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From the editor

How wedded are you to your principles? As pressures continue to mount on school leaders across the country – strained budgets, thinning local service provision, the upcoming SATs – that may be a question they've had cause to ask themselves, or indeed, have had put to them by others.

Moreover, what do you do when the principles you hold are so antithetical to certain sections of your local community that they feel moved to protest them? There's been a vivid illustration of precisely that playing out in Birmingham over recent weeks, as part of a story that's captured national attention and continues to develop at the time of writing. Professor Colin Diamond, formerly Birmingham's deputy education commissioner, shares his perspective on the matter in question on page 40.

What about those principles one might assume are shared system-wide? Having previously witnessed exclusions from the vantage point of a PRU, Jackie Ward reflects on page 43 how her belief that schools could be doing more to include all children gave way to a recognition of how pressures to meet certain targets may have led schools to test where the limits of inclusion might lie.

Meanwhile, on page 6, Richard Gerver highlights the widely-held assumption among education policymakers that teachers can't be trusted to deliver without being tightly managed from above. There's a case to made for a more collaborative profession, in which educators are comfortable with sharing not just good practice, but also honest appraisals of both their own and others' mistakes. From this, a self-correcting system of accountability could organically emerge, but how likely is that future? Perhaps less likely than either of the 'good' and 'bad' artificial intelligence scenarios posited by Professor Rose Luckin on page 32...

Enjoy the issue,

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Our experts this issue

Sue Birchall
Business manager at The Malling School, Kent

Nadine Bernard
Primary headteacher, facilitator and executive coach

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Tyrone Samuel
Education data, systems and insight professional

Kate Owbridge
Executive headteacher, Ashdown Primary School, Crowborough

Iesha Small
Innovation lead at LKMco

From the makers of *Teach Primary*

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"Teachers need to feel valued"

Former headteacher turned consultant, speaker and author Richard Gerver tells us why the schools accountability system has to change

Your latest book is titled *A Manifesto for Change* – why publish it now?
I started writing it in January 2018, on the 10th anniversary of me leaving my primary headship. Over that decade, there were numerous times when I thought to myself, *I wish I'd known that when I was an educator* – I wanted to put these thoughts in a book to show current generations of teachers and school leaders those experiences which had stimulated my own thinking as a teacher.

You've consulted with numerous companies over the years – what have been the most memorable ways in which this work has informed your views on educational trends and policy?
I've worked with a number of organisations that employ high-performing young people with top degrees from the top universities, particularly in the financial and tech sectors. Talking to the senior directors of those organisations, they often tell me the same thing – that their younger employees are phenomenally well educated, but don't possess the kind of skills they need for them to be able to drive their businesses forward.

Those skills include self-leadership, innovation, the ability to take risks, the ability to collaborate. A question I've kept returning to is how do we plug that gap? And how can we ensure that we have an education system that doesn't result in that gap needing to be plugged?

In the book you describe Twitter as both a 'fantastic tool for collaboration' and an 'ecosystem for hate'. Are there any particularly inspiring examples of social media use you can call to mind?
In the early days of Twitter usage, perhaps around 2010 to 2011, I was doing a lot of work in Scandinavia and remember seeing Twitter there start to become this really powerful, collaborative tool. At the time, the Swedish government had just started to reform the country's school system – which had always been very collaborative up until then – by creating charter schools, similar to what we've seen here. Teachers soon found themselves feeling more isolated, and started using Twitter as a means of maintaining that collaborative structure.

At around the same time in England, when we saw similar moves towards free schools and academisation, some powerful voices emerged on Twitter who would try to undermine experts and voice their own views of what the system should be, rather than support one another. I think that helped create quite an intimidating environment for many educators, particularly at primary level, who then felt very nervous about using Twitter to express opinions, share views and look for advice.

More recently, however, I've been encouraged by the return of a more constructive, positive and collaborative discourse across Twitter, which I believe has been helped along by a younger generation of teachers who have grown up with social media in their lives.

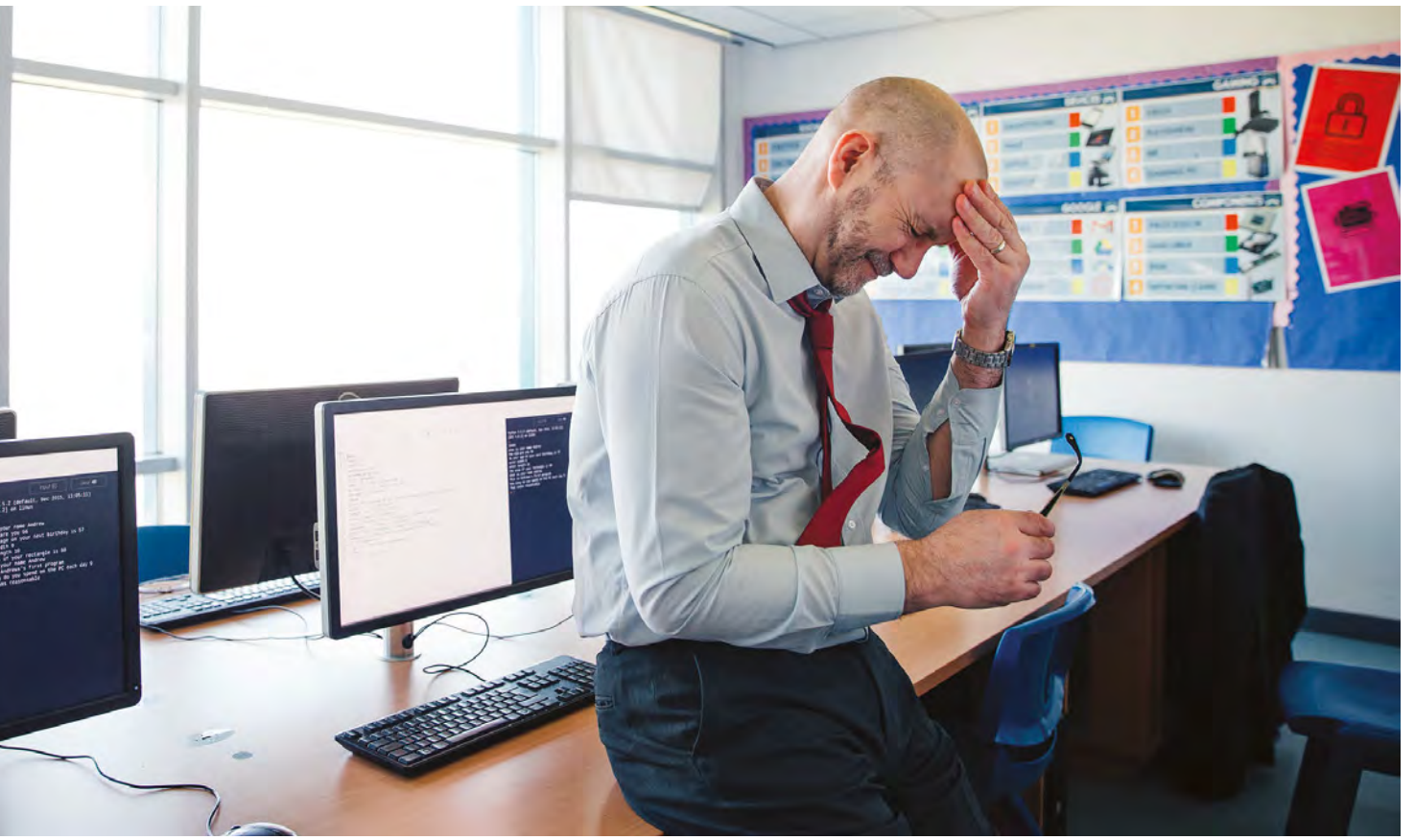
You've previously spoken of the need for schools to recognise the importance of 'psychological safety' in education. Can you expand on this?
'Psychological safety' is an elegant term I first picked up from Google and the research they've done into what makes teams effective. Google and other companies like them operate under what I call an 'assumption of excellence.' Borne out of trust for your colleagues, it's the absolute belief that you're working with good people who are capable of doing great things.

Yet in many traditional organisations – and certainly within this country's education sector – there's historically been a belief in the 'assumption of incompetence' – this idea that people have to be 'managed' in order to do their best job. If we don't trust schools and the profession to deliver, they consequently have to 'prove' their abilities before being allowed to develop. There must be better ways of looking at accountability.

By adopting a culture of psychological safety, we can create school environments where everyone supports one another, on the understanding that we're all human, and that we all have a duty to share both great practice and the stuff that goes wrong.

Is there any possibility of changing things in way you propose without entailing major upheaval of the sort we've seen in recent years?
Most education policy is built across short-term change, and largely focused on thoughts of '*How do we make our existing system more efficient?*' rather than on truly transforming it. That's what leads to those 'silver bullets', the stress, the pressure, and resulting scepticism.

We must get rid of this idea that change has to happen overnight. In *'A*



Manifesto...' I've tried to frame the book as a series of catalyst conversations, questions and challenges for people who I want to see talking about these things, and developing the confidence to start evolving their thinking, vision and practice. But it's very hard to do that when schools are still facing the same systems of accountability.

We need to have a big conversation about the vision and purpose of education – and not just in the 21st Century, because let's not forget that some of the kids being born and starting education now will be alive and working into the 22nd century. Only when we get to that place can we start to develop a truly sustainable model of education in which teachers feel like professionals again – where they feel valued, and where the vast majority of what they're doing in the classrooms is what they chose to enter the profession for in the first place.

Is the answer to take education policy out of the hands of politicians?

It may be too easy an answer, but I absolutely believe it is – to an extent. Politicians do have the right to hold the system to account, because they're the people's representatives. And in a system of mass public education that the taxpayer is paying for, the taxpayer has a right to know that the system is effective.

What's increasingly happening in a large number of developed countries is that politicians have become the designers of policy around education, while trust in the profession has been increasingly undermined. Look at Finland – it's a very different social context, but they have a highly successful and innovative education system, where teachers are highly respected, highly regarded and drive the system ahead of politicians. Around 20 years ago they stopped politicians changing policy every four or five years and handed the evolution and development of education to educators and the system itself.

That doesn't mean politicians don't hold them to account, but *politicians don't create the policy*. That means there's less chance of policy being driven by ideology, and far more chance of it being driven by practice. If you set people targets, human nature means they'll focus on delivering those targets because that's what they're judged on. If you ask people to instead create something that's more significant, and hold them to account for it, you'll achieve far more remarkable things.

***Education: A Manifesto for Change* is available now, published by Bloomsbury**

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CAREER TIMELINE

1992 – Begins teaching career, having previously been an actor and copywriter

2001 – Appointed headteacher of Grange Primary School, Long Eaton

2003 – Becomes adviser to the then Department for Education and Skills

2005 – Wins 'School Head Teacher of the Year' at the British National Teaching Awards

2006 – Has his work recognised at the UNESCO World Arts Education Conference

2009 – Publishes his first book, *Creating Tomorrow's School Today*

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School Improvement

HOW TO SUPPORT GIRLS WITH AUTISM

The myth that girls 'don't have autism' is being dispelled, says Sarah Wild – and school leaders should be mindful of how the condition can affect them

For too long the biggest misconception about autism has been that girls don't have it. In recent years there's been an increased awareness across society that autistic girls can present very differently to boys, yet getting a diagnosis is still challenging for autistic girls – especially in their primary years.

Many autistic girls at primary school can make conversation, want to have friends and are desperate to fit in and be 'normal.' The stereotype of an autistic child being locked into themselves and obsessive doesn't necessarily apply to autistic primary aged girls, who will be reaching out and trying to socially engage with their peers. Autistic girls can be deceptively good at faking neurotypical behaviours from a very young age, and are experts at hiding in plain sight at school.

Society needs to reimagine what it thinks autism looks like.

MASKING

'Masking', or 'camouflaging', is when an autistic person copies someone else's social behaviour and tries to make it their own, without understanding where it comes from – which can lead to serious problems.

Masking or camouflaging is mentally exhausting and isolating. Autistic girls at primary school are often surrounded by peers who really don't 'get' them. They have to mask their difficulties all day, and pretend to be a different version of themselves. In many cases this leads to meltdowns at home caused by overwhelming and confusing days, with family life becoming very difficult.

This is why understanding, regulating and managing emotions is absolutely crucial to autistic girls' emotional and mental wellbeing. It's key to their ability to feel well, happy and together, and to access opportunities. It's what makes the difference between autistic girls being able to function and attend school each day versus being stranded in their homes by their anxiety.

Supporting autistic

girls with recognising and managing their emotions is a long process. Autistic girls will often know that they have 'behaviours' that are 'unhelpful' or 'unacceptable', but won't understand why they behave in certain ways.

A good place to start is to work with an autistic girl in identifying how certain emotions make their body feel. Once they've linked physical sensations with their emotions, together you can work backwards to identify triggers for those emotions. Once the girl understands why certain situations make her feel a certain way, you can work with her in developing strategies for managing her emotional responses. This process can take months, but once the girls understand why they feel the way they do, it's incredibly empowering.

KEY STRATEGIES

In terms of general advice for educating autistic girls at primary school, you firstly need to build a relationship with them. Relationships are crucial to autistic girls – they need to feel accepted by you, and that you understand them. Follow this by making their learning concrete, contextual and visual.

Ask them how they'd like to be supported in social situations. Girls will want to engage with others socially, but may find this overwhelming or confusing. Build in quiet space and time each day where the girls can process their thoughts and feelings without being socially 'on show.'

Finally, create some bespoke sex and relationships education opportunities. This can't start too early, since autistic girls will have multiple vulnerabilities. These can include wanting to please people, being sociable without understanding context and being concrete literal thinkers, while also being very trusting and often having low self-esteem.

Sarah Wild is the headteacher of Limpsfield Grange School in Surrey, a maintained special school for girls with autism.

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WHAT SCHOOLS NEED FROM THEIR SUBJECT LEADS

Clare Elson examines the qualities and attributes SLTs should be looking for in the individuals chosen to lead on specific subjects

Subject leads help to coordinate and drive outcomes with a specific area of focus. According to Ofsted's 2019 draft inspection framework, inspections from September will include a 'quality of education' judgement. This means that subject leads will need a clear understanding of their school's curriculum intent ('what are we trying to achieve?'), implementation ('how is our curriculum being developed?') and impact ('what difference is our curriculum making?').

When allocating subject lead roles to teachers, it's obviously important that each subject be matched to your staff's skills and interests. Speaking from experience, having a passion for their subject role will help teachers take ownership of it and drive their efforts forward.

My first subject leadership role was in art. I went on to lead maths for 10 years while being a SENCo, and have also led on science, D&T, and history. Overall, I'd say I had more success in raising the profile of arts in the school – I may have led maths for many years, but not with quite the same level of confidence.

Subject leads must possess a solid grasp of their area across all year groups, not just the one they teach, and a have a good understanding of the quality of teaching across their school. Providing effective feedback to colleagues and helping them to deliver outstanding teaching, will, after all, require a secure knowledge of all aspects of your subject.

It's also important that subject leads possess good organisational skills, since a clear action plan with key objectives and success criteria – one consistent with the school improvement plan – will be vital for leading improvements. With budget allocations usually planned at the start of the financial year, subject leads will have to keep track of when observations, learning walks, book looks and other activities will be taking place. Subject leaders need to know what their subject's teaching looks like in day-to-day practice, and will therefore schedule regular monitoring visits to gauge the school's relative strengths and identify next steps for CPD and improving pupil outcomes.

At Roebuck Academy we now work in faculty teams to lead our subjects, which has enabled us to monitor the strengths of all staff and develop more effective subject leads.

When asked what she looks for in a potential subject leader, our headteacher, Lynsey Young, says "Above all, I look for someone with passion, enthusiasm, dedication and a relentless pursuit for their chosen subject. Subject leadership isn't easy – a subject leader has to be trusted to drive their subject forward through a consistent approach, so that colleagues have a clear understanding of the direction in which they're headed.

"Your vision will be important, as will your understanding of where you want the subject to go. You also need to be clear as to how you intend to communicate these to colleagues, in order to ensure that your aims are ultimately realised."

Clare Elson is a teacher at Roebuck Academy

How standardised are your assessments?

Without a consistent approach to test invigilation, it's debatable whether there can be such a thing as 'standardised assessments', says Tyrone Samuel...

"You have to consider the human element of life and the way that circumstances and chance upset everything – even the most accurate and clearly reported data."
– Sir Alex Ferguson

When working with assessment data, as I often do, the above quote is frequently at the forefront of my mind. I have regularly consulted with leaders on their use of standardised tests to collate and digest internal data, so that they're able to understand cohort performance and pupil gaps in learning. However, this process tends to be accompanied by one crucial omission – test invigilation. Can 'standardised tests' really be all that insightful – or even standardised at all – without a consistent and reliable invigilation process in place?

My own view is that without robust invigilation, our true understanding of pupil gaps in learning will be significantly reduced, given the heightened possibility of producing results that don't necessarily reflect pupils' actual abilities.

Ensuring consistency

Good invigilation ought to provide schools with an opportunity to ensure consistency in their testing, whilst also alleviating high stakes pressure on students by making the process part of their everyday school assessment culture.

How do you ensure that students and teachers aren't exposed to test papers ahead of time? How can you make it so that students aren't over-aided by test administrators or adults working with students one-to-one? Are breaks in testing, be they planned or unexpected, managed strategically and consistently across school? These are just a few factors among many, but they're vital to consider.

In my experience, schools will often leave the process of invigilation to their statutory testing year groups, which in primary schools effectively means only year 6 during the summer term. The rationale schools have for doing this usually relates to the challenges that come with the process, such as the need to deploy an appropriate number of adults who understand the invigilation policy during whole school assessment week, or the building space required to ensure that relevant access arrangements can be implemented correctly.

Rigour over data

Reducing the problems that come with 'high stakes' testing calls for a strategy that can address the above challenges. Following on from Ofsted's recent announcement that it will no longer expect to see schools' internal tracking data, I feel that now is the perfect time to replace the vast amount of time-consuming objective data collection currently happening within schools with a more rigorous process of properly invigilated testing over two or three streamlined assessment points.
This could be carried out by designated individuals not typically part of the normal classroom setting, but readily available when the tests are administered, having received appropriate training beforehand – maybe externally appointed candidates, or perhaps members of the school governance.

These assessments should be purposeful, involve minimal workload burden and prepare students for routine test conditions in a way that enables them to perform at their best. With this in place, rich and detailed insight into their progress should naturally follow, allowing teachers to have a significant impact on pupil learning.

Admittedly, one-off standardised assessments carried out with threshold measures aren't the only way to understand gaps in learning, and the invigilation challenges schools face will vary depending on the setting. However, ensuring consistency across three key, overlapping factors – purposeful assessments, access arrangements and standards of test invigilation – should provide you with a structure for considering whether your assessments are sufficiently standardised, and thus able to meaningfully inform your teaching and learning.

Tyrone Samuel is an education data, systems and insight professional

@TyPrimaryData

"Inspections will see richer, deeper conversations"

Ofsted's new inspection framework is set to shift more weight onto the shoulders of leadership – but there's no need for heads to panic, says Caroline Pudner...

Being a former primary school teacher, 'a meeting with Ofsted' isn't a proposal I'd have welcomed in the past. This was different, however – I'd arranged to meet Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, Amanda Spielman, in an attempt to cut through the speculation surrounding the new draft inspection framework, and was strangely looking forward to it.

Recorded for The Curriculum podcast (see tinyurl.com/curr34-as), Spielman gave an eye-opening account of her vision, and provided some useful insights into what schools are likely to experience during inspections as of September this year.

CURRICULUM FOCUS

Our discussion focused mostly on curriculum issues. Having carried out research into curriculum quality (see tinyurl.com/ofsted-curriculum), Ofsted now wants schools to think deeply about the substance and direction of their curriculums and be ready to articulate them.

This change in focus means that internal data will no longer be the be-all and end-all. Instead, inspectors and school leaders will have 'meaningful conversations' about the curriculum, how well children are learning it and how this flows throughout the school. As Spielman noted, "Inspections will see richer, deeper conversations that get more to the heart of what you would want schools to be thinking about."

She went on to explain, "It's about the big picture. We're looking to see if your thinking is clear, if you know where you are, what's strong and what's not – if you're on the right path. It's changing the inspection conversation, so that we put more time and attention into something that's incredibly important to schools, and always has been."

SPOTLIGHT ON LEADERSHIP

The draft framework also marks a shift away from inspectors making significant judgements based on individual teachers' performance and one-off lessons, in favour of a greater emphasis on the vision and strategies of school leadership. More responsibility will therefore be placed on leaders for planning and implementing a broad and balanced curriculum. Spielman hopes that this, alongside dropping the demands for reams of assessment data, will relieve pressure on class teachers.

"I think that as heads and leadership teams get accustomed to this new model, they'll realise that it puts the weight in a different place," she said, "so perhaps there'll be a little less pressure on teachers to have the 'perfect Ofsted lesson.'"

Educators can be reassured that Ofsted won't be expecting perfection at first. It's giving schools time to get their curriculum vision together, and has recognised that for many, this may be a 'work in progress'.

Spielman was keen to point out that curriculum design needn't be daunting, but conceded that it can be a major task for primary schools: "In many ways [they] have the harder job, because they don't have big management teams, they don't have somebody who is a subject expert in all the areas they teach. Primary schools are more likely, I think, to use various kinds of outside resource and support."

Ofsted has stressed, however, that whatever approach schools use, this curriculum work shouldn't be seen as 'just a quick fix'.

CONSISTENCY AND IMPACT

Spielman did admit that inspectors will have to cover a lot of ground in a relatively brief visit. So how exactly will inspectors look to gather evidence to assess the big picture in a school, assuming the new framework is implemented in its current form?

The key will be judging consistency throughout the school. Inspectors will be asking the following:

- *Is there a clear curriculum intent and rationale?*
- *How is the curriculum intent being implemented?*
- *Is it effectively sequenced with clear endpoints?*
- *Is this evidenced in the children's work and what they talk about?*
- *Does the curriculum develop knowledge and skills?*

Inspectors will also want to see how well children access the curriculum, particularly through reading, so it seems highly likely that inspectors will speak to readers from different year groups.

In terms of lesson observations, Spielman says that inspectors will again take the broad view. "It's not about *'is this good or is this bad?'* It's saying *'does it all hang together?'* Are we hearing a consistent story? Can we draw together and say *'yes – this is the picture of the school'*?"

