

BROUGHT  
TO YOU BY

THE  
**teach**  
COMPANY

**Training**  
**TOO EXPENSIVE?**

Find great value CPD

**RING THE**  
**changes**  
...without  
causing a mutiny

# PSM

PRIMARY SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

## Super Teachers

HOW TO EMPLOY  
**THE BEST**

**SIR KEVAN  
COLLINS**

Should research  
shape your school?

**"WE DON'T LOOK  
FOR ANYTHING"**

Sean Harford on why  
Ofsted's misunderstood



**Get better  
BROADBAND**

And pay less for  
the privilege

**Public  
speaking**

Master the art of  
engaging your audience

**Your yearly  
BUDGET PLAN**

What to do, when  
to do it and why

wear it  
**pink**

breast cancer  
**now**

# Classmates wear it pink.

On Friday 20 October, primary schools across the UK will wear pink, raise money and make life-saving research happen. Will you and your class join in?

Breast Cancer Now's wear it pink day is the perfect way to have fun and end your term in style.  
Order your free fundraising pack today at:

[wearitpink.org/freeprimarypack](https://wearitpink.org/freeprimarypack)

or call 0333 20 70 300.

#wearitpink



Registered with  
FUNDRAISING  
REGULATOR

## From the editor



If you're in the business of producing a magazine, you'll always have your previous issue at the back of your mind when producing the next one – constantly checking for consistency and looking for things to improve on. It can also be instructive to compare the news and talking points of then, compared to now.

When the first issue of *Primary School Management* was published, Britain was in the midst of an election campaign which was still widely predicted to deliver an improved majority for the incumbent Conservative government. As our second issue goes to press, a minority Conservative government has seemingly abandoned its ambitions to open new grammar schools, reversed a previous pledge to do away with infant free school meals in favour of breakfasts, and taken £1.3bn from the DfE's free schools and new buildings budget for additional funding that will go to schools in England over the next two years.

There's a cautionary tale there about making predictions – but if you were to predict what the next... let's say year might hold for those in education, one might venture that we could be in for a period of relative calm, at least where new government initiatives are concerned.

With luck, this might free up a little more time and energy for the profession to address a host of ongoing issues, such as the need for schools to get increasingly tough with their budgets, problems with recruitment, excessive workload, the narrowing of the curriculum – all touched on in this issue, incidentally. Or, you know, it might all change again come late October. Either way, happy reading...

Callum Fauser  
callum.fauser@theteachco.com



**Stephen Morales**  
CEO of the National Association of School Business Management



**Andy Vass**  
Psychologist and professional coach



**Nazli Hussein**  
School business management consultant



**Bruce Waeland**  
Educational consultant and former headteacher



**Ilesha Small**  
Former school leader, teacher and associate at LKMco



**Mark Wright**  
Director of AMIE, the leadership section of ATL



**Jill Berry**  
Leadership consultant and former headteacher



**Sue Cowley**  
Teacher, educator and author



From the makers of  
*Teach Primary*

## HIGHLIGHTS

**6 "WE REPORT WITHOUT FEAR OR FAVOUR"**  
We talk to Ofsted's National Director, Education

**9 "IT COULD CHANGE PEOPLE'S MINDS"**  
We explore the story behind the School Cuts website

**17 TOO MANY RULES**  
Paul Dix reveals why less is more when it comes to behaviour policies

**48 STOP PRESS**  
PR specialist Susan Delgado shows how to craft the perfect press release



## 11 School Improvement

- Get better VFM from your CPD
- The case for baseline assessments
- Why all schools need evidence-based staff development

## 14 AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH

Don't boost results today at the expense of morale tomorrow

## 17 BACK TO BASICS

School behaviour policy failing? Streamline your rules, counsels Paul Dix

## 21 GOOD PEOPLE DOING BAD THINGS

Why are we working staff to the limit, asks Mark Wright

## 27 Buildings & Facilities

- Pleasing aesthetics meet impressive eco credentials at Burry Port Community Primary School

## 31 GOING GREEN

Keen to do your bit for the planet? Here are some ideas...

## 32 CULINARY KNOW-HOW

10 points to observe when creating or refurbishing a school kitchen

## 37 Technology

- How video can improve your lesson observation
- Are you spending too much on broadband?
- Why BESA wants to 'Resource Our Schools'

## 40 HOW SAFE IS YOUR DATA?

We take a look at the incoming General Data Protection Regulation

## 43 BRING YOUR OWN DEVICE

Should you let kids and staff use their own gadgets for school business?

## 45 Community Engagement

- How to plan a photo shoot
- What to do in a media crisis
- Tips for recruiting parent volunteers



## 48 PERFECT PRESS RELEASES

A lesson in what to do (and not do) when messaging the media

## 51 DRIVEN TO DISTRACTION

Do schools have a responsibility for managing parents' car use?

## 53 Human Resources

- Increase your recruitment reach
- What's causing the retention problem?
- Hone your interviewing skills

## 57 GOVERNANCE GROUPTHINK

A good governing board is a mixed governing board, argues Ruth Agnew

## 58 OUT WITH THE OLD

A whole school culture can be changed faster than you think, says Martine Clark

## 60 WHEN LETTING GO IS HARD

A staff member accuses you of unfair dismissal – what happens next?

## 63 Procurement & Budgeting

- Fundraising off the beaten track
- The importance of planning
- From NASBM to ISBL



### EDITOR:

Callum Fauser,  
callum.fauser@theteachco.com,  
01206 505111

### GROUP ADVERTISING MANAGER:

Richard Stebbing

### ADVERTISING EXECUTIVES:

Gabrielle Pitts,  
gabrielle.pitts@theteachco.com  
01206 508629

Edward Webber,  
edward.webber@theteachco.com  
01206 505956

GROUP EDITOR: Joe Carter

ART EDITOR: Sarah Mayes

DESIGNERS: Charlotte Weatherley,  
Clare Brasier, David Haddington

ACCOUNTS: 01206 505995

### DESIGN & REPROGRAPHICS:

Ace Pre-Press  
01206 508608

### SUBSCRIPTIONS DEPARTMENT:

Lisa Harvey, lisa.harvey@aceville.co.uk  
01206 505922

### SUBSCRIPTION ENQUIRIES:

0844 576 7861

PUBLISHER: Helen Tudor

PUBLISHED BY: Maze Media (2000) Ltd,  
25 Phoenix Court, Hawkins Rd,  
Colchester, Essex, CO2 8JY.  
TEL: 01206 505900

aceville

## 67 IT'S THE FUNDING, NOT THE FORMULA

Caroline Collins laments the mixed messages surrounding school funding

## 68 WHAT SHOULD AN ANNUAL BUDGET LOOK LIKE?

Julie Cordiner and Nikola Flint take us through a year in the life of an SBM

## 71 Leadership

- The true meaning of 'diversity'
- How to build a culture of resilience
- Why regional partnerships can help schools retain leaders

