is serious.

The average parent will believe that their child is sensible enough to know how to navigate the internet. However, as a social work manager I've had to personally escalate cases where parents have failed to recognise that their child is being sexually exploited online.

PRODUCTIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Legally, if a serious online incident involves the use of devices outside the school or at home, it's a police matter. Where schools have a part to play is with respect to partnership working and their duty to co-operate with multi-agency approaches to promoting the wellbeing and safeguarding of children (see tinyurl.com/agency-safeguarding) – that is, making parents more aware of their child's online footprint, helping them better understand the dangers that can arise from it and policing those risks with the child.

A good example is managing screen time and discouraging the presence of smartphones in children's bedrooms, especially before bedtime and during the night. This can be done in a healthy way if families and schools work together – indeed, some schools have been amazing at making the case for strict supervision of devices at home, and emphasising how this is in the best interests of their children's education and welfare. When done appropriately, the children are able to recognise this too and soon get used to healthier routines that leave them feeling less tired in school the following day and more focused in their work.

Now, more than ever, schools and parents alike have to distinguish between genuinely safe, child-friendly apps – licensed apps linked to popular TV shows and cartoon characters, for instance – with others that might be indirectly putting children at risk of harm.

WHO'S WATCHING?

The app Musical.ly, now known as TikTok, is one such example. It essentially lets users livestream video of themselves singing, dancing to pop music and engaging in other activities. Picture filters can be applied to the livestream, making the whole thing feel silly and fun.

“Some parents simply aren't aware of how harmful the online spaces where their children spend their time can be”

Children love using it – they're aware that people are watching what they're doing and registering 'likes' or emoji's on their performance, which gives them a self-esteem boost and can make them feel more grown up.

However, the issue is that these children think they're performing for other children, when in fact there are a significant number of adult viewers on the platform who then send inappropriate, often sexually suggestive emojis to those child users. Channel 4 News highlighted the dangers of TikTok in its earlier Musical.ly incarnation in 2017 (see tinyurl.com/c4-musically). The reporter Fatima Manji followed five children between the ages of 8 and 12 who were using the app, and within an hour they were being sent inappropriate suggestions and images of a sexual nature. Some were even offered payments to move their bodies in particular ways.

Some parents simply aren't aware of how harmful the online spaces where their children spend their time can be. Because schools need to be fully up-to-date and compliant with their statutory safeguarding duties, they're in an ideal position to share what they know with parents and help raise awareness.

DIGITAL LEADERS

We need to encourage the proactive and preventative work that's already taking place, and ensure that more schools are working effectively with parents, instead of waiting until things go wrong and calling for crisis interventions.

Take the role of 'IT lead' in schools – how involved they are in the school's online curriculum can vary hugely. Are they simply responsible for configuring systems and ensuring everything works? Or is it a role performed by a member of teaching staff, and therefore one that involves overseeing aspects of the curriculum?

In schools that handle this well, the IT lead will encourage pupils to take ownership of parts of the school website and post blogs about work that they've

done. In some schools, it might not be made clear who the IT lead even is.

Another approach some schools are taking is to appoint 'digital leaders' – pupils who receive training to become 'go to' peers, giving advice and guidance to other children. It's a child-centred approach that utilises the knowledge children have of their peers while providing them with support from teachers.

DUTY OF CARE

In April this year the government unveiled its new online harms white paper (see tinyurl.com/ho-oh-19), which argues for online platforms to be held to account for the duty of care they have towards their users.

I welcome its acknowledgement that parents must be more mindful as to the seriousness of online harms, and its calls for shared ownership of the issue – that families and platform operators can both play active roles in tackling online harms, rather than only schools.

That will improve the present situation, but it certainly won't 'fix' everything. There continue to be issues with apps like TikTok, whose international owners seem to respond reluctantly, if at all, to problems that arise on their platforms. This white paper isn't going to stop that, but it's a step in the right direction.

I'd also query how the measures it puts forward are going to be managed. It mentions the establishment of an 'independent regulator' to ensure online companies are complying with their duty of care – hopefully that body can complement what schools are already doing, while also supporting parents in ensuring children that children's experience of life online can be positive, but above all, safe.



Ann Marie Christian is an international safeguarding and child protection consultant, trainer and author

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ARE YOU HARNESSING YOUR PARENTS' SKILLS?



Parents are an untapped resource that can give your school an organisational and promotional edge, says Parentkind's Sarah West...

In the latest Annual Parent Survey carried out by Parentkind in 2018, 88% of parents reported wanting to play an active role in their child's education, while 85% said they were supportive of their child's school.

Given such demonstrable willingness to participate, schools should be working hard to harness this enthusiasm and potential for parental involvement – so here are some ways of getting started...

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

Our research shows that the two main reasons parents don't get more involved in their school is because they're unsure what skills they have to offer, and that they've never been asked! Without knowing it, you might have an IT Technician in waiting who could help set up your new computer suite, or a parent with excellent sewing skills who could help make the costumes for your next school play.

Try sending out questionnaires to identify what your pupils' parents do professionally, along with their interests and hobbies, so that you can see what untapped areas of expertise might be lurking in your playground. If you don't ask parents to help, they might not know you need them!

Be explicit, though, about the skills you're after, and send out emails,

add notices to your newsletters and post messages on social media asking for assistance with specific projects. Parents want to support you, so show them how they can.

MANAGE EXPECTATIONS

Many parents might not have the time to regularly volunteer or join an organised parent group. Be clear about the scale of a project and the time that's needed from them, so that they don't feel overwhelmed. Remember that some might not be able to volunteer their own time, but may work for a business, or even own one, that could support you – for example, through match giving, volunteering hours, or providing resources such as stationery.

PROMOTE THEIR EFFORTS

Don't forget to shout about what your parents have done to help you. Take pictures of parents volunteering and publicly thank them in your newsletter. Young kids often love to see their parents around school, so ask them to come in and talk to the pupils about any projects they've been involved in. You could also invite the local press to take photos or write up a story about a specific project.

RECRUIT AND MAINTAIN

Attracting parental support is one thing, but maintaining it is quite another. Ensure that you're regularly thinking of new and innovative ways in which your parents could help out – even if that's just, for example, volunteering for a few hours to help tidy and sort the school library. Don't forget that each school year will bring with it a new intake of parents who may be eager to help. Make a point of tapping their potential expertise from the start, sending out questionnaires and getting to know them at welcome events. After all, you'll never know how they might be able to help your school until you ask...

Sarah West is marketing and communications manager at Parentkind – the leading Parent Teacher Association (PTA) membership organisation which provides training and support to teachers, governors and parents for building successful home-school relationships

 @Parentkind
 parentkind.org.uk



April's March of the Four-Year-Olds – Kay (in red) and Isla can be seen at the front

“THEY’RE TURNING CHILDREN INTO DATA”

Kay Tart explains why she and her daughter Isla joined last month's 'March of the 4-year-olds' on Downing Street

On April 25th this year, my daughter Isla and I gathered with a group of around 250 parents and Reception-age children in Parliament Square, in protest against the government's plans to roll out standardised baseline assessments for 4- and 5-year-olds. We were there as part of an action organised by the campaign group More Than a Score, alongside the MPs Jack Dromy and Peter Kyle.

There was singing, pictures were drawn on the ground in chalk and flags were waved. We then marched down to Downing Street, where Isla and I, along with two other parents and their children handed in a petition to Downing Street with over 65,000 signatures objecting to introduction of baseline assessment. Quite a few bystanders came up to ask what the protest was about, and reacted with horror when we told them why we were there.

Isla is the fourth of my five children, and currently in nursery at a state maintained primary school. I've seen three children through the school system, without any undergoing formal assessment upon entry to reception, and I don't believe that formal testing for children within the first six weeks of them entering full-time school is a good idea. That first term of reception should be about children finding their feet, settling down, developing their confidence, getting to know their classmates and becoming comfortable with their new teachers and surrounding environment.

I'm also concerned that the results gathered by baseline testing will be effectively locked away for seven years,

and then held up against Year 6 SATs results. Lines will be drawn and schools will be judged based on the development of a cohort starting seven years previously – which by that stage may include a substantial proportion of children who didn't even start at the relevant school.

It's an example of how the system is moving more in the direction of 'stick' than 'carrot.' Look at how much standardised testing children are now expected to do – officials are trying to turn children into data that they can use to hold schools to account, when there are far more important outcomes for children in primary settings. Their management of social situations, for example – their confidence levels, creativity, problem-solving skills, physical development.

I agree that there's a need to track how each pupil has progressed, but that can be done sensitively via a series of informal assessments. Children are individuals – the systems we've had of formative and summative assessment recognise that.

I'd like to see headteachers stand up and say they're not taking part in the baseline pilot planned for September this year. I want to see the idea scrapped – again – since this is the third time that it's been floated. Above all, I want to see the DfE listening to school leaders, teachers and education professionals. They're the people who know our children best, and those best-placed to assess them.

Kay Tart is a PTA co-chair and a North Hertfordshire District Councillor, representing Hitchin Walsworth

Be a good neighbour

No school wants to deal with a hostile community – here, Philip Burton offers some suggestions for keeping yours on side...

Whether your school's in a rural or urban setting, maintaining good relations with your neighbours is key to the success and image of your school brand. In every walk of life, we'll all encounter times when our local community does something that affects us, or when we want to do something that will affect it. If we want to navigate these kinds of challenges successfully, then we need to meet them head on – so let's look at some of the things we can do, as schools, to address them.

I believe the single biggest factor that will help you is to be an active, positive force within your neighbourhood. Make sure your school takes part in wider community events. Hallbrook Primary School regularly takes part in the annual local carnival procession, and has done for many years. We put on huge displays which the community love to see – especially the children, who get to participate and have fun in a positive environment.

Our secondary school opens its facilities up to the community in order to host the carnival, which draws people to the schools and therefore provides

opportunities for us to market ourselves further. That's one example of what you can do, but we do many other things too, such as organising the local Santa Dash and Dawdle Run. Our choir sings at the local care home, and we open up the school for use by local groups, such as the Sea Cadets. These are all ways in which you can really project the positive image of your school out there to the wider public.

Within our school community, social events are a great way of building relationships with parents. Your PTA can be hugely helpful here – a close working relationship with your key school gate mums and dads can go a long way.


Many schools organise annual 'camp overs', but do let your neighbours know about these. We recently took our school councillors around to meet the school's neighbours, so that they could talk to them about what we were planning and also invite them to attend if they wanted. It was a simple gesture, but gratefully received and the event turned out to be a huge success.

Where there are challenges within your school, listening to the community and being open to what they tell you is

vital. Why not hold an open forum or a surgery, where parents and community representatives can come and discuss the issues they're experiencing? The school can then explain what they've been doing to resolve said issues and further develop its partnership with the community.

Good communication is needed in order for your community to know what's happening and what you're doing. Are you using social media to promote your school and the positive impact it's having? Are you writing for your local parish magazine, perhaps in a monthly 'school slot'? Is there a member of your team at the school gates each morning, ready to speak with parents? If you want to support your school, improve its image and boost its brand, make sure you communicate with everyone in a timely fashion.

Philip Burton is business manager at Hallbrook Primary School in Broughton Astley, Leicestershire

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





TURN THOSE FOLLOWERS INTO PUPILS



Ian Clifford explains how social media advertising can be used to boost your school roll

Many schools find using social media a challenge. There will often be access restrictions when on school premises, and numerous reasons for being circumspect as to what gets posted, which can result in heads and business managers undervaluing just how effective social media can be.

The ubiquity of social media should allow every school to spread good news and engage local parents, thereby providing them with an affordable and easy to master marketing platform. Unfortunately, however, mistrust of Facebook, Instagram and other social media platforms leads many schools to take a bare-bones approach, limiting their posts to the sharing of uninspiring images and news pieces and little more. This is barely scratching the surface of what can be achieved.

COMFORT ZONE

As a digital marketing agency, we're firm proponents of using organic social media and paid advertising on the major platforms in order to effectively market a school, whether that be to prospective and existing parents or to potential future staff.

"The most compelling sources of information for parents were school tours, local word-of-mouth and the school website"

With the majority of our client schools, we encourage the leadership team to step a little outside their comfort zone and post more content, more often. The simple truth is that virtually everyone the school would like to reach is using Facebook and Instagram; simply by being bold enough to take part, your school will get noticed.

However, the greatest results can be achieved when a school is sufficiently far-sighted to commit some of its budget to running advertising both on social media and through Google to deliver a specific goal.

The way in which one school we worked with used this approach to fix their falling pupil roll is a perfect example of the power of social media advertising – both its ability to reach people where they're already looking, and the way its incredibly detailed targeting allows you to reach precisely who you want, when you want.

