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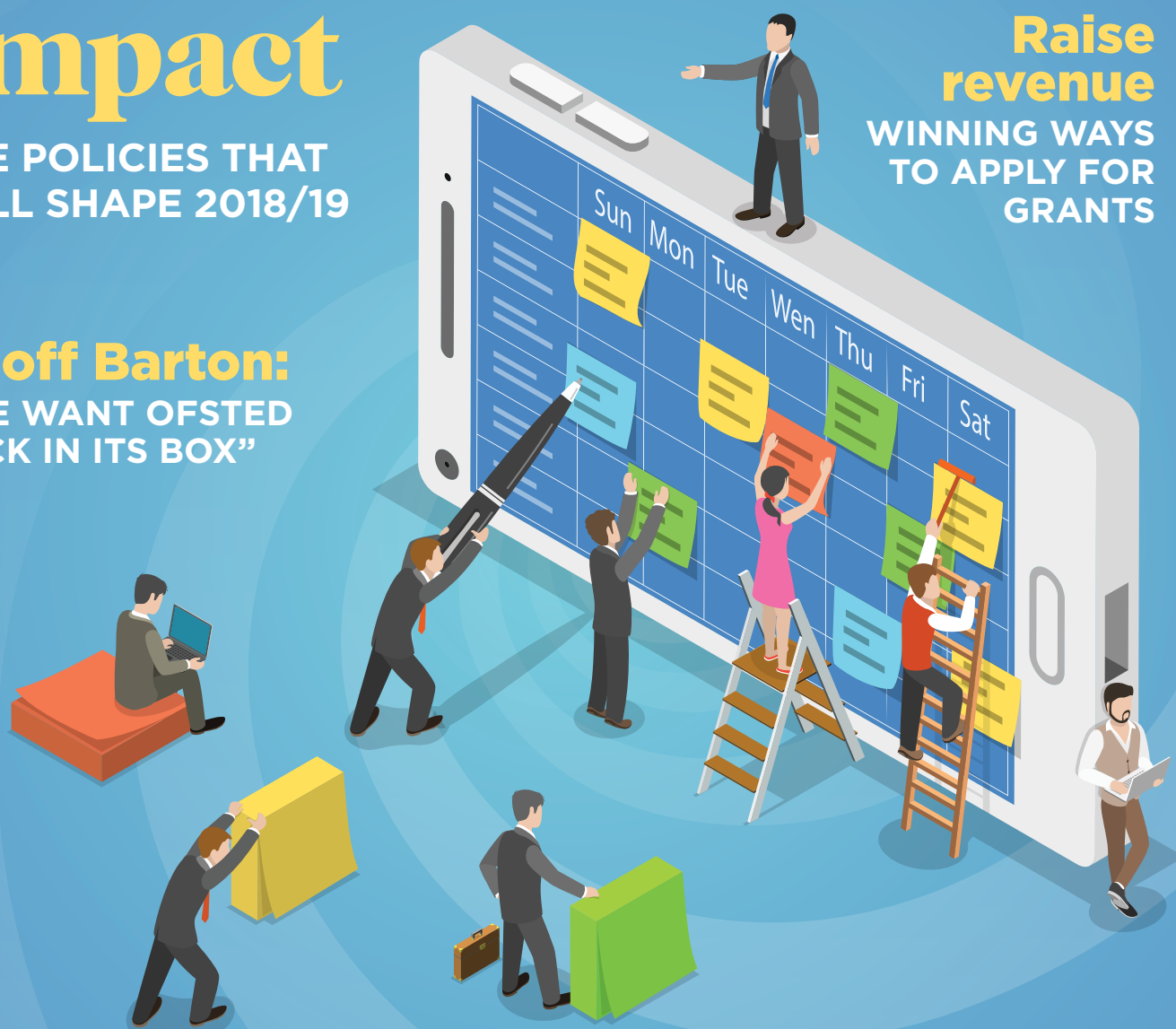
Brace for impact

THE POLICIES THAT
WILL SHAPE 2018/19

Geoff Barton:
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From the editor



You're back in the office, you can hear the pupils' voices echoing through the corridors and all of a sudden those long, leisurely (and rather hot) summer afternoons seem a very long way away.

As another September rolls around, there'll be plenty of you assertively grabbing the reigns, looking over the months that lie ahead – and very likely hoping that your school's financial planning can get you through to July in one piece.

It's unlikely we'll ever see a time when the profession at large agrees that schools have 'enough money', but one could be forgiven for wanting to see an end to a period where a significant number of schools have had to effectively operate in 'crisis' mode due to lack of funds, while having little time to properly digest big announcements on high. The latest occurrence of the latter came with the government's publication of the School Teachers' Review Body's salary recommendations, followed by its announcement of a 3.5% and 1.5% pay rise for teachers and leaders respectively. Right after schools broke up for the summer.

Executive headteacher Anthony David advances his own theory for the timing of said announcement on page 78, while noting that if headteachers can rely on just one thing this year, it's that it's going to be quite full-on. But then isn't it always?

As seasoned pros at the school leadership game, many of you will doubtless be used by now to the pressures and pitfalls that came with the role – but as Kevin Harcombe observes on page 77, even the most capable leaders can fall prey to dips in confidence. It also pays to do as Julia Steward advises on page 82 and keep your energy levels carefully maintained. You might well be a hardened professional, giving pupils and staff your all – but between now and next summer, you'll need to look after yourself, too.

Enjoy the issue,

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Our experts this issue



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National
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“We want to put Ofsted back in its box”

Schools need to be accountable, but if we want to stop teachers from quitting, let's hold them to account for the right reasons, says ASCL general secretary Geoff Barton

What's the relationship like between your members and Ofsted?

We've got 19,000 members who are heads, deputies and assistant heads, and inspection always figures on their agenda. Part of my narrative over the past year and a bit has been that given 89% of schools are good or outstanding, why do we spend so much time allowing Ofsted to set the agenda? We think it's disproportionate in terms of the influence it wields and one of the things we want to do as an association is try and put Ofsted back in its box.

What should be the focus for Ofsted, do you think?

Under Amanda Spielman, Ofsted says it's focusing on curriculum, because that's

the most important feature of a school, and we'd agree with that. We also welcome that it says it doesn't have a preferred view of the curriculum – but there are contradictions. Look at the Bold Beginnings report, for example. It certainly implied a preference for an increased emphasis on reading and writing. Ofsted is also quite dismissive of schools which have a two-year key stage 3. It seems to me there's an inherent contradiction there.

We'd argue the question Ofsted should be asking of school leaders is “What's distinctive about your curriculum in your school, in your community? What are you doing for the children in that area that they need?” That would be an empowering approach. It means we'd have an inspectorate that's encouraging all of us to make decisions based on what we think is right for our young people.

Damian Hinds recently announced an overhaul of the accountability system - do you think this will mean headteachers can rest easy?

I think Damian Hinds recognises that while schools, particularly academies, were promised liberation - to be able to concentrate on the things that matter - high-stakes accountability is pulling headteachers in different directions. There's always a problem when

something like the Key Stage 2 tests are used not only to tell parents how their child is doing, but also to make a judgement about the performance of the teacher in Y6, the performance of the headteacher and the performance of the school itself. It's very hard for even the most confident school leader not to wake up in the middle the night thinking, *What if we get terrible results? What if we're*

named and shamed in the local paper? What if we're moved into Special Measures?

Damian Hinds is saying that we need to be clear about the role of regional school commissioners and how that fits with Ofsted. This

clarification, which we await, will be a helpful one – because otherwise, it feels like everybody's inspecting.

There are currently big problems with teacher retention. What are the most serious concerns?

I think teaching is starting to look a bit of a luddite profession, compared to becoming a management consultant, or taking a job where a good work-life balance and flexible working arrangements are easier to achieve.

Justine Greening was strong on the idea that teaching has to make itself more flexible. Our primary members have been very good at this, but there's more to do if we're to make teaching a 'must go to' profession.

“We must put trust back into the classroom and say ‘You're the expert’”



CAREER TIMELINE

1984
Begins teacher training in Leicester, later securing his first job at Garforth Comprehensive in Leeds

1990
Joins Huntington School, York, where he is head of English and assistant head of sixth form

2002
Joins King Edward VI School, Bury St Edmunds, where he remains as headteacher for 15 years

2014
David Fulton publishes Geoff's book, *Don't Call It Literacy*, helping teachers of all subjects deliver English



Workload has perhaps the biggest impact on retention, and while a lot of problems stem from the endless juggernaut of government reforms and expectations, school leaders have to recognise their contribution as well. Because of the high-stakes accountability we now have, heads pass the anxiety they feel on to their staff and create an audit culture, whereby you're not just preparing lessons but having to provide evidence that you've done so.

We must put trust back into the classroom where it's been lost, and say "You're the expert in this – you don't need to demonstrate to me the quality of your planning, because that will show in your teaching."

What's the solution?

I believe we're at a turning point in terms of needing to reinstate trust at all levels. We need more trust in school leaders that

they'll do what's right for their communities and children. Leadership, meanwhile, needs to place more trust in teachers so they can channel their energy into teaching children, instead of demonstrating to us what they're doing.

If you talk to Dr Karen Edge at UCL, who's a globally recognised expert in retention, she suggests looking at Ontario, where the government and teaching unions sign a five-year agreement in which they pledge to never say anything negative about teachers and education. I think there's something in that – changing the narrative around education.

How do the changes to teacher training feed into current recruitment issues?

It used to be that you'd train in a university department and work in schools. It wasn't perfect, but now we have something like nine different routes into the profession and it's bewildering. Frankly, this needs to be simplified.

There's also been a trend in some schools – particularly those in rural or coastal areas that may be under pressure, with communities that have lost faith in education – to look for 'quick fixes'. This is the Michael Wilshaw 'school in a box' idea [where problems with temporary or underskilled staff are solved by giving teachers all the materials and scripts they need to deliver lessons], but I have to say that's precisely what we *don't* need at

this point. We need teachers who are passionate about teaching, developing their skills as teachers, and getting the joy of seeing how they're getting better year on year. That will be made easier if there's less monitoring and more stability in the curriculum.

Following the DfE's recent announcement on pay rises, what advice would you give to headteachers anxious about the impact on their budgets?

Schools will have to find the first 1% of the pay award from their own budgets and this will put further strain on already tight finances. The Education Policy Institute in March found that around 7,500 schools were unlikely to receive sufficient additional funding in 2018-19 to meet the single cost pressure of a 1% pay settlement.

Unfortunately, headteachers have had to become very adept at managing budgets under great financial pressure and will have anticipated this additional cost in their planning. Our advice to schools would always be to take a strategic approach to financial planning, aligning the school's development plan to available resources and ensuring they develop and maintain robust procurement and financial systems.

In the longer term, schools desperately need more funding from the government.

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2017
 Becomes general secretary of the ASCL following a landslide victory based on an anti-establishment message

2018
 Gives National Education Trust annual lecture calling for a more humane approach to judging schools



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WHAT? Match Funding

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APPLY BY? Until funding is fully allocated

WHERE? booklife.co.uk/pages/match-funding

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WHO? *Ministry of Defence*

WHAT? Education Support Fund

HOW MUCH? Individual awards dependant on applications – £3 million in funding will be available in 2018/19 and £2 million in 2019/20.

APPLY BY? 2019 bidding round ends on 19th October 2018 (opens 14th September)

WHERE? tinyurl.com/psm-mod-esf

FUNDS? Schools and LAs able to demonstrate that Armed Forces deployment is affecting their pupils. The funding is intended to help meet staffing and training challenges stemming from temporary dips and increases in Service pupil numbers, and provide resources linked to Service pupil intake such as activity projects, sensory rooms and furniture. The funding may also be used to refurbish existing school areas (barring any capital works), examples of which may include trim trails, playgrounds and outdoor classrooms.



WHO? *Family Action*

WHAT? National School Breakfast Programme

HOW MUCH? £500 start-up grant, plus free breakfast food (depending on eligibility)

APPLY BY? Ongoing

WHERE? tinyurl.com/psm-fa-nsbp

FUNDS? Schools with no existing breakfast provision, or breakfast provision with significant scope for improvement. Funding will be made available to improve breakfast provision in over 1,770 schools, including primary schools, special schools and PRUs. Most applicants deemed eligible will receive free deliveries of healthy breakfast food to their school for four terms, support from dedicated members of NSBP staff and a start-up grant to buy equipment such as toasters and freezers.



WHO? *Institute of Physics*

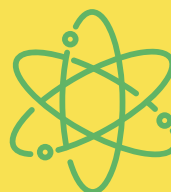
WHAT? School Grants Scheme

HOW MUCH? Up to £600

APPLY BY? 1st November 2018

WHERE? tinyurl.com/psm-iop-sgs

FUNDS? UK-based schools undertaking new projects, events and activities linked to the promotion of physics and engineering; existing or repeat projects will not be eligible. The project must involve pupils directly (thus precluding teacher CPD activity) and add value over and above basic curriculum requirements.



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THE PSM GUIDE TO... School improvement

GIVE YOUR KIDS SOME GRIT

Sue Webb looks at how upping the resources schools devote to teaching character education can have a transformative effect on pupil outcomes

Imagine a school where ‘normal’ looks different, and where you feel that you’re making a real difference. Consider a school where actions are carefully thought about, and relationships with colleagues are deep and meaningful.

Reflect on a school where character education promotes grit and determination, and staff feel authentically valued. What’s specifically happening in this setting, and what impact will such an environment have on the lives of the pupils?

CULTURE OF VALUES

My reason for becoming a school leader was to offer every person in my school the opportunity to truly flourish and become their very best selves. If this vision could become a reality for all, what a different world we would have.

When schools work to embed a culture of values, positive change happens in every aspect of school life. As a school leader I’ve experienced this first-hand, having seen many examples of the impact this way of working has had all over the world. Schools in countries such as India, Nigeria, America, Australia, Iceland and Russia are recognising how critically important this dimension of education really is.

If your school is to successfully embed a culture of values successfully, your most vital resource will be your staff. Not only must they be able to develop their skills, their time also needs freeing up to enable them to talk to children and help



them explore their own core values at a deeper level. That's easier said than done, of course – but crucial for helping them look inside and develop stronger character traits. It's doable, and a very wise use of the time they have.

To be clear, this isn't a magic process. Working towards the vision we know to be right for our children takes dedication, drive and huge amounts of resilience.

RELATING ON A DEEPER LEVEL

A model for true character education – for all – can be seen in the The Values-based Education (VbE) approach developed over 20 years ago by Dr Neil Hawkes, with its emphasis on improving social and emotional wellbeing and building mental 'wealth'.

As a leader and a practitioner, I've found that knowing myself better has enabled me to relate to others on a deeper level. If we can extend that to the children in our care – showing them how to use values in their lives to become more independent, courageous, positive and resilient – we'll be preparing them better for the toughness of life and the challenges they'll face.

A headteacher of a school in Kent recently attributed an astounding transformation in outcomes to their implementation of VbE. The school in question saw 154 days lost to exclusions in the year 2014-15. You can imagine the toxic culture of such an environment.

In September 2015, however, the school held a day of VbE training for all staff, who subsequently began to embed a values-based culture throughout the school. At the close of the 2017-18 academic year, zero days have been lost and the school is thriving – a superb example of a happy, values-based environment where people are properly flourishing!

*Sue Webb is a professional leadership coach, executive consultant at Values-based Education and a former headteacher; her book **Can I Tell You About Compassion?** is available now from Jessica Kingsley Publishers, priced at £8.99*

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 valuesbasededucation.com



WANT TO BOOST LITERACY? APPOINT A LIBRARIAN

School librarians may be associated more with secondary schools, but they can play an important role at primary too, says Dawn Woods

How can a primary school afford not to have a school library and librarian? You might well argue that primary schools lack the funds to employ a full time, dedicated member of staff for the school library, but they don't necessarily need to (though this would be the ideal). Schools' Library Services can help with placing experienced librarians who cover more than one primary within a week, thus saving schools time and money. Tower Hamlets SLS has successfully offered such a service for many years – schools subscribe on an annual basis to as many or as few hours of a librarian's time as they can afford and get to experience the following benefits:

IMPROVED OUTCOMES

The prime aim of a school is to educate, and a key part of that is to provide pupils with reading material. Giving children access to a wide range of books that have been carefully curated by an expert offers children more choice and opportunities for improving their reading.

READING FOR PLEASURE

Schools may use reading schemes, but it's hard to get lost in the adventures contained in formulaic books. School librarians know the world of children's books well, and can therefore recommend the right book for the right child. It's crucial that children be given the ability to decide on what they'd like to read. Children have little say over much their lives, making this one decision that can empower them. A school librarian can also provide evidence of children's

reading improvement, and help schools save money on schemes that may have the adverse effect of preventing children from reading outside of their designated level.

INCREASED WELL-BEING

School libraries aren't classrooms where only the brightest children thrive. They afford children opportunities to be more casual; to sprawl across a beanbag while reading at a comic (and have that seen as a valid choice). In libraries, children have the freedom to express their opinion on a book without judgement, and even pick up books on difficult situations without having to disclose intimate secrets to others. A good stock collection policy that meets the diverse needs of the school will offer something for every child, while avoiding unnecessary purchases of duplicate or unsuitable resources.

CREATIVITY

School librarians will often have contacts that are helpful for organising author visits, and can assist with devising displays that prompt children to pick up a particular book, running reading groups and generally putting the fun back into reading.

Dawn Woods is the manager of Worcestershire Schools' Library Service and treasurer for the School Library Association

 @uksla

 sla.org.uk

Why the SATs are damaging to schools

Rather than looking only at the scores, we must face up to the wider impact that SATs are having, says Nansi Ellis

In this year's key stage 2 SATs, 64% of pupils achieved the government's 'expected standard' in reading, writing and maths – up from 61% last year. The government presents these interim results as a success story, while seemingly not comprehending the impact on the one third of children who arrive at secondary school labelled 'below the expected standard'.

Many heads and teachers see the primary assessment system in very different terms. For them, the real story of SATs isn't the headline figures, but rather the damage that our test-driven system is inflicting on primary schools day in, day out throughout the school year. A narrow curriculum, stressed children, over-worked teachers – these are the signs of an assessment system that needs root and branch change.

In June this year, the NEU conducted a survey of over 1,200 primary members, asking them about their experience of primary assessment in 2018. The response was clear: over 90% reported that SATs adversely affected their pupils' well-being, and 86% said preparation for SATs squeezed out other parts of the curriculum. Hundreds of members took the time to send in eloquent and troubled commentaries on what they'd witnessed – not just in Year 6, but in lower years as well.

"We have had awful experiences", wrote one member, "with a third of our 120 children crying during and before exam weeks, refusing to attend school, refusing to come into the exam room. The SEN children have no hope of seeing success at the standard expected, and yet are being put through this to watch themselves fail and be labelled as failures. Even more depressing is that my year

4 and 5 children have sleepless nights and report their mental health and wellbeing as being upset, because they are so worried about the SATS in year 6."

These experiences weren't unique. "Pupils at our school have cried", wrote another member. "They have had nightmares and changed in behaviour due to the pressure on them. We do our best to shield them from it and not make a huge issue out of the tests."

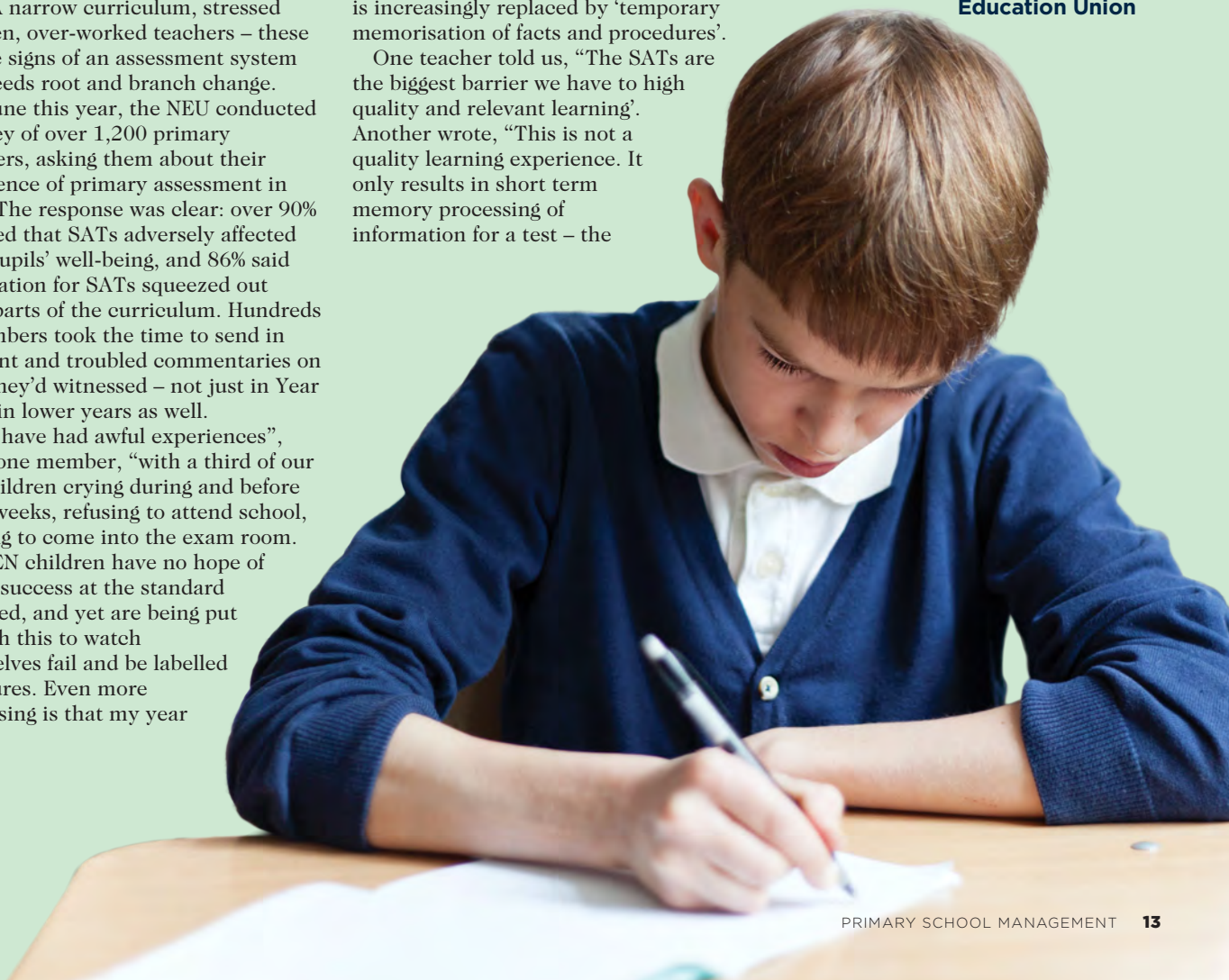
While fears about pressure and well-being topped teachers' list of concerns, also important was a sense of the seriously limited nature of the learning opportunities schools are providing, as 'deep conceptual learning' is increasingly replaced by 'temporary memorisation of facts and procedures'.

One teacher told us, "The SATs are the biggest barrier we have to high quality and relevant learning'. Another wrote, "This is not a quality learning experience. It only results in short term memory processing of information for a test – the

children forget this information as soon as they have learnt it".

