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From the editor



It didn't take long for Philip Hammond's promise last month of \$400 million of schools funding to cover those 'little extras' – such as whiteboards and computers, apparently – to attract considerable opprobrium from many across the education sector. Their argument was that this sum was nowhere enough to help ease a multitude of financial pressures that schools are struggling to deal with – not least staff salaries.

If you're the head or business manager of a school grappling with the task of incorporating the 2018 pay award into your budget, you're far from alone. As Sue Birchall examines on page 46, it seems inevitable that the profession will soon have to face some major changes in how schools are funded or how they operate.

In the meantime, life goes on and those classrooms won't equip themselves. The purse strings might have to be tighter now than they've ever been, but schools can at least now avail themselves of technological solutions and new financial arrangements to make the procurement process smoother and more efficient. Over on page 54, three experienced school business professionals share the habits and practices that have worked for them.

Elsewhere in this issue, Jeremy Hannay ponders on page 66 the perennial question of whether it's best for headteachers to lead by asserting their strength and authority, or if they'd fare better by making a culture of warmth and trust their priority.

And finally, for any veteran school leaders out there wondering whether now might be the time to embark on their next big professional adventure, there's some advice on page 64 from former heads who have parlayed their expertise into successful second careers.

Enjoy the issue,

Callum Fauser callum.fauser@theteachco.com

Our experts this issue



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School, Kent

From the makers of Teach Primary



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A trio of secondary school business professionals impart some lessons in procurement

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As a paediatrician and the UK's first independent Children's Commissioner, Sir Al Aynsley-Green has spent his career advocating on behalf of children's interests - so what's his take on how children are faring in the current social and political climate?

Since stepping down as Children's Commissioner in 2010, would you say that the overall prospects for children and young people in the UK have improved, changed little or declined?

You're interviewing me on a morning when two thousand headteachers are marching on Westminster. I think that exposes a huge crisis in education today, if indeed further exposure were needed. Though it's not just in education that children are affected by crises – they're happening across our health, social care and youth justice services. If you're asking me whether childhood is in crisis – I believe it is

What are the chief factors behind the crisis you describe?

As a result of austerity and devastating cuts to services, there's no question in my mind that children's services are under the most enormous strain and stress. It's time the public understood the enormity of this, and that politicians did something about it



Your latest book is titled *The British*Betrayal of Childhood - who or what in your view is doing the betraying?

The book is deliberately challenging and provocative because I want to provoke debate, and above all, see action being taken to improve children's outcomes. It's a book that looks at not just education, health or social care, but rather at the bigger picture of what's actually going on.

However, I also want to celebrate what's good. That really important, because we've got fantastic kids everywhere, with wonderful parents who are trying their best; we mustn't lose sight of the fact that we have much to be proud of and that for many children, it's the best of times to be a child. The book's purpose is to remind people that for too many children, it's the worst of times. We have to ask why that is.

What needs to start happening at a policy level to bring about the kind of changes you're calling for?

Children are in this situation for four reasons. The first is related to the public and political attitudes we have here towards the importance of children, which are very different compared with other countries and deeply ingrained in our society.

The second reason is that for far too long, government policies have been short-term, inconsistent and in some cases, untrustworthy. Look at Every Child Matters – that was a policy under New Labour that brought about an extraordinary era, where we had a

Cabinet Minister for Children, Schools and Families right at the heart of government. We had a joined-up policy, with each Department of State held accountable for what they were doing for children. The first fruits of this were just emerging when the Coalition government came to power in 2010, and proceeded to systematically dismantle the whole edifice of Every Child Matters, leaving us with no overall policy framework for children.

The third reason is that we've failed to be effective advocates for the importance of children, and the final reason is that bunkers and silos now exist everywhere in government and between our professions now. There are walls between our health and education Ministries; between the primary and secondary phases; between professional organisations that barely talk to each other. We should be examining what's in children's best interests and how we can address those together.

So what can we do?

First of all, we need get out of our offices and see where things are being done well. I've been to Finland many times, and was there recently visiting a children's nursery in Helsinki. As with all of my previous visits, I found myself asking the same question – why is Finland so good for its children? Right up front, they told me it was their attitude to the importance of children in their society and future.

CAREER TIMELINE

Commences training in paediatric medicine

Appointed
James Spence
Professor of
Child Health at
the University
of Newcastle
upon Tyne

Assumes the role of National Clinical Director for Children at

the Department

of Health

Becomes the first independent statutory Children's Commissioner for England



I enter this nursery and soon see that the staff are all graduates, many with Masters degrees in subjects like psychology and the science of play. They consider themselves well paid and receive immense satisfaction from what they do. Of course, Finnish children don't start formal schooling until they're seven. The staff told me that 'school-readiness' there refers to Finnish schools being ready for children, not the other way round.

Contrast that with what's happening here, and the government's proud declaration of free nursery places for babies and young children - what's driving that is the objective of getting mothers back into work. Why can't we recognise the early years are absolutely crucial for child development?

As a paediatrician, what are your thoughts on what appears to be an increasing incidence among UK children of behavioural difficulties and growing demand for SEND provision?

Receives
Knighthood for
his services to
children and
young people

Appointed
President of the
British Medical
Association

That's a hugely complicated area that can't be addressed in a few words, but I would raise the question of whether we fully recognise the importance of parenting in this country – and my short answer would be that we don't.

Teachers and primary schools are currently confronting a parenting deficit. In the book I cite the work of The Potty Training Academy, Promoting Positive Parenting and other organisations supporting school starters who haven't been potty-trained, who are undisciplined or who don't have the simple social skills they need to interact with others.

Those organisations do a fantastic job of working with young parents faced with the most difficult job in the world. As a society, we must recognise the importance of parenting as part of the nurture of children, and build local communities that can further support and nurture them. This isn't just a job for parents and schools; it should be everybody's business.

You've previously spoken and written about the aspirations your own parents had for you and the broader culture of 'self improvement' that surrounded them. Can you see any possibility of that culture coming back or emerging in a new, modern form?

Yes, I think it can. There are pockets of people doing such things already, of course, and I'm not saying there's been a complete death of cultural activity in communities - far from it - but it's not joined up. I know that the government is looking at this. Plans are being devised around developing new 'healthy communities', which is to be admired, but there remains a leadership issue in localities.

We need to find people in localities, and indeed schools, who are prepared to think outside the box and start working together to improve the wider culture, boost outcomes and broaden attitudes to our most precious resource. With people living longer, who's going to provide the wealth to support them? It's the children of today. The Treasury has to understand the economic implications of failing to do right by children and see what many of us are trying to achieve – skilled, healthy, educated, creative, resilient and happy children.



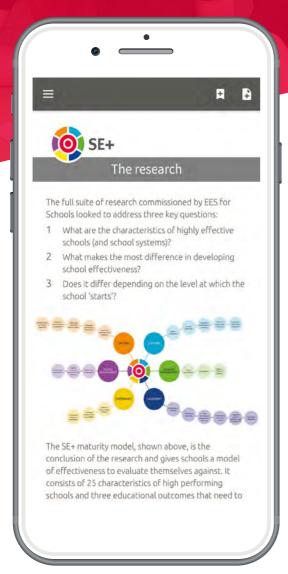
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Improvement

WHAT'S YOUR 'CURRICULUM INTENT'?

Stephen Rollett explains why curriculum thinking is the key to Ofsted's brave new world

t's arguably at primary school where the interventions of successive governments have had most influence on the curriculum. With accountability pressures dictating the importance of tests at the end of key stages, is it any wonder that Ofsted found some schools were spending a disproportionate amount of time preparing children for SATs? Ofsted's new inspection framework and its focus on the curriculum has the potential to be a positive step in the right direction - although we need to maintain a healthy degree of caution until we see the detail. For now, let's examine what it might look like and what it might mean for primary schools.

BEYOND DATA

From September 2019, inspectors will be encouraged to go beyond data, though this isn't to say that they'll ignore it. The key component will be the 'quality of education', largely framed by exploring the school's curriculum.

Ofsted has tried to fill what it sees as

a national gap in how we think about the curriculum by asserting that inspectors – and arguably schools – should be concerned with the three 'i's' of curriculum development: 'intent', 'implementation' and 'impact'.

The danger with such an appealingly pithy definition is that it can lead us to think the task at hand is relatively simple, yet high-quality curriculum thinking can be challenging. Part of Ofsted's argument is that curriculum expertise has been lost from the system, as a result of centralised government strategies over many years.

So, what should leaders do ahead of September 2019? A good starting point would be to establish a strong foundation – what Ofsted calls your 'curriculum intent'. Your curriculum



intent must be built on values, of course – but values based on what? They need to be rooted in more than just intuition, and while your curriculum intent should be ambitious, it should also be informed and deliverable.

For example, expressing an aspiration to 'develop 21st century learners', is laudable – but what does that actually mean for the curriculum makers in your school? Does it mean teaching transferable skills? If so, what's the body of evidence concerning how best to teach these skills? Leaders need to grapple with such issues and reach an informed view.

Many schools will (rightly) say that their curriculum intent is to reduce the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and other children. But in doing so, it's important to make use of the evidence which suggests that vocabulary and knowledge is key to closing that gap. The first step in preparing for the new inspection system may therefore be less about 'doing' anything, and more about deepening the quality of curriculum thinking within your school, so that the curriculum intent is well constructed and understood.

The smaller size and sometimes more remote locations of primary schools add an extra layer of challenge when improving curriculum expertise. Leaders will need to think carefully about how they support and nurture curriculum thinking.

Leaders could do a lot worse over the next two terms than make time for themselves and colleagues to read about and discuss the curriculum. Challenging existing thinking may be uncomfortable at times, but doing so and drawing on useful research summaries will help to ensure the curriculum you shape is rooted in more than intuition alone.

And regardless of Ofsted, that's likely to be good for children.

Stephen Rollett is inspections and accountability specialist at the Association of School and College Leaders





Grahame Smith runs through a list of what schools should consider when embarking on a specific strategy or initiative

1. DECIDE ON YOUR TIMEFRAME

What duration is best for what you're trying to achieve? Decide what's practical, given your school's current circumstances. A year? Longer? Or do you need a short-term plan in order to rapidly tackle a specific issue?

2. SET PRIORITIES

Keep your plan's priorities to a minimum - sections of the Ofsted framework or your last inspection report can be helpful here. Ensure that the priorities in question are key aims that will help your school or department advance to the next level.

3. GIVE ACTIONS MEANING

Will the actions you've chosen have a genuine impact? 'Ensure that Shakespeare displays are put up when studying the text' might be desirable, but is that really going to help you meet a target of 'Improve outcomes in reading'? Test any such decisions by assessing honestly whether they will raise standards.

4. TRY SOMETHING NEW

Focus your plan around new actions and developments that you're not already pursuing. Including lots of 'maintenance' actions will simply clog up your plan, making it flabby, rather than sharp.

5. FORMAT IT WELL

Number your priorities, actions and pages - don't just bullet them. This will make it easier to reference actions in future and monitor what's been completed and achieved. Referring to '4.3 on page 5' will let everyone know that you're pointing to 'priority 4, action 3 on page 5,' while also making it easier to illustrate your plan's coverage and impact via a monitoring grid.

6. MAKE YOUR TARGETS 'SMART'

Ensure that your plan's targets are kept 'specific', 'manageable', 'achievable', 'relevant' and 'time sensitive'.

7. AGREE ON WHAT 'SUCCESS' MEANS

Devise some big picture success criteria for each priority, rather than getting bogged down with different success criteria for every single action. The latter amounts to too much detail, and will make the monitoring process a painful one...

8. COMMUNICATE CLEARLY

Let's be honest - most of our peers will barely even look at our plans, however proud we might be of them. To help communicate your key priorities and actions more rapidly, why not produce a poster-sized summary sheet for the staff room wall and distribute it among key stakeholders? That way, you can clearly distil your key messages without all the waffly bits...

9. MONITOR IT CAREFULLY

Leave a column on your plan free for monitoring notes. An action plan should be a working document; any notes, scribbles and updates will show that you're tracking the plan and monitoring its outcomes.

10. KEEP IT SHORT

Above all, remember that in nearly all circumstances less is more! Keep your plan sharp, focused and tight.

Grahame Smith is school improvement manager at Havering School Improvement Services



"We need networks, not hubs"

Eve Bearne of the UK Literacy Association explains why the government's latest round of spending on phonics ought to be directed elsewhere

he government recently announced that it will be spending £26.3 million to fund 32 new Primary English Hubs that will build 'a network of excellent phonics teaching in every region'. That means that money from the education budget will once again be spent on a single aspect of teaching reading, to the detriment of a wider reading experience during the primary phase.

While phonics is an essential part of becoming an independent reader, equally important is developing the motivation to read through and enjoy high quality texts, leading to a lifelong desire to read for purpose and fulfilment. That \$26.3 million would be better spent on books for schools and public libraries, rather than yet more training for teachers

about phonies. This isn't the place to argue about the

limitations of synthetic phonics

(though the UK Literacy

comprehensive and convincing evidence of

what those are - see tinyurl.com/

dombey-2010).

Association has published

However, it is worth asking who'll benefit from the vast amount of money allocated to phonics hubs. It's unlikely to be children or schools.

There's ample evidence that the phonics check puts pressure on already stretched schools and headteachers - and for what? Recent research by academics Margaret M Clark OBE and Jonathan Glazzard (see tinyurl.com/clarkglazzard-18) reveals that 89% of headteachers and 94% of teachers don't think that the phonics check provides any more information about children's reading than they already have.

But hand-wringing gets us nowhere. Teachers themselves have found that creating professional networks can be a powerful antidote to narrow policymaking. UKLA's awards and reading groups, for example, represent a groundswell of support for exposing children to recently published high quality literature by reading aloud.

Groups of teachers all over the UK, who regularly read and avidly discuss children's books, find such experiences transformational for children, and a good way of encouraging professional development.

UKLA's joint action research with the Open University has meant that over 80 Reading for Pleasure groups are now responding to the needs in their respective schools for a richer, wider and more enduring children's reading experience. Those involved will even fund books out of their own pockets, seeing it as a moral and social responsibility to spend their own time fostering readers for life.

These reading communities tempt children into reading for pleasure though encouraging them to talk about reading, providing space for texts to be explored in greater depth and allowing favourites to be shared. The result is tangible delight and engagement, raised motivations and, of course, a secure grasp of phonics!

Authors, publishers and librarians generously lend their support to such initiatives, which are based around networks to which teachers willingly give their time - because they know this is more effective in creating enthusiastic

young readers than detecting nonwords. The proposed funding for phonics hubs would buy more than 4 million books. How many more children could be set on the path of becoming lifelong readers with that kind of money? Far more than will be created by the government's current plans.

> **Eve Bearne is associate** editor at the UK Literacy **Association and its former** president



GET TO WHERE YOU WANT TO GO

It's hard to overstate the importance of a well-crafted self-evaluation form, says Anthony David - but at the same time, we need to be aware of what its limitations are...

ack in 2006, a requirement was introduced for schools to keep an up-to-date school self-review using a self-evaluation form (SEF). In the years since, use of this document has gone in and out of fashion among school leaders, but it remains a very useful tool for reviewing what impact a school is making as a whole.

A tight SEF will consider the focus areas of school life (leadership, learning, personal development and outcomes). and help to provide evidenced judgements of any actions in the complementary school improvement or development plan. Your SEF is a review document designed to inform Ofsted teams and direct school inspection under the current framework. It's not meant to present a descriptive history of the school, but rather serve as a robust and up-to-date analytical tool.

Every member of the school will be a stakeholder in the creation of this document. It might be SLT that actually writes it, but there's every chance that you'll be later required to provide evidence to support certain aspects of your SEF or specific statements within it.

MANAGE IT CAREFULLY

At its heart, the SEF is an evaluative assessment of current practice. It shouldn't outline the vision of the school, and nor should it be used to drive the development of that vision. Yes, during a review your SEF may uncover issues that might warrant some form of short-term school improvement - but it shouldn't be used as a major vehicle for long term vision implementation. As with many other areas of school life, your SEF will need to be carefully managed.

There are certain times of the year when it makes sense to update particular sections. Establishing direct links between your SEF and school improvement plan will create a harmony between the two documents - indeed,

school leaders are increasingly viewing their SEF and SIP as one document consisting of two parts - while also providing the ongoing evidence you'll need for external evaluations.

SLTs must remember that maintaining the SEF is a joint responsibility that should be communicated to the whole staff body at least once a year. If there are distinct areas of responsibility, such as the Foundation Stage or professional development, area leaders should provide the evidence needed for the sections in question.

Ofsted recommends that before uploading their SEF to the Ofsted portal (something only required during inspections), leaders should consider the following points:

- Are your judgements clear and to the
- · Have you reflected stakeholders' views?
- Does the SEF give a fair and honest picture of what the school is like, and have you been clear about the actions being taken to improve matters?
- would your SEF lead you to ask?

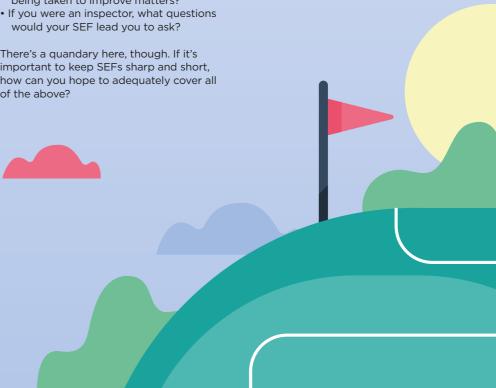
There's a quandary here, though. If it's important to keep SEFs sharp and short, how can you hope to adequately cover all of the above?

PRESENT IT INTELLIGENTLY

School leaders are rightly passionate about their schools, and with that can come the temptation to wax lyrical about their every achievement. I've previously seen SEFs that are some 40-plus pages long - which, in truth, tends to ring alarm bells. If the received wisdom for many vears has been that SEFs ought to be kept tight and short, why is this head bucking the trend?

We don't want to lose that rich detail, but it can be captured in other ways. Each section of your SEF should cover three areas:

- 1. Evidence and commentary that supports your judgement
- 2. Action points that have been identified as areas of weakness or development
- 3. Bullet points that signpost to documents, reports and/or awards that further support the SEF



All of that can and should be recorded using one page per area. The core sections should meanwhile reflect the current inspection framework - which at present covers leadership, teaching and learning, outcomes, Early Years and personal development. That said, church schools will be required to develop a specific SIAMs (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) SEF. Given that the SIAMs framework is in the process of changing, it's essential that you understand what its seven new priorities are, and that your SIAMs SEF addresses core questions regarding vision.