REACHING OUT

The school in question is St. Andrew's CE Primary School in Lambeth. We were already working with the partnership running this school and one other in the borough, having previously built both schools' websites.

St Andrews has a single form entry, and had been undersubscribed in reception by eight and four places respectively in the last two years. The head was concerned that unless she took action, this would be an ongoing issue that would recur every year with an incrementally negative effect on her per pupil funding.

The head felt that the school needed to reach all parents within a reasonable area of the school, who had children about to enter Reception, and put forward some compelling positive information to encourage more parents to apply for places.

This is something that's remarkably easy to do with social media advertising, if you understand how it works and what it can do.

COMPELLING INFORMATION

We devised a marketing campaign that would assess exactly what parents were looking for when choosing a school place for their child, and how they obtained the information on which to base their decision. The campaign would then aim put the answers they were looking for right in front of them in their social media feeds and among their Google search results.

To do this, we researched the available data – focusing on one particular Cambridge University study – and talked to existing parents to find out why they had chosen St Andrews in previous years. We then created and updated content on the school's website to focus on the factors that parents had highlighted.

These included the general local reputation of the school and the quality of its teaching, but also wider concerns such as extended childcare. Critically, we discovered that the most compelling sources of information for parents were school tours, local word-of-mouth and the information shown on a school's website.

With this information in hand, informative content and additional pages were added to the school website which sought to directly address the known concerns of prospective parents, while also providing them with all the information they'd need to apply for a



school place, via a series of clearly presented and easy to follow 'how to' posts.

Our core strategy, though, was to focus intently on getting prospective parents to take a school tour. New webpages were created that enabled parents to book a date that suited them, and which we could track from the planned advertising. We also made sure that all of our updated and new content throughout the school website clearly linked back to the school tour page so that parents couldn't miss it, no matter how they came to the site.

SPECIFIC TARGETING

Having completed this necessary groundwork on the school website, we then set up advertising campaigns via Facebook, Instagram and Google AdWords. The Google AdWords campaign simply targeted people making relevant searches, such as 'primary school Lambeth'.

On Facebook and Instagram we ran numerous advert types using most of the available options and listed the available school tour dates as Facebook events. The adverts used to promote the school

tours and the new information pages comprised long copy text ads, image ads (which employed a whole range of different photos) and video ads – the latter of which both repurposed existing promotional video belonging to the school and new, simple video footage we shot of the head using just an iPhone.

What made these ads so effective is that the Facebook ads platform allows you to target a very specific set of people. In this case, we were able to target the parents of 3 to 5-year-olds who lived within one or two miles of the school's location – the exact target demographic the head needed to reach. Similarly, the Google AdWords campaigns only targeted people within a 1- or 2-mile radius of the school who were making relevant Google search queries.

TANGIBLE RESULTS

Another enormously powerful aspect of social media advertising is that you're able to track exactly which adverts generate traffic and the conversion event for which you're optimising – in this instance, a school tour booking. This allows you to see exactly what's working and what isn't in your campaign, enabling

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to focus on the positive and see significant results even with just a small advertising budget.

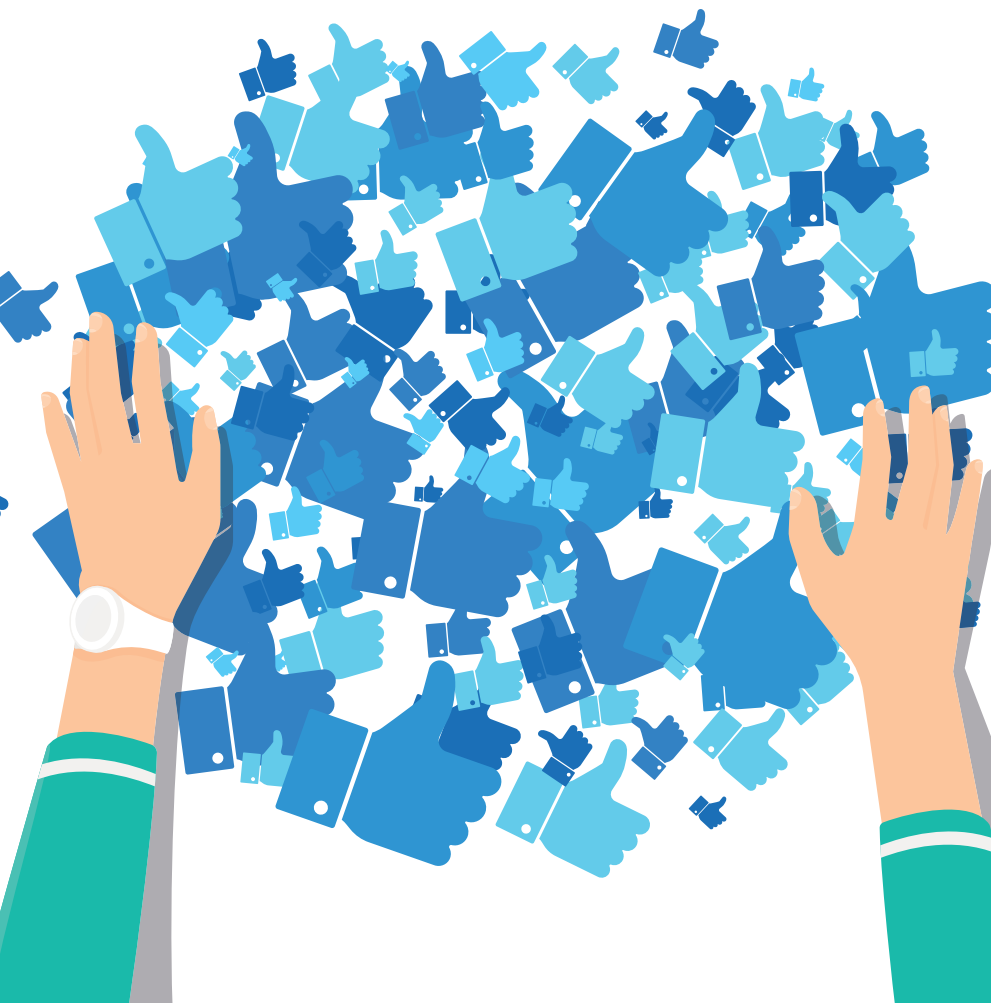
The total cost of the advertising spend for the campaign was £1,059.28 across Facebook, Instagram and Google. The end result was an 83% increase in applications to St Andrews this past January, the upshot of which has been that its Reception class is now oversubscribed.

The school embraced the power of social media advertising to deliver a specific result, which is what it was uniquely designed to do. Every school can expect similar results when running promotional campaigns with a similar objective, or indeed campaigns tailored to different goals entirely.



Ian Clifford, Illicit Digital, is a digital marketing expert working with schools and education authorities; an expanded version of this case study can be found at tinyurl.com/id-school-roll

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



WHAT HEADS REALLY THINK ABOUT HIGH-STAKES TESTING

93%

of heads and primary school leaders believe the government should review the current system of standardised assessment

87%

believe the government doesn't listen to the views of headteachers when deciding education policy

98%

agree that teachers are placed under unnecessary pressure because of SATs

96%

have concerns about the effects of the tests on the well-being of pupils

100%

have discussed concerns about SATs with their colleagues

93%

say they have been contacted by parents raising concerns about their children in the run-up to KS2 SATs

93%

think SATs lead to a narrowing of the curriculum and that English and maths are prioritised to the detriment of other subjects

93%

agree that SATs don't provide a fair representation of a pupil's capabilities

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5 THINGS LEARNED AT THE Maths – No Problem! CONFERENCE

Last month saw the resources provider Maths – No Problem! hold its 5th annual conference. Here are Callum Fauser's key takeaways....

1. MATHS IS A LANGUAGE

In a keynote titled 'Teaching the Shakespeare of Mathematics', noted Oxford professor and mathematics populariser Marcus du Sautoy revealed how it was his discovery that maths was a language that initially inspired his love for the subject. "What do we do with language?" he asked. "We tell stories." From there, he proceeded to show how co-ordinate geometry can enable students to describe geometrical shapes that can't be seen, and how the magic of prime numbers helped the likes of Olivier Messiaen produce musical works of art. By contrast, du Sautoy noted, the teaching of maths is broadly utilitarian. That's useful, but we don't teach utilitarian English. Instead, we inspire children with the big, complex stories of Shakespeare and others. Why shouldn't maths teachers share some remarkable stories of their own?

2. DYSCALCULIA EXERTS A LONG-TERM NEGATIVE IMPACT

The focus of a presentation given by Brian Butterworth of UCL's Institute of Cognitive Neuroscience was a group for whom maths very much was a problem – people with dyscalculia. Butterworth highlighted how the condition – a congenital neurological disorder affecting 4% to 7% of children that causes them to struggle with foundational arithmetic – can reduce the probability of a child achieving five or more A* to C GCSE grades by 7 to 20 percentage points, and reduce lifetime earnings by as much as £114,000. For developmental dyslexia, which affects 4% to 8% of children, the figures are 3 to 12 percentage points and £81,000 respectively.

3. SINGAPORE'S CRITERIA FOR MATHS SUCCESS IS DIFFERENT TO THAT OF ITS INTERNATIONAL ADMIRERS

According to MNP technical consultant and international speaker on Singapore Maths teaching, Dr Yeap Ban Har, the island city-state is well aware of how impressed other countries are by its consistently high PISA scores, but less impressed by those scores itself. To hear Ban Har tell it, Singapore's maths practitioners are 'obsessed' with helping the lowest performing 10% of their school starters, and determined to narrow the gap between them and their high performing peers. To that end, big changes are apparently on the way in Singapore with the imminent arrival of a new maths curriculum focused on giving pupils more opportunities for deep learning and imparting big mathematical ideas.

4. MATHS EDUCATION SHOULD BE LESS ABOUT THE DESTINATION AND MORE ABOUT THE JOURNEY

Maths education consultant Adam Gifford drew comparisons between how the subject was taught circa 2006, around the time he moved to the UK from New Zealand, and the prevailing trends of today. Back then, he told the audience, it was believed the answer to improving pupils' maths ability lay in success criteria; now, there's recognition of the need to engage pupils' 'left brains'. The challenge is for teachers to get pupils curious in the journey towards outcomes, rather than just the outcomes themselves. And just as children need to interrogate the process by which they come to a solution, educators need to ensure they're not racing towards outcomes without being curious or innovating along the way.



Dr Yeap Ban Har

5. DEVISE AN ETHOS, NOT A POSTER

That was advice of Philip McNaboe, assistant headteacher at Orrell Lamberhead Green Academy in Wigan, when discussing 'How to Encourage Deep Mathematical Thinking in ALL pupils'. Having adopted the MNP programme in 2015, the school's approach to doing that began with changing the mindset of teachers to recognise that children with less mathematical knowledge can still accelerate, given sufficiently high level teaching and support, and to acknowledge that the messages children receive concerning their potential can hamper their learning. Teachers were also encouraged to celebrate conceptual mistakes made by children in the classroom in order to create a positive atmosphere, and to see that getting children to explain their work – even when their answers are correct – is of key importance.


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Callum Fauser, PSM Editor

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DRIVER REQUIREMENTS

It could be said that as they stand, rules around driving licences discriminate against the young. Many primary schools across the country are having real difficulty finding appropriately aged staff to drive the school minibus without them first having to undergo an expensive and time-consuming D1 driving test.

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Chris Lavender from Marshall handing over the keys

livery and a comprehensive inspection and maintenance pack.

The question of which path to go down is one that needs careful consideration. There are plenty of companies out there that can offer valuable guidance, and others that will be less helpful. Ultimately, the decision has to be made around the individual requirements of your school.

Many minibus suppliers will have a vested interest in specific product types, which can influence the advice they offer. At Marshall Minibus we are entirely impartial, and happy to supply the right type of vehicle for you, whether that's a more traditional manufacturer-built offering or a purpose-built lightweight vehicle.

WHO SHOULD YOU TURN TO?

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1926

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1991

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“SCHOOLS MUST TEACH EQUALITY”

In the face of protests against schools’ teaching of diversity, we can’t afford to let important messages around equality be diluted, says Laura Clark

No-one can have failed to notice the recent media frenzy around the teaching of LGBT inclusive education in primary schools. Parents and activists protesting outside school gates; claims that schools have disregarded parental rights and religious beliefs; threats to withdraw children unless equality lessons are suspended; calls from schools for government intervention; and pleas for clarification on the new regulations around relationships education.