The problems, stresses and failures that teachers are identifying amount to a national scandal. The government's response is to bury its head deeply into the sand. Nick Gibb, ignoring the effects of his own accountability system, has said that "There is absolutely no reason why any school should put pressure on young children" around the tests. In this way, the Minister closes his eyes to problems which are deeply damaging to England's primary schools.

Nansi Ellis is assistant general secretary of the National Education Union



WHAT'S AT THE ROOT OF CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR?

Greg Perry explains why school behaviour policies ought to focus on reasons over excuses

According to the philosopher and neuroscientist Sam Harris, free will is an illusion. If I ask you whether you'd like a cup of tea or coffee, you feel like you're choosing. Harris, however, would argue that you *didn't choose your preferences*. You didn't choose whether you prefer tea or coffee, either as a general rule or in any specific moment. You feel like a nice cup of tea this morning – but did you decide that was your preference or, more likely, did your preference dictate your choice?

It could be argued that you're free to choose coffee over your preferred tea. But then you didn't choose to be the type of person who'd drink coffee in defiance of their preference in order to prove free will exists (while accidentally helping to prove that it doesn't).

Applying this idea to school behaviour, to what extent do children and young people freely *choose* to behave in a negative way? They won't have chosen their genetics, family, previous life experiences, the school they attend, their teacher or indeed their brain chemistry. Is that incomplete list of unchosen circumstances a list of excuses or a list of reasons? What's the difference between a reason and an excuse?

I'd argue that *excuses* are usually used to deny personal responsibility. A *reason* places responsibility in the correct place/s and to the correct degree.



EXTRA CHANCES

An important distinction needs to be made here. If a 'No Excuses' behaviour policy means there are no acceptable reasons for poor behaviour, then I'm not prepared to advocate it. If, however, a 'No Excuses' policy means that no individuals should be given extra chances within a behaviour system, then I'd agree wholeheartedly.

I'm frequently asked whether we should allow some students more leeway in terms of negative behaviour because they have, for example, a difficult home life. I'd say never – though I'm not suggesting that we don't make more effort to look at the reasons for their poor behaviour and put extra effort into preventing it.

I'd recommend avoiding a further trap that many schools fall into, which is to simply ratchet up punishments. Lots of schools try this and it doesn't work. What's needed is a careful and robust analysis of the triggers for poor behaviour, while looking at and changing reinforcing consequences. How often in primary schools do children get withdrawn from class for poor behaviour, only to end up with loveliest person in school playing with Lego or on a computer? We're then surprised when they end up being sent out again the following day.

FINDING THE TRIGGER

Many schools will look very carefully at any recognisable barriers to learning, including those related to behaviour. They'll collect, analyse and act upon behaviour data, just as they would with data concerning academic progress. They'll have access to that key information at a school-wide, class-by-class and individual level, just like progress data, and use it to inform their systems, priorities and interventions.

Let's take a common example. A teacher has identified that a specific student is displaying negative behaviour, most often in maths lessons. The teacher takes an educated guess that the student's perceived difficulty of maths

problems, coupled with a fear of looking foolish in front of their classmates, is the trigger for their poor behaviour.

Certain 'No Excuses' policies might simply escalate the formal consequences, ultimately leading to the student's withdrawal from class.

It should be obvious, though, that this won't get to the root of the problem.

In contrast, some teachers will try to prove what the trigger is. They could, for example, ensure that the next two weeks worth of maths lessons begin with 10 minutes of very easy challenges and then examine whether the student's negative behaviour starts when the work gets more difficult. After this intervention and other attempts have been made, we'll have either proven that difficulty is indeed the trigger and can now adapt our planning accordingly, or moved on to testing for other possible triggers.

CHANGING LIVES

Whether your school's policy is dubbed 'No Excuses' or something else is far less relevant than your belief in what can prevent further negative behaviours and increase the likelihood of positive ones.

If you feel the answer to that lies in punishment alone, then good luck. Your success will, at best, be limited. But if you're ready to look at the possible roots of students' negative behaviour, feel free to call your policy whatever you want. You'll ultimately be helping the adults of the future make positive choices that will serve them well for a lifetime. You'll change their lives forever. Any once you know how to do it, you'll keep doing it, because it works.

What made you read this article and not another? It's hard to get to the root of the reason, isn't it? Yet read it you did, all the way to the end. Has your mind been changed, or have your views been reinforced? Can you choose to disagree with your own view?

If we can accept that free will is an illusion, then we can change our view on how to support people whose genetics, family circumstances, life experiences, health and numerous other variables lead them to negative behaviour. I can't help thinking that's got to be a good thing.

FOUR VARIABLES

'NO EXCUSES' BEHAVIOUR POLICIES FALL INTO THE COMMON TRAP OF ASSUMING 'PUPIL CHOICES' ARE THE ONLY VARIABLE WHEN IT COMES TO POOR BEHAVIOUR. IN FACT, THERE ARE ACTUALLY FOUR BROAD VARIABLES IN PLAY:



1. INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS

We've all met them. The reasons for them presenting negative behaviour are complex and a few million words above my given word count.



2. COHORT

Sometimes, when two or more students get together their behaviour is far worse than when they're not in the company of these classmates.



3. TEACHERS

Some teachers are inexperienced, poorly trained, poorly motivated or underprepared for the challenges they face. Others may be more experienced, but repeating ineffective strategies.




4. LEADERSHIP

The quality of school-wide systems for dealing with negative behaviour can be variable.



Greg Perry is a former teacher and co-founder, with Jill Perry, of the behaviour training provider and consultancy Future Behaviour

 @futurebehaviour

 futurebehaviour.co.uk

BETTER SEND WITHOUT THE SPEND

Anita Kerwin-Nye outlines 10 cost-free ways in which schools' SEND provision can be changed for the better...

Two years ago I wrote an article titled 'Is Inclusion Over?' (see tinyurl.com/akn-iiio), in which I highlighted how, for the first time in 30 years, we weren't just having to look at the 'how' of inclusion, but also revisit the 'why'. Having seen stories both then and now of children deemed unlikely to attain the heights of KS2 or EBacc tests being pushed out of schools, it suddenly seemed necessary to reassert the principles of equity and effective education underpinning the inclusion of children with special educational needs and disability in their schools and communities

There's a wider discussion to be had on the implementation of the SEND Reforms, and certainly more work to do on SEND funding – but further reforms and funding aren't enough on their own. If we really want inclusion to work, then more consideration needs to be given to SEND learners and other vulnerable young people across all areas of education policy and practice.

Here, then, are my 10 proposals for improving SEND provision. They don't involve allocating spend to a distinct 'SEND policy', but rather working collectively to shape developments currently affecting the education system as a whole.

1. HAVE A PROACTIVE MINISTER

Give the Minister of State for Disabled People, Health and Work – a role currently held by Sarah Newton – the responsibility of reviewing any government press release, statement or speech that mentions disability, to ensure that such messages are positive, inclusive and factually accurate. It could be argued that the government has been creating a 'hostile environment' for people with disabilities; it could take a significant step towards remedying that by proactively fostering a measurably more inclusive environment.

2. HAVE A PROACTIVE COMMISSIONER

Along similar lines, give the Children's Commissioner the responsibility of reviewing every DfE policy. Publish impact assessments on the effects each policy might potentially have on children and young people with SEND, to which the DfE would have to respond.

3. REVISE THE TRAINING COURSES

Every workforce tender – from initial teacher training through to headship CPD – should include a requirement to demonstrate how it will support staff in meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND. Despite pupils with SEND representing between 10% and 20% of the overall school population, wider professional development funding dwarfs the amount available for SEND-specific CPD.

When a teacher attends training on, say, teaching primary science, it should address how to support SEND students. Similarly, when a soon-to-be headteacher undertakes their NPQH, SEND should be covered at every stage. This won't detract from the need for separate specialist input – such as the SEND Code of Practice, for example – but simply recognise that every class and every school includes SEND students.



4. INCLUDE SEND WITHIN SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES

Every school improvement fund and contract should include outcomes for learners with SEND and demonstrate the impact it will have on them. The DfE is currently recommending that schools make use of the SEND Review tool (see tinyurl.com/send-review), which can usefully embed SEND concerns across every part of the school improvement process. Ofsted could also recommend a SEND Review of its own, similar to the ones currently carried out for Pupil Premium.

5. ALL HEADTEACHERS TO SIGN THE #DRAWNIN PLEDGE

The 'Drawn In' pledge (see panel) is a proposition intended to tackle the 'pushing out' of pupils mentioned above, which some schools are already building into their inclusion policies. It doesn't preclude the lawful exclusion of pupils who threaten the safety and well-being of their peers or staff, or indeed the transfer of any children who may need additional support or provision.

6. SET TIME ASIDE FOR REFLECTION

Test the culture around SEND in your school by reflecting on five questions (see '5 reflective questions') or by looking into the many tools designed to carry out the same purpose. Whichever approach you pursue, be sure to stop, check, reflect on and adjust your SEND provision at least once per year.

7. DROP THE CATCH-UP NARRATIVE

None of what I propose here entails lacking ambition for children with SEND – quite the opposite. We need to focus on the best possible outcomes for all learners, as part of a narrative that talks about learners with SEND at university, in top jobs, setting up businesses and thriving in apprenticeships.

Yes, many learners with SEND will never 'catch up' or reach age-related 'norms', and some will never live independently – but valuing only those who will sends out a message of exclusion, while devaluing the work that mainstream special schools do to help these children achieve.

8. RESEARCH WHAT WORKS

We know a lot of what works when teaching SEND children, and much of that theory has been embedded into how our special schools and inclusive mainstream settings operate. Yet there's still not enough funding spent on capturing and researching how it works in practice. One way of tackling this would be to set up a SEND strand within existing Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) funding.

EEF's recent work in the area of SEND is certainly welcome (see tinyurl.com/eef-send), but a dedicated funding stream and a wider range of research approaches would help to accelerate the impact of said research and drive better outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

5 Reflective Questions

1. How many people with SEND are in my school, class and organisation; how does this compare with my peers, local community and the national population?
2. How do I ensure individuals with SEND are visible in class, at school and within my local community?
3. Do I speak of 'learners with SEND' as a homogeneous group?
4. How do I measure the impact I'm having on individuals with SEND?
5. What networks that support learners with SEND can I access?

9. MIND THE GAP

Schools should consider the entitlement of experiences for every child, and keep a close watch on any widening gaps between pupils' experiences of extra-curricular activities. This is partly why we set up Every Child Should (everychildshould.uk) – to consider how schools and their partners can develop the social and cultural capital of all children and young people, including those currently possessing the least, but potentially benefiting from it the most.

10. ACCOUNT FOR OUTCOMES

The Minister of State for School Standards should be assigned responsibility for the school-based outcomes of children with SEND. Outcomes for children and young people with SEND should be an integral part of School Standards – not an addition or bolt on, but right at the core of the work.

The highest standard for schools to aspire to should be achieving for all their charges.

THE 'DRAWN IN' PLEDGE

- I will never propose or encourage moving a child from a school unless it's in the evidenced best interest of the child
- I will never advocate or action the moving of a child as a route to improving school results
- I will not use any method to reduce the attractiveness of my school to particular groups of pupils
- I will actively review our processes and messaging on a regular basis to ensure we don't create a sense that some groups are not welcome in our school

FIND OUT MORE AT [DRAWNIN.UK](https://drawnin.uk)



Anita Kerwin-Nye is a national leader in inclusion policy and practice; she was

previously the founder and lead of Whole School SEND and The Communication Trust, and currently seeks to champion the work of, among others, Every Child Should (everychildshould.uk) and Cultural Inclusion (culturalinclusion.uk)

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Maddy Barnes, English Consultant, Assistant Head Teacher



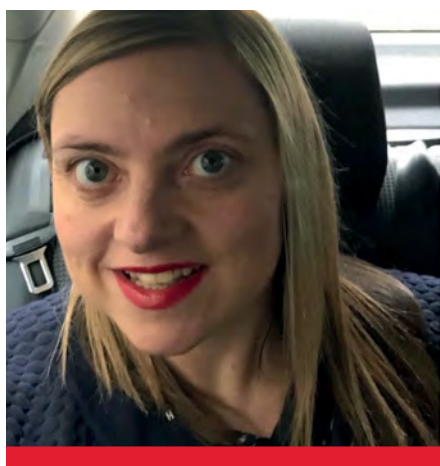
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Ask the Expert

Maddy Barnes talks us through the role that *The Week Junior* has played in improving English outcomes at one Manchester primary school



Maddy Barnes is an assistant headteacher, year 6 teacher and English lead at Sacred Heart Catholic Primary in Manchester

How have you used *The Week Junior* in your school?

I've used copies of the magazine as my guided reading text in various ways for children of different reading abilities. For those in whom we wanted to encourage reading in greater depth, we gave them 30 minutes to read the magazine independently in silence (whilst I worked with a different group). Immediately after, they were asked to select an article they'd particularly enjoyed or disliked, summarise the general gist and prepare to answer questions about it. The more often we did the exercise, the better they became at pre-empting the questions in their summaries.



For average readers, I selected up to three double-page spreads for them to read independently. Together, we then discussed the overall thrust of each article and any vocabulary issues, before modelling SATs-style questions relating to those articles on a flipchart and having the children answer them. With less able readers, I read a single article to them and again modelled SATs-style questions. I tried choosing three articles ranging in difficulty – easier, medium and hard – to mirror the demands of the test and build the pupils' confidence.

Has it affected the way you teach literacy?

It's definitely impacted on our vocabulary teaching, challenging pupils to learn new words and work out what they mean. They're now better able to read articles about unknown topics and summarise their contents, while also gaining a better understanding of true journalistic writing.

How do pupils benefit from being more aware of current affairs?

In our catchment area the children don't always get a very balanced view of current affairs. What *The Week Junior* can do is offer a non-biased approach to news reporting, which is something every child should be entitled to. In areas like ours we have a duty to ensure they can benefit from such material in a non-

pressurised way, and *The Week Junior* does this perfectly.

What impact has using *The Week Junior* had on your pupils' attainment, results or progress?

We had 35% more 'greater depth' readers this year, having used the magazine in the way described above. It gave them a renewed interest in reading, and for our reluctant readers in particular, brought back a sense of purpose and pleasure when it comes to reading. They all particularly enjoyed a set of Royal Family caricatures that appeared in one edition- it felt a bit naughty, while still being age-appropriate for our children!

Would you recommend *The Week Junior* to other schools?

Yes, definitely. The resource represents good value for money, and feels and works like a real magazine. We don't know what topics will be included on the reading tests in any given year, but this resource is the perfect tool for encouraging children to read about unknown topics with confidence.

FURTHER INFORMATION

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Buildings & Facilities

“CHILDREN’S TASTEBUDS ARE MORE REFINED”

Menu planner Jean Potter – recent winner of LACA’s ‘Finishing Touches’ culinary competition – shares her thoughts on the trends shaping school catering



I've always had a keen interest in food and food-related activities. My background is in retail, having previously worked in the wine industry, but have now been at Hertfordshire Catering Limited for 11 years.

My first role in school catering was as a general catering assistant, before assuming the role of cook manager for the next four years. From there, I moved into a staffing role that entailed a great deal of logistics and staff planning, and have also held the role of contract supervisor, supporting a contract manager overseeing around 30 schools.

My current role is menu planner, which involves producing a three-week menu twice a year that has to be both customer-focused and appealing to children, as well as nutritionally balanced and compliant with government guidelines. Beyond that, we need to consider schools' budgets, available storage facilities and the skill-sets they have in their kitchens.

We make three core menus available, but have nine altogether, so that we're able to cater for schools with special requirements. We presently serve somewhere in the region of 400 schools with a wide variety of needs and preferences, which can take quite a bit of sorting out! Some prefer to offer their pupils four or five meal options each day, while

others are content to offer a single choice of two meals. Some will also have special dietary requirements.

In terms of what's popular, there are a few favourites on our menu that we daren't take off, because we'd lose quite a few customers if we did – chicken pie's one of those. We organise roast dinner days on Wednesdays and have what we call 'Friday Fundays' – that's the one day of the week when pupils are allowed to have chips, albeit the healthier oven variety.

Right now we're seeing something of a trend towards street food. Four schools we work with have been on a street food menu since our last cycle, and we're in the process of developing various noodle, pasta bake and filled wrap recipes. One dish we're looking at potentially introducing is the very on trend Chinese 'bau bun', a steamed bread roll.

What we're increasingly seeing is that children and families want more flavours in their school food than was previously the case, so we've been working on introducing various spices and herbs into our menus. Children typically now eat out a lot more, so their tastebuds are often more refined than they perhaps were some years ago. We're also working hard on reducing sugar levels in desserts.

This year was the fifth time I'd entered the Finishing Touches contest organised by the Lead Association for Catering in Education, and had started working on my entry the very day after last year's competition. [Potter won this year's top prize by entering a salted caramel and fig triple layered sponge cake, pictured above.] I'd been looking to do something a bit different that stood out from the usual summertime cakes you can expect to see. I take inspiration from coffee shops, magazines, books, anywhere – if I see a funny finishing touch on something, I'll add it to my brain bank. It's an amazing privilege to have won this year's competition."

Jean Potter is a menu planner at HCL

 @HCLcatering

 hertscatering.co.uk



DO TRUSTS HAVE AN ASBESTOS PROBLEM?



A cross-union committee has questioned whether the academies system is stymying asbestos management efforts in schools

One of the most commonly cited advantages of the academies system is how schools are given greater independence in the running of their administrative affairs. The thinking goes that academies and MATs can respond to various operational challenges and address areas of need in a way that's best for them in a timely fashion, rather than having to accept whatever solutions an LA might choose on their behalf. However, it could be argued that the distributed responsibility of such a system isn't up to the task of addressing challenges of a scale and severity that warrant a centrally devised and consistently applied response.

One such challenge is the managing of asbestos materials found in older school buildings. After asbestos was found to cause forms of cancer, notably mesothelioma, multiple countries banned its use in construction and existing traces of the material were made subject to strict health and monitoring regulations. (Though at the time of writing, the US government's Environmental Protection Agency had just taken the controversial step of proposing a new rule that would allow for the manufacture of new products containing asbestos, subject to EPA approval).

In April this year, the Joint Union Asbestos Committee – a trade union committee including representatives from ASCL, the NAHT, the NEU, NASUWT and others – issued a set of figures that seemed to indicate the academies system is ill-equipped to deal with the ongoing issue of asbestos presence within school issues. From data gathered via a series of Freedom of Information requests, the JUAC identified 54 reported incidents of

asbestos exposure within academy schools, and found that five MATs had had action taken against them by the Health and Safety Executive.

The JUAC went on to note that the number of incidents may have been even higher, with some MATs not responding to the group's requests for information and others returning incomplete responses. The group further found that some MATs had no asbestos management plans in place at their academies, and that a number were failing to carry out audits of buildings constructed before the year 2000, in contravention of their statutory duties (see tinyurl.com/dfe-asbestos). In a few cases, MATs were unable to gather the information requested due to their involvement in Private Finance Initiative arrangements.

Commenting on the release of the figures, JUAC chair John McClean said, "This information confirms that the government's policy of managing asbestos in schools has failed. There is absolutely no uniformity in how multi academy trusts are managing their asbestos, and no standardised procedures followed when schools transfer to academy trusts."

NASUWT general secretary Chris Keates in turn remarked that, "Whilst the failure of the government to ensure there is in place a programme for the phased removal of asbestos from schools is shocking enough, equally shocking is its failure to ensure that it is managed consistently across all schools.

"Asbestos is lethal."

 @TheJUAC

How to clean and maintain classroom furniture

Investing time in the upkeep of your classroom furniture now can help keep down your future costs, says Richard Kemsley

We've all seen examples of tired and poorly maintained classroom furniture. Whether it's the unintelligible scrawl of a bored student on a desk, or a build-up of ink and pencil use over the years, dirty or poorly maintained classroom furniture doesn't create an inspiring learning environment.

Combined with other forms of damage, it creates a poor impression of a school, and can result in furniture replacements having to be arranged more frequently – with all the costs that entails. Here, I'd like to share some helpful tips for keeping your classroom furniture clean and well maintained.

Pen marks

Pen and pencil marks are some of the most common ways in which school furniture can become ruined. There are, however, a variety of ways in which you can remove them using common household items that won't put pressure on your budget. For instance, whilst vinegar is a commonly recommended cleaning tool, a cloth moistened in hairspray will work just as well. You can also use a paste of baking soda and water – applying the mix to marks for 15 seconds and removing it with a soft, clean cloth can provide a natural alternative solution to chemicals.

Grease stains

From sneaky snacking moments to stubborn fingerprints, greasy patches have a way of working themselves into classroom furniture, especially in younger year groups. Greasy patches can be easily removed by combining water and washing up liquid on a damp

cloth. Where possible, try to use reusable cloths over single use paper towels to help the environment.

Chewing gum

Perhaps the worst of all furniture maintenance jobs, every classroom will almost inevitably have some chewing gum lurking under chairs and desks, yet there are a few approaches you can try for removing it. The classic method is to

place a sealed bag containing ice over the gum for a few minutes to harden it, before scraping it off with a non-damaging tool such as a putty knife. Alternatively, duct tape can be used to dislodge more stubborn gum remains – simply apply and remove.

It's always advisable to test any new cleaning methods on an inconspicuous area to make sure it won't have any harmful effects on the furniture itself.

Maintenance

Checking furniture throughout the year will help prevent significant damage from occurring. Every few months, check your furniture fittings, such as screws, and adjust where necessary so that you can catch any faults before the items break. Aim to buy lighter furniture where you can, so that it can be lifted with greater ease. This reduces the likelihood of larger items being dragged across floors, which can lead to loosened elements and weakened joints. Ensure that the weight of items accommodated by shelving and storage units is distributed in a way that helps to preserve their structural integrity, with heavier items positioned at the bottom rather than the top.

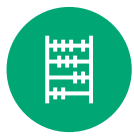
Finally, devise a maintenance policy that details how your furniture should be cleaned, by whom and how often, and how any problems should be reported. This will ensure that your furniture maintenance is kept on top of, before issues arise.

Richard Kemsley is the director at UK Educational Furniture, specialists in providing furniture to the education sector

 @ukedfurniture

 ukeducationalfurniture.co.uk





the smart MONEY



Graham Read, facilities and operations manager for Leicestershire Traded Services, explains how schools and academies get more from their facilities management at a lower cost



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Reducing cost and time

We managed the tender process from start to finish, spreading time and administration costs across partners. We managed the process so that we could offer a 'final cost' upfront before work started, resulting in lower risk for our partners and enabling business managers to plan and use their budgets more effectively. As the sole leader of the tender process, we significantly reduced the time and money our partners needed to spend on health and safety, finance and performance checks and on vetting contractors.

Being flexible

By combining our work into a collective arrangement we've gained significant bargaining power. We've retained the ability to fulfil our partners' unique, site specific needs while offering them the flexibility to buy into packages that suit their business. Doing the initial groundwork on the contract means we can give clients flexibility and save them staff time and money. LTS offers a range of cleaning services for buildings, security, waste collection, specialist cleaning and pest control which, when combined, can deliver great value.