## 75 BECOME A BETTER COACH

Coaching can be useful, but only when properly deployed, advises Andy Vass

## 78 ENGAGE YOUR AUDIENCE

Bruce Waeland shares some tips for becoming a better public speaker

## 82 WATCH OUT FOR MAT MONSTERS

Tread carefully when choosing a MAT, warns Hilary Goldsmith

# Be Outstanding

with Bloomsbury Education



BLOOMSBURY  
EDUCATION



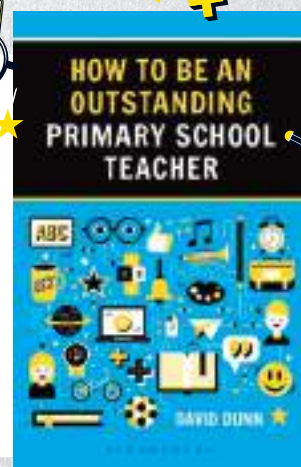
“This book is an essential resource for all Key Stage One teachers as it offers insight into how early years children learn and what strategies should continue into later years. Beyond simply continuity, this book advocates a practical and discovery based curriculum which is so vital to the development and engagement of young minds.”

*UKEdChat Magazine*

**NEW  
EDITION**  
of the  
bestselling  
book

“This book is filled to the brim with grounded, practical ideas to move your primary teaching to the next level. These are tried-and-tested suggestions, written in a warmly enthusiastic way, and they are a great read for newly qualified and seasoned teachers.”

*Stephen Lockyer, Enrichment Leader and Teacher*



Visit **Bloomsbury.com** for **30% off** all our books for teachers until the end of September

## Stay In Touch with Bloomsbury Education



Join the  
conversation:  
**@BloomsburyEd**



Watch our Tips for  
Teachers videos online:  
**#BloomsCPD**



Read our Blog: **bloomsburyeducation.wordpress.com**



# “We don’t want to see triple-marking”



Sean Harford clears up some Ofsted myths and discusses whether the agency may have played a part in the narrowing of the school curriculum...

## **As Ofsted’s ‘mythbuster in chief’, what have been the most common misunderstandings of Ofsted’s role that you’ve encountered within the past year?**

Some teachers still believe that we grade the lessons they teach during inspections – we gave that up three years ago. Others include the belief that we have a preferred style of marking and want to see triple-marking, when we don’t.

There’s also things like the idea that inspectors need assessment information to be produced in a specific way just for inspection, when what we really want to see is just the way the school already uses such information as part of their teaching, learning and assessment.

## **What is Ofsted looking for from primary leaders?**

We don’t look *for* anything; we look *at* the practice of leaders and managers within a school. We’ll look to see whether schools have identified their key issues, the things they need to improve on and the things that they do well, and through that process of evaluation, how they go about working on those areas. If a school is clear as to what its weaknesses are and how to tackle them, that gives us confidence in the leadership team’s capacity to improve.

Clearly, though, there are some areas such as safeguarding which are more compliance-driven, and dependent on whether the leadership has ensured those requirements are met.

## **How would you typically expect those areas to be evidenced?**

To take safeguarding as an example, one of the things we’ll do is randomly sample specific cases of children referred to social services. Some schools have taken that to mean that we want to see case studies, but that’s not it at all. We will sample from the school’s case files of such pupils and look to see how the relevant issue was identified, what the follow-up to that issue was and whether it

was resolved – whether the child was referred to social services, how the case is progressing, whether it’s ongoing, all those things.

Schools that think we want them to put together example case studies are wasting their time. What we need is to see their real working documents and discuss with the school’s safeguarding officer how a case was handled.

## **Ofsted has recently consulted on the conversion of short inspections to three-day full inspections. Can you explain more about the reasoning behind this?**

We’re two years on from the introduction of one-day short inspections, and while we’ve had generally good feedback, we’ve also heard from schools and inspectors about issues regarding the conversion from short to full inspections. If that happens at a large secondary, the school could have two inspectors on day one, then see six or seven further inspectors arrive the day after, which can be a bit of a worry.

It’s also been difficult for some of our contracted inspectors who are school leaders and will have agreed to do certain days and weeks many months in advance. Because we can’t predict which short



## **CAREER TIMELINE**

**2000**  
Appointed  
assistant  
headteacher at  
Linton Village  
College,  
Cambridgeshire

Joins Ofsted as  
an HMI  
**2003**

**2006**  
Promoted to  
assistant  
divisional  
manager

Appointed  
regional director  
for South and  
later East of  
England

**2011**

inspections will convert and which won't, those school leaders sometimes have to stand down and miss their slot.

It's a bit of a misnomer to say 'Ofsted are now doing three-day inspections'. We've been trialling two approaches – short inspections converting to full inspections within up to 10 days in one region, and within up to 15 days in another. In some cases it may be necessary to carry out a further two days at the point of conversion, or in some cases it might just be one – it depends on the size of the school and a number of other factors.

**You've remarked in the past that Ofsted may have played a role in narrowing the scope of the curriculum, particularly with regards to the emphasis on maths and literacy at primary. What have you looked at doing since then to try and prevent that from happening?**

Last year the then Chief Inspector published a commentary which looked specifically at science and foreign languages at KS2 ([tinyurl.com/ofsted-may-16](https://tinyurl.com/ofsted-may-16)). As part of that, it became clear that a lot more time was being put into the teaching of English and maths at KS2 than science and foreign languages.

When we judge the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in a school we'll consider the breadth and balance of the curriculum provided. While we recognise that our focus and that of the country is on maths and English, we think that it's as important to have a broad and balanced curriculum, so that's where we'll look in schools – at whether they're actually providing that. We recognise that there's perhaps been an 'over-emphasis' on those subjects to the detriment of others, and want to play our part in redressing that balance.

**Do you recognise the issue that some people within the profession have with the Ofsted ratings scale as it currently stands, particularly the 'Outstanding' rating? Is there any prospect of it changing?**

Amanda Spielman said at her pre-appointment session with the education subcommittee that this was something she wanted to look at, and we will in due course. We need to consider the



“Schools that think we want example case studies are wasting their time”

'Outstanding' rating in terms of both the intended and unintended outcomes of having it, and make a decision once we've looked at that.