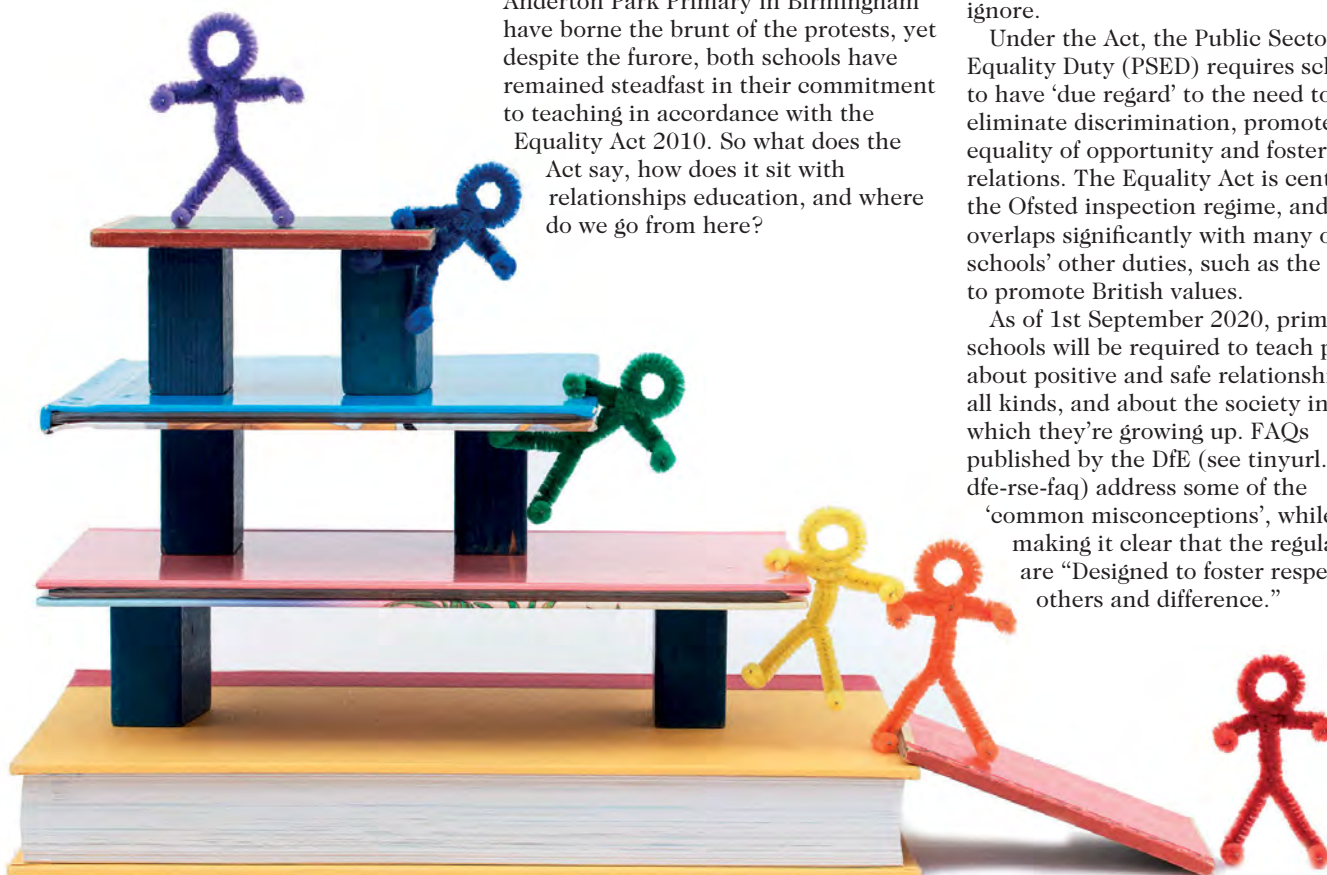
Parkfield Community School and Anderton Park Primary in Birmingham have borne the brunt of the protests, yet despite the furore, both schools have remained steadfast in their commitment to teaching in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. So what does the Act say, how does it sit with relationships education, and where do we go from here?

NO CHERRY-PICKING

The Equality Act, on the statute books for almost a decade, provides protection from discrimination to people with ‘protected characteristics’, which include race, sex, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment sexual orientation. There’s no hierarchy – all protected characteristics are equal – and neither is there any provision allowing schools or parents to ‘cherry pick’ which protected characteristics schools should educate about and which to ignore.

Under the Act, the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requires schools to have ‘due regard’ to the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and foster good relations. The Equality Act is central to the Ofsted inspection regime, and overlaps significantly with many of schools’ other duties, such as the duty to promote British values.

As of 1st September 2020, primary schools will be required to teach pupils about positive and safe relationships of all kinds, and about the society in which they’re growing up. FAQs published by the DfE (see tinyurl.com/dfe-rse-faq) address some of the ‘common misconceptions’, while making it clear that the regulations are “Designed to foster respect for others and difference.”



ALIVE TO THE DANGERS



In April, Damian Hinds called for an end to the protests and tried to clarify the expectations placed on primary schools: "What is taught, and how, is ultimately a decision for the school," he said, stressing that although schools must consult with parents about relationships education, "Consultation doesn't provide a parental veto on curriculum content."

He went on to talk of primary schools being "Enabled and encouraged to cover LGBT content, if they consider it age-appropriate to do so" – sentiments which were welcome, but which many felt didn't go far enough. That much was evident when the NEU voted at its annual conference to campaign on making LGBT education compulsory, rather than allowing primary schools flexibility on the matter.

Of course, parents must be consulted, given time to ask questions and feel able share their concerns. Respect must be shown for religious beliefs, but the final say remains with schools. Under the regulations, schools are entitled to raise awareness and understanding of LGBT relationships – indeed, many already do – but they must also ensure they continue to teach about equality and diversity in accordance with their public sector equality duty under the Equality Act.

Given recent rises in global terrorism, far-right ideologies and hate crime, children should learn to celebrate difference, and understand that there are many types of families in this world. Messages around equality mustn't be diluted.

Laura Clark is senior HR manager at One Education, working with a large number of schools and academies, and is a qualified solicitor, specialising in employment law

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TRACK YOUR STAFF ABSENCE

Do your staff absence rates warrant cause for concern? Here's how to track them over time and the trends to be wary of...

How can you expect to improve your pupil attendance when your staff absence rates are alarmingly high?

I firmly believe that many schools often focus so heavily on pupil absence rates that staff absence ends up slipping through the net. According to the most recent statistics from the DfE circa 2017, education staff took 2.1 million sickness days. Although down compared to some previous years, the number of staff taking sickness days was at its highest point that year, up by 5,000 on 2016.

It's difficult to infer whether this is statistically significant or not, but what can't be denied is that there's been a marked increase in absences at a time when questions around staff workload are at the forefront of policymakers' minds.

So how do we unpack whether your own staff absence rates warrant cause for concern? There are some key trends to watch for at school level, albeit with a few significant prerequisites. To accurately monitor any trends, you need to first ensure that your staff absence is being effectively recorded, and that the mechanisms for doing so are fully aligned with your absence policy. Where appropriate, there needs to be significant buy-in from senior leaders and occupational health services.

This will involve ensuring that pre-determined 'absence reason' categories are clearly defined and captured across the key start and end dates of absence, along with appropriate notes. Most MISs will be fully capable of capturing this data as part of their basic feature set.

Assuming your data is being recorded

accurately, you can then begin to understand both the frequency of your staff absence and the amount of time lost to it (those lost days or hours being expressed as a percentage of the total possible days or hours the staff could have worked). These trends can be highly illuminating – one example being the way in which they allow you to analyse any correlations between teacher absence and class performance, enabling you to understand what (if any) impact it's having on pupil learning.

Capturing absence data like this further enables you to see whether there might be patterns at particular times of the year or during certain weeks, such as frequent 'Friday and Monday' absences resulting in extended weekends. I'd also strongly recommend focusing on cumulative days of absence within a given period – this can typically trigger action around checking in on staff wellbeing, and will be a common feature in most school absence policies, making the process of identifying and understanding it that much more efficient.

Observing the above suggestions should enable leaders to then ensure that appropriate support from the school is communicated clearly and efficiently upon a staff member's return to work and at their review meetings, thus creating an environment in which people can re-engage with their role seamlessly.

Tyrone Samuel is an education data, systems and insight professional

 @TyPrimaryData

Difficult conversations around ... intimidating behaviour

When emotions threaten to get in the way, some carefully chosen words can put things back on track, says Sonia Gill

Have you ever had someone shout at you during a difficult conversation? Or cry? Or go quiet? You might find the following strategy useful for getting you both out of the emotion and back to the communicating.

Emotions make difficult conversations, well, more difficult. Whilst I believe people are entitled to their own reactions (albeit while acknowledging we all need to manage our reactions) it's hard when the person we're talking to gets angry, upset, defensive, or exhibits any of the range of negative emotions out there.

This can make the conversation go in all sorts of unpredictable directions, and compel us to say things we don't necessarily mean as a result of becoming overly hard or nice in response. Keeping your balance when the other person reacts emotionally can be hard, so here's a handy sentence structure that can help move them on from the emotion they feel:

*'When you ... I feel ...
And I would like to feel ...'*

Let's try it with three different emotional reactions.

- *'When you raise your voice, I feel intimidated / like we can't talk, and I would like to be able to have a constructive conversation with you.'*
- *'When you cry I feel like I can't give you feedback and I would like to be able to help you improve.'*
- *'When you go quiet I feel like you don't want to talk to me and I would like to feel that we could talk this through together.'*

The idea of expressing such sentiments out loud can feel quite scary, but I've seen it work many times in moving

conversations on in a more positive direction. Once you've said your sentence, hold the silence – they might need some time to process what you've said. Hopefully it will help them move on from their emotion, and understand how it's not helping either of you move forward.

It's really important to say how you would like to feel. This lets the person know what you're looking for, and then gives them a choice as to whether they want to help bring that about or not. If you know that the person you're going to speak to is likely to react in a certain way, you can plan what you want to say in that sentence in advance. If you're on the spot and need to structure the sentence quickly – which I appreciate can be hard – try buying yourself some time with a phrase such as *'I just need a moment to think.'*

It won't necessarily work every time, but in my experience it generally works well. If you're ever in a situation where yours or others' safety may be at risk, the most important thing to do is make yourself and those around you safe.

Sonia Gill is founder of the consultancy Heads Up, which specialises in making schools outstanding, and author of the #1 ranked books *Successful Difficult Conversations in School* and *Journey to Outstanding*; further tips on this topic can be had by registering at the Heads Up TV video channel and newsletter (ukheadsup.com/headsupTV)

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TROUBLE AT THE TOP?

National Leader of Governance, Jane Owens, offers some advice for what to do when relations between governors and headteachers become less effective than they should be...

School governing boards have three core functions: to ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction; to hold executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils and the performance management of staff; and to oversee the financial performance of the organisation, making sure its money is well spent.

The governance handbook and competency framework as of March 2019 (see tinyurl.com/governance-hb) gives advice on the skills, knowledge and behaviours expected to ensure effective governance. All boards should sign a code of conduct – the National Governing Association has devised a model that many use, while one of the boards I belong to has one based on the Nolan Principles of public life. We're similar to a number of other boards in that we're now engaging in new initiatives based around the concept of 'ethical leadership.'

Ideally, all members of a governing board, including the headteacher, will be aware of the above expectations. There are extra expectations placed on the chair of the board to facilitate supportive, challenging and professional relationships among the board's members, with a particular emphasis on their relationship with the headteacher. The National Governance Association, NAHT and ASCL sought to further define these relationships by collectively drawing up the handily titled document, 'What governing boards should expect from school leaders and what school leaders should expect from governing boards' (see tinyurl.com/gb-sl-17) – so that's all okay then. But is it?

As a national leader of governance (NLG) and experienced chair of governors across primary, secondary and special schools, in MATs and maintained schools, I'm not so sure that everyone has got the message...

THE OVER-EAGER CHAIR

Holding a headteacher to account can be problematic if there's a mismatch in how the aforementioned roles are viewed. In many instances, this type of mismatch will only become apparent during an Ofsted inspection.

Consider the following scenario. The chair of governors is in school so frequently that their oversight verges on the operational, rather than just the strategic. They'll 'pop in' to speak with the headteacher unannounced, which in turn causes the headteacher to feel under pressure from the constant interference.

The headteacher in this instance may therefore decide that some refresher training for the whole board would be appropriate, in order to remind everyone of what their roles ought to be. They may seek to support the chair with

guidance from a consultant or an NLG (the latter of which will offer their advice free of charge).