OUTCOMES STILL MATTER

Spielman was careful to stress that outcomes will remain important and should reflect the curriculum: "I think it's important that the outcomes are achieved in the right way. It's about substance, and really reflecting what the children have been taught and know."

Ofsted ultimately wants teachers to 'aim high' by delivering a broad and balanced curriculum – one which sees children achieving good results as a by-product of being taught well, rather than with the aim of ticking boxes.

Ofsted's aforementioned curriculum research found that some schools, despite being 'stuck' in RI due to poor test results, were nonetheless offering a rich curriculum. Spielman believes that the new framework may help those schools that find themselves in a similar situation. "The new framework really does, I think, help schools doing the job in particularly difficult circumstances to get recognition for what they're doing – even where that hasn't yet resulted in a significant change in the results coming out at the far end."

She did, however, admit that on the flip side, good and outstanding schools with narrower curriculums may get a shock following their next post-September inspection. The new framework could therefore potentially act as a leveller, at least in terms of schools' curriculum quality.

LOOKING AHEAD

The incoming changes might initially seem a daunting prospect for some school leaders, but it's important to recognise that there's a positive message to take away here.

For many schools, the greater emphasis on curriculum work could make a welcome change from endless data discussions, and there's curriculum support available for those wanting it. Ofsted isn't suddenly asking schools to do something radically different – it's more looking to shift its focus and shine a light on something that should be at the heart of every school.

My own advice to school leaders and teachers would be that nobody knows your children better than you do. By creating a quality curriculum that's right for your children, you'll be going a long way towards creating one that's right for Ofsted too.

5 STEPS TO CURRICULUM SUCCESS

1. DO A CURRICULUM AUDIT
What works well already? What's having less impact? What do your stakeholders say?

2. AGREE YOUR CURRICULUM INTENT
What kind of curriculum do you want for your school? What's the rationale behind it?

3. RESEARCH CURRICULUM BLUEPRINTS THAT ALREADY WORK
Referring to existing curriculums, published or otherwise, will save months of staff time and effort – it may be that they require only minimum shaping to fit your needs.

4. SET A PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTING YOUR CURRICULUM
Ensure that knowledge and skills are well-sequenced, and that meaningful links are made across topics.

5. TACKLE READING ISSUES IN SCHOOL
Make this a top priority, particularly in KS1, and provide support for children who are struggling.

Caroline Pudner is a curriculum developer at Cornerstones Education; episodes of The Curriculum can be found at tinyurl.com/curriculum-podcast or downloaded via Apple Podcasts

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SKILLS FOR LIFE

Liz Grundy explains how her school went about developing a communication project that recently came to national attention at the Shine a Light Awards...

Longmoor Primary School is a larger than average school in the heart of a strong and vibrant North Liverpool community. We've been here for over a hundred years; generations of families have attended Longmoor, all of whom have been very supportive of our aims and share our aspirations for their children.

The number of children we have registered for free school meals is significantly higher than the national average, some from quite complex family backgrounds – yet that makes us all the more more determined to ensure all of our pupils get the same great start to their education that every child is entitled to.

DIFFERENT ITERATIONS

I joined Longmoor in September 2015, making this my fourth year in post. Prior to my appointment, my predecessor and her leadership team had in 2011 initiated a communication project that eventually turned into the provision we offer today. They were looking for ways to improve pupil progress in reading and writing, and identified as one of the major barriers the low level of communication skills of pupils entering the school.

She was able to draw upon the services of our LA's principal speech therapist, Christine Taylor, who worked alongside Longmoor staff to develop what was effectively the first iteration of our communication programme. Every child in nursery and reception – 90 pupils in total – was screened, after which it emerged that over 50% of children in both cohorts weren't at age-related expectations for speech and language.

The next step was to design a programme of interventions tailored to the needs of individual children, such as I CAN's Talk Boost (icancharity.org.uk) and Blank Level Questions. All staff were trained to deliver the programme, and further investment was made in appointing a dedicated communication and language assistant (CLA) to work with those children needing the most support. The model became one that involved assessing pupils on entry, identifying appropriate interventions, delivering them and then checking on progress and outcomes. It's been refined and tweaked over the years since, but the essential principles remain unchanged.

For example, the battery of assessment tests we initially used to measure pupils' speech and language levels were accurate, but the process took up to 30 minutes per child to complete. Our SENCo, Heather Gough, met with representatives of Stoke Speaks Out (stokespeaks.org – themselves winners of 'SLCN Initiative of the Year' at the 2018 Shine a Light Awards) to see what they had done. Following that meeting we switched to using their Early Learning Screen, with the result that the process now takes just 5 to 10 minutes per child.

MAINTAINING THE MOMENTUM

Having seen the benefits of our early years communication provision, I wanted to maintain the momentum and give communication the same high profile throughout the school, as I believe the ability to communicate effectively makes a huge difference to children's life chances.

We did this in small steps at first, by promoting school council elections and the process of writing and delivering a speech. We then began to develop our oracy curriculum through debating and drama. Now, having joined the Voice Liverpool programme, we feel there's been a step-change in the profile of oracy across the school, and that the confidence and articulacy of all pupils is noticeably developing.

The original 'seed money' for our early years communication provision came from Pupil Premium funding, a proportion of which we still use to cover the costs of our CLA and ongoing training and resources. We feel that our continued investment in this provision has been more than repaid by the outcomes we're now seeing throughout the school.

Budgets are getting tighter, of course, so we try to be selective and invest in a small number of high-quality initiatives, rather than take a 'scattergun' approach. Voice Liverpool is a great example – when I saw that the charities SHINE and Voice 21 were launching a city-wide education programme to boost students' spoken language skills and literacy, I knew I wanted Longmoor to be a part of it. It's been a significant investment in terms of staff time for training and development, but very much worthwhile in that we're now part of a well-supported, evidence-based initiative.

LIFE SKILLS

We tend to focus our investment on staff development and training, rather than spending large sums on equipment or one-off services. That's because we know that the most effective way to accelerate pupil progress and improve outcomes is through high quality teaching. We've also been extremely fortunate in being able to collaborate with a wide range of skilled and experienced partners, who have supported us in building a really effective, good value provision for all our pupils, including those with SEN.

I've always believed in giving children as many opportunities as possible to take on responsibilities themselves. This promotes self-confidence, teaches children the value of being of service to others and allows them to practise essential life skills. For example, when recruiting play leaders from among the children, we advertised the post and had pupils write letters of application and attend interviews. Just recently, I whisked some of the successful applicants into a KS1 assembly to explain what the role involves and demonstrate some new playground equipment to them. They presented with such confidence and poise at a moment's notice – that's when I knew that everything we're doing to promote high standards in communication is paying dividends.

IF YOU BUILD IT, THEY WILL COME

In terms of our parental outreach, perhaps the most important initiative is our weekly Lego Club, run by our SENCo. It's a really simple idea – families come into school and build Lego models together – but the beauty of it is that parents who might otherwise be reluctant to come into school for a formal meeting are happy to have a quick chat with Mrs. Gough at Lego Club for some advice or support.

The positive relationships that are built there can also be really helpful when we're trying to support families in difficult circumstances, or who have children with SEN. We've found that many of our families from overseas will attend the club because they may not know anyone locally. The club offers a great opportunity to meet other parents, particularly through the friendships their children have formed.

Liz Grundy is the headteacher of Longmoor Primary School in Aintree, which was recently announced as the 2019 Primary School of the Year at the Shine a Light Awards, organised by Pearson and the Communication Trust

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Why we need compassionate schools

We can solve the mental health crisis affecting our schools by looking inwards, writes Andy Sammons

I should have acted at the first sign of trouble. A perfectly innocent email dropped in my inbox and I cried. A lot. For about 10 minutes.

I turned 32 last year. I have a beautiful two-year-old and an incredible wife. Yet I found myself laying on my parents' couch and sobbing uncontrollably. It's safe to say that 2018 was an appalling year for me.

Without knowing how I got there, I had plummeted into a black hole of depression and anxiety so deep that I no longer wanted to be alive. When my little boy cried, my stomach would lurch with anxiety and panic. The thought of going in to work every day gave me a 10-tonne weight on my chest. Working as a head of department in an unstable environment for months had destroyed my mind's ability to rationalise. I was gone, mentally. Totally.

'THREAT', 'DRIVE' AND 'SOOTHE'

Working my way out of this – something I'm continuing to do – has forced me to consider education in the wider sense and the systems we find ourselves in. Two things are now abundantly clear. Firstly, the cruellest thing about depression and anxiety is that it's like a living death, but one you can only really fix from inside – albeit with some help from others.

Secondly, if we take a look at the literature on mental health and map it onto our educational context in the UK, the system is inadvertently encouraging everyone within the education profession into behaviours which might seem rational, but are profoundly harmful to their own, and others', mental health.

At my lowest point, I sought help from a therapist. I wasn't all that encouraged to begin with; I explained that work had been tough, my son wasn't sleeping well, and that I felt like a failure. She drew three circles on a sheet of paper – the same sheet of paper that remains on the table whenever I see her now. Each circle had a word inside it - 'Threat', 'Soothe' and 'Drive'.

The approach we used is called Compassion Focussed Therapy, and has roots in evolutionary psychology. It works on the idea that we all have three parts to our brain (see panel). When we perceive threats in our environment, they effectively trigger a panic state in the brain that can have a long lasting and dire impact on our mental health. As the most powerful part of the brain, this 'threat' system controls the override, much like a fire alarm whose only job is to get people out of a building.

> "The system is inadvertently encouraging everyone within the education profession into behaviours which are profoundly harmful to their mental health"

Unfortunately, while our threat system is good at telling us to run from tigers, it's less great at finding answers to complex problems. Our bodies tell us when we're in threat mode via palpitations, sweating, breathlessness and that awful feeling in the pit of your stomach or chest. Some of which may sound familiar...

WARNING SIGNS

On reflection, I ignored all the warning signs. Repeated wakefulness during the night to attend to my mental 'to do' list; not chatting to my wife; not seeing friends or family; not exercising; not eating. I felt powerless to stop it, so I did nothing. Why didn't I do something earlier?

Everything in our society – and I include education in this – is essentially structured in a way that encourages us to forget that we're evolved beings whose brains haven't evolved solely to meet the challenges of modern living. Unless we consciously remind ourselves of this and make space between ourselves and our thoughts, feelings and emotions, we're going to be in for a tricky ride.

Luckily for us, however, our minds have also evolved a fail-safe mechanism. By nurturing our human 'Soothe' brain, we can calm our systems, improve our mental health and create better environments for us to work in.

When I realised that the therapeutic model I'd been working with was about 'compassion', my heart sank. I didn't want to be told that by being nice to myself and others, everything would be okay – but I was wrong. Compassion is about honesty and warmth, not simply 'being nice.' It speaks to our 'Soothe' brains by encouraging us to treat ourselves in a more kind and honest way, and to recognise some of the unhelpful things a 'threat-addled' brain might be telling us.

By understanding ourselves better and being kinder in the process, we can start to understand the point of departure we see in others, both colleagues and

students alike. We're evolved to benefit from both receiving kindness and passing it on to others.

EXTERNAL VALIDATION

That got me thinking about whether the same principle can apply to wider systems, as well as individuals. What if the education system itself is forcing us to focus on outcomes and external measures to justify our own existence? What are the implications if schools' validation comes only from external sources, such as exam results, rather than the quality of relationships within the building?

The pressures we currently see on headteachers and staff to conform to a competition-based model of education, with league tables at their heart, has led to the very opposite of healthy system-level mental behaviours. Schools should emphasise 'Soothe-Drive' behaviours – being driven to achieve results from a place of warmth and compassion. A 'Threat-Drive' school starts from entirely the wrong place, and will lead to appalling consequences for staff.

One phone call and a pitch later, I found myself researching and writing a book, *The Compassionate Teacher*, which explores and explains how we can improve our own mental health as individuals working within schools, while offering some practical tips from a teaching perspective on maintaining a manageable work-life balance.

A WAY OUT

Moving forward, there is a way out of this quagmire. To a degree, systemic change is out of our control, but we can bring about a cultural shift. This begins by seeing ourselves as part of a much bigger picture, in relation to those systems exerting pressure on us. If can do this collectively, we can start creating the schools our teachers and young people deserve.

Individually, we can practise things like Soothing Rhythm Breathing to calm ourselves (there are plenty of free guides online), being conscious of those things we appreciate in our lives, or simply being more of aware our feelings and what might trigger them.

Sometimes, the honesty we provide for ourselves can tell us things we might not want to hear – particularly if it's the realisation that the school we work at may be detrimental to our wellbeing. The point, however, is this – unless we're prepared to recognise our own warning signs and do something about it, both individually and collectively, things will only get worse.

OUR THREE-PART BRAINS

• THREAT
The most basic and powerful part of our evolved brains from our reptilian days

• DRIVE
Linked with status and achievement, stemming from our evolution into mammals

• SOOTHE
A more recently evolved component linked to the 'human' behaviours of attachment, kindness, care and affection (It's worth reflecting here that humans are at the top of the evolutionary tree because we learned to cooperate)

Andy Sammons leads English at a large secondary comprehensive in West Yorkshire; *The Compassionate Teacher* is available now, published by John Catt

@andy_samm
compassionteach.weebly.com

Resources UPDATE

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Hope Education understands just how quickly busy schools can get through essential resources. It also knows that art, stationery and cleaning supplies are often in need of frequent replenishing. That's why its team has been working hard to redevelop the CLASSMATES® brand.

Aimed at providing schools with an extensive range of high quality products, Hope Education's CLASSMATES® comprises over 1,000 superior quality items while keeping prices affordably low. From the resources themselves right down to the packaging they come supplied in, the Hope team have left no stone unturned to help you make savings. From paint and PVA glue, through to pens, pencils and hand soap, CLASSMATES® can result in savings of as much as 45% when compared against bigger brands.

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You can be further confident that with the variety of size options available, there's an option to suit your school's need and budget. Indeed, Hope understands only too well that school budgets are tighter now than they've ever been. That's why it recently invested £4 million into lowering its online prices in effort to give school even better value.

Those price reductions apply across entire CLASSMATES® products range, allowing you to save up to 25% on PVA – our 5 litre bottle is currently priced at just £4.45!). Simply look out for the 'price drop' logo on the Hope website.

WHAT USERS THINK

John Dabell recently reviewed the CLASSMATES® range for Primary School Management magazine and liked what he found: "I've always tended to upgrade when it comes to things like glue sticks and dry-wipe markers, since bitter experience has taught me that the glue won't always stick, and the markers will soon dry up. But these Classmates resources are surprisingly good and haven't disappointed or let me down yet."

Read John's full review on page 87.

SWITCH AND SAVE

Finding a low-cost alternatives to big brand products can sometimes be a time-consuming and frustrating process. That's why Hope Education has made sure that switching to CLASSMATES® couldn't be simpler for teachers and business managers.

You don't need to do a thing – each time you add a branded item to your basket when shopping online at Hope Education and there's a CLASSMATES® alternative available, you'll be automatically shown the saving you could potentially make. You can then opt to switch to the CLASSMATES® equivalent at the click of a button. it really is that easy, giving you the opportunity to re-invest the savings made back into your school.

Remember also that at Hope Education, it's not just the big brands you can save against. The site's price comparison tool also compares against hundreds of resources stocked by other suppliers large and small, saving you even more time and money.

FURTHER INFORMATION
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Buildings & Facilities

WHERE DO YOU SOURCE YOUR FOOD?

Look beyond the frozen meals and make your lunch offerings something to be proud of, says School Food Matters CEO, Stephanie Wood

Our charity began in 2007 with a campaign to fix up the school meals in 40 London primary schools. At the time, only 26% of the children were choosing school meals – which was unsurprising, since they were being served frozen meals brought in from a factory in Wales. The LA believed that the schools included in the contract couldn't cook from fresh. We challenged them on that, and proceeded to write an ambitious food spec, asking caterers to come back to us with solutions.

By 2011, we had managed to transform the service, getting those 40 primary schools to start serving freshly prepared meals, cooked on-site by well-trained school cooks, using quality ingredients. Within a term of the new provision being introduced, the pupils' take-up of school meals had doubled and the meal price had came down by as much as 38p.

We know that food prices have increased in the time since, but we'd still recommend that schools be ambitious, ask for the meal service they want and write an ambitious spec. We also know that schools will get better meal prices if they collaborate with each other – single site contracts are likely to be more expensive, as you won't enjoy the benefits of economies of scale.

THREE ATTRIBUTES

When working on the government's School Food Plan in 2013, the three things schools with great meal services had in common were:

- A headteacher that led the change by taking responsibility for the service's success and made things happen
- A whole school approach that encouraged a good food culture throughout the school, so that teachers, children, parents and the wider community all received messages about food rooted in health and wellbeing

• A true understanding of their customers – i.e. the children.

Mindful of these, it's sensible to create a food team that includes someone from SLT, a rep from the catering company, whoever manages the contract and, of course, some children. Together, you can go on your reconnaissance mission, discuss the findings and come up with a 'to do' list.

GROW YOUR OWN

How about growing the food for your school lunches yourself? There are some great examples of schools growing masses of vegetables to supplement their school kitchen supplies, but to be honest, they're rare.

What school gardens *can* do, however, is create a fabulous learning experience for children so that they can get to grips with where food comes from. What better way is there to teach children about food then getting them to grow it from seed and harvest the fresh produce, before taking it to the school kitchen? We've found that school cooks are happy to receive garden offerings, and that caterers can do a great job of showcasing the children's efforts: *'Today's tomatoes were brought to you by Year 5 – today's roast potatoes were grown by Year 2...'*

The food enterprise element in our programmes has proved very popular with both teachers – it's a great opportunity for sneaking in a bit of maths – and children, the latter of whom love the idea of becoming traders and will often thrive in a simulated market environment, when previously they might have been reluctant to contribute in class.

We've also seen young people successfully selling chutney and sauces through our Schools to Market programme with Whole Foods Market, and fresh veg with our Young Marketeers at Borough Market

Stephanie Wood is the founder and CEO of the charity School Food Matters

@sfmtweet
schoolfoodmatters.org

UPGRADE YOUR FURNISHINGS

Upmarket businesses have high-end furniture and equipment they no longer need or use. Schools are short of resources. Enter Business2schools...

For 10 years I've been the owner and managing director of a company called Mayfair Quarters, which organises travel, hotel rates and various other benefits, services and discounts for large corporate clients, mostly from the financial services sector.

Over that time, we've helped many clients move premises and observed how items are often left behind, such as furniture that's an issue for them to get rid of. Outside of the business, I'm also a school governor, so I know how difficult it is in education to find resources for essential items.

Business2schools is a new initiative that enables businesses to donate old or unwanted items to schools, instead of selling or disposing of them. We've already had quite a few well-established businesses sign up via our website, including private banks and hedge funds. We recently helped clear a 5,000 sq ft office in New Bond Street belonging to the investment specialist Värde Partners, took the inventory and allocated items to one primary and two secondary schools.

Once a school has registered with us and stated what items they want, we'll notify the headteacher or business manager via email and let them know when we've any relevant inventory – the school only has to accept what it wants. All being well, a business will then give the items to the school for free, though it's usually down to the school to arrange collection or delivery of the items. That said, we've found on occasion that if a company has set aside a destruction budget – as was the case at the aforementioned New Bond Street office – they'll sometimes be willing to spend this on removal services.

A good proportion of items come from London, but we have schools signed up in Kent, Northampton, Watford and West Sussex and try to link schools with businesses willing to donate items in their locality where we can.

For us, it's not about replacing items schools already have, but giving them things that are better. In the past, that's meant large, high quality desks for secondary schools and Okamura Contessa designer desk chairs for primary teachers. Where the scheme's made a huge difference is in technology – because businesses are typically on a much faster 3-year upgrade cycle compared to the 10-year+ cycle in schools, the latter can benefit from receiving faster computers with much more powerful components and even multiple display monitors (all hard drives are wiped of data before they're passed on). We've seen for ourselves how this can help the children work faster and get them through learning interventions more quickly.

The businesses have really embraced the scheme. Where once they'd be scratching around, knowing they have to clear a building by a certain date ahead of a move, and aware that good quality furniture may end up as landfill, they now have a place to send their old items where they'll be valued and gratefully received.

Lindsay Parslow is a co-founder of Business2Schools and the managing director of Mayfair Quarters and Mayfair Quarters Travel

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business2schools.com

Include everyone

Could your setting be doing more to ensure that it's a safe, welcoming and comfortable environment for all pupils, staff and visitors?

We're all aware of school access audits and accessibility plans, but what do they actually involve? To be compliant with the Equality Act, schools need to have an accessibility plan and make 'reasonable adjustments' to their school building, availability of information and curriculum, so that all pupils, staff and visitors have equal access as their non-disabled peers.

Schools' duty is specifically "To take such steps as it is reasonable to have to take to avoid the substantial disadvantage" to a disabled person caused by a provision, criterion or practice applied by, or on behalf of a school, or by the absence of an auxiliary aid.

So, how do we identify any access issues around our premises? An experienced access consultant who is sensitive to budgetary issues within school settings – and can thus suggest practical ways of ensuring compliance with equality legislation without recourse to costly building works – is a good option. Many of the schools we have advised over the past decade have endeavoured to take on this work themselves. More often than not, they've 'used their caretaker' to undertake an access audit, and had their headteacher or SENCo write up the report and plan. Having found this to be a costly exercise in time and unnecessary building works, they've then called in the experts.

Many reasonable adjustments are inexpensive, and will often involve a change in practice, rather than building works. Instances of this might include changing lighting and paint schemes to help visually impaired children, carpeting and acoustic tiling in classrooms to help hearing impaired pupils and ramps to help physically impaired children.

Take the following example. A school admits a pupil who is deaf and decides, without consulting the pupil, to install an induction loop in all teaching rooms – but the pupil doesn't use a hearing aid and is therefore unable to benefit from it. The pupil does lip read, however, so a reasonable adjustment would have been to tell all staff to ensure that they face the pupil when speaking to him – at at no cost to the school!