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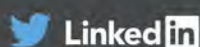
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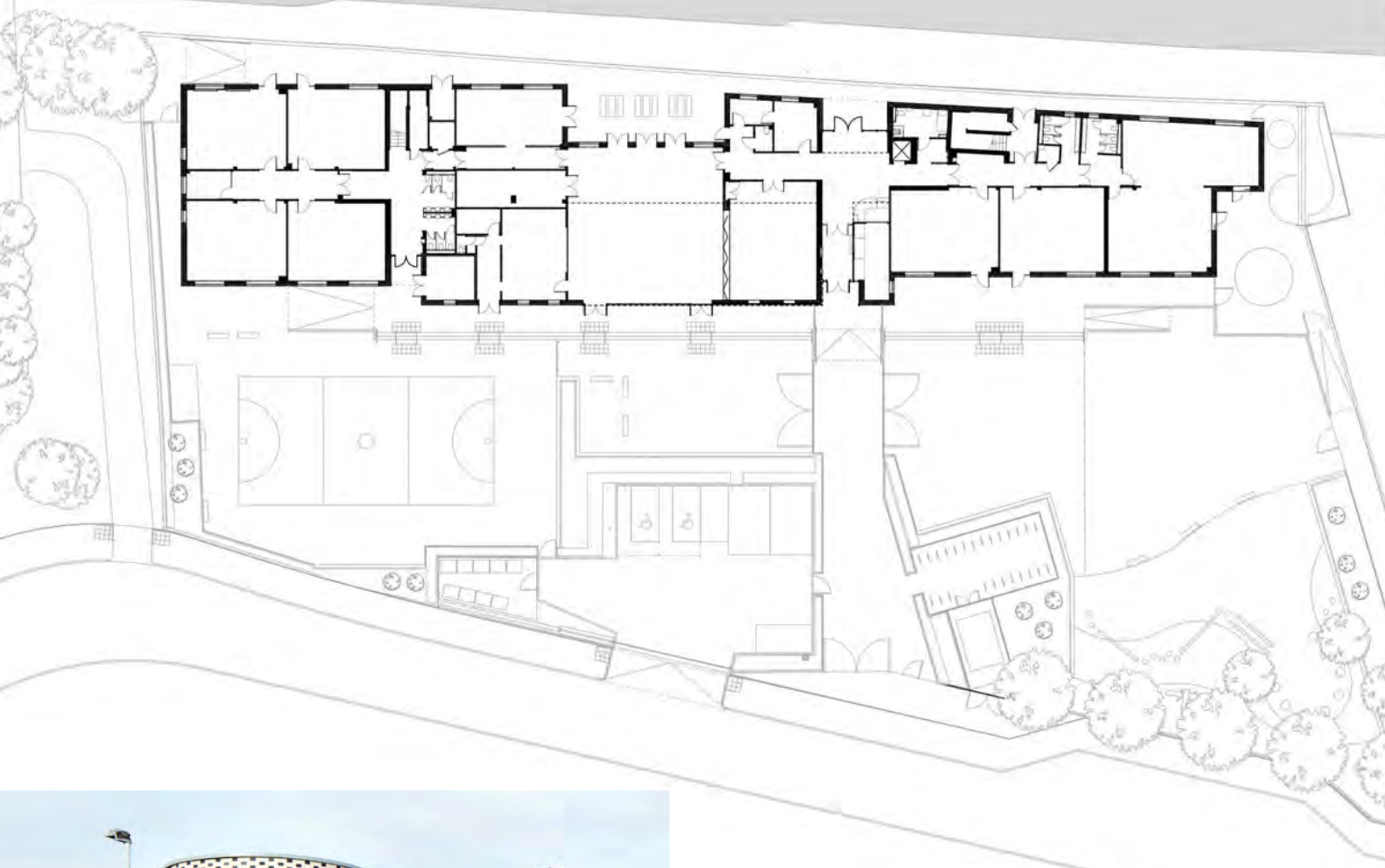
We examine the planning of a school named after an England footballing legend, built on the site of the London 2012 Games...



As locations for a new school go, they don't get much more prestigious than Queen Elizabeth Park in Stratford. Bobby Moore Academy occupies two sites within the area that played host to the London 2012 Games – a six-storey secondary school building and a two-storey primary building approximately eight minutes' walk away from each other.

Naturally, it's the primary school that concerns us here. Situated a short walk away from London Stadium, right beside the Lee Navigation Canal with commanding views across to Hackney Wick, the vision for the school is closely tied to the London 2012 legacy.

As principal Stuart Burns explains, "Part of that legacy includes the regeneration and rebuilding of communities in East London, which are hugely deprived areas. The spirit of the school is therefore based around opportunity – not just academically, but also in sport, drama and music. Our trust, the David Ross Education Trust, has strong ties to both sport and the arts, and wanted to ensure that the schools' buildings were well geared up to offer enrichment opportunities."



FUTURE-PROOFED PLANS

Work on both schools commenced in September 2015, with architect Penoyre & Prasad joining the project as part of a contractor framework that included Balfour Beatty. Given the high profile nature of the site, Penoyre & Prasad's designs had to be approved not just by the Education and Skills Funding Agency, but also the Queen Elizabeth Park's own design review panel. Funding for the schools' construction came mostly from the ESFA, but also included contributions from the David Ross Education Trust and the London Legacy Development Corporation.

Bobby Moore Academy's primary setting is a two form entry school from reception up to year 6, accommodating 420 pupils and occupying around 2,500 square metres of floor area – at least for now. As Rafael Marks, project architect at Penoyre & Prasad recalls, "One of the complexities of the design was that there was some tension between what the ESFA, the DfE and the David Ross Education Trust all wanted. The trust wanted a two form entry school, but the ESFA wanted a school that could be expanded to three form entry."

Complicating matters further were the chosen site's building restrictions. "There are two Thames Water mains running right through the middle of it, which

meant there was a 'no-go zone' we couldn't build on," Marks explains. "That pushed the building right to the edge of the site, along the canal. For the school, it's great. The classrooms, circulation spaces and hall all look out on to the canal, so the views from the school are fantastic – but any future expansion will have to be upwards, rather than sideways."

The team thus deliberately oversized some of the building's shared spaces that would be likely be impossible to extend later. As a result, the hall, kitchen and library are all slightly larger than one would expect to see in a two form entry school. If and when Bobby Moore Academy is called on to grow, either end

of the building will be extended upwards, with the central roof covering the hall forming a play area.

The Penoyre & Prasad team also allowed for future expansion by giving careful thought to the building's classroom layout, which presently consists of two classroom pairs separated by a corridor on both floors. Were a third floor to be added, this would change to three classrooms for years 3, 4 and 5 on successive floors, with one year 6 class on each floor, Marks notes that "The curriculum model would be such that the year 6 pupils could become mentors for the younger kids."

OPEN TO ALL

Another key consideration in the design of both buildings was the need for the school's facilities to be made accessible to the local community after hours and at weekends, without causing any security issues.

Said facilities include an Olympic standard athletics track at the secondary site and a multi-use 3G artificial pitch just north of the primary building. "The primary has some really strong spaces and has already been used by a few of our local partners for meetings and other events," says Stuart Burns. "It's got a good dining hall, a recreational hall and a dance and drama studio that can be used for all manner of things."

"On either side of the primary building's two halls you have key stage 1 to the north and key stage 2 to the south, each with their own separate entrances," adds Rafael Marks. "Those can be locked down after hours whilst the central area is being used – the spaces are quite clearly delineated."



SPACE AND LIGHT

The primary building opened its doors in September 2017 – so how does the end result compare against the initial plans? "Pretty much as conceived," replies Marks. "There was some rearranging of the internal entrance area which involved moving the lift a bit, but nothing drastic. And there was only so much we could do, given the constraints of the site."

One of those constraints is the school's extremely close proximity to the canal, though as Burns notes, "It's worked out really well. We're built above the towpath's retaining wall, so if I stand looking out of the balcony over the canal, my feet are at head height of any passers-by. Once you've added fencing on top of that, the building's pretty much impregnable from the towpath side. We have CCTV around the school, and really enjoy our location. It's becoming a very beautiful and enjoyable place for people to live."

Finally, I ask what aspects of the school Burns is proudest of. "There's an incredible sense of space and light. We worked hard in challenging the need for extra walls and unnecessarily dark corridors, working closely with fire safety officers while doing so. The space and light contributes hugely to pupil welfare, behaviour and our ability to passively supervise, rather than having to physically walk around every single corner."

bobbymooreacademy.co.uk
penoyreprasad.com



Raphael Marks explains the thinking behind the building's heating and ventilation

"The building absorbs heat during the day, which then dissipates in the evening. All of the spaces are naturally ventilated, using thermal hybrid units to mix the air."

In winter, outside air enters through these boxes, which are set at a high level on the external wall with louvres on the front. Inside each box sits a fan, which in winter draws cold air in and mixes it with room temperature air before dissipating it into the classrooms. That way you don't get the cold, downward drafts you'd have if you were to simply open a window. In summer the fans work the opposite way, taking air from classrooms and dissipating it out through the louvres.

A big reason for using this system in both buildings is that they're on the City Airport flight path, so there was a need to minimise the amount of aircraft noise that could potentially disrupt lessons."





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- Save money in the long run by purchasing machinery renowned for its reliability and quality.
- Save operators time by using the most productive, low maintenance mowers on the market
- Make a statement by ensuring your school grounds are kept pristine

BEFORE YOU BUY

- Ensure you are purchasing the right mower for the job; every machine is different, but there will be one that's ideally suited to your intended use
- Get recommendations from other customers about their experiences
- Research your local dealers and see which will offer quality after-sales support

“The Ransomes MP495 is a great mower. It has a quiet cab, it's easy and comfortable to drive, all of the controls are in the right place, and the air conditioning has been very handy with the hot temperatures!”

TREVOR WOOD - OPERATOR, BLENHEIM PALACE



Reliable and well engineered lawnmowers to suit a multitude of purposes

When Ransomes manufactured the world's first lawnmower – the ‘Budding's Patent’ – in 1832, the way grass was maintained changed forever.

Over 180 years later we are still cutting grass in exactly the same way, using a rotating cylinder and a fixed bottom blade. Budding was a true innovator, and in all that time we have yet to find a better way of maintaining fine turf.

Thanks to our unrivalled understanding of turf maintenance equipment, we have been entrusted with maintaining some of the world's most prestigious fine turf areas, including Royal Palace lawns, legendary golf courses, cemeteries, stadia, monuments and football pitches, including numerous grounds that have hosted FIFA World Cups.

As we look ahead to the future of our industry, Ransomes will continue to build upon our legendary history by driving further improvements in the quality and innovation of our products and our green initiatives.

WHAT CAN WE OFFER YOU?

Ransomes manufactures a range of mowers designed to tackle a multitude of applications – all engineered and built in the U.K. by experts based at a firm with 186 years' experience in the industry.

MP493/ MP653/ MP653XC

Highly productive wide area rotary mowers that are ideal for cutting overgrown areas, sports fields or routine cuts, whilst also giving you the ability to negotiate tight spaces.

MP495 / MP655

A robust and productive range of wide area cylinder mowers that leave a pristine finish every time. Suitable for large parks, numerous pitches and travelling on roads.

HM600

Tackles irregular cuts and helps bring less maintained areas back under control for use in a multitude of applications.

TR320

One of the lightest machines on the market, the TR320 is a fine turf mower perfect for sports pitches, estates, and light municipal applications.

BESTSELLER

RANSOMES TR320

The TR320 is perfect for maintaining school pitches and surrounding areas.

With its ability to cut and collect, you can rest assured that a clean, pristine finish will be achieved on cricket and football pitches, as well as longer grassed areas. The TR320's winning combination of narrow transport width, a productive width-of-cut and superior manoeuvrability makes negotiating tight spaces, courtyards, and building surrounds a breeze.



For more information, visit www.ransomes.com

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- Lead to the award of 60 M-level credits (NPQSL & NPQH) from Middlesex University, which can be used towards further Masters level qualifications with Real Training or Middlesex University
- Are based on Real Training's practice-led learning model, which means you receive the content and theory you need, along with opportunities to make a difference to your setting through putting theory into practice and reflecting on the process
- Are flexible, with core content delivered online, so you can study at a pace that complements your professional and personal commitments



Knowledge building with a difference

WORD OF MOUTH

"Real Training offer the best online learning platform I have ever experienced."

Tutor support is friendly, professional and fast. Modules are well structured and really do lead to improved levels of confidence and better outcomes for students."

– Anthony, NASENCO delegate

"When I started the course, my confidence was at a low."

I had experienced a knock-back when applying for an assessment practising certificate. My knowledge of assessing needed a boost, and now I feel that it has been significantly deepened."

– Frances, CCET delegate

"This course has enabled me to do my job much more effectively."

It has given me confidence in my decisions, which I have at times lacked prior to studying. The tutors are extremely supportive and the constructive criticism is helpful and very useful."

– Elspeth, NASENCO delegate



Help your staff learn, enact and reflect with Real Training's innovative and flexible courses of study

In 2004, two educational psychologists created Real Group – Real Training's parent company – to make a real difference in education, especially among young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Today, our group of companies share one mission: to improve education to transform lives.

WHAT DOES REAL TRAINING DO?

We provide online learning and blended training across the globe to more than 2,000 education professionals per year. The majority of our courses are at postgraduate level and practice-led, as we believe that educators transform their practice and the outcomes for their students and schools by learning, enacting and then reflecting. Our courses are respected, accredited and supportively delivered. Our expert course designers and tutors are fully qualified and experienced education practitioners.

WHAT MAKES REAL TRAINING DIFFERENT?

Next generation online learning

To ensure our students have the best possible learning experience, we've created our own Virtual Learning Environment, Campus Online. Using Campus Online, Real Training delegates feel supported, included and in-touch. What's more, busy educators can study anywhere, at their own pace, taking away

the challenge of finding time away from school.

A practice-led learning model

A fundamental principle of Real Training is that people learn best by doing – through practice-led learning. This allows participants to apply the very latest psychological insights and expertise to their setting throughout the course, and for the rest of their career.

Academic accreditation

Our courses are variously accredited or fully validated by Middlesex University, giving our delegates a route to continued academic progression. We know how hard our delegates work and believe they deserve to receive academic recognition.

WHAT COURSES DOES REAL TRAINING OFFER?

We have a wide suite of programmes for education professionals which can be seen at realtraining.co.uk, but our most popular courses are:

- National Award in SEN Coordination
- National Professional Qualifications at Middle, Senior and Headship levels
- Certificate of Competence in Educational Testing
- Med SEND programme

Learn more by contacting 01273 358 080 or visiting realtraining.co.uk

MEET THE SUPPLIER



Dr. Mark Turner

Mark is Real Group's professional and academic lead and Managing Director. He

completed his educational psychology doctorate in 2010. He publishes, speaks at conferences, is part of industry-wide governance teams and is Parent Governor of an inner London Secondary School.

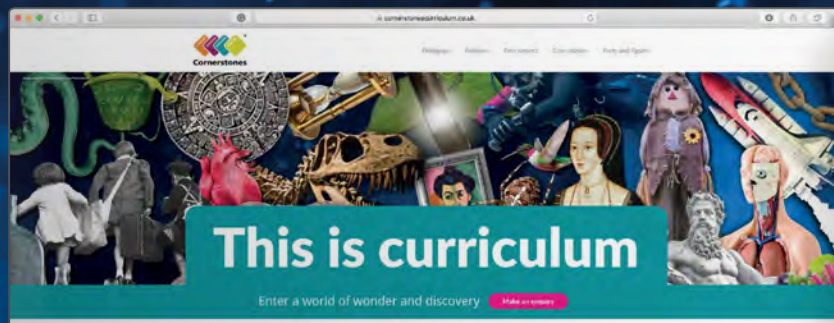


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Cornerstones

BIG POTENTIAL

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Reduce workload and put a comprehensively resourced curriculum and schemes of work in place. Cornerstones Copy and Paste facility ensures there's no reinventing the wheel when it comes to planning, and you can check your curriculum coverage at the click of a button using their online Coverage Checker.

GETTING STARTED

Getting started with the Cornerstones Curriculum is quick and easy. Book an online or face-to-face training session with one of their friendly and knowledgeable teacher consultants. Their excellent customer services team will be on hand to register your staff, meaning curriculum materials can be accessed straight away.

WHAT SENIOR LEADERS AND TEACHERS SAY

With over 70 headteachers purchasing the Cornerstones Curriculum again after moving schools, Cornerstones pride themselves on excellent customer satisfaction. Feedback says that schools enjoy an overwhelmingly positive experience of the Cornerstones Curriculum. Ofsted success, pupil engagement and saving teachers' time are the most valued aspects of the curriculum.

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Cornerstones understand your financial constraints. That's why they offer bespoke purchasing for schools, no matter what their size. Cornerstones offer great discounts for small schools and multiple purchases, with split payments available for those schools wanting to spread the cost.

Save on teacher time and resources



The Cornerstones Curriculum – a pre-planned, coherent curriculum for children aged 3 to 11

Established in 2010 by Melanie Moore and Simon Hickton, two former primary senior leaders, the Cornerstones Curriculum and teaching resources are used by over 2300 schools in the UK alone.

Cornerstones' online curriculum gives you access to a choice of over 80 learning projects that you can use to design and shape your curriculum. Each learning project delivers a series of well-planned lessons that save teachers' time and provide a coherent approach to curriculum planning. The curriculum helps you to deliver the skills and knowledge that children need as part of the national curriculum and is supported by thousands of high-quality, tailored teaching resources.

When subscribing to the Cornerstones Curriculum, you also gain access to free curriculum updates and schemes of work that support other significant aspects of learning, including Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development and Fundamental British Values.

Included with any curriculum purchase is an online assessment package that includes time-saving functions such as a parental reporting tool and an online tracker. Cornerstones also offers several other fully resourced curriculum schemes that save teachers' time and support their expertise. These include Love to Celebrate for RE and Love to Investigate for science. Comprehension and the teaching of literature are also supported by the Love to Read scheme, which is available in hard copy. Along with a full suite of tests for Maths and English, Cornerstones offers schools a one-stop shop for all things curriculum and assessment. With online support and help from the expert curriculum staff, the Cornerstones Curriculum has everything you need to raise standards and engage your children in a rich and motivating curriculum.

**Find out more by contacting
03333 20 8000 or visiting
cornerstonescurriculum.co.uk**



Give your arts PROVISION A BOOST

If you want your pupils to benefit from a rich and rewarding arts curriculum, cut down on the big productions and go meet some artists, says Meredith Elliott...

1

SELF-EVALUATE

When improving a school's arts provision, the first thing to do is think about what you want to keep, get rid of and change. There's a reflection game we play at Kensington Primary called 'Keep, Ditch, Tweak'. Have everyone map out your existing provision, then think about what's working, what isn't and what needs changing.

2

LOOK FOR GAPS

Examine the arts individually – music, dance and drama, plus visual arts such as design and technology, – and look for gaps. What are you not doing? Where is your provision a little light? Assemble a taskforce of people keen to champion specific arts areas, and if possible, involve some children, parents and governors.

3

BE FLEXIBLE

Continue to run your 'Keep, Ditch, Tweak' process throughout the year, making sure it links in to your school development plan. Be loose and flexible when it comes to your planning, and link to your SDP so that rather than entailing extra work, it instead ties into something you've already agreed to do.

4

FIND A PARTNER

Look for opportunities to collaborate with external artists, musicians and other performers. We ourselves collaborate within our local borough and across our Trust, but also try to establish partnerships in other areas of London. So far it's provided a very local, yet very broad base for the children.

5

LISTEN TO PUPILS

Run the 'keep ditch, tweak' process past your kids and check to see if what interests them marries up with the findings from your staff. Carry out learning walks across the school, taking some of the children with you and letting teachers know in advance when visiting their classrooms. Organise dedicated arts days and arts weeks.

6

USE ASSEMBLIES

Start seeing assemblies as opportunities for showcasing and celebrating the inspiring talent in your school. If you plan on opening them up, make sure that parents know well in advance what's happening and are able to attend. Try to ensure your assemblies touch on as many elements of the arts as possible.

7

DO THEME WEEKS

Combining your arts education with dedicated theme weeks is a great way of simultaneously showcasing your pupils' artistic achievements to the whole school, while getting everyone to recognise how important and rewarding the arts can be. It can also provide an ideal arena for giving pupils experience of performing.

8

MIX IT UP!

Avoid only putting on big productions at the end of each term. Instead, try to arrange things so that there's something arts-related happening at least once a month. Do numerous 'little things', as opposed to two or three 'huge things' – otherwise you risk burning yourself out and exhausting your children.

9

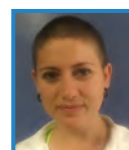
GET OUTSIDE

Look into outdoor staging solutions that might work in your playground. Giving the children access to a permanent or semi-permanent stage area will encourage them to practice performance and directing themselves during break times, while also providing a great place for classwork during the day.

10

THINK BIG

If you haven't already, consider equipping your main hall with a collapsible stage that can be easily set up and disassembled. Above all, though, you should be wary of falling back on established approaches to your arts education; instead, always be open to changing the way you've hitherto done things.



Meredith Elliott is a teacher and performing arts lead at Kensington Primary School, as well as a mentor and teacher trainer based in East London





“THE ARTS AREN’T JUST SOMETHING WE DO ON A FRIDAY”

Meredith Elliott explains how at Kensington Primary, performing arts is deeply embedded in everything the school does

INSTRUMENTS

We're an inner city London School with just over 500 children. The boroughs that make up our catchment area have high levels of poverty, and deprivation, and a significant portion of the local population is transient.

Many children show up halfway through the year and often don't stay for long. With a lot of kids who are in and out, we often have a short amount of time to do the best that we can for them.

With the help of an 'Every Child A Musician' grant, all of our children are given the opportunity to learn a musical instrument at key stage 2. They begin in year 3 with a flutophone, before moving on to the ukulele in year 4. In year 5 they get to choose between clarinet or guitar, and can then opt to continue or swap in year 6.

PERFORMANCES

As well as organising regular assemblies that can serve as class concerts, we task each of our year groups with organising two performances per year. These are attended by whole school, and parents and members of the local community are given the chance to watch too.

They typically involve involve a combination of songs, dance and musical performances, sometimes combined with elements of visual arts and design relating to a particular learning topic.

Our theme weeks are always linked in some way to art, design and music, the key to which is our approach to multimodal learning. The arts aren't just something we do on a Friday afternoon – we use the arts to improve our data, progress and achievement in maths, English and reading.

VENUES

For the last three years we've taken part in Music at the Tower – an event the Tower of London puts on in partnership with Water City Music that's free for schools to join. Pupils get to perform alongside other schools on awesome stages at an iconic site before thousands of visitors. Their families are invited too, and get free admission to the Tower.

We organise several groups of children who rehearse for the event separately. On the day, we then combine and sing together over three separate performances in a space that's more realistic in terms of giving pupils experience of performing in a venue. Once you've started using your outdoor space for arts purposes, I'd suggest seeking opportunities for collaborating with local venues.

CURTAIN CALL

Lend your performing arts session a little something extra with these helpful services...



Get connected

Schools facing the prospect of forging relationships with artists from scratch can try applying to Artsmark – an accreditation award provided by Arts Council England that can open up access to a network of cultural organisation who may be able to help. artsmark.org.uk



Theatrical magic

M&M Theatrical Productions combines high quality theatre with education, providing value for money productions that are innovative, colourful and captivating. Its expertly constructed sets, adaptable to any venue, allow the experience to be enjoyed by the whole school in the safety of their own surroundings.