THE PASSIVE BOARD

Issues can also arise when information provided to the board by the headteacher is taken at face value and goes unchallenged. Evidence of this will be clearly seen in the minutes of meetings



where most reports are merely 'noted', with no 'curious questions' recorded by the clerk. In instances such as these, the likely verdict of an Ofsted inspection would be that the board is over-reliant on the headteacher for information.

To prevent this, the chair must develop a good relationship with the headteacher and remind them that their reports should be provided in a format governors can understand, so that they can effectively offer challenge and support. There needs to be a culture of openness and transparency.

It can also help to reach agreement on the frequency and purpose of visits to the school by members of the board. A visit policy and reporting form should be drawn up in order to ensure that school policies are being adhered to and embedded as part of the board's monitoring role. This will, of course, require headteachers and governors to fully understand their respective roles.

THE SPECIAL MEASURES

What if, following an inspection, the board is temporarily replaced? Imagine a school that goes into special measures, following which the LA decides to put in place an interim executive board (IEB). Only a few of the original board of governors remain.

The IEB proceeds to successfully challenge the school's senior leaders, play a key role in driving broader school improvement efforts and provide other forms of support, all of which has a positive impact and contributes to the school ultimately being rated Good.

During the time of the IEB being active, a range of searching and challenging questions are put to the school's leadership team, including the governors. At what point can governors help to lift some of the pressure? The data is good – solidly so – and the school is no longer in imminent danger of going back into special measures. The governors know that they have to hold the executive to account, but as the school improves, they haven't refocused themselves accordingly, and the governance structures originally needed for an IEB are no longer relevant.

As an NLG, I've had leaders ask me to help with the restructuring of their board. In an ideal scenario, weekly meetings of the board and committee will cease being necessary, since governors are conducting purposeful visits, holding the school's executive properly to account and undertaking independent CPD and training. All governors have a duty to

minimise unnecessary workload, balanced against their requirement to fulfil the three core functions outlined earlier. In this case, a refocusing of the committees can reinvigorate the board.

THE AGGRESSIVE BOARD

Conversely, what should happen when governors take the 'holding to account' aspect of their role too far? What if the board's collective attitude towards the headteacher becomes one of 'We don't trust you,' for no good reason, when the data is perfectly fine? Mediation will be required in such circumstances – and the behaviour of the chair will be critical.

Leaders must be able to share and think aloud, without fear of reprisal. Equally, however, the conversations had between heads and their chairs are privileged; not just in terms of subject matter, but also in terms of respect and trust.

Holding an individual to account should never be an act of aggression, but rather be used as a stepping stone towards more effective governance. The modelling of approaches by an NLG can provide a good starting point in cases such as these. When combined with getting people to talk freely in a safe space, it will hopefully lead to a renewed level of trust on both sides. When relationships flounder, it's easy to lose sight of the 'why' of governance.

Most instances of mismatches can be dealt with by providing training to governors and, indeed, headteachers. There's plenty of information available to help ensure governors know what effective governance is – we just need to be outward-looking enough to find and use it.



Jane Owens is an experienced governor, having previously served as a chair of

governors within primary, secondary and special school settings, and is a national leader of governance; she also provides external governance reviews both locally and nationally via her consultancy, Purple Governance

 @GovPurple

 purplegovernance.co.uk



“Tempting more recruits won’t stop teachers leaving”

Steve Waters explains why banishing burnout is the only solution to the current retention crisis...

“I returned to work after the Easter break in 2016 and couldn’t enter my classroom. I had a panic attack, cried for what seemed like hours and got sent home. I couldn’t go in the next day, nor the next, and was signed off work.”

This account from Victoria Hewett – part of a 2018 interview published at the Pupil Progress website (pupil-progress.co.uk) – is typical of teachers suffering from burnout. The body and mind shut down, overwhelmed by attempts to cope with high levels of physical and mental exhaustion that will usually have built up over a long period of time.

Fortunately, Victoria – active on Twitter as @MrsHumanities – applied to a different school, and with the right support, was able to rekindle her love of teaching and continue developing a successful career. She has since set up a wonderful scheme called #Teacher5adayBuddyBox (see teacher5adaybuddybox.com), where teachers send one another parcels to give them a lift. My own daughter benefits from the scheme, and loves both receiving and sending parcels.

WHAT IS BURNOUT?

Unfortunately, it’s still the case that some teachers become so worn down by the relentless accountability, workload and stress of the job that they end up leaving a profession they originally entered with much hope and promise. We’re in a retention crisis that we can only solve by focusing on the wellbeing and mental health of our existing teachers. Tempting more recruits won’t stop teachers leaving.

What we need are effective whole school approaches. Teachers can adopt strategies to reduce their own stress levels, but if their schools don’t take a share of the responsibility for causing that stress, there will simply be a series of

relentless individual battles that some teachers will inevitably lose.

According to Alexander Michel of the Association of Psychological Science, burnout occurs “When the balance of deadlines, working hours and other stressors outstrips rewards, recognition and relaxation.” (see tinyurl.com/burnout-brain).

Christina Maslach of the University of Berkeley in California has been researching burnout since the 1970s. She is the co-author, with Susan E. Jackson, of the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI), which aims to assess individuals’ risk of succumbing to the three components of burnout – those being:

Emotional exhaustion – characterised by irritability, permanent tiredness, nausea, stomach pains and an inability to focus

Lack of personal accomplishment – self-blame, lack of confidence, feeling a failure, not doing a good job

Depersonalisation – cynicism, isolation, distancing from work and colleagues, blame and negativity directed towards others (including, in our case, pupils)

HOW TO TACKLE IT

In March of this year the DfE launched the Teacher Wellbeing Advisory Group, the purpose of which will be to recommend strategies for reducing workload and improving teachers’ wellbeing. It’s a move that should be welcomed, since the Group’s inclusion of representatives from the Chartered College of Teaching and the Education Support Partnership should help broaden its focus beyond matters of simply workload.

This is crucial, observes Maslach: “It is a common belief that there is just one dimension to job stress – work overload ... but in our burnout model, overload is only

one of six mismatches in the workplace.”

In other words, all six of these factors must be taken into account when tackling and preventing burnout. So what are they, and how might we define them within an educational context?

WORK OVERLOAD

When the quantity of work required exceeds the time available, or when a job is simply too difficult for an employee’s current resources.

LACK OF CONTROL

In terms of decision-making, access to resources, curriculum design, data collection and so forth.

LACK OF REWARD

Not necessarily just pay – social recognition, acknowledgement of effort, praise and thanks are just as important, if not more so.

ABSENCE OF COMMUNITY

As Maslach notes, “People thrive in community and function best when they share praise, comfort, happiness and humour with people they like and respect.”

LACK OF FAIRNESS

A commonly held perception that promotions are biased; indications of favouritism and/or the sense that some staff are more appreciated and thus more frequently rewarded than others.

CONFLICT OF VALUES

When your values as a teacher – the reason you entered teaching in the first place – don’t coincide with those of the government, which the school promotes over your own.



PREVENTING BURNOUT

Under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 (see tinyurl.com/hswa-74), it's every employer's duty to minimise stress and mental ill health while providing support to their employees – which in schools, can effectively mean mitigating the adverse impacts of government policies, strategies and directives. Your school can achieve this, however, by using Maslach's approach.

The first step is to place the aforementioned six factors in the order in which they're having impact on staff wellbeing, from greatest to least. You can do this by either surveying staff individually and anonymously, or during professional development meetings, where the different factors can be provided on sets of cards for pairs or groups to move into position.

The next step is to ask staff why each of those factors might be causing burnout while noting their responses – some examples of what you might hear can be found in the 'Possible burnout causes' panel.

After this, draw up an action plan for how you intend to tackle these causes, circulate it to staff for anonymous comment and begin to implement it. Be sure to monitor the impact it's having as you go, using short, anonymised

online surveys.

Once this work has concluded, evaluate its impact and have your staff rank Maslach's six factors again. If there's been any progress, those factors that previously had the greatest impact should have moved down the ranking. Finally, plan in further work in this area for a second year, as part of a three-year rolling programme, and make the process a permanent addition to your School Development Plan.

NEXT STEPS

The process of tackling burnout is challenging and requires time – at least three terms for the rollout of your initial action plan. It also requires openness, transparency and a willingness on the part of SLT to accept criticism and acknowledge the need for change if staff burnout is to be prevented.

In turn, teachers must recognise that stress affects everyone – including the headteacher and all non-teaching support staff – and resist apportioning blame for the common good.

Above all, it will entail a major shift in culture, from one where staff may have fought lonely battles against Burnout, to one where every adult in the school gets to benefit from mutual support. If you can achieve that, you'll not only banish burnout, but also create a truly forward-thinking school – one that teachers will look forward to arriving at each day.

POSSIBLE BURNOUT CAUSES

- Marking requirements
- Ineffective pupil behaviour policies
- Inconsistent leadership
- Failure to take teachers' views into account
- Lack of thanks or acknowledgement
- Division and competition between different year groups and/or departments
- Poor internal communication
- Feedback characterised by aggression and lack of respect



Steve Waters founder of the Teach Well Alliance and a Founding Fellow of the Chartered College of Teaching; the views expressed in this article are his own

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HANDS UP, WHO WANTS TO TEACH?

Kevin Harcombe takes issue with the messaging currently being directed at tomorrow's NQTs...

A survey commissioned by the DfE as part of its Get Into Teaching campaign (GIT) has found that 44% of the general public think they would make a great teacher. Of these, 44% said it was because they were good at explaining things, 40% thought they could make learning fun and 39% believed they could relate to others. I'm guessing at least 35% completed the questionnaire in crayon because they're not allowed sharp objects.

Pardon me for thinking the survey is a heap of offal. I'm only surprised no one mentioned 'having long holidays' or 'a day that ends at 3.30pm'. GIT is an apposite acronym.

The vacuity of understanding of what it takes to have the right stuff for teaching is appalling. 'Being good at explaining things' – what sort of things? Explaining probability to Y6? Explaining to 4-year-olds that those black squiggles on white paper can be read? 'Make learning fun?' Nothing is more likely to induce me to reject an application than the applicant blithely asserting what fun they are. Reader, they're always the least fun people possible!

Had their replies mentioned excellent subject knowledge, having the stamina to engage in hundreds of one-to-one interactions in a working week and the

ability to pose questions that enable understanding, I'd have been impressed.

Instead, the DfE simply colludes in perpetuating the fallacy that teaching is about explaining things in a fun way while relating to the kids. As teaching unions noted, the DfE, not for the first time, has asked the wrong questions. How about, 'What puts you off training to be a teacher?' The £9,000-plus fees for a teaching qualification might be a bit of a barrier. The teacher-bashing by DfE ministers another. Ofsted, stagnant wages – I could go on, but I actually love the job despite the downsides.

A spokeswoman said the survey results had been published to launch the DfE's teacher recruitment and retention strategy, and that it hoped to encourage more of those who think they have what it takes to be a teacher to give it a try. It's this misrepresentation of the job – all fluffy rewards, no stubborn reality – that leads to people forking out £9,000 plus a year's missed wages to train, only to leave the profession after five years because they've been sold a false prospectus.

Recruitment involves PR, of course, and I can see the DfE's logic, but it's misleading. To boost recruitment, how about 50% fee bursaries for all teacher training and 100% for shortage subjects for suitably qualified applicants, with 0% interest on any associated loans? Maybe a

'golden hello' after successful completion of the probationary year, or better still, an across-the-board pay rise to make teaching, if not a financially attractive prospect, at least financially viable? If you value education and the skilled professionals providing it, put your money where your mouth is. Alternatively, do next to nothing and watch the problem get even worse.

For the right person – clear-sighted rather than misty-eyed, and qualified to teach their subject instead of simply possessing a tedious capacity to have fun – teaching is an immensely gratifying career. Giving people the impression that it's merely explaining things and being good at relationships isn't going to attract the right stuff. It is those things, but also much, much more.

Consider the following tweet posted by someone called Mr Primary Data: "I love my job. I'm not an NQT or fresh out of uni. I've taught for 10 years and I genuinely enjoy every day. Yes, it can be rubbish at times and the workload is high BUT I love it. Sadly I know this is not true for everyone but wanted to share some positivity." DfE – recruit that tweeter.

Kevin Harcombe is a Teaching Awards winner and headteacher at Redlands Primary School, Fareham



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Budgeting

HOW TO POLITELY SAY 'NO'

When a colleague's laudable plan or initiative isn't financially feasible, what's the best way of breaking it to them?

As a headteacher, saying 'no' to people will be a regular occurrence. More often than not, it's straightforward – but when it comes to budget requests, feelings can become conflicted when you know you'd happily say yes to something, if only you had the money for it.