EMBED IT WITHIN YOUR PRACTICE

Having invested time in producing your SEF, it's can be useful to then carry over the shape of your SEF headlines to other documents and procedures. Linking your school improvement plan to the SEF will mean that something identified as a weakness or area for development has a

clear and strategic place in the current year's school improvement. Linking the two will also help governors track changes.

Just as with the SEF, the school improvement plan shouldn't be an intensely detailed document, but neither should it leave out important details. Redesigning the written headteacher report to reflect the core titles used in your SEF will help governors gain a deeper understanding of the progress the school has made, while also creating a further body of evidence that directly links to the SEF.

It's worth also reconsidering how you minute your leadership team meetings. Why not flag up your SLT meetings with the same titles as used in the SEF and headteacher's report? You might not always be discussing 'outcomes' at each meeting, but there's a strong likelihood that elements of leadership, learning and personal development will regularly figure on your agenda - and referring to them in the same way in which they're cited in your SEF will keep thse core areas at the forefront of each leader's mind.

Inevitably, there will be incidental issues that fall outside of those key areas, but these should be rare. Most of what SLTs do and discuss will conern learning and leadership; formatting your minutes to reflect this will serve a useful exercise for yourself, while at the same time creating yet another evidence pool.

"Inspectors won't have time to wade through and thoroughly understand a lengthy document"

CONVEY YOUR ESSENCE

Finally, don't forget the school itself because that's the strongest evidence of all. Ofsted will expect you to lead a learning walk, and if you've been training your mind to identify how the learning environment reflects your SEF (particularly where you're actively addressing weaknesses) then you'll be able to demonstrate, as a school leader, that you've identified your school's needs, understood them and devised a plan for addressing them.

Remember that inspectors won't have time to wade through and thoroughly understand a lengthy document. They might conceivably have less than half an hour allocated to reviewing your SEF, and will thus want to comprehend the essence of your school as quickly as possible.

Ultimately, there's little to be gained from creating chapters for your SEF that deviate from what Ofsted (very clearly) state they'll be inspecting. Link the SEF to your school improvement plan, consider how you can build evidence that supports the SEF, and tailor your school's documentation and procedures so that said evidence is easier to source.



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

SURVIVE YOUR FIRST **100 DAYS**

When charged with turning round a 'failing' school, heads have only so long to act. Simon Botten looks at what they ought to prioritise...

hadn't intended to take over a school in difficulty. It wasn't the plan. But on an April evening in 2007 - just as I was stepping out the door, en route my leaving do at the school where I was deputy - the phone rang. It was the chair of governors at the school where I was due to be starting as head after the Faster break

"Four children have just tried to burn down the school," he said. "What would you like to do?'

And so it began.

Since then, I've been headteacher at two schools in difficulty - the first by accident, the second through choice and have supported many more. School improvement is a lengthy business, with few shortcuts. As a new head, you only get one opportunity to make the right

impression and set the tone and pace of the school improvement work to follow. This is where the first 100 days come in.

Leaders from all walks of life often talk about the importance of their first 100 days. It's that brief honeymoon period where, unencumbered by complex issues of your own making, leaders have the opportunity to create some momentum and push through quick wins and big ideas. In a school experiencing difficulty, the head gets just one shot at doing this - so using those 100 days well is a must. Here are a few of the lessons I've learnt along the way...

DOING NOTHING ISN'T AN OPTION

Being a bloke, my internal heroic monologue casts me in any number of heroic movie roles. As such, the only way I of Saving Private Ryan. Having landed at a Normandy beach in a hail of murderous machine gun whilst his platoon are cut to ribbons around him. He doesn't know what to do, so he does nothing. It isn't until you like us to do sir?" that he

remembers he's in charge, that and doing things is what's expected of him.

Taking over a school in trouble can feel a bit like that (albeit without the machine gun fire). The scale of the challenge seems overwhelming, and the temptation can be to watch and wait. In a 'normal headship', taking time to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school before deciding how to move things forward is a good strategy, but a school in crisis can't waste time. There's likely to have been a recent period of inactivity and/or chaotic leadership, resulting in the need to inject a sense of urgency into the school's work. In that situation, doing literally anything is better than doing nothing.

REPEAT YOUR KEY MESSAGE

When addessing staff, pupils and indeed parents for the first time, everything you say (or don't) will be scrutinised for hidden meaning. Think carefully about what your key message during those first couple of days will be and keep it simple. At my first school, the most pressing problem was poor behaviour. When I asked a Y6 boy to quietly enter the hall for that first assembly, he calmly told me to 'fuck off'. My message therefore concerned the importance of mutual respect, and agreeing to the basic school rules we would all live by. At my second school, the children and some staff had low expectations of what they could achieve, so the key message there was one about being 'champion learners'.

Once you've decided on your message, it becomes a case of repeating it constantly, putting up displays and other reminders that this is the thing that matters most right now. (Incidentally, I immediately excluded the sweary Y6 boy for two days, as everyone was watching to see whether I meant what I said).





フ GET A SKIP

The first piece of advice I give to all the new headteachers I mentor is 'get a skip'. The second is 'get another skip'. I learnt this from the brilliant Simon Rowe. headteacher at Waycroft Primary school. A couple of weeks into my headship I asked him what I should tackle first. "Environment, then behaviour, then teaching." was has unequivocal response.

I've yet to find a school in trouble that's tidy and organised, so this is a good place to start. Change the foyer, mount any awards in nice frames and model it on the image of the school you want to convey. Tell staff to throw away every last piece of junk. It's a quick win, and everyone feels better for it. Controlling the physical environment shows staff that you're a headteacher who's taking control. It's a physical manifestation of change - and you can't improve a school when there's crap everywhere.

DEFINE YOUR VALUES

All of the vulnerable schools I've worked with had at one time forgotten their raison d'etre. They may have had values and aims up on display, but they would be rarely referred to and inevitably not 'lived'. In your first 100 days, define four values you want built into the DNA of every child. Be bold - look ahead to a future where the school is Outstanding and define the child you want the school to create.

Next, create five aims - 'Every child will...' statements - which define in short sentences those qualities and skills a child should exhibit at the end of every day, week, term and year. This must be a three-way collaboration with parents, staff and children all contributing. In a headlong rush to get things done, heads will sometimes dream these up alone and present them as a done deal, but this is one area you have to agree on as a community. The conversations you have in agreeing those five aims will help you discover what the staff truly think their school is capable of.

WATCH YOUR LANGUAGE

The language you use or accept from others around school defines the professional standards adopted by the whole school team. Professor Tim Brighouse talks about this power of language in his excellent book Essential Pieces - The Jigsaw of a Successful School (see tinyurl.com/tb-epss). If you allow yourself to moan and be negative around colleagues, don't be surprised when they do the same.

Conversely, positive and ambitious language can have a huge impact on staff morale and expectations. Starting sentences with 'When the school is Outstanding...' convays the message that you believe success is the inevitable outcome of everyone's best efforts to improve the school.

USE SYMBOLS AND RITUALS

Schools are essentially a tribe. As such, staff and pupils will often act tribally, ascribing meaning to symbols and rituals which may appear insignificant. On more than one occasion I've caused huge upset by cancelling or changing something I assumed meant nothing, but actually meant everything to the tribe. Unpicking the hidden meaning in existing symbols and rituals can be a good way of understanding the school's USP.

At my second school, before the first 100 days were out we had already created a new school uniform and badge that incorporated our 'Champion Learners' motto. From then on, we told the children that whenever they pulled on their school sweatshirt we should see them transform into champions, the characteristics of which were discussed. over a series of assemblies.



Simon Botten is a primary school headteacher

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southgloshead.wordpress.com

Freshen up your **ASSEMBLIES**

Stuck in a rhetorical rut? Lucy Starbuck-Braidley offers some advice for making your assembly format more engaging



MUSIC SPEAKS

Music needn't be just used at the start of an assembly, it can form an integral part of each session. Children will listen and respond to a wide variety of musical genres - can they articulate their emotional response to a piece, or explain how the music links to the assembly theme?



VIDEO VARIETY

Using video clips is a great way to keep things fresh. There are a huge number of short films online that can provide ideal starting points for assembly discussions - there's lots at The Literacy Shed (literacyshed. com) and TED Talks archive (ted. com/talks) to help you get started. If you have the resources, you could make your own to support particular themes.



KIDS' TAKEOVER

Getting the children up and involving them whenever you can is essential to holding their attention, beyond simply asking them to answer questions. They could perhaps help tell a story, hold props, have some input into deciding assembly themes across the term or even take the lead themselves via a 'flipped assembly' format (see opposite).



CHANGE IT UP

Ask different members of your school community to contribute children, teachers, governors and support staff may all have something to share with the school in their own unique way. Not everyone will feel confident when speaking publicly, but some will, and assemblies are a great way of getting people involved.



PICTURE

PERFECT Picture books can be a great way of breaking down barriers when dealing with a wide age range. Younger children will be interested in the images, whilst older children can practise inference and explain how the moral of a given story relates to our everyday lives.



KEEP IT REAL

In a rapidly changing world, there will always be new topics to cover in your assemblies Leave space in your planning to respond to national and international events or new trends in your school. The children will benefit from the opportunity to explore these as

a group.



KEEP IT SHORT

Key assembly themes can be built up across a term or even year, so there's plenty of time to deepen children's understanding over a longer period. Keep your assemblies fresh by making them short, snappy and memorable. The children will be keener to participate and more likely to engage.



WHOLE SCHOOL!

A gengathering of the whole school is the perfect opportunity to highlight schoolwide initiatives. Use assemblies as a launchpad for school improvement projects and take the children on the journey with you. Giving something like times tables a regular spotlight might be just what you need to focus children's minds.



SPEAK PASSIONATELY

Don't shy away from the personal - children can tell when you're speaking from the heart, and it makes them sit up and listen. Using stories and examples that are important to you will lend your presentation effortless enthusiasm, while also providing an important insight into your core values.



STAY DYNAMIC

One size doesn't fit all. and you might feel that you have a 'tried and tested' approach to your assembly, but it's always worth experimenting from time to time. Ask other members of staff to sit in on some pupil conferencing afterwards, so you can keep track of what's working for the pupils in your

setting.



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





FLIP YOUR ASSEMBLY

Conducting assemblies can build confidence and public speaking skills – so why not share the benefits with your pupils?

DIVERSITY

At St Martin's CE Primary School, a small setting in rural Berkshire, children in years 5 and 6 are taking the lead when it comes to assemblies.

The initiative sees each child take a turn in leading an individual assembly on a subject of their choice that links to at least one of the school's core values: courage, friendship, creativity and respect. The topics chosen are wide and varied, reflecting the children's diverse interests.

As headteacher Katy Bartlett explains, "Children have chosen to focus on topics as diverse as Disney, Harry Potter, the RAF and Nelson Mandela."

The children appreciate the freedom of being able to break free from the curriculum, "We have the choice to cover different subjects that might not be part of our normal lessons." says Thomas – a pupil at the school who, for his own assembly, opted to go with the topic of YouTube.

VALUES

Some children choose to work on their assemblies in pairs, whilst others prefer to work independently. The children plan and prepare their assemblies in their own time as a piece of homework with minimal input from their teacher. The requirement for all assemblies to make wider connections to the core school values gives the children a forum in which they can demonstrate their own understanding and interpretation of what those values are in a variety of contexts.

"We try to weave the school values through all aspects of school life," says Bartlett, "and this gives the children an opportunity to demonstrate their understanding of those concepts." The pupils themselves have responded positively to the initiative, and look forward to taking their turn in front of the school once they reach upper key stage 2.

OPPORTUNITIES

Year 6 pupil Emily, for one, appreciates the opportunity she's been given to take the lead: "It feels like you have an important responsibility, and you get to teach people about something that's important to you."

Bartlett comments: "We've found it a great way to give the older children in the school an opportunity to build their independence and confidence in public speaking before they move onto secondary school. Class teachers also find that it gives them an added insight into the children's wider interests, which we might not ordinarily hear about in the course of the school day."

For some children, the experience has certainly been an eye-opener. "It helps you understand how teachers feel when they get interrupted," says Elri. "It shows you how hard a job it is, and why you need to respect teachers."

For more information, visit st-martins.hants.sch.uk

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On with the show

If your available hall space or the content of your assemblies requires you to be flexible, one potential answer might be Q-build multi-level staging range. Available in bundled kits, as individual components or a bespoke design, it can be configured in a wide variety of layouts without the need for tools, and be quickly dismantled and neatly stowed away should the need arise.

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HOW TO CHOOSE OUR CLEANING PROVIDER

With schools increasingly able to choose their own cleaning provider, what should you be looking for in order to secure a good deal?

he process of deciding who should provide your school's cleaning service requires careful consideration, as you'll be relying on them to perform a vital and visible job. Start by weighing up whether your cleaning provisions should remain in-house or be outsourced. Price is often cited as the main driver, but the quality and reliability of the service provided should be considered as being of equal importance. Should you opt to outsource, you'll then need to settle on the approach you intend to take - overseeing and running the procurement yourself, or utilising a compliant framework. At ESPO we offer a

number of EU/UK compliant frameworks, one of which is Total Cleaning Services Solution (reference 263). ESPO established the framework by assessing suppliers on their technical and professional ability in meeting customers' requirements, as well as price and quality factors.

Every contract put in place under the framework is underpinned by a call-off contract (pre-agreed terms and conditions) in order to protect the customer's interests, and it's possible to tailor the call-off contract to reflect your own specific requirements. You might choose to incorporate key performance indicators to manage and monitor the supplier's performance, which could include:

- Satisfaction with the cleaning services provided (e.g. audits)
- The frequency of complaints or customer feedback received
- · Punctuality and attendance of cleaning staff
- Adherence to your cleaning specification
- Meeting of cleaning timescales

You must ensure that the KPI's you establish are SMART - Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-Bound.

You may choose to appoint a supplier based on the terms set out in the framework, or alternatively opt to undertake a further competition exercise in order to complete your requirements. Your further competition can be awarded based on price only, or on the basis of evaluating price and quality factors, with weightings for each factor to emphasise their importance.

Ideally, there'll be a reasonable number of potential suppliers covering your region to ensure that the process is competitive, (ESPO framework 263, for instance, has a number of suppliers spread across multiple geographical areas). It's also important that sufficient time be allowed for the potential suppliers to complete the further competition documents.

If your cleaning provisions are presently in-house and you're looking to outsource the service provision, then TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations) may apply. It's best to seek legal advice on how this is managed as part of your outsourcing process.

ESPO frameworks are free to use, and can save schools time and money by mitigating the need to undertake a full EU-compliant procurement process; the suppliers on the frameworks have all been assessed on their financial stability, past track record, previous experience and technical and professional ability. ESPO's frameworks can be easily accessed via the ESPO website (www. espo.org/frameworks) and will give schools ready access to a wide range of suppliers.

For more information on the framework, plus details of how to obtain document templates that can help you communicate your requirements, contact ESPO's place and environment Team at place@ espo.org.

Guy Swanson is a Procurement Officer at ESPO





School libraries aren't luxuries, says Samantha Pope - the most successful are far more than iust a depository of books...

ear headteachers. As school budgets are squeezed even tighter, I'm going to ask you to earmark money for something that you, officially, don't have to spend any money on - your school library.

I can anticipate your immediate response already. Schools are expected to do so much already with decreasing amounts of money. Believe me, I know - I used to be a school governor and I work in a primary school. And, since libraries aren't a required facility in schools, it might make more sense to cross them off the list. After all, often school libraries can hardly be called that - squashed into corridors or located in a dark corner behind a cloakroom, where battered books fight for space among coats, bags and muddy wellies.

If a library doesn't look welcoming or attractive, the children won't want to visit it, so what's the point in having one, you might ask. Besides, if most primary classrooms have book corners and bookcases with age- and abilityappropriate titles, is there any need for a separate library at all?

The thing is, a successful library is so much more than a depository of books. It's a place where the written world can come to life. Dedicated school librarians (and they don't need a library qualification to be effective) try to engage families and carers and the wider community to instil a love of reading.

We help staff with reading materials to support classroom education and create

interesting and entertaining challenges in reading and writing. We might work with children who are reluctant readers, or who struggle to achieve their ageappropriate reading levels. We liaise with local bookshops and libraries and keep in touch with authors and illustrators to arrange school visits and send them photos, letters and tweets.

In my library. I'm fortunate to get to know each and every child in the school through weekly library sessions and 'library lunchtimes', where I run activities such as storytime and arts and crafts sessions based on the books and poetry we're reading. The children see the space as a place of creativity and calm, with cushions, teddies and colourful displays alongside the books, magazines and newspapers.

This environment is vital at a time where, according to recent surveys, one in ten children and young adults suffer from mental health problems such as anxiety, depression and conduct disorders. Librarians aren't necessarily trained psychotherapists or counsellors, but if they can at least offer a vulnerable child a refuge a few times a week, it can help ease the burden on teachers with 29 other children to care for.

Book lover, reading helper, agony aunt, researcher - perhaps the question you should be asking yourselves is this: can you afford not to have a librarian?

Samantha Pope is librarian at St Michael's CE Primary in Oxford

What does a school building consultant do?

In certain cases, a firm of chartered surveyors may be able to assist schools by acting as a school building consultant - here, Michael Harrison explains what that entails

school building consultant is the sole professional appointed by a school to implement and oversee all building projects. The consultant is responsible for the management of building projects from start to finish, including appointing all other professionals required to complete the outlined works and applying for funding.

The school building consultant's remit extends to advising the school on all building matters, including repairs and maintenance, refurbishment, alterations and extensions in order to meet a set level of condition, suitability and

sufficiency of a school's

premises.

It's the school
building consultant
who will obtain all the
necessary surveys,
reports and statutory
approvals for any

project in the process of being planned, The consultant will also advise on any legal issues relating to a project, and generally ensure all aspects are in place for the successful delivery of building projects and works.

The consultant will usually be appointed by the body responsible for running a collection of schools, such as an area's diocese or a MAT. Single academy trusts, free schools and independent schools can alternatively seek out and appoint a school building consultant of their own.