**How much sympathy do you have with the argument expressed by some that Ofsted should be an agency centred around constructive school improvement, rather than one focused on penalising schools for non-compliance with an inspection framework?**

We're part of an accountability system, and the part we play within that system is to evaluate the quality of education being provided for pupils. In doing that we will, as we've always done, report without fear

or favour and publish the outcomes of that evaluation. It's for others to decide what action needs to be taken as a result of those outcomes.

Different schools will obviously be in different cycles of improvement. One management team will have been in place for a while, while another might have just started. We can't judge a school on the basis of all those circumstances; we look at the quality of education being provided and make a judgement on that. Others can then take into account those additional factors when deciding what intervention might be necessary on the back of those outcomes.

@HarfordSean [www.gov.uk/ofsted](https://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

2014  
Becomes  
national  
director, schools

Assumes role  
of national  
director,  
education

2015

# Now FUNDING

Sit down your SLT and gather your governors – here's our pick of recent funding schemes and grants that primary schools can apply for...



**WHO?** *Ernest Cook Trust*

**WHAT?** Small and large grants programme

**HOW MUCH?** £1,000 to £4000 (small grants)  
£4,000 to £12,000 (large grants)

**APPLY BY?** This a rolling programme, with meetings taking place every two months throughout the year.

**WHERE?** [tinyurl.com/ernest-cook-grants](http://tinyurl.com/ernest-cook-grants)

**FUNDS?** The Ernest Cook Trust is dedicated to preserving traditional English estates, including their residents and workers, buildings and surrounding grounds. The trust's small grants are open to small charities and state schools looking to embark on projects consistent with its aims. The large grants are intended to fund wider ranging education programmes and projects, in areas ranging from countryside conservation to art galleries and orchestras.



**WHO?** *The Foyle Foundation*

**WHAT?** The Foyle School Library Scheme

**HOW MUCH?** £1,000 to £10,000

**APPLY BY?** Ongoing

**WHERE?** [tinyurl.com/foyle-libraries](http://tinyurl.com/foyle-libraries)

**FUNDS?** Books and reading materials to help maintain or renew a school library, with priority given to primary schools. Some funding may be made available for ebooks and equipment required for a library space (furniture, IT equipment), but this would need to comprise a minority of the funds requested.



**WHO?** *The Naturesave Trust*

**WHAT?** Community Renewable Energy Grants

**HOW MUCH?** Details on enquiry

**APPLY BY?** Ongoing

**WHERE?** [naturesave.co.uk/the-naturesave-trust](http://naturesave.co.uk/the-naturesave-trust)

**FUNDS?** 'Seed corn' grants for community renewable energy projects, aimed mainly at community groups and companies that lack the start-up capital needed to carry out the preliminary work necessary to reach the planning stage (awarded in a way that ensures the community can retain as much control as possible over the operating income of the completed project). Previous recipients of the grants have included primary school projects to install wind turbines and solar arrays.



**WHO?** *Big Lottery Fund*

**WHAT?** National Lottery Awards for All

**HOW MUCH?** £300 to £10,000

**APPLY BY?** Ongoing

**WHERE?** [tinyurl.com/blf-awards-all](http://tinyurl.com/blf-awards-all)

**FUNDS?** Small grants for voluntary/community organisations, statutory bodies and schools to support projects and activities that will build community relations, improve the local environment and/or enable people to fulfill their true potential. Funds can be spent on equipment, event organisation, transport, staff/training costs and utilities expenses.





# “Headteachers are at their wits’ end”

We talk to the architect behind the NUT-led School Cuts campaign about the attention it garnered during this year’s general election...

By his own admission, Andrew Baisley describes the Camden school where he works as among the better funded in the country. Yet he recalls seeing how, “Over four years, bits of our service offering have been closed down. I was aware that the National Funding Formula [NFF] was coming, and that it was going to make our situation even more difficult, on top of what was effectively a real terms per-pupil spending freeze.”

In his capacity as a member of the NUT’s campaigns team, Baisley set about organising a form of protest against government decisions on funding for London schools – but he soon realised the scale of the issue at hand required a different response. “I thought we really needed a national campaign. I’d had this idea of making a map showing every school in the country, illustrating how even when schools were having to make smaller cuts, they were being very badly funded to start with.”

Working in conjunction with several other unions, Baisley’s idea emerged in October 2016 as the Schools Cuts website ([schoolcuts.org.uk](http://schoolcuts.org.uk)), which allows visitors to enter their postcode and instantly see whether any of their local schools will have had their budgets reduced by 2019, and if so, how many teachers they will need to have shed as a result.

“We initially sought to show the potential impact of the proposed NFF in conjunction with the flat funding over the course of the last Parliament,” Baisley explains. “We used National Audit Office calculations to work out school costs, such as rising National Insurance contributions, the Teachers’ Pensions



scheme and the Apprenticeship Levy, and continued to develop it as more proposals were brought forward by the government.”

The campaign began to attract some notice, but Theresa May’s announcement of a snap election the following April subsequently boosted the site’s visibility dramatically. As well as updating the site’s costings to reflect the different parties’ manifesto commitments, Baisley and his colleagues worked to secure pledges from election candidates to oppose further school cuts. Many did, and even when a pledge wasn’t forthcoming, in some cases the campaign still seemed to have an impact.

“One candidate managed to lose the email and hadn’t signed up,” says Baisley. “They later got back to us, really urgently, having met people asking them why they hadn’t signed it. I remember thinking that if there was this much anger about the issue, it could change people’s minds when it comes to voting.”

Baisley puts the website’s success down to one thing in particular. “There’s

one set of figures that almost everyone has referred to, which has helped the message about the level of cuts get through. With campaigns like this, people will often rely on different datasets, which makes it seem as though people are arguing over what the situation actually is. I know that headteachers are at their wits’ end dealing with cuts. They can now see that there’s this big, ongoing campaign, which has emboldened them to speak out.”

Has anyone quibbled with the campaign’s figures? “Some MPs told us our data was out of date, but they often tended to rely on out of date press releases themselves, to be honest,” Baisley replies. “We wanted to show that these cuts are general, almost universal. We’ve had people ask whether they can check through our numbers and data sources, which we’re happy for them to do. We’ve tried to be as open as possible.”

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

 [schoolcuts.org.uk](http://schoolcuts.org.uk)

# Policies for Schools



## Comprehensive School Policies Database

300+ school policies covering 20 different statutory areas



## School Policies regularly updated

in line with the DfE's latest guidelines and recommendations



## Bespoke School Policy Writing Service

If you can't find the policy you need, we will research, write and send it to you within 5 working days

Why subscribe to Policies for Schools? Because all our school policies are .....