Everyone working in education knows that funding is dire, but there are some ways in which you can mitigate the impact on your staff of those situations where budget constraints have forced you into having to say 'no'.

1. Don't be bounced into decisions

It's easy to find yourself on the automated 'no' train. If a teaching colleague catches you at a bad moment, when you're unable to take in the facts or are in need of more information, then say so. Alternatively, refer the member of staff to your SBM to talk it through with them in more detail before formally submitting their request.

2. Consult your SBM

If you want to make sound expenditure decisions, you need to make sure you have the latest information to hand – especially if it's a budget request you'd like to facilitate. Your SBM can assist you in looking at patterns of expenditure, identifying funding priorities and perhaps cheaper alternatives.

3. Keep a long term view

Though you might have to say 'no' today, the financial picture will

continue to shift throughout the year. Keep a list of those received budget requests that you can't quite afford right now and review them each month with your SBM. What isn't affordable today may well be in the future.

4. Provide an explanation

Saying 'no' and leaving things there can result in staff feeling they haven't been properly heard. If, on the other hand, you provide an explanation as to why you've had to say no, your staff will feel that they've been listened to and that there's a clear reasoning behind your decision. If it's a budget request you'd like to support but simply can't, then make this clear. Say something positive about their idea, and where possible, offer some advice on how they can move forward.

5. Educate your staff

The greater your staff's understanding of the school's financial picture, the more mindful they'll be when making budget requests. Provide updates at appropriate meetings and encourage senior and middle leaders to regularly work with your SBM on their allocated budgets. That way, when you do have to say 'no', the decision will come as less of a shock, and the process of explaining it will be more straightforward.

6. Be firm

If you've had to decline a budget request, explained your reasons why and you're comfortable with the decision, it may be that a member of staff still continues to argue their case. Don't be tempted to back down – if you have to say 'no' more than once, do so and conclude the discussion politely and firmly.

Having to say 'no' when you'd like to say 'yes' isn't easy, but being honest and transparent with your staff will create a positive financial culture in your school in the long run.

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

 @lauraljbusiness

 ljbusinessconsultancy.co.uk



ARE YOU SIFTING FOR QUALIFICATION GOLD?

Ensuring your SBP colleagues are sufficiently qualified is more involved than it used to be, writes Bethan Cullen...

As you read these words, you'll likely be contemplating your intake for the coming academic year and how your attainment outcomes may affect the review of, and requirements for, additional development among your teaching staff.

However, your team extends far beyond the teaching and learning on offer in your school. You'll also need to consider the training and development opportunities available to your school business professionals.

A few years ago, this process was much more straightforward. The National College for Teaching and Learning (NCTL) provided the only dedicated suite of training programmes intended for these colleagues, and for a significant period, bursaries were readily available.

When it comes to the qualifications available and the next steps these professionals should take presently, we've found ourselves facing the same questions posed by a multitude of colleagues and employers. There are now a range of new qualifications available, and a variety of career points that can be reached.

The old programmes originally introduced by the NCTL, such as the Certificate in School Business Management (CSBM) and Diploma in School Business Management (DSBM), are still valid qualifications that provide excellent starting points for practitioners to build upon with further learning and development.

The question, however, is which programmes, through which providers and via what learning methods they should pursue. With the myriad new qualifications available, and with few, if any bursaries to call upon, school leaders naturally want to ensure that they're investing in the most appropriate training opportunities – and perhaps whether any

funded apprenticeship routes might exist which offer the same learning outcomes.

To correctly identify the best training and development route for yourself or a colleague, you must first understand what training needs need to be met. These can then be used to assess the various training programmes on offer.

As a school leader, you can use the ISBL Professional Standards (see isbl.org.uk/standards) to identify the knowledge, skills and behaviours of the team responsible for your school business and governance. In a primary school, some of these activities may be shared across multiple members of the SLT.

The standards set out a clear blueprint for effective school and academy business leadership. They impose no glass ceilings on the profession, but continue to recognise that practitioners are at different stages in their professional journey.

From this analysis you'll be able to understand the development needs of your team in conjunction with your strategic aims, and thus be better placed to consider which of the training routes and programmes available to you best meet these needs.

Paul Robertson is Professional Development Manager at the Institute of School Business Leadership; the organisation has developed a career pathway for SBPs with clear entry points, highlighting the training and CPD available based on career route and experience, which can be found at the ISBL website via tinyurl.com/isbl-pathways

 @isbl_news

 isbl.org.uk

How to work in a post-GDPR world

One year on, what difference has GDPR made to schools' daily operations? Dr. Richard Harrold weighs up the protections it affords with the work it's made

May this year is the first anniversary of the General Data Protection Regulation law, designed to protect the personal information of individuals. It's had a massive impact on working practices, and every school in the country has likely been changed by it in some way.

Before the law came into effect, scandalous infringements of privacy were being carried out by large corporate companies. They had no incentive to do anything about this, because it wasn't in their commercial interests to do so. The ability to fine companies 4% of their global revenue for data breaches has given those previously responsible for privacy infringements a very powerful reason to change, and will go on to protect consumers, just as the law intended.

It's also given schools an understandable and achievable way of protecting themselves, their staff and

students. However, it can be felt in some schools that GDPR has simply created a rod for their backs due to the huge amount of work it involves. It's certainly true that setting up good, compliant systems, and keeping them refreshed and up to date is an enormous task.

Yet the real reason why many schools believe that GDPR has created a monster is because the past few years have seen the number of subject access requests (SARs) increase tenfold. This is where an individual – usually a member of staff or a past or present student – can request to be sent all the personal information held about them. The information has to be sent within 30 days of the request being made.

SARs can consume a horrendous amount of time, but having good GDPR systems in place can actually help. The Information and Records Management Society (see irms.org.uk), for example, publishes advice on how long you need to keep different types of information. Student records only need to be kept for seven years after they've left school – records should be deleted after this time, with schools recording that they've done

so. Otherwise, if they hold the data and a student asks to see it, the school has to provide it. If schools keep everything, they are taking a big risk.

There is, however, some information that has to be kept longer, such as medical data, information of incidents relating to asbestos or radioactive materials, or – more pertinently for schools, unfortunately – child abuse data records. The IRMS is a great, underused resource. So too is the DfE's Data Protection Toolkit for Schools (see tinyurl.com/dfe-data-toolkit), which is available to download from the DfE's website.

Another area where GDPR has created change within schools is in relation to securing consent or contracts using photos and images. Consent can be given via email or even on a slip of paper, but that consent could be withdrawn at any time. You might have spent thousands on printing a new school brochure; if consent is withdrawn, you're suddenly unable to use it.

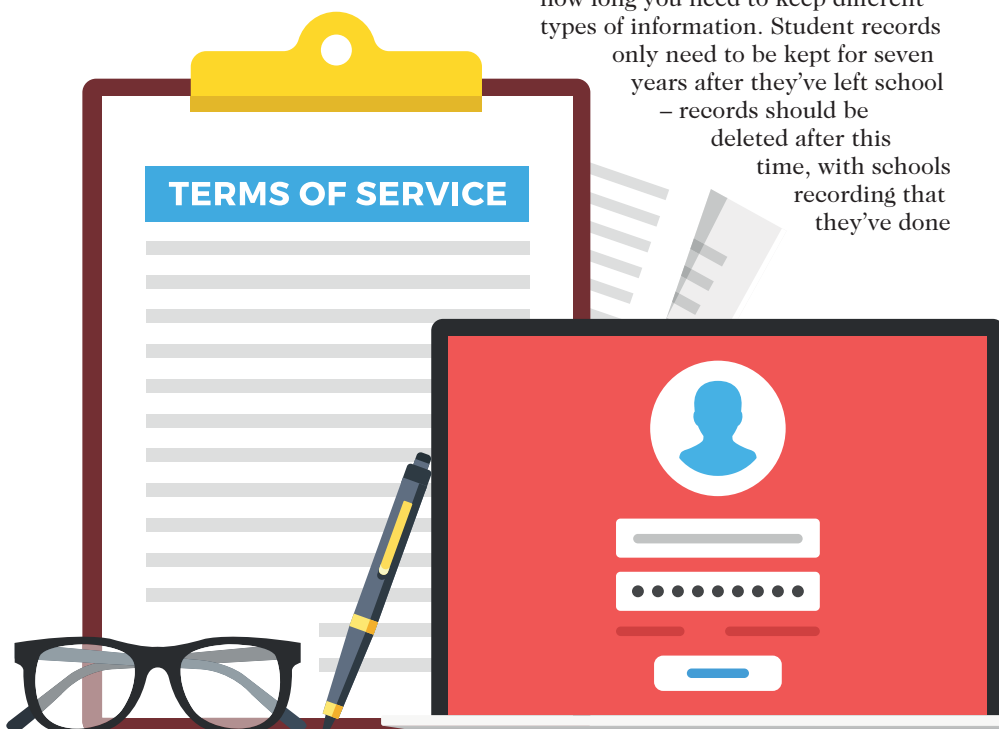
A contract signed by both parents, on the other hand, will explain the terms of agreement to cover such situations. This is where GDPR, backed up by good working practices, helps protect schools.

I recently attended the Information Commissioner's Office conference, and a key message I came away with was that the ICO isn't looking to punish schools and make life harder. It's trying to ensure we're all protected, while managing our data in an informed and measured way.

Dr. Richard Harrold is data protection officer at ACS International Schools in Cobham, Surrey

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acs-schools.com

TERMS OF SERVICE



HOW TO PLAN YOUR CAPITAL EXPENDITURE

Capital spending can be hard to come by, tough to allocate and highly risky – so make sure you approach yours with the right mindset, says Sue Birchall

Over the past decade, financial support for capital expenditure in schools has been diminishing. Maintained schools have seen their devolved capital grants, which come through their LA, reduced significantly, with no access to further funding unless recognised by the LA as imperative.

Church schools continue to have access to their diocese, while standalone academies can apply to the condition improvement fund. MATs are eligible to receive both devolved formula capital (DFC) funding and school condition allocations, but in truth, there's less money available for capital spending.

The difficulty, or otherwise, of acquiring capital funding doesn't match the level of responsibility many schools have for maintaining the condition of their buildings – some of which are barely fit for purpose. While there have been occasional announcements of financial support for schools' spending – most recently, Philip Hammond's offer of funding for 'little extras' in October 2018

– the truth is that our school building stock has been in decline for decades; the lack of funding we've seen in recent years has only hastened its deterioration.

With the onset of academisation, the growing number of free schools and the phasing out of initiatives such as Building Schools for the Future, there can be no 'one size fits all' answer to the issue, short of a huge injection of funding. So how can we plan wisely, using whatever capital expenditure we've managed to secure, and make it work for our school settings, given the limited resources at our disposal?

WHAT'S YOUR VISION?

To use capital funding effectively, it's important to have a school vision for the capital expenditure, whether it's intended for buildings or ICT. It's now considered good practice, if not statutory, for all schools and academies to have a fully costed school or academy development plan in place that sets out a clear strategic vision. A premises development plan (PDP) that sits alongside this can help you map out your 'capital vision', and potentially take the form of a single document, together with your SIP/ADP, operational plans and staffing structure.

If you're an academy, the new CIF guidance document 'Good Estates Management for Schools' (see tinyurl.com/dfe-gems), outlines processes similar to those one might find in a premises development plan but in far greater detail, alongside plenty of good advice for all types of school. The GEMS guidance also provides some useful

information on how to draw up an estates asset management plan – something that maintained schools might not get much value from, but

which is now an expectation for standalone academies and MATs.

“Our school building stock has been in decline for decades; the lack of funding we've seen in recent years has only hastened its deterioration”



In my school, I use the PDP as a working document and ensure that it's referred to during any discussions around capital investment where capacity, affordability, sustainability and best value are all key considerations. I also use it to help set budgets both in year and strategically, and when considering how revenue funding should be allocated to ensure that specific aims are achieved.

My PDP is fed into from many sources, including the net capacity assessment, SLT and governor wishes, while taking into account future changes at the school, such as increasing pupil numbers. I currently work in a secondary school that has a growing pupil roll, but has to manage the restrictions of being a PFI. This means that my PDP looks a little different compared to most, since I don't have the ability to plan any rebuilds or significant alterations. I'm still able to apply its principles to other areas of capital spending, however, and have found it to be a useful document to consult even when making relatively small changes.

GET INVOLVED

Of course, in order for all this to be beneficial, as an SBM you'll need to be familiar with your school or academy's improvement plan, and be closely involved in any future planning and development efforts. What a good PDP does is enable a more joined-up view of whole school development, changes and expenditure, while providing a means of including all members of senior management in your finance and estates planning – which often isn't the case.