However, there may be instances where cost-free adjustments simply aren't possible – an obvious case being the absence of an accessible toilet. Schools can find themselves in tribunals due to not having an accessible toilet, or using one as a storage cupboard if they do. Equal access to school buildings extends beyond pupils; the school has a further duty of care towards its staff and visitors. Sadly, there's usually little or no financial assistance available for necessary works of this kind because of shrinking LA budgets.

An access audit of a school building needs to include areas such as the approach to the building, car park, route to reception, external steps/ramps, main entrance, reception area/desk, corridors, hallways/internal circulation, wayfinding and signage. Other areas to pay attention to include classrooms, internal stairs, steps and ramps, internal doors, WCs (both general and disabled provision), dining hall, staff room, means of escape, lifts/stair lifts and outdoor spaces.

Your aim when carrying out an access audit of your school building should always be to identify obstacles to access, look at the options for removing these and to make clear recommendations for improving access.

Lesley Mifsud is head access auditor and CEO at EA Audits

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“IT’S MORE THAN JUST A BUILDING”

For one school situated beside an RAF base, the transformative impact of its new teaching and learning space made the preceding year of disruption entirely worthwhile...

JO PHILLIPS
Headteacher and Y2 teacher, Wyton on the Hill Primary School

ADAM GARNER
Associate architect, Saunders Boston Architects

PREPARATION

JP: When I first arrived at the school in 2009 it was in quite a dilapidated state, though a rebuild was already in the planning stages. It was supposed to have been finished in 2014, but after the funding was pulled, we had to lay a lot of plans to rest.

AG: Wyton was an unusual case, since the school is located right beside the RAF Wyton base. The Ministry of Defence were fairly heavily involved in the project, as a lot of the base children go there.

JP: When our LA finally approached me a couple of years ago with the news that we would be getting a new building, we were delighted at the prospect – though I was sceptical that it was actually going to happen for the first six months or so...

AG: The new school building needed to be constructed on the site’s playing field, whilst allowing the existing school to remain fully operational in the interim.

There was one significant alteration to the brief early on, when it changed from being a 1-form entry school to a 1.5-form entry school.

JP: Our old building dated back to the 1950s. It was a box built around a wooden frame structure, but having been subject to many improvements over the years – double glazing, UPVC doors and so forth – the frame had gradually rotted away inside. This came to light before I became head. The school had wanted to put a cover over the courtyard, but were advised they couldn’t because the building was essentially not supported by an internal framework.

> “We had to lay a lot of plans to rest”

AG: The new building’s interior is divided into three distinct elements: the pre-school, the main teaching wing with classrooms and ancillary spaces and the learning resource area. The latter is the building’s focal point, and can be seen from the exterior as a cube at the front of the site. The idea was to create a hub from which ‘streets’ and ‘neighbourhoods’ would wind out, with pupils moving from these very public, open spaces to the quieter classroom areas.

JP: We wanted a light and airy space. The old building had been quite closed, with fairly small corridors and very low ceilings. While teaching your class you’d quite often be aware of movement around the corridors, and it was difficult to keep tidy, owing to a lack of storage.

We have an active school council and a strong mechanism for pupil voice at the school which we call The Big Conversation. Once we knew the project was going ahead, we talked a lot with the children about what they wanted their new school to look like. Their suggestions included wider corridors, a bigger play area and more space for keeping their personal belongings.

AG: We linked the main hall and studio hall together, so that the school has the option of combining them into one larger space. The idea throughout was to get as much versatility into the building as

possible, so that it could be used both by the school and for community events. The way educational spaces are being used is changing so much, and we've got to be as flexible as we can. It's almost like we're creating a stage or backdrop for the school and kids to use how they wish.

JP: There aren't many facilities in the local area. A part of the hall can be annexed off, enabling us to let it out for community use while keeping the rest of the school secure.

REALISATION

JP: During the construction work we ended up with a tiny area down the side of the school for the children to play in which we called 'the landing strip', because of how it was shaped. That meant having to stagger our play times and elongate our lunch times, so that we could have some children inside and some outside.

We also had to repeatedly change our fire planning and fire exits. Previously, all classes would assemble on the field – with the field no longer there, we needed to change our assembly and egress points whenever the building site changed, and step up our fire practice frequency to two or three times per half term.

AG: It was fortunate that there was an area of open land owned by the MoD immediately adjacent to the site which we managed to obtain, but the school still had to cope with considerably less outdoor space for a year. It was a huge challenge, but the staff and pupils were exceptional – and the end result, what they have now, very much outweighs those difficulties.

JP: The lack of outdoor access was perhaps the most difficult part of the experience for our children, but it was almost like a life lesson – that if you're patient and manage things carefully, good things will happen in the end. When we moved into our new building, all they did during playtime for the first week was run around and squeak, because they were so excited!

AG: When the building was handed over, the school was absolutely thrilled. The children and staff had made multiple visits to the site throughout the construction process, but seemed almost overwhelmed once they actually took ownership of it. It's changed from being a site comprising a failing single storey building with maintenance issues into a whole new school. It's made a world of difference to them.

JP: I think I underestimated how positive the impact would be on the children's learning and general behaviour. The school has always felt really busy, and still does to an extent, but there's now a new focus, purpose and sense of calm to what we do.

As soon as we moved in, people started coming to work earlier. The new building has plenty of working spaces, which we didn't have before, so our staff room can now be a place where we just sit and talk. Staff are always commenting to me how much the new space has impacted positively on their wellbeing. It's more than just a building.

PROJECT TIMELINE

Nov 2016
Saunders Boston Architects appointed as lead designer

May 2017
Planning stage commences

Nov 2017
Final approval of planning and design granted

Dec 2017
Work begins on site

Feb 2019
New school building opened

Mar 2019
Previous school building demolished

What can your school do to support charity?

We hear from several charitable causes keen to engage schools in supporting their work

PENNY STRETTON

Director of Marketing and Communications, The Prince William Award

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LESLEY APPLETON

Fundraising co-ordinator, Hand on Heart

Hand on Heart is a dedicated children's charity with a mission to keep children safe, and prevent the deaths of the 12 young people who each week lose their lives due to sudden cardiac arrest.

Our vision is for all educational establishments and community facilities hosting children's activities to have defibrillators in place; for their staff to be confident in managing health emergencies, and for further child deaths from sudden cardiac arrest to be prevented.

Charity days don't just raise money for good causes – they can also provide children with valuable learning opportunities. How does the heart work? Want happens when the heart gets poorly? How can we help to protect the heart whilst in school?

The money schools raise could go towards helping and protecting the lives of young people you may well know – your own children, or those of siblings, other relatives and close friends in your local community.

Hand on Heart can provide fundraising packs and worksheets via our website. Raising funds and supporting us can be fun, so get involved and help save the lives of others at risk from cardiac arrest.

@HandonHeart
handonheart.org

JONATHAN ROBERTS

Manager, community and events fundraising UK, Smile Train

From the tried and tested non-uniform day fundraiser, to running an art competition, there are countless ways in which your school can get involved and support the work of Smile Train.

We recently heard of how one primary school supported us by holding an assembly dedicated to joke-telling, with pupils all bringing in their favourite joke and a charitable donation. I personally think that's a great idea – and one that aligns perfectly with our goal at Smile Train of giving every child the opportunity to live a healthy, productive life and the chance to smile, with Smile Train funded cleft treatment costing as little as £150.

No matter what you do to support Smile Train, make sure to contact us so that you can receive a selection of helpful fundraising materials, such as balloons, banners and information leaflets. These are a great way of raising awareness and can help make your event a great success. Most of all, it's important to have fun whilst fundraising, and to let your pupils know that their support is helping to change the world – one smile at a time...

@smiletrainuk
smiletrain.org.uk

INSPIRING SOUNDS

Services For Education tells us about its mission to create opportunities for children and young people across Birmingham.

Services For Education is a Birmingham-based music and learning charity. Music is of key significance, particularly for those with additional needs. It can be the only way in which some children with severe and profound learning difficulties are able to communicate – yet nationally, the music offer for special schools is not equitable with their mainstream counterparts.

To begin addressing this gap, in 2018 Services For Education launched 'Inspiring Sounds'; a pilot project seeking to broaden access to music for those with additional needs.

'Inspiring Sounds,' is delivered by a team of 'Sounds of Intent' practitioners (see soundsofintent.org). The team is led by Sophie Gray, who has worked in music education for the past 16 years, primarily supporting learners with complex needs and disabilities. Also involved in the project is Professor Adam Ockelford of Roehampton University, the creator of Sounds of Intent, who acts as a critical friend and will be developing music resource cards tailored to individual schools.

We are currently working with over a hundred students across six special schools through the Inspiring Sounds initiative. Pupils receive two weekly hours of bespoke group music lessons led by our practitioners, while school staff receive training in how to use music in their practice and how to evaluate their pupils' progress.

The students benefit by being able to develop a variety of skills, including enhanced movement, awareness and creativity, as well as life skills such as listening and turn-taking. They also have a lot of fun in the process!

"During sessions, children who were normally reserved, and who struggle to pay attention during work time, got involved, playing instruments, imitating noises and copying actions in songs. It was amazing to see!"
– Class teacher

School staff have also benefited from the professional development opportunities that the work brings.

"[Sounds of Intent and Inspiring Sounds] helped staff to understand the importance and significance of incorporating music into the curriculum, language and development, and how it truly benefits social and emotional communication. It has helped to provide staff with more confidence in teaching what's a specialist subject, and make the teaching of music less daunting."
– Music co-ordinator

We have provided school staff with the resources, skills and confidence to continue delivering music provision for hopefully many hundreds more pupils in the future.

To find out more about the project, visit servicesforeducation.co.uk/inspiring-sounds

£20m

APPROXIMATE AMOUNT GIVEN TO CHARITY BY THE UK'S 9- TO 11-YEAR-OLDS PER YEAR

49%

THE PROPORTION OF YOUNG PEOPLE HEARING ABOUT CHARITIES THROUGH THEIR SCHOOL – BEHIND TELEVISION (78%) BUT SIGNIFICANTLY AHEAD OF PEERS (9%)

Source: March 2013 survey of 500 young people aged 9-11 and 500 aged 16-18 carried out by the Charities Aid Foundation

Those wanting to further explore the relationship between schools and charities may be interested in 'The mainstreaming of charities into schools' - a research paper authored by Sally Power and Chris Taylor originally published in the Oxford Review of Education (Volume 44, 2018)

The authors suggest that the extent of schools' involvement in charitable fundraising ought to be seen 'As an institutional and political phenomenon, rather than simply individual acts of altruism,' and calls for greater critical attention to be paid to school activities undertaken within a charitable context. Read the paper in full at tinyurl.com/psm-charities.

FIND MORE ONLINE:

CHARITY COMMISSION

Includes a register of charities in England and Wales and guidance for charity trustees and advisors

tinyurl.org/charity-commission

CHARITIES AID FOUNDATION

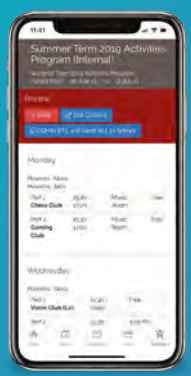
Provider of consultancy and banking services to charities, as well as CSR advice services to companies and other organisations

cafonline.org

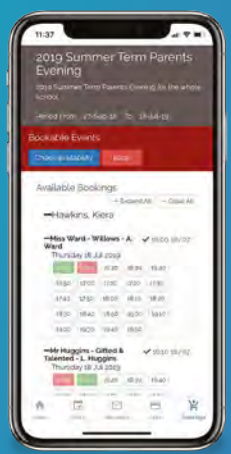
We link to all MIS including SIMS, Arbor, Integris

SchoolsBuddy

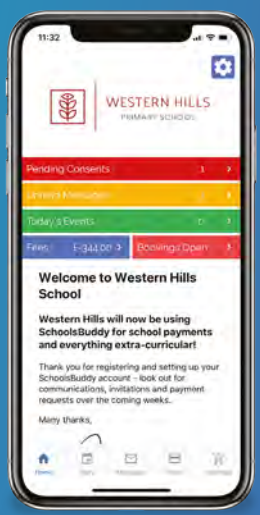
Make it easy for your parents to signup for after school clubs, trips, sports fixtures, care bookings, parents evenings and more



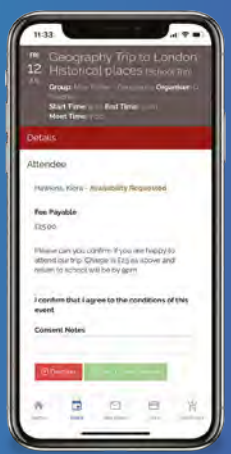
After School Activities with Preferences



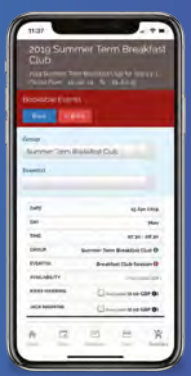
Parents Evening Bookings



Simple Dashboard (Fees & Messaging Optional)



Trip/Fixture Consent



Care & Lunch Bookings

"I booked and paid for clubs at the same time as washing my kids in the bath – it was so simple"
SchoolsBuddy parent user

JODIE OLIVER, HILLTOP PRIMARY SCHOOL - CRAWLEY
"After school and breakfast clubs bookings took me the majority of my day, in addition invoicing parents was incredibly time consuming!! SchoolsBuddy has revolutionised this process, and now no longer impacts my day at all!"

BEN MILLER, CHESSWOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL - WORTHING
"SchoolsBuddy reduces the number of systems we need to manage our events, payments and communications. This saves us time, money and enables us to do so much more, we are thrilled!"

ENTER FREE TO WIN £500 OF SCHOOL ACTIVITY EQUIPMENT

We are passionate about helping children become more active so each year we give away an activity equipment bundle. Last year our lucky winners were Burnt Oak Primary School in Gillingham. Staff or parents can enter, the more entries the more chance of being drawn out of the hat. For more information and to enter visit

www.schoolsbuddy.com/win

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IS YOUR SOFTWARE ABOVE BOARD?

What rights and entitlements do you have regarding the software used in your school, and are you paying what you should be? Terry Freedman takes a closer look...

Software licencing in education settings has shifted in recent years towards a model based more on subscriptions than ownership. Here are the key things leaders and SBMs should consider if they want to avoid falling foul of software licensing restrictions, and ensure they're actually getting their money's worth…

WHO DECIDES?

While it's tempting to be very liberal and allow each subject leader to buy their own software licences, it's better to have a centralised purchasing system. That way, you can ensure that the same software isn't being bought by different people and that the school doesn't go over budget.

Weigh up what packages are available. The London Grid for Learning, for example, has negotiated discounts on a wide range of products, and now offers a service that's no longer confined to schools in London. See bit.ly/tfLGfL for details.

WHAT'S THE MODEL?

Is that software subscription you're paying for based on broad tiers, priced per individual pupil, or charged per individual concurrent user? Will the software still work if more pupils join the school or need to use it at the same time? If not, will the school be charged retrospectively when the numbers change, or is there a risk of pupils losing work when the school exceeds its user count? Check whether or not the software licence covers home usage.

IS IT WORTH IT?

Think about the value for money offering. If, say, your school subscribes to a software suite comprising several applications, will it make financial sense to subscribe to a separate, more specialised service, even if it performs a particular task better than your

general suite's application?

Remember also that software subscriptions can be quite deceptive in terms of cost. A subscription might cost 'just' £1 per pupil per year, but that's a substantial amount for the school itself to be paying…

KEEPING TRACK

You need to put in place a central database of some kind to keep track of any subscriptions your school is currently paying for, their cost, their renewal dates and their licence numbers. This system should also include some form of secure physical storage – you'll need to read and keep the end user licence agreements (EULAs) pertaining to any software you use, plus any other relevant documentation such as receipts and original installation discs, where applicable. If the software was downloaded or is accessed online, print off a copy of the details you would have been emailed, such as the purchase date and licence number. If your licence expires, keep a record of the expiration date.

You must be able to easily prove that the software subscriptions you use were purchased legitimately, so be sure to check the essential details. In fact, it's not a bad idea to carry out checks of your software documentation every so often, just in case someone is inadvertently using unlicensed software.

This can happen quite innocently. A teacher once told me that the shop she purchased a standalone computer from said it would 'throw in' a Microsoft Office installation. I advised her to email the shop and ask them to confirm that the software licence allowed that. They declined.

The Federation Against Software Theft (FAST) has some great tips on how to avoid counterfeit software that can be found at bit.ly/tfFASTtips. See also bit.ly/tfDfElicences for the DfE guidance on how schools are affected by copyright licences.

Terry Freedman is an independent education technology consultant and writer

@terryfreedman
ictineducation.org

SAFEGUARDING DOESN'T STOP AT THE GATES

Mark Bentley explains why safeguarding knowledge is as important for support staff as it is for teachers, and how to roll it out effectively…

When was the last time staff at your school attended an all-staff safeguarding refresher? Before tutting at this seemingly silly question, think about what 'all staff' actually means. Was the site team available? Were your office-based and part-time colleagues there too? If they received the same session at a different time, great – but it's worth remembering that *every* adult working in your school has a role to play in keeping children safe.

In the DfE's statutory guidance document 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (tinyurl.com/dfe-kcsie), it's made clear that all staff must receive regular safeguarding training and are required to read Part 1 of the document itself. This is easier said than done if your staff is subject to regular changes and/or reliant on agency personnel, but most schools are very careful to ensure that every role with core duties that involve direct contact with young people complies.

But what about those roles that don't? Are they any less important? It's easy to presume so, but who's most likely to enter every room after hours, when there aren't many people about? Probably a cleaner, at a time when teachers are liable to pop out of their rooms for a minute or two, when children are feeling relaxed and therefore more likely to disclose something. But would your cleaners or site staff know how to respond, in the same way as a teacher or LSA?

It's key for consistency and effective safeguarding that they do. That's one of the reasons for LGfL deciding to translate part 1 of the Keeping Children Safe in Education document into 10 community languages for the benefit of all schools – to help members of staff who don't require high levels of English literacy for their roles, and are likely to be speakers of English as a foreign language. The translated documents can be found at kcsietranslate.lgfl.net.

Another topic on which staff can be supported is sexting. Designated safeguarding leads will have read the 58-page 'Education for a Connected World' framework document (tinyurl.com/dfe-efacw), but what about the one-page 'Sexting: how to respond to an incident' overview (tinyurl.com/ukccis-1p) – have all staff read it? If not, ensure they do. Links to these and other documents can be found at sexting.lgfl.net.

It's easy to ensure that classroom and office-based staff alike have read your school's policy or acceptable use agreement, but how will that make a difference if it isn't applied across the board? LGfL has some templates that can help you at safepolicies.lgfl.net. If you want to make your audit easier, try searching the Keeping Children Safe in Education document for mentions of 'All staff should…' and asking yourself (or indeed them) if they do.

It's vital that we recognise the role *all* adults in school communities have to play in keeping children safe. Together, we can make a difference – remember that the next time you're planning a CPD refresher or auditing who's read which policy document.

Mark Bentley is online safety and safeguarding manager at The London Grid for Learning

@LGfL
lgfl.net

Keep your devices safe

Gary Spracklen lays out the considerations every school should heed when it comes to protecting its ICT hardware and equipment from theft...

Ensuring your mobile devices are safe and secure from unwanted attention and potential theft is an important consideration for any school leader. Leaders should remind staff regularly about basic security measures, such as not leaving devices unattended without appropriate security measures in place.

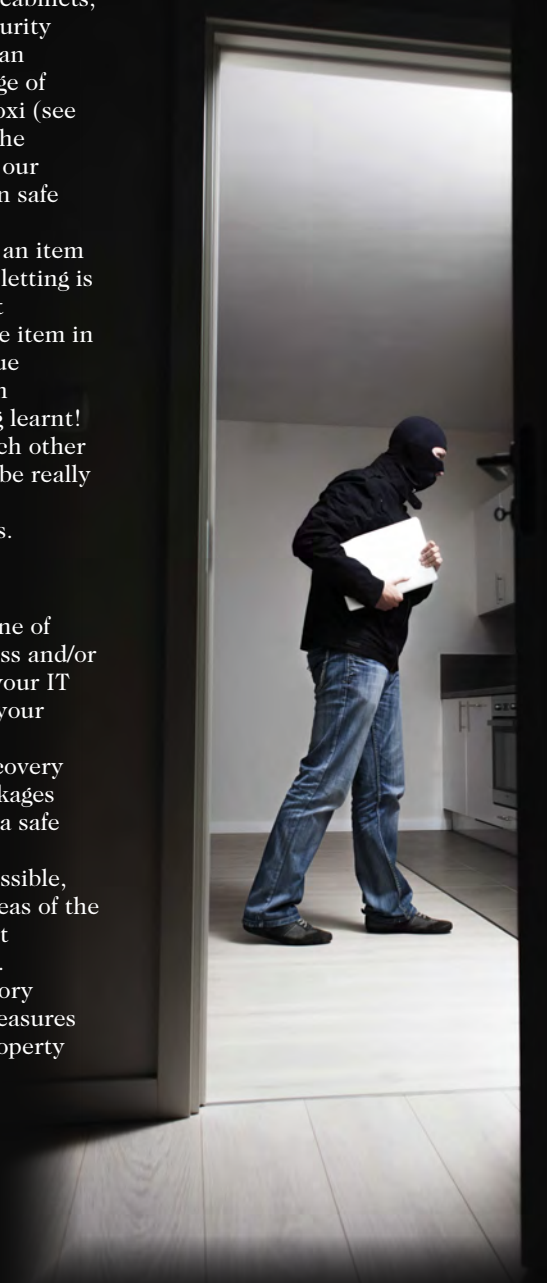
'Appropriate security measures' in this case may include lockable cabinets, which can provide physical security against unwanted attention. I can personally recommend the range of Mobile Device Lockers from Zioxi (see zioxi.co.uk), which we use at The Prince of Wales School to keep our Chromebook and iPad provision safe and secure.

On rare occasions, I'll notice an item left unattended before a public letting is about to commence. When that happens, I'll normally retain the item in my safe keeping until a colleague reports that it's missing – which typically leads to a lesson being learnt! Encouraging all staff to hold each other to account in similar ways can be really helpful here. We all have those moments when we forget things.

Physical security

Physical security is your first line of defence, preventing direct access and/or intruders from circumventing your IT security. The IT equipment in your school, including any servers, workstations, backup tapes, recovery diskettes, original software packages and so forth, should be kept in a safe place that's guarded against unauthorized access. Where possible, you should also define those areas of the school where there are different physical security requirements.