The company aims to provide shows full of fun, laughter, excitement, music and larger than life characters. Produced by an experienced team of professionals, its scripts, costumes, scenery and special effects are all designed to ensure the entire audience will enjoy a truly immersive, memorable and magical theatrical experience. magicoftheatre.com

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Resources UPDATE

CLASSMATES®
Amazing quality, low prices.

Introducing CLASSMATES® – the low-cost, big brand alternative from Hope Education

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

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

CLASSMATES® is the ideal solution for any learning space, office, staff room or cleaning cupboard. Try it – you'll be amazed at how much of a difference it can make...



phthalates, to alleviate any concerns you might have regarding allergies.

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

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

and there's a CLASSMATES® alternative available, you'll be automatically shown the saving you could potentially make. You can then opt to switch to the CLASSMATES® equivalent at the click of a button. It really is that easy, giving you the opportunity to re-invest the savings made back into your school.

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

WHAT USERS THINK

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

Read John's full review on page 87.



FURTHER INFORMATION

What are you waiting for? Visit hope-education.co.uk/classmates to start making savings today!



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PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT

Your students love demonstrating their imagination and creativity – and with Hope currently offering its lowest ever price on PVA glue, you'll have plenty for all your crafting needs!

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SWITCH AND SAVE

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

You don't need to do a thing – each time you add a branded item to your basket when shopping online at Hope Education



WEAR JEANS CHANGE LIVES



Morgan cuddles her brother Cameron, 5, who has Norrie disease. Cameron is blind, going deaf and has learning difficulties.



Help children with disabilities
Sign up your school to take
part in Jeans for Genes Day
on Friday 21 September

Cameron is five years old. He was born with the genetic disorder Norrie Disease. This means he is blind. He is also deaf in his right ear and may lose his hearing completely as he grows older. He has autism, learning difficulties and hasn't learned to speak yet.

Despite all his challenges, Cameron is incredibly happy and has a smile that stops you in your tracks. His sister Morgan, nine, says: "He never lets anything get him down."

Jeans for Genes Day raises money to support families who are coping with a genetic disorder that makes their child very ill.

All you need to do to raise money is to ask your pupils and colleagues to bring in £1 to wear their jeans instead of their uniform. The money you raise will fund family conferences, equipment and special nurses for children with genetic disorders.

Be the one who makes a difference. Sign-up for your free fundraising pack today at jeansforgenes.org

IT'S SO EASY TO GET INVOLVED

1 Sign up

Sign up for your free fundraising pack at jeansforgenes.org today and you'll be on your way to organising your Jeans for Genes Day on Friday 21 September

2 Have fun!

We will send you top tips, fundraising ideas, posters and stickers to hold an amazing Jeans for Genes Day

3 Change lives

Use your event to raise money to make a difference for children like Cameron who have a genetic disorder

jeansforgenes.org

GUARD AGAINST DATA LOSS

Gary Spracklen explains how you can get those vital electronic records back, should the worst happen...

Data loss is potentially one of the biggest risks to your school. With electronic data storage having (rightfully) become the default setting for schools, it's important to consider what happens when things go wrong and what can be done to protect our organisations against major failures.

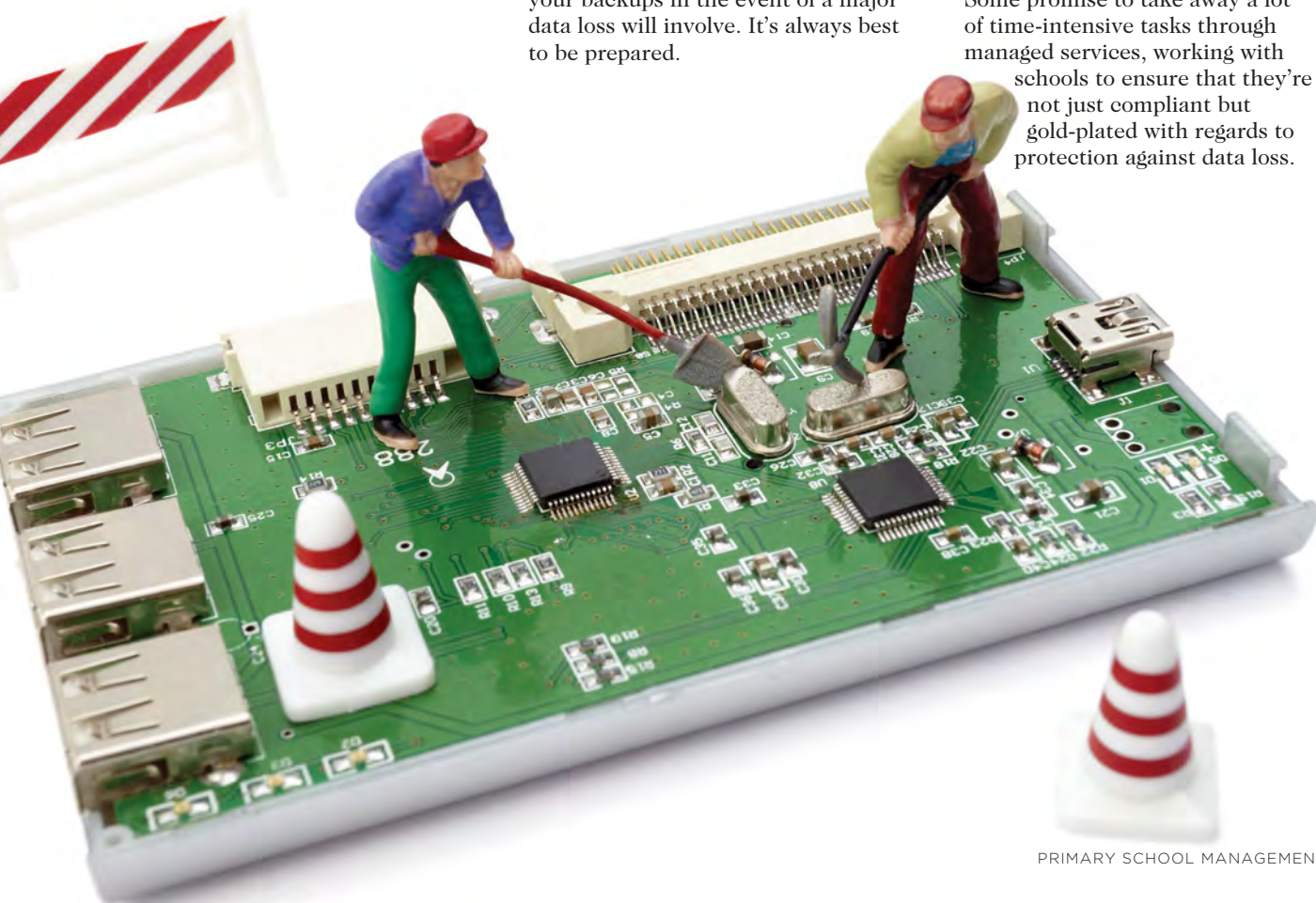
The best approach is to build protection from data loss into your systems and processes from the ground up. Some basic principles to observe

include ensuring that all data is backed up off-site in multiple locations at regular intervals. This is a wise move that can help save you money in comparison to on-site solutions.

Consideration should also be given to how quickly you can recover your data when needed and which members of staff will be involved in that recovery. Just as your school will practice evacuations in the event of fire, you should carry out drills based on what the process of recovering data from your backups in the event of a major data loss will involve. It's always best to be prepared.

It may be that you have some in-house expertise to help support this process. If so, that's great, but always take care not to rely on just one person's skills. Bring in some external scrutiny, perhaps from another school, to quality assure practice.

Newer cloud storage solutions, such as European Electronique's 'Freedom Cloud' (see euroele.com) are specifically designed to meet the demands of the education sector. Some promise to take away a lot of time-intensive tasks through managed services, working with schools to ensure that they're not just compliant but gold-plated with regards to protection against data loss.



WHEN THINGS GO WRONG

If you experience a major system failure and there's no backup, things can get very expensive, very quickly. Specialist providers such as Redstor (redstor.com), Stack (stack.co.uk) and Data Clinic (dataclinic.co.uk) are incredibly sophisticated in their ability to recover data. While it's possible to recover files from so-called 'ghost images', it's an often complicated and time-consuming process. A considerable amount of analysis needs to be performed on a hard disk before it's even possible to know whether the data is recoverable.

If the failure is less serious, causing you to lose just one or two files that haven't been backed up, think back to when you last shared them. Did you email them to someone? Store them on an external hard drive or save them to a cloud service such as Google Drive or Office 365?

Personally, I've not been worried about experiencing data loss since 2012, which was when I first adopted the 'cloud-only' approach of using Google's G Suite for Education (see edu.google.co.uk). Free for schools, the service enables me to store an unlimited amount of data in the cloud and access it from any device at any time via a web browser. I don't feel limited by what it offers, and have been able to perform my full roles as a senior leader and now headteacher using cloud-based tools exclusively. If my laptop breaks or is stolen, I can simply pick up another device, log in via the Google Chrome browser and access all of my files straight away.

This marked a big change in my working habits at first, but has since become my default setting. I now wouldn't dream of opening up a file stored only locally on my device or onsite server. Sometimes what we need is a rethink, rather than a reboot...

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



Your Management Information System is a powerful tool capable of delivering all manner of useful insights and discoveries, says Terry Freedman

As a senior leader, your school's Management Information System is something you need to get to grips with fairly quickly. The MIS holds and organises your school's data, and as such, will be key to your planning decisions concerning individual pupils and the school as a whole.

Via your MIS, you will immediately have to hand data regarding attendance, punctuality, grades and behaviour. The question we should ask at this point is what can you do with that data to ensure that each pupil gets the maximum possible benefit from their schooling?

A good place to start is to set a benchmark for attendance (and by definition, absence). What level of absence should trigger a response, be it giving the pupil catch-up opportunities or calling the parents in for a chat? According to DfE-commissioned research, each day of absence at key stage 2 is associated with a lower educational outcome at key stage 4 (see bit.ly/pmtabsence). You can configure your MIS to tell you when a pupil falls below the threshold you've set, and then decide what to do about it.

If a pupil is increasingly getting comments about poor behaviour, or their punctuality suddenly drops off, it could be an indication that something else is going on. Treat any sudden changes in the data as a red flag and prompt for further investigation.

Your MIS should make it easy to see if pupils in different classes or year groups exhibit similar patterns of lateness or absence. If there's a dramatic change in a pupil's data,

check to see if there are any correlations with other pupils.

Some schools have found that sending parents text messages, emails or even postcards about their child's attendance and other recorded data can lead to better outcomes. This is an application of so-called 'nudge theory' – a process of prompting someone to do something without specifically instructing or threatening them.

Recent research in the USA found that the presence or otherwise of the data itself in the message made little difference. What mattered more was the sending of the message itself – even if it was the highlighting of data by the MIS that led to the message being sent in the first place.

Beyond individual pupils, you may be able to spot wider trends and correlations by examining the school's combined data. If, for example, you've set up a system that enables parents to look at their children's work online and leave comments, but nobody's doing so, that can prompt some useful questions. Do parents know about the facility? Is it too complicated to use? Are parents having trouble logging in?

Your MIS might not sound like the most exciting thing in the world, but if used thoughtfully, it can help you use your data to keep the school and the pupils on the right track.

Terry Freedman is an independent education technology consultant and writer

How bright are things looking for EdTech?

Mark Rosser looks at how schools' reasons for not investing in EdTech solutions have shifted over the past year

Most schools around the UK are using educational technology products and services to become administratively more efficient and effective at delivering teaching and learning. However, the school funding crisis continues to hold them back from making more use of EdTech for their pupils' benefit.

In June this year, the British Educational Suppliers Association (BESA) published its latest report on how EdTech is currently being used in schools and in the classroom. The report features survey work undertaken by the National Education Research Panel among ICT leaders and decision-makers across 437 primary schools and 244 secondary schools in England.

The research found that school leaders in both primary and secondary schools are eight percentage points more likely to consider management systems 'very important' in supporting the effective running of their school compared to last year. In primary schools, 79% consider management systems either 'very important' or 'somewhat important'.

Parental communications solutions

and parent payment systems have seen particularly strong growth, with some 57% of primary school leaders surveyed reporting that they now use a parental communications solution of some kind. Demand for these and payment systems is still continuing to grow, with parental communication systems topping the list of EdTech that primary schools are most keen to acquire.

In terms of content technologies, primary schools have long recognised the potential for EdTech to be effectively used across the curriculum, though maths and literacy continue to dominate the use of classroom EdTech content solutions. The research did, however, find that 63% of primary schools use EdTech content solutions in computer science, and that there's been a rise of 12 percentage points in the number of schools using EdTech to support students with SEND.

Perhaps the most significant change compared to last year is the nature of the barriers preventing schools from using EdTech. While still a contributing factor, reluctance on the part of teachers to use EdTech and lack of understanding as to what it can offer are now less prevalent than before.

Standards of wireless connectivity and internet bandwidth also seem to have improved and present less of a barrier than was the case previously.

On the other hand, 29% of primary schools now see lack of budget as constraining their use of EdTech, up from 18% last year. A previous BESA research report from earlier this year found that 40% of primary school leaders anticipated having to work with smaller 2018/19 resource budgets compared to 2017/18.

However, it remains the case that EdTech resources can do much to enhance the learning process and help children of all abilities. It's crucial that schools are able to spend as much as they deem necessary to provide children across the UK with the education they deserve. To that end, BESA has been vigorously campaigning to Resource Our Schools - our statement can be signed here: besa.org.uk/resource-our-schools

Mark Rosser is communications manager at BESA

 @besatweet

 besa.org.uk



IS YOUR ONLINE SAFETY POLICY DUE AN OVERHAUL?

Clare Elson looks back on the planning, activities and engagement involved in one school's wide-ranging revision of its online safety policy



Roebuck Academy was formed in July 2017. We're now part of North Herts Trust and have developed strong links with The Thomas Alleyne Academy, a local secondary school. We're a two form entry school up to year 3, with plans to be fully two form entry by 2020. Roebuck Academy is a new build with extensive school grounds, and has a media room equipped with two iPad trolleys.

We began with a two-pronged plan – to develop a broad and balanced curriculum that inspired and motivated all of our pupils, and to establish a robust culture of safeguarding. As part of that plan, we identified a focus area that drew on elements of both – to improve the online safety of pupils, parents, staff and governors.

With the school having previously not had any dedicated online safety policies in place, it was agreed that pupils, parents and staff alike were in need of up-to-date information and training in how to stay safe online. The absence of online safety information within the school setting, and lack of such information communicated to parents via newsletters and other means was also recognised as an area that needed to be addressed.

The final motivating factor was feedback we received from a joint annual review carried out by the Hertfordshire Improvement Partner (HIP) programme.

WHAT WE DID

An action plan containing a series of tasks and activities was drawn up, which required the involvement of five distinct groups:

Governance: Our governors supported the school's efforts at organising a themed 'technology day' and 'computing week'. They were also interviewed by HIP advisers and had input into a new online safety section that was added to the school's website. Governors were then assigned their own email addresses and proceeded to receive training and find out more about online safety themselves.



THE IMPACT IT HAD

Following this initial series of activities, the school drew up and put in place a full, up-to-date online safety policy that included some online safety rules contributed by pupils. The school has also adopted a Sing Up song (singup.org) titled 'Internet Rules' which we sing during online safety assemblies. Online safety posters are now clearly displayed in every class.

Having successfully completed the activities set out in our action plan, we were able to achieve Herts for Learning's Healthy Schools 'enhanced status'. The school's staff, pupils and families now possess a much more informed understanding of what online risks entail, and all three groups now know where they can access information and support if they need it.

Pupils can discuss using the internet for different purposes, such as for educational research or social interaction, and now recognise that advances in technology will play a big part in their future.

The 'parents' section of the Roebuck Academy website now includes a page (see tinyurl.com/roebuck-esafety) that hosts helpful links, a downloadable 'eSafety Rules' poster and the latest editions of our termly eSafety newsletter for parents – a separate edition produced by the Herts for Learning team (hertsforlearning.co.uk) goes out to pupils and staff.

WHAT NEXT?

The process of improving online safety remains ongoing, however. We will be holding annual pupil, staff and governor voice listening sessions, and have timetabled in online safety training throughout the year for staff, governors, parents and pupils. We will be looking to keep ourselves updated on the latest news and developments concerning



popular online platforms and new technologies.

We've also mapped out a number of PSHE curriculum-linked online safety initiatives that we plan run throughout the school year, including teaching pupils about the potentially addictive nature of consumer technologies and the possible impact of excessive screen time on physical health and emotional wellbeing. Drawing on the Children's Commissioner's 'Digital 5 A Day' campaign (see tinyurl.com/5-day-cc), our activities in this area will also touch on the importance of face-to-face socialising and maintaining good mental health.

The teaching will be structured around around online safety-themed assemblies, followed by classroom sessions. The core PSHE themes of 'health and wellbeing', 'relationships' and 'living in the wider world' will give our pupils opportunities to consider their own online behaviour and responsibilities within a wider context.

Clare Elson is a teacher at Roebuck Academy

PUPIL VOICE

"The School Council had an e-Safety walk to see how the school helps us to be safe online. We're currently making a book which includes eSafety. This project has had an impact on the school, as we now have eSafety assemblies about it."

VANESSA, YEAR 6 SCHOOL COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE

"I am an online leader. I feel happy, because I want people to be safe. I have learnt you don't give away your details. You don't go on a programme without help. In science we took photos on the iPads and I told the class not to take photos of each other without permission."

POPPY, YEAR 2 ONLINE LEADER

"I think online safety is now amazing because we have a policy, posters, competitions and online leaders."

CHRISTOPHER, YEAR 5 ONLINE LEADER

Staff: The school's teaching staff were tasked with implementing an action plan, which included a series of pre-arranged teaching and learning opportunities, and teacher-specific training sessions that I provided and oversaw.

Pupils: We made sure that our pupils were kept informed and given a say in the plans by consulting with our School Council, holding whole school assemblies during technology week and organising themed competition activities. Our school council recently held interviews with children who had applied for the role of online safety leader, ultimately selecting two children from each class. As well as attending regular training sessions that I convene, our online safety leaders issue safety reminders when their classes have computing lessons or use iPads, with the aid of posters created by our school council. A competition was held to design an online safety leader badge.

Families: We invited pupils' parents and carers to attend online safety workshops and share any concerns they had regarding their children's use of technology and online behaviour outside of school. The headteacher is responsible for logging any online safety incidents, but we're proud to say that so far there have been no recorded incidents since the start of the project. Families have also helped to lead our technology week assemblies, with some additional support provided by local businesses.

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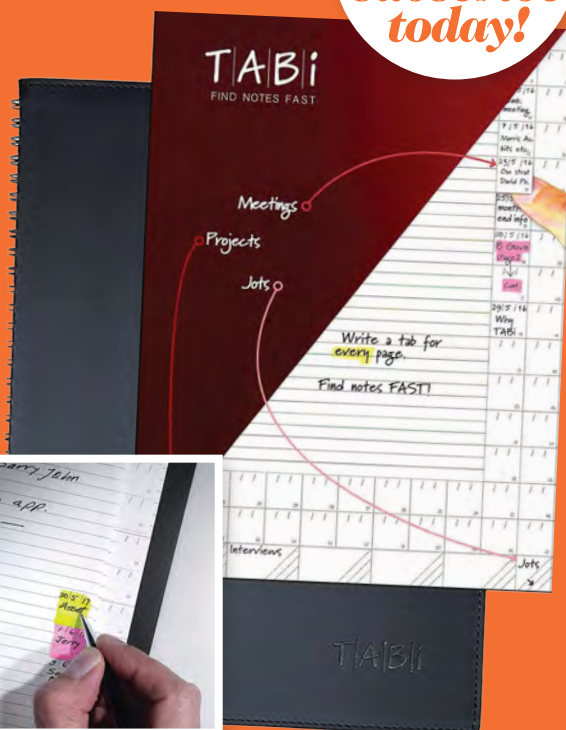
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“ They offered best value for money

We considered an outdoor gym because we'd seen them at other schools and wanted the children to be more active at break and lunchtimes. We used the Sports Premium funding for the gym; we always look for things that will enrich the children's learning as much as possible, and therefore used the funding for the project specifically, because we felt it was important for their healthy lifestyles. We chose to work with Fresh Air Fitness because they offered best value for money.”

David Harris – headteacher

“ All the children have embraced the equipment

The gym has transformed our daily morning and lunch breaks. It enables our children to engage in physical exercise, rather than just standing around. We want to improve our children's fitness and engagement in physical activity, and this is now possible at playtime, with them working as a team or individually. All the children have embraced the equipment – from the most athletic to those least engaged in PE, they have all enjoyed using it from the moment it was installed.”

Mr Paul Morley – deputy headteacher

“ The children have shown physical improvement

Since the gym was installed, the biggest difference has been to the children's free time – they're a lot more active, and they all want to use it. We've also incorporated the outdoor gym into our daily mile programme. When the children have completed their daily mile they're given some free time to spend time on the equipment, which they really enjoy. The children have already shown a lot of physical improvement, and are much more determined to work for a sustained length of time, rather than give up.”

Grant Simmons – PE specialist

Find out more by calling 01483 608 860, visiting freshairfitness.co.uk or emailing sales@freshairfitness.co.uk



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Community Engagement



“WE’RE NOT PUNCHBAGS”

When confronted by a parent who’s angry at a school policy or perceived slight against their child, how should you respond? Kate Owbridge offers her thoughts...

The first thing to do when facing anyone who’s angry, be it children, parents or even your own staff, is to calm them down to the point where you can have a reasonable conversation with them. A lot comes down to the parental relationships you’ve built – if you’ve got to know your parents, you can tell when they’re genuinely angry about something school-related or bringing with them anger in relation to something else. In those cases, letting them ‘rant’ for a bit and sympathising with the situation they’re in will eventually result in them opening up.

If a parent threatens violence your response should simply be to get them off the premises, as they present an immediate threat to your staff and children. I’ve only had to manage a couple of such incidents before, and in neither case was I on my own. If you suspect that an individual might suddenly turn on you physically, make sure there’s someone outside your office door – maybe have your caretaker ‘measure up your doorframe’, just so that there’s somebody else nearby.

When it's happened before, my colleagues and I have managed to get them out of the main entrance. If after doing that a parent still refuses to leave the school site, the only option left is to call the police. That will pretty much destroy whatever's left of the relationship you have with them, but we're not punchbags.

The hardest situations of all are those where the parent concerned has a history of mental health problems, because what follows won't always involve a rational conversation. Should a parent display that type of behaviour, it would become a safeguarding issue and require the intervention of the designated officer at our LA. That would then hopefully open a pathway where social workers and other professionals can attend to the issues involved.

In terms of what you shouldn't do, losing your temper is top of the list – you can't afford to get into slanging matches. Just wind up the conversation, keeping things as light, smiley and friendly as you can – even when deep down, all you want to do is shout back. If things descend into a swearsy shouting match, the parent risks being banned from the premises and that's all. The member of staff could potentially lose their job.