Capital funding is financing for infrastructure, and it's for the school or academy to decide whether it should be put towards buildings or ICT. That said, if you're part of a MAT, the decision may have already been made for you.

There are many benefits to adopting a planned and co-ordinated approach – not least the ways in which it will enhance your school's learning environment. Warm, comfortable buildings that are fit for purpose will improve the wellbeing of both staff and students and make your setting a more pleasant place in which to work and learn, contributing to better outcomes.

ADDING VALUE

If your capital funding is to be directed towards ICT, then be aware of its sustainability. It can be tempting for headteachers and principals, upon receipt of monies such as the aforementioned 'little extras' funding, to purchase new technologies or replace existing devices. When using such funding for ICT purposes, however, it's important to look at the long-term cost implications of what maintaining, repairing and ultimately replacing those purchases will involve. Often, these avenues won't be affordable within a school's basic budget allocations.

Saying that, this will often be the only way through which schools can add value to their ICT provision. An SLT- or governor-led decision to use ongoing capital for this purpose will be perfectly sound, so long as those principles are taken into account.

Finally, capital projects, particularly those providing a tangible benefit to the local community, can often attract donations and funding from external sources. Doing this will be easier if you have something to match fund with – in this case, any capital monies you can allocate to the project. As always, it pays to be innovative.



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

BE BUSINESS-MINDED

SBPs can call on a number of business principles to inform their capital spending decisions in relation to buildings and estates management. Investing time in planning today can pay dividends tomorrow – examples of which might include the following:

- **Planning your maintenance well into the future, thus reducing your spend on reactive works**
- **Avoiding costly mistakes by making decisions in full awareness of all the facts**
- **Co-ordinating projects which will offer a better view of value for money**
- **Devising a reliable planning process for day-to-day actions, such as arranging room moves, co-ordinating staff cover and ensuring the availability of curriculum resources**
- **Sharing aspects of your capital spending plans with neighbouring schools, which can lead to you all concentrating on different specialist areas and result in local facilities provision far exceeding what your individual budgets would otherwise cover**



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.

“Take a closer look at outstanding examples of leadership in some of the best primary schools across the UK”

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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



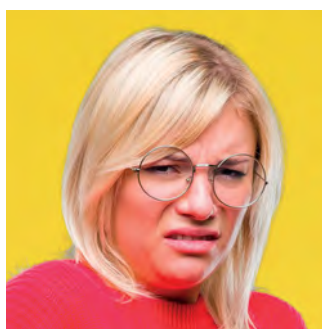
Are your SBL's messages getting through?
tinyurl.com/psm-work-stress

School Improvement



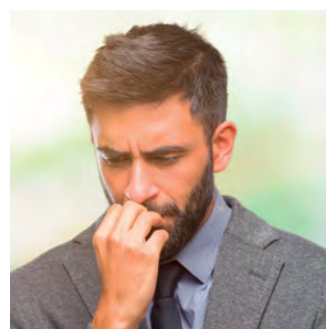
The qualities schools need from subject leads
tinyurl.com/psm-subject-leads

Parental Engagement



What to do when parents don't welcome your headship
tinyurl.com/psm-parent-heads

Leadership



Why introverts can be leaders too
tinyurl.com/psm-introverts

WHAT'S TRENDING

1

Ofsted's new framework and you
tinyurl.com/psm-framework

2

How schools should respond to curriculum protests
tinyurl.com/psm-curr-protests

3

Why the education sector should welcome AI
tinyurl.com/psm-art-intel

4

Rethink your recycling policies
tinyurl.com/psm-recycling

5

The pressures affecting pupil exclusions
tinyurl.com/psm-exclusions

Leadership

ARE YOU A LEADER OR A MANAGER?

Catherine Carden considers the difference between 'leadership' and 'management' – and whether the distinction matters...



Leadership within primary education is something that's regularly debated, discussed and judged, be it through Ofsted inspections, local newspaper reports, national news stories or social media posts. What does that term 'leadership' actually mean? Is it a more contemporary term for what used to be referred to as 'management'? Or is there more to it than that?

'Leadership' is a term that all of us regularly use within everyday conversation, but if put on the spot and asked to define the word, most of us would find that quite a struggle. Some will offer a fairly simple definition, such as this concise example found on the pages of businessdirectory.com: "The activity of leading a group of people or an organisation, or the ability to do this."

Others will argue that leadership is, in fact, a far more complex notion that has a variety of definitions. That complexity often results in definitions of leadership morphing into a list of skills and attributes of effective leaders. However, this difficulty in defining leadership shouldn't be seen as problematic, but rather an acknowledgement of how leadership is, in fact, a highly nuanced, multi-layered concept.

ORGANISATIONAL OBJECTIVES

Management, on the other hand, is a much more easily definable term that centres around the process of attaining organisational objectives through effective co-ordination of resources and activity within a hierarchical structure.

The terms 'management' and 'leadership' will often be used interchangeably, with some referring to themselves as being 'part of the management team', or even 'a manager', while others will cite the presence of a 'leadership team' and

consider themselves as being 'a leader'.

Leadership and management aren't the same thing and shouldn't be conflated. Effective leaders need be aware of the difference, and should be able to articulate it to their teams through their actions. 'Management' is characterised by task-oriented activities, such as writing reports, producing action plans, managing emails and various other administrative tasks. 'Leadership' is strategic, and will involve tasks such as enhancing teaching and learning, and feeding analysis and evaluation into priorities for development. Most among you will likely aspire more towards the latter than the former, but probably concede that the majority of your time has become dominated by management tasks.

QUICK RESULTS

The process of moving from being a task-orientated manager to becoming a strategic leader requires time, determination and a willingness to make difficult and bold decisions, underpinned by a strong understanding of what it means to lead, rather than manage.

Yet despite leadership and management being very different, the two aren't mutually exclusive. Leadership roles inevitably entail a range of management tasks that have to be undertaken. What's important is that leaders are able to identify when they're spending too much time on management tasks, to the detriment of leadership activities.

Given the widespread pressure to achieve quick results and immediate impact, even the most well-intentioned leaders risk losing direction and focus, causing management concerns to trump leadership aims. Yet if a school's results and impact are to be sustainable in the long-term, only strong leadership will deliver that. Developing a clear knowledge and understanding of leadership, and investing time in learning how to practice it well, will ultimately pay dividends for any headteacher and their school.

Catherine Carden is the faculty director of primary initial teacher education at Canterbury Christ Church University

 @catliscar

 tinyurl.com/catherine-carden



Ensure staff are well-prepared before your next moderation visit, says Lucy Starbuck Braidley...

Many schools across the country will be expecting moderation this year, so what can school leaders do to ensure staff are adequately supported to successfully navigate the experience?

It's important to remember that whilst standardisation events run by LEAs or MATs in the lead up to a moderation period should result in teachers strengthening their assessment knowledge, the moderation process itself isn't a CPD exercise – all of the learning should have been done beforehand.

The purpose of a moderation visit is to confirm that teacher assessments for the end of KS1 and KS2 are correct. Moderators aren't there to offer advice or coaching, but to assess the accuracy of teachers' judgements against published standards. Ensuring that teachers are secure in their judgements, and know where to find the evidence that supports them before the day, is key.

On the day, the focus will be on the teacher presenting the evidence to show how they know their judgements are accurate. They'll be expected to refer to the child's work alongside the assessment framework, so your Y2 and Y6 teachers are will need to have had adequate time to make accurate judgments – though really, this should be done as a matter of course, not just during a moderation year.

When looking at work and judgements, moderators will be looking for evidence of consistent demonstration of attainment towards the standards. This doesn't mean that a child has to be 100% accurate, but there should be clear evidence that the teacher can justify their judgement of the standard being met against the body of

work presented. There's no 'magic number' in terms of how many times a child must demonstrate a standard; moderators will be looking at whether they can do so independently and confidently, and how the teacher knows this.

It's a good idea for teachers to be given the opportunity to moderate with other teachers, perhaps across year groups in larger schools, at standardisation events, in cluster moderations, or all three. Make sure any such events are run properly, and don't dissolve into aimless flipping through books and polite smiles. They should give teachers a dry run at articulating their judgments, presenting the evidence and responding to challenge if evidence is lacking.

Since the emphasis of a moderation visit is the validity of the teacher judgment and the professional dialogue surrounding it, there's no need for teachers to stay up late the night before, furiously Post-it-noting evidence. Rather, it's best practice to ensure that over the course of the assessment period, teachers are given adequate time to ensure all of their judgements are accurate, clearly evidenced and that they know where to look for evidence in key pieces of work across the portfolio.

Approached in this way – using assessment frameworks, exemplification materials and supporting documents – moderation should be a relatively pain-free experience that builds teachers' confidence in their knowledge of the standards.

Lucy Starbuck Braidley is a primary school teacher and subject leader for English and PE

Are you getting enough headteacher CPD?

What use will an established school leader have for professional growth opportunities? More than they might think, ventures Jill Berry...

I recently attended a conference session on the importance of CPD, at which the presenter encouraged us to reflect on the acronym and what we understood by it. Interestingly, we discovered we didn't all share the same assumptions about the phrase. 'Continuing?' 'Continuous?' 'Career?' 'Professional?' 'Personal?' In some schools, the letter 'L', for Learning, was added to the phrase. In others, the term 'Professional Learning' has replaced 'CPD' altogether.

This isn't simply a semantic distinction. It's worth considering what CPD/CPDL/PL means to us – to teachers and leaders, including headteachers – and whether we continue to invest in it throughout our careers.

The term 'CPD' in education was coined in the 1980s and originally stood for 'Continuing Professional Development', as opposed to 'Initial Teacher Training'. The idea was that once your teacher training was completed, you would embark on an ongoing professional journey.

When I ask teachers and leaders about CPD, I find that many simply see CPD as 'going on a course'. I'd suggest that external training is actually only a part of CPD, and arguably not the most productive part. Secondly, many believe that CPD is about securing promotion, particularly for further leadership responsibility, and think that those who don't seek leadership positions are less likely to need CPD, or be interested in it.

I'd suggest that CPD is particularly important for those who don't intend to change their role, or perhaps their school. Having access to professional development opportunities which stimulate, challenge and energise us is crucial if we're to remain engaged, satisfied and fulfilled.

So what of headteachers? This role may be the pinnacle of your career, and

you may have no aspirations for further career progression. Is CPD therefore irrelevant? I would suggest the following three reasons for why it most certainly is relevant.

1. We've never 'cracked it'

We're all personal and professional works in progress. There's always more to learn, which is one of the reasons why working in schools is so appealing and fascinating. In my experience, the best teachers want to be better teachers and the best leaders want to be better leaders. CPD offers us opportunities to reflect, through our reading; through collaboration with, and learning from, others; through experimentation and review.

2. We need to understand ourselves

Headteachers must be aware of their strengths and those areas in which they're developing. They need to work with senior leaders whose skills and talents complement their own for the good of the school, and they need to be sufficiently humble to be receptive to what they can learn from their senior team colleagues and others within their

networks. Twitter, meetings and conferences give us opportunities to listen to and learn from those with different experiences and perspectives. Coaching can be invaluable.

3. Education never stands still

The one constant across my 30-year career was 'change'. Then, as now, new challenges and opportunities continue to emerge all the time. How do we keep up to date and sufficiently well-informed so that we can meet these challenges and make the most of those fresh opportunities? Professional learning is key. Seek out and embrace training – be it beyond the school, or organised within the school – to ensure that you're current, confident and capable. Read blogs and articles. Keep abreast of new publications and research. Discuss, debate and challenge your thinking.

You might well learn how to be even more successful in your school leader role, and your school will grow as a result.

Jill Berry is a leadership consultant, author and former headteacher



TAKE ON THE MAVERICKS

Every school has one – that colleague who opposes everything you do, stopping just short of insubordination. Anthony David offers some practical management strategies...

Nothing can be more frustrating than the mighty maverick who sees it as his or her goal to undermine your leadership. They may even see their actions as driven by a moral imperative on behalf of the school. The problem, however, is that they don't have to account to governors, parents or inspectors. You do.

Here, I want to examine the strategies you can employ and what to avoid when going head-to-head with these mighty mavericks – who to talk to, what documents to use and how to conduct a meeting with them.

Firstly, let's define who I'm talking about. It's that person, often an experienced member of staff, who fails to follow policy, or walks a line consistent with the letter of the law, rather than the spirit. To be clear, I'm not describing individuals who challenge you in a professional way, but rather that someone who consistently comes against your leadership style, seemingly just for the sake of it!