Property marking and inventory taking are further important measures for preventing physical loss. Property markings should be properly painted on all major hardware items, such as desktop base units, monitors, notebook computers, printers, scanners, projectors, removable storage devices and so forth. I've used the property marking resources available from Selecta DNA (selectadna.co.uk) for a number of years, and have always been impressed by its customer service and ongoing support and advice.



Inventory

However you choose to keep it, a log for recording and maintaining your IT equipment inventory list is essential. Your log should record the location, as well as the status of all equipment, indicating whether it's 'in use', 'on loan', 'under repair' or possibly 'discarded'. If any parts are missing, or there seem to be any discrepancies, you should investigate immediately. One product I've used to support me with this in the past is School Asset Manager (schoolassetmanager.com) – a simple to use system with an accompanying mobile app which, while initially expensive when compared with a DIY solution, can deliver clear cost benefits over time.

Keeping your devices safe is about more than simply security, though. It lets your pupils and staff know that you value the school's technology as an essential resource; something you want to protect not just because of its monetary value, but its educational value too.

Which brings me to my final point – that if you want to protect your devices from theft, damage (both accidental and deliberate) and from going 'lost' or 'missing', make the very maximum use of them for educational benefit.

Show your community why you use technology to regularly support your learning. Showcase your work with technology at events and forums, through social media and at parents' evenings. Show everyone just how valuable something is, and you'll soon see that everyone will want to protect it.

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

"TEACHERS AND LEARNERS WILL BE EMPOWERED"

An education sector that uses artificial intelligence could usher in a bright future, says Professor Rose Luckin – but we need to start making the right decisions now...

Right now, we're using artificial intelligence in ways many of us don't realise. Every time we do a Google search, or use voice activated assistants like Siri or Alexa, we're using AI. It's become part of an infrastructure that most of use every day.

In education, the kind of AI systems currently being used fall into one of two categories. The first covers tutoring systems, which support students in an individualised way to help them learn specific subject areas. Companies like Century Tech (century.tech), for example, have developed artificially intelligent platforms through which various curricular subjects can be delivered to students in an individual way.

This flavour of AI is used to personalise instruction and tutoring to students' specific needs, which can be very effective, but it isn't the same as having a human teacher. I'm not of the belief that AI can or should replace human teachers, but I believe it can provide highly effective, efficient and individualised tutoring to *complement* human teachers, while giving immensely valuable feedback to those teachers about how students are performing.

The second main category is recommender systems. Similar to how services such as Amazon will recommend products to you – except more useful – companies such as Filtered (learn.filtered.com) will intelligently recommend resources that best suit the needs of educators and learners.

WHAT IS AND ISN'T AI?

I would define AI as a system where the computer learns. As it processes data about learners, teachers and educational interactions, it gradually adapts and improves over time. It's therefore extremely important that teachers, leaders, managers and budget holders understand when, to be frank, they're dealing with a snake oil salesman. If a salesperson can't explain to you precisely, in ways you can understand, what data their solution will collect, how it's processed and how that processing will enable the AI to learn and adapt, don't touch it.

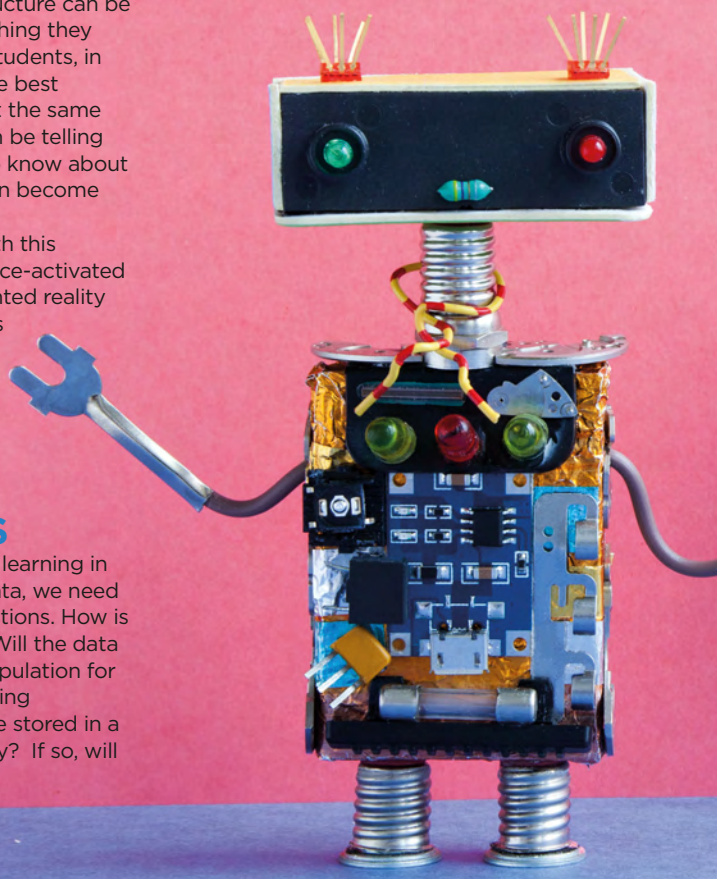
An important thing to note is that AI's real power is its invisibility. Picture an intelligent infrastructure underpinning everything we do. Try to then imagine how this intelligent infrastructure can be used to tell teachers everything they need to know about their students, in order provide them with the best possible human support. At the same time, that infrastructure can be telling students what they need to know about themselves, so that they can become better learners.

People might interact with this infrastructure through a voice-activated interface, a form of augmented reality or even via a robot – but it's more helpful to think about the intelligence involved, rather than the interfaces used to access it.

ETHICAL ALGORITHMS

Given that AI, and machine learning in particular, is powered by data, we need to consider some vital questions. How is that data to be collected? Will the data be representative of the population for whom the technology is being developed? Will the data be stored in a safe, secure and private way? If so, will that data be processed using algorithms that are 'ethically designed' – i.e. built by people who understand the population diversity of where those algorithms will be deployed?

I'm a co-founder of the Institute for Ethical AI in Education, which was formed at the end of 2018 and is based at the University of Buckingham. Particularly now that we're expecting people to embrace lifelong learning, education is fundamentally one of the most important interactions we want people to have, so we have to protect it. Ultimately, there will always be people wanting to do harm. There has to



therefore be an element of education within the regulation we'll need; people need to understand what they should and shouldn't be worried about, and how to keep themselves safe.

COMMERCIAL SENSITIVITY

It's been interesting to observe how some big tech companies have already been taken to court over GDPR compliance failures, highlighting the need for any AI regulation to be properly policed – but you also have to work with companies and bring them on board. If you can embed a set of ethics within a company's culture from the ground up, you're more likely to end up with products and services that won't fall foul of ethical regulations and guidelines.

It's true that some companies will object to oversight of their activities, citing 'commercial sensitivity'. I believe it's justifiable for companies to maintain some degree of commercial privacy, but that shouldn't prevent them from making what they've developed explainable and intelligible. And it doesn't stop them from being absolutely clear as to whether their algorithms have been designed in an ethical way, and the degree to which they're treating their data ethically.

I don't accept commercial arguments as a 'get out' for not being ethical. We can and must insist that companies clearly explain their ethical processes and procedures, and provide evidence to show that they're processing their data and training their employees responsibly.

The most important thing at the moment is for everybody to understand enough about AI to keep themselves safe. Everyone should feel confident enough to not simply give their data away, but to instead ask companies, *why?* Why do you want this information? What are you going to do with it? How do I know you're going to keep it safe?

We also need those in charge of making decisions in this area to understand enough about AI to ensure that their decisions are sound. I was struck recently by the questioning of Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg by the US Congress, and how he wasn't exactly probed robustly. We have to help everybody understand enough about AI to know what questions to ask, and to know when they've been given satisfactory answers.

20 YEARS' HENCE

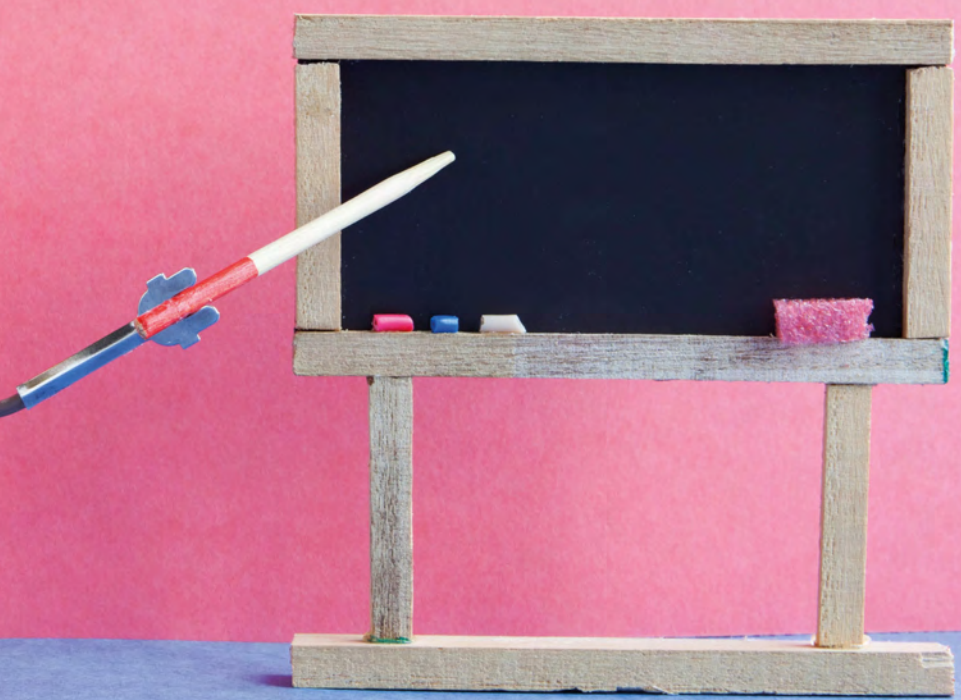
Assuming the best case scenario, what might a classroom look like in 20 years' time with sophisticated AI working in the background? If we get it right, teachers would have much more time to spend with students face-to-face. We could have a situation where the subject fundamentals students really need to understand are taught effectively and efficiently via AI tutoring systems, freeing up teachers for quality human interactions.

Those teachers will understand the needs of their students to a level of detail we've never seen before. Teachers and learners alike will be empowered by that intelligent infrastructure to interact in ways conducive to preparing students for a world that's very different to ours; one that prizes collaborative problem solving, flexibility, mental agility and resilience in the face of big, technological transitions.

It may well be that the roles of 'teacher' and 'learner' are more fluid. Teachers might move through groups of learners in different ways, and we there may be a very different physical infrastructure within education. If people will be expected to learn all of the time, we could see schools, institutions and universities become discrete elements within a wider learning repertoire. We'll be using AI to make ourselves more intelligent, not the other way round.

Conversely, my dystopian fear would be that we're faced with institutions packed full of AI tutoring systems to the detriment of everything else; where kids are plugged into audio, screen or holographic interfaces for most of the time, with comparatively little human interaction (though there would be some minders present to ensure no one misbehaves). The result would be that they miss out on all that rich, human interaction because it's 'too expensive'.

I love technology, I love AI – But I don't want our schools, universities and colleges to be dominated by technology. I want there to be a powerful, intelligent infrastructure that empowers humans to focus on improving human intelligence.



Rosemary Luckin is a UCL professor whose research involves blending theories from the learning sciences with techniques from AI; she is the author of *Machine Learning and Human Intelligence: the Future of Education in the 21st Century* and director of EDUCATE – a London hub for educational technology startups

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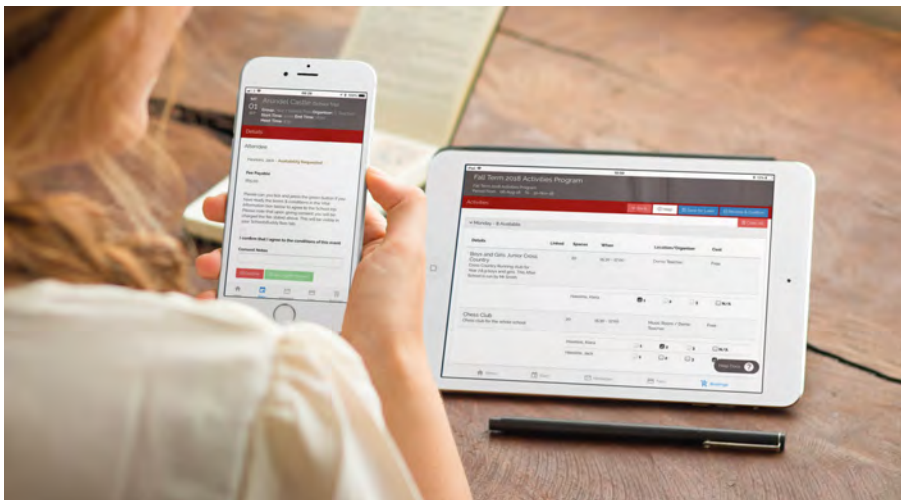
SchoolsBuddy

A cloud-based software platform for consolidating different school administration tasks into a single portal

- An intelligent software tool that combines all non-MIS tasks automating workflow and management processes
- A unique and progressive system that reduces admin time by 50%
- Used in over 28 countries for activities management, payments, bookings, Comms, parent conferences, sports teams and more
- Engaging parent-friendly software for reliable and accurate communication through web or app

Reviewed by: John Dabell



Schools need to run like clockwork, have their finger on the pulse and join the dots. Anything less will make them look amateurish, disorganised and unprofessional.

SchoolsBuddy is a sophisticated system that rationalises your administration by putting it all in one place. It's a practical and powerful platform helps schools operate numerous systems flawlessly, so that stuff gets done and staff get some headspace. It de-clutters and multitasks, and knows who's who, what's what and where.

Instead of using a dozen systems that don't communicate with each other, SchoolsBuddy brings everything together into one system so that there are no gaps or oversights. What that means is that schools can smoothly combine under one umbrella everything from parental communications to activities management, fee collections, after-school club sign ups and parents' evening bookings. To that you can also add mobile registers, sports organisation and school trip management.

It might sound like wizardry, but the powerful algorithms at work within SchoolsBuddy make the process intuitive and easy to set up. It makes numerous tasks accessible via a browser-based and mobile-enabled interface that can be fully integrated with a school's MIS, thus making processes that might have once have taken hours last mere minutes.

It can also supercharge your school-wide internal communications and help to build better home/school links. Everything entered can be made to appear in the diaries of staff, parents and pupils alike, ready for viewing via your smartphone. Ahead of your next parents' evening, parents can look up a slot and instantly book it there and then, thanks to SchoolsBuddy.

Parents will further love the fact that they can book their children into breakfast and after-school clubs, extra-curricular activities and pay for trips with just a few taps. Teachers will in turn love it for the way it presents a single system for hitherto separate and fiddly admin tasks, such as consent seeking, gathering sign-ups and collecting payments. It can even manage the tricky business of popular clubs that become over-subscribed, through a brilliant preference system that will automatically allocate choices and produce registers.

The great thing about SchoolsBuddy is that it's customisable, allowing schools to select specific modules based on what they need it to do, rather than having to buy into everything at once.

If you're of the view that your present systems aren't cutting the mustard, then take a look at what SchoolsBuddy can offer. Its creators have clearly thought about what teachers and parents need when it comes to co-ordinating and organising their daily activities, and delivered a system that leaves nothing to chance.

PSM
PRIMARY SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

VERDICT

- ✔ Perfect for organising extracurricular and wraparound care provision
- ✔ Massively improves safeguarding arrangements
- ✔ A simple to use and intuitive dashboard
- ✔ Hassle-free and cost-effective
- ✔ Reduces paper use, while cutting down on spreadsheets and Google forms
- ✔ Reduces complexity and makes time management a breeze

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To learn more, visit schoolsbuddy.com or follow @schoolsbuddy

Hand on Heart

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THE PSM GUIDE TO...

Community Engagement

A GAME OF RISK

That upcoming trip might be a great day out for the pupils – but how prepared are you, in case the worst should happen?

When I was 8, we went on a class trip to Hampton Court Palace. I remember it well – not because of the history or what we learnt, but because a boy in my class fell in the fountain. He had to travel home on the coach wearing his underwear and the teacher's poncho.

When telling that story at a staff training session on educational visits, it turned out most of my colleagues had similar tales of surprise events happening on school trips. The message was clear – expect the unexpected.

On a more serious note, I was working in Lambeth in 2001 when Bunmi Shagaya, a Y6 pupil at a local school, drowned while on a school trip abroad. After that we had to fill out risk assessments comprising reams of paper when simply walking to the local library.

For me, ensuring that trips and visits run smoothly comes down to 'PPP' – policies, procedures and protocols – at three different levels:

1. SCHOOL LEVEL

Every school should have educational visit co-ordinators. We have three, in case one leaves or is absent long term. EVCs are members of staff with the experience, know-how and training to spot the things teachers may miss. They'll ask the awkward questions, be able to advise on insurance, know who the LA/MAT contact is and which trips will need registering with which body.

2. YEAR GROUP/ DEPARTMENT LEVEL

This where you'll hear *'Well, Y1 always go to Tonbridge Castle.'* They don't have to! But if they do, there'll

be staff who have been before and know the layout of the day. They'll have learned where to have lunch if it rains and how many steps it is from the top when Freddie needs the toilet. They'll be familiar with the timeline for booking venues, getting letters out and so on. They may also know why Y1 keep going to Tonbridge Castle, rather than anywhere else.

3. CLASS TEACHER

The most important level for the risk assessment, since these are the people who know the individual children best. Generic risk assessments are great for, say, walking down the street – *'In pairs, adults spread through the line'* – but only the class teacher will know that 9-year-old Freya is scared of dogs and once ran in the road to avoid one, so will need to hold an adult's hand.

Having considered those risks, undertake a preliminary visit – I let my staff go during PPA time if they wish. Once there, think about your class. Who'll react to what? Consider the children's likely behaviour, any SEND requirements, allergies and which parents will prove more of a hindrance than a help. Think also about what might happen that's out of everyone's control. Is it likely that a gunman will rampage through Brighton Toy Museum? What about the terrorism threat level when planning a trip to London?

What might happen? What could you do to stop it? What will you do if it happens anyway?

There's your risk assessment.

One of my brilliant teachers once wanted to take his Y2 class ice skating as a reward. I shuddered at the thought, but told him to do the risk assessment and then see what he thought. He came back a few days later saying they were going to the cinema instead!

Kate Owbridge is executive headteacher at Ashdown Primary School, Crowborough

CREATE A BUZZ

How can you get less engaged parents to join you for open days, project consultations and the like? Sarah West offers some advice...

1. ADVERTISE

Communicating with parents is an ongoing challenge for all schools. In addition the usual routes – eye catching posters and flyers, website updates, direct messages to parents via apps and social media – don't forget to advertise your event face-to-face. Talking to parents in the playground about upcoming events, and explaining why attending would benefit them personally, will help build momentum and interest.

2. BE INNOVATIVE

Your existing parent body, be it a PTA or parent council, is one of your greatest assets and can help spread the word. These are parents who are already engaged and well-placed to persuade others of the benefits to getting more involved with the school.

It's important to show that all parents' opinions and contributions matter. Providing options for parents who find it difficult to attend due to work commitments, caring responsibilities, health issues or time constraints is therefore a must. Consider filming or livestreaming the event for absent parents as it happens; ensure that minutes from meetings and information shared at events is easily accessible to those unable to physically attend.

3. HAVE STAFF THERE

Where possible, try and have any relevant members of staff attend the event. It's reassuring for parents to see the familiar faces of the teachers their children are with every day, and can make them part of a bigger, well-supported community. If your event concerns a significant change – conversion to an academy, for example – your staff should be informed of all the details so that they can answer queries and allay parents' concerns.

4. GATHER FEEDBACK

Distribute feedback forms at your events, or provide anonymous suggestion boxes, so that everyone feels comfortable feeding back about how your events can be improved in future. Sending home questionnaires (both printed and electronic) asking parents for their views, and giving them opportunities to contribute their views about specific school policy changes, will make them more enthusiastic about getting more involved. It's important to act on this parental input and explain what you've done as a result, so that they can see their contributions are indeed having an impact.

5. OFFER INCENTIVES

Consider asking your PTA to come along and run a raffle or provide food and drink, so that school events with your staff can be made more sociable, less formal and much more inclusive for everyone.

Another way of motivating parents to come is by combining an adult event with one for children. Again, don't be afraid to ask your PTA to organise a simultaneous event for the kids, thus encouraging the whole family to be present. If you can establish your school's 'parent-friendly' credentials in all your communications with parents, support will build and your events are more likely to be successful.

Sarah West is marketing and communications manager at the Tonbridge-based charity Parentkind

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A letter to… the pupils attending breakfast club

Your free food adventure has helped your parents, prevented waste and left you better prepared for learning, says headteacher Iain Linsdell…

It has been a couple of years now since you began attending our free breakfast club, and I'm sure you will agree, it has been a brilliant help to you and your parents.

I am well aware you are sometimes slightly unsure about whether to eat guava, or what to do when faced with a lychee, but you have behaved brilliantly well, by and large, for the 20 minutes you share with each other at the start of each day.

It is true that when we first started, the big bosses in school (the school governors – *boooo!*) were really worried that it wouldn't work. "What if all of them want to come?" they asked. "We can't let so many of them come through the front door, and there's no other way in!" But, children, even though there are between 80 to 100 of you each day, you have managed it beautifully and you continue to do so every morning – thank you!

Did you know that since the breakfast club was first introduced, your attendance has improved and you are now more likely to be on time in the mornings? And, because it is free, your parents have really appreciated the fact they can drop you off safely for a healthy breakfast on their way to work. It has hopefully shaved a bit of money off their 'big shop' each week too!

What's more, because you get dropped off or brought to school for 8.30am, it has helped to reduce traffic congestion (look it up) at the start of the day, which keeps your grown-ups a bit calmer and our neighbours (a little bit) happier too – which is good news, because I don't have to split them up when they lose their tempers with each other at the school gates as much (maybe they should come to breakfast club for a calm start to the day too).