### Professionally written and researched

Our policies are clear, concise and consistent and set out individual responsibilities



### Easily Customisable

Simple to edit policy templates which can be customised to your requirements



### Value for money at just £225 per year

plus all updated and new policies are free of charge during your subscription period



### Available 24/7

All you need is an internet connection to download the policies straight to your computer

If you wish to view some sample policies before subscribing, we have several school policies available.

Just call us on 01600 891506 or email us at [sales@policiesforschools.co.uk](mailto:sales@policiesforschools.co.uk)

and we will send them to you free of charge.

To subscribe to Policies for Schools just go to our website at: [www.policiesforschools.co.uk](http://www.policiesforschools.co.uk)

Teachers Resource Centre Ltd Telephone: 01600 891506 Website: [www.policiesforschools.co.uk](http://www.policiesforschools.co.uk) Email: [sales@policiesforschools.co.uk](mailto:sales@policiesforschools.co.uk)

# Resources for Headteachers

## Helping headteachers and senior leaders manage their workload

Resources for Headteachers provides a wealth of ready-to-use management support material, written by experienced educationalists, that are designed to cater for the day to day management needs of any school leader.

Some of our most popular products are:



Managing Headteacher Workload



School Risk Assessments



School Health and Safety Staff Handbook



Questionnaires for School Improvement



Safeguarding Handbook for School Personnel

For more information on all our products just go to our website at:

[www.resourcesforheadteachers.co.uk](http://www.resourcesforheadteachers.co.uk)

Teachers Resource Centre Ltd Telephone: 01600 891506 Website: [www.resourcesforheadteachers.co.uk](http://www.resourcesforheadteachers.co.uk) Email: [sales@resourcesforheadteachers.co.uk](mailto:sales@resourcesforheadteachers.co.uk)

# School improvement

## CPD ON A BUDGET

David Weston outlines five ways in which leaders can get more CPD bang for their buck...

### 1. Benchmark

To present the argument for investment you need to build a strong case backed by good evidence. Comparing to previous years' expenditure won't be enough, though. The Teacher Development Trust (TDT) offers a free benchmarking tool at [TDTrust.org/benchmarking](http://TDTrust.org/benchmarking), which can tell you what the average school spends on CPD, as well as what the top 20% of schools are spending.

### 2. Identify grant opportunities

The Education Support Partnership has recently partnered with the CSIS Charity to launch a Training and Development Fund, to which teachers can apply for course funding, including career development and classroom training courses – find out more via [tinyurl.com/ESP-CSIS](http://tinyurl.com/ESP-CSIS).

Elsewhere, STEM Learning has teamed up with the Wellcome Trust to offer 'Enthuse Award' bursaries for schools to help pay for STEM-related CPD for teachers, technicians and ITT students. Further details can be found at [stem.org.uk/bursaries](http://stem.org.uk/bursaries). Finally, the DfE has launched a Teaching and Leadership Innovation Fund for CPD provision – see [tinyurl.com/DfE-CPD-fund](http://tinyurl.com/DfE-CPD-fund) for more information.





### 3. Improve your in-house processes

Schools should foster a culture where staff are willing to put effort into their own learning, possess the capacity and capability to work on problems and can access high quality support and challenge.

This can be difficult and hard to measure, however. A CPD audit will reveal what's currently working and what isn't, and offer steps for improvement. The TDT can provide a CPD audit that includes self-review from school leaders and an all-staff survey; similar services are also available from CUREE ([curee.co.uk](http://curee.co.uk)) and the UCL Institute of Education.

### 4. Go subject-specific

Effective teacher learning needs to disrupt existing thinking, while providing new perspectives on what's possible and how to achieve it. The best professional development helps teachers understand how to improve the teaching of particular subjects and topics.

Translating generic ideas into practical steps takes time, however – e.g. 'How can I use this advice on differentiation and apply it effectively to this lesson on triangles?' A helpful step would be to encourage your staff to join subject associations and networks – you'll find a good list of these at [tinyurl.com/CSA-members](http://tinyurl.com/CSA-members).

### 5. Use your time well

Teacher learning is time consuming, challenging and tiring, and it's unreasonable to assume that teachers can do it in addition to everything else. Instead, try to free up your teachers' time by cutting back on meetings and clamping down on the volume of internal email. Reduce the amount of expected marking and focus instead on verbal feedback.

Then set aside time for subject-focused meetings, in which teachers can collectively plan, analyse data, assess and have structured conversations about the best ways to teach particular students and topics.

*David Weston is CEO of the Teacher Development Trust*

 [@informed\\_edu](https://twitter.com/informed_edu)  [tdtrust.org](http://tdtrust.org)

## “ARE BASELINE ASSESSMENTS REALLY SO BAD?”

The much-maligned baseline assessment is due a reappraisal, suggests Michael Tidd...



There was probably some considerable excitement in staffrooms up and down the country when the news emerged that KS1 tests could be on their way out – maybe tempered slightly by the realisation that it's only a possibility, and then only in five or more years' time. But at least it feels like a step in the right direction.

There was perhaps slightly less jubilation with the realisation that scrapping the KS1 statutory assessment would probably dependent be on the introduction of a new reception baseline assessment. After the chaotic attempt at this in 2015, early years practitioners won't want to rush back to them again any time soon. I'm not an EY specialist, and make no claims to be, so I'm sure some will be horrified at even the thought – but would a simple check on entry to school really be so bad?

The big disaster of the previous attempt wasn't the administration of the assessments – which schools handled as brilliantly as you might have imagined – but the foolish way in which different providers were permitted to produce incomparable tests. Hopefully the department will have learnt its lesson.

EY practitioners might think that a baseline check won't tell you anything you don't already know, and that's fine. Few Y6 teachers are told anything new

by the outcomes of the KS2 tests. But that's not what they're for – they simply offer a snapshot of pupil attainment that allows government and others to get a measure of how schools are doing.

Many might argue against even that snapshot idea, but that gets us nowhere. We can't expect governments to spend billions on education without getting some indication of how it's working, but we *can* expect such measures to be sensibly used.

The consultation on primary assessment published earlier this year suggests a more sensible measure of primary schools – focusing on progress right the way through, from early years to Y6 – but also seeks support and guidance from the profession to get it right this time. A baseline makes good sense.