A school, or group of schools can benefit from the services of a specialist school building consultant in several ways. One area that headteachers and school governors will particularly value is the provision of a building development plan, usually covering a 5-year period. These plans can be used to prioritise 'condition' and

'development' building projects, and provide an agenda for other initiatives the school may wish to develop. The school's appointed consultant will typically visit the school twice a year to discuss whether the requirements have changed and report back on completed projects.

completed projects.

Another benefit of working alongside a consultant with experience of the education sector is their knowledge of routes to funding. The right school building consultant will be able to advise on available funding streams and submit bids that stand a better chance of

meeting relevant funding criteria.

Dealing with building projects is a time-consuming process. With headteachers and governors likely to be already swamped with paperwork and red tape, having a trusted building consultant on hand can dramatically reduce the time needing to be spent on dealing with building works. Instead of having to liaise with multiple contractors, a diocese or LA, the DfE, EFSA and others, your school's headteacher and governors will have a single point of contact for all matters relating to the maintenance and improvement of the school's buildings who can act on behalf of the school in all relevant communications.

At Lea Hough, we act as a school building consultant for a number of schools in Lancashire, Cumbria and Greater Manchester. We're an approved consultant for Blackburn CE and Carlisle CE Dioceses and have undertaken several projects for Salford RC Diocese. We've been regularly appointed by MATs, single academy trusts, free schools and private schools in the North West, and seek to provide a comprehensive tailored service for every school, large or small.

The property consultancy services we offer range from thorough assessments of existing school buildings, through to the identification of potential projects, overseeing of funding applications, planning, design and specification services, tendering and project management. The professional advice we're able to offer mean you can rest assured that your school is in safe hands.

Michael Harrison is a partner and chartered building surveyor at Lea Hough



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MAXIMUM ENGAGEMENT

This issue, we examine a school construction project that saw contractors assist with the pupils' learning, and staff identify spaces for additional rooms...



ising pupil numbers may be continuing to drive the need for bigger schools, but the chance to play a key role in the large-scale expansion or replacement of an existing site remains one that only a select group of headteachers get offered.

This certainly wasn't lost on Linda Burrows, headteacher of Chorley New Road Primary School in Bolton. In early 2015, six months into her headship, the call came through from Bolton Council that a new school would be opening in their area, and that it would take the form of an entirely new building at the existing Chorley New Road Primary School site.

As Burrows recalls, "I fully embraced the opportunity, because not every headteacher will encounter something like that in their career. How often do you get the chance to help design a school?" Thus began a process that involved around two years of planning and development, followed by a year of construction - plus a multitude of meetings, of which Burrows estimates she missed only five.

OPEN FOR BUSINESS

A key factor behind Bolton Council's decision to go with the Chorley New Road site was that it included a portion of land that could be built on in a way that

allowed the school to remain open throughout the project's development, albeit without the use of half of its playground and an outside area set aside for use by its EYFS provision.

Overseeing the planning and building of the new school was the construction and property services company, Willmott Dixon. According to senior building manager Josh Heavens, the site works went largely as planned, with just a couple of areas where the Willmott Dixon team needed to make some adjustments. "The new building sat directly behind a number of residential properties," he remembers. "We received some complaints from local residents that



the new playground was going to overlook the ground floor of the houses, so the council instructed us to add a large hedge that ran the full length of the school building to provide additional privacy for the neighbours."

The only other practical issue of note concerned the school's foul sewage connection. "When we came to excavate the ground we encountered an exceptionally large amount of live services that we had to dig beneath," Heavens recalls. "It was a challenge that took a number of weeks to solve, but we managed to get it connected after going considerably deeper than we'd initially expected."

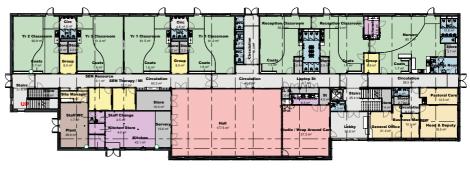
To help the school run smoothly while the works were underway, efforts were made to ensure that site's entrances and exits well separated, and that deliveries were managed in a way that avoided the school's daily pick-up and drop-off times.

LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

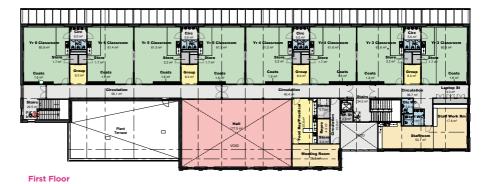
One notable aspect of the project was the extent to which the school took advantage of the learning opportunities it presented. The site was securely cordoned off and protected by high fencing as one would expect, but a section of the perimeter close to the existing site's early years and reception classes included windows that could be opened and allowed the children to watch the progress taking place inside throughout the year. The school also organised a 'school safety council' made up of pupils that made regular visits to the site, took pictures and gave assemblies on how the project was advancing with help from the Willmott Dixon team.

"Willmott Dixon were advised that the whole school was going to play a part in the project, which they fully embraced,"

says Linda Burrows. "We used the new build to teach the children lessons around health and safety, linking content to what was happening next door. At every stage we held open mornings for parents who wanted to come and see the plans for themselves, and how the new school was coming along."



Ground Floor





NO HIDING PLACES

The new building was finally opened in September 2018, with work on the construction of a large staff car park. the refurbishment of two existing playgrounds and the installation of a multi use games area set for completion in March 2019.

Housed within a rectangular exterior, the new two-storey Chorley Primary School building is bisected on both floors by a central corridor. The two classrooms for each year (EYFS to Y2 downstairs, Y3 to Y6 upstairs) sit adjacent to each other, either side of a shared storage area and WC. Each year is also assigned a cutaway space that's open to the adjoining corridor and observable through windows in both classrooms, which can serve as break-out areas or accommodate interventions. The dimensions of the spaces and the windows enable those using them to feel some connection with the classrooms either side, while in turn allowing the teachers to monitor what's going on.

As Burrows notes, "The layout makes crowd control easy. With the lack of nooks and crannies and windows into the breakout areas, there are no hiding places. It's a big school, but because of the how it's been designed, there's nowhere for children to get lost."

Careful thought also went into keeping out the noise of the frequently busy Chorley New Road, part of the A673. The school's offices, plant areas, kitchen and other non-pupil areas were positioned on the 'road' side of the building, allowing



windows to be opened in classrooms with little to no chance of hearing traffic noise, while the modern glazing deployed in the 'roadside rooms' works to keep noise pollution to minimum

world

HIGH EXPECTATIONS

Having now had time to settle into the new space, how have the pupils found it? "During that first half term in the new building, things felt quite quiet," says Burrows. "I think it was because the children were in shock at how different it all was. They'd come from a Victorian school, and some had never been inside a school - or even building - like this before. It's beautiful, and shows that you have to have high expectations in life - that this is what you can produce with hard work."

Prior to 2015, Burrows had never been involved with a capital works project

before, let alone one of such scale. One recollection in particular near the end of our conversation drives home just how proactive she was determined to be throughout the process: "We'd been looking at the plans with the Willmott Dixon team, and there were areas of the school that had been left blank," she says. "There was a void in one of the upstairs ceilings, so I asked if it was possible to put in a false floor and they did. We've since made that space a combined food technology area and meeting room that we can also use to generate revenue by hiring it out.

"Once you know that a project like this is going ahead, you get to decide as a headteacher how much input you're going to have. You can sit back and just let things happen, or you can choose to get fully involved."





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DO YOUR MEALS REALLY NEED MEAT?

ProVeg UK's Amy Odene explains explains why meat-free midday meals can make schools happier and healthier - both physically and financially...

ublic authorities are responsible for setting good examples to the younger generation, and in many ways do a wonderful job. Yet having reviewed primary school menus across the UK earlier this year, it's become abundantly clear to us that most are falling far short of required standards when it comes to the food served to children in schools.

The daily hot meals that schools provide are often a child's main meal of the day - in some cases their only one so it's important that said meal is healthy research findings have been far from encouraging. On 99% of menus we found processed red meat - a substance that the World Health Organisation in 2015 classified as a Group 1 carcinogen and cause of cancer, putting it in the same category as tobacco and asbestos. The level of risk between those substances varies, but still - to knowingly feed our children foods we know can lead to cancer is surely unacceptable.

Cancer isn't the only health issue at stake. The WHO sees childhood obesity as one of 21st century's most serious health concerns, and announced in July this year that obesity levels in UK 10- and 11-year-olds had reached their highest point since records began. Childhood obesity is largely preventable through changes to diet and

lifestyle, and one of the best ways to reduce the risk is by increasing consumption of foods like fruit and vegetables, whole grains, legumes and

It's in this context that that ProVeg UK has launched School Plates - a programme designed to support LAs, schools and caterers with making five small menu changes focused on replacing animal products with delicious, wholesome and healthy plant-based foods. The changes are small, but can have a big impact on the health of children, and indeed the planet, while also saving LAs money.

We've had a great response to the programme since its launch, with commitments already made to see over 3.1 million meals change from meat-based to meat-free over the next 12 months. Plant-based meals are further suitable for everyone, regardless of faith and dietary requirements - those requiring halal or kosher foods, for example, those with dairy allergies, vegetarians and vegans and meat-eaters alike.

With our support, these menu changes can easily be included in the next menu cycle. We work with suppliers, pupils, parents and chefs to ensure the changes aren't difficult or time consuming to introduce, and can offer free chef training plus the services of a nutritionist for free to make sure the meals remain balanced, wholesome, healthy and delicious.

Every LA decision maker, headteacher and caterer should ask themselves this: if you could enhance the health of your pupils, protect them from killer diseases in the long term, reduce our impact on the environment and save money all at the same time - why wouldn't you?



Amy Odene is School Plates programme manager at ProVeg UK

@ProVeg_UK

proveg.com/uk/school-plates

The nation's favourite

This month saw the Lead Association for Catering in Education hold its 25th annual National School Meals Week. Running from 12th-16th November, the week's events included organised



activities at 10 schools across all LACA regions, a 'National Roast Dinner Day' for parents and pupils to showcase the skills of catering staff and a vote for the Nation's Favourite School Lunch - with curry crowned as the winning main meal, and chocolate sponge and custard being declared top dessert.

thegreatschoollunch.co.uk

Off to a good start

Family Action has announced that 500 new or renewed breakfast clubs have signed up to



the National School Breakfast Programme it runs in partnership with Magic Breakfast since its launch in March. Funded by the 'sugar tax' on the soft drinks industry, clubs started under the programme are currently serving 15,000 healthy breakfasts to children each day

magicbreakfast.com

How should schools secure their premises?

Three experts give us their take on how schools should approach the business of protecting pupils and staff from intruders



ROGER HALLIDAY Managing Director, Resilience UK

Many schools will already have bomb hoax protocols and lockdown procedures in place, and regularly use CCTV as part of their security measures.

Those are important steps to take, but the fact remains that if a lockdown procedure or similar measure is invoked, the system has already failed. CCTV is great for apprehending criminals after an event, but has never successfully prevented a serious crime from taking place.

All crimes, from theft of school property to acts of terrorist or child abduction, start with perpetrators carrying out a degree of advance reconnaissance. This weakness presents schools with an opportunity. Equipping staff with the information and skills needed to identify potential issues before they become a threat is the most effective way of creating a safer environment. Training staff so they know what to look out for and crucially, what steps to then take can prevent crimes from taking place.

At Resilience-UK we provide support and training that enables schools to avoid the worst happening, via a team of police and military specialists with years of experience in countering organised crime and terrorism.

roger.hallliday@resillience-uk.co.uk resilience-uk.co.uk



KLAUS ALLION Managing Director, ANT Telecom

Before schools can initiate a dynamic lockdown procedure, the risk needs to be identified, verified and communicated - ideally without causing further escalation. Unfortunately, in the absence of official government advice, the first of those steps tends to receive the least consideration.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that identifying a potential incident and initiating action - such as triggering an alarm - is often left to a single individual. The first member of staff to spot a potential risk will typically attempt to confirm directly whether it's valid, thus putting themselves in harm's way, or else seek support from colleagues, leaving an intruder unmonitored and free to continue to roam.

Technology, however, can provide an effective and affordable solution. Using a simple key-fob or lone-worker device, staff that spot potential risks can press a 'panic button' that initiates a call via a SIM card-equipped device or their mobile phone to a manned reception, who can listen in on events whilst poised to call in help and/or assist, if needed. This type of technology is now sufficiently straightforward and inexpensive that it can be deployed among all members of a school's teaching and support staff.





ANDREW SHAW Architectural Consultant, Allegion UK

Schools can present complex security challenges for architects, specifiers and school officials alike. Receptions, entry points, classrooms and other areas each need to be approached differently in terms of safety and security measures.

Schools must address three levels of security. The first concerns perimeter entry and exit points, the complexity of which will depend on the size and layout of the school grounds. Schools should consider incorporating some level of electronic access control, be it a combination of electronic and mechanical door hardware or a more advanced electronic solution. The second level is the administration or reception area, which will require monitoring and control of visitors' access. A well-designed school with a single entry point will allow for such monitoring while also enabling efficient movement in and out of the building.

The third (and most vulnerable) level is the core used by staff and pupils, including hallways, corridors, stairwells, entry points and restricted areas. Solutions here include individual locks activated via proximity sensors, or an integrated centralised system where all doors in the school building can be locked remotely at the touch of a button.



LESSONS FROM AMERICA

We look at how one school in the US was able to bolster its emergency readiness with the help of a sophisticated communications platform from FrontRow

School headteachers will be keenly aware of the the increasing need to establish effective communication channels to keep their teachers and students safe. Richgrove School District's Superintendent, Mario Millan (pictured right), knew it was time to overhaul his district's communication platform to better serve its 750 students.

The district, located in California, needed a better way to handle emergency communication for two primary reasons. Firstly, because the campus is situated opposite an agricultural chemical storage, which could at any moment could pose harm to the students and require a complete lockdown to lower student exposure to potentially leaked chemicals. And secondly, due to the unfortunate rise of school violence plaguing schools across the US today.

Millan identified FrontRow's Conductor - a networked, unified communication platform - as the solution. Consulting with the implementation team from FrontRow, Milan was impressed by the three pillars of safety-related communication advocated by the company:

- 1. Activation Multiple ways for staff to activate an alert
- 2. Notification Redundant ways to inform responders
- 3. Response -A suite of effective, automated actions



These three fundamental functions support the school's life safety systems with communication technologies that help keep staff and students aware, informed, focused, and out of harm's way.

Where most networked communication systems will only allow schools to send an alert - usually in the form of an alarm or a flashing light - Conductor can automate critical emergency responses that effectively provide notification and response mechanisms. These include locking doors, voicing verbal instructions, sending text messages and emails, pushing evacuation maps to digital devices, updating digital signage and more. Conductor's intuitive, user-friendly interface is easy-to-learn, which translates into empowering assigned staff to easily use the system.

"Conductor's versatility allows us to pre-program a wide range of responses for everything from lightning and storms to fires and harmful intrusions, as well as deploy on the spot responses as needed," Milan says. "We're in an environment

where safety is a priority, and the ability to successfully respond to any emergency is crucial."

By joining the ranks of the more than 500 US and Canadian schools who have adopted the Conductor standard for communications, Richgrove has effectively modernized its emergency response power. It's reducing costs, saving effort, and achieving more with FrontRow Conductor's communication technology so that its schools can focus on learning.

Millan concludes that. "Conductor has given me peace of mind in knowing that, if an emergency were to occur, our team is equipped with a system that doesn't only call attention to something happening, but actually activates response processes to maximize student and staff safety."

Schools wanting to mirror Richgrove's success can contact FrontRow for a personalised consultation by visiting GoFrontRow.com



THE NUMBER OF CASES DEALT WITH BY HERTFORDSHIRE POLICE IN 2017 THAT SAW DANGEROUS WEAPONS SEIZED FROM 9-YEAR-OLDS

Source: i News (tinyurl.com/ins-sc-18)

OF PUPILS IN ESSEX 'USUALLY' OR 'ALWAYS' FEEL SAFE AT SCHOOL

Source: 2018 School's Health and Wellbeing Survey produced by Essex County Council (tinyurl.com/ehws-18)



Currently, government advice regarding school security can be found in the DfE document 'Advice on

school security: Access to, and barring of individuals from, school premises' (tinyurl.com/dfe-advice-security). School leaders may also find useful Guidance Note 1/2015 from the National Counter Terrorism Security Office, which presents general guidance for how to develop a dynamic lockdown procedure in order to secure a publicly accessible site (tinyurl. com/nactso-ld)

Q primaryleaders.com

READ MORE ONLINE:

How to Replace Your School's Fencing primaryleaders.com/fences

How Secure is your School Lockdown Procedure? primaryleaders.com/lockdowns

Are Your Pupils' Valuables at Risk from Theft? primaryleaders.com/valuables

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Mandy Wilton

Head Teacher











PSM Technology

KEEP THOSE IT THREATS AT BAY

Your school will doubtless be using some kind of antivirus software - but if it doesn't form part of a layered IT strategy, it might not be doing what it should...

ntivirus software is designed to detect, prevent and remove malicious software, aka 'malware'. The definition of malware covers viruses, worms, trojans, and scareware; depending on the scanner used, it might also include other unwanted programs such as adware and spyware.

> There's not a school in the land that won't already

have some form of protection in place to guard against malware, viruses and hackers - but how can you tell whether the solution you're using is the best one for your setting?

Schools have numerous options when purchasing antivirus solutions - Avast, AVG, F-Secure, McAfee and Sophos being some of the most well-known but will benefit most from deploying one that meets their needs in terms of

protection, scale and cost. I'd recommend that schools work with providers such as European Electronique (euroele.com), which can conduct security assessments that may reveal vulnerabilities that can be patched with appropriate antivirus software and other protections.

For many years, antivirus providers were able to update their malware signature databases faster than such malware could spread across the internet. Yet times have changed, and malware can now spread faster than ever before, before antivirus providers can even identify it. Virus authors have additionally started producing illicit programs that function in the same way, but have deliberate changes in their signatures to evade antivirus software.



These interventions will include security and more. Ultimately, my advice to anyone new to this area would be to seek advice and listen to the professionals.

protection can be organised into the following two categories:

PROTECTION AGAINST **EXTERNAL THREATS**

invasions from worms (which are

networks - which allow users to visit online destinations via a worms and other forms of

PROTECTION AGAINST INTERNAL THREATS

users, such as the downloading of web and email filtering in place, alongside a robust event ensure that the event logs of all servers and workstations can be easily retrieved and that IT managers are alerted to any intrusions or attacks in real time.