Now, some very important people (the *really* big bosses in London) think that, because you come to a breakfast club every morning, it is making you brainier. I'm not sure about that! But you are definitely more ready for school than you used to be. Some of you weren't getting breakfast at home all the time, so when you get to class after breakfast club, you don't feel as hungry as you might have done before. Being less hungry and a bit more awake makes it easier for you to learn and that is probably helping you better understand what's being taught that morning – and that can't be bad, can it?

Because we work with the charity FareShare Greater Manchester, all of the food we serve to you is super-cheap which means your grown-ups at home don't have to pay a penny! I know that you sometimes find eating muesli a bit tricky, but remember what I said in assembly the other day – the charity works with over 500 food companies to redistribute food to schools, families and other community groups that would otherwise be thrown away. That's right, thrown away! In landfill!

So, children, I just wanted to say thank you for making our Pitstop breakfast club such a huge success. And I promise that next time we get cumquats, I'll come and show you how to peel them!

Iain Linsdell is the headteacher at Poplar Street Primary in Audenshaw, Greater Manchester

@poplarstreetht / @fareshareUK

poplarstreet.tameside.sch.uk / fareshare.org.uk

"WE'RE NOT HERE TO INDOCTRINATE"

Professor Colin Diamond CBE shares his thoughts on the recent protests against the No Outsiders teaching programme, and the lessons school leaders should heed from it...

For the past several years, the teaching of the No Outsiders programme in a number of schools – notably Parkfield Community School in Birmingham – has been spectacularly uncontentious. What changed with the recent protests?

My reading of the situation is that imminent changes in law, relating to the new relationships and health education that primary schools must teach from 2020, have galvanised certain sections of the local community. It appears that socially conservative elements of the local Muslim population believe that the teaching of issues around relationships and sex education belong primarily in the family home, and is not terrain that schools should be engaging with.

Within that opposition are groups who see anything other than their view – or theological interpretation – as tantamount to encouraging homosexuality and promiscuity. There's a website called Islamic RSE (islamicrse.org) which shows exactly where such voices are coming from.

I believe the current protests at the time of writing – which started in Birmingham, but have since spread further afield – are being used as a platform for a wider campaign against what some see as inappropriately liberal relationships education.

A BEAUTIFUL CONCEPT

There's a previous episode directly related to what's happening now which is worth highlighting. Back in 2014, a programme called Challenging Homophobia in Primary Schools (CHIPS) came under serious attack at another setting in Birmingham, Welford Primary School. The headteacher at the time, Jamie Barry, was effectively ambushed by several groups of parents from a number of religious backgrounds, and even some with no religious affiliation, who took exception to the teaching of CHIPS.

The incident occurred around the time of the Trojan Horse episode. It was unpleasant, with some fears for the safety of staff at the school. It resulted in media coverage (see tinyurl.com/welford-chips) and the school pulling back slightly from the full version of the CHIPS programme.

My own view on what happened is that the programme was bound to offend some sensibilities within certain communities because of its focus on homophobia. The lesson learned locally is that equalities education needs to work from a broader canvas. That informed the No Outsiders programme, which is rooted in the 2010 Equality Act and its protected characteristics. No Outsiders itself is a beautiful concept – I believe the name is derived from a quote by Desmond Tutu – and until recently at least, the teaching of it had gone very well.

It's important to note that people often refer to 'the Muslim community', singular. It's no more a singular a group than any other religious or cultural community within this country. There are many different elements within the broader Muslim community, and different interpretations of Islam among different generations of Muslims. To talk of 'the Muslim community' is to wield a short, blunt and crude rhetorical instrument.

AHEAD OF THE CURVE

The issue we have, however, is that many local people are frightened to speak out against figures who claim to represent this 'Muslim community'. They don't, but these are figures who command very loud local voices, and it's difficult to get

beyond that.

Had there been a genuine, overwhelming rejection of No Outsiders among the local population, then these protests would have happened years ago. No parent wants any kind of ideology forced upon their children, but that's not what No Outsiders is about. It isn't sex education; it's actually saying 'Some families have two mummies, some have two daddies. Sometimes a grandad or auntie will be looking after the kids. Some families have kids who are wheelchair users. Everyone's a bit different.' It's very gentle in its approach.

I heard a wonderful phrase a while back – 'You can't over-communicate anything.' If, as a leader, you sense an issue may be controversial, then get ahead of the curve. Get out there first, and notify the parents about what you're studying, what the syllabus is covering, why you're doing it, how it fits in with the broader education at the school and invite parents in. Let them sit with teachers and go through the relevant materials, because in the great majority of situations, those parents will be reassured.

RED LINES

Parents can get nervous. They can get anxious – particularly those who might be new to the education system in this country. We're one of only very few countries in the world that legally enforces the type of protections outlined in the Equality Act, so it may well be that schools will find themselves introducing new social and educational norms to different communities. That should never be taken for granted.

However, this isn't simply a case of schools asserting 'We're right and you're wrong'; it's more a case of saying 'We want to work effectively between you, the family, and your child.' These situations often require a lot of effort on the part of school leaders and class teachers. What we must do is allay fears. Let's be invitational. Let's consult.

What we must ultimately be aiming for is community cohesion, right across the country. That involves recognising that we're a pluralist society – multi-faith, multi-ethnic and multi-tradition. It's important that the children growing up here have a deep, meaningful understanding of each other's cultures and how relationships are managed. And yes, that now includes our country's LGBT community.

We're not here to indoctrinate. We're here to enable young people to be strong and make their own choices – but to make an informed choice, you need knowledge. You gain knowledge by participating in classes that take you outside of your social domain at home.

I believe that there are some red lines, and things we're doing that we shouldn't row back from – but I also think there's a huge amount we can do via energetic communications within our communities to keep things calm. What we ultimately need to do is *communicate, communicate communicate*.

Colin Diamond CBE is Professor of Educational Leadership at the School of Education, University of Birmingham

@Anfieldexile

PROACTIVE CONSULTATIONS IN 3 STEPS

My preferred approach to consultation involves three elements:

1. Share the information
Put the facts on the table and explain clearly what you're planning to do in lessons, so that everyone can become familiar and comfortable with it.

2. Allow people time
Rather than introduce the change tomorrow, give people time to absorb things properly. Provide them with the relevant information and timescales, and explain that if any of the proposals concern them, they can visit the school, meet with you and talk things through.

3. Listen to your responses
As school leaders, you'll need to give conscientious consideration to what your parents, members of the local community and whomever else respond with. Listen carefully to what they tell you.

INCLUSION VERSUS EXCLUSION

Jackie Ward considers the pressures that now weigh on schools when deciding whether they exclude a pupil

The words of an anonymous teacher quoted in 2000 by the clinical psychologist Russell Barkley have become a well-known adage in education – *"The children who need love the most will ask for it in the most unloving ways."*

The sentiment expressed here is one we can recognise and empathise with, but how many 'unloving ways' can schools be expected to take? Is it fair for the rest of the class to be exposed to this and have their learning disrupted in the process? These are the considerations schools have to take into account when faced with a disruptive child with challenging behaviours.

PAINFULLY ACCOUNTABLE

Teaching is certainly more standardised in approach and regulated by policy than it was when I first started. The question has to be, has this contributed to a 'zero tolerance' culture in some schools, particularly towards those children who have behavioural difficulties? I certainly see an immense variation from school to school in terms of what's deemed forgivable and what leads to immediate exclusion. I do wonder whether some primary settings are now too rigid to allow certain groups to function positively.

We need to be creative about how we meet the needs of all learners, and this includes broadening the curriculum and becoming more child-centred. From the second a child walks into class there's not a moment of education to be lost, and teachers are held painfully accountable.

Yet something arguably more precious *is* being lost – that instinctive knowledge on the part of the teacher that something is wrong, or the chance for a child to talk about the weekend or share an achievement from home. That all-important relationship-building and bonding is being undermined.

Often it's learning mentors or family support workers who liaise with parents, help with family crises, lend a listening ear or provide a shoulder to cry on. Whilst this is a great resource for schools, it can also mean that teachers are left unaware of important issues surrounding children in their class.

It's difficult to see how teachers can have any sort of pastoral input when this vital role is farmed out, 'leaving teachers to teach'. Building these relationships is essential, not some inconvenient part of school life that gets in the way of extra phonics or guided reading. Compounding the problem at primary level is a proliferation of class interventions which occupy separate timetables with streamed groupings, meaning teachers don't see their whole class as regularly.

EXCLUSION'S NOT THE SOLUTION

I'm not against children receiving targeted support, but at what cost to their overall learning experience is this form of support provided? In secondary schools, pupils spend limited time with each of their teachers as they move from subject to subject. How can we build up a comprehensive picture of the whole child, their interests, strengths and weaknesses, if as teachers we hardly see them? And is it surprising that some

children cannot cope with the demands of a busy classroom environment, either in accessing the curriculum or managing their own behaviour?

The system is to blame for this. We're losing sight of our core purpose as teachers, *in loco parentis*. Parents are meanwhile working ever-longer hours, so some children are also missing out on the opportunity to spend meaningful time with the adults in their home lives.

I've seen first-hand the effects of exclusion on children and families, and on distressed parents who feel inadequate. Removing the 'problem' from school is not the answer. As Claire Wolstenholme and Nick Hodge, two academics at Sheffield Hallam University, observed in 2016, "It might initially feel like a relief when a pupil who is perceived as difficult and stressful is excluded from school. But exclusion can also leave many teachers with a sense of failure as they struggle with the unsettling question: 'Could I have done more?'"

Many of the teachers and heads I work with share this unease and try to exhaust all other sources of help and support, with exclusion coming as a last resort. Wolstenholme and Hodge went on to say, "Schools find themselves trapped within what feel like competing government agendas; the mandate to include children and young people with SEND in mainstream, the ranking of schools according to pupil attainment and the need to be seen to be strong on discipline and control."

COMMUNICATION IS CRITICAL

Wolstenholme and Hodge's research suggests that regular positive communication with pupils and parents could reduce permanent exclusions. My own experiences suggest that communication and talking are indeed key – however, the discussion needs to begin at the earliest possible stage, before difficulties become embedded.

The issue of communication can be particularly pertinent in the case of learners with EAL. At some of the schools I work in there is good use of staff who speak community languages to ease transition and ensure that integration is speedy without negatively impacting on the child's cultural experiences.

My career actually began as an EAL support teacher at an infant school, in which a significant proportion of pupils were of Pakistani heritage and spoke a first language other than English. Funding for such posts was ringfenced in the 1980s, but has since been subsumed into other budgets with some schools now relying more on bilingual support staff than specialists. I'm now seeing some children with EAL and SEN struggling to get the support they need, often resulting in them showing some challenging behaviours. This is particularly difficult for families who have little or no English themselves, as they have to rely on interpreters to access the right help from professionals.

THE HALLMARKS OF INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS

What makes some schools more inclusive than others? Some common characteristics I've observed include...

- **Leadership and management have embedded inclusive policies and practices**
- **Pupils with behavioural issues are identified at an early stage; underlying medical needs are investigated**
- **The school embraces difference and recognises when support is needed**
- **Parents and carers are fully included in the monitoring and managing of their child's needs**
- **Correct SEN procedures are in place during EHCP applications; paperwork and evidencing is tight**

> "I see an immense variation in terms of what's deemed forgivable and what leads to immediate exclusion"

THE 'RIGHT' PROVISION

Children with EAL often presented at our PRU with behavioural difficulties due to a language deficit – in their home language, as well as English – and a range of undiagnosed needs. Poor social and communication skills led to them leaving mainstream education, either as a respite placement or as the result of permanent exclusion. Due to their challenging behaviours, we were seen as the 'right' provision.

Usually, their behaviours were down to the frustration they felt in their struggle to communicate. They were often confused and traumatised, sometimes having been thrust into a new country and a new school. We often felt schools could be doing more to help these children before resorting to exclusion, although now I can see the pressures they were under.

Parents struggled to communicate and this only compounded the issue. It was often difficult to persuade them to engage with relevant medical professionals through referrals and subsequent appointments. They needed high levels of support from school staff. However, if parents trust you and know that you're there to help them and their children, they're more likely to meet you half way.

If a child has EAL and SEN, parents will sometimes be fortunate enough to receive home language support and be accompanied to appointments by staff acting as translators. This works well, but is very intensive as often *everything* will need translating – discussions, reports, follow-up appointments and team around the family (TAF) meetings. Without that, the child is in danger of slipping through the net, particularly if they require the support of an EHCP. Some schools provide extra adult support, but others may not be able to afford this.

However, if we're proactive and search for resources we can integrate into our practice, there's no reason why we can't make a massive difference in helping learners with EAL and complex needs, rather than pushing the 'exclude' button.

Jackie Ward is consultant specialising in SEND, having previously taught in primary schools and a primary PRU over a 25-year career; this article is based on an edited extract of her book *On the Fringes*, published by Crown House Publishing

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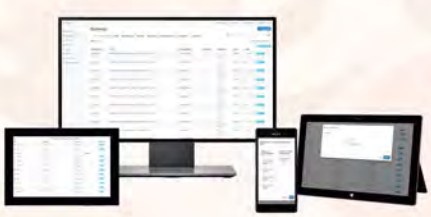

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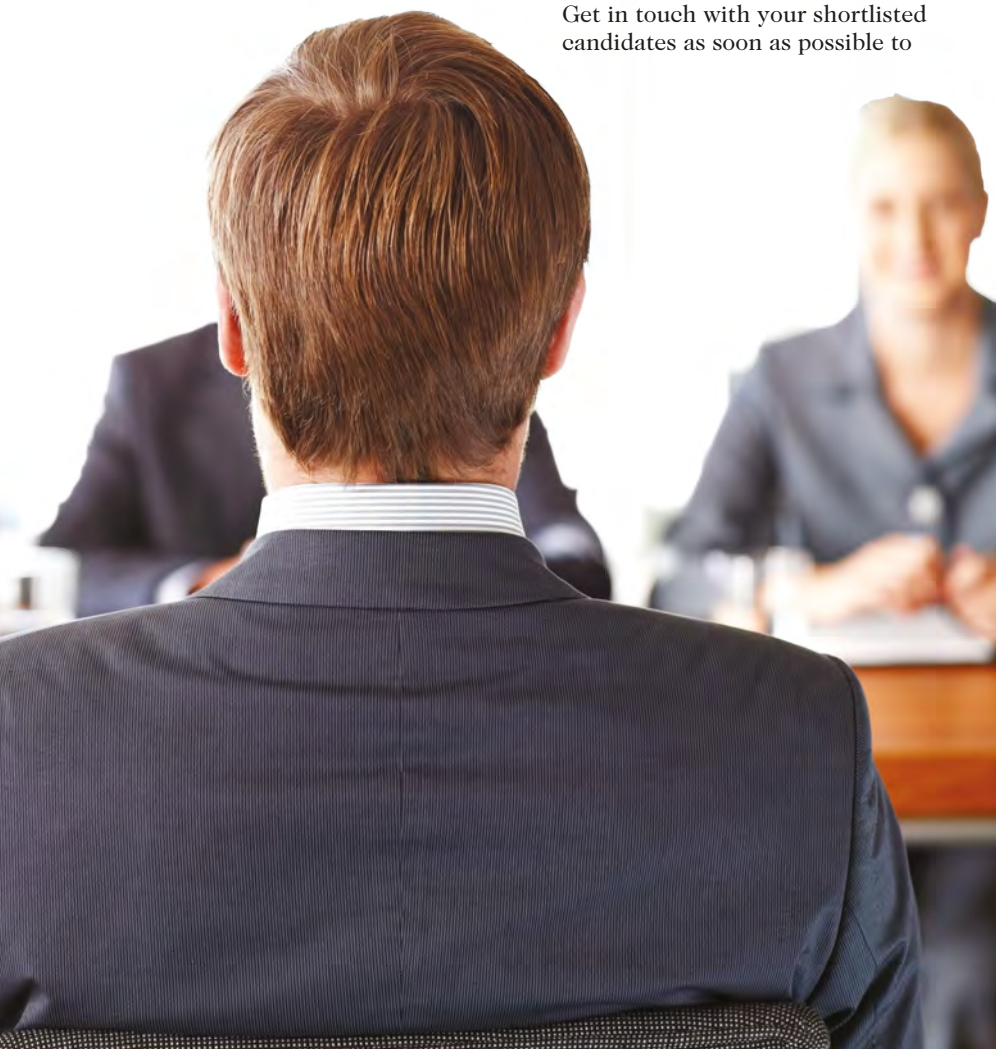
HOW TO ENSURE A SUCCESSFUL INTERVIEW

Imogen Rowley lays out some advice for navigating the interview process – including how to avoid falling foul of anti-discrimination law...



Perfecting the interview process will help you not only find the right talent for your school, but also convey a positive impression of the school to potential candidates. When you're next recruiting, look to do the following:

Arrange interviews for a convenient time

Get in touch with your shortlisted candidates as soon as possible to arrange an interview for whenever works best for you. Try to be flexible though, and make allowances for those candidates with childcare responsibilities, who practice religious observance or will need to fit the interview around their current working hours. For candidates living far away, you could potentially conduct the interview via an internet call using a service such as Skype.

Decide on your panel

It's good practice to have three people on the interview panel – five for more senior roles – and for it to include the role's line manager. An odd number will allow a split decision if not everyone can agree on who should get the job. Make sure at least one member of the panel has undertaken safer recruitment training (see tinyurl.com/nspcc-safer). This is a requirement in maintained schools, but also good practice for academies.

The panel membership is only subject to legislation when interviewing for a headteacher or deputy headteacher at a maintained school. In this case, it's up to your governing board to select at least three of its members to take part. These cannot include the current headteacher or deputy headteacher.

Prepare your questions in advance

You'll usually want no more than 10 main questions for an hour-long interview. When preparing them, use the person specification as your basis for competency-based questions, and weight these competencies to help you decide which are the most important. Try to keep your questions open-ended

– avoid anything that can be answered with a 'yes' or 'no'.

Assign 'evidence scores' to the candidate's answers. This can help you to prevent bias and avoid making snap judgements based on 'gut feeling'. Keeping a record also means you have evidence of your decision-making, should a candidate challenge your final decision. Bear in mind that they can now make a request under GDPR legislation to see the contents of the form, so be careful what you write.

Don't ask about personal views irrelevant to the job, or topics related to the candidate's gender, age, sexuality or other 'protected characteristics'. For example, avoid questions about childcare and living arrangements, or plans to get married, to have children, retire, etc.

Furthermore, don't ask anything about a candidate's disability or health and how it relates to their ability to do the role. Equality law stipulates that you can't ask about this until you make a conditional job offer.

If you want to see how the candidate performs in practice, set them a task to do before or after the interview. You might like to see how the candidate engages with pupils or, depending on the role, ask them to give a presentation on a particular topic.

Notify candidates as soon as possible

Call your preferred candidate and offer the job as soon as possible, then follow this up with a written confirmation. If they accept, you can proceed to the necessary pre-appointment checks, in line with statutory safeguarding guidance.

Once an offer has been accepted, call your unsuccessful candidates. This is more personal, and good for your reputation as an employer. Let them know the outcome immediately and move quickly on to giving them positive feedback, before explaining the reasons why another candidate was successful.

Imogen Rowley is a lead content producer at The Key – the country's most trusted provider of knowledge and know-how to education leaders determined to make a difference

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WHY YOUR HLTA MAY NEED MORE CPD

Schools should recognise the ambition of their higher level teaching assistants, says Dean Boyce

Higher level teaching assistants are playing an increasingly prominent role in children's learning, but they need professional development to match their ambitions.

That's one of the key findings to emerge in a recent survey of 944 HLTAs and TAs across England, which was carried out by the HLTA National Assessment Partnership (HNAP) to canvass views on the HLTA standards related to CPD.

The survey revealed that 46% of HLTAs are undertaking whole class teaching for between a fifth and half of the week, in order to strengthen their schools' staffing structures. Their enjoyment of this role is matched by their confidence – 90% of HLTAs feel confident in their ability to advance learning when engaged in whole class teaching. They also feel that their schools recognise their strengths and areas for development, and seek to support these.

The survey further showed, reassuringly, that HLTAs get to employ their area of expertise in a way that's recognised by their school (55%). However, a significant proportion of respondents (60%) felt that their skills could be more effectively deployed in support of both pupils' learning and the work of other teachers and TAs.

It was clear from the survey that HLTAs receive plenty of professional development in school. Around 70% said they attended INSET training, 55% reported receiving observation and feedback, and around half had participated in training programmes run by external providers. The general view, though, was that there's more scope to develop their whole class teaching skills; almost half of the HLTA respondents said they didn't receive feedback concerning this aspect of their work.

As well as giving a voice to HLTAs, the survey results have helped us in the HNAP to gain a better understanding of current practice across schools and other educational settings. Among our recommendations in response to the findings would be for schools to put systems and processes in place for monitoring and evaluating exactly where TAs and HLTAs are in terms of their performance and capability, and relating this to their knowledge, understanding, skills and behaviours.

We would also suggest that schools develop clear plans for helping TAs and HLTAs get to where they need to be, professionally. This could include giving HLTAs and TAs opportunities to network with peers at other schools, enabling them to share good practice. Another recommendation would be to match TA and HLTA development to school needs and priorities.

HLTAs and TAs are already doing great work in our schools, and are being supported in that by committed colleagues. Yet it's clear from our survey that more can be done to support HLTAs and TAs in being the best they can be.

Dean Boyce is programme director, CPD and accreditation, at the Best Practice Network (bestpracticenet.co.uk) – a regional provider that manages HLTA assessment standards and is a member of the HNAP. The full survey results and list of recommendations can be found at hlta.org.uk/hnap_survey_2019

@HLTA_status

Use your apprenticeship levy

It's time to stop seeing the apprenticeship levy as simply an additional cost burden for schools and start actually utilising it, says Bethan Cullen...

For many school leaders, it may feel that opportunities to use the apprenticeship levy are elusive. There remains some confusion around its use, the purpose that apprenticeship programmes are meant to serve and how to access approved learning providers.

As we approach the two-year anniversary of the Apprenticeship Levy's introduction, now is the perfect time to reflect on how schools can use this ring-fenced funding for professional development, find out about the programmes available and locate a suitable provider.

Who can be an apprentice?