How you manage this type of personality will often be a direct reflection of your own personality, but it's important to clarify that this shouldn't be treated as a battle of wills – in my experience it rarely comes to that. Tackling the issue will essentially involve addressing two simple questions. How are you presenting your strategy? And why are they resistant?

CAUSE FOR REFLECTION

Firstly, there's the strategy (or plan, or development) itself. Why are you doing what you're doing? Unusually for us, education at the present time is ticking along quietly for the most part, primarily because every civil servant employed by the government is singularly focused on Brexit.

That said, you may well be reviewing

your curriculum following Ofsted's change of focus from core subjects to wider learning experiences (this in itself being a change that's been quietly evolving for several years). Alternatively, or you might be reviewing your school's MIS, as many are at the moment.

Whatever conclusions you come to, you will ultimately have at your core a fundamental question to answer – how is this going to support the learners in my school? (Or in business-speak, 'What's the benefit to the primary users?') Once decided, your strategy needs to be implemented. Rarely will we ever impose a strategy, particularly in smaller schools; there will be a genuine consultation process, followed by an agreed implementation process. Your role is to ensure that this is done in a timely way, which may be faster than some teachers would like, but ultimately your chief priority is to support the learners.

It's during these sticking points that the maverick may make themselves known. Ask why they might be so resistant. Are you pushing too hard or too fast? There could be cause to reflect on this. Are there aspects that are overly burdensome? Again, time to reflect may be wisely taken.

'PASSIVE' AND 'BULL'

If you've discounted your strategy as an unreasonable aspect to challenge – or are unwilling to discount the strategy – then the next step must be focused on the person, but there are right ways and wrong ways of addressing this.

Two classic wrong approaches are 'passive' or 'bull'. The 'passive' approach is to do nothing and hope that the situation resolves itself. It won't. All that will happen is that the member of staff begins to recruit supporters, therefore increasing the challenge when introducing new strategies.

The other approach, the bull, will leave a similarly negative impact. Yes, you can intimidate the person into either leaving or falling into line, but the end result will be that you've created a leadership strategy built on being aggressive. This is fundamentally in contradiction to what schools are about; building people up, not crushing them. Certainly, we all have 'bad days at the office', and sometimes the maverick can get caught in the cross-fire – but don't let this accidentally become your default style of leadership.

CONSULT THE EVIDENCE

That said, however, mavericks still have to be addressed. As with everything else in education, rely on evidence, or risk becoming 'the bull'. Fundamentally, have you been clear in what you expect as non-negotiables? How books are marked, how we assess and how we teach are all aspects that a reasonable leader can be specific about, but make this clear in policy or the staff handbook.

You also have the Teaching Standards (see tinyurl.com/dfe-teaching-standards). This document states very clearly what's expected, and is the national minimum standard for teaching. Handily, the



digest consists of just one page, but it's part 2, covering personal and professional conduct, that's arguably the most helpful. That word 'professional' is used frequently throughout; by undermining the leadership, it could be easily argued that the individual isn't demonstrating the professionalism their role requires of them.

Again, however, before you act it's well worth contacting your HR team, which will be able to give you concise advice and walk you through the process, if it's the first time you've had to address this

“They don't have to account to governors, parents or inspectors. You do.”

particular personality type. Either way, it's always helpful to talk to somebody else first, so that you can 'rehearse' the conversation you'll be having later.

That just leaves one final step – the face-to-face discussion, and always one of the most challenging conversations you'll have. That said, remember that nobody wants to be called into the office. It may be that other members of staff are looking to you to engage with this person and waiting for you to act. The longer you wait, the more difficult this will become.

DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS

At the initial meeting, try to avoid having it alone. Phrases such as *'It has come to my attention...'* or *'In the meeting you made it clear you weren't happy with the discussion...'* will open proceedings, but it's important to make clear to them that how they presented was inappropriate.

It's at this stage that a simple trick can help the situation. Avoid filling any space with your voice; instead, allow long silences and let the other person explain themselves. In situations such as these, silence can do more to say what needs to be said than words alone.

Be sure to hold this initial meeting on your terms. It's ultimately your name that will be attached to any reports, and your face that's publicly accountable. In my own experience, a maverick will often have aspects of their practice that don't follow school policy, which can provide a reasonable avenue to follow should you wish to take the matter further.

Fundamentally, nothing can hold a school back more effectively than a maverick. It's therefore critical that you have a conversation with them as quickly as possible. You've been appointed to lead the school, and sometimes that means needing to have conversations which are hard, but ultimately to the whole school's benefit. Keep that in mind when preparing for your next challenging conversation and remember – let the long silences do the heavy lifting on your behalf.



Anthony David is an experienced headteacher, executive headteacher and educational writer and speaker

BECOME A GREAT PRESENTER

Graham Shaw gives an insight into the habits and strategies that can help your next presentation really land with your audience

To some extent, one can develop key presentation skills simply by working as a class teacher. Often you'll get to improve your abilities further by convening assemblies, speaking at governors meetings or meeting parents.

Having myself taught for 14 years at a primary school in Surrey, eventually becoming deputy headteacher and later acting headteacher, I now coach others in developing the skills they need to make their presentations more effective.

FORMAL LOVE LETTERS

The first thing to note is that the audience for every presentation is different. There's a great quote by Ken Haemer, a former presentation research manager for the US telecoms company AT&T: "Designing a presentation without an audience in mind is like writing a love letter and addressing it: 'To whom it may concern.'"

Headteachers will already possess some presentation skills, but can still lack confidence in certain areas. One area that's hugely important is the ability to structure what you're saying. There are four questions that presentations should always be structured around, because they'll be on the minds of every

audience member – 'why', 'what', 'how' and 'what if?' (see panel).

Ways of improving your confidence once you get up there at the front include standing upright, with your feet about hip-width apart. Stay still; don't move around unless it's for a particular reason. It's hard to listen to someone who's wandering around aimlessly or swaying slightly.

The next thing is to use your hands for gesturing as you would naturally.

Scientific evidence demonstrates that when people are asked to try and explain something while keeping their arms still by their side, the speaker finds it difficult and listener finds it harder to understand them. When speakers are allowed to move their arms in natural gestures, they became more eloquent and articulate and find it easier to choose the right words. Audiences in turn find it easier to absorb what they say.

Remember to also breathe. A good way of combatting nervousness is to take deep breaths in and out, while holding that good, confident posture.

MEMORY AND MOVEMENTS

When addressing a regular weekly meeting, colleagues won't expect you to reel off everything you want to say from memory. If, however, it's a short, high stakes talk, it's worth practising and potentially scripting key lines. Since such talks tend to be fairly rare, my general tip would be to prepare bullet points you can glance at for reminders of details you already know how to explain, rather than memorising the presentation in full.

If you're using PowerPoint you can include key points on certain slides that you're able to talk around, or keep them within easy reach on cue cards. That said,



you're usually better off not holding objects in your hand while delivering a presentation. If you're holding something, you'll inevitably fiddle with it. Put pens down when you're not using them so that you're not tempted to twiddle them, and avoid having any sheets of paper in your hands while speaking. It's better to keep some brief notes outlining your key points to one side. If you get stuck, take a breath, glance over at the notes you've prepared and carry on.

Some speakers can exhibit idiosyncratic postures and movements, like putting their hands behind their back, which is best avoided. Try to also avoid holding your hands out in front of you and fidgeting or wringing them together, which can be a sign of nervousness. If you're asked any questions during the presentation, stand your ground, stay still and open your arms to welcome contributions from the audience. A common reaction is for people to take a step back, which is a visible sign of nervousness and an indication that the speaker feels a need to retreat.

ENGAGE YOUR AUDIENCE

Think of your presentation like a piece of music – it might start nicely, but if it stays like that for three or four minutes, people will soon get bored.

Instead, create contrast through the nature of the content and your method of delivery. Whether it's showing videos, displaying slides or putting questions to the audience, vary your content, method and pace. If a roller coaster only ever went really fast, it would soon get dull. Roller coasters are exciting because they slow down, go uphill and then suddenly woosh down the other side. Contrast is key.

One of the biggest mistakes people can make is to begin too enthusiastically. If I were to say, "I'm really excited to tell you all today about the latest health and safety update," that's not starting from a

place agreed between you and the audience. You need start from where the audience are – and the way to do that is to give them reasons to listen to you.

With our health and safety example, you might say something along the lines of, "Many of you will have worked here for at least several years, and may be wondering why you've had to come to this..." To get people on board from the start you need to captivate their attention.

READING THE ROOM

It's important to keep your attention on the audience throughout. Much of what gets in the way of a good performance is down to 'self-talk in the head,' which is what happens when your attention is focused inwards, towards your own mind. By keeping your attention outwards and your eyes looking round, not only will you connect with people through eye contact, you can pick up on early signals as to how you're going down.

When heads are nodding, you'll know that you're with them and they're with you. If they start frowning, you'll know that's not the case. Being able to make adjustments as you go is entirely contingent on keeping your attention focused on the audience, though generally you shouldn't be making huge changes to what you've prepared. Comedians do the same thing – their material will typically be very well rehearsed before they start, and they'll only make relatively minor adjustments if and when needed.

When it comes to reviewing your presentation skills, I'd recommend getting colleagues to watch you. If I were scheduled to present a high stakes talk at an upcoming conference, I'd want gather a few teachers together and have them watch me perform a run through. Those colleagues can then closely examine three things: the content and

'WHAT IF...?'

You can invite audiences to consider two types of 'What ifs?...' When referring to problems or risks, what might go wrong? What are some of the issues with what you've just said?

The second type points to benefits. What if your idea or proposal goes right? What will happen in the future? Is there's a positive story to be told, paint a positive picture of the future at the end of your talk and how people's lives will be different as a result of them taking action.

structure of your presentation, any visuals you're using and your overall style – namely your energy levels, whether your voice is projecting, the degree of eye contact, physical stance and how you're coming across.

Get your colleagues to be specific. You could even give them a feedback sheet and ask them to note down anything they feel is working well, and anything you could do differently next time. If you're colleagues are able to do that, you'll receive a great deal of useful information in return.



Graham Shaw is a speaking coach and professional conference speaker;

his book, *The Speaker's Coach*, is available now, published by Pearson



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TREVOR WOOD - OPERATOR, BLENHEIM PALACE



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Whizz Pop Bang

An award-winning science magazine with lesson plans for years 2 to 6

- A fun 36-page children's science magazine chock-a-block with tried and tested activities, news, exciting articles, how stuff works and mind-expanding facts
- Dynamic accompanying suite of hands-on lesson packs, linked to national curriculum
- Punchy and bite-sized features and awesome activities
- Magazine pages with uncoated paper for easy journaling, recording, colouring and science scribbling
- No advertising

Reviewed by: John Dabell

Science is missing out. According to the Wellcome Trust's 'State of the nation' report into UK science education, primary schools on average teach science for 1 hour and 24 minutes a week. Only 42% teach science for the recommended time of two or more hours a week, which is why primary science is currently one of their education priorities.

Transforming the teaching of science in primary schools, so that every pupil has an excellent first experience of science, is a multi-dimensional process, in which inspirational resources can play a key part. As a subject, science can be stimulating and empowering, with lots of invigorating content available. One source teeming with ideas for getting children hooked on science is the cleverly kaleidoscopic magazine *Whizz Pop Bang* – an attractively illustrated monthly publication pulsating with scientific energy and steaming with cross-curricular opportunities.

This magazine covers an impressive range of topics and ideas and is intelligently organised, with readers moving from news to experiments, to new discoveries, taking in fascinating facts and puzzles along the way and finishing with a quiz. In between there are interviews, fact files on famous

scientists, questions galore, jokes and competitions. It also busts some myths and includes QR codes leading readers to relevant web pages.

And that's not all. The magazine is further supported by downloadable lesson packs that can be easily integrated into your science planning. These contain differentiated lesson plans and various colourful and interactive materials, from simple hands-on investigations to engaging PowerPoint presentations and fun games, with lots to investigate and plenty to get your pupils thinking, talking and doing.

The lesson packs are further structured in a child-friendly way, with clear explanations that will likely boost your learners' confidence in sharing their ideas, joining discussions, working collaboratively and asking questions. They're also ideal for guided reading.

The *Whizz Pop Bang* magazine and supporting lesson packs are golden nuggets that can enhance your science provision and engage children with the idea of carrying out scientific enquiries. As a resource, the high production values, intelligent structuring and enriching content makes *Whizz Pop Bang* real Blue Peter badge material. I just wish it exploded every week.



PSM
PRIMARY SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

VERDICT

- ✓ Champions and encourages a love of science
- ✓ Wide-ranging and accessible content for classrooms, libraries and science clubs
- ✓ Inclusive of all pupils and gender neutral
- ✓ Bursting with rich, practical experiences
- ✓ Helps children relate science to their own lives

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You're looking for fun, simple and affordable science ideas and resources to spark children's curiosity, develop their thinking skills and boost their science literacy, while raising the profile of science across your school.