Remember also that this assessment isn't a measure of school effectiveness in its own right, or even of pupil attainment – that's why the consultation states that results wouldn't be published or shared. It's just an indicator of children's attainment level when they start at your school. That's surely got to be worth noting, so that we can celebrate all the fantastic work schools do in the seven years that follow.

**Michael Tidd is deputy headteacher at Edgewood Primary School in Hucknall, Nottinghamshire**

# “There’s no shortcut to being a great teacher”

Evidence-based professional development should be a key part of how every school operates, says Sir Kevan Collins



**W**e’ve seen some big education policy changes in recent years, from curricula reform and new school structures to pupil assessment methods. But however well-intentioned most of these have been, it’s good teaching – the interaction between adult and child in the classroom – that has the biggest impact on the learning of pupils, particularly those from poorer backgrounds.

It’s no accident that the highest-achieving education systems in the world invest heavily in the learning of their teachers. Educators in Singapore, for example, have an entitlement to 100 hours of professional development per year. Yet too often in England, professional development is something to fill the statutory training days, rather than an integral part of every teacher’s career. Teachers have a right to a career pathway that recognises that their professional development doesn’t stop when they qualify, but should be constantly renewed through life.

## TEACH LESS, TEACH BETTER

There are some schools that get this. ‘Teach less, teach better’ is the mantra adopted by Huntington School in York, for example – they restructured their timetable to set aside two hours of professional development time every fortnight for each of their staff. Such investment is still the exception, though hopefully the newly formed Chartered College of Teaching will help to put meaningful staff development front and centre.

At the EEF, we believe that evidence should be the cornerstone of

professional development. Far from adding to teachers’ workload, evidence can help save time by focusing on what works, not what doesn’t. Last year, for instance, we reviewed the evidence around different marking strategies and found that there’s very limited research to show which will have a positive effect on their pupils’ progress and which will not.

In a profession struggling to deal with unmanageable and debilitating workloads, why are we asking our teachers to spend hours and hours each week on time-consuming and unproven approaches like ‘triple-marking’? Smarter feedback strategies, guided by robust research of what teachers have found to work best, is one way of making an immediate and real difference to teachers’ workload.

## TOUGH CHOICES

That’s why we launched the Research Schools Network last year. An initial group of five schools – recently grown to 11 and soon to increase to 23 – will become focal points for evidence-based practice in their regions. Their task is to build affiliations with large numbers of neighbouring schools and support the use of evidence in their areas. They’ll engage with local schools and teachers in a variety of ways, including twilight sessions, seminars and conferences, to support them in improving their teaching practice.

School leaders will need to make some tough choices about their spending in the coming months. But if there’s one thing they must prioritise, it’s their staff. After all, there’s no shortcut to being a great teacher. All staff, from NQTs to academy CEOs, need time and space to develop their practice, informed by the latest research.

**Sir Kevan Collins is Chief Executive of the Education Endowment Foundation**

# AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH

Why risk staff burnout in the chase for short-term gains? We're better off adopting an approach that delivers big improvements in the long-term, argues Jeremy Hannay...



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

In 2003, volleyball in Canada was at a low ebb. The country had fallen to a historical low in international rankings, and hadn't had an Olympic start in men's volleyball since 1992. At the national level, youth and university teams in Ontario struggled to compete against stronger and deeper teams from the west of the country. They had fallen into the trap of doing what they had always done, and then doing more of it.

They competed frequently, specialised positions early, had their 'best' athletes playing volleyball all year with the best coaches and played the same game on the same court whether players were 8, 18 or 28. Why? Because they could win today, and that would surely prepare them for winning tomorrow – yet the game had changed, and Ontario had failed to change with it.

Enter veteran player and coach, Dustin Reid...

## REMAINING STEADFAST

What was unique about Dustin Reid's coaching approach was that he was focused on the long-term development of athletes, rather than the traditional approach of training to win. He wasn't interested in winning today. He would say strange things such as, "Winning at 8 has no connection to success at 18 or 28," and "Competition is a good servant but a poor master." He organised tournaments that had no winners or medals. He promoted athletes playing every position.

This caused uproar in the volleyball community. Other coaches wanted his blood – *'We're creating a generation of non-competitive softies!'* *'If there are no medals, what's the point of playing?!'* It must have been frightening, and he must have had second thoughts, but he remained steadfast.

Against the wishes of many critics, skeptics and angry voices, he brought the theory of Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD) to the forefront of Ontarian volleyball in 2004, and it stuck. The result was that Canada's men's team returned to the Olympics in 2016 after a 24-year hiatus. Ontario has since won at least one medal at the last five university

championships, and most importantly, the mindset of Canadian volleyball coaches and associations has shifted.

Dustin understood an inconvenient truth about success – nothing which raises results today, but destroys the potential of its people tomorrow, is relevant. The only success in the short-term that matters is that which is predicated upon sustainability and long-term impact. As school leaders, we can learn a lot from Dustin Reid.

## TOXIC ENVIRONMENT

It's easy to get drawn into the traps of convention and convenience. When we're 'the new leader' and there's a history of poor performance data or an imminent Ofsted inspection, it's easy to justify and defend decisions to monitor more closely, scrutinize more regularly and get results quickly. It's a reassuring default in times of uncertainty, and when everyone else seems to be doing the same thing.

“The only success in the short-term that matters is that which is predicated upon sustainability and long-term impact”





I've even heard of this approach being promoted to schools already rated as 'Good', in order to get that ever-coveted 'Outstanding'.

This approach, whilst widely used and accepted, is, however, deeply flawed and has serious, unintended consequences for our schools and our profession. It creates an absolutely toxic professional environment for our teaching staff. It turns graduates away from teaching. It has caused teachers to leave our profession in droves and left staff morale at all time lows. It may well have the potential to raise results today, but it will almost certainly destroy our schools tomorrow.

At Three Bridges Primary School, we took lessons from Dustin and those like him. We visited top performing areas such as Singapore, and indeed Ontario, and read widely around school leadership and change. We looked beyond just 'the teaching' to the cultures, climates and conditions seemingly required for sustainable, exceptional performance in the long term.

### INCREDIBLE LEARNING

We saw teachers highly involved in pedagogy and practice, who were able to speak confidently and intelligently about everything they were doing. In response, we introduced pedagogical models to staff and let them examine and exercise them – without scrutiny. It meant collaboratively developing collective responsibility for what excellent teaching looked like, and more importantly, what incredible learning looked like.

We developed highly effective approaches to teaching English and mathematics, and now regularly discuss our models and refine them as we continue learn more. We open our doors to other schools (some 200 in the last 18 months). Everything is highly systematic, but nothing is permanent. When teachers are a part of pedagogical design, teaching no longer needs constant monitoring. Teachers are self-regulating in cooperation with one another.