It's a myth that apprenticeships are only for school leavers and/or new employees. In fact, anyone can become an apprentice at any age, so long as they're employed, working towards an approved apprenticeship and can undertake at least 20% off-the-job training.

Apprenticeships are designed to be used by existing and aspiring professionals. They're developed and led by employers to ensure that the learning objectives and tasks suit practitioners undertaking the role the standard describes.

If school leaders are considering taking on an apprentice within an educational setting – outside of specialist apprenticeships, such as those for TAs – then it's important to review individual training providers and check that their programmes have been contextualised for education. How will the provider support the requirement for all apprentices to have 20% off-the-job studying, in the form of reading and other assignments?

This time focused on learning can seem like a daunting prospect to school leaders more used to upskilling full time members of staff. Try talking to other school leaders in your local area who are using the levy to develop their existing staff; find out how they've managed the 20% off-the-job element whilst maintaining staff capacity.

Get involved!

The DfE-published document, 'A guide to apprenticeships for the school workforce' (see tinyurl.com/dfe-apprentice-guide), explains in detail what apprenticeships are, how schools can use apprenticeships and how the apprenticeship levy applies to schools. It also covers whether or not your school should be paying the levy, and how to benefit from the levy if you're a non-levy paying school.

A growing number of training providers throughout the country are now offering apprenticeships, a list of which can be found via the Institute for Apprenticeships (instituteforapprenticeships.org). There are many opportunities applicable to schools, including 'Commercial Procurement & Supply – Level 4', 'School Business Professional – Level 4' and ' Facilities Manager – Level 4'.

There's also Amazing Apprenticeships (amazingapprenticeships.com) – an ESFA-approved communication channel commissioned by the National Apprenticeship Service which offers free resources and highlights apprenticeship vacancies.

The ISBL has itself led the development of several new apprenticeship programmes especially contextualised for the education sector, which include 'Level 4 School Business Professional', 'Level 6 Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship' and 'Level 7 Executive Leadership'.

Apprenticeships give aspiring and practising school professionals the opportunity to combine practical training with study, whilst schools get to benefit from using their apprenticeship levy funding. At a time when schools are looking closely at their resources and ability to fund training, the levy provides a route that many school leaders have yet to fully explore. Rather than lose the opportunity, take time to consider how your school can use the levy.

Bethan Cullen is commercial director at the Institute of School Business Leadership

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ARE YOU TRAUMA AWARE?

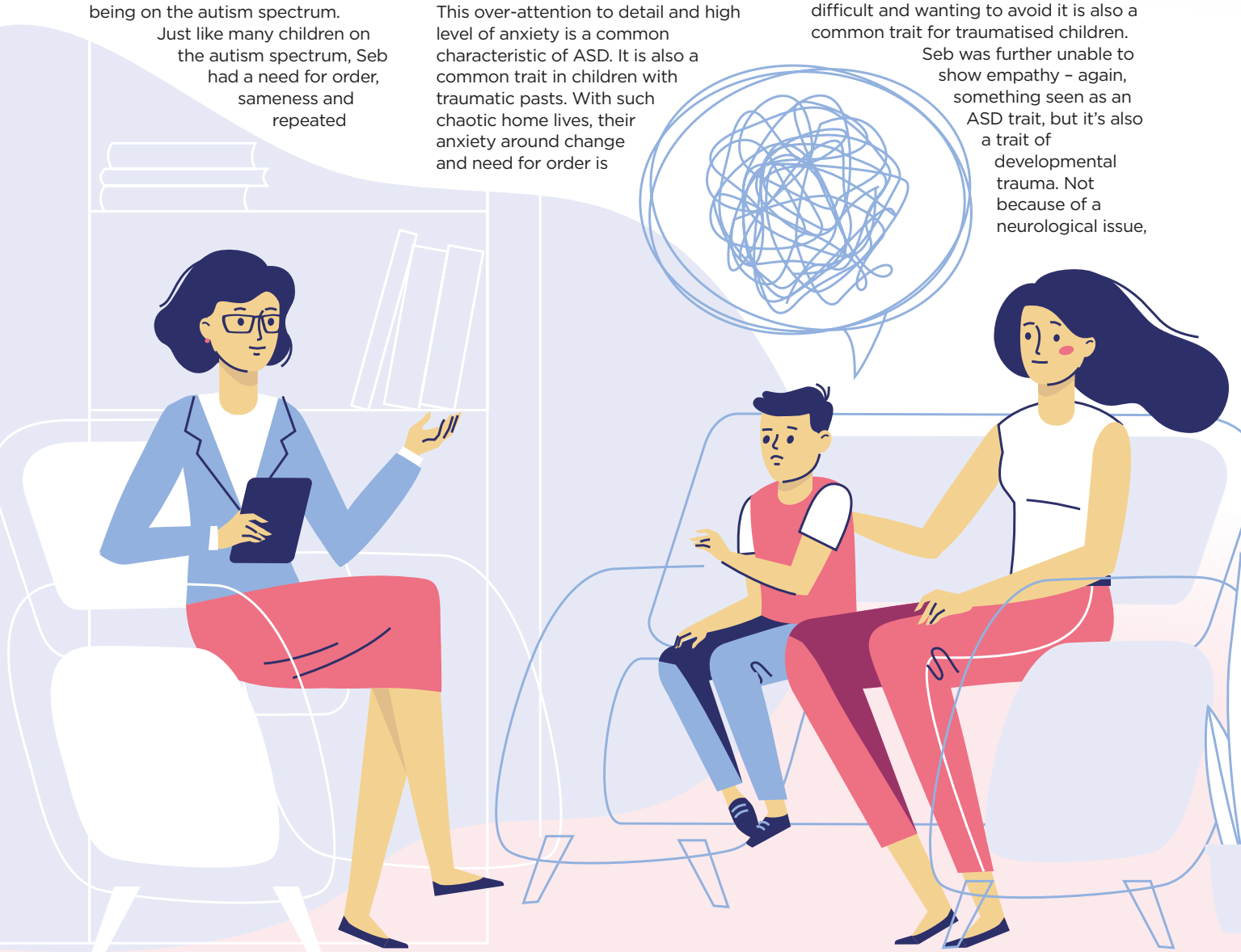
Painful life experiences can lead to pupils showing symptoms very similar to other child diagnoses such as ADHD and autism, says Dr Margot Sunderland

Seb, 11, was a foster child who had experienced seven different placements after he was moved from his birth parents following an abusive background. He was diagnosed as being on the autism spectrum.

Just like many children on the autism spectrum, Seb had a need for order, sameness and repeated routines. He would show extreme anxiety about any changes. He had a difficult journey to school and was often heard recounting to himself each step of his journey: "I am going to walk there then cross the road then get the bus." This over-attention to detail and high level of anxiety is a common characteristic of ASD. It is also a common trait in children with traumatic pasts. With such chaotic home lives, their anxiety around change and need for order is understandable.

Seb found the social world very difficult. He had poor eye contact, a blank expression and never smiled. He showed no interest in what other people thought or felt. Finding the social world difficult and wanting to avoid it is also a common trait for traumatised children.

Seb was further unable to show empathy – again, something seen as an ASD trait, but it's also a trait of developmental trauma. Not because of a neurological issue,



as with ASD, but because the pain he had suffered caused him to distance himself from his own and others' feelings.

PREVENTABLE MISDIAGNOSIS

Most diagnoses given to children will be accurate. For some conditions, such as ASD, there can seem to be indisputable neurological evidence – yet we must remain aware of misdiagnosis, which can be made more preventable if we are suffficiently trauma-informed.

Painful life experiences, and the trauma and loss arising from them, can fuel challenging or disturbing behaviour and cause children to relate awkwardly to others around them. In some cases, these painful life experiences may give rise to symptoms that seem outwardly very similar to some of the most common child diagnoses.

My worry is that after a behavioural diagnosis that signposts an apparent answer, the painful events in a pupil's life that may be what's actually triggering their behaviour remain unheard. Trauma-informed schools would at this point be asking two key questions – why is the child behaving like this, and what has happened to them? Where there's been a misdiagnosis, the latter will often explain the former.

COPING MECHANISM

Once the bad things that have happened in a traumatised pupil's life are heard, their ADHD- or ASD-type behaviour will make perfect sense. Their behaviours and ways of relating will be entirely understandable as coping mechanisms and defences, resulting from traumatic experiences when they had no one there to help them through a painful event. Without incorporating mental health into our protective policies, we're failing to protect pupils from the consequences of misdiagnosis and ineffective treatment.

If medical professionals aren't trauma-informed – ensuring before giving any diagnosis or medication that they've heard a child's life story to rule out the possibility of trauma – then we're in danger of damaging that child psychologically, perhaps neurologically, by giving them medication for a condition they don't actually have.

You might hope that this type of misdiagnosis is a rare occurrence, but I'm afraid it's not. An adverse childhood experience (ACE) study carried out on 17,000 people in the US by Anda et al found that those who had experienced several ACEs had a high chance of being diagnosed with ADHD, conduct disorder or as being on the autism spectrum.

Symptoms of ADHD and several other common child diagnoses will often match those of childhood trauma and loss – agitation, difficulty concentrating and hyperactivity, for instance. Some of these children may then go on to be permanently excluded from schools as a result of their psychological distress presenting itself through their behaviour.

ALLEVIATING SYMPTOMS

It's a gross failure of empathy to exclude traumatised children because of their difficult behaviour without asking what's happened to them. We know that when we do ask, and provide an emotionally available adult to help them grieve and work through what happened, their symptoms can be alleviated.

Seb, introduced at the start of this article, began working therapeutically with a psychologist called Martha who listened to his life narrative. She questioned his diagnosis of ASD after finding that he was able to lie well – something uncommon for children on the autism spectrum. He could also use drawings and metaphors to symbolise his painful life experiences, whereas children with a consistent ASD diagnosis will find metaphors difficult and tend to think and express themselves more literally.

Seb was insightful about what had fuelled his parents' cruelty, and over time become interested in Martha, asking her questions about her life and demonstrating good communication skills. From this, Martha concluded that he had no problems with social and emotional processing. Seb proceeded to work through his painful life experiences, grieve over his traumatic childhood experiences and went on to do very well.

Many children don't have opportunities to tell their stories in such a way, often because the people around them show little curiosity and don't recognise how vital it is to know. Consequently, these children are left with an unheard narrative. Let's change that, and demand trauma-informed inquiry before any diagnosis is given.

FREE CPD

By signing up to the new teaching box set at our sister site Teachwire, your staff can receive plenty of fresh ideas about SEND in eight handy email instalments. Sign up for yours at teachwire. net/free-teacher-cpd

Dr Margot Sunderland is a child psychologist, psychotherapist, neuroscience expert and award-winning author; she is also co-director of Trauma Informed Schools UK and director of education and training at the Centre for Child Mental Health – a London-based, not-for-profit provider of CPD and training programmes

traumainformedschools.co.uk / childmentalhealthcentre.org

THE ART OF GIVING GOOD FEEDBACK

Jill Berry looks at how to accurately appraise your colleagues' abilities in a way that everyone can get on board with...

How do we give feedback so that it's seen as positive, constructive and helpful? How can we ensure that it leads to improved performance in the future?

Whether you're observing a lesson, conducting a learning walk, examining pupils' written work to assess progress or looking more broadly at progress data, at some stage it will be necessary to talk to teachers about where they are now and how they can continue to develop from this point.

Yet receiving feedback can be tricky. Particularly if it's critical – even constructively critical – it can be tempting for those hearing it to feel defensive, hurt and under attack. If that's the emotional response, then the individual's receptivity to any advice offered, and their willingness to act on it, may be minimal.

RELATIONSHIPS

Education is all about relationships of different kinds: with colleagues (both peers and those in leadership roles), with parents, with students. We must work to establish the most positive relationships with those with whom we interact. There needs to be consideration and mutual respect. We have to recognise that we are all, in fact, on the same side – the learners' side – and that we have a common goal, which is to ensure that the standards of teaching and learning, and care, are as high as they possibly can be.

If we use up time and energy fighting each other, we're wasting precious resources which could be used in the fulfilment of our common aim. So if you want the feedback you offer to generate a positive response, make sure you've invested in these positive relationships from the outset.

TRUST

Ultimately, there needs to be trust between the person giving the feedback and the person receiving it. There should be a recognition that this is not primarily about judgement, (and certainly not condemnation), but about development. Observation, work scrutiny and data analysis should have as their focus opening a dialogue,, encouraging reflection and supporting growth. This isn't about exerting power.

Trust can take time to build, and it can be easily damaged. Where there's a lack of trust (on either side) the likeliness of feedback being welcomed and utilised for good will be significantly undermined. If you have leadership responsibility, think about how you earn trust by being open and honest, having integrity and humanity and demonstrating a strong moral purpose.

CLARITY

The purpose of the observation/scrutiny/analysis and ensuing reflective conversation has to be clear and well-understood by those involved. There needs to be an acceptance that none of us has ever 'cracked it' – we're all a work in progress and are constantly learning, which is one of the things which makes our profession energising. We can always get better, but we need to see that as a positive opportunity, rather than something that's overwhelming and draining.

There also has to be clarity around the role of the person offering the feedback; they don't have all the answers and shouldn't simply be directing what ought to be done. Their responsibility is to facilitate the conversation and offer a judicious balance of support and constructive challenge, so that you can plot the next steps together.

EMPATHY AND SENSITIVITY

It's important that the person delivering feedback can empathise with the situation, and appreciate the perspective of the person they're talking to. Messages should be sympathetically and sensitively delivered. If this is a lesson observation, for example, the advantage the observer has is that they can help the teacher see more clearly what exactly happened in the lesson – they can be the 'fly on the wall' who helps the teacher appreciate what they may have missed as the lesson was in progress.

They can also help the teacher tune into the learners' perspective. Ideally, if we're considering the opportunities for learning within the lesson, we need to focus on the learners' experience rather than the teacher's 'performance'. However, being attuned to the teacher's point of view, and

recognising that teaching is about who we are and not simply what we do, can help us frame our comments about what we saw and heard positively and supportively.

DIRECTNESS

Messages mustn't be vague and unclear, however. In our efforts to be supportive and to make the most of the positives (which we should always do – what are the strengths here, and how do we build on them for further success?) we mustn't dodge confronting less palatable messages. Again, this isn't predominantly about judgement, but about future development.

Can we make it clear that we're invested in supporting the recipient of the feedback to fulfil their professional potential? We're there to lift them, not grind them down and make them feel even more pressured. We're on their side – we're not the enemy.

It's possible to communicate this directly, and we need to check there's clear understanding about the main points discussed and the next steps.

FOLLOW-UP

There needs to be appropriate follow-up. There should be a structure to the process, so that feedback isn't seen as a one-off event, but rather as part of a sequence where the direction of travel is forward, and the relationship between the two parties continues to strengthen over time.

Never underestimate the power of asking, 'What more can I do to help?' Be prepared to listen and act on what you hear, but be clear that the responsibility lies with the teacher. You're there to help them find and use strategies, and resolve any issues, rather than take these issues from them.

RECEIVING FEEDBACK

Finally, think about your own response to feedback. Can you model receptivity and responsiveness? If you feel hurt, disappointed and defensive when receiving criticism, you can use this constructively to build your empathy and understanding.

However, you do need to be able to rise above it, absorb and process the information, and recognise how it can help you to clearly reflect on your own professional journey and continue developing, so that you become the teacher and the leader you hope to be.

In my opinion, every good teacher wants to be a better teacher, and every good leader wants to be a better leader. Feedback, judiciously offered and graciously accepted, can help us get there.

Jill Berry is a leadership consultant, author and former headteacher

"We mustn't dodge confronting less palatable messages"

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RAISE REVENUE FROM YOUR SCHOOL CLUBS

Ben Aston highlights how, with sufficient thought and planning, your school's extended childcare provision can help both parents and your bottom line...

Last week I sat down with a headteacher to discuss how her school was progressing this academic year. She was candid about the current educational climate and challenges around school budgets – and then dropped the following into our conversation: "We've just been paid in the region of £21,000 in rental from our extended school [7.30am to 8.30am breakfast / 3.30pm to 6pm after school] and holiday clubs."

As a primary school consultant and currently serving primary school governor, I can only imagine the impact that amount of money would have on the pupils in that school. Which prompts the question – can other schools replicate this type of revenue generation?

Providing before/after school and holiday care for families within your community can be an excellent way of generating revenue and boosting pupil numbers. There are two options for running such a service – developing your own in-house provision as a school or MAT, or using an external provider.

When consulting with a school on its childcare provision, I'll always suggest canvassing parental opinion before making any decisions. These conversations with parents can be carried out via parent forums, coffee mornings, parent evenings, progress days or any other methods you already use for engagement.

If there isn't going to be the uptake, then however vital the provision might

be for some families, it'll inevitably become financially unsustainable. To generate sufficient revenue, a site will need to have approximately 15 or more pupils per day.

With the data collated, you can then decide whether to set up the provision yourself or enlist the services of an external provider. Opting for the latter will reduce the need for internal administration and lower your overheads. All external providers must register with Ofsted and comply with the requirements of the Childcare Register, but there's something else, too – you can charge the provider rental and generate income for your school.

The most effective rental models work on a percentage per head attending the club(s), as opposed to a flat fee. As the numbers increase, so will the payments received by the school. How you then spend that money is up to you. I've previously worked with schools that have used it to fund full-time specialist PE teachers and intervention programmes aimed at raising whole school academic standards.

Alternatively, you can decide to bring the provision in house. I was previously a senior leader at a school which chose to operate in this way, and know from experience that internal provision gives you more autonomy over how the provision is run. That said, there are independent providers out there who can help with the initial set up and administration tasks. It's a system with clear advantages – the staff will belong to the school, and often be from within the local community, thus building trust with parents. In this instance, the school generated a substantial amount of revenue from its provision, which it put towards paying for academic interventions and additional classroom resources.

The opportunities are certainly there for schools to generate additional funding in what's becoming an ever tougher landscape. Perhaps you too could find yourself saying, 'We've just received around £21,000' during the next academic year. Sounds good, doesn't it?

Ben Aston is head of operations and primary school consultant at J and C Education

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USE ICT TO CUT YOUR OPERATING COSTS

Your ICT outlay might be significant, but used well it can help you save costs elsewhere, says Jayne Davies

Finding ways to cut costs without negatively impacting teaching is an issue pertinent to all UK education providers. Schools have long sought to integrate ICT throughout pupils' learning, but using ICT to its best effect in the classroom isn't without challenge. It's possible for schools to invest in the very latest kit, such as top of the range iPads and virtual reality devices – but without the right support for embedding these into the curriculum, investment of this type will likely be underutilised.

Putting the right technology in place to support learning, rather than making learning work around technology, will enable schools to achieve a higher level of ICT delivery and support, while keeping costs down.

MOVE TO THE CLOUD

Moving to the cloud and going 'server-free' can save schools money and improve collaboration between teachers, students and office staff. Google's G Suite for Education and Microsoft's Office 365 are both free for school settings, offer a similar set of regularly updated features and can be easily integrated with existing on-site technology, meaning schools won't need to purchase hardware to host an Exchange server.

These platforms can also replace expensive virtual learning environments. Cloud packages tend to be purchased via annual subscriptions, rather than a large capital spend every three to five years. This gives schools greater visibility of ICT spend each year, without the worry of peaks in capital expenditure.

A recent report from the British Education Suppliers Association on the procurement landscape for MATs showed that 51% of MATs have centralised their procurement of ICT equipment and services – the second most commonly centralised service after utilities. MATs are in a unique position of being able to use economies of scale, centralised services and procurement strategies to negotiate the best value for money services to meet their needs and deliver improved teaching and learning.

AVOID THE FINES

There has been a great deal of media coverage on the increase in GDPR fines in education, yet according to a survey carried out by probrand.co.uk (see tinyurl.com/probrand-gdpr), 54% of educational organisations failed to wipe the data from decommissioned IT equipment in the two months following the instruction of GDPR.

Schools hold personal and often sensitive information which means they may be a potential target for ransomware and malware attacks. Annual ICT security audits conducted by an outside source are therefore important for ensuring the correct procedures are in place to avoid data leaks and fines.

There are many other ways in which schools and MATs can analyse their ICT costs and identify potential savings. Start by conducting an internal IT audit of all ICT touchpoints, from the office environments to the classrooms, and talk to staff to find out what works well. When researching potential IT providers, draw up a comparison showing what each company can offer and use this to work out which provider offers the best value for your specific requirements.

Jayne Davies is services director at RM Education; you can gauge your school's ICT effectiveness via RM Education's online health check at tinyurl.com/rm-healthcheck

@RMEducation

"If they don't know, they can't help"

Setting your budgets behind closed doors is a quick route to staff resentment, says Caroline Collins – so why not be open with your spending decisions?

Are your school's staff and SLT involved in budget-setting? Or is that something carried out in an office with the door shut and outcomes kept confidential between the SBM and headteacher?

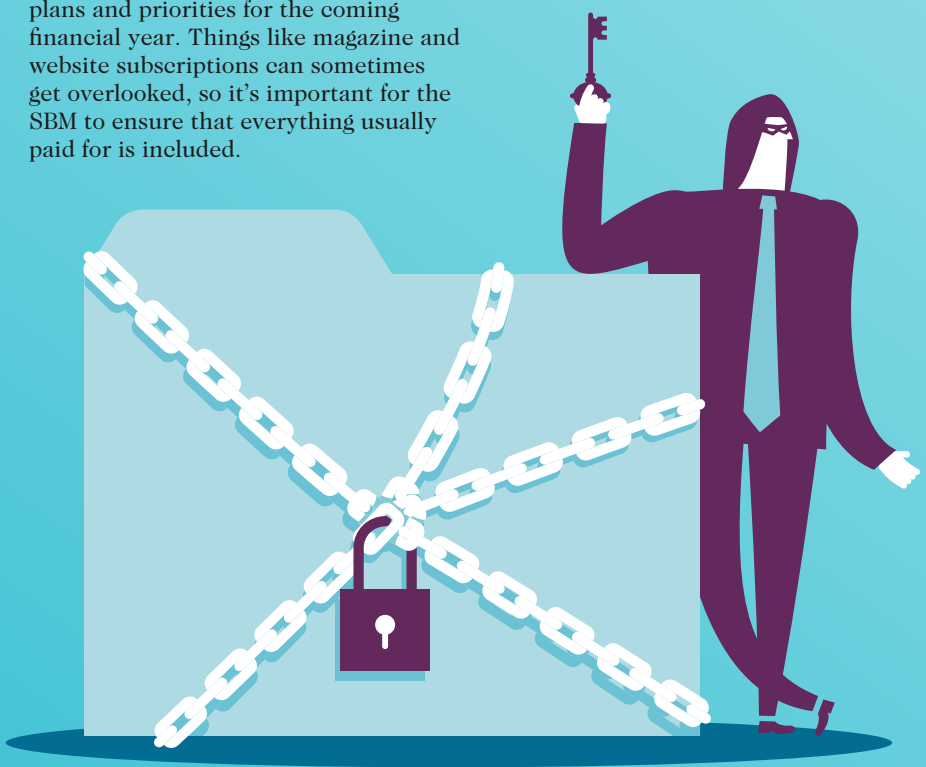
At a time when school funding is being squeezed, leading to cuts in individual budgets, senior staff can't afford to make financial decisions in isolation which could result in misunderstanding and resentment amongst school staff. Sharing your budget setting with staff will help create a culture of inclusiveness, joint decision-making and raise awareness of the school's financial position.