Gary Spracklen is headteacher at The Prince of Wales School, Educational Technology Action Group



Mark Rosser explains how BESA is looking to further build on Britain's reputation as an edtech world leader by hitting the road

t the British Education Suppliers Association, which represents hundreds of the UK's leading edtech companies, we're delighted to see the respect in which the UK's edtech offering is held across the globe. Interest in the edtech successes of UK schools and industry continues to grow internationally, with the world's biggest edtech event, the Bett Show, taking place in London each year and attracting 10.000 visitors from overseas.

It's thus pleasing to see that the DfE has decided to champion edtech in schools throughout England, following the announcement this summer of an 'overarching vision' for education technology by the Secretary of State for Education, Damian Hinds.

We're delighted that the DfE's plans place teacher training and support at the very centre of its future approach to edtech. As Hinds says, technology can be used in classrooms in 'revolutionary ways' - allowing, for example, students to remotely explore rainforests or programme robots. We welcome the vision for edtech that the DfF has set out, because if realised, it could have a groundbreaking impact upon its implementation worldwide.

BESA is therefore proud to state that we're working in partnership with the DfE on delivering two of the key projects announced by the Secretary of State.

First, BESA will be jointly running a series of free events across each of the English regions during 2018/19. These one-day LearnED conferences are aimed at headteachers and SLTs and will aim to inspire and inform school decisionmakers through peer-to-peer panel discussions, while also affording

opportunities to hear from DfE keynote speakers about how edtech can be effectively used to improve teaching and learning outcomes, facilitate assessment, and support whole school leadership and management.

Delegates will further get to experience some of the best edtech solutions in action inside a 'BESA edtech showcase classroom', that will be on show at each of the regional conferences.

Alongside the LearnEd roadshows, BESA is also launching a new online lending portal with backing from the DfE called LendEd, which is designed to act as an online marketplace, matching teachers with items of edtech that will make a difference in their school. Due go live later in the 2018/19 academic year, the initiative will be flagged and promoted via the DfE to teachers and schools.

By signposting trusted suppliers that are full BESA members via the portal, the DfE will be able to help schools better understand the importance of taking into consideration quality marks such as BESA's own Code of Practice and other markers of quality when choosing educational products and services.

The first LearnED roadshow will take place at the AESSEAL New York Stadium in Rotherham on Thursday 29 November 2018, followed by further events in Newcastle, Cambridge, Manchester, Coventry, Maidstone, Bristol and Reading, up until June 2019. For more details, visit learned.org.uk.

Mark Rosser is communications and website manager at BESA



Who's managing your EdTech?

A school's edtech facilities ultimately need to work, and be ready for use when staff need them - Terry Freedman looks how things can be kept ticking over smoothly...

Tell people where things are

Prevention is better than cure

Keep your equipment in good working order by ensuring people know how to use it correctly. Run induction sessions for new members of staff, and look at holding regular 'ICT surgeries', where staff can have the chance to try out of the classroom.

Take care of equipment loans

and easy for staff to report any issues check to see whether it needs charging

Create a booking system

Your booking system for computer rooms and equipment can be as simple the noticeboard where staff can put their names to the slots they want. Alternatively, if your school has an staff and resources, ask if it can be used for recording and keeping track such as audiovisual facilities and computer suites.

Introduce central locking

items and room keys have been



Terry Freedman is an independent education technology consultant and writer

ictineducation.org













"FDUCATION CAN'T BE 'MADE' IN A TECH COMPANY"

Sam Chaudhary, one of the creators behind the popular school communications app ClassDojo, explains why teaching staff need more of a say when it comes to EdTech

his might not be the view you'd expect from the CEO of a technology company, but I don't believe that a great education is made by technology. It's always been the case that it's actually made from people working together.

Education can't be 'made' in a tech company or office somewhere and shipped out to classrooms. We have to enable teachers, kids and families all over the world to work together in creating incredible learning experience in every classroom, home and community.

GRANULARITY AND DETAIL

I've talked to teachers across the UK and throughout the world about their experiences of technology procurement in schools, and it seems that things tend to go wrong as a result of top-down decisions made elsewhere: when there's been little consultation or input from teachers, pupils and families.

I was chatting recently to a MAT leader who admitted they'd seen considerable sums of money spent on technology solutions that never even made it out of the delivery box, because they didn't provide value to the people who'd actually be using them.

Decisions around technology purchases and usage should be informed by the views of classroom teachers. They will have a nuanced view of what their own workload is like, and what their pupils and their families will need. That level of granularity and detail is hugely important, because these are ultimately the people we're relying on to produce the educational experience. Let's make them more central to decision-making process.

GETTING THINGS **BACKWARDS**

It's often been the case that people attempting to 'improve education' have started the process outside the classroom by developing some big piece of technology, bold new policy or curriculum idea and just started putting it into classrooms in the hope that it works, which is getting things backwards. Better learning experiences come about from the interactions of those most closely involved in them everyday - namely teachers, kids and families. To me, it makes far more sense to start in the classroom and work things out from there.

ClassDojo began life as a communication app for teachers, kids and families. Our first step was to try and create a community in and around every classroom, because it struck us as odd that parents seemed increasingly more connected to everything else in their lives other than the people they cared about most of all - their children. They would only find out every three months at parents' evenings the specifics of was going on in their child's life during their time at school.

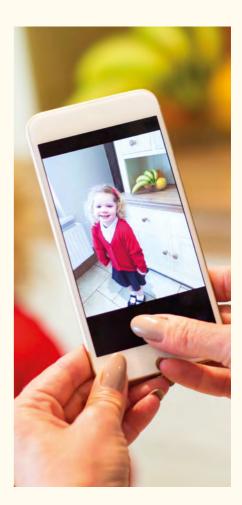
Where ClassDojo aims to help with that is by serving as a communication app, facilitating the sharing of pictures, videos and messages between teachers and parents and across the whole school in a way that helps to foster a wider community. Once that community is working together across multiple classrooms, it's then possible to support it with the best and most helpful ideas available for improving the learning experience.

That's where the second phase of company came in. A couple of years ago we began polling teachers and families, asking them about the ideas they most wanted to see introduced into their

classrooms, and one that kept coming up was teaching based around the concept of the growth mindset approach developed by Carol Dweck.

DEVELOP AND

Growth mindset teaching considers how we deal with failure, and helps kids learn that they're not limited or fixed in what they can do, but can develop and grow through appropriate levels of challenge.



We ended up working with Carol Dweck directly, discussing with her how we could get the growth mindset message out to thousands of schools.

We ended up distilling large chunks of her research into a short, animated series for schools that included prompts for classroom discussions and which could be used as interactive learning activities. These were distributed through ClassDojo and ended up being used in thousands of classrooms; teachers could show them in class, and then share them with families at home.

The notion that we could take some of the best educational research out there, present it in a more accessible form and then provide it to any school that wanted to teach it was pretty exciting. It's something that's not really been possible before.

DRIVING ENGAGEMENT

We endeavour to visit schools wherever we can, researching ways in ClassDojo can be used to help teachers. One example comes to mind of a school in rural California, where we spoke to a teacher who was using ClassDojo to communicate with families at home, but finding that the families of half the kids in her class weren't engaging - the parents simply didn't seem that involved. We dug a bit more, and soon realised that the families in question were those for whom English wasn't the main language spoken at home.

We asked what support was available for these parents and it turned out they had access to a school district translator, but that there was a three- to four-week turnaround for school materials to be translated, which seemed like it wouldn't help anyone. That prompted us to add a feature to the app called ClassDojo Translate, which lets teachers send messages home in their country's native language, and have those messages be automatically translated into whatever language the parents speak or use on their phone. The parents can then message back in their language, and have their words displayed in the teacher's language, instantly removing the language barrier between school and home. It's one of those simple, yet highly effective things you might miss if you weren't listening closely to teachers all the time.

From our experiences of comparing schools and classrooms around the world, we see far more similarities than differences. There's not a parent or family in the world that doesn't want



"Let's make teachers more central to the decision-making process"

their kid to have a great experience at school. Families want to be engaged, they want to feel useful and they want to provide support at home, but aren't always sure how.

THE 'WHY' OF WHAT WE DO

For me and ClassDojo's co-founder, Liam Don, the 'why' of what we do hasn't changed. Ultimately, we'd like to see every kid on Earth gain access to a world class education, and want to help create the network, app, whatever form it takes, that makes that possible.

The first part of that is what we've done by connecting schools and classroom communities, which is how ClassDojo has grown. About 85% of primaries in the UK have teachers using ClassDojo, and 10% of UK families use ClassDojo every week.

The second part is continuing our efforts to enable the spread of the best possible learning experiences to those communities via the ClassDojo network. By learning experiences, I mean tools, ideas, content, curricula, activities, whatever it takes, because different schools, classrooms and environments all need different things. I believe we can enable the classrooms within a school to be teaching similar things in slightly different ways that are right for the particular kids in those communities.

We've been doing this for a little over six years now, but we're just at the start. For us, the story isn't about the tech involved or the app itself; it's really about forging these communities of teachers, school leaders, kids and families who are actually doing the work that we hope to support.



Sam Chaudharv is the co-founder and CEO of ClassDojo

How can a film make a difference in your marketing mix?



ENGAGEMENT



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SCHOOL GOVERNOR AT ST CHRISTOPHER'S SCHOOL



Want us to tell your story?

Community Engagement

MAKE FRIENDS WITH Generating positive coverage about your school isn't as hard as you might think, says I inda Tanner

school isn't as hard as I inda Tanner

You cannot hope to bribe or twist, thank God! the British journalist.

But, seeing what the man will do unbribed, there's no occasion to.

early a century after Humbert Wolfe made this observation, the view persists that journalists are at best a necessary evil. The recent BBC drama Press further portrays why current representatives of the national print media might be best avoided.

For schools, however, building a relationship with local newspapers and broadcast reporters remains a worthwhile exercise. Bribery is likely not an option, but 'twisting' - or at

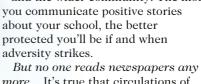
least influencing – is a different

matter. If you invite a journo to visit vour school, he or she will have a better understanding of your context, which could well result in more balanced coverage.

Why should you bother? Look at the most successful schools in your area they'll have almost certainly taken time to engage with the media. Always remember that talking to the press is

a way of talking to your families and the wider community. The more you communicate positive stories about your school, the better protected you'll be if and when

more... It's true that circulations of almost all paid-for titles have



plummeted because of the internet and social media. Big city dailies and some smaller regionals now focus most attention on their websites. Traditional weeklies soldier on, but staffing has been cut to the bone. Free papers vary wildly. Nevertheless, an item in the 'local rag' still carries considerable weight in the community.

The best approach is to look at the media in your area and work out how to use its situation to your advantage. The stories that attract the most clicks on a print title's website might never make the paper, but editors still have lots of pages to fill. If you present them with a well-written, concise story and an engaging photo, there's every chance it will be used in full.

Journalists increasingly source their stories from social media, so make sure that you promote any positive activities at your school via Twitter and Facebook and tag in your local print title – or better still, an individual reporter.

If there's an education specialist or a reporter covering your particular 'patch', get to know them fast. Link with the picture desk too; they'll be looking for great images and might well send out a photographer to an event. Think about the sort of stories you can offer. What's important to schools isn't always what newspapers and websites are looking for, but with a bit of lateral thinking you can find common ground.

Consider local radio too – BBC stations in particular have lots of airtime to fill. Make contact with the breakfast and drivetime show presenters and call up the planning desk a week or so in advance if you have a story that might be of interest to them. It will be worth the effort. Trust me – I'm a journalist!

Linda Tanner has been a regional journalist for more than 40 years and a primary school governor for two decades; she is currently an education journalist and communications consultant with Local Voice Media in Bristol





Allison Smith talks us through the logistics of Focus Trust's first professional open event on metacognitive teaching

e're a primary MAT with 15 academies that spans the M62, from Leeds right across to Manchester and down to Cheshire, and as a trust, we're keen to celebrate and share the details of our teaching and learning initiatives. We'd hosted similar open events within Focus Trust before, but this was the first we'd organised where 'external' people were invited.

We put out an open invitation and advertised the event far and wide. We used social media, approached four universities – three of which shared our invitation with their students and graduates – got staff to share it with their peers and colleagues and organised the responses with the online booking system Eventleaf (eventleaf.com).

We also arranged for the open evening to be added to some free event listings sites based in Bradford and Leeds, in an effort to broaden our reach as much as possible. Prior to that, we'd been good at communicating internally, but less so at reaching out.

We hosted the event at Thornton Primary School in Bradford, as they were able to offer us the use of their hall and had good parking arrangements in place. The Eventleaf registration system meant the school could get a sense of the numbers attending, and we'd hoped that the process of booking and effectively needing a ticket to attend would make people regard it as a fixed commitment. Ultimately some did and some didn't, but it at least gave us an easy way of

confirming people's registration details. In the end, we had around 20 external visitors from schools across Bradford, plus additional people from within Focus Trust.

Beforehand, our CEO, Helen Rowland, had put together the event's running order and shared it with schools in the trust that had been using metacognition in their classroom settings. We ended up with more speaking volunteers coming forward than we'd anticipated, so we found ourselves having to tailor the agenda accordingly. The event lasted around 90 minutes in total and consisted of a welcome, a series of presentations and then a Q&A at the end, followed by an informal networking session.

Our priority was to involve teachers and practitioners who were experienced at delivering metacognition in their classrooms. It wasn't a theoretical discussion, but one centred more around 'This is what we've done, this is where it's worked, and this what worked for me.'

We considered the evening a success, and are envisaging doing something similar again in late spring 2019. We organised this event for the first week after half term, which in retrospect perhaps wasn't ideal – deferring it for a week may have been better. The booking system we used worked very well, however. It made it easy for attendees to get all the details, and really lightened the administration load for ourselves.

Allison Simpson is procurement lead at Focus Trust

Your school community includes customers

Your pupils' parents and carers are first and foremost members of your school community - but as Andrew Dean points out, they're also an attractive target market for local businesses...

chools have been raising additional funds to plug holes for years. At The John Fisher School, a Catholic Boys' School in Croydon, we've let out our sports hall, cricket nets and even classrooms for a number of years, which has helped bring in vital funds. However, with the need to generate larger sums, we looked at how we could use our breadth, rather than reduce it.

The answer lay with our local community, businesses and one key asset in particular - our parents and carers. We began by approaching local businesses, inviting them to access the captive audience that our parents and carers comprised. This is an area where schools have undervalued themselves for years. In our case, with over 2,000 parents/ carers, 100 staff and a large alumni database, we had an attractive market ready to go.

Next, we identified what we could offer to businesses in return for their support. For some, that was extra customers; for others, an

give back or boost their messaging around corporate social responsibility. We're not talking large corporations sponsoring an academy chain here, but real interaction conducted on a weekly basis between two distinct organisations.

Choose your friends wisely

We may be in need of additional funds, but we've been picky in choosing which businesses to align with. It was vital to us that we chose brands we felt linked to our values and Christian ethos, and have previously turned down opportunities because of this.

We started to build a group of partners we felt a synergy with, the most notable of which is Jemca Croydon (Toyota and Lexus). The company's socially responsible mindset links perfectly with our ethos, and they've provided us with a range of support including sponsorship of sports shirts, rugby balls and ancillary sports equipment. They've also given us access to in-house grants, supported our work experience placements, school events and a new environmental project. Our parents and staff have also benefited via discounts on new cars and services.

agent, a photography service, a dentist and a financial services provider. These businesses are all either local or run by alumni of the school, which lets us both support our local community and maintain links with those who have left. We never duplicate partners in a given sector, and work hard to ensure that they receive access to our parents, without crossing the line.

Now, I can sense that some of you reading this might thinking, 'We're a smaller school', or 'We're a new school with few alumni'. We're certainly lucky in some of the ingredients we already have, but all schools can replicate much of what we do if they're willing and happy to open themselves up to business.

If we do, are we allowing our public sector world to be muddled by private sector involvement? Or could it be the first step towards opening up the benefits of both worlds, identifying common goals and working with like-minded businesses to achieve the same outcome – giving every child access to as many opportunities as possible?

Andrew Dean is assistant head-



"WHAT STAYS WITH PARENTS IS HOW COMPLAINTS ARE DEALT WITH"

For middle leaders, dealing with parental complaints comes with the territory. Zoë Paramour looks at what that means in practice...

t's interesting that the relationship school can be so precarious, because both parties ultimately want the same thing – for the child to be happy and require careful management. Parents need to know they're appreciated and listened to, but it also needs to be made

drop their children off at school, and just

CONSISTENT ADVICE

Let's start with an example. You're on duty at the end of the day and an angry parent comes marching over to you. She tells you that her son is being bullied, and that the class teacher knows about it, but

1. GET INDOORS

2. STAY CALM

3. MAINTAIN A UNITED FRONT

4. IF YOU NEED TO, PASS IT ON

PARENT WORKSHOPS

Parent workshops are a fantastic way to strengthen the relationship between staff and parents, because they help parents



.Community Engagement



There is, however, one crucial difference - when talking to parents, you're the on parents having their own prior knowledge that they can bring to the

questions to consider and offer prompts for group discussions, but most of the parent workshop will be you talking and answering questions. Here's my advice:

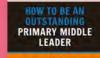
- **2.** Provide a handout that summarises
- 3. Avoid using examples of specific something as innocent as, 'They do interpreted as 'it' not being done very
 - **4.** Try to repeat the workshop two or

Consider running the workshop on an evening when the parents are already in school, such as parents' evening. This way, class teachers can direct parents over to the workshop during their meeting with them: 'If you'd like more his maths at home, then I know that our maths leader is running a workshop in the hall in about half an hour. It might be worth dropping in.'

A word of warning, however - the parents who attend parent workshops are likely to be the ones already reading make sure you find a way to get this information out to them too by email or putting it on the school website.

running any school, and maintaining

constant work







Zoë Paramour is a middle leader in a North **London primary**

school, as well as a freelance writer and journalist specialising in education and politics; this article is an edited extract taken from her book How to be an Outstanding Primary Middle Leader, published by **Bloomsbury**



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GET ON WITH YOUR **GOVERNERS**

A good governance/school leader relationship shouldn't be adversarial, but mutually supportive for the benefit of all, says Martin Matthews

overnors aren't there to be managed by headteachers, just as governors aren't there to manage staff. The roles are symbiotic, dependent on each other. When this relationship breaks down, the results for the children can be catastrophic and should therefore be avoided at all costs. The phrase 'critical friend' was dropped from the governance handbook (see tinyurl.com/ governance-hb) several years ago and replaced with 'challenge and support'. This is a significant difference.