It's also useful to identify which senior leaders have the best relationships with certain parents. At my last school, there was a one parent who couldn't stand me but adored my deputy head, and another whose feelings were the other way round. When we needed to deliver a tough message to either of them, they'd hear it from whichever person they liked the least. If they reacted badly, they then had the option of complaining to my deputy or head or I about what the other was making them do. Knowing that we were liked by the parent, our response would be to reassure them – 'Don't worry, you and I can sort this out' – when we're actually all on the same side.

A parent's anger will often stem from a sense of injustice at something that's happened to their child. Ultimately, what's needed most is for them to know and understand that everything you do is done solely in the children's best interest.

Kate Oxbridge is executive headteacher at Ashdown Primary School, Crowthorpe



FOOD ON DEMAND

If you introduce the option to order school lunches online, your pupils and catering staff will thank you for it, says Nick Hucker

Celebrity chef Jamie Oliver was recently in the news after calling a ban on 2-for-1 pizza deals. It sparked a furious reaction, and once again reignited the conversation around his (in)famous school dinners campaign of the mid 2000s.

While perhaps the most high profile, Oliver's School Dinners project was one of many in an area that's been much discussed and campaigned on over the years. What exactly constitutes a healthy lunch, and how can pupils' health be balanced against the limits of government funding? Did we need to cut access to free milk? Every generation will have different memories of their own school dining room; baby-boomers can probably remember stodgy meals comprising cheap meat and boiled puddings.

As the conversation continued down through the decades, fish paste sandwiches turned into Turkey Twizzlers, which gave way to British Farm Assured chicken fillets and salad. We've certainly come a long way since the first free school meals were served up in 1870s Manchester. Back then, they were given out in order to provide for 'Destitute and badly nourished children'; now, the emphasis is on helping young people build strong bodies and sharp minds, the better to help with their learning.

It's not just the food that's changed. The free-for-all that was the school lunch queue could be riotous. 20 years ago, those without a packed lunch needed to get to the canteen fast if they were to be successful in picking up a portion of chips. Those days are gone too.

In 2018, pre-ordering technology has made the school lunch queue a much gentler affair. The children still need to line up, but any argy-bargy has been rendered pointless, since the food being served has already been selected and prepared. Thanks to online ordering via websites and apps, pupils and their parents are now able to order their preferred meals at the start of the school week, while teachers can fill in any gaps for 'pupils that forgot' during morning registration. Once in the canteen, the children need simply scan their student cards or 'tap in' via a touchscreen before collecting their order.

The benefits for children and families are obvious – more control over the nutritional content of what their child eats, and far less boisterousness in the lunch queue.

For schools and catering staff, the benefits are even more pronounced. Prior knowledge of what meals need serving each week results in stock control efficiency gains, a big reduction in waste and potential revenue opportunities.

Moreover, by electronically recording each meal served, catering staff can quickly spot ordering patterns and adjust their menus accordingly. Knowing for certain that the salmon en crouete isn't popular means you can replace it with something that is. The result? Happier children, more efficient catering facilities and satisfied schools.

Nick Hucker is the CEO of Preoday

 @preoday

 preoday.com

What's blocking your clubs provision?

Michael Ledzion looks at how schools can increase their extracurricular offerings while minimising the administrative burden

Over 2.5 million families want more extracurricular clubs to be offered at their school, according to new research commissioned by Clubs for Schools – that's 60% of parents with primary aged children. Parents think clubs are important. Underlining this, a third of parents also reported that they'd consider moving their children to another school if they felt their school's club provision was inadequate.

The pressure is on for schools to offer more extra curricular clubs. In the latest School Inspection Handbook, Ofsted states that it will directly consider "How well the school supports the formal curriculum with extra curricular opportunities for pupils". Studies have shown that extra curricular activities support children's development in ways that include improved behaviour and better academic outcomes, while boosting their time management and organisation skills and developing their curiosity through the learning of new skills.

However, it's not a simple task for primary schools to increase the number of clubs they offer. I talk to school leaders and business managers every week, and while there's certainly a clear trend towards schools doing more, it remains time-consuming. One deputy head told me that it takes a week of his time at the start of each term, while another said that administering clubs takes her half a day each week.

Costs in time spent on admin, quality assurance and making the necessary space available continue to be big challenges that prevent primary schools from offering more extra-curricular clubs – so how can they be overcome? I've seen lots of ingenious approaches on my visits to various schools, and would make the following recommendations:

Reduce the admin

Can you streamline your process of appointing coaches, managing payments and dealing with bookings? Do you use standard documents? Can payments be

managed directly by coaches and other third party suppliers? Portals such as Clubs for Schools can simplify taking payments and administration.

Allocate more space

Evaluate all the possible spaces you can use for clubs. The hall and playground are obvious locations, but how about running a cookery club in the canteen or a classroom? In our research, a cookery club was the second most requested club parents wished their child could do.

Think beyond the typical


Our research found that parents were keenly interested in lesser-known sports like handball, archery, or volleyball. Not everyone's a footballer or gymnast, but all children want to excel at something. One of the best ways of helping them to achieve is by providing a larger range of alternatives.

Build links with trusted suppliers

I know that there's a real shortage of experienced gymnastics, fencing and code club leaders. There's also the need to offer a broad range in order to appeal to more children. Build a network of trusted suppliers that won't let you down, or outsource that job to a trusted partner.

I hope your school year gets off to a positive start, with children and parents alike excited by the extra curricular activities you have on offer. Good luck!

Michael Ledzion is founder and CEO of Clubs for Schools – a free resource to help schools find coaches and manage their extracurricular activities

 @ClubsforSchools
 clubsforschools.org



GIVE YOUR PROSPECTUS PURPOSE

A prospectus should do more than simply impart information – it needs to successfully inspire parents, says Zoe Howes

Despite the popularity of social media and digital marketing, prospectuses are still a crucial part of school marketing. They can be handed out at events and open days, giving an instant impression of the school.

Produced correctly, they can really showcase your school and tell your story in a compelling, powerful way that's difficult to replicate online.

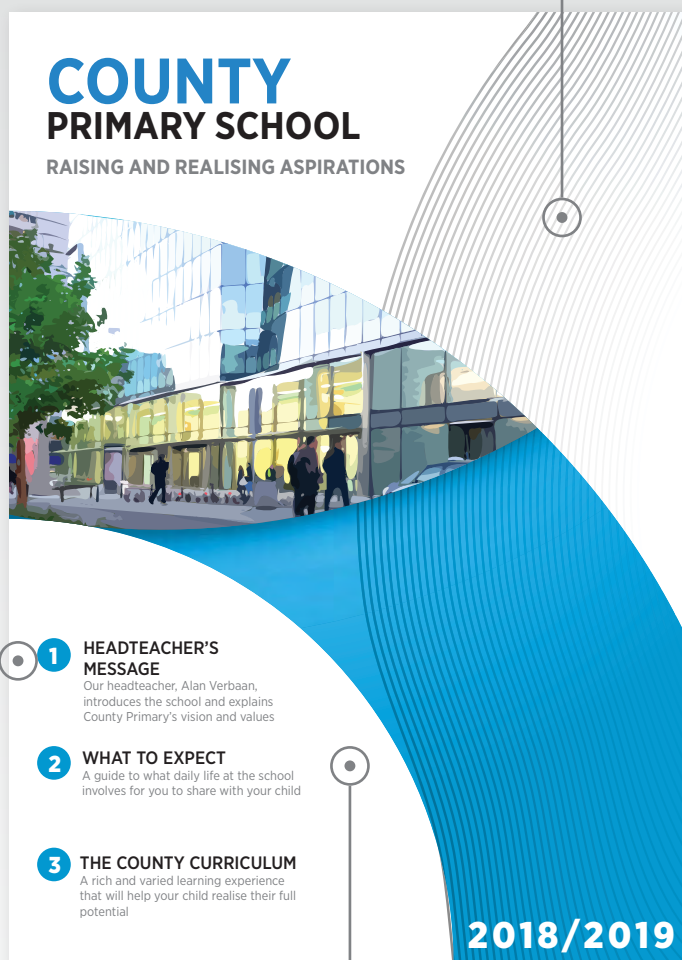
Ultimately, however, your prospectus doesn't have to tell parents everything there is to know about your school; it should simply inspire and encourage them to come and visit you and witness it all for themselves. Collectively, your marketing materials should aim to get them through the door – and once you've done that, the job's done.

INCLUDE A CALL TO ACTION

The good news is that a printed prospectus often means that readers will spend longer reading it, and are likely to spend time going through it with their child. However, it's worth also driving your prospectus readers towards an online version to which you've added in some finer details. A prospectus hosted online can provide you with detailed analytics of your website users' behavior, how they came to be on your site and potentially their age, location and other details. This all helps to build a base of knowledge that can inform your marketing strategies and grow your admissions.

PHOTOGRAPHY

High quality imagery is at the heart of every great prospectus. Forget using an iPhone or an amateur volunteer and invest in a professional photographer. Those key images will form your first impressions, so make them great. Focus on three or four defining images that say everything about the school, without the need for words. The pictures will not only make your prospectus come alive, but can also be used on your website, on social media and in press releases.



1 HEADTEACHER'S MESSAGE
Our headteacher, Alan Verbaan, introduces the school and explains County Primary's vision and values

2 WHAT TO EXPECT
A guide to what daily life at the school involves for you to share with your child

3 THE COUNTY CURRICULUM
A rich and varied learning experience that will help your child realise their full potential

2018/2019

ENSURE IT DOESN'T DATE

We're often asked, "How many years until I need a new prospectus?" Well, a prospectus needs a reasonable shelf life if it's to deliver a return on the investment you've made in it. We recommend not listing your staff, last year's academic results or (for independent schools), the fees you charge. If that's information you'd specifically like to give out, consider adding a built-in folder to your prospectus, or again driving readers to your website.

TELL YOUR STORY

Storytelling is one of the most powerful ways of breathing life into your prospectus. You can take your target audience on a journey which they'll yearn for their child to experience. For new parents to form a personal connection with your school, any case studies and testimonials must be authentic. Ensure your content is creative and inspirational throughout.

COPY

Don't write words for the sake of it. If you can say the same thing with half the amount of words, then do so. If you feel that one perfectly executed image will get your message across, then use it with only a small amount of supporting copy. Try and keep the word count to less than 100 per page.

ENSURE CONSISTENT BRANDING

When designing your brochure, make sure your branding is consistent with the rest of your marketing materials. For many parents, the school website will still be the first thing they look at when considering a school. The prospectus needs to be an extension of the website and any other communications they might have had with the school up to that point in order to maintain consistency.

CONTENT

While it's not a statutory requirement for schools to produce a printed prospectus, we all know it's incredibly important to have quality printed information that you can hand out. Don't overload your prospectus with too many details, however – you can point readers to parts of your website with further explanations. If you offer a range of school activities, for example, don't list them all in your prospectus but drive readers to your website instead.

The areas you'll most commonly find in a prospectus are:

- Head's welcome
- Values and vision
- Starting school
- About the curriculum
- How the school supports their children
- Case studies/testimonials
- About absences and illness
- School policies
- Contact details



USE AS HIGH A QUALITY PRINT FINISH AS POSSIBLE

Don't think for a second that you need simply print out a low-quality prospectus for your school and all will be fine. The end result must be produced to the highest standard, though obviously within your budget. There are myriad factors that can affect print quality and cost; liaising closely with your designers or printers direct will ensure that you get the best quality results for your money.



Zoe Howes is marketing director at The Collective – an agency providing marketing, publicity and PR services to the education sector

 [thecollectivegroup.co.uk](https://www.thecollectivegroup.co.uk)
 [@TheCGUK](https://www.facebook.com/TheCGUK)

HANDLE THE MEDIA LIKE A PRO

It's one thing to face a crowded assembly, but quite another to address a TV camera. Here's how to carry out your media engagements with flair and confidence...

Children aren't allowed to play conkers any more unless they wear protective goggles. Many people believe this to be true, but it's a myth. In 2009, it emerged that the original source for this 'fact' was a headteacher who genuinely wanted his pupils to learn about horse chestnuts and how the traditional game was played (tinyurl.com/psm-mt-hs). When one child asked about safety gear, the head had an idea that he thought would make a fun photo for the local paper – and you can guess the rest...

It serves as a perfect example of how a positive and well-intentioned story can have unexpected and sometimes negative consequences. Local news is picked up by the national papers, television and radio and used to fit an agenda – in this case, *'Elf 'n' safety gone mad!'*

Along similar lines, all of us will have witnessed how the Chinese Whispers of school gate gossip can result in parents storming in, demanding to know why a school is suddenly taking a particular course when the school in question is simply continuing to pursue something it's already done for years. It's a process that's becoming ever more amplified and accelerated by social media.

ADVERSITY STRIKES

Jamie Barry, headteacher at Parson Street Primary in south Bristol, found himself in the eye of one such storm after organising a Drag Queen Story Time to foster tolerance and understanding. The event shouldn't have been a surprise, since Parson Street has previously received a Gold award from the charity Educate & Celebrate for its practice in helping children learn about diversity and equality (see tinyurl.com/parson-celebrate). Yet some parents – inevitably, anonymously – accused the school of inappropriately bringing in adult entertainers and the media swooped.

Barry, however, succeeded in achieving balanced coverage overall thanks to his proactive approach with respect to the school community, the wider community and the media. The school's existing good relationships with parents meant that many were willing to come forward and provide supportive comments for reporters.

Similarly, when the school dropped a grade following an Ofsted inspection, families were unworried. They knew from the consistent messaging they received that this was just one measure and that the school was doing many good things.

"We are very open about our school with our public Facebook and Twitter accounts," says Barry.

"We deliberately decided at the start of the academic year to hashtag all of our posts #BestSchoolYearEver to showcase all that we do."

Barry goes on to describe how the school has gone about working with journalists: "You learn who you can trust. By building relationships, there's a better chance when adversity strikes of them seeing the big picture and the wider context."

NEWS VALUES

It can help schools when reporters know more about how they work, but it's also important for people involved in education to understand the media – especially the various ways in which it's changed within the last few years.

Newspaper sales have plummeted as advertising and news has continued to move online. Journalists are typically under pressure to get clicks on their stories, hence the frequency with which their stories are pushed out via social media. Journalists will also regularly scour Facebook and Twitter, on the lookout for issues and exchanges that are either already provoking lively debate or have the potential to do so.

So what should you do if they spot

"Ensure you know the subject you'll be speaking about 200%, so that you're not tripped up or caught out"

some chat concerning your school or students and contact you for a response? Obviously, it depends on the story. In some cases, transparency may be the best policy; in others, a short statement will be better. 'No comment', however, is almost never a sensible response.

It's also wise to ensure that all policies, values, information and contact details on your website are fully up to date. If a story involving your school breaks over a weekend, this is the first place a journalist will look.



PRESSURE VALVE

Dean Blake is communications manager for the 15-school Cabot Learning Federation, and has extensive experience of supporting headteachers in dealing with press inquiries. His advice is to embrace interview requests whenever it's practically possible, and approach them with the attitude that they present an opportunity to talk to parents, prospective parents and the wider community. His success in building relationships with journalists means they now often come to him when needing a school-based spokesperson or setting to illustrate a national education story.

"My main tip when dealing with the press is to ensure you know the subject you'll be speaking about 200%, so that you're not tripped up or caught out," he says. "If it's a radio interview, check whether it's live or pre-recorded, and whether you'll be up against someone presenting an alternative point of view."

Occasionally, headteachers can become embroiled in news stories that don't originate in school, such as when a child is killed in an accident. In such cases the headteacher's priority will, of course, be supporting upset staff, children and parents rather than talking to the press – but working with the media can sometimes actually take the pressure off others.

PREPARED STATEMENTS

Rich Coulter, my Local Voice Media colleague, cites an example of a newly appointed headteacher who had to deal with requests for TV interviews, following the sudden death of a student from a meningitis-related illness. "She thought she had to speak to them," he recalls. "I reassured her that she didn't, but conceded it might be helpful to give them something."

3 PRESS INTERVIEW RULES

- Answer the question
- Be honest
- Counter the criticism

"We agreed with the journalists that the head would read a prepared statement to camera about what the school was doing to support its community, but we wouldn't touch on any of the medical aspects, as those were for Public Health England to address. The press people were delighted, as they hadn't expected to be allowed in at all."

It's worth thinking about how you might respond in these and other similar scenarios. Crisis media training for headteachers is unlikely to be affordable, but it's definitely worth talking to colleagues and sharing ideas. If you're really camera shy, your school business leader or chair of governors could perhaps take on interview duties – maybe while you play conkers (but not Chinese Whispers ...)



Linda Tanner is an education journalist and communications consultant with Local

Voice Media, chair of a primary academy council and has previously served as an LA primary governor and a MAT board member

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kidsclubhq.co.uk



2 RAISING THE STANDARD

Developed with over 20 years' experience of working with schools and expertise in appraisal, performance management, and training, Standards Tracker from Educate enables school leaders to use project management processes to strategically target development priorities based on accurate information, make robust performance related pay decisions and inform school improvement plans. It can also serve as a useful tool for self-evaluation, monitor CPD impact and provide inspectors and governors or trustees with simple, effective performance summaries against specific measurable standards, while highlighting areas of developmental need.

info.standardstracker.co.uk/primary-management-2018



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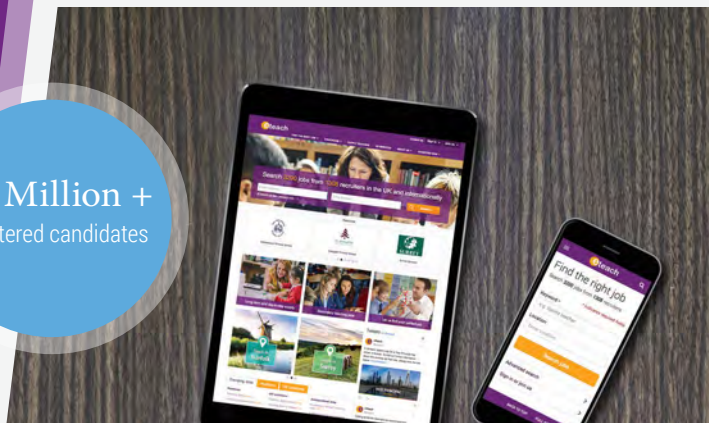
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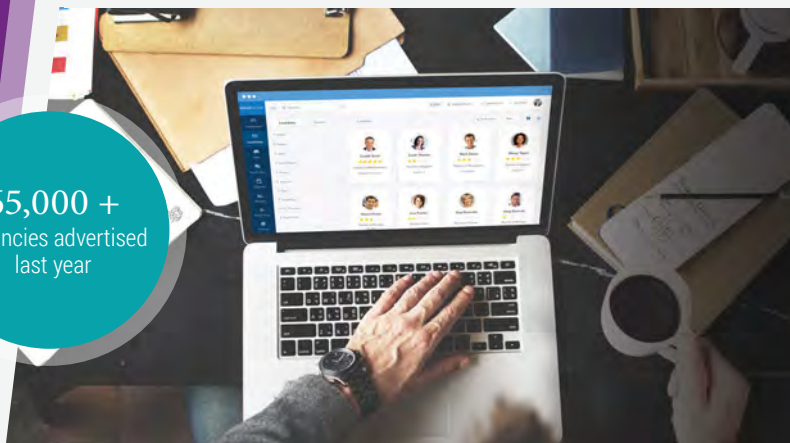
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IT'S A PERSONAL AFFAIR

How good is your school at supporting staff in the event of a serious personal or family issue, such as bereavement or separation?



“The thing that is causing people to get ill at work and adversely affect their quality of working life is line managers who are not socially and interpersonally skilled. They don’t have the soft skills that are needed.”

So says Professor Sir Cary Cooper, the UK’s leading expert on organisational wellbeing. With that in mind, is it any wonder that many staff don’t feel they receive the support they need to manage their demands of work and home?

Research previously carried out by Goldsmiths, University of London identified 12 leadership competencies proven to prevent or reduce staff stress. The competencies in question are focused largely on people and soft skills – but you won’t find much mention of them within the National Professional Qualifications. Once in post, many school and MAT leaders often won’t have the time or opportunities needed to properly develop such skills, especially in early leadership roles.

Yet there are also plenty of leaders who manage to bridge this gap successfully. What is it that they do which ensures staff are given effective support – particularly those facing serious personal or family issues, such as bereavement or separation? Below are the steps that they follow, listed in priority order:

1. GATHER INFORMATION

Successful leaders know how important it is to understand what’s going on with their team members, both in and out of work. As a starting point, they’ll schedule check-ins and one-to-ones, and ask staff how they are. They’ll do this regularly, authentically and really listen to the responses.

2. IDENTIFY WITH OTHERS

They’ll show compassion and empathy, and be capable of putting themselves in others’ shoes. Not everyone will have these as natural

traits, but they can be learnt and are essential to have.

3. BUILD TRUST

They can keep matters confidential where appropriate, encourage team members to share information with others when necessary, and direct staff towards a range of helpful support networks both inside and outside school.

4. RESPECT PEOPLE'S TIME

They will agree any workload adjustments with the team members affected and provide reasonable time off as appropriate.

5. KEEP EVERYONE UPDATED

They will ensure that any forms of support offered within the school, and entitlements to paid and unpaid leave, are clearly detailed within policies and staff handbooks.

6. PROVIDE HELP

They will put in place an assistance scheme of some kind that will allow staff to take advantage of confidential support and counselling services away from school.

Workload and lack of both time and money are the most commonly cited reasons for school staff failing to receive the level of support they need – yet often it's down to a failure to appreciate the importance of such support and an inability to plan for it as a priority.

Yes, there is a time and financial hit to providing the above forms of support to staff – but it will be dwarfed by the cost of doing little or nothing. Providing your staff with insufficient support will soon cause your annual bills to grow by the tens of thousands, and see to it that your school gets left behind in the ongoing battle to attract and retain key staff.

Mark Solomons is a school governor, author, leadership consultant and the founder of School Wellbeing Accelerator

 @SWAccelerator

 wellbeingaccelerator.co.uk



Eleanor Drabble and Ian Deakin explore what action schools can take when faced with incidents of staff crime

Enhanced DBS checks allow schools to see the criminal records of those applying for posts. Since said posts are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, any spent convictions and cautions may also be listed. But what should a school do when an individual is investigated, charged or convicted of a criminal offence during their employment, and what are the risks?

Employment contracts should require employees to inform you of any investigation, caution or conviction. Following notification, suspension may be appropriate in the majority of cases – especially if there are serious safeguarding concerns, or the presence of the individual could interfere with any investigation. However, this shouldn't necessarily be an automatic process. Employment Tribunals have recently been critical of employers that have failed to consider all the alternatives carefully. Always make sure you record your decision.

Any suspension should be on normal pay and placed under constant review. Criminal investigations can often take months, resulting in a prolonged period of paid suspension. Your duty of care will continue during any suspension, so make sure you always have a point of contact for the employee.

If the individual under investigation is subject to police bail conditions, clarify what those conditions are, as they may prevent the employee from attending school or being near children. This may also allow you to stop their pay, but seek

legal advice before you decide to take this action.

Where an employee is subject to criminal investigation or proceedings, there's a danger that the matter may enter the public domain. You may want to consider making a public statement, but be careful not to breach confidentiality or any reporting restrictions for teachers preventing disclosure placed on the case under The Education Act 2002, until after charges are made.