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5alive-Roadwise

A comprehensive road safety education programme featuring teacher booklets and classroom resources for every year group

- Tools and resources to teach road-user education to all year groups
- Expertly written 28-page booklets containing four interactive and focused workshops
- Printed copies of all resources, Powerpoints, song CD, DVD and a bookmark for every child
- Tailored to the developmental phases of schooling

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
- ✓ Encourages and promotes school-community participation and home-school links

UPGRADE IF...

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3 PLAYFUL CREATIVITY

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www.legoland.co.uk/schools

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2 NEWS AND LEARNING

First News Education helps over 9,000 schools to advance pupils' literacy levels through a foundation of news. The weekly newspaper gives children an accessible and engaging way to grow their knowledge of the world and build confidence in discussing news. Alongside the newspaper, Activity Sheets and the online iHub deliver reading activities based on exploring each week's stories, provided in three levels to support teachers in developing pupils' global understanding, comprehension and news literacy skills. Free tasters are available at schools.firstnews.co.uk/explore



5 BACK IN TIME

Celtic Harmony is an award-winning education charity providing experiential learning of ancient Britain at Celtic Harmony Camp - the UK's largest reconstructed Iron Age settlement. The charity provides a programme of Prehistory Residential and Prehistory Day trips covering Stone, Bronze and Iron Age Britain to increase understanding of a more sustainable way of living. Pupils get to experience life as Neolithic hunter gathers, Bronze Age farmers and Iron Age warriors, with the unique opportunity to sleepover in a roundhouse! Get your free Prehistory Lesson Plan with Cartoon Resource by signing up for the Celtic Harmony newsletter at the website below. celticharmony.org



Why I Love...

Sallie Boyd, senior leader at Sutton Veny CE Primary, shares her plans for Christingle's 50th anniversary celebrations

Over the past 50 years, thousands of schools across the country have held Christingle celebrations for The Children's Society. The vital funds raised help to give vulnerable children a Christmas free from fear and full of hope.

“We are excited about the anniversary

We celebrate Christingle every other year in our school. We always use The Children's Society as our chosen charity, for many reasons. First and foremost, it's to make children aware of the plight of those less fortunate than themselves, some of whom may be in our communities. It helps raise awareness and compassion for others and the children are always willing to support in any way they can. It also helps pupils understand the idea of 'stewardship' and how, as a church school, we can help those in need.

“The Children's Society's resources are fantastic

The resources that The Children's Society provide really help, both in a practical sense (the candles, tape, etc), but also for lesson planning and suggestions for activities to help with the history and reasoning behind Christingle. We have used some of the extracts from the resources in our services. They are easy to use and follow.



“We're planning an extra-special service

We are hoping to celebrate The Children's Society's 50th anniversary by focusing on a theme of 'Children at Christmas: near and far'. We'll look at children around the world (which is what the orange of a Christingle represents) as well as the lives of children in our country. The collection during the service will be for The Children's Society and we also keep a collection box at our entrance desk during this period. For our school, Christingle is spiritual, thought-provoking and a welcome tradition.

To celebrate the 50th anniversary of Christingle, The Children's Society has created a range of free teaching resources for schools that

make it easy for you to hold a joyful, unforgettable Christingle celebration. Its teaching resources support your pupils' learning and creativity and include assembly plans, a specially commissioned 50th anniversary song and fun craft activities. This year, the charity has also created a special video which you can show at your celebration to let attendees know how their donations are allowing vulnerable young people in this country to enjoy a first Christmas free from fear.

Visit christingle.org/video to download it. For more information or to order your resources, visit christingle.org or call the friendly Supporter Care team on 0300 303 7000.

The Children's Society

No child should feel alone

GET PROACTIVE WITH PARENTS

Louis Walker recalls how taking the initiative with respect to a parent's religious convictions paid dividends for one Year 6 pupil...

Teachers are naturally protective of what goes on in their classrooms. The experiences shared between them and their 30-odd children feel like something 'outsiders' wouldn't understand, like something best kept private. Invaders, however well-meaning, are most certainly unwelcome.

Parents, too, can be viewed as ignorant of what it takes to run a classroom – ignorant of what their own children are really like in school, and worst of all, firm believers that they're some kind of expert in the job. After all, *they* went to school once...

However, breaking that circle of privacy and reaching out to difficult parents can pay dividends in the long-run.

RED FLAGS

That's certainly been the case with a Year 6 child I teach, who is a Jehovah's Witness. For years, her mum had pulled her out of vast chunks of the curriculum. During Year 5 she missed weeks with her class, having been removed from their study, and ultimately their production, of *Macbeth* – the nature of the witches being 'incompatible with her beliefs'. This was just one example of many issues that had come up year after year, to the enormous frustration of her teachers. The child didn't seem to feel like a full member of her classes, or indeed the school.

Her detachment from school was such that she didn't start writing at any length until Year 4, despite her reasonable aptitude. So, while looking at our Year 6 plans and noting a number of red flags – including the study of Charles Darwin and a class

reader about an angel – my heart sank. Her Year 5 teacher had simply wished me luck, and told me I'd never get her to go on the Year 6 residential trip. Another advised me to avoid her mum. However, I got lucky when I had another approach thrust upon me...

That luck came when her mum volunteered as a helper in the school, close to the summer holiday. I knew her daughter would soon be in my class, so I took the chance to talk to her about the year to come and how to be sensitive to their beliefs.

SNEAKING IN

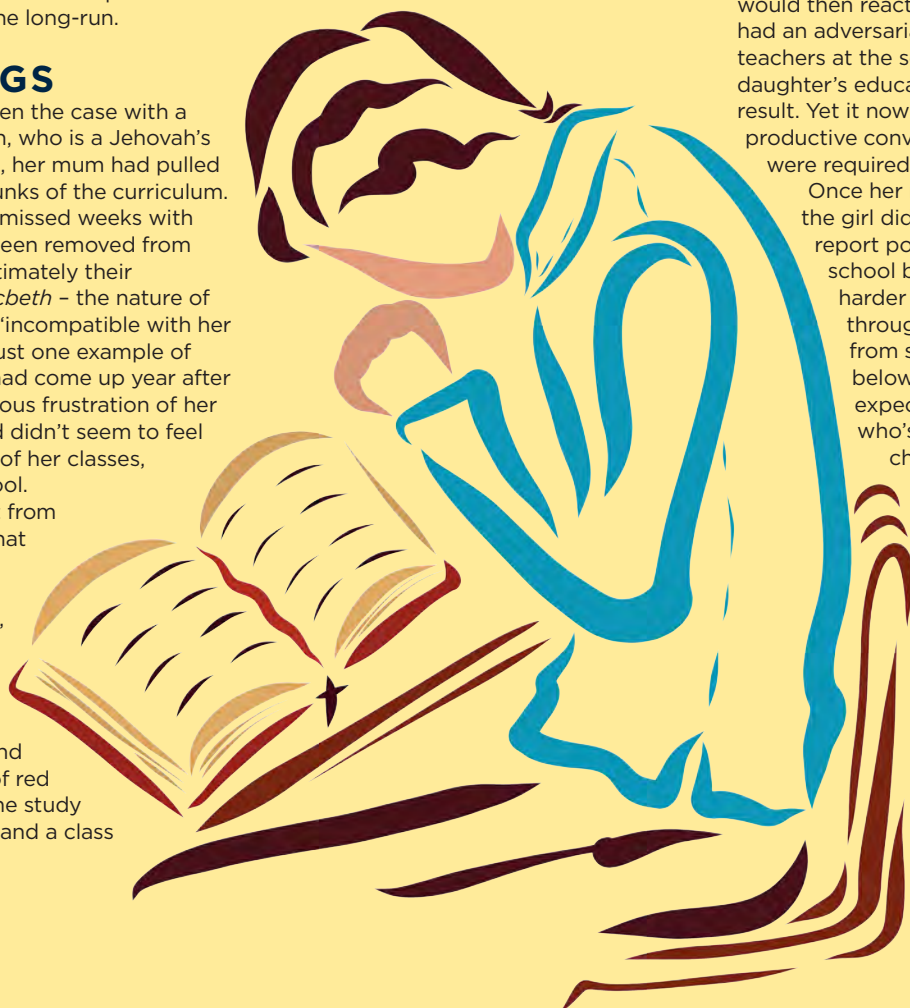
From then on, I took the initiative. I rang her the following week to ask some questions I still needed the answers to. I read her some key passages from our class reader and talked her through some elements of the residential trip that had made her feel uncomfortable. We built up trust. By the end of that first term she said she trusted me enough to teach her daughter anything in the curriculum, without further consultation.

She spoke to me about how, in previous years, it had always felt to her that teachers had tried to 'sneak in' content incompatible with her beliefs. Hearing about it after the event, she would then react angrily. She'd always had an adversarial relationship with the teachers at the school, and her daughter's education had suffered as a result. Yet it now seemed that some productive conversations were all that were required to break the cycle.

Once her mum began to like me, the girl did too. She started to report positive experiences of school back home, and tried harder to win my approval through her work. She went from someone working below age-related expectations to someone who's now in with a fair chance of passing all the big three.

And all it took was to make her parent feel like a valued part of the school experience. I'm now looking at which parents to target next year!

Louis Walker
is a primary
school teacher
based in Essex



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John Lawrence, Business Manager, George Mitchell School

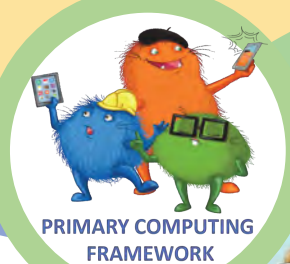


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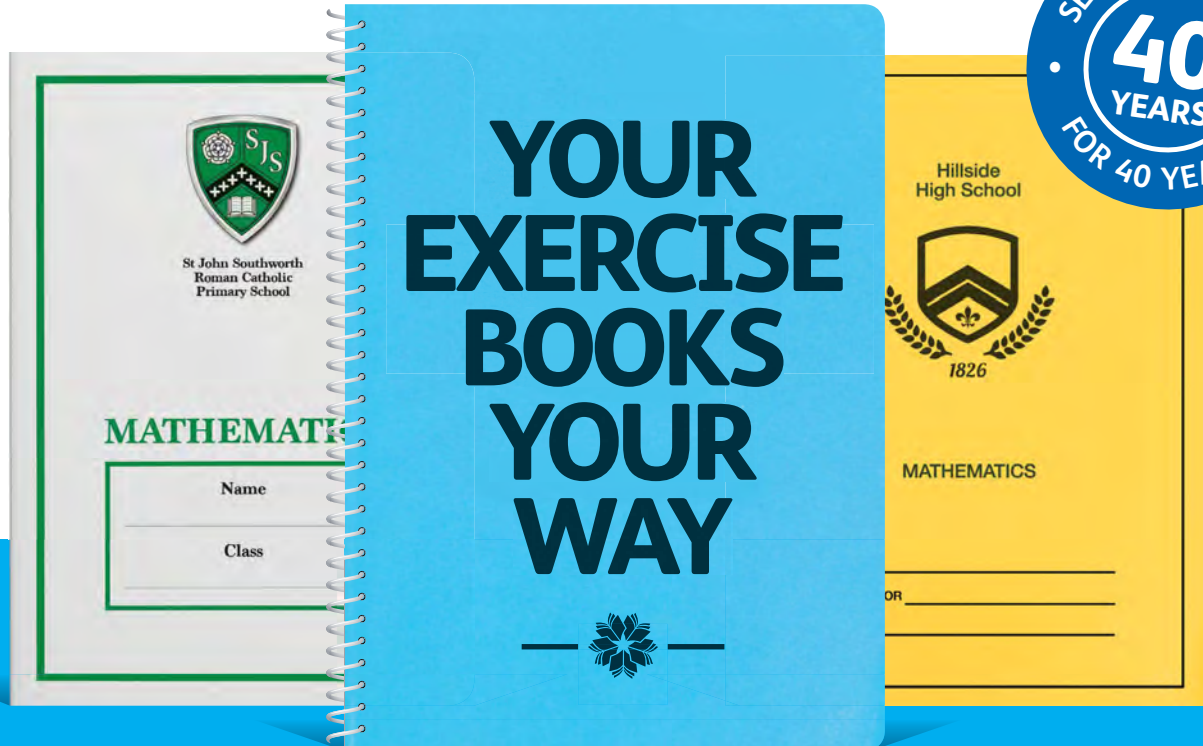
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