During our research we saw school leaders

making workload-based decisions around their policies and procedures. We began to see one of our key roles as that of protecting our teachers from the barrage of everything unrelated to learning.

This meant getting rid of old ideas about marking, traditional approaches to planning and observation and building in time to complete administrative tasks. As a result, we now no longer have staff do anything that isn't directly related to professional or pupil learning. Having built our own assessment system, we now allow our teachers to plan in ways that work for them and have binned our previous 'marking policy'. We no longer scrutinize anything a teacher does. Even the word is cringe-worthy. Instead, we involve them all in the development of shared standards and courageous conversations.

### UNINTENDED MESSAGES

We saw leaders who spoke about building teams and creating cultures in which everyone could flourish. Leaders who saw themselves as primarily responsible for developing an environment that nourished and promoted a deep belief that every teacher could be their best, and that together they could have a positive and long-lasting impact on the life of every child.

This made us reflect on how we had developed collective efficacy in our own staffroom, and what unintended messages we were sending by closely monitoring each teacher every half term. It didn't exactly scream 'high-trust'. So we stopped.

It's impossible to recruit staff, retain them and help them uncover their greatest professional selves when they feel untrusted, constantly monitored and uncertain about their value in the organization. That much was crystal clear.

13 years ago Dustin Reid courageously set a standard for leaders everywhere. In the face of high-stakes testing, under the pressure from Ofsted and in light of what's always been done – I can tell you that nothing which raises results today but destroys the potential of people tomorrow is relevant. For the last five years, the only thing higher than our results has been our desire to keep improving.



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

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

**Your fire risk assessment.**

# DO IT JUSTICE.

**You could face jail or six-figure fines if you don't appoint a competent person to perform your fire risk assessment.**

**Receive training to complete your Fire Risk Assessment.**

- Helps prove your competency
- Choose courses to suit all experience levels
- Courses held across the UK or at your offices

Email: [training@thefpa.co.uk](mailto:training@thefpa.co.uk) or visit [www.thefpa.co.uk/training](http://www.thefpa.co.uk/training)

**Let us complete your Fire Risk Assessment.**

We have the experience to complete assessments of all sizes and complexity

- Accredited with BAFE SP205 Certification

Email: [technical@thefpa.co.uk](mailto:technical@thefpa.co.uk) or visit [www.thefpa.co.uk/services](http://www.thefpa.co.uk/services)

Do your Fire Risk Assessment justice. Call us now on **01608 812 500** or visit **[www.thefpa.co.uk](http://www.thefpa.co.uk)**



**Fire Protection Association**





# Having too many rules is bad for behaviour

If you're going to enforce a set of school rules, it helps if pupils and staff know what they actually are, says Paul Dix...

**W**hen I arrived to work with a primary school in the north-west of England it was clear that the headteacher had done her homework. She greeted me with, "I've seen your stuff, Paul. I know about your obsession with having just a few rules, so I have reduced mine to five golden rules."

I said I was impressed. After all, who could argue with rules that are golden? I suggested that we might ask some of the children if they knew what the rules were. "Oh, that would be perfect," she said, with an *'I know your game'* smile. "I have just spent the last five weeks taking each rule in turn as an assembly theme. The children definitely know the rules."

We came across a 6-year-old running an errand and I stopped him in the corridor. "Funny question," I said, but do you know what the rules of the school are?"

"Ummmmm ... Oooooooooooooo," he pondered. He immediately assumed the face of an extremely hard thinker while looking wildly from side to side (presumably looking for the rules poster). "Errrrrrr, is it 'don't wear hats'?"

The headteacher looked crestfallen. "Is 'no hats' one of the golden rules?" I asked her as we walked away. "No," she said, masking her irritation well. "No, it's not hats."

Moments later a Year 5 pupil came into view, and so I asked her the same



question. "Ummmmm ... Oooooooooooooo," she said, and she too scanned the walls. "Is it 'no hoods'?" "Is it 'no hoods'?" I enquired of the head, but she was already muttering and walking away briskly. I caught her up. "OK," she said, "I know what the problem is – I know why."

It seems that as the children come into the building on a cold, rainy Rochdale day wrapped up against the elements, they are met with a cacophony of staff voices repeating the

*'Hats and hoods off'* mantra. It was the only rule about which all the adults were consistent. As a result, the children thought the most important rule of the school was 'No hats and hoods'.

We walked into a Year 6 class, and instead of asking the children, I approached the class teacher and asked her the same question. She stared at me with a 'Who the hell are you to be giving me a policy quiz in front of my boss?' look, then searched frantically in her planner for the answer.

## *Inconsistent adults*

If nobody can remember the rules, if everyone has to look them up, then nobody really knows them. When adults *really* know the rules, you hear them referenced in every interaction on behaviour. You might be surprised at just how clear it is to the pupils that the adults are inconsistent.

Just imagine dropping litter on the floor and every adult who intervenes does

so not just in a different style and with a different emotion, but also using different reference points. From 'Would you do that at home?' to 'Our school environment is very important', 'I can't walk by, it's not safe to leave it there', 'Litter is a pet hate of mine so I am going to ...', 'You are disrespecting everyone' and 'Pick it up, you filthy wretch!'

In a blizzard of different values, rules and commands, we ask children to find their own route to discipline. It should





be no surprise to anyone that confusing, flexible, ignorable boundaries are no boundaries at all.

Take a tour of your school, collect all the rules posters from every environment and all the signs prescribing the expectations of learners, stand back and look at them. Count them. Now test yourself. How many do you actually know? Is it any wonder that there is no true consistency?

### A chaos of rules

The children don't know the rules. The adults don't know them either. Nobody knows them because the list is so ridiculously long. In many schools there will be a code of conduct that extends to more than 60 rules. There will be between 10 and 20 upfront rules, then a collection of bizarre rules hidden deep in the policy or disguised in the uniform code – rules on length of socks, hairstyles, guns, knives, drugs, badgers, atomic weapons.

There are rules for speaking ('No repeated talking'), rules for language ('No inappropriate language' or 'No offensive comments') and rules for thinking ('Do not do anything dishonest'). Crimes extend to those more commonly found in military environments – 'poor role model', 'failure to cooperate' and 'refusing to give your name'. Learners are referred to as 'offenders', 'troublemakers' and 'the disruptives'. In policies like these, practical guidance to staff is scant, with an air of 'do whatever you can'.