After any caution, conviction or even if the case is dropped by the police, you may feel it is appropriate to carry out an internal investigation. Even if an individual is acquitted in court, you could still take action up to and including dismissal if the circumstances warrant it. It should be remembered that the burden of proof is much higher in a criminal proceeding compared to an internal disciplinary.

If an employee leaves your employment, either through resignation or dismissal, you'll be required to consider a referral to DBS (where a child has been harmed or placed at risk of being harmed) and/or the Teaching Regulation Agency (in cases involving serious misconduct by teachers). Make sure you inform the individuals that you'll be doing this when they leave your employment.

Eleanor Drabble is an HR consultant and Ian Deakin an associate at the law firm Browne Jacobson

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 brownejacobson.com

Why two teachers may be better than one

Caroline Cafferty looks at why the time has come for senior leads to encourage more flexible working conditions

Many schools are struggling with both retention and recruitment issues. According to a 2017 National Audit Office report (see tinyurl.com/psm-nao-17), schools were able to fill just half of their vacancies with teachers possessing the experience and expertise they required. In around a tenth of all cases, schools failed to fill said posts at all.

However, there may be a way for SLTs to improve staff relations and potentially retain their highly motivated teachers. Flexible working conditions, with offers such as job shares, can provide teachers with opportunities to continue their teaching careers without forfeiting a healthy work-life balance.

Flexi is a service recently launched by the supply teaching agency justteachers that matches two like-minded teachers to one full-time role. Dahlia Al-Sarraj was among the Flexi candidates placed earlier this year. Having worked for three years as a full-time primary teacher, just like 81% of the teachers responding to the aforementioned NEU workload survey, she had contemplated leaving the profession altogether – largely due to an unsustainable workload, long hours and poor work-life balance. Yet Dahlia is now working three days per week, sharing a key stage 2 class with

another colleague, and credits her Flexi job share role with keeping her in the profession.

“When I was working full-time I was working extremely long hours. I’d leave the house at 7.30am and get home at 7.00pm – it was just not sustainable at all,” Dahlia recalls. “I also felt like I didn’t see my family for a very long time. I was always doing extra work on weeknights and at the weekends. I did consider leaving the profession, but then the opportunity arose for me to take on the Flexi job share and I’ve fallen back in love with teaching. It’s changed my mind completely.”

Another advantage of job sharing is that it enables teachers to work collaboratively. “My job share partner and I both have similar teaching styles, so the children still have that continuity throughout the week which has helped them settle quite quickly to being taught by both of us,” she says.



“We keep in contact through email and text, and also have a contact book.

Anything noteworthy that happens on my days, such as communication with parents or incidents in class, I’ll write in the book and vice versa. There’s constant and ongoing communication between the two of us.

“It’s important to be open-minded. We’re both very open to other ideas – if I go back on one of my teaching days and there’s a note that seating plans have been changed, that’s absolutely fine. Being open to change is really important, and it also shows the children that we’re working together as one.”

Now six months into her Flexi role, Dahlia has become a strong advocate of the job share approach. “The way teaching is going, I think this is going to be the way forward,” she says. “It’s just not sustainable for one person to take a class with the amount of work that needs to be done. There aren’t that many part-time teachers at the moment, but I think in future we’ll see a lot more.”

Caroline Cafferty is operations director at justteachers

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YOUR SBM HANDOVER CHECKLIST

Caroline Collins looks at how schools can transfer responsibilities from one SBM to another with minimal disruption

As the school business professional role has evolved significantly over the past decade, so has the need to ensure that schools are equipped with confident, competent professionals able to manage role's various demands. But what happens if an SBM is suddenly absent for a long period of time, or if they decide to leave unexpectedly? Will your school be able to step in and carry on?

Here, I'll explain what existing SBMs themselves can do to ensure their school is able carry on as normal, should they not be around to take care of its various business operations.

THREE STEPS

There are three things all SBMs can and should do to minimise the impact of a protracted absence:

1. Identify a team member for succession planning
2. Prepare a detailed manual outlining the role and how to do specific tasks
3. Create a handover checklist summarising key regular tasks

The first of these should be standard practice in all schools. Headteachers will already have put some form of succession planning in place concerning themselves, so that the school community can be confident in knowing that there are sufficiently competent senior leaders ready take the reins should the need arise. But how many schools have similar arrangements in place with respect to their business management teams?

Take time to help your team member(s) understand the role of the SBM and get them fully trained. You might be able to access the apprenticeship levy to fund a Level 4 Diploma in School Business Management qualification, which will give them a greater understanding of what your role involves.

As an SBM, it's down to you to ensure that the school's detailed manual is kept current and up to date, so that your team members can carry out some of the more complex tasks you do by following a series of instructions.

The manual can then help form the basis of a handover checklist, which should list all the tasks needing to be undertaken annually, termly, monthly, weekly and daily, along with basic instructions on how to do the tasks in



FINANCE

Annual tasks

- Complete and return SFVS
- Budget return and new budget
- Year end closure
- Benchmarking report
- Publish PE and Pupil Premium reports
- Review contracts

Termly tasks

- VAT return
- Finance report to governors

Monthly tasks

- Budget monitoring report
- Petty cash report
- Monthly returns to LA

Weekly tasks

- Petty cash reconciliation
- Bank income
- Bank reconciliation
- Cheque run

Daily task

- Record meals and clubs income

HUMAN RESOURCES

Annual tasks

- Support staff performance management
- CPD analysis

Termly task

- 1-to-1 team meetings

Monthly tasks

- Submit payroll reports
- Produce sickness absence reports
- Submit teacher pensions data

Weekly tasks

- Monitor staff sickness
- Ensure return to work meetings complete

Daily tasks

- Monitor sickness
- Deal with ad-hoc queries

PREMISES

Annual tasks

- Update asset register
- Review premises management plan
- Conduct all statutory checks
- Undertake H&S inspection
- Arrange fire risk assessment

Termly tasks

- Fire drill
- Premises inspection review

Monthly tasks

- Check maintenance contracts
- Site contractor meetings

Weekly tasks

- H&S checks
- Site management meetings

Daily tasks

- Ad-hoc maintenance issues
- Deal with ad-hoc H&S issues
- Report accidents

question. Keeping the checklist electronically will let you add hyperlinks that lead through to the relevant area of the manual for more detailed information.

The checklist should be kept in a central area, with your team and the headteacher made aware of where it is and how to access it.

TASK MANAGEMENT

So, where do you start? You need to think about what tasks you do, how often you do them and how those tasks are done. You might want to start by grabbing a piece of paper and creating an evolving mind map. Set yourself a deadline for completing the mind map and then spend a little time each day working on it.

As you complete a task, jot it down on the map. There will be some tasks that you conduct infrequently and might therefore be forgotten about at first. Keeping your developing mind map close to hand will allow you to add to it as and when those forgotten tasks are remembered.

Once the mind map is complete, you can then decide how you want to set out

your handover checklist. The simplest way is to create a document that sets out the tasks that need to be done annually, termly, monthly, weekly and daily. Within each of those timeframes you can then place tasks in categories, such as 'finance', 'HR' and so on. If a task is especially complex and will require a more detailed explanation, hyperlink the entry to a separate document that clearly lays out the instructions.

Of course, your handover checklist is only ever going to be useful if it's reasonably concise, clearly presented and regularly updated. Make sure the approach you've opted for is something that others can understand and follow, and that the information it contains is fully up-to-date. Be sure to check it regularly and ensure that the instructions it contains are still relevant.

You should also think about which tasks will require the entering of a unique password. Are you willing to share your password with other staff members? Could you perhaps tell one colleague where the password is kept, should it be needed? If a task will require entering a

main password that grants access to school's web-based information system, look into creating a separate or generic login so that your password security isn't put at risk.

As the leader of your school's administrative and site support services, you might decide that a support services instruction manual would be useful to have. You could create a handover checklist document for each of the roles that you lead on, and then combine them all into one comprehensive document. That way, if anyone's absent their colleagues can pick up their tasks quickly and easily, and demonstrate just how efficient the school's support team is.



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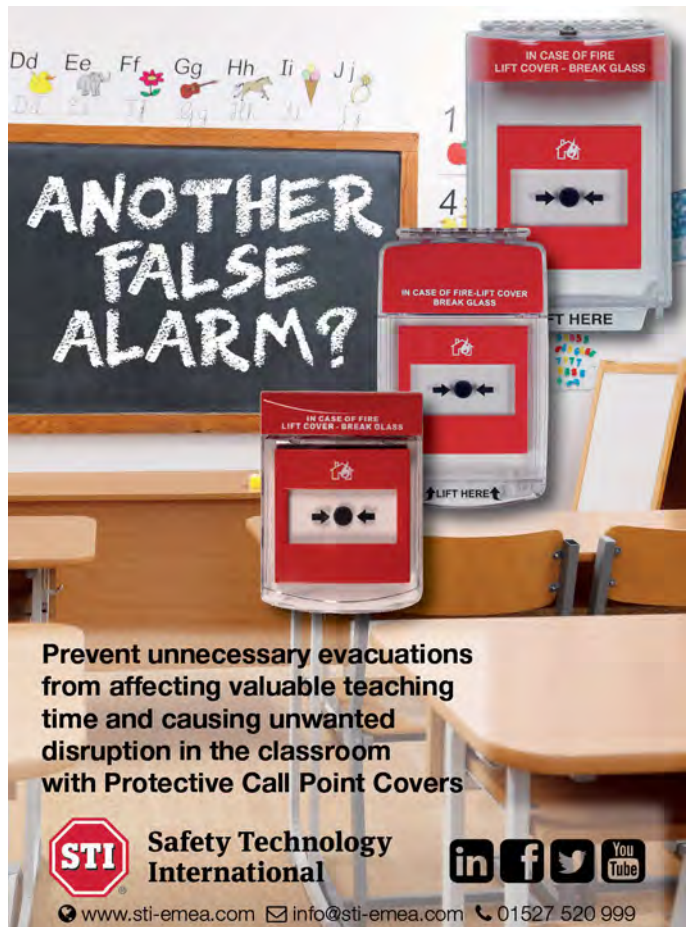
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ARE YOU HARNESSING YOUR HR TALENT?

With new school structures comes the need for new specialist competencies – Bethan Cullen explains how school staff with an interest in HR can develop their skills further

At its essence, human resources is about making sure the right people are in the right jobs. Attracting people is an important first step, but that's just the beginning. As the HR requirements of a school grow over time, issues of retention will become increasingly important, alongside the need to give your people the skills, training and development they'll require to perform at the best of their abilities.

The emergence of new school structures over the last few years has seen the advent of hitherto unfamiliar job titles within school settings. There's now a need to achieve efficiencies, provide oversight and drive consistency of approach across organisations that span multiple schools. As a result, duties relating to finance, procurement and HR are increasingly being carried out by people appointed to a series of new, more specialist roles.

It's important that the individuals taking up these new HR roles have an intrinsic understanding of the school's context and the uniqueness of the wider education sector. How, then, should we go about finding and developing the talent such roles demand, and ensure that they can properly manage a school's HR requirements?

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) has worked in partnership with the Institute of School Business Leadership to create a new Level 5 Certificate in Human Resources for school business professionals. It's specifically intended for those with responsibility for HR and people development, and for those who aspire to develop a specialist HR role in the future – for example, HR Manager in a MAT structure.

Ideal for people recognised as the HR professional within their school, or someone whose responsibilities currently include managing and advising on people-related matters, this new Level 5 Certificate will enable you to develop and implement people plans to help your school meet its operational and strategic goals. If you're interested in future cohorts, or would like more information, email training@isbl.org.uk

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

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WHO'S SIGNING UP AND WHY?

"As the school has expanded, the number of staff has increased and the demands on HR has also increased. Unfortunately, at this time of growth the LA has completely withdrawn support, so approximately 30% of my time is now spent dealing with HR. "Whilst the school does have support from an external HR advisor, I must ensure that I'm asking the right questions, interpreting the information provided and applying it correctly to the given situation. The headteacher relies on me to ensure that the advice I provide him with is accurate and has sound legal basis."

VICKY RODRIGUES – SCHOOL BUSINESS MANAGER, GROVE PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL

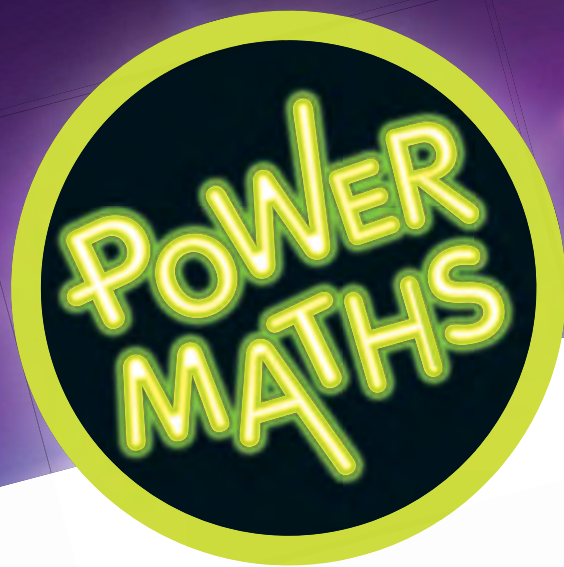
"Having worked as a school business manager for more than 10 years, I was looking to develop my skills and knowledge in areas other than finance. Working in a large primary school, which is also establishing a MAT, I've found that I'm dealing with more and more HR-related topics. Having no formal training in HR, this Level 5 course seems an ideal qualification to enable me to further support our organisation as we develop, and to help ensure we maintain the high-quality staffing we need."

JO LONG – BUSINESS MANAGER, VENTURE MAT



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IDLE CASH ISN'T USEFUL CASH

John Howson questions the wisdom of having MATs hold significant financial reserves

£2.5B
Net position of Trusts with reserves

£65M
Net deficit of trusts in cumulative deficit

Is holding some £2.4 billion pounds of public funds in reserves a good use of our money? In a note published in July this year, the DfE revealed that in August 2017 academies and their trusts were holding said sum in reserves against committed and potential future needs (see tinyurl.com/psm-arr16-17).

The proportion of trusts in this position seems to have recently declined, however. The DfE observed that, "Trust level data from 2016/17 shows 93.9% of trusts had a cumulative surplus or zero balance. This is a decrease of 0.6 percentage points from 94.5% of trusts in 2015/16. 95.7% of academies were in trusts that were in surplus or breaking even at the end of 2016/17."

While noting that figures couldn't be provided at an individual school level, the DfE went on to state that "Smaller trusts are more likely to have a deficit. This means that only 4.3% of academies were in trusts that were in deficit at the end of 2016/17."

Of course, it's possible for some schools in a trust to have positive balances and for others to be in deficit. Following Lord Agnew's recent letter to academy trust auditors (see tinyurl.com/psm-agnew-trusts), it's



perfectly possible to transfer funds between schools in this situation – something not possible in the maintained sector.

The DfE's note doesn't seem to consider whether benchmarks for levels of reserves are appropriate for academies and MATs. In the past, 5% of turnover was considered sufficient for secondary schools, and 8% for primary schools, to hold as reserves. Even allowing for central costs, MATs shouldn't be holding such significant amounts.

I have some concerns regarding the DfE note's use of a chart indicating that the net position of the trusts with positive reserves stood at £2.5 billion, while trusts in cumulative deficit had a total net deficit of £65 million. The net position for the academies sector as a whole, it concludes, "was a positive reserve of £2.4 billion."

Laypersons looking at this chart and accompanying text might think that 'net position' was achieved because deficits could be offset against surpluses. As noted, that is indeed possible among schools within a specific trust, but not between schools in different trusts, as far as I'm aware. The chart ought to be split into two sections: one showing deficits that can be covered within a MAT, and another showing MATs where all schools are in deficit or standalone academies with no current provision for covering their deficits, other than by reducing expenditure.

The STRB could be made aware of any regional trends among schools with deficits that might relate to pay decisions. The alternative is that schools and MATs in deficit are simply found all around the country and are the product of poor leadership, rather than the consequence of certain policy decisions.

Professor John Howson is the chair of TeachVac, the free national vacancy service, and co-founder of Oxford Teacher Services

 @TeachVac
 oxteachserv.com

GET SOME HELP WITH YOUR SPENDING



Rowena Thomas explains how schools can benefit from outside help in making their procurement processes easier and more economical

From pencils to toilet rolls, schools across the UK have many buying decisions to make when receiving their annual budgets. Then, of course, there are those bigger ticket items to consider, such as services relating to catering, waste management and recycling collections, not to mention the cost of utilities. Few schools will have a procurement specialist working for them when making these often complex buying decisions, yet they'll still be expected to consistently purchase quality items or services while achieving good value for money.

With the government's austerity measures still very much in place, funds remain tight across the whole of the public sector. Schools are more sensitive to this than most, and the pressure to get the right goods and services at the right price has continued to increase over time.

Buying practices in the education sector have been the subject of close scrutiny for some time. In 2014, the Education Select Committee commissioned a research report by the Institute of Education (see tinyurl.com/coi-ioe-14) which found that the checks and balances on how academies spent their allocation of public funds were too weak. The report identified instances of potential conflicts of interest, such as the academy headteacher who spent £50,000 on a training course run by a friend. Then there was the MAT chairman and specialist education lawyer who used his company to provide all of the trust's legal services.

Those and other incidents clearly highlighted then the need for schools to do the right thing when making purchases with public money. A persistent

challenge, however, has been the requirement for schools to be scrupulously transparent while doing so. Many schools simply don't have the staff resources or expertise available to put in place their own EU-compliant procurement processes.

That's where supply frameworks come in. These provide schools of all types and sizes with a reliable, compliant and cost effective way of purchasing their goods and services, while helping to protect them from inadvertent breaches of complicated procurement rules. Some schools will already use frameworks, but might be more familiar with the alternative term 'contracts'.

Schools have nothing to fear and everything to gain by using frameworks, but to get the most out of them, it's helpful to consult a professional buying organisation (PBO). Some PBOs are publicly owned – thereby offering their services for free – and will assist schools with identifying good deals on a range of specialist equipment, building services or ICT, helping them save money and freeing them up to focus on their primary responsibility – teaching our children.

Rowena Thomas is head of category for education at professional buying organisation ESPO; she has worked in public sector procurement for over 30 years, assisting schools with meeting their day-to-day procurement needs and one-off new build furniture and equipment purchases

 @easternshires
 espo.org

What are every SBL's rites of passage?

Hilary Goldsmith invites SBLs young and old to recall those memorable 'firsts' every seasoned professionals will recognise...

I've no idea how many school business leaders there are in the UK – tens of thousands, I'd imagine – and every one of us will be at a different stage of a similar, but distinctly personal professional journey. Our school settings are all unique, our job descriptions all slightly different and our experiences hugely varied.

But get a group of SBLs in one place (what's the collective noun for SBLs? A bursary? An efficiency?) and talk will eventually turn to those rites of passage that shape our journeys. What are these professional milestones? Qualifications, promotions? Well, yes – but not in the way you might think. See how many of the following you can tick off your own list of achievements...

1. Your first budget

Whatever point in the year you joined your school, you'll almost certainly have inherited someone else's budget. But it's only when you've created your own and nurtured it from its first funding statement through governing body sign-off, watched it take its first wobbly steps through month 1, fly through quarters 2 and 3 and glide back to the ground in month 12, spent, that you can truly call it yours.

2. Your first HR hearing

There's nothing that can prepare you for your first HR hearing besides being in one. Whatever the outcome, you can take real professional pride in the preparation and delivery of a thorough and well-evidenced management case. They're nerve-wracking, but one of the best HR learning experiences you can have.

3. Your first drain survey

My personal favourite. One thing they never tell you in the job description or at the interview is quite how much time an SBL will spend discussing toilets and blocked drains. Discovering that drain surveys are a thing, and watching your first one, is a rite of passage no SBL ever forgets...

4. Your first audit

There's nothing like the fear and stress of your first audit. It requires the work and prep of a full Ofsted inspection, but rather than every member of staff giving it their all, there's just you, your finance regs and a free coaster completely alone, ready to face the unknown.

5. Your first hard hat

This is less common now that no one can afford to build anything, but an SBL's first major building project is an important milestone. Not just because of the professional experience it brings, but because it's an opportunity to buy one's own hard hat. Mine's pink, but other colours and effects are available.

6. Your first unplanned fire evacuation

However well trained you are, the first time you hear the school bell ringing outside of a lesson changeover you'll experience a sense of dread like no other. The ability to hold your keys, clipboards, two walkie talkies and an emergency bag whilst putting on a hi-vis is one only the most elite SBLs have mastered.

WHAT DID YOU SCORE?

1-2: NOVICE

Consider buddying up with a more experienced SBL to prepare for when these events happen – because they will.

3-4: INTERMEDIATE

You've got some great experience but there's always more to learn. Keep going, because you're well on the way to mastery

5-6: EXPERT

You've nailed it, so sit back and enjoy the rest of the ride. Just kidding – get yourself out there, find a new SBL to mentor and pass on all that wonderful knowledge.

Hilary Goldsmith is director of finance at a secondary school in Brighton

 @sbm365

 sbm365.wordpress.com

YOUR SBM'S TIME IS MONEY

Hayley Dunn examines what the 'business' side of being an SBM entails – and considers whether schools are making full use of the skills theirs has to offer

It's time to lose the neat tagline that says the benefit of having an SBM is that 'it saves 30% of headteacher time'. The role is so much more than that.

I try to illustrate the value of my time by explaining the concept of chargeable time in the business world. When I worked in industry, I had to account for my time by recording it in six-minute units. Any time that wasn't chargeable to a client wasn't adding profit to the business.

If you calculate your hourly rate, you can easily explain the cost of you undertaking a task and querying whether it's the best use of your chargeable time. Working out the 'chargeable time' cost of meetings is an interesting exercise...

THE 'TWO-MINUTE RULE'

We all have the same number of hours in the day and various demands on our time. The SBM has one of the most diverse roles within the SLT, with responsibility for areas that include finance, buildings, payroll, contracts and health & safety, all of which are important in their own right.

Without managing our time, it can start to manage us. If we aren't careful we can end up working in a reactive way, only ever dealing with the most urgent tasks – and that can often be because of demands and interruptions from others, rather than because we're not planning and organising our time well.

Emails are a particular time thief that need a good strategy to manage, so that your inbox doesn't become your to do list. I use the 'two minute rule' – if a task will take less than two minutes, I do it straight away. If it takes any longer, it goes on to a list.

Allocating space in your schedule during term time to work away from school will allow for periods of time where you can work uninterrupted. Planned well in advance, you can let colleagues know that you won't be available for a morning or a day. I recently saw an SBM share on Twitter that they're much more productive on days where they work half of the day, because they know they have a short amount of time that has to be focused on their most important tasks.

KEY CHALLENGES

I recently accessed free coaching through the government's Women Leading in Education initiative (see tinyurl.com/psm-wlie). Working with a coach made me realise that I was working on too many different things and needed to narrow what I focused my time on. I'm now using a simple technique of dividing an A4 page in four and listing my priorities in terms of my work, my professional development, me personally and my family life (see '4 Priority Areas').

There's a list of challenges that SBMs often share that they're facing. The main ones include time pressures, funding and cost pressures that make budgets difficult to balance, increased accountability and increased workload.

To that, you can add policy changes and a constant flow of new and updated requirements which can be hard to keep up with, high challenge coupled with low support, isolation, parity with SLT colleagues and the elusive life work balance.