Governance challenge now centres around questions of 'Why?' and 'How do you know?' (the latter borrowed from Her Majesty's Inspectors). The first,

when phrased in ways such as 'Why did you choose that resource?' will likely get clear answers from a headteacher - after all, a reasonable question should get a reasonable response. 'How do you know?' queries aim to probe beyond the headline facts and figures, which is something all governors should do with important school decisions.

A SCHOOL SHIELD

Governors should support their schools in more ways than simply turning up to meetings, assemblies and the odd fête, important though those are. The governing board can be a shield for the school, reducing the 'noises off' and enabling educators to concentrate on

education. Staff have a hard enough job as it is; if they can trust governors to have their back, they'll have more time to ensure that the children have their undivided attention. Happier staff will usually result in a better quality of education.

Granted, there are times when it might seem quicker or simpler for school leaders to do things without



having to refer them to governors first – but 'quicker' doesn't always mean legal. Besides which, regulations are usually there as the result of something bad having happened and a determination not to let it happen again. Regulations are there to protect staff from being treated unfairly, leaders from accusations of misconduct and schools as an employer. Unpicking short circuit decisions are always painful, and can be career-ending for leaders and extremely expensive for schools, absorbing money better spent on areas with a positive educational impact.

CHECKS AND BALANCES

School leaders should reasonably expect governors to properly shoulder their workload. If this isn't happening, you can obtain support for your governing board provided by a national leader of governance deployments are free. You literally have better things to do with vour time.

It's also important for school leaders to know that their governing board is meant to be there as a balance to the power invested in them as a person. That's not a challenge to them personally, but a way of building checks and balances into the system in order to prevent the occasional megalomaniae from inflicting serious damage to schools. This is in part why governors make decisions on pay in maintained schools.

A good governing board is a wonder to behold; when you see one, you'll recognise its worth and the positive difference it can make. Governance should be professional, but not cold. Governance should be supportive, but not cosy. There should be challenge from governance, but never aggression. Governance shouldn't believe its school to be perfect, but should always strive to be better.

And above all, a school's governance should never forget that the children come first.

Martin Matthews is a chair of governors and national leader of governance





"EVERYBODY IS UNSURE"

What, if anything, should schools that employ EU nationals be doing ahead of the UK's March 2019 Brexit deadline?

hen the Maastricht Treaty came into force in 1993, it contained a provision that established the free movement of persons and labour, which the UK was bound by as an EU Member State. The idea was to ensure equal treatment of individuals wanting to move from one country to another, such as teachers wanting to move from another EU member to the UK and work here. Under those freedom of movement rules, these individuals are to be treated as if they're UK nationals, in accordance with principles of non-discrimination that underline EU law.

The question many are asking now is what the immediate ramifications will be for EU workers in the UK if the country withdraws from the EU next year without a deal in place. If that happens, EU workers will no longer enjoy the special status they've had up to now that encompasses equal treatment and non-discrimination, but it's unclear exactly what their status would be. If the government chooses to implement some form of points-based migration policy, their eligibility to work in the UK would become similar to that of non-EU nationals - which in the case of school employees, might mean something close to the existing Tier 2 skilled work visa (see tinyurl.com/uvi-t2), and all the sponsorship and salary restrictions it entails.

The main form of protection for EU workers against this change might for them to argue that it violates the European Convention on Human Rights

- a non-EU human rights treaty that the UK will remain signed up to after Brexit. It protects the right to a private and family life, so if an employee were to be stripped of his or her job without any notice or protections in place, that could be interpreted as an interference in their private life. Depending on how reliant their families are on their earnings, it could extend to them too.

It obviously depends on the individuals concerned, but if I was an EU citizen who had been here for five or more years, I would apply for permanent residency or settled status to protect myself and my existing rights as far as possible. But since no one currently knows what's going to happen, it's difficult for employers to make any preparations.

They can very well tell their EU citizen employees that their jobs are safe, but the rules may change and those employees could end up having to apply for visas. It wouldn't be in any employer's interest to effectively promise their employees something they can't deliver. That's the real problem with all of this. The uncertainty means that everybody is unsure, which in turn generates yet more uncertainty and a reluctance for anyone to promise anything. Everybody is in limbo.

Adrienne Yong is a lecturer at The **City Law School under the Institute** for the Study of European Laws



Establish a supply teacher talent pool

Don't leave your teaching cover to chance, says Esme Bianchi-Barry – establishing a group of regular 'go-tos' can be good for schools and supply teachers alike

upply teachers might require the flexibility that their role provides, but they also want consistency. Schools can meanwhile benefit from being able to call upon a reliable group of supply teachers who already understand the school and its culture, and are familiar with its teaching staff, methodologies and technology.

We all know what it's like when you have to cover a teaching role at short notice but lack the capacity among your existing staff. The typical process – frantic telephone calls to local recruiters, desperate searches of the database – is one that puts pressure on admin teams, causes headaches for headteachers and doesn't always deliver the best outcomes in the classroom.

Cultivating a talent pool will give you ready access to a select group of hand-picked supply teachers. You'll know their strengths and be aware of their availability, and in turn they'll know what you expect from them. This group might consist of teachers you've used previously and supply teachers who might have proactively contacted you. You can also build a talent pool

around recommendations received from recruiters about new supply teachers in your local area; these might include teachers who have recently retired or stopped working full time, but are keen to keep teaching.

Here's how you can develop your own supply teacher pool in five steps:

1. Get the data on what you need from supply

How often do you need supply teachers? What's the breakdown on a daily, weekly and termly basis? What internal resources do you have available, and what are your long-term requirements likely to be? Then there's the question of what budget you have available for supply teaching and how it can be best deployed.

2. Do your workforce planning

The data gathered in step 1 will inform your workforce planning in step 2. We've previously come across a MAT that analysed its data and found there to

be a consistent, year-on-year demand for a certain level of maternity cover, which compelled them to keep in touch with good supply teachers ahead of those positions needing to be filled. Things might not always be as clear-cut as that, but it's often surprising how clear the trends that emerge from data can be.

3. The supply mindset: from reactive to proactive

Effective workforce planning can help with moving away from reacting to immediate needs and towards proactively engaging with supply teachers. Start including regular supply teachers in training days and offering them CPD opportunities.

4. Assign your best supply teachers to specific roles

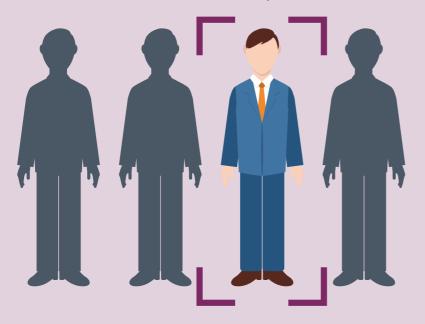
As well as individual expertise and experience, supply teachers will have their own priorities. Carefully consider which supply teacher should be assigned to which role – some might be better at short-term availability, while others are well-placed to provide longer term cover.

5. Give and receive feedback

It's worth gathering feedback from permanent teaching staff on how your supply teachers are perceived to be performing, and also from the supply teachers themselves on how they feel about working in your school. This will provide valuable information you can use to improve your talent pool, as well as how your school's reputation, systems and processes come cross to those with experience of working in other settings.

Esme Bianchi-Barry is the managing director of Monarch Education





What does a staff salary rise mean for YOUR BUDGET?

If you're of the view that the 2018 pay award will prove to be a headache for your school's finances, Sue Birchall is inclined to agree...

egardless of how you might feel about the pay increases for teaching staff announced by the DfE in summer this year, many will have been mildly amused at the timing. The amounts themselves – 3.5% for main scale teachers, 2% for upper and 1.5% for leadership – fell short of recommendations by the School Teachers' Review Body, which was calling for a 3.5% increase across the board. The Institute for Fiscal Studies has since stated that the lower amounts represent a below inflation increase for those receiving them.

According to Education Secretary
Damien Hinds, the 2018 pay award will
help teaching to be seen as a
'Competitively rewarding career', though
it remains to be seen whether his
optimistic view of the award will help
with teacher recruitment and retention.
I'm sure many of us will have a view.

Following the initial announcement, September saw the publication of the intended method by which these increases will be funded – the Teachers' Pay Grant Methodology document can be accessed via tinyurl.com/paymethod-18. Before exploring it in detail, however, it should be noted that it doesn't apply to schools in Wales or further education establishments.

Also worth noting is that when producing the figures, the DfE worked on the assumption that schools would have budgeted for a 1% rise in staff salaries. The pay grant is therefore intended to cover schools' needs less this 1%. What's more, the additional funding will only be available until 2019-20, after which schools will be expected to manage the costs themselves using their existing budgets

THE VIEW FROM THE GROUND

Following analysis using an overall staff cost formula, the government's pay award funding will be allocated on a per pupil basis, with 7/12ths of it due to be distributed in 2018-19 and a full year's worth in 2019-20. The amounts schools receive will be based upon assumptions of pupil numbers, while being weighted to area (which in practice will amount to an uplift for special schools, due to their higher teacher/pupil ratios).

Taken together, the 2018 pay award ought to improve teacher recruitment and retention while having a positive effect on staff morale, at least initially. Some might object that the amounts are too little, but we've still seen a significant increase on what's been offered for a while - certainly under this government and the since the start of the financial austerity era.

However, what the methodology doesn't do is take into account the breakdown of teaching staff at each establishment and whether they're on the main, upper or leadership scale. As such, how individual schools fare will be highly variable.

In my experience, an average rarely benefits all. On the surface, it would seem that small primaries and schools with falling pupil rolls will see the most pressure on their budgets, though there will be other circumstances in which budgets will be affected – schools with certain types of specialist SEND provision for example. The enhanced rate for special schools won't apply to them, even though the teacher/pupil ratio in such settings will likely be higher than most.

MANAGING THE IMPACT

As an SBM, my chief concern is always affordability, closely followed by sustainability. We all know that staffing takes up the biggest proportion of spending in school budgets. Most monitoring systems will show percentage ratios of staff spend to income and total budget. That information is the key to making these salary increases sustainable, and further monitoring will be needed thereafter to sustain them once the grant is no longer in place. Given that the minimum funding guarantee

increases in staff costs of this proportion moving forward will need some serious planning.

Maintained schools will have already set their annual budget back in April this year. Academies will have agreed theirs for the new school year with knowledge of the increase, but not the methodology of the grant. Most schools will have allowed for a 1% increase in teaching staff salaries, but likely not for

For many, this won't be an issue in the short term – but ahead of your longer term financial planning, some decisions will need to be made. Schools and

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'Why MAT CEO Salaries Need To Be Brought Under Control' primaryleaders.com/mat-ceo-pay

experiencing a real terms reduction in for teachers will increase from the current 16.48% to 23.6% in 2019-20 – again, to be funded

few years...?



Sue Birchall is a consultant, speaker, writer, trainer and business manager

at The Malling School, Kent

TO MANAGE THE IMPACT OF THE 2018 PAY AWARD, IT'S IMPORTANT FOR SCHOOLS TO:

- · Be aware that the number of staff on each pay scale isn't necessarily an indicator of higher costs, since the salary increases are smaller at the higher payscales
- Ensure your longer term planning takes into account the additional costs in year three
- · Note that in maintained schools there will be no opportunity for top-slicing by LAs, even though the funding will be passed through them
- · Recognise that it will help in a small way with the recruitment of staff
- · Help attract more people to join the teaching profession

TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR SBL CAREER

Hayley Dunn looks at how SBLs' varied career backgrounds and rich skillsets give them a wide choice of options when planning their next career move...

raditionally, the majority of those holding SLT posts will have followed similar career pathways - from teacher to subject or department lead, through to assistant head, deputy head and potentially headship. For the most ambitious, the next step might be an executive headship spanning multiple schools, or a CEO role. SBLs tend to be unique among SLT members in that their career backgrounds and skills can be highly diverse. There's no clear single pathway for business leadership careers, which means that an SBL career can be entered via many different routes. Ask any SBL about the path that led to their current position and you'll get an array of answers that can take in everything from LAs and the commercial sector to operations, banking, project management and the military.

You'll likely uncover a range of diverse, experience-rich backgrounds from which they'll have picked up a plethora of skills. The common thread is that these routes all require learning transferable skills in key areas such as finance, HR, marketing, site management and leadership, sometimes with no prior experience of the education sector. However, you may also meet some who have come up through one of two education-based routes - education professionals previously based inside or outside the classroom before opting for a career change, or others who might have started their careers via a graduate scheme.

The qualifications held by SBLs can

also vary hugely, spanning finance (like AAT, ACCA, CIMA, CIPFA) and project management (such as PRINCE2) - and that's before you even get to the degrees, MBAs and various school business management qualifications.

CONTEXT-SENSITIVE

The upshot of so much variation is that business leaders will need CPD that's appropriately varied and personalised if they're to fill the gaps in their knowledge and build the skills they'll require for roles they might aspire to in future. Beyond school business leader, those future roles might include chief finance officer, academy business manager, chief operating officer and CEO - all of which will naturally require a thorough understanding of the different entities now existing within the education sector (maintained schools, MATs, free schools, etc).

One question I often encounter is 'What must I do or learn to move from being an SBM in a primary school to a secondary? How different is it? The answer to that will depend on the scope and responsibility of said current role compared to the new one. As well as understanding the specific context and demographic of the new organisation, ensure you're aware of the priorities



and challenges you'll be expected to deliver on.

There's no 'one size fits all' career route for aspiring business leaders - but the best will always seek out feedback and aim to continually improve their practice. Since the ethos of an organisation tends to be set by the person at the top, searching out opportunities for working, and potentially volunteering, in different organisations will do much to enhance your experience and vividly illustrate how there are many different ways to proceed when it comes to leading and managing people.

KNOWLEDGE TO APPLICATION

Take my own career progression, for example. With every step I've taken I've always sought to 'add something'. My understanding of finance comes from my previous experience of accounting clerk and officer roles within the private sector, before I moved to the public sector. Every role I've held has broadened my knowledge of finance and accountancy, while also giving me a range of other skills and experiences, supplemented by professional study and other CPD activities.

The purpose of undertaking qualifications is to gain new relevant knowledge and external recognition of professional competencies. School business professionals have the choice of either undertaking an industry-specific qualification, such as the Level 4 Diploma in School Business Management, or specific skill qualifications such as those available from the Association of Accounting Technicians. The best course will depend on what qualifications you already possess, the current direction of your professional development, your organisation's needs and your own future aspirations.

That said, quality mind-stretching experiences are just as important as completing qualifications. Studying might give you the knowledge, but it's your workplace that will provide opportunities for applying that knowledge. Personally, I've always gained a better understanding of different processes from putting them into practice and seeing them through from start to finish.

QUALIFIED AND **EXPERIENCED**

There's also the need to keep up with changes in policy and statute. In the latest version of the ESFA's Academies Financial Handbook, for example (see tinyurl.com/esfa-afh), there's a new statement relevant to finance staff employed by MATs: "The trust's finance staff must be appropriately qualified and/ or experienced. Trusts should assess whether the CFO, and others holding key financial posts, should have a business or accountancy qualification and hold membership of a relevant professional body, dependent on the risk, scale and complexity of financial operations."

It's vitally important that a trust's most senior staff - particularly those with statutory responsibilities - are adequately qualified and experienced in carrying out the complex processes and reporting requirements their roles entail. Moving from a finance role in a maintained school to a MAT equivalent, for instance, will involve taking on a significantly different workload that encompasses complex financial tasks, such as VAT 126 returns, budget forecasting returns and statutory financial statements.

What we need in the sector is to retain, develop and invest in reflective, high performing practitioners who are committed to furthering their professional development. Successful schools are full of amazing staff - not

"Studying might give you the knowledge, but it's your workplace that will provide opportunities for applying that knowledge"

ITEMS FOR THE CV

AMBITIOUS SCHOOL BUSINESS PROFESSIONALS KEEN TO ADD **VALUE AND BROADEN THEIR** UNDERSTANDING SHOULD CONSIDER **BUILDING THE FOLLOWING INTO** THEIR CAREER PLANS...

- Attend selected conferences with the aim of participating in the most relevant talks and workshops, while meeting and making new connections
- · Read widely, including books, professional blogs, industry publications and research papers
- Build a social media profile and use it to actively engage with other leaders
- · Volunteer as a governor or trustee at a school or a charity - you can learn much from seeing how other organisations are led and governed
- Find somwhere to showcase your expertise locally or nationally, be it via blogging, writing articles, public speaking engagements, working groups or conference panels
- · Join or create a peer network government guidance on doing this can be found via tinyurl.com/ dfe-sbp-nw
- · Attend coaching and mentoring programmes; the Women Leading in Education coaching programme, for example, is free for female SBPs - see tinyurl.com/tsc-wle for more details

least the school business professional, who should be influencing a school's recruitment and retention strategies, succession planning, career planning and cover for any unexpected absences among senior leadership. In future, we may be able to utilise analytical insights and harness technology to manage risk, inform our strategic plans and boost our own professional development. With the sharing of excellence and best practice, school business professionals can design and plan their own path.



Hayley Dunn is a MAT finance director; her book, The School **Business Manager's**

Handbook, is available now, published by John Catt



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PSM Budgeting

WHY BUDGETS ARE TIGHTER FOR RURAL SCHOOLS

School finances might be constrained across the board, but rural settings face a unique set of challenges, says Imogen Rowley

e've heard much about the budget challenges schools are facing, but for rural schools these financial pains can be particularly acute. 44% of rural headteachers surveyed this year by The Key identified 'not having enough money' as their most difficult challenge. In many eases, their already-stretched budgets will face extra strain from problems unique to rural schools – not least low pupil numbers, high home-toschool transportation costs, parental incomes dangling just above the threshold for free school meals and a

There are no quick fixes, but if this sounds familiar, here are three ways in which rural schools can ease those pressures...