And that's not forgetting the 'catch-alls' – rules so open-ended that reading the detailed rules is a complete waste of

time: 'Do not do anything to damage the reputation of the school/college'. 'Do not engage in any dangerous activities', 'Love thy neighbour'. There's also the language filled with threat, such as 'suspension', 'exclusion' or 'permanent record'.

There can also be policies which are so subjective that any application of them invites protracted and impossible argument: 'Behave in a way that does not offend', 'Have a pleasant manner'; 'Do not wear hoods, hats or any type of headgear, except for bona fide religious reasons'; 'Behave in ways that respect the needs and aspirations of others'.

### Where rules should live

The rules of a successful classroom are not just plastered onto the walls but woven into behaviour interventions. If you need to have posters in every corridor or in every learning space, then you can be sure that nobody knows them.

In the home, parents don't plaster the walls with rules. There's no list of 'don'ts in the bathroom, no rules for using the stairs etched into the carpet



**Paul Dix is a behaviour specialist and executive director of the consultancy firm Pivotal Education. This article is an edited extract from his book, *When The Adults Change, Everything Changes* (£16.99, Crown House Publishing)**

## SCHOOL OR PRISON?

Alcatraz had 52 rules. Most education institutions have more rules than Alcatraz. The following phrases are all found in a school/college behaviour policy or in prison regulations (from Alcatraz, among others). See if you can decide which ones are which...

1. WITHDRAWAL OF PRIVILEGES
2. POSSESSION OF CONTRABAND OF ANY SORT IS A SERIOUS OFFENCE
3. YOU ARE REQUIRED TO WORK AT WHATEVER YOU ARE TOLD TO DO
4. WORKING HARD AND CONTRIBUTING
5. DO NOT CARRY A KNIFE
6. ACT AT ALL TIMES WITH DUE REGARD FOR YOUR SAFETY AND FOR THE SAFETY OF OTHERS

### ANSWERS

1. SCHOOL 2. ALCATRAZ 3. ALCATRAZ  
4. COLLEGE 5. SCHOOL 6. SCHOOL

– yet the home is not a lawless, anarchic place with children jacked up on doughnuts, swinging on the shower curtain and launching themselves down the stairs.

It is not enough, of course, in the home or in education simply to know the rules. They need to live every day in conversations between adults and learners. Why would you need a poster if you really knew the rules?

Make the school day go with a swing!

fitness  
with fun

- Create an outdoor classroom or trim trail
- Enhance fitness, emotional wellbeing and social interaction using our curriculum-friendly lesson plans
- Promote imaginative play and physical literacy
- Funding available

☎ 01483 608860

✉ [sales@freshairfitness.co.uk](mailto:sales@freshairfitness.co.uk)

[www.freshairfitness.co.uk](http://www.freshairfitness.co.uk)

Healthy Products  
+ Healthy Pupils

Healthy Profits

It all adds up to some valuable learning, and a lot more of your 5-a-day!

Tuck Shops are **self funding** and offer an effective way for KS2 children to run their own simple business, so let them take responsibility and watch proud pupils inspire healthy eating!

All our **Healthy Tuck Shop** snacks are within the Children's Food Trust guidelines and our **Stationery Shop** range includes eco-friendly products.

**i** Get in touch and ask us about our enterprise training toolkits, for reaching learning outcomes, and product supplies.

☎ 07767 313394  
✉ [pupilsprofit.com](http://pupilsprofit.com)



**Pupils Profit**  
Enterprise based PSHE learning



Services  
For Education

# Ready for your first Headship?

Head teachers are responsible for creating environments where all staff and pupils can thrive and develop to be the best they can be.

You already know about high quality teaching and learning. What about all the other aspects of your school you are now responsible for?



Key knowledge and skills in:

- ✓ People
- ✓ Finance
- ✓ Legal
- ✓ Health and Safety
- ✓ Estate Management
- ✓ Resource Management

Services  
For Education  
School Support Service



Creating great leadership  
Everywhere.

A two year programme at £1,800 per year. Interested and wish to find out more?

Contact: [linda.brown@servicesforeducation.co.uk](mailto:linda.brown@servicesforeducation.co.uk) | Tel: 07825 153 836 | [www.servicesforeducation.co.uk](http://www.servicesforeducation.co.uk)



**Edu** cater  
STATONLINE

- ★ Tracks attainment and pupil progress in primary schools
- ★ Reduces both time and workload for teachers - freeing them up to do what they do best, teach
- ★ Assessment frameworks from Rising Stars, STAT Sheffield and NAHT



Call freephone  
**0300 012 0001**

STAT  
SHEFFIELD  
Schools Tracking &  
Assessment Tool

NAHT

**www.educater.co.uk**

t: 0300 012 0001

e: [info@educater.co.uk](mailto:info@educater.co.uk)

RISEING STARS **Edu** cater





# Shield your staff from supersized workloads

**Mark Wright – Director, AMiE**

Mark Wright explains why headteachers should be concerned less with micromanagement and more with ensuring that their staff are adequately supported

**H**igh stakes accountability, SATs, performance appraisal and pay, safeguarding and job insecurity have conspired to create huge pressure on managers and leaders, which can in turn undermine the way they treat colleagues.

This is unfortunate, but unsurprising. Research by Lawrence & Kacmar published earlier this year (see [tinyurl.com/lawrence-kacmar](http://tinyurl.com/lawrence-kacmar)) found that professionals experiencing job insecurity become emotionally exhausted, leaving them less likely to focus on the right course of action and more vulnerable to acting unethically.

Good people can find themselves doing bad things. This is the position that managers and leaders in schools across the country may be finding themselves in. It is one of the contributory factors behind teachers' decisions to leave the profession altogether, because they have simply had enough of malnourished work environments.

Workload in schools has ballooned with the quiet acquiescence of many senior leaders who feel they have little option but to implement the stream of policy reforms coming from government and protect their insecure position by micromanaging their staff.

As one headteacher recently told us, "Ethical leadership is pie in the sky. The fact is, I'm advertising for a deputy head and the job comes with a 100-hour a week workload. That's just what the



job entails, and there is no scope for ethics in this."

The result of this overloading of staff is that they're driven beyond their capacity to deliver sustainably, which has a negative impact on their well-being. Teachers are consequently driven out of the profession by unnecessarily high workloads, or have any appetite for moving into management drained out of them.

More school leaders are now recognising that keeping teachers and middle leaders has to be a key priority. Retaining staff means treating them well, with humanity, and encouraging high performance through trust and collaboration, rather than coercion.