The impact of high challenge, low support in the context of coaching is a member of staff who feels demotivated and disenfranchised. The pressures of unmanageable workloads, hardships in balancing the budget and increased

scrutiny all add to the challenge, while budget pressures mean that access to development opportunities become a 'nice to have if we can afford it', rather than essential.

START COLLABORATING

Isolation can occur when an SBM is likely to be the only individual undertaking the role. It can be hard when colleagues don't understand the workload involved and the role's competing deadlines, pressures and challenges.

We need to be working closely with other leaders, building a strong relationship with the curriculum lead and adopting a joined up approach, using techniques such as the curriculum-led financial planning modelling and making it possible to shadow other leaders for a day.

One vital way in which SBMs can access support in dealing with their challenges is through collaboration. *The School Business Manager's Handbook* is an excellent example of collaborative working, containing experience and tips shared by practitioners at different stages of their career. There are other brilliant examples happening all around the country, such as one SBL Group that's worked together on GDPR and collaboratively produced a set of resources that would have amounted to an overwhelming task for one person working on their own.



CHOOSE YOUR PATH

The SBM role is continuing to evolve and develop, throwing up an array of exciting opportunities. Practitioners can pursue a career path that includes roles such as the traditional bursar/school business manager with general responsibility that covers a variety of areas, to more specialist roles in certain disciplines such as finance, HR and PR. For the ambitious types, there's a growing number of executive roles coming to the fore, including chief finance officers and chief operating officers.

The opportunities available are exciting and diverse for those who are willing to adapt. The challenge for practitioners is to decide which route suits them best and to plan their professional development appropriately. By tailoring my professional development, creating a strong support network and building on my knowledge and skills, I've moved from being an LA finance officer to becoming a business manager in a

single maintained primary school, and latterly assumed the role of finance director in a MAT.

An essential attribute for those working in the school business management profession is the ability to choose between competing priorities, because there's never going to be less to do and your time will always be pressured. And yet, many business managers simultaneously continue to be an under-utilised resource in their schools and MATs. Many possess commercial instincts, an ability to take calculated risks and the leadership skills needed to lead and manage strategic plans.

We can be the ones flagging up those early warning signs that things aren't on track, reporting on potential issues and presenting solutions. It's time to prepare yourself for being a next generation business leader.



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

published by John Catt

4 PRIORITY AREAS

WORK

- Carry out Month-end checks
- Draft board report
- Plan agenda for the team meeting

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Research for article for PSM
- Arrange training on curriculum-led Financial Planning (CLFP)
- Prepare for coaching session

ME

- Dentist appointment

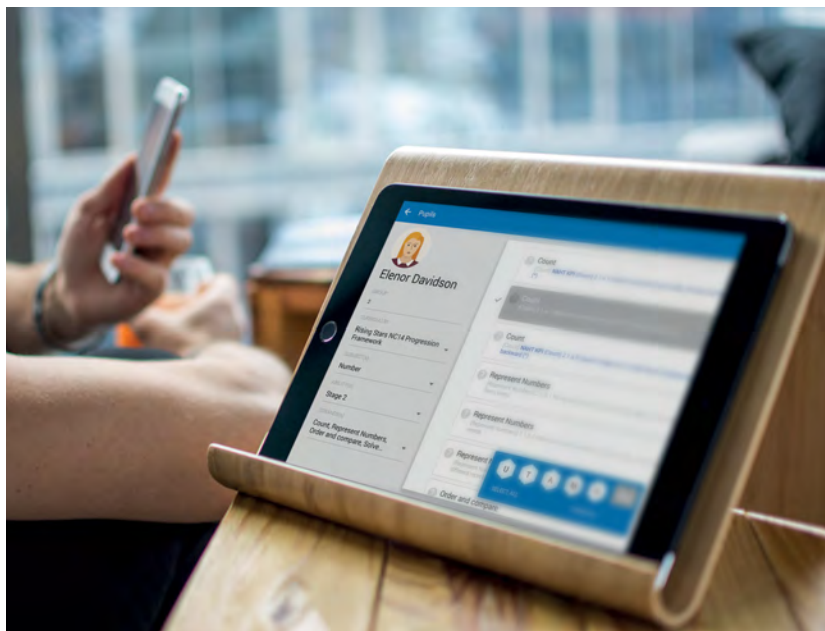
FAMILY

- Doctors appointment
- Complete trip consent
- Book haircuts



Ask the Expert

In response to the release of the DfE's workload toolkit, **Tanya Parker** discusses how you can generate meaningful assessment data without creating an unnecessary workload burden for your teachers



Tanya Parker is an experienced education professional, passionate about pupils' learning. At Classroom Monitor she supports teachers and leaders to use technology in a way that reduces workload whilst enhancing effectiveness.

Why collate assessment data?

It's important to avoid the trap of collecting data for the sake of it, just because you feel that you should. Any practice taking place in school needs to have a definable positive impact on the learners. The most useful data is that which can be used multiple times –

reporting and tracking, as well as teaching and learning.

What educational impact can come from assessment data?

The data can provide insights that will help with demonstrating pupil progress, comparing cohorts and identifying pupil interventions. It can also assist with planning and the identification of next steps in learning for groups, where support might be needed and highlighting areas for additional challenge.

Assessment data can further help with parental engagement. Sharing your assessment information with parents will not only inform them about what their child has learned, but can also empower them to support their child's next steps. Finally, it provides a useful means of ensuring the effectiveness of intervention programmes and resources.

What data will Ofsted expect to see?

Ofsted makes the point that they don't expect to see anything beyond the data used to support teaching within your school. You have the freedom to collect the information you need in the format that works best for your teachers, SLT and governors. Ofsted states that "Such information should be provided to inspectors in the format that the school would ordinarily use to monitor the progress of pupils in that school."

What assessment information should schools be collecting?

The DfE recommendation is to consider, "What data will be useful and for what

purpose, and then collect the minimum amount required." If it doesn't add any value to teaching, or give you useful insight, then don't collect it. Also, the balance between formative and summative assessment recording should be determined by what works for you – there's no 'correct' way of doing it.

How do we make sure that assessment doesn't create unnecessary workload for teachers?

The frequency depends on the type of data. Adopting a 'little and often' approach to gathering formative assessment will enable timely impact on learning. Summative assessments will be used less frequently to compare against a standard, typically at the end of a unit or term. Consider also the level of detail needed. Only collect data that could have an impact, and crucially, collect that data once, then use it many times.

How does Classroom Monitor help?

We know that teachers work hard and are always looking to be more efficient and effective. Classroom Monitor helps teachers and schools get the most value from their assessment effort. At its heart, the system encourages assessment to support the teacher, with data for tracking and parental reporting seamlessly building upon that. Being fully customisable, it can provide you with a solution that perfectly supports your assessment framework.

FURTHER INFORMATION

To find out more, call 0330 0555 811 or visit classroommonitor.co.uk



How to buy... Cleaning Products



VISIT: [YPO.CO.UK](https://www.ypo.co.uk) FOLLOW: @YPOINFO

YPO's category buyer for cleaning, Kelly Snee, looks at how schools' considerations when ordering cleaning products will likely include how effective they are, how much they cost and how harmful they are to the environment...

WHAT'S NEW?

Teachers and consumers across the UK are increasingly opting for eco-friendly cleaning products, having become ever more mindful of the risks and harm that such products can have on the environment.

For their part, companies specialising in eco-friendly products have managed to take their messaging into the mainstream, showing customers that 'leaning green' when purchasing cleaning products can now get you a product that's both effective at what it's supposed to do and better for the planet – while at the same time not having to necessarily pay significantly more.

For a good example of how new technology has changed the way we think about cleaning products, take Electro Chemical Activation (ECA). Using nothing more than salt, water and electricity, it's possible for an onsite ECA dispenser to produce up to 40 litres of environmentally-friendly cleaning and disinfecting solution per day.

LESS IS MORE

Look at using concentrated products, since opting for these will typically save you money and leave less of a toll on the environment than their non-concentrated equivalents.

The benefits of concentrated products become easy to see when considering the impact of using them at scale. They require less packaging (resulting in less material getting dumped at landfill sites), take up less space (freeing up demand for transport and shipping) and reduce the amount of fuel needed to distribute them.

Given that concentrated products have to be diluted before use, staff who use them will often keep a supply of reusable spray bottles to hand. Regular users of ready-to-use products will tend to just dispose of their (typically sealed) packaging once they're finished with them, which contributes significant amounts of waste to landfill sites.

BEST VALUE

Once you've decided on which general products you're wanting to use, be sure to compare suppliers on both price and the quality of their products. Try asking other schools or organisations in your local area which cleaning product supplier or distributor they use and what sort of deal they get. You might even be able to negotiate down the price of orders by partnering up with one or more other schools.

Next, look at trying to rationalise your purchases – could you potentially buy a combination chemical or cleaning agent that performs the same job of two separate cleaners? This is where concentrated cleaning products can again be helpful – being able to store more units of a given product than you would otherwise can mean not having to place orders as often. Note that you can purchase concentrates from YPO, which offers loan dispensers for free.

HOW TO APPLY FOR FUNDING GRANTS

Make that next grant application a successful one, with these words of advice from Sue Birchall

When I first joined the education sector back in the dark ages, grants that schools could bid for were much more readily available. During my first few years as an SBM, the amount of additional income I was able to generate through bid writing could cover my salary. My headteacher at the time even used to say that it was a good performance target for me to work to. I'd hate to have that now!

That's not to say that it's become impossible to attract donations and monies through bidding for grant funding – just that it's now a far more structured and time intensive process. And if you adopt some particular processes and habits, you can significantly increase your chances of success.

WHAT'S OUT THERE?

There are many places where you can look for grants, including Funding Central (fundingcentral.org.uk), GrantNav (grantnav.threesixtygiving.org) and Beehive (beehivegiving.org). Your LA or school partnership may also keep lists or offer resources that can connect you with fund providers and explain what they'll support.

Do your homework – be clear as to exactly what support you actually need, and make you'll be able to describe and relate it to the funders to whom you'll be applying. Drawing up a business or project management plan around your proposal will enable you to examine the various aspects of your project – resourcing, viability sustainability – in a structured and detailed way. Doing this before the grant application stage will make it easier to match your project with an appropriate funder and present a convincing case.

Before starting the bid process proper, ensure that you've also done some research around the area your project is intended to support. Ask all stakeholders who'll be affected by the project for their views, and gather supporting data that

will help prove to funders that the need is there, and that it's a project worth supporting.

This can also be used as an opportunity to seek additional support from your stakeholder group, since parents and relatives will often know of further potential funding sources themselves and how to access them. I've previously been able to secure match funding from major banks for projects this way, and it can also a good way of getting parents more involved.

PERFECT MATCH

If the body responsible for matching your application to its fund can't identify a clear correlation between your bid and the fund's terms, your application will go no further. Most funders will receive a whole host of applications; if the criteria don't match, bids will simply be thrown out without any further consideration.

It may be possible to secure match funding through another form of support or funding source and file more than one grant application per project. Give some thought as to whether you might be able to attract local partners, collaborate with another school or even raise some of the necessary funds with the aid of parental support.

It's worth noting that funders tend to prefer forming part of a larger funding strategy to being the sole supporter of a project. From their point of view, they won't want to bear the full impact in terms of cost and reputational harm if the project turns out to be unsuccessful.

COST IMPLICATIONS

Bear in mind that most funders will typically concentrate their support on certain types of project. Some will be looking to make one-off investments in

projects that involve a very specific outcome, such as a new build or renovation. Others might prefer to support an ongoing project which is intended to have a significant lifespan. What you include in those bids will obviously need to be different, though the first option will be easier to quantify.

With long-term projects, you'll have to consider the implications of what the ongoing costs will involve, while also looking at any accompanying statutory responsibilities and the financial implications they might have. Funding agreements will often include a clause that allows the funder to withdraw support in the event of any unforeseen circumstances, restrictions or sudden cessation once the project has begun, in order to protect their investment (and that of shareholders, if applicable).

If your project doesn't match a particular funding criteria, there's often no reason why you can't rethink it, re-badge it and start again (though be aware that some funds will have restrictions in place regarding reapplications). On a similar note, once you've written your project and bidding rationale, you don't need to reinvent the wheel each time. Use it to apply to multiple funders – the basics of what you need will be there, and will just need matching to the fund in question.

If your school has an active PTA, your project can become something for its members to get actively involved in and provide a challenging, yet rewarding activity for those members possessing the appropriate skills. It could even reach beyond the PTA and succeed in engaging others from your parent community who have a particular interest in the area relevant to your project.

Use social media to advertise what you're doing to as wide an audience as possible. Sometimes charity really does begin at home, and you may well find that other members of your local community are keen to get involved and support you.

RECIPROCAL ASSISTANCE

You'll likely find that the most well-resourced funders will be big businesses with charitable intent, and local business or support organisations who would appreciate some public awareness of the support they've provided for a particular cause or charity.

Think about what you can offer them in return for that support. You have a significant stakeholder base – not just the children and their parents, but also their relatives, work colleagues and social contacts. They can give your funders something tangible in return (a larger base of potential customers, positive word of mouth), and also potentially

increase the audience for your project.

Above all, be tenacious, don't give up and be prepared to innovate. Don't assume that a rejection automatically means having to rethink your intentions. When looked at in a certain way, every rejection can be turned into an opportunity to improve your practice and sharpen your application skills.

And finally – always remember to say thank you!

9 APPLICATION TIPS

- 1 Be clear as to what you're raising funds for
- 2 Check that the needs of your project match the application criteria of each fund you approach
- 3 Research the market and test your ideas
- 4 Look into the possibility of securing match funding for your project
- 5 Calculate the overall lifespan and lifecycle of your project
- 6 Where permitted, don't be afraid to reapply
- 7 Consider enlisting some outside support for your application process from the school community
- 8 Share your efforts – both successes and failures
- 9 Give something back



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

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Educational Play works closely alongside teachers, PTAs and children to create structures that encourage play, active learning and enable children to interact. Structures which are safe, look good within the school environment and will provide years of enjoyment for many children.

WHAT THEY'LL LOVE AND WHAT THEY'LL LEARN

Teachers and children alike will love the products available from Educational Play.

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Children have got energy to burn, so let them run around in a safe environment that offers challenges such as climbing walls and balance beams. Our Step-Up range includes multiple platforms and steps that can be used to create different levels and circuits – ideal for active and 'free flow' play.

Expressive Learning

Playhouses and classroom lofts can easily be transformed into role play and 'dress up' areas – one day an ice cream shop, the next a garage. They're perfect for bringing such projects to life and can help teachers easily switch themes to link in with current topics. Playhouses give children a space

they can call their own – a space where imagination is the only boundary.

Social Play

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

Hands on Play

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

great way of making hands-on activities more inclusive. A sandpit provides a play space that children can share while working together to construct roads, build castles or dig tunnels, at the same time learning about tools and developing their physical, cognitive and social skills. Sand allows for exploratory play, in a way that sees children investigating its texture and qualities as dry grains and when compacted. Add a little water, and that sand will change in way that allows children to shape it into anything their imagination allows.

Why Educational Play?

We design, build and install our products to ensure quality and compliance with all relevant regulations. We think carefully about the requirements of the national curriculum, and particularly the importance of outdoor play. From building motor skills to stimulating imaginative play, our designs aim to achieve the twin objectives of helping pupils learn and helping them have fun. As each project is individually made, you can add your own colours and choice of accessories if you wish. Sometimes you may need something a little different, perhaps to fit an awkward space or around an existing tree. Creating something special, just for your school, is a speciality of ours. Talk to us about your ideas and what you need – we are experts at providing solutions that will work within your budget. As you'd expect, we take our safeguarding responsibilities very seriously – not just in the products we supply, but also our time on site. You can expect courtesy and efficiency from our staff, all of whom are DBS certified and experienced in working within educational environments. We also offer a maintenance package for further peace of mind.



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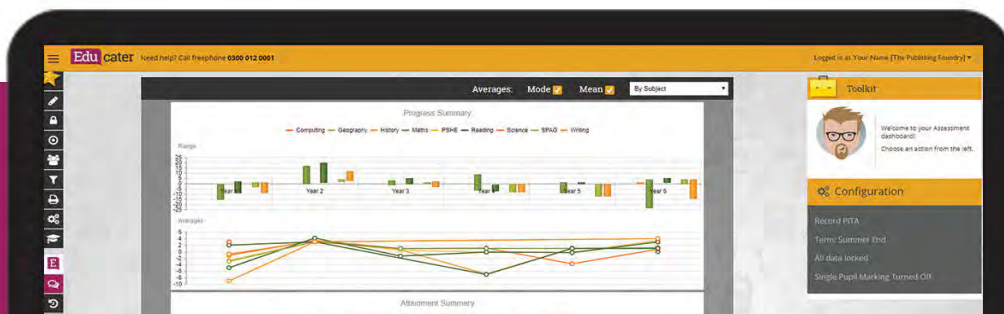
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HOW TO HANDLE A CRISIS OF CONFIDENCE

Headteachers aren't immune from the sudden lack of confidence that can strike anyone in a position of responsibility. Kevin Harcombe looks at how those affected can get back on track

Have you ever thought, 'Am I really up to this job?' If not, then you probably aren't. Certainty is for dictators and losers; a little self-doubt distinguishes the most effective leaders, and is a mark of humanity, humility and the ability to reflect. Yet too much doubt can be paralysing.

Confidence can be eroded gradually over many months or smashed by a single event. Poor behaviour, underperforming staff, bad results and antagonistic parents can all keep you sat in your car outside school, trying to muster the will to enter, but appearing confident can be the first step to stopping the rot and regaining the real thing.

Take a deep breath and act like you have all the confidence in the world. Stride purposefully into that building, make eye contact with everyone you meet and announce through your body language that you're in charge, bloodied but unbowed – even if you're actually quaking in your boots and sick at heart.

Your confidence will be sorely tested if faced with a large group of disgruntled staff or parents. Never, under any circumstances agree to meet angry mobs in a large group.

I attended one such meeting early in my career and it didn't end well. Instead, meet your campaigners one by one in the privacy of your office where you have the home advantage and a fighting chance of picking them off.

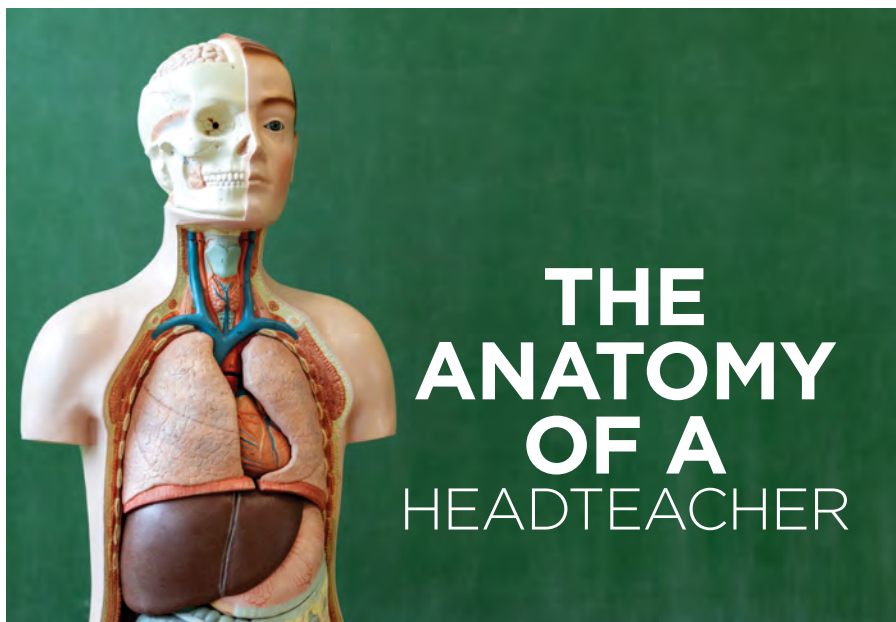
If you've been knocked back by a bad set of results, did you see it coming? Did you take steps to boost the students' chances? Did you prepare the PR ground, so that your governors, staff and parents were already expecting bad news before results day, thereby dissipating its impact?

If your bad results are surprising, find a trusted confidant in your setting (or outside it) who can act as a sounding board, since a lack of confidence can affect your ability to see straight. Above all, though, keep a sense of perspective. Exam results are important, but not a matter of life and death.

Some leaders lose confidence after giving negative feedback to staff, worrying about it, taking it home and stewing on it. If someone's underperforming, that's not your fault. They'll need support to improve, and it's your duty to make them aware of this. Prepare some notes of your arguments and evidence ahead of time, and at the meeting, get any bad news out quickly and clearly – 'That lesson wasn't up to standard' – keeping the personal separate from the professional. You might not be talking to a 'bad person', but they are being paid to teach. And right now, they're not earning their money.

In summary, wear big hats, buy yourself time by acting the part and manage those things which, unmanaged, may dent your confidence. And if all else fails, simply list all your achievements since taking the job – because believe me, there'll be many more than you think.

Kevin Harcombe is the headteacher at Redlands Primary School, Fareham



THE ANATOMY OF A HEADTEACHER

Jill Berry considers four key elements that have informed her school leadership practice and where they came from

Every good idea I've had in my life has, I think, been borrowed from someone else. We're influenced by those we live and work with, and in terms of our professional development, we tend to learn a great deal from both positive and negative role models.

When I look back on my headship, I think of how the lessons and advice of former colleagues, friends in the profession and other headteachers both helped me formulate my vision of the head I hoped to be, and supported me as I honed my school leader skills.

The following four examples of this were particularly pertinent:

1 TEMPERATURE TAKING

A friend of mine who took up her headship shortly before I did explained how she'd set up one-to-one meetings with all members of staff in her first term. To give a focus to the conversation and encourage them to talk, she asked them to tell her one thing about the school they hoped might change under her leadership, and one thing they hoped would never change. I thought this was an excellent idea, and proceeded to do the same thing, using the same questions, in my first term. It was an effective way of taking the temperature of the school, identifying frustrations and finding what it was about the school that was particularly valued. Thank you, Jean.

2 KEEPING YOUR HAND IN

When I was head of sixth form, one of the deputy heads I worked with applied for headship. He told me that if he

were successful, he planned on teaching each year 7 class maths for one lesson each week, but that he'd be paired with their 'normal' maths teacher. His reasoning was that if he had to be out of school, the class would be taught as usual and wouldn't lose out. I opted to do the same when starting my headship (though my subject was English), and it was hugely useful with respect to learning the names of, and getting to know, each individual pupil, and was a strategy I continued for the full 10 years of my headship. Thank you, Anthony.

3 HONESTY AND FRANKNESS

When I was a deputy, I remember the second head I worked with sharing honestly with me how her confidence as a leader could fluctuate from day to day. "I have days when I think I'm actually quite good at this, invariably followed by days where I think, 'Who am I kidding? I'm barely getting away with this and someone will find me out!'" There were times during my headship when I felt just like that, and it was helpful and reassuring to know that I wasn't alone. Thank you, Angela.

4 FORGING YOUR OWN PATH

Finally, while reading the book *Heads – Expert advice for changing times* (see tinyurl.com/psm-heads) I found the following advice invaluable: "There is only one way to be a head, and that is your way." Thank you, Brenda.