1. MARKET CREATIVELY

Savvy marketing can generate healthy pupil numbers. Showcase your school in places that families new to the area might visit, such as estate agents or doctors' surgeries, by leaving flyers promoting what you offer and your unique culture or ethos. Your school website is your digital shop window, so make sure it's up to date.

Think about innovative things you

since nothing beats actually visiting a school for helping parents to imagine their child being happy there. Pick a 'main' event each term that you can invite the whole community to, such as a summer fair or bonfire party. Approach local businesses to secure enticing raffle prizes, and sell said raffle tickets door-to-door and in pubs and community centres.

Those tips might not seem revolutionary, but combined with other steps they helped Snape Primary School in rural Suffolk several years and become



2. APPLY FOR FUNDING

Focus your efforts on grant-funding schemes that support schools in rural communities or areas of deprivation. Applying for grants can be time-consuming, but some schemes (typically for smaller amounts) only require completing a simple online form. You can also contact your LA for further details about voluntary services or information about local schemes.

3. TACKLE YOUR TRANSPORT ISSUES

Some of your pupils may be eligible for free transportation provided by the LA. If you decide to organise your pupil transport yourself, your main options are to outsource or use a school minibus. Neither will be cheap, but you can recover at least some of the costs via pupils repaying the school for bus passes (usually subsidised a little) weekly or termly. Outsourcing to a bus or coach company typically involves setting up a contract whereby you pay the cost upfront and pupils then pay you for passes.

If you don't have your own minibus you could buy or lease one, but this will need to be factored into your cost estimates. Also bear in mind the additional costs and processes this will entail, such as appointing a driver (which will require relevant background checks), obtaining insurance and planning a route.

The challenges faced by rural schools are many and varied, and largely out of schools' immediate control. These tips aren't necessarily a solution, but suggested as positive steps that are helping schools such as Snape Primary keep their heads above water – and may just help you too.

Imogen Rowley is a content producer at The Key, which provides leadership and management support to schools; its full research report on the challenges faced by rural schools can be downloaded for free via tinyurl.com/key-rural-schools





Opening up avenues for mentoring can fill gaps in your CPD provision for school business professionals, suggests Laura Williams

ue to the nature of the role, and the depth and breadth of responsibility that comes with being a school business leader, access to quality CPD is a must. The main issue with SBL CPD, however, is that it often solely targets the attainment of qualifications or knowledge acquisition.

This is important, but CPD to support the *application* of such knowledge in context, along with the personal development of critical skills, is too often neglected.

SBLs are solo operators, similar to headteachers. They may lead a number of teams and work alongside the SLT, but few in the school will have firsthand knowledge of what their role demands or the capacity required to deliver, which can lead to SBLs feeling isolated.

Giving SBLs opportunities to engage in coaching or mentoring will enable them to explore their strengths, priorities and challenges, while receiving advice and guidance from an experienced fellow professional. Working with a coach or mentor can provide SBLs with a much-needed practical and personal support system, which can in turn directly enhance their performance, capacity and impact.

Headteachers might be concerned at the cost, time and capacity required, but coaching arrangements of this type tend to be time limited, goal-focused and flexibly undertaken. Here, then, is my advice for headteachers who want to support their SBL in engaging with coaching or mentoring:

1 SET ASIDE TIME

Schedule a meeting with your SBL where the sole topic will be their professional development. Block out the time needed in your calendar and ensure the meeting isn't cut short or interrupted.

2 DISCUSS YOUR SBL'S DEVELOPMENT

Ask your SBL whether they feel coaching would be of benefit to their development, and how you might be able to accommodate this. Your SBL may have previously considered coaching as a CPD activity but felt unable to broach the topic, or might not have previously considered it but be open to exploring it further.

3 POINT THEM IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

Signpost the SBL to a place where they can source a coach or mentor – perhaps through an informal arrangement via the local SBL regional network, or through discussions with SBLs in other schools. There are a number of independent and experienced SBPs out there who can provide bespoke coaching services.

4 ARRANGE A FOLLOW-UP

To avoid both of you being bounced into making a commitment or decision, schedule another meeting once you've had an opportunity to reflect on what was previously discussed. This will also allow time for research into any options you've agreed to explore and potentially support.

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



Get a handle on your running costs

Some recurring expenses in your budget are beyond your control - but with a little shrewd planning, others can be contained says Caroline Collins

t a time of budget cuts in schools, as well as rising staff costs and ever-higher energy bills, SBMs are understandably looking for ways to reduce spend and save money. Staffing costs remain the biggest spend of all and the area needing the most focus, but it is possible to achieve cost savings in other areas. This can range from negotiating savings with suppliers of paper and other office supplies, through to changing your telephone provider and investing in cost-saving parent communication tools.

Energy costs is an area that SBMs could spend some time on. Activities in this area can not only result in some significant savings, but also serve as the foundation for a whole-school energy efficiency project. The energy market is a competitive one, with suppliers always keen to secure new residential and business customers alike, so shopping around and

negotiating the best deals possible could be time well spent. We've all spent some of our free time looking for competitive deals that can save us money on our household bills – so why not apply those same principles at school?

It can sometimes be easier to stay with a provider you've been using for years because you know them and are familiar with how their system works, or because there's uncertainty about what the change process will entail - yet just a modest amount of time and effort could result in some significant school savings. For example, the DfE and Crown Commercial Services have worked together in offering schools a means of getting greater value for money in their energy provision, further details of which can be found via tinyurl.com/ dfe-ccs-energy.

Clearly, some schools will be more prone to higher energy costs than others. A large, Victorian building with high ceilings, old windows and plenty of drafts will obviously make it harder for a school to keep its heating costs down during winter months. Similarly, schools using older boiler

models might struggle to efficiently maintain their heating levels. Replacing a boiler isn't cheap, but the initial outlay will inevitably save money in the long run. Academies might be able to use capital funding to cover the cost of replacing a boiler; maintained schools might be eligible for help from their LA.

Lighting is another area where schools could potentially save thousands of pounds each year. If you haven't already, switching to LED lighting will not only save money but also benefit the environment and could therefore form part of a wholeschool energy efficiency project.

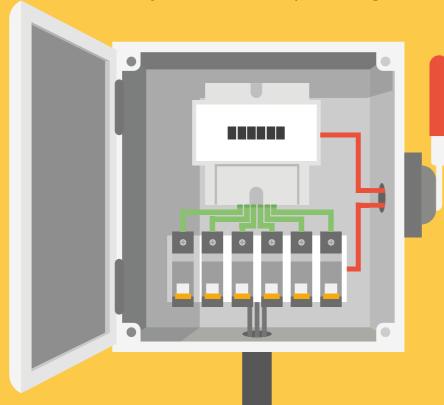
FUNDING FROM SAVINGS

The above projects can save significant amounts year-on-year. If the initial outlay required to get them started exceeds what you're able to spend, you can try applying to the governmentfunded Salix Energy Efficiency Loan Scheme (SEELS), which helps public sector organisations fund energy efficiency projects using the cost savings that each project is intended to deliver over an agreed timeframe. Open to maintained schools, more details about how it works can be found via tinyurl.com/salix-schools.

Finally, I'd urge SBMs to dedicate some time to raising staff awareness. It's frustrating to walk into an ICT suite and find the windows open and the air conditioning on. How often have you found all the lights left on after everyone's left? Reminding staff to switch off lights, monitors, heaters and photocopiers to save money and the environment could be a good starting point in your new energy efficiency project.

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





LESSONS IN PROCUREMENT

Can primary schools learn anything from the more complex and larger scale procurement processes typically found within secondary schools? Three school business professionals tell us what works for them...



EMMA GRAY Secondary SBM and MAT finance director

Our conversion to a MAT in 2016 initially involved the coming together of two successful schools, a primary and a secondary, situated 15 miles apart. We knew we wanted to run a centralised finance system from the start, but it had to work effectively for both schools and required a rethink of our procurement processes. There have got to be benefits and efficiencies to forming a MAT for everyone, and we're still working through the processes that make it more time and cost effective.

As a secondary school, our budgets are delegated around heads of departments who have authority to spend it on resources of their choosing. Pre-MAT, the only thing we really ever did centrally was a massive exercise book order! We didn't want the schools themselves to just become 'budget holders', especially as goods were being delivered to remote

sites. We chose Sage 200 with TSG's Elementary portal so that both schools can input orders, authorise, and mark goods as received. All the central team need to do is pay the invoices, knowing that all the proper authorisations are

As we grow as a MAT, the systems we've embedded mean that we'll begin to realise efficiencies much sooner than if we were still all doing our own thing. We can now purchase equipment and resources together, and are looking at also tendering external contracts together; we're supporting each other and each school's precious and limited budgets to get the best out of them.

We've still got work to do. We'd like to centralise our IT and Estates, so that joint procurement can take place in those areas. We can really see the benefits of the support that's now growing for schools' procurement, and we want to be part of that process. We set up a MAT because we wanted to work together and with other schools, managing change to operations, as well as teaching and learning, with the aim of improving outcomes for all our pupils.

"It's all too easy to concentrate on bigger items, when products that are much smaller but bought regularly can also reap savings"



ANDY HERON SBM, The Maelor School

When intending to purchase any item in school nowadays, a rigorous process of ensuring best value and value for money is of paramount importance. Whether you're using a buying club, a procurement specialist, a government scheme, purchasing something yourself or a combination of all these, achieving savings and best value is crucial.

I produce regular editions of my own mini procurement aide memoire, 'Guidance for Budget Holders', which I send to department heads each March in preparation for the new financial year. It informs users that: "We are guardians of public money given for the education of young people, and as such we have a moral and statutory duty of careful stewardship. Business Managers in schools are subject to a high degree of accountability, audit and inspection, and as such have to ensure the finances throughout the organisation are managed with integrity, consistency and accuracy."

It's now essential to scour as many avenues as possible, compare products on price and quality and ensure that the very best value for money is obtained. No longer is anything sacred. The ruthlessness of conducting three-way discussions with suppliers to minimise the cost of an item by 'playing them off' against each other is now seen in my school as the norm, and not just by the school finance staff.

Everything – and do I mean everything – should be open to price negotiation. It's all too easy to concentrate on bigger items, when products that are much smaller but bought regularly can also reap savings. Existing contracts are a

favourite - they can often be forgotten about, and there can be a lack of awareness as to the savings that can be made by reviewing them, particularly if the school has been signed up to them for some time.

When recently procuring a new visitor management system for the school, for example, the product we were looking at was licenced to a number of other suppliers able to see the same product. A like-for-like quotation process was conducted, and by negotiating costs down based on those quotes, a saving of over 21% was made when comparing the most expensive quote with the final agreed price.

Not all processes will achieve that level of saving, but having this kind of ethos and culture in place will mean that in the vast majority of cases, you can be confident that the organisation as a whole is striving to achieve the best for its students through careful and sensible procurement.



ANGELA OGDEN
St. Damian's RC Science College Ashton Under Lyne, Lancashire

Following the introduction of the school financial value standards (see tinyurl.com/dfe-sfvs), there are now many guidelines for schools to follow with regards to procurement and finances. Back in 1994, when I first started working in the education sector, those guidelines were very sparse. I mainly drew on my accounting background, looking at how things were bought in and balancing value with quality so that the teachers could be provided with sufficient resources for the school to run smoothly.

SMART ORDERING

Informed by, and created for SBMs, Smart Ordering from GLS is collection of great online features and tools that can save SBMs time and money when ordering their school supplies. Smart Connect forms part of this and is used by over 1,400 schools – a free solution that makes the process of buying school supplies faster, smoother and more affordable by linking the GLS Educational Supplies website directly to your school's financial management system.

For more details, visit glsed.co.uk/smart

As more regulations have come into place over time, we've had to make better use of the financial resources we have and be accountable for the decisions we make. I've found myself adapting my role according to the procedures I've needed to follow.

Budget constraints aside, the challenge I encounter most often is time. Years ago, you'd be looking for the best products and searching for them via one or more catalogues, based on what teachers would tell you they needed. Now, you might receive an email from a teacher explaining what they need. If they've not already chosen it themselves, you'll have to research that item online, browse through a wide array of different products and try to compare options so that you get the best one.

Another challenge we have is making sure that the sites we order items from are secure. We have our own internal security, but many online companies increasingly won't allow you to make purchases without using a business card. In the past, our audit teams would always want to see us use an invoice procedure. In that respect, the rules are slightly more relaxed, particularly with items purchased from specific websites using a business card. Given developments in IT security and things like online banking, it's down to us to make sure what we're doing is secure and safe.



LET'S NOT LOSE THE LEADERS WE NEED

Stephen Morales considers the complexities and challenges of strategic school leadership in a febrile political climate amid ongoing reform

he government's policy trajectory since 2010 has left our education system fragmented. The sector is only partially reformed, and subsequently we have two distinct education delivery models operating in England and Wales, with academy and maintained schools running in parallel.

We should remember that the majority of schools (circa 18.000) remain under LA control. For some, this can present new opportunities for development, but it can also be confusing and daunting for school business leaders moving between maintained and academy schools sometimes out of choice, and sometimes not. What's expected of SBLs in a maintained school setting is often very different to the expectations of a trust.

THE MEANING OF **'EXECUTIVES'**

At this point, it might be worth defining the different flavours of leadership we've seen start to emerge, beginning with 'executives'. This is a person, or group of

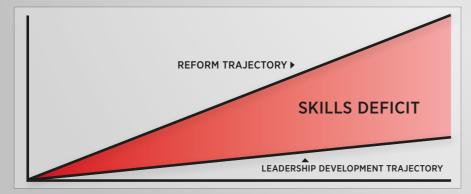
persons, that has administrative, operational and supervisory authority within an organisation, or the power to put plans or actions into effect.

Executives will generally perform the following functions:

- · Represent the organisation and effectively be its public face in dealings with external stakeholders
- Be accountable and responsible for the organisation's operations, and accept responsibility for its overall performance
- Make strategic decisions in relation to new markets, products and making acquisitions
- Manage the organisation by allocating and monitoring its resources, and facilitate collaboration by developing and engaging people to get the best return on investment from those resources
- · Lead by championing new directions - either on a large scale with a new vision, or on a small scale with minor new ideas

It's also important to understand the difference between an executive and a generalist. Executive leaders have people

"What's expected of SBLs in a maintained school setting is often very different to the expectations of a trust"



who follow them, while generalist managers have people who work for them. To be successful, organisations will need both strong leaders and strong managers to get their teams on board and follow the leader's vision of success.

Leaders paint a picture of what they see as possible. Their job is to inspire and engage their teams by turning a vision into reality. They think beyond individual contributions, encouraging people to instead think of themselves as part of something bigger. They know that high-functioning teams can accomplish a lot more working together, compared with individuals working autonomously.

Managers will tend to focus on setting, measuring and achieving specific goals. Their job is control their situations in a way that will enable those objectives to be reached or exceeded.

THE MEANING OF **'SPECIALISTS?'**

A separate group, 'specialists', possess unique technocratic knowledge, typically acquired through rigorous programmes of study. However, the pace of reform in recent years has left a skills and knowledge gap across the three pillars of school leadership - pedagogy, governance and business - as headteachers assume CEO positions, governors become company directors, and SBPs increasingly move into executive roles or take on specialist functions previously provided or supported by LAs.

The Institute of School Business Leadership has responded to this challenge of developing our leaders, while keeping pace with the reforms, by developing a tiered membership that tracks individual CPD and offers a career pathway from entry into the profession through to Fellowship and executive leadership. It's developed specialist qualifications in collaboration with other chartered institutes and offered funded



qualifications through apprenticeships. It's also devised academic programmes alongside partner universities, providing workshops and short courses on relevant subjects such as curriculum-led financial planning and occupational safety and health, and nurtured excellent relationships with local networks and regional groups.

Finally, it's promoted the concept of 'joined-up leadership' by working collaboratively with headteacher and governor associations in areas such as curriculum development, schools' financial health and efficiency, funding policy and governance.

MANY FLAVOURS

The opportunities currently available for SBLs to progress and diversify are enormous, but not without committing to CPD. The reforms therefore represent an element of risk, as trusts seek to rationalise their leadership and management functions and start to explore what efficiency savings can be made through centralisation.

I would, however, caution both the government and the sector at large against removing the local business support offered to headteachers in particular, as this will result in pedagogical leadership being diverted away from the core business of teaching and learning.

Where SBLs are concerned, they may be able to follow new career pathways, but the value and importance of local practitioners shouldn't be underestimated - not just in standalone schools, but also in trusts.

We need to accept that 'school business leadership' isn't a single discipline, nor does it represent one level within a school's or trust's organisation. As we've explored here, it exists in many flavours - and ISBL is here to support the diverse spectrum of practice.



Stephen Morales is chief executive of the **Institute of School Business Leadership**



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It remains an essential supply for schools across the world, but as YPO category manager John Goldthorpe explains, there are many things to consider when sourcing paper...

RIPPLE EFFECT

For the last few years, paper has been steadily increasing in price. The rising cost is linked to the supply of pulp, following unprecedented levels of demand right across Europe. Pulp, used to make paper, is now being utilised much more widely by hygiene and packaging producers, as companies increasingly switch to using paper over plastic for sustainability reasons. Inevitability, this is having a knock-on effect on the consumable paper supplies required by schools. A ripple effect has led to paper suppliers consolidating their businesses, meaning there are now fewer suppliers and more restrictions in terms of choice. We supply a large range of paper at YPO and have noticed a 30% increase in the price of copier paper, one of the most frequently purchased paper types. These price rises unfortunately tend to be passed on to customers, though at YPO we're working hard to keep paper costs as low as we can.

BETTER QUALITY

Given the increased prices, it's more important than ever that you buy the right paper for the right job. With paper, as with many other items, cheaper isn't always better. If you base your paper supply purchases solely on price, it might not be of the right quality or the correct weight to pass through your printers and copiers, resulting in bad print jobs or worse, blocked printers. With exercise books, we're finding that teachers are increasingly buying A4 books rather than the traditional A5 as they provide more space per page. Teachers are in turn tending towards A4+ size exercise books for themselves, which allow them to slip A4 sheets between the pages. Consider purchasing exercise books with 80 pages or more to make your money go further. If you're stocking up for the year ahead, YPO's resource packs of display papers and borders can help you prepare for putting those classroom displays together.