In the context of a teacher shortage,

micromanagement is simply not sustainable. School leaders who use coercion are undermining the profession when they burn out teachers who go on to leave the profession for good. With 31% of teachers currently leaving within five years of commencing their teaching career, there is significant room for improvement.

Many school leaders have become business leaders, allowing workload to drive teachers from the profession for the sake of short term performance goals. Conversely, the best leaders know that sustainable success comes through cultivating an environment in which teachers feel supported. This in turn creates the ideal conditions for learning and impacts positively on pupil performance.

These leaders will be relentless in their attempts to shield their teachers from as many tasks as possible which are not essential to core teaching and learning. They will keep assessment to a minimum,

while still ensuring that pupil performance is on track, leaving teachers with more time to devote to teaching and learning.

As heads, this approach will also reconnect them to teaching and allow them to reclaim the title 'headteacher' – a leader of teaching and learning success.

Mark Wright is the director of AMiE – the leadership section of the ATL union representing school leaders and managers.

[@atl\\_amie](https://twitter.com/atl_amie)

[amie.atl.org.uk](http://amie.atl.org.uk)



# Resources update

Looking to create a more active school? Here's how to do it...

Our children are in crisis! A third are leaving primary school obese or overweight, and they've been described as the 'Least active generation ever.' Evidence shows that increasing activity in schools not only tackles these issues, but also improves their academic performance, mental health, focus and behaviour within school.

Schools have been tasked with getting more active by giving their pupils a minimum of 30 minutes' structured activity every day, in addition to the two hours of PE already timetabled. But when can you fit this structured activity into an already packed day? Where are the ideas and resources that will support staff to ensure it happens?

At imoves, we're seeking to tackle this head on with our new Active Schools package – a digital platform featuring over 1,000 lessons and activities developed by teachers, for teachers, to support active learning in every lesson. The resources include national curriculum-based lesson plans, demonstration movies, music and flashcards to minimising planning time, whilst maximising learning outcomes and fun!

According to Louise Jones, headteacher of Royds Infants School, Sheffield, "It's an amazing tool to upskill staff to deliver active lessons." Change lives using your PE and Sports Premium funding, and get a 'thumbs up' from Ofsted, by demonstrating how you're up-skilling your teachers and building a truly active school.

## ACTIVE CLASSROOMS

The package's 'Active classrooms' resources are specifically designed for use in the classroom or school hall, and offer ideas for activities relevant to a wide span of subjects, including literacy, science, geography, MFL, history and PSHE. Each activity is designed with key lesson outcomes in mind, and can be combined to create whole lessons that ensure children are always able to learn actively – something that may be particularly useful for your kinaesthetic learners.

There are hundreds of lessons to choose from, so whether you're teaching phonics to your Early Years children, the history of the Tudors to year 6 or the science of evolution, you'll find something that fits your needs. Some teachers may also be interested in our innovative mindfulness module, which is designed to support children's abilities to manage stress and anxiety using relaxation techniques.



## DAILY CHALLENGES

imoves' daily challenges are 15-minute 'activity blasts', which teachers can incorporate into their daily classroom routines. There's a new challenge for every day of the school year, and they revolve around five themes – 'Mighty Monday', 'Challenge Tuesday', 'Wellness Wednesday', 'Thinking Thursday' and 'Funky Friday'.

The children will enjoy the variety of activities, while teachers will appreciate the fact that everything's already done for them, with little, if any, preparation required – often the only equipment needed will be the IWB. As Laura Mossman, PE lead at Mosborough Primary School near Sheffield, told us, "My children wouldn't even go on a school trip without doing their daily challenge first!"



## FULL PE CURRICULUM

To support activity and develop physical literacy we have a full PE curriculum with over 600 lessons, specifically designed to up-skill teachers, minimise preparation and support the delivery and assessment of the lesson itself. Topics include gymnastics, Pilates, dance and outdoor adventurous activities, alongside a full physical literacy curriculum that covers invasion games, net and wall, athletic activities, striking and fielding. The PE lead at Cordwalles Primary School in Surrey recently tweeted to us, "This is the best use of my PE and Sport Premium funding ever!"

**imoves**  
Inspiring activity everyday

For a free trial, visit [imoves.com](https://imoves.com) today. Call on 0114 266 1061 or email [enquiries@imoves.com](mailto:enquiries@imoves.com)

# TOP OF THE CLASS

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



## WINNING WASHROOMS

There's lots to consider when refurbishing your school's washrooms. How many toilets should there be? What regulations must you follow? Which products will last the longest? Cubicle Centre can help you to provide the best washrooms for your pupils. With our helpful resources, quick turnaround times and quality products, you can be assured that we will do what we can to make your project a success, with our friendly staff on hand to guide you every step of the way.

[washroomcubicles.co.uk](http://washroomcubicles.co.uk)

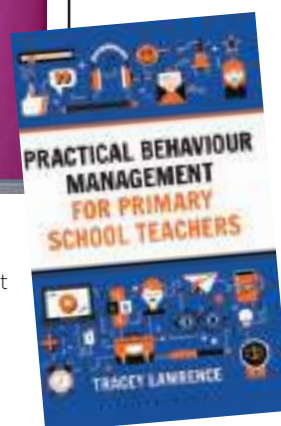
## 2 THE PATH TO OUTSTANDING

The bestselling book *How to be an Outstanding Primary School Teacher* by David Dunnis is now available in an updated second edition that reflects recent changes in education policy and teaching initiatives, and adds valuable new content on using technology within the classroom. The book features plenty of activities and techniques that will help turn 'satisfactory' and

'good' lessons into 'outstanding' ones – and best of all? Readers won't have to devote excessive hours to further planning, research and preparation.

A must for all primary teachers who want to be outstanding – not just for inspectors, but for every child they teach.

[bloomsbury.com](http://bloomsbury.com)



## 3 RUNNING RAIN OR SHINE

The competitively priced All Weather Daily Mile Track surface from EdSpace can typically be installed within three days at a cost that falls within a school's annual sports premium funding. EdSpace offers a free-of-charge satellite-based remote survey, which can provide a suggested track route and help generate a fixed price installation quote. The routes of EdSpace tracks are designed to suit existing school field layouts without adversely impacting on other field-based activities. The length of the track is calculated so that an exact number of laps will equal the challenge distance of 1 mile. Schools interested in having a survey carried out should email [info@edspaceltd.com](mailto:info@edspaceltd.com) with their address, postcode and a contact name. [edspaceltd.com](http://edspaceltd.com)

## CONFIDENT PLANNING

The Teacher's Moderation