Jill Berry is a leadership consultant, author and former headteacher

“I fear for the loss of humanity in our system”

The pressures now routinely placed on school leaders are starting to adversely affect children's futures, says Viv Grant

Over the past decade, I've witnessed first-hand how high levels of public scrutiny and personal accountability have eroded the profession's ability to take care of, and meet the human needs of, those at the frontline.

It came as no surprise to me when The Key's 2017 State of Education Survey Report (see tinyurl.com/psm-key-2017) found that “86% of school leaders think the perception of the profession has got worse over the past five years and believe this is negatively affecting morale.”

School leaders are now endemically under-supported, with little help or training provided to enable them to deal with the intense demands of the role. The increased pressure for results, competitive league tables and the football manager-style ‘hire and fire’ culture in some schools has intensified and made

a bad situation worse.

The pace and volume of change in our system over the past decade has only exacerbated matters. Increased ambiguity, inconsistency, insecurity and staggeringly high levels of public scrutiny and personal accountability have further added to the pressures that many already feel.

How do I know this? Well, increasingly over the past few years, I've seen many school leaders pushed close to the brink of a nervous breakdown as a direct result of changes within the system. I've received desperate pleas from the partners of heads, and heard through emails and phone calls of inhumane treatment of some who have since ‘disappeared’ from the system.

I fear more and more for the loss of humanity in our education system. SATs and GCSE results, Ofsted grades and league tables now appear to be a greater priority than the health and wellbeing of our

teachers and school leaders. This isn't how education should be. This is not how we fulfil society's hopes and dreams for our children. Those on the frontline need better support.

This has to be understood and taken seriously. If the emotional and psychological needs of school leaders aren't met, then not only do our school leaders themselves suffer, but school improvement efforts are also put at risk.

As someone who cares deeply about education and the future we're creating for our children, I try to do my part. Each year we host an annual ‘Education for the Soul’ conference, which aims to give leaders a space where they can have honest conversations about the issues they're facing, replenish their passion and sense of purpose, and discover how best to have their own needs met amidst the myriad challenges they face.

I've seen how restorative these events these can be, but it's clear that there's still much more that needs to be done across the system to stem the tide of leavers departing the profession. We need a whole new conversation around wellbeing and supporting great leadership in schools. A conversation centred on how we can learn to properly take care of the ‘person in the role’.

The price of continually failing to do so is one we can no longer afford to pay. When we fail to adequately recognise what it takes to create great school leaders today, we also fail our children and their hopes of a better tomorrow.

“I've seen many school leaders pushed close to the brink of a nervous breakdown”



Viv Grant is the director of Integrity Coaching,

which specialises in tackling professional and emotional isolation among school leaders

 @vivgrant

 integritycoaching.co.uk

DON'T EXPECT A QUIET YEAR

Anthony David gets out the crystal ball and considers how events over the past few months are likely to shape your workload between now and next summer...

September 2017 marked the start of a rare fallow year that saw no major overhauls in education, but this year is quite different.

Our legal duties are being stretched again with various updates to the 'Keeping children safe in education' statutory guidance (KCSiE – see tinyurl.com/dfe-kcsie). GDPR is really starting to make its presence felt. Then, of course, there are the ever-evaporating finances, staffing crises and significant updates to both Ofsted and the Church of England's SIAMS school inspections frameworks. In some ways it's hard to know what to focus on first!

My child protection radar says I should look at KCSiE initially, but in reality we must first look at our budgets – and in particular at two major announcements that will affect them.

RUNNING LATE

The first of these are the incoming additional staff pay rises and teacher pay rises. What we know is that the anticipated 4% pay rise for additional staff (spread over two years) has significantly increased to between 16% and 20%, depending on colleagues' pay scales. There'll be a definite impact this year – somewhere around £17,000 for the average sized school – but it's the 2019/20 budget that will likely see a steep rise in costs, easily over £50,000 above anticipated increases. That alone will do much to damage already tight budgets.

The real concern, however, is teaching salaries, including leadership. At the time of writing (late July 2018) the DfE had just published the recommendations from the School Teachers' Review Body (STRB). Frustratingly, I had been informed by the STRB that it submitted

its recommendations to the Department in early May this year; judging by their tone of voice, they were as frustrated at the DfE's delayed publication as school leaders. Interestingly, the publication date is followed by a six-week period of consultation that, usefully for the government, closes just as schools return.

Publishing on the 24th July, after the vast majority of schools have closed for the summer, means that school leaders will likely have had very limited access to their finance officers when calculating the impact of the pay rise. If I were cynical, I'd wonder if this was deliberately planned...

SIGNIFICANT PRESSURE

So where has this 3.5% pay rise come from? The NEU had called for a pay rise of 5%, following on from the 6.5% pay rise awarded to NHS employees in March this year. This is arguably a minimum pay rise, given inflation over the last few years, but enough of a sweetener to calm the unions. Maybe.

The general advice to headteachers had been to factor in a 2% increase. If that's what you've budgeted for, then the recently announced dip in in leadership pay rewards (1.5%) will create some overhead. Equally, if the government is true to its word that this increase is funded, you may find that you have a little of bit of unexpected excess. Don't worry, that'll be absorbed by the TAs – it's all got to come from somewhere!

YOUR PRIORITIES

Let's pretend for now that a magical formula for funding schools fairly (in the true sense – not the 'unfair' funding formula we have currently) has been put

in place. Budgets aside, what else should you be concentrating on throughout 2018/19?

First, you must ensure that all colleagues, volunteers and governors read section one of KCSiE 2018. Note that the document in question has increased in size by nearly 50% since it was first reviewed in 2016, and that it's

“The real concern is teaching salaries, including leadership”

pay rewards (1.5%) will create some overhead. Equally, if the government is true to its word that this increase is funded, you may find that you have a little

of bit of unexpected excess. Don't worry, that'll be absorbed by the TAs – it's all got to come from somewhere!



now mandatory for teachers to also read annex A. I'd suggest you keep a register for colleagues to sign, stating that they agree with and understand what they've read, along with the Child Protection, Behaviour, Code of Conduct and Safeguarding policies.

Note that there are key distinctions in the language used, notably 'must' and 'should'. The term 'must' means the person in question is legally required to do something. 'Should' is used when the advice set out should be followed unless there's good reason not to.

Senior leaders should further note some significant changes to section 3, 'Safer Recruitment'. A core change alongside GDPR is the process around requesting references; these can now only be requested before interview with a candidate's agreement. There should be no reason for the candidate to disagree – why include them as a reference otherwise? – but you must be clear that you've asked them before the request is made.

COMPLETE OVERHAUL

Finally, a brief word on the inspection frameworks. The new SIAMS framework has been completely overhauled, and in keeping with the current vogue, the bar has been raised. There's now one core question, as opposed to the four in the previous version, with that core question essentially sub-divided into seven sections.

YOUR TO-DO LIST

- First and foremost is the need to address the growing funding gap. This, more than anything else, will eat your time.
- Once that's been considered, there are still safeguarding updates and GDPR agreements that will require embedding.
- If that wasn't enough, there are new inspection frameworks to get your head round. Thought this was going to be a quiet year? Think again...

The language has been changed, as have the expectations concerning relationships between schools and churches. Given that this affects more schools than any other group (over 5,000) these changes are considerable. Initial estimations are that less than 2% of schools will be able to achieve the revised highest grade.

At a time of constrained finances, reduced staff and depleted resources, it's arguable that the church has chosen to raise the stakes at a time when schools' morale is at an all-time low. If only 2% will be able to attain the highest grade, will anybody realistically try? I'd like to think so, but it does seem quite a challenge.

As for Ofsted, based on what we know already we shouldn't expect to see too much change just yet. As ever, though, the devil is in the detail, which we'll know in September 2019. For now, we know that the 3-year cycle has been replaced with 4 years (given how stretched the service is, this is no great surprise) and details for the 2019 overhaul will come out throughout the year. Will we see the removal of the outstanding grade? Who knows...

In short, the only thing that's clear about this year is that it's going to be a busy one!



Anthony David is an executive headteacher of two North London schools



HOW HEADS SHOULD MANAGE THEIR ENERGY

Julia Steward examines some of the daily challenges that can sap leaders of energy, and the impact that can have if not kept in check

There's little that's more guaranteed to drain your energy than a sense of not being in control of your own agenda.

If you find yourself constantly reacting, rather than having the space to plan and implement your own agenda, it's time to stand back and take stock.

If you've ever tried to Skype someone on an inadequate internet connection that's constantly disconnected, or had your favourite television programme interrupted with the message 'Sorry, you don't have enough bandwidth to play this right now' you'll have an objective illustration of what's happening to your brain when you're trying to do too many things at once. You simply have insufficient 'cognitive bandwidth' (working memory) to be able to think through all the items that require attention.

Add to that the fact that the part of the brain you're compromising is the prefrontal cortex, responsible for complex decision-making, planning and creative thinking, and you'll see how easy it is to get into a vicious circle. You're too busy, so you make less helpful decisions, so you agree to undertake work when you already have more than you can deal with.

A meeting that's cancelled at the last minute feels like a gift from the gods. The psychological effect of suddenly having space where there previously appeared to be none may well be greater than is merited by the amount you achieve in the two hours that you might otherwise have been at the meeting, fretting about the fact that you're wasting your time.

CONSTANT AVAILABILITY

Some of us are larks, some are owls and some fall in between. Recognising the

circumstances under which you do your best work will allow you to focus on the more difficult aspects when you're at your best.

An 'open door policy' that involves being constantly available if you're in school is death to productive working. If you're constantly available to others, are you in danger of contributing to a culture of dependence? When headteachers justify their constant availability by telling me they want to be approachable and available to staff, I sometimes want to ask whose needs they're serving.

Think back to recently. How many people's difficulties did you hand back to them with encouragement to find a way forward, and how many did you pick up? Just like a parent who holds the bicycle seat of their child as they learn to ride, sometimes you need to let go, even if they might fall, in order to allow them to learn to ride without stabilisers. Questions, rather than answers, will help individuals to find their own solutions.

INSIDIOUS EMAIL

Emails are insidious. If we allow them to, they become like earworms, nagging at us, and diverting us from our own agenda. If I leave my email client open in the background when I'm working on something else, I'm constantly aware of emails pinging in to my inbox and can't avoid seeing the name of the sender and the first few words of the email.

Even if I choose to ignore the email after that, the very fact that I've registered its arrival is sufficient to have taken my focus from the matter in hand. Reading it in full can take me off track altogether, as I make a decision regarding whether I'm going to respond instantly or not. Maybe I need to look up something in order to be helpful to someone else. Before I know where I am, my morning's planning has been hijacked by leaving my

inbox open.

I've learned that a moment's hesitation in responding is a good thing; it allows me to consider whether I have the time and the expertise to meet the demand. Then, of course, there's the dopamine rush to my brain when I respond to (or indeed delete) an email and see the numbers in my inbox diminishing. That's a clear indication of how I've spent my morning. As I'm strongly driven by a need to achieve, providing myself with tangible evidence of a productive morning is motivating.

MAINTAINING CONCENTRATION

There's a difference between not allowing constant interruptions and working without interruption. If you have a lengthy and demanding task to undertake, it's wise to build in some breaks in order to be able to sustain your levels of concentration. You'll find your own rhythm, but if you spend three hours in front of a computer screen without a break, each hour is likely to be less productive than the one before.

Set an alarm to remind you to get up and walk somewhere, to give your pre-frontal cortex space to recover before you ask more of it. Signs that you need a break include re-reading the same sentence several times without taking it in, checking emails or checking something on the internet (a great distraction, but not a proper break). If you know you're tired, stop working.

If you were to insert an energy smart meter into your brain, you'd find that the prefrontal cortex – the part of the brain responsible for executive function, often referred to as the PFC – is energy hungry.

It operates at its best when well rested and when bouts of intense activity are interspersed with low-level activities, such



as answering routine email. For maximum efficiency in using the PFC, it's a good idea to allow periods of respite between intense concentration on complex issues. How often have you struggled to complete – or indeed begin – something creative, only to find that if you leave and come back to it, suddenly things become clear?

WHO DRAINS YOUR ENERGY?

Sir Tim Brighouse, sometime leader of the London Challenge and a well-known writer on UK education, used to talk about radiators and drains in the staff room.


The radiators are the enthusiasts who are always up for a challenge and greet each day as an opportunity to learn. The drains are the ones that sit in a huddle in the staffroom until the last possible moment when the bell goes. They mutter under their breath when a new idea is proffered at a staff meeting, and phrases such as 'That'll never work' and 'We tried that five years ago' are frequently heard to pass their lips.


Leaders need to be eternally (though not unrealistically) optimistic if they're to win hearts and minds. On a day when things aren't going well, it's easy to feel sucked down by the drains. Radiators give off warmth; their heat is your energy. In your professional life you may be unable to avoid the drains, but the more radiators you have, the greater the chance of the warmth reducing the damp of the drains.



Julia Steward is a school leadership consultant providing one-to-one coaching,

workshops and development programmes focused on resilience in leadership

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

 chrysalisleadershipdevelopment.com

This article is based on an edited extract from Julia Steward's book, *Sustaining Resilience for Leadership*, published by John Catt (johncatt.com)

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1

Andreas Schleicher talks politics, pupils and PISA
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2

Why schools are living in a false reality
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3

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tinyurl.com/psmsocial

4

What SBLs say (and what they mean)
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3 Top Attractions

1



A school day like no other at ZSL London Zoo

2



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3



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animals in our exciting walk-through exhibits, such as 'In with the Lemurs', 'Rainforest Life' and 'In with the Spiders'!

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Why not upgrade your visit to one of our engaging education sessions? These are delivered by our award-winning team of Discovery & Learning Officers, and cater for all age groups from foundation right up to post-16 and higher education. All sessions are linked to the National Curriculum and

exam board syllabi, and will give your students the opportunity to develop skills and explore concepts that include the relationship between humans and wildlife, evolution, biodiversity, climate change and the importance of conservation. They will also have the chance to handle physical objects from the natural world, and could potentially even meet a species from one of our zoos!

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We also free animal talks and feeds, free pre-visits for teachers, free coach parking (at ZSL Whipsnade Zoo) and a digital outreach programme that can bring some zoo excitement into your classroom. The proceeds from all zoo admissions go towards the conservation of our animals and their habitats.



Find out more about the educational and fun school trips offered by ZSL London and Whipsnade Zoos by contacting 0344 225 1868 or visiting [zsl.org/education](https://www.zsl.org/education)

Whizz Pop Bang

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

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

Reviewed by: John Dabell

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



PSM
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VERDICT

- ✓ Champions and encourages a love of science
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Reviewed by: John Dabell



This is the time of the year when you find out who knows the difference between 'stationary' and 'stationery'. It's also the time of the year when you know who can shop like a ninja.

Tight budgets and being frugal doesn't just mean saving money, but spending your money wisely. It can be tempting to go for the bottom-end of cheap, but that will likely result in you actually spending more in the long run. Poor quality items don't tend to last.

We need to choose our tools carefully and consider those two big factors when making our purchasing decisions – affordability and quality. It's easy to cut corners, but happily you don't have to when it's possible to buy decent quality at low prices.

The CLASSMATES® collection of stationery resources from Hope Education offers plenty of choice at very reasonable prices. If you're looking for a class supply of assorted colouring pencils for under £20, you can't really go wrong with a box of 288 to keep you going. How about 144 HB hexagonal shaft pencils that will come in handy for general classroom use for just £7.19? You're definitely going to need some ballpoint pens – here you can pick up 50 for £3.99.

I've always tended to upgrade when it comes to things like gluesticks and dry-wipe markers, since bitter experience has taught me that the glue won't always stick and the markers will soon dry up. But these CLASSMATES® resources are surprisingly good, and haven't disappointed or let me down yet.

For someone who's a self-proclaimed stationery junkie that gets a kick out of going to certain retail outlets, I'm impressed with these CLASSMATES® supplies, and would recommend them as a smart choice. They'll see to it that you spend your budget intelligently, representing as they do the very opposite of fashion-fad novelty stationery that's both costly and unnecessary.

In *Great Expectations*, Charles Dickens writes that "There was something very comfortable in having plenty of stationery." Well, he wouldn't be disappointed by the CLASSMATES® collection.

In these cash-strapped, deficit-driven and frugal times, it's reassuring to know that teachers needn't spend hundreds a year on classroom supplies themselves – not when there are resources such as these that are well within budget of every school. This is what CLASSMATES® are really for.

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Classroom Monitor's goal is the same as teaching staff both nationally and internationally; to improve teaching and learning for every child as well as cutting down on teacher workload.

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Classroom Monitor allows schools to create their own bespoke assessment frameworks, as well as being able to adapt existing off-the-shelf frameworks to match the needs of their learners. Recording judgements in Classroom Monitor little and often is one of the key ways of helping reduce the time teachers spend on assessment. Using the system in the classroom – especially with the Classroom Monitor Teacher App – is an effective way of doing this. Available for Android and Apple devices, the app gives teachers a simple way of recording assessments instantaneously, plus the ability collect photo or video evidence and upload it directly to their markbook.

Classroom Monitor believes that classroom assessment is fundamental to teaching and learning. To support this, it's offering one PSM reader the chance to win five 7-inch, 8GB Samsung Galaxy Tab A tablets for use in their school. To enter, simply visit the link below and take part in our poll on the teaching and learning impact that data is currently having in your setting.

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*Competition closes at 5pm on 5th November 2018. Winners will be notified within 21 days. Full terms and conditions available at teachwire.net



Why I Love...



Science co-ordinator and Year 6 teacher Kay Wilkie extols the new hands-on science teaching resources from Whizz Pop Bang



“ These resources are full of practical ideas

Being a Year 6 teacher and science coordinator, I'm always on the lookout for innovative and exciting resources to use – so it was very refreshing to find these new teaching resources from *Whizz Pop Bang* magazine. They are full of practical ideas that stimulate interest and encourage children to ask questions that they can investigate through hands-on activities and games. The experiments are really well explained and easy to do in class, using everyday store cupboard ingredients. I was delighted at how much fun the children had, and how much they learnt in the process!

“ They help even the most science-phobic teachers

I tried the 'Electric Art' lesson pack, which came with a pre-prepared PowerPoint presentation, a printable electric circuit game and a lesson plan with full instructions for an activity to make salt dough and use it as an electrical conductor. The lesson plan was clearly linked to the year group objectives, and included full scientific explanations of the science behind the activities. The children got a real buzz out of lighting up their LEDs through their dough! These new resources are all written by teachers in conjunction with scientists, and will help even the most science-phobic teachers deliver accurate, hands-on science.

“ Everything links to the national curriculum

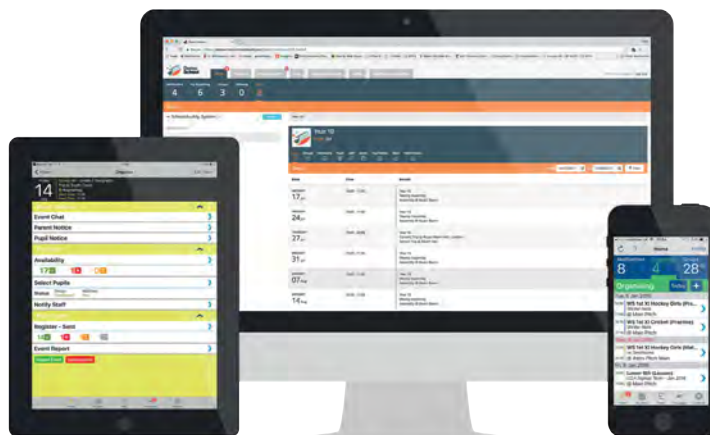
The cross-curricular nature of the resources, with links to reading, speaking and listening, make it easy to raise the profile of science and bring the fun back into a subject that children can easily relate to. I really like the links to magazine articles that are related to the topic, so that children can read around the subject. I found that the practical sessions stimulated lots of 'I wonder what would happen if...?' moments, which led nicely on to follow-up investigations and research into finding out more. It's time to get excited about science again!

Find out more about Whizz Pop Bang at whizzpopbang.com/primary



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While SMS is still useful for emergencies, SchoolsBuddy's push notifications will do the same job for free! They pop up directly on smartphones, and can be automatically generated by tasks performed within the software. Similarly, the sheer volume of paper it takes to print letters – for parental information and school trip consent forms, for example – can be eliminated when sending information and requesting consent from parents electronically via SchoolsBuddy.

Save precious admin time

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To find out more, call 01903 898 119, email info@schoolsibuddy.com or visit schoolsibuddy.com

ALL THINGS CREATED EQUAL...

School leaders who ignore teacher feedback will find it hard to advance their vision, says Emily Tenenbaum

The start of the school year presents a natural point to set your goals for the year ahead. One area that's well worth considering is strengthening staff communication and feedback for improvement. By that, I don't mean feedback for improving teaching, which is doubtless embedded as standard practice in most schools. I mean feedback for improving the *leadership*.

There's no doubt that leadership in schools can be lonely. The structure of schools, especially small primaries, can mean that those traditionally in a position to offer help and advice to school leaders aren't people on the ground. County advisors and leaders from other schools or MATs can offer general leadership advice, but they may not have a working knowledge of your specific school, any unique staff issues and most importantly, of the impact that your leadership decisions and style has on those at the coalface. Without a meaningful method of feedback, school staff can be left at the mercy of a headteacher's decision with no practical way of making their voices heard.

Putting meaningful feedback loops in place as part of your leadership doesn't equate to bowing before your teaching staff's every demand, nor will it involve diluting your core values. It will, however, provide a helpful release valve for staff who can easily become frustrated by top-down decisions that affect their practice, work life balance

and the joy they get from the job.

The educational consultant Dr Neil Hawkes has talked of a values-based leadership style built around a "Hierarchy of needs and not a hierarchy of relationships." It's an interesting phrase that's stayed with me long after turning the final page of his book *From My Heart*. What actions could school leaders take to enable and maintain an equality of relationships with staff across their school?

For me, it starts with knowing the people that work for you – spending downtime with them and giving them opportunities to chat informally about the challenges of the day. It starts with popping by the staff room at break time

and lunch for a cuppa. It starts with placing yourself at the centre of a team, rather than the top of a pyramid.

Teaching is a humbling profession, in that it keeps you learning and progressing. The best teachers learn something new every day; they'll be constantly tailoring their practice to the children in their room that day, taking account of moods, learning needs and attention spans in order to reach their objective for the lesson.

In the same vein, good school leadership calls for more than simply repeating previously successful approaches. It requires you to notice when the parameters change and to adapt to the needs of staff. It's about bringing people with you on a journey, in a way that acknowledges their role as stakeholders.

School leaders require a huge range of skills, but as managers of people, emotional intelligence and communication are among the most important. If you want your vision to be realised, you must be able to bring it to life for others and make them feel like it's their vision too.

If you're willing to open the door to feedback from staff, you're already half way there. This term, make an effort take a step back and listen to what staff tell you. Encourage that feedback, and use it as fuel to help you adapt and reach your school improvement goals.

Emily Tenenbaum is a primary school teacher based in Hampshire

"Good school leadership calls for more than simply repeating previously successful approaches"



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Our productions educate Primary School audiences through the powers of entertainment and imagination, whilst at the same time encouraging children to read for pleasure and explore their creative abilities. We balance humour with serious messages, evoke emotions in a sensitive and relevant manner, and encourage appropriate and valuable audience reaction to a wide range of moral and historical issues.

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