ECO-FRIENDLY

The pricing of paper is further affected by its environmental impact. Recycled paper still comes at a premium, but don't let that put you off - buying such paper can help your school meet its sustainability objectives. Recyclable paper consumes less water and energy and produces lower carbon emissions than non-recycled paper. Advances in technology have meant that recycled paper can now be produced at a comparable level of whiteness as nonrecycled paper. Paper makes up most of the waste produced by schools, making it important to promote recycling and teach children about its importance. YPO's paper supplies are all obtained from sustainable sources, many accredited by the Forest Stewardship Council or the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification. It's important to understand that virgin fibres are critical for manufacture and lifecycle of paper - and that without virgin paper, we'd be unable to recycle.



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PSM Leadership

BECOME A **MEETINGS MASTER**

Ensure those essential gatherings remain focused and productive with these words of advice from Farihah Anwar-Simmons



NAGEMENT

further ensure that the time's used efficiently.

CONTROL THE PACE

Meetings can overrun for various reasons – too much on the agenda, endless incomplete actions from previous meetings or reminiscing about 'how we used to do things.' The chairperson has a vital role in ensuring that discussions stay on track. Rotating the responsibility of leader or timekeeper is a good way to train others in maintaining focus and momentum.

There's a time and place for anecdotes and debates about the colour of the exercise books, but pressing on with the agenda will ensure that all participants remain engaged and that the meeting ends on time. Timed agenda items and simple reminders about the agreed finish time at regular intervals should be sufficient to keep the discussion rolling at a good pace.

SET RULES

For teams that meet regularly, an agreed set of ground rules can help ensure every meeting is useful and has clear outcomes. The specifics will vary depending upon the team dynamics, but could include:

- Be aware of impact
- Be positive and avoid personal criticism
- Complete agreed actions or ask for help if needed!
- Remember the vision and core purpose

Meetings can be a powerful tool in driving school improvement. They have the potential to energise, enthuse and effect lasting change. A few simple tweaks could be all it takes to ignite inspiration.

Farihah Anwar-Simmons is a deputy headteacher





Maxim Kelly offers some practical tips for school leaders faced with email inboxes that threaten to consume their working hours...

Email - once a revolutionary communications technology, now an everyday tool that often exacerbates, rather than solves the issues it was meant to help with. Far from enabling effective leadership, email can instead shackle you to your desk at work (leaving you less visible and ironically more remote) while also intruding on your private and home life, thanks to mobile devices.

How many of us leave our email clients permanently switched on? We might be in the middle of something important, but for many of us, that tell-tale 'ping' will divert our attention away from the task at hand and straight to our inboxes. Email can become all-consuming – but only if we let it.

The first step in redressing the balance and regaining control over your email habits is to get the culture right at school. As a leader, that starts with you setting the right example. Not emailing late into the night is a good place to start. Draft those emails if you feel so inclined – but delay pressing 'send' until 8am the following morning.

The way you prioritize your inbox will help hugely with tackling an email backlog. At my school we include one of five simple codes in the subject lines of our internal emails: 'FYI', 'ACT', 'REQ', 'URG' or 'REP'. If, for example, I'm emailing a copy of the school newsletter, my subject line would read 'FYI school newsletter'. This way, when it appears in a colleague's inbox they can tell instantly that it's a non-urgent email that doesn't require a reply.

If I'm sending an email that requires someone to do something upon receiving it, I'll use the 'ACT' code for 'action': 'ACT Mrs Jones telephoned, please call her back 861373'. That example also illustrates how some messages can be written straight into the subject line. 'REQ' meanwhile prefaces requests, 'URG' is for priority messages and 'REP' indicates a reply will be needed. An inbox full of coded subjects makes prioritizing them a doddle.

Other steps include emailing only those you're actually 'speaking' to. Emails will often be sent to a whole list of people who have been 'copied in for information only', which can be confusing. Am I supposed to reply? Is someone else going to? Cut the confusion by cutting your recipients list.

Finally, don't become a slave to email. Choose specific points in the day to check and deal with your email rather than leaving your client open the whole time. This will help you to stay focused on other tasks and sort your emails only when you're ready.

Maxim Kelly is the executive headteacher of two schools in the Isle of Man (Dhoon School and Laxey School) which form the Laxey / Dhoon Federation



maximheadteacher.wordpress.com

Distribute your LEADERSHIP

Esther Brooks looks at how leaders should go about finding the right balance between vision, leadership and followership

he concept of distributed leadership is widely talked about as something every headteacher should aspire to if they wish to see that their vision is continually driven forward. There's perhaps less discussion about where this should start or stop - do you employ staff who support the school vision and then find their leadership 'niche'? Or do you begin with a distributed leadership structure that you aspire to, and then look to recruit accordingly?

Moreover, how can the leadership distributed throughout your school be regularly reviewed and reshaped so your team are presented with fresh challenges and opportunities for growth?

At Chestnut Park, as a new build school with an initially small but ever growing team, these questions provoked much thought. Our thinking, however, was that the vision always came first. And here's why.

A ship without a sail

When one has no building, no previous Ofsted results and no long term legacy to build on, it's your vision that will capture hearts and minds and compel families and potential staff to follow you. It's about recognising that leadership without 'followership' is like a ship without a sail. As the social psychologist Jonathan Haidt

puts it, "Focusing on leadership alone is like trying to understand clapping by studying only the left hand.'

Haidt suggests that 'followership' requires three leadership qualities. First, the leader must establish why he or she is a credible authority figure for followers. As headteachers, we do this when we show that we completely understand, and indeed love our community, and thus create a vision of school development that supports and develops this - a vision of equity and equality of provision.

Secondly, a leader must express that his or her leadership will be fair. If leaders are clear that the whole team is there to support the realisation of the vision, the team will be able to recognise that everyone, not just senior leaders, can have an impact and will want to be part of what you're doing. They'll want to make their own mark. We often talk in schools about 'everyone being a leader', but if just one person fails to embrace that ethos, the whole school will be affected.

Thirdly, Haidt holds that loyalty to the leadership is a requirement of followership. For me, this is about leaders sharing a vision that's clear and deeply rooted in pedagogical understanding, with the result that staff loyalty follows out of loyalty to the vision - because the vision really matters.

Creating followership

Having established a firm foundation of 'followership', a headteacher can then proceed to distribute and redistribute leadership throughout the school, which will in turn result in other leaders creating 'followership' within their own teams, further developing the distribution throughout the school.

A self-improving school system is therefore born out of the vision. Once people start following you, we can look at the CPD they'll need to develop within their identified leadership niche. In this way, we can support a model of talent spotting and growing your own leaders, whilst at the same time energising the school system by distributing and redistributing where the leadership is.

I ask myself daily whether I'd have taken the same approach in an already established school - to which the answer is yes. Vision is the heart of the school. If the vision is where your leadership starts, then distributed leadership and followership are what will surely follow.

Esther Brooks is the headteacher of Chestnut Park Primary School, Croydon



Life beyond headship

Three former heads tell us how they went from being the leader of their school to embracing the opportunities and experiences afforded by what came next... If you're a successful head with years of experience under your belt, you'll have picked up a fair amount of knowledge and wisdom that your peers may well appreciate hearing.

From addressing conferences, to authoring your first book and setting yourself up as an advisor or consultant, there are plenty of avenues you can pursue when it comes to giving something back. Here, three former heads tell us where their career path beyond the school gates ended up taking them.



JAMES HILTON

Spent 23 years in senior leadership positions at schools in around Derbyshire, including two headships; he is now a writer, author and speaker

My first headship was at a school where I'd been deputy. After five years, another headship became available at a school that ultimately grew from around 150 on roll to over 800 by the time I left. It was an exciting environment in lots of ways, though not without its difficulties.

After 10 years there, I left partly to write a book (*Leading from the Edge*) that I knew I couldn't really write in post. I wanted to be open and honest about some of the pressures involved with the job and how I'd dealt with them. I interviewed many other heads in the course of writing it, so that it wasn't just 'my story', but about how other professionals dealt with the pressures of the job themselves.

Our kids had just completed university, which relieved quite a lot of financial pressure, so I decided to take a bit of a leap of faith. People talk publicly about

wellbeing much more now than they were five years ago; at the time, I wanted to tell a story around stress management as a sufferer, rather than as someone with a qualification in it, which I think was quite unique.

I managed to get a lucky break when the then NAHT president Bernadette Hunter offered me an opportunity to speak on the topic at a couple of NAHT branch meetings. I was then invited to deliver the opening keynote at at the 2015 NAHT conference, and a lot of work came in off the back of that through recommendations – other conferences, branch meetings, headteacher working groups and so on.

For others interested in doing something similar themselves, it's scary. For the first six months or so, I'd be looking in the diary and asking myself, 'What have I done?' The best advice I can give would be that you need a USP. You need to find an angle, something that's going to be your particular specialism. Offer to do some free events, maybe an area heads meeting, to try out what you want to talk about and get some honest feedback. I ditched guite a lot of stuff fairly early on after I realised it wasn't working. If you're looking to make a second career out of this, having that USP is vital.

7

aiameshilton300





JILL BERRY

Served as headteacher of a 7 to 18 school in Bedford for 10 years; she left headship in 2010 and has spent the years since then supporting educators and schools

I loved headship - it was the most joyful and rewarding of the seven jobs contacts over time. Engaging in the I had in schools over a 30-year period, world of edu-Twitter, blogging about but 10 years in one school felt like enough for me. I still found the job satisfying in my tenth year, and believe I continued to be successful, but I wanted a change of direction and a new challenge, and a second headship didn't appeal.

Having previously completed a Masters degree 15 years into my teaching career, I decided to embark on a professional doctorate. I chose as my research focus the transition from deputy to head, gathering data which I thought could be helpful to aspiring heads and those who select and support them. I then wrote a book about my research, experiences and wider reading titled Making the Leap - Moving From Deputy to Head, which due to be published by Sage in was published by Crown House in 2016 (see tinyurl.com/berry-leap). Building a relationship with educational publishers and those writing books about education, is extremely worthwhile - I've been asked to review a number of such books, and it's been an interesting experience

I subsequently set up in business as I wish you well! a leadership consultant, making the most of the contacts I had from my

years in education, and building new education (jillberry102.blog), writing for different educational publications and networking both virtually and at a range of conferences and events has helped me to generate opportunities for leadership development work.

I particularly enjoy working with aspiring middle leaders, senior leaders and heads, helping them to step up to the next level of leadership responsibility with confidence. I've written a chapter that looks at this, 'Get the job you dream of', for the book 10% Braver, which is edited by #WomenEd's national leads, Vivienne Porritt and Keziah Featherstone and is February 2019.

There are any number of ways in which experienced heads can contribute to the wider educational community once they've left headship - the opportunities on offer are considerable. To all those about to embark on the next stage of their educational adventure,





VIV GRANT

Was appointed as one of the voungest primary headteachers in the country and proceeded turn around a failing school in Stockwell, South London, She has since served as a consultant for the National College of Teaching and Leadership and the DfE, and founded the coaching company Integrity Coaching

When I left headship, I went to work at the London Leadership Centre, which at that time was part of the Institute of Education at London University (now UCL). Back then, becoming a coach and setting up my own company wasn't part of the plan. However, two programmes I tutored on had a profound impact on me, and set me on the path for the work

The first was the National Professional Qualification for Headship. As an NPQH tutor working with aspiring heads, I soon realised that many had the same fears and worries that I had when I was a head. Just like me, they too felt there was no-one impartial who they could to talk to or rely on to listen to them. The result was that they kept their hurts, worries and fears to themselves. I saw this and thought to myself, 'This is wrong. This isn't how we should prepare aspiring leaders for headship. It's not just about being good at the external stuff - they have to know how to get good at managing all their internal stuff as well.' At the time, though, I didn't have any solutions. I just felt there had to be a better way.

I soon found out what this better way was, after I was invited to be a tutor on the London Leadership Challenge's Mentoring and Coaching Programme. It here that I took my first steps into coaching, and I found the programme to be transformative. It completely changed my understanding of coaching and the role it could play in helping school leaders better manage their internal thoughts, feelings and emotions. I was hooked this was what I felt I'd needed as a head. and I was now certain this was what all heads needed.

This interest subsequently grew into a passion. That passion developed into a service, which then became a company that's now Integrity Coaching.



Should leaders be LOVED OR **FEARED?**

other forms of scrutiny, monitoring and quality assurance. In a thriving inspection culture, this can be a great way of protecting ourselves from poor judgements, or help us decry

them as invalid if they don't go our way

facilitates

Unfortunately, when we lead from strength we run the risk of eliciting fear. By putting strength first, we gain compliance without courage. Schools run like this end up following an 'everyone for themselves' philosophy that can extend to the school itself - competitive rather than collaborative, secretive rather than willing to share and more concerned with seeking recognition than identifying areas for improvement. The teachers become less metacognitive, less creative and more disengaged.

Warmth is a greater factor in one's evaluation of us as leaders. It

s it better to be loved or feared? That would be an interesting discussion to have amongst headteachers, though I'm confident we'd eventually all agree that you need a bit of both (and that 'feared' could perhaps be changed to something less scary). The real question, however, is what we as leaders should start with first - warmth or strength?

I read a great article in the Harvard Business Review a few years ago (see tinyurl.com/hbr-warmth-strength) that characterised this exceptionally well. Before people decide what they think of your message, they decide what they think of you. The article's authors maintain that one's decision to follow our lead is based on two main thoughts: Can I trust this person (warmth) and can I respect this person (competence/ strength)?

STRENGTH VERSUS WARMTH

Most of us start with our strength how many degrees we've earned, how much experience we possess, how long we've served in the trenches, how busy we are. We've worked hard to be competent and want others to see us that way.

In schools, this may translate to starting with lesson observations, learning walks and

Jeremy Hannay looks at what it means to lead with strength versus warmth - and why the latter can help you go further...

trust, communication and the absorption of ideas. Once we've established our warmth, our strength is a welcome reassurance. Moreover, it's a conduit of influence.

> Leading with warmth allows us to connect immediately with our staff, letting them

know that they're heard, understood and valued. At Three Bridges, we call this 'Leaning In'. We know from largescale studies that good relationships keep us happier and healthier. They improve our life expectancy, brain function, general health and wellbeing. The prioritising of connections, relationships, and warmth is key to leading successful schools.

THE POWER OF LANGUAGE

I've always been amazed at the power of words and language. As a Canadian, when I started teaching in the UK I encountered a number of linguistic misunderstandings. The one that always stuck out most was the simple British greeting, 'Y'all right?' It was how virtually every day started in school, and for months it bothered me. In Canada we have many ways of saying hello: 'What's up?' 'Bonjour.' 'Salut.' 'How are ya?' 'Hey!' 'Hi.' But when we ask 'Are you all right?' the implication is that the speaker has noticed something wrong; they're worried about you. As someone new to the country, being asked every morning if I was all right, I'd go to the toilets, look in the mirror, smell myself, check there wasn't something in my teeth. It was a weird way to start the day. And no one knew.

I quickly learnt this wasn't what everyone meant, but even after understanding what their intention was, I couldn't let go of the power that phrase had on me.

Some years ago I carried out a small experiment with some of my senior staff. Lasked them to write down what they believed their role was, based on a variety of requests I'd make of them. I wanted to see if their interpretation of my intention would change based solely on the language I used, whilst keeping those intentions consistent. At first, I asked them what they believed their role was if they were asked to 'monitor and scrutinise' a person, subject or development area. I then changed the phrase to 'quality assure', before replacing it with 'support and develop'

Their expectations shifted hugely. The first phrase was coupled with militaristic ideas - holding to account, checking up on, making sure people are doing what they're supposed to, finding problems, reporting back, etc. This changed slightly with 'quality assure'. Most seemed concerned with standards of some kind, or else outputs, results and products. The themes of

hierarchy were mirrored. The final phrase, however, elicited rather different feelings

#LEANIN ON LEADERSHIP

Want to lead with warmth in your setting? Try observing the following...

#LEVELOUT

It's often helpful to speak at a lower pitch and volume, as if you were comforting someone. Find a tone that shows you're levelling with people. Share a personal (but appropriate) story that lets them know you understand.

#ISEEYOU Make sure staff know that you see them. Acknowledge their feelings and what they're going through. Know them. Often, when you appreciate other people's positions, they'll be more willing to listen to yours.

#LIVEDNOTLAMINATED Warmth isn't easy to fake, but it is easy to see through - so you need to mean it. You need to live it.

#WESERVE As educators, we're servant leaders. Serve your children, your community and your staff. If we want our children to flourish, our adults must flourish first.

altogether - asking people what they need, modelling best practice, team teaching, facilitating access to training, sharing practice and resources, collaborating for planning and learning. What's scary is that in each case I meant for the same thing to happen sustainable, capacity-building, values-led school improvement. Language is powerful.

COMMON **NARRATIVE**

As a headteacher that's had the good fortune of working with many schools, leaders and teachers across the country, I can say without any doubt that performance management processes are often the main contributing factor to a teacher leaving the profession. We start with strength - countless lesson observations, learning walks, scrutinies, monitoring activities, planning checks, checklists, and so on. School leaders want their schools, teachers and pupils to improve, develop and flourish.

The teachers, on the other hand. feel untrusted, micromanaged, automated and fearful.

Leading with warmth means building collaborative processes instead of individual judgements. It involves placing connection at the heart of school improvement, rather than competition. It requires us to dissolve the link between hierarchical inspections and school improvement.

It compels us to ask ourselves better questions. If learning observations are designed to develop, align and enhance professional practice, how can we achieve the same goal through a model of social capital and collaborative professionalism? If scrutiny and monitoring are in place to maintain high standards and support consistent practice, is there a way to manage that through learning communities and collective expectations?

At Three Bridges, we have regular learning and lesson study driven by professional interest and school development. Teachers self-refer to each other for development and practice dissemination. Team meetings are learning communities, centred around support and development targets, generated from informal information and feedback. Teams work together to design collective goals, related to areas of strength and struggle.

We don't use traditional monitoring and observation exercises. Experienced teachers aren't routinely observed in a vear. We don't have book or planning scrutinies. There aren't any learning walks. We have low to no staff turnover - in an inner London borough, at a school that's near the top of the deprivation tables, with high proportions of pupils with EAL and who qualify for Pupil Premium and free school meals. Standards and expectations are consistently high, and attainment is strong.

When we aim to align the underpinnings of great leadership with school improvement, teachers feel trusted and valued and begin to see the difference they make. Their collective efficacy soars, and they start to feel deeply responsible for the life of every child. When we #LeanIn on relationships and relational processes, we move our schools, our profession and our people forward.