Frustration and resentment

It's a good idea to meet with budget-holders. The SBM should identify any contracts or SLAs coming out of specific budgets, while the budget-holders themselves should bring a list of their plans and priorities for the coming financial year. Things like magazine and website subscriptions can sometimes get overlooked, so it's important for the SBM to ensure that everything usually paid for is included.

These meetings will be an opportunity for the budget-holder to present his or her plans for the forthcoming year to the SBM and headteacher, so that they can understand what the priorities for the subject area are going to be. For example, the ICT co-ordinator might tell you they want to purchase new iPads for every class. The SBM's initial reaction to that could well be along the lines of, "Well, we can't afford that so scrap it" – but actually, there may be a valid reason for it. Perhaps an important curriculum app doesn't work on the iPad models the school currently has, or a number of devices are broken through wear and tear.

A lesson for SBMs here is to not just instinctively say 'no', but instead listen and understand why items are being requested. If, for whatever reason, the items can't be justified because they're a luxury rather than a necessity, then budget-holders need to understand why a commitment can't be made for it. If people aren't told, they won't understand – which can in turn lead to confusion, frustration and resentment.



Communication is key

Often, senior leaders will feel that they don't want to share the burden of reduced budgets and high spend with staff. Sometimes that can be because they don't want staff worrying about things they have no control over – yet sharing the burden can in fact help immensely. Staff members will understand more fully why their requests for orders are being refused, and might even feel prompted to come up with some good fundraising ideas and become more mindful about wastage.

Your budget setting should further involve your admin team and site manager. They might be able to come up with some ideas for saving money in their cost centres through pursuing alternative options – but similarly, if they don't know, they can't help.

Communication is key to everything that happens in school, and it doesn't stop at financial management. Whatever your financial situation looks like, remember that the school is a team; sharing information with the rest of the staff should lead to better understanding, increased respect, greater awareness of wastage and less complacency.

Of course, SBMs and heads have a duty of confidentiality, but they shouldn't shield staff from the truth. Instead, they ought to embrace the help and support that their team might be able to offer.

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

@caroline_261

THE COST OF CONFLICT

Sonia Gill set out how to appoint another full-time teacher in your school at no additional cost ...

"Conflict is a black hole that sucks away time and money"

Would you like an additional full-time teacher, TA or other member of staff to start at your school, while incurring no additional costs? If so, then good news – you can! But how?

Well, most schools are currently haemorrhaging time and money equivalent to the expense of a full-time teacher. And where are all these resources being lost? Conflict.

WHAT IS CONFLICT?

The word 'conflict' conjures up images of screaming and feuding staff. It actually covers a wide spectrum of behaviour and performance, all of which will cost your school time and money. Below are some examples of the most common types of conflict you can expect to encounter:

- **Compensation** – where we do something because the person who should be doing it isn't. e.g. a teacher spends 10 minutes each morning preparing resources, which is what their TA should be doing but isn't, because they're late or don't prepare the resources properly.
- **Avoidance** – this is where we can avoid speaking to someone or asking for something because we worry about the other person's reaction. By avoiding it, either the 'thing' won't get done at all, or else we'll compensate in order to get it done.
- **Fall out** – perhaps someone has created a negative atmosphere that's adversely affecting other members of the team. Maybe the team was unable to properly discuss a new idea because of the individual in question.
- **Gossip** – which can create ill-feeling and cause more problems.

You'll notice that none of these examples involve big, overt displays of conflict – yet these seemingly minor issues can all hinder the work you want your teams to be doing, and reduce the potential impact that individuals within those teams can make.

CALCULATING THE COST

Conflict wastes time and money in three key areas, starting with salary. If you're a one-form entry school and each member of teaching staff spends just 30 minutes a week being involved or affected by conflict, that's costing you nearly £5k p/a in lost time.

Sickness has meanwhile long been used as a marker of how happy staff, teams and organisations are. The higher it is, the more likely people are to be unhappy. In an organisation where there's conflict you're therefore likely to witness higher incidents of sickness – though bear in mind that only rarely can this be explicitly attributable to conflict issues. In the context of our one-form entry school, if people are taking just two days sick a year, that costs you £4k.

Finally, recruitment has become considerably harder in recent years – the time spent recruiting new staff can easily add up to £1.5k p/a in recruitment costs.

WHAT IS CONFLICT MAKING YOU SPEND?

For our one-form entry school, my conservative estimate for the cost of conflict so far stands at £10k p/a – almost the cost of a TA. For each additional form teacher thereafter, add another £6k p/a.

At a more typical two-form entry primary that equates to £16k, which isn't far off the cost of an NQT. At an average 5-form secondary school the figure rises to £34k p/a. I've seen many instances where a school's costs exceed £100k p/a.

THE REAL COST OF CONFLICT

The real cost of conflict, however, takes the form of lost opportunities.

According to my conservative estimates, the time lost to conflict adds up to 20 full-time weeks for a one-form entry school, and a further 15 weeks for each additional form entry. For an averagely sized two-form entry primary that's 35 weeks – almost a full school working year. For a five-form entry secondary, it's 80 weeks – two full school years.

What could you do with that time if it wasn't sucked up on conflict? Improve the curriculum. Mark books more thoroughly. Tailor teaching even further. Train and learn new skills. Teach and develop the team. Deliver more interventions. Find better interventions.

Money buys resources, and I'm sure you'll agree that the best resources are great team members and the time they can give. So what can you do to start countering the cost of conflict?

PREVENTION STRATEGIES

Conflict is a black hole that sucks away time and money. Plugging that hole, kindly and effectively, could release the resources you need to add at least one more TA to your school and up to several teachers.

Of course, the process of tackling conflict will itself take up time and resources, but it's an *investment* that will reap huge dividends – and you'd be surprised at how quickly you can resolve issues.

So what's the key to resolving conflict? The answer lies in learning how to have successful difficult conversations; ones where you can challenge poor performance and behaviour, and bring about the outcomes you need. You can find further information and assistance on this topic through my free e-course, 'How to structure a difficult conversation'. The Heads Up website also offers a whole range of free resources that can help you in other areas – now go and plug that black hole!

Sonia Gill is founder of the consultancy Heads Up, which specialises in making schools truly outstanding

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@SoniaG_HeadsUp
ukheadsup.com

USEFUL RESOURCES

COST OF CONFLICT CALCULATOR AND TUTORIAL

You can use the Heads Up Cost of Conflict spreadsheet to calculate how much time and money is being lost, and think through *where* and *how* it's being lost. Consider what changes you want to see, and who you need to have difficult conversations with in order to bring those changes about.

teachwire.net/cost-of-conflict

SEE ALSO:

- **E-course – how to structure a difficult conversation**
  ukheadsup.com/storm
- **Heads Up TV video channel and newsletter**
  ukheadsup.com/headsuptv

Sonia Gill's books *Successful Difficult Conversations in School* and *Journey to Outstanding* are both published by John Catt and available via Amazon

ARE YOUR FINANCIAL MESSAGES **GETTING THROUGH?**

Sue Birchall looks at how SBLs should present a school's financial situation to leaders – and how to ensure the messages you're conveying are the right ones...

When I first became a SBM – and indeed, before that a bursar – it was considered almost ungodly to utter the terms 'business' and 'finance' in the same breath as 'education'. However, because of the austerity measures imposed by the current government, school leaders are now more aware than ever before of the cost of education and the importance of getting value for money when delivering pupil outcomes.

To a certain degree, this has made the jobs of SBLs managing school finances a little easier. No longer are we considered to be solely negative when uttering the words 'Sorry, not in the budget' or 'No, we can't afford it'. It's now a whole school responsibility to spend and manage wisely within the confines of our ever decreasing budgets.

However, that doesn't mean that your SLT will automatically make the right decisions when introducing a new initiative, or even maintaining an existing one. As professionals, how do we ensure that we're able to offer advice and guidance in the knowledge that we'll be listened to, and that credence will be given to our advice and support?

SPECULATE TO ACCUMULATE

Those of you who have read my previous *PSM* articles on school finance will know I'm an advocate of inclusion, in that I believe staff should be made aware of restrictions created by our budgetary situations.

Alongside that, there's a need for all staff to understand not just how we're funded, but to what extent. Whenever I deliver this sort of training in my schools I'm always surprised by the misconceptions people hold – often due to misinformation through something they've heard or read, rather than a lack of understanding.

However, I also feel very strongly that innovation and change in schools shouldn't be driven solely by financial concerns. That might sound like a strange statement coming from an experienced business manager who 'deals with the figures,' but it's founded in a belief that you have to speculate to accumulate, and that you have to have sound risk management strategies.

My own approach to risk management in school settings is reflected in my desire to cost every element of the school's operations and encourage a business mentality when making choices. I'm an advocate of using business plans, service level agreements and financial formality in all areas of school life. This isn't always well received, but it does create an aura of understanding. I've found that my colleagues' work is typically informed by an understanding of the cost implications of any decisions they take.

A key part of all this has been my inclusion in the SLT, which affords me the ability to 'talk money' around the key decision makers at the schools I work in. It also gives me a greater knowledge and understanding of the schools' direction and enables me to offer strategic insights into any issues and developments I can see approaching on the horizon – something that's very helpful when it comes to financial planning, bid writing and developing long-term solutions.

YOU'RE THE PROFESSIONAL

At the very core of our responsibility as SBLs is the level of knowledge we hold about the school setting and our ability to share this with senior leaders and governors. What might that look like within the context of the school's day-to-day activities?

Firstly, we're all working with public money. As such, everyone involved must understand what this responsibility entails and look to ensure best value within everything they do. All aspects of school life have a financial implication, which is one of the most important points to get across to leaders. There ought to be a transparent approach to all aspects of budget spend, which should include a costed school or academy improvement plan, a whole school approach to purchasing and a common protocol for procuring goods and services.

It's important to remember that you're the professional in school charged with delivering sound and directed financial advice and support. A willingness to step forward and conduct difficult conversations around purchasing decisions and strategic direction is an essential part of your role. This isn't always easy to maintain in every setting, but it's not impossible!

Belonging to the SLT will put you at the heart of any decision making, and help you gather information that can be drawn on when offering your advice and support. If you're not a full time member of SLT, offer to attend at the start of their meetings or try to arrange a 'post-SLT meeting' the next day. This will give your

headteacher or principal an opportunity to share their ideas with you and discuss how affordable they are. The same could apply to your governors – attending their finance meetings, or even the occasional full governing body meeting, will give you the chance to offer some helpful options and solutions.

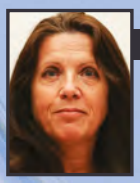
I mentioned earlier the role of SBL in relation to other staff. Maintaining a set of procedures that all staff must follow is a great way of attaining knowledge of your school spending in advance. In my schools there's a 'finance handbook' we originally wrote for this very purpose, which sets out a series of non-negotiables. I also insist on service level agreements, contracts registers and business newsletters, as well as a host of other business tools for monitoring spend and reaffirming responsibilities.

GATHER INFORMATION

The 'need to spend' will often be subject to outside influence – perhaps a reaction to a government initiative, pressure from the media or the instant response to a judgement. Keeping ahead of the game, being aware of what these influences are and their potential impact will mean you'll always be in a position to give best advice and guidance. Sign up for government newsletters, take part in consultations, join professional organisations, carry out your own research – these will all provide you with a stronger basis for informed discussion.

What all of this effort will contribute to is ensuring that you, as an SBL, hold all the information you need about your school or academy so that you're able to have robust conversations around matters of affordability and strategic direction.

SBLs should find themselves placed firmly in the middle of the process, in a position where they're able to guide, cajole and offer support to colleagues in a way that helps them achieve both best value and value for money.



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

"Innovation and change in schools shouldn't be driven solely by financial concerns"

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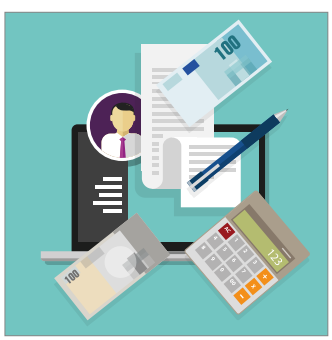

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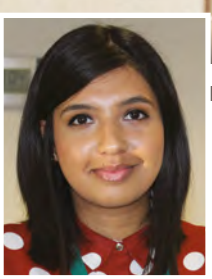

Replacing your fleet of photocopiers can be a daunting task – especially when you don't have the technical expertise to know which photocopier is best for your school's varying needs, says ESPO procurement officer, Krishna Mistry…

AUDIT

ESPO, in conjunction with CCS (Crown Commercial Service) and YPO (Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation), has put together framework RM3781 Multifunctional Devices, Managed Print and Content Services (see tinyurl.com/espo-rm3781). The framework covers a wide range of requirements, from basic A4 desktop devices to large reprographic devices, but there are several key considerations to check first.

First, examine the volume of copies you're printing each month, rather than focusing on how fast your existing machine prints. This will ensure that any new photocopier is properly fit for purpose, and won't be put under strain by large volumes of printing throughout the day.

If you're unsure as to which photocopier is most suitable for your requirements, the suppliers listed under ESPO framework RM3781 will be able to conduct an audit of your existing arrangements before recommending an appropriate device.

CUSTOMISE

The framework also allows schools to customise photocopiers with extra features they might need for their setting, such as a stapling function or a supplementary paper tray. It can also help schools acquire more streamlined, feature-light photocopiers to help keep costs down.

Lot 1 portal of the ESPO framework is a single supplier arrangement with Canon, designed for schools looking for a small range of devices and basic print management software. The user-friendly portal has a built-in comparison tool that assists schools with comparing the costs of their existing photocopier with those that a new device would entail, and can calculate any savings achieved over the lifetime of the contract.

There are two purchase options available under the ESPO framework to suit all budgets. Option 1 is for the outright purchasing of photocopiers, for those with the necessary capital. Option 2 is for leasing a photocopier over a period of three, four or five years.

LEASE OR OWN

There are benefits to both options. For those leasing a photocopier, there's the lack of any upfront expense and the flexibility of being able to spread the cost of the machine over that three-, four- or five-year period. Those leasing also have the option of updating their fleet of photocopiers and swapping out older devices more frequently than might be the case otherwise.

On the other hand, schools purchasing a photocopier outright will get to enjoy full ownership of the device, without having to plan around the ongoing payments leasing arrangements that typically accompany a fixed contract. Once the machine is yours, you'll effectively only have to pay for quarterly copy costs over the machine's lifetime.

For further information on the framework, the suppliers available and how to access quotes, email the ESPO Resources team at resources@espo.org, quoting 'PSM3781' in the subject line.

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"SOME PEOPLE HAD A PROBLEM WITH MY HEADSHIP"

Nadine Bernard reflects on why not everyone in the school community was on board with her appointment as headteacher – and how she navigated the resulting challenges

I've found that being a young, black, female headteacher is inspiring for many, but a massive problem for others.

I was 31 when I first became an acting headteacher, and assumed my first official headship before my 32nd birthday. The individuals who appointed me agreed I was the right person for the job, and had every faith that my leadership capabilities would take the school from strength to strength. Headship was a goal I'd been working towards for 13 years, and I felt ready to implement the vision I had for the school community.

I worked tirelessly to ensure the school ran smoothly. I put purposeful structures in place, co-created a relevant and personalised curriculum for my pupils and established a diverse team. Most importantly, I created a working environment that was productive, supportive, happy and safe for all.

The naive and trusting part of me felt that I was on a smooth road to further success, but I soon discovered how a series of external factors would start to cause me internal problems.

CONFIDENCE HIT

Some people had a problem with my headship. The most significant of these encounters was when I introduced myself as head to an individual visiting the school. Her response was to say, in a patronising and dismissive tone, "You're the head?" She quickly released her hand from our handshake and proceeded to look me up and down. This was the first time we'd spoken, and I didn't expect such a

disrespectful comment. Whether it was because I was young, black or female that caused her to react that way, I'll never know – but there was obviously something this person decided they didn't like about me from the moment they saw my face.

Disappointingly, I can recall further incidents like this – occasions when I'd be ignored at meetings or conferences, overlooked or asked to speak like my white colleagues. I've had experiences of being deliberately undermined, amid indirect references to my age. I still remember the parent who requested a meeting because I wore trousers instead of skirts, as there were boys in the school. (In case anyone's wondering, my skirts have always been knee length or longer!)

I allowed these negative external encounters to destroy my confidence and cause me to question my capabilities. Fortunately, I can now recognise that they weren't my problems to own, but rather problems to challenge and address – sometimes with the help of networks such as #WomenEd, #BameEd, #DiversityEd and #iamhereweseeyou, which are all working to challenge systematic injustices.

However, I can also point to many positive experiences I've had as a young head, alongside people who acknowledged my age, race and gender, but didn't allow this to influence how they treated me – a testament to the many wonderful individuals who work in education. There was my executive lead, for example, my 'on call' person who could always give me the best guidance with anything I needed advice on. The highly supportive working environment this created enabled me to develop my confidence in my role.

I'm now 35, and would still classify myself as a 'young' head. My advice to other young headteachers is to never let someone else's 'personal problems' make you question your ability to do the job. Be reflective, and refuse to be arrogant. Speak out against mistreatment and surround yourself with a supportive network. Be proactive in broadening your knowledge and skills, and walk confidently in your own shoes.

Nadine Bernard is a primary headteacher, facilitator and executive coach

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FINALLY – RSE GETS THE STATUS IT DESERVES

The DfE's new RSE and health guidelines should be welcome news to all, says Hayley Sherwood

The DfE's recently published guidelines for relationships education in primary schools, relationships and sex education (RSE) in secondary schools and health education for all ages are a welcome development that will support headteachers in giving these subjects the status they deserve.

As of September 2020, primary age children will be taught age-appropriate online safety, including what to do when encountering something they're uncomfortable with; the importance of treating others with respect, even when posting anonymously; and the dangers of talking to strangers online. They will also learn how to look after their own mental wellbeing and recognise when their classmates might be struggling, alongside lessons on nutrition, staying active and the importance of both spending time outdoors and getting enough sleep. The guidelines also currently fit the overall ethos of Ofsted's proposed new inspection framework, which at the time of writing is out to consultation.

I have, however, been disappointed to read what I consider to be the somewhat slanted headlines focusing on how primary school children will be 'taught about gay and transgender relationships as part of compulsory lessons'. The DfE guidelines have also been cited in the context of a protest against a Birmingham primary school by parents and community members unhappy at the purported 'teaching of lessons on homosexuality and gender', as well as a petition calling for parents to be able to opt their child out of RSE lessons, which has so far been signed by more than 115,000 people.

We all have a responsibility to make a stand for the wider focus of learning and societal issues these guidelines are intended to address. Nobody can say that the teaching of sexual consent, cyber safety and mental health aren't important – yet most of the discourse seems to focus on LGBT issues, when RSE and health education encompass so much more. The message sent from schools should centre on equality, diversity and inclusion – that we're all unique in some way and that this should be embraced. Our children must be taught to be accepting of differences and opinions.

The DfE has said it will provide £6 million of funding in 2019-20 for a school support package to cover the training and resources teachers will need to ensure they're well prepared ahead of the subjects becoming mandatory. This funding commitment, alongside the guidelines themselves, would seem to offer schools the autonomy and flexibility to commission high quality learning resources to support the new RSE and health education requirements.

September 2020 is only 16 months away. Schools need clarity now as to when exactly they'll be able to access this funding. For all the new guidelines' promise and potential, this remains the biggest question we do not yet to know the answer to.

Hayley Sherwood is creator of 1decision primary learning resources, part of Headway Education

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How often should headteachers actually teach?

Joanne Richardson looks at how much time heads should spend in the classroom – assuming they have a say in the matter...

For headteachers, establishing how much time you should devote to actually teaching pupils is challenging, regardless of whether you lead a large urban or small rural school.

Headteachers at small schools can find that budget cuts may result in them spending too much time teaching in the classroom – though this regular interaction with pupils will at least enable them to a gather a greater working knowledge of pupils' individual needs, and a better understanding of the progress and attainment each pupil makes.

In contrast, headteachers at larger schools can potentially draw on a greater number of teachers and support staff when it comes to managing how much time they spend in the classroom themselves, thereby preserving their leadership time. However, the higher pupil population will likely mean having to manage a larger volume of administrative tasks – particularly in the areas of assessment, SEN and child protection.

Additionally, the management structure in large schools – which generally see senior and middle leadership teams reporting back to the headteacher – will often limit the opportunities available for headteachers to maintain direct contact with pupils through teaching classes. That can make the job of gathering a working knowledge about the needs of individual pupils extremely difficult.

Striking a balance

It's good practice to build opportunities into the working week for teaching pupils, but setting aside the time to do so isn't easy. Build in some flexibility when establishing your teaching commitments, particularly in smaller schools where the scope for devolving responsibilities in the event of unexpected situations will be more limited.

In those situations, it's important to limit the amount of weekly teaching time to an absolute minimum. A lack of regular teaching commitments will enable headteachers to cover in emergencies, whilst also giving them the time to successfully carry out their leadership and management role. Where this isn't possible, try limiting your teaching to one or two days per week.