Jeremy Hannay is the headteacher of Three **Bridges Primary School**

THE HEADTEACHER'S GUIDE TO ... Staff Absence Management



"We've been using SAM now for a year and a half and in that time we have been impressed with how easy it is to use, how supportive the SAM team are and how much easier it has made managing our absence process. We've been really happy with the system and the service we receive and have contributed to user groups to help develop the software further."

How SAM has helped

"People now know that we are addressing staff absence and that has encouraged them to talk to us and work with us. Staff absence here was not an issue prior to SAM, as we supported staff well, but the absence process itself was a laborious unnecessary paper system that took up a lot of administration time. There was no structure to it and we were logging information in multiple places. There was so much paperwork. Now I put the information into SIMS and upload it straight to SAM. I can see right away what I need to do. If you import weekly, SAM does the rest for you and provides accurate data that you can act on. It reminds us about monitoring rounds and

meetings, so we are reacting much quicker to triggers. SAM guides us through the process and it is now only an hour's job once a week. It is so easy to deal with as it does everything for you.

The main benefit from SAM is that it is more personal, so people are responding better, no-one is getting their hands slapped, it's all about working together and so when people are absent we are getting people back to work much quicker. In fact, in the time we have been using SAM we have seen a reduction of **59%** in the number of days absent. We have saved 146 days in a year and a half from using SAM, and when you put this into financial terms, the savings are frightening. Our supply costs for the academic year 2015/16 were £22,609, this academic year so far, they are just £2,800. That is a saving of £19,809 from our budget and that is just supply costs. If you take into account the salaries of the staff absent (£47,266 1st year/£19,529 2nd year so a saving of £27,737), the savings for our school of 70 staff are estimated to be £47,546, making SAM worth every penny.

I have been championing SAM to other schools because I think it is so valuable and I would highly recommend it."

Victoria Roome. St John's C of E Primary Academy

SAM's Top Tips for Managing **Absence**

- 1. Communicate the school's absence policy and procedure regularly
- 2. Allow reasonable time off to attend medical appointments
- 3. Hold regular one to one's to check on employee wellbeing and progress
- 4. Closely monitor absence to identify trends/patterns
- 5. Keep on top of the process. Record when Doctor's notes expire and when people will be returning to work
- 6. Hold return to work interviews following every period of absence
- 7. Set absence monitoring rounds with timescales for improvement
- 8. Record details of all absences, discussions and, where appropriate, confirm outcomes in writing
- 9. Challenge current policies and procedures, working practices, working conditions as a means to improve absenteeism
- 10. Get HR advice before acting if you are unsure

*using salary costs of £1,829,000 based on 70 staff and 195 working days





How to save time and money by managing staff absence



SAM is innovative software specifically developed to help schools track employee absence, save time and reduce costs

POTENTIAL

SAVE BUDGET BY REDUCING SUPPLY COSTS

Monitoring and managing staff absence effectively can help you to facilitate return to work meetings quicker, therefore getting staff back to work quicker and saving on salary and supply costs. Budget can then be better spent on educational resources

REDUCE ADMINISTRATION TIME

Using an efficient software system can help reduce the countless administration tasks that your team need to do. Automating processes, such as identifying staff who have triggered, notifications when fit notes expire and when return to works are due, will remove the need for endless spreadsheets.

IMPROVE STANDARDS

Using SAM's tiered access control, leaders can be empowered to deal more effectively with attendance by gaining greater visibility of the information available. Adopting a systematic approach ensures that a fair process is followed and that an audit trail will be captured, helping to prevent claims of discrimination.

SPECIAL OFFERS

Work out how much staff absence is costing you with our online calculator (see staffabsence management.co.uk/absencecosts) and then save even more with SAM's Winter Offer - £100 off an annual licence if you purchase by 31st December 2018. To book a free, no-obligation demo, contact 01924 907 319, quoting 'PSM100'.

*Autumn and spring term results across 10 schools that have been using SAM since September 2015

Once upon a time, a school business manager had an idea. What if she could find an easier way for schools, big and small, to manage staff absence? Something that would save all those thankless hours of inputting? A tool that could help you report and monitor - and save time and money - like never before?

Staff Absence Management, or 'SAM' as it's better known, is an innovative online software specifically intended to help schools and MATs manage their staff attendance. It's become the leading absence management tool of its kind, deployed within hundreds of schools and supporting over 1,600 users who use it to monitor some 40,000 employees.

SAM can be tailored to your school's specific needs and circumstances, whereupon it will monitor, report and manage all aspects of staff absence, including periods of sickness, paid leave and unpaid leave of absence. SAM will automatically notify you when staff hit triggers and when tasks are due. It provides a means of centrally organising all supporting documents and can quickly generate reports for SLT, governors and trustees. With SAM on the case, it's possible to reduce your supply costs, save money and improve continuity of teaching in the classroom, which is good for everyone.

SAM will work on your term dates

(while allowing for inset days), run against your absence triggers and provide access to customisable document templates and best practice documents produced by Education HR specialists. SAM's Employee Portal, makes requesting and approving leave of absence simple and SAM's direct link to school MIS systems means importing and updating data is easy.

Schools using SAM have effectively reduced their absence days by an average of 40%*, resulting in significant savings. SAM also helps you save time, reducing the laborious tasks that take up administrators' time.

As Anne-Marie Dorsey, Business Manager at Baguley Hall Primary School in Manchester explains, "Before SAM, we were having to count days manually and plot absence on a spreadsheet, which was an administration nightmare. Now, SAM does it all for us, saving us muchneeded time. It identifies absence patterns when staff hit triggers and makes it easy to provide information to senior management who can then further support staff. We would highly recommend SAM to other schools."

Find out more by contacting 01924 907 319 or work out how much staff absence is costing you with our online calculator www.staffabsencemanagement.co.uk/ absencecosts

KidZania London

An educational destination that brings the worlds of work, learning and play together for KS1 to KS3 pupils

- Real life activities focusing on KS1 to KS3 STEM, PSHE and English
- Free planning trip for teachers
- Fully inclusive for SEND students
- · Downloadable resources (including lesson plans) for pre and post visit
- · Encourages pupil autonomy and genuinely experiential learning

Reviewed by: Helen Mulley

et's pretend' has always been recognised as a powerful tool for education; there's a reason that every primary school classroom has some kind of 'role play corner' - and in secondary schools it's not unusual to find students 'becoming' entrepreneurs, or politicians, or magistrates, in order to enrich the eurriculum at KS3 and 4.

KidZania London - the 'indoor city run by kids' that nestles, TARDIS-like. behind an innocuous-looking entrance on the first floor of Westfield London is in many ways an obvious extension of this idea. From the moment they pass the threshold, children find themselves in another world; one that is both reassuringly familiar and entirely different from the one they are used to experiencing - because here, they're in charge.

Once they've dropped off their bags and collected their security bracelet from the airport departure lounge, visitors are given 50 'kidZos' and encouraged to go and decide what to do with their newfound wealth in a carefully constructed environment of streets, shops, businesses, services and leisure areas.

Thereafter, the youngsters' experiences depend entirely on decisions they make for themselves.

Once they have 75 KidZos, they can open a bank account, use the cashpoints dotted around the city, and earn interest - so, will they choose to work a shift in the supermarket, or cleaning windows;



or might they explore life as a journalist, firefighter or professional sportsperson? Perhaps they'll take a longer-term view, and invest some dosh in getting a degree, or training to be a pilot, both of which will boost their earning power afterwards.

The artistically inclined can explore professional dancing or theatre; animal lovers might try veterinary work; and the Nintendo Labo workshops are a STEM-fuelled thrill. Yes, everything is branded - but research shows that this increases engagement, and the organisation takes its corporate relationships very seriously. Partners must justify their presence within the city and deliver a genuinely impactful, socially responsible experience. Regular pop-up events, like the Business and Careers Festival that was running during my visit, offer added value.

Above all, though, a visit to KidZania is fun! Children will love the dressing up; the autonomy; and the authenticity of what's on offer. And teachers will love the free supporting resources; the clear curriculum links; and the chance to relax in the comfy grown-ups' den, knowing that their charges could hardly be in a safer, nor a more stimulating, environment. If only real life were always this easy...



VERDICT

- ✓ An exciting, memorable experience for young people from four to 14
- ✓ Peace of mind for teachers, thanks to solid safeguarding procedures
- ✓ Carefully managed corporate input boosts engagement
- ✓ Pupils' decisions genuinely impact
- ✓ Additional learning opportunities through regular pop-up events

VISIT IF...

You're looking for a school trip that will link learning to real life, right across the curriculum; and be talked about by pupils for years to come.

To learn more, email schools@kidzania.co.uk or visit KidZania.co.uk/education

imoves

A cross-curricular digital platform for building physical literacy and an active school with muscle

- Inspiring daily activity challenges for the whole school
- Interactive films, lesson plans, PowerPoints, printable worksheets, flasheards and assessment tools with achievement certificates
- · Mindfulness module for emotional wellness
- A full active PE curriculum covering dance, gymnastics, Pilates and other assorted activities

Reviewed by: John Dabell

n an overloaded curriculum, time is precious. Every minute of the day counts, so finding the time to squeeze everything in is a battle. You know your children need to be doing more exercise, and that active learning is one of your top priorities - but how to put it into practice?

One way of approaching the problem is to integrate physical activity across classroom subjects and make it part and parcel of your teaching through the day. It's a nice idea, but who has the time to do that? Well, don't sweat it, because imoves have set about resolving that very issue. It's their mission to get all children moving every day for at least 30 minutes, and they've come up with some highly creative ways of bringing that about. This is a comprehensive programme of classroom activities that's bursting with hints, tips and ideas.

Available via imoves' online platform is an array of activities - including 'SportsJam', 'Creative Combat' and Pilates - which range from short and sharp 'quick blasts', through to full 'active lessons'. The latter are classroom based and combine movement with subjects such as drama, maths, geography and PSHE. There's also a mindfulness component for building confidence and resilience and managing anxiety.



Every imoves activity is created by an expert in the field, which shines through in the quality of the content, the lesson notes and ease with which teachers can monitor progress. Everything's been created with busy teachers in mind, in a way that allows them to get straight down to business with minimal set-up time.

It's a brilliant planning tool, superbly structured with both eyes on inclusion and couldn't be easier to use. Simply click 'Find lessons', select the age range and subject you want to teach, print off a lesson plan and get moving! The demonstration videos model specific activities in a clear, engaging and child-friendly way, accompanied by fun music that serves to both motivate and help children understand the importance of following a beat and how music is phrased.

If you're looking to become an active school, you won't find a better package than this. It's bursting with dynamic activities that will stretch and challenge, while feeling fresh and bang up-to-date - and can positively contribute to a major change in mindset when it comes to promoting healthy lifestyles.



VERDICT

- ✓ Top quality music and video material
- ✓ Delightfully easy to plan, teach and assess
- ✓ Enjoyable and engaging: improves motivation and builds self-esteem
- ✓ An easy and cost effective way to get children moving more
- ✓ Ideal for Sports Premium funding

UPGRADE IF...

You're looking for a practical, flexible and fun programme that can make exercise an enjoyable and routine part of the day, while inspiring healthy minds and bodies

> Prices start from £295 a year; try imoves for free for 30 days at imoves.com

TOP OF THE CLASS

Support your pupils with this selection of resources, equipment and services



MAKING SENSE OF THE WORLD

The Week Junior is a fascinating magazine for KS2 children that explains the week's news in an age-appropriate and accessible way. It's packed with

fascinating stories and fun facts covering an extraordinary array of topics, from history and politics to science, books and sport, enhancing learning across the curriculum. School subscriptions are available from only £54.

schools.theweekjunior.co.uk



SELF-ASSESS

EES for Schools is a leading provider of software, training and professional services that enhance school effectiveness. Market leaders in the provision of pupil progress software (Target Tracker), EES has now developed SE+ - an award-winning, downloadable self-evaluation tool that gives senior leadership teams the ability to assess schools' effectiveness. SE+ allows you to complete a comprehensive diagnosis and identify your school's strengths and weaknesses, enabling you to develop improvement priorities. EES for Schools has previously won two Education Investor Awards - for School Improvement Service in 2016 and Education Business Service in 2018, the latter in recognition of its SE+ software. eesforschools.org

SIGNET SIGNS

Signet Signs Ltd is a market-leading signage and thermoplastic playground marking company with a longstanding reputation for exceptional customer service and high quality products. Its products are all manufactured and installed by an experienced team of DBS-checked signage professionals working with the latest materials to ensure everything looks superb for many years to come. Free quotations and advice are available via phone (01275 463 601), email (quotes@ signetsigns.co.uk) or its website, which also contains a large amount of helpful background information.

signetsigns.co.uk





MANAGE YOUR PRIORITIES

With over 20 years' experience of working with schools, and expertise in appraisal, performance management, and training going into its development, Standards Tracker from Educate enables school leaders to effectively use project management processes to strategically target development priorities based on accurate information. It can also help leaders make robust performancerelated pay decisions, inform school development and improvement plans, monitor CPD impact and provide inspectors, governors and trustees with simple, effective summaries of performance against specific measurable standards.

info.standardstracker.co.uk/primarymanagement-2018



ADMIN MADE EASY

Running before and after school clubs can bring in some much-needed income, but schools often find that the admin involved can be a huge burden. Kids Club HQ was built to solve this problem, with its online booking system for parents and administration system for school and club staff. Its ability to provide automatic invoicing and payment reminders, along with up to date registers, has enabled schools like yours to save lots of time previously spent on admin. Find out more by contacting hello@kidsclubhq.co.uk

kidsclubhq.co.uk





a class trip + Family ticket to KidZania London worth £560

t KidZania London, we believe in 'Learning by Doing'. Our indoor city, designed for kids aged 4 to 14, encourages children to independently explore a range of exciting real-life activities whilst imparting important skills such as problem solving, communication and teamwork

We offer a unique learning experience in a secure environment. Pupils are encouraged to discover activities designed around the National Curriculum for Key Stages 1 to 3 and broaden their knowledge by enacting roles. Furthermore, we partnered with Year of Engineering this year to deliver enhanced STEM learning through our educational

events, with the next STEM Fair due to be held on 5th-9th December.

Join KidZania London on their educational events in 2019. Take part in careers workshops with the Fire Education Department and Alan Turing Institute at the Careers Fair on 23rd-25th January. Pupils can also explore literacy and publication with Little Tiger at the World Book Day event on 27th February-2nd March.

We're also giving back to schools this Christmas! Each school visiting us in December will receive a gift worth up to £1,000, including books from Usborne Books and Mad Science show. For a limited time only, take advantage of our Early Booker offer of £8.50 per pupil - find out more at KidZania.co.uk/education.

What's on offer

- Free class trip of up to 30 pupils
- Free teacher places with 1:5 ratio for primary schools and 1:10 for secondary schools
- Winning prize will include visits for our educational events in 2019 (Careers Fair, WBD, Maths and STEM festivals)
- Family ticket (1 adult + 3 children or 2 adults + 2 children)

Enter now at: Teachwire.net/giveways/kidzania

Further information on our educational events and Early Booker offer can be found at KidZania.co.uk/education

www.teachwire.net/giveaways/kidzania

Competition closes at 5pm on Friday 25th January 2019. Winners will be notified within 21 days; For a copy of full competition terms and conditions, email schools@kidzania.co.uk

CAN TEACHER GOVERNORS HELP RAISE STANDARDS?

*3)

Clare Elson recalls how renewing her tenure as a teacher governor inspired her to embark on an ambitious project aimed at examining and improving her school's SEND provision...

've been a teacher for 21 years. For 20 of those I've taught at Roebuck Academy, which it's fair to say has seen some changes in that time. When I first started, it was a two-form entry infants school; it now occupies a pair of newly constructed buildings on the same site and has recently undergone conversion into a two-form entry academy. The experiences I've had while remaining in ostensibly the same setting have been considerable, but I've found working under different headteachers. SLTs and governing bodies to be both rewarding and productive.

LATE EVENINGS

For the past 10 years I've also served as a governor at the school, and continue to enjoy being part of a supportive, friendly and challenging team. Despite initially telling my family that I'd be stepping down after a decade, I surprised myself by agreeing to renew my tenure – while at the same time questioning what effectiveness and impact I'd actually managed to have as a governor.

Is my reselection due to the school's staff having faith in me as a governor,

or is it a role that my colleagues are reluctant to take on? After all, the added workload, meetings and late evenings likely won't appeal to the dedicated and hard-working team I'm proud to be part of. I prepare for meetings by reading minutes from past meetings and the most recent headteacher's report, before drafting paragraphs with additional information and challenge to show what developments there have been in the areas I lead.

I do, however, find it difficult to question data when it's my own class data that I'm presenting. It's hard, after all, to challenge the school data when you have personal ownership of it — something that becomes especially acute in my dual role as the school's SEND co-ordinator.

Being keen to contribute to the governing body in a way that served the school's best interests, I asked the headteacher if I could set aside a day for having the governors review the school's SEND provision and was given the go-ahead.

REAL IMPACT

We began by splitting up into three groups. Group 1 examined whether

our website was consistent with our statutory SEND obligations and in line with Ofsted expectations by referring to the SEND Code of Practice and comparing our website to those of other schools. Group 2 focused on pupil voice, looking at whether pupils knew who to turn to for help and how often that help was available.

Group 3 meanwhile looked at parent voice, checking whether useful and essential information was reliably communicated to parents, how often meetings were had between parents and teaching staff and whether the school was doing enough to direct parents to external agencies and forms of support when they needed it.

The governors then proceeded to undertake learning walks focused on their respective areas, comparing their observations against an inclusive learning checklist. They examined what the children were able to do, how they went about using the resources available and the ways in which the school's environment helped them or created barriers to learning.

The governors finally reconvened in the afternoon, shared their findings and set out a series of SEND-focused actions for the school to take in line with the school development plan. The chief aim throughout was for the monitoring we had done during the day to have a real impact, and to result in follow-up actions that highlighted those issues that needed redressing.



Clare Elson is a teacher at Roebuck Academy



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The leading education and best policy event is back in London, and this time, we're here for 2 days!

Designed to help schools and academies overcome some of the biggest challenges affecting the education sector, with policy updates and case studies from senior Government figures, key association leaders and inspiring teaching practitioners, this is the one event to put in your calendar for 2019.