In larger schools, regular classroom teaching may enable headteachers to establish more positive relationships with pupils and keep up to date with issues arising through regular conversations with class teachers and support staff. Informal discussions can help identify issues of concern and instil a spirit of teamwork throughout the school.

How much time a headteacher dedicates to teaching pupils will be subject to a range of factors, including staffing levels, budget limitations and demands on their time as leaders and managers. How successful they are in establishing a manageable timetable for working with pupils will depend on their ability to balance those factors.

For headteachers in large schools, securing teaching time with pupils will probably be an aim for them to work towards; in small schools, it will often be a necessity. In either case, regular monitoring to ensure that balance is being achieved will be essential.

Joanne Richardson is a specialist advisor at the National Association of Headteachers

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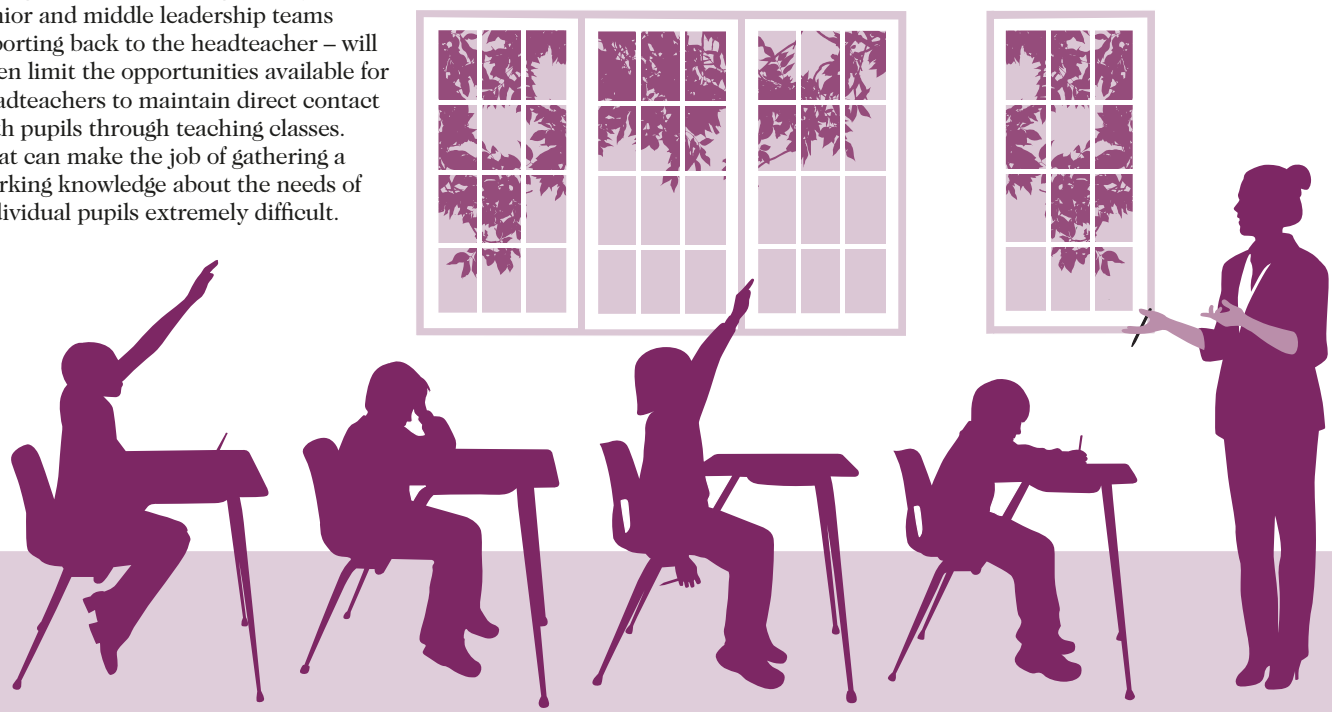

INTROVERTS CAN BE LEADERS TOO

Iesha Small explains why a gregarious personality needn't be a prerequisite for headship

Do you hate making whole-staff announcements? In meetings, do you prefer to listen to the points made and process what's being said, rather than convince everybody of your opinion?

Are you happy to develop other people, rather than take credit for everything? Are you confident in your abilities, but don't feel the need to self-publicise? Have you ever been told that you need to 'speak up' and be 'more vocal' and 'confident' in meetings, or with your colleagues?

Are you as comfortable alone as you are with other people? Sometimes more so? Are you happy working in a team and with others, but sometimes feel the need to work alone in order to really concentrate and process?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, then you may identify as an introvert. At the very least, you may have a quieter leadership style and be happiest out of the spotlight.

RAGE AND DISAPPOINTMENT

There's a perception that leaders need to be extroverted, outgoing and charismatic. Many people may feel that these qualities are synonymous or interchangeable, believing that leaders need to be the brightest light in the room that all are drawn to. This isn't necessarily the case, yet people often don't expect introverts to make good leaders.

I identify as an introvert, but for some people this has negative connotations and they'd rather not be known as such. I enjoy interacting with people, but I also need long stretches of time alone, and tend to prefer being in small group or one-to-one interactions over socialising or working in large groups.

When I was an assistant headteacher, I was called into my boss's office. "Iesha," he said, "have a seat."

I took the one opposite him at the huge conference table that dominated the office. So far, so normal; we met like this on a weekly basis. But next he said something which really had an impact on me. "I don't feel like this year has been a very successful year for you, compared to last year." He went on to outline why.

I sat and listened quietly, but inside, I have to be honest, I was *livid*. I left the meeting calmly, but internally seething. In my view, I'd actually had a more successful year than the previous one. My work had had a wider impact, due to others I'd worked with and projects I'd initiated, or so I thought. However, to outside observers it seemed I'd kept a much lower profile compared to the preceding year.

Once my rage and disappointment had subsided, I realised that deep down, I shouldn't be that surprised by my boss' comments. In the year he considered to be 'highly successful' I'd been extremely visible. I'd led on a staff consultation related to the school improvement plan, and had led lots of middle leader meetings.

This year – the one perceived to be less successful – far more of my work had been done in small meetings or individual coaching sessions. I wanted to empower other staff and develop their leadership capacity independently of me, so that the impact would last beyond my time working with them. To me, that felt much more successful, but as a result there were fewer demonstrable initiatives linked directly to me, so I couldn't visibly take the credit for anything.

PERCEPTION AND REALITY

Despite disagreeing with him at the time, I can see now that my boss did me a favour. After that meeting, I realised that in our working lives, whether we like it or not, perception is very important, since the perception of you becomes other people's reality. Knowing this could empower me.

"Inside, I was livid. I left the meeting calmly, but internally seething"

My boss was supportive, and we subsequently found projects that made use of my skillset while giving me a platform to be more visible.

One involved leading on our school's transition to a new internal assessment system, since we were scrapping the old key stage levels. It involved lots of research and consultation, which I enjoy, as well as the one-to-one and small meetings I was skilled at – but crucially, it affected everybody in the school in one way or another, and there was a clear outcome in that it resulted in a pilot with the upcoming year 7 and subsequent rollout to other years.

Another project saw me leading on staff and governor training related to LGBT issues, which I tackled as a series of twilights targeting groups of no more than 30 at a time (we had over 100 staff). This worked, because once again I was exposed to all staff but in a way that suited me, and it was about a topic I was passionate about. It's also always good when staff can see SLT in a setting which is closer to teaching, and appreciate that you're skilled at helping people to learn too.

However, not everything can be done in small groups or workshops.

Sometimes leaders need to talk to larger audiences. I first shared my ideas about being an introverted leader publicly during a talk at a major education conference. I was nervous, but made the experience more manageable by being well-prepared.

THE KILLER TOOL

In talking to other introverted leaders I've found this is a recurring theme. Lila, now an executive headteacher of an oversubscribed school, recalled to me her first ever assembly: "I carefully structured the message that I wanted to give about the use of praise, as well as sanctions. I got such good feedback after every assembly, and that made me feel really confident because I hadn't done assemblies prior to that role."

Alex, a deputy head, highlighted the importance of the research he did to prepare for public speaking and key meetings "Confidence isn't some physical show or some bit act; confidence and knowledge grow at the same time for me."

Both Alex and I now speak publicly in front of a range of audiences. My key advice to leaders who consider themselves quieter or more introverted would be to develop your writing skills. Writing really is the killer tool – if you practice writing clearly to persuade others and convey a point, it makes everything else much easier. It means you can prepare for when you're speaking to people face-to-face in almost any context. Also, don't forget how much communication in schools these days is actually done in writing via letters and emails.

I hope that if you're reading this as an introverted school leader it will help you to think about your strengths and find ways of using them in your professional life.

Iesha Small is innovation lead at the education think tank LKMco; her book *The Unexpected Leader* (an edited extract of which forms the basis of this article) is available now, published by Independent Thinking Press

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HOW DO YOU DEAL WITH THE 'HIGHER-UPS'?

Anthony David explores what the often complex relationships between heads of school, executive heads and MAT directors need in order to work

It's a brave new world. We're seeing a rapid move away from traditional models of leadership involving headteachers and deputy heads to a number of different, evolving models that include executive heads, MAT directors, Local Governing Groups, heads of school – the list goes on.

We've seen a blurring of lines. What were once clear, if slightly rigid leadership structures have now been replaced with something much more fluid. And as with anything new, that brings with it a testing of where those lines now are.

To declare my hand, I am one of the 'higher ups', currently an executive headteacher of three schools. In the early days – quite a few years ago, now – I spent a long time chewing over my impending change of role. As you might expect, the head of school and I discussed what our new leadership model should ideally look like, and asked ourselves how far away we were from realising it.

Less expected was the discussion subsequently had between our MAT Directors and the Local Governing Group...

WHO'S THE HEAD?

When I first became an executive head six years ago, my head of school asked me a pointed question – 'What exactly *is* an executive head?' There wasn't much difference between our job descriptions, except that the document outlining my role regularly mentioned the word 'strategy' throughout.

As we soon discovered (and I'm sure she won't mind me sharing this), the distinction involved a delicate dance – one with the sole aim of not stepping on each other's toes, whilst driving forward the ambitions of the school.

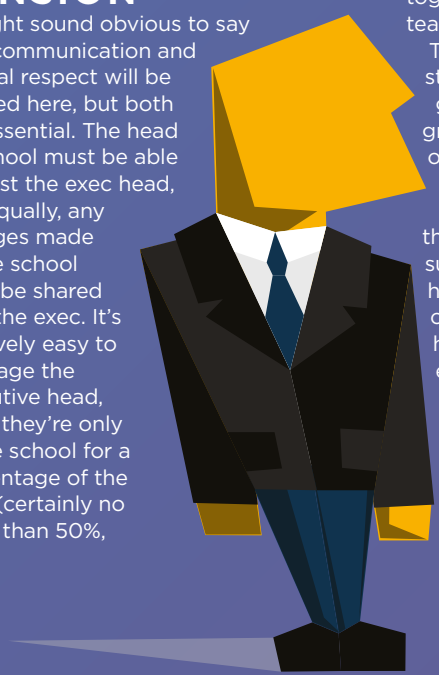
The simple truth is that the type of people who typically become exec heads are strong-minded leaders. They're used to being the focus of the school, the figure upon whom everyone is pinning the school's hopes and triumphs.

As an exec, however, you need to readjust that thinking. The head of school is now the figurehead, which means that as leaders, you're now effectively co-leading. What this means in terms of changes will largely depend on the head of school's skillset – which leads us to consider what the model ought to look like.

In an ideal world, the head of school should see the exec as a coach who can help them navigate their early steps into leadership. The exec should look to identify the head of school's learning gaps – which will often involve budgets – and together, you should both be able to set the school's long-term strategy.

RESPECT AND TENSION

It might sound obvious to say that communication and mutual respect will be needed here, but both are essential. The head of school must be able to trust the exec head, but equally, any changes made to the school must be shared with the exec. It's relatively easy to up-stage the executive head, since they're only at the school for a percentage of the time (certainly no more than 50%, which leaves a lot of time to raise your profile).



For the model to work well, face-to-face time is a must. There are some practical steps you can take to encourage this, such as sharing an office. Even if that means the visiting exec head has to sit in a corner with their laptop, it will still afford opportunities for both of you to casually chat, in addition to holding regular meetings. You could also change the sign on the door from 'Headteacher' to 'Leadership Office' or similar, to indicate unity of leadership.

Make sure that the head of school can be seen first in the leadership office, rather than the exec, however, as this will reinforce who the daily 'in charge' person is. See to it that you both carry out regular learning walks around the school together, to demonstrate that you're a team sharing high standards.

That said, tension can be productive. A strong head of school will raise the game for everyone and eventually grow to become a headteacher in their own right. If the executive head has done their job well, then new school leaders should emerge. At this point, the head of school can apply for a more substantive position, or the executive head can step away and allow the head of school to carry on as the substantive headteacher. There are cases where exec heads oversee the work of headteachers, but these tend to be rare.

It would be lovely if this was all as transparent in practice as it sounds, but sadly, egos are funny things. The final point to therefore make is that 'hard honesty' is critically important. The fundamental goal of every school is to ensure that every individual child receives the best possible education afforded to them. The egos of leaders should never get in the way of that.

WHO'S THE GOVERNOR?

At this point, it's vital to understand what the term 'executive head' actually means. Legally, it refers to a CEO, but some organisations are so large that they have CEOs and exec heads. Confused?

Well, the governorship of MATs is itself quite confusing. Ultimately, it's a MAT's directors (AKA 'governors') who will hold the CEO accountable. MATs may enjoy large freedoms, but they'll also want to demonstrate that they're meeting local need. In the early days of the academies system there was a temptation among some to create 'MAT franchises' – i.e. a MacDonald's-esque, 'one strategy fits all' approach – but this has since been largely discouraged.

"The fundamental goal of every school is to ensure that every child receives the best possible education. The egos of leaders should never get in the way of that"

As a result, Local Governing Groups (LGGs) have come to play an increasingly essential role as monitoring eyes and ears for their school and champions of what it does. Strictly speaking, LGGs hold no power at all – all decision-making power lies with those MAT directors – but 'earned autonomy' is an increasingly favoured approach when it comes to school oversight.

Put simply, if an LGG is effective, it can earn autonomy from the MAT's central directors. This might outwardly appear a bit patronising, but the reality is that the final buck stops with the Directors, who must be able to have confidence in their LGG. By growing a strong LGG, a school can effectively give itself an effective mechanism for challenging weak governors.

For heads of school and local governors, this new approach is one that arguably has a singular purpose – that of nurturing good leadership. As school leaders proceed to demonstrate their capabilities, their executive heads and directors can afford to move away and become more distant, whilst still making themselves available during times of need. At its best, it's an approach that will benefit the school as a whole and raise expectations all round.

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

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Stella Mead

Stella Mead has worked in education support for over 20 years and overseen Pupil Asset tracking solutions through many DfE changes. Stella currently supports our central MAT teams in developing the sustainable and effective assessment solutions that feature in Pupil Asset

A simple but powerful MIS that allows everyone to focus on what's most important – the pupils

Pupil Asset is a new way of seeing your school. It's a next-level school management solution that has successfully revolutionised the day-to-day business of leaders and managers, teachers and office staff, enabling them to make better decisions and improve teaching and learning.

Pupil Asset is the UK's most advanced assessment system – a fully-customisable attainment and progress tracker that allows schools to create a bespoke assessment model for their specific needs. It allows for an approach exclusively based around formative assessment or a mixture of formative and summative for overviews of attainment, alongside information about what each pupil has accomplished.

Assessing pupils in class is quick and easy – simply log in or use the free Teacher App for Apple and Android devices to document written or photographic evidence of work. With its easy-to-use reporting and analysis of attendance, behaviour, progress and attainment, Pupil Asset lets schools see the pupils behind the data.

The Pupil Asset offering also includes a full consultancy service to help schools design the approach that works best for them, together with ongoing support to help them get the most out of their data in the long term.

Pupil Asset empowers school leaders to improve pupil achievement, reduce absenteeism and give parents confidence in their children's education. From measuring the effectiveness of your Pupil Premium spend, to tracking progress across the new curriculum, it provides leaders with all the tools they need to make informed decisions and raise attainment. By keeping everything together in one place, it further helps to provide comprehensive evidence for inspections.

Pupil Asset's 100% cloud-based system means that schools don't require any specialist hardware or servers to run or use it – you can simply access it from any device, any time, anywhere.

It really is a new way of seeing your school.

Learn more by emailing sales@pupilasset.com or visiting pupilasset.com

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TIME FOR CHANGE

More Than A Score is a coalition of heads, teachers, education experts and parents campaigning to change the current system of high-stakes assessment in primary schools.

The group believes that schools should be measured on the overall quality of education they provide, not the results of a narrow set of standardised tests. They point out that current government policy is focused on accountability to the detriment of children's education, and that the time is right to debate alternatives which would better serve schools – and most importantly, pupils.
morethanascore.org.uk
campaign@morethanascore.org.uk

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Pupil Asset

A smart, cloud-based tracking and MIS system for schools

- An industry-leading management information and tracking system
- Easy-to-use reporting and analysis for attendance, behaviour, attainment and more
- Puts data, routines and reports at your fingertips
- Powerful search facility and finely-tuned filters with nifty navigation
- A creative and innovative solution to data analysis to support teaching, learning and assessment

Reviewed by: John Dabell

The educational landscape is flooded with systems that promise to help schools comprehend the volumes of data they gather, but only a few deliver. One that certainly does that is Pupil Asset, which aims to put schools at ease with the process of using data to improve pupil achievement, and support them in running their schools more efficiently.

This is a super-sophisticated and fully customisable system developed by teachers, for teachers. Its functions range from helping SLT track the effectiveness of their Pupil Premium spend, to supporting office staff in the managing of attendance registers, school meals and DfE returns. Everything is accessed via a top-notch and highly intuitive dashboard with various widgets that can be easily switched on and off.

The Pupil Asset MIS comes with an enormous number of features designed to help your systems run more smoothly. These include the 'Teacher' mobile app, result tracking for summative assessment, achievement tracking for formative purposes, behaviour tracking, progress reports, attainment reports and advanced data analysis.

Out of the box, users receive an SMS text allowance and unlimited emails, and can start using Pupil Assets in relation to attendance registers, school meals, extra-curricular activities, staff and pupil census returns, office reports and the requesting and receiving of electronic payments. There's also a 'Parent' app for those important home/school communications, event sign-ups and online payments.

One particularly superb feature is 'Live School', which renders your school onscreen as a 3D model. Hovering over the different buildings and parts of the school site, it can tell you who's taken their attendance register and highlight any areas of repeated behavioural incidents. The key benefit here is what it can do to help spot patterns and trends, and identify what might be going on and where.

Data doesn't typically jump off the page and make itself available as easily digestible and useful information – but it does if you have a system like Pupil Asset to hand that does all the work for you. It can synthesise and organise data in a host of different ways to stimulate reflection, while ensuring the reliability, validity and integrity of the data in question.

It's the perfect tool for SLTs that frequently find themselves delving into school improvement minutiae. It makes data management less of a dark art and more of a science, while helping to streamline your daily processes and making it easier to keep your finger on the pulse. Its creators seem to have thought of everything, and delivered a system that's very impressive.

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- ✔ Can reduce administration and teaching time while saving you money

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"LEADERSHIP CAN BE LONELY"

Catherine Carden contemplates how we should support school leaders during times of change and challenge...

Leadership is centred on the people we lead. It's a leader's responsibility to get to know those for whom they're responsible, support their development and in turn empower them to become autonomous leaders themselves. Strong leaders create an environment of transparency and trust, in which communication is clear and discussions are open.

These leadership attributes and skills are never more important than when organisations find themselves entering periods of significant change. Humans are creatures of habit, and impending or proposed change can be unsettling. It's during these times that leaders need to step up and focus on the essential skills of effective leadership – communication, transparency, trust and honesty – whilst ensuring the wellbeing of their team. The staff making up that team will have questions. They may feel unsure, insecure, frustrated and potentially confused, as well as angry and frightened about the forthcoming change.

This can all be very challenging for a leader who must maintain a sense of 'business as usual', whilst simultaneously creating channels of communication so that staff can be kept informed of developments regarding the change and have their anxieties assuaged. Staff must be given opportunities to express their concerns to leaders and ask about how the change may affect them. The leader must listen, coach, mentor and advise. Strong leaders will ensure that the change process has minimal negative impact on staff wellbeing and morale.

During periods of change, leaders can expect to see a significant increase in their workload. They'll be expected to attend additional meetings, take on extra tasks and familiarise themselves with all the documentation shared as part of the process, so that they're in a position to respond appropriately to any questions staff may have. Leaders may also be exposed to sensitive information not shared with the wider workforce, due to the concerns and stress it might cause – an additional pressure that leaders might have to contend with for a significant period of time.

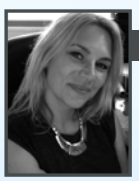
> "Leaders may be exposed to sensitive information not shared with the wider workforce"

A leader willing to take on all the above will be hugely beneficial to their staff, who will likely feel supported, respected and cared for as a result – as well as better informed and knowledgeable, at what can be a difficult time.

But who in such circumstances will support the leader? This leader will be privy to the true reality of the challenges being faced, while having to keep it to themselves. They will have seen the demands placed on their time grow exponentially, despite having to contend with uncertainties of their own. They will have given up time to listen to staff worries and concerns. They will have offered positive perspectives and boosted morale, while staying behind at the end of the week to ensure staff are fully updated on all current progress.

Who will ask this leader if they're okay? Who will ask the leader if they have any questions? Who will support the leader when they make important decisions regarding possible options and opportunities? Who will monitor their wellbeing? Who does for the leader what the leader does for so many others?

Leadership can be lonely. It's the role of a leader to look after their team, yet at times of significant change, leaders themselves must be looked after too. Otherwise, the team may make it down the rocky path to an exciting future, but minus the person who made that future possible.



Catherine Carden is the faculty director of primary initial teacher education at Canterbury Christ Church University and has a research interest in educational leadership

@catliscar
tinyurl.com/catherine-carden

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

If you agree, you are not alone.
Together, we can change a system that fails children and schools alike.

Please join our campaign and remember to state that you are a headteacher.

www.morethanascore.org.uk

more than a score

All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 230 senior primary school teachers in England. Fieldwork was undertaken between 15th January and 4th February 2019. The survey was carried out online.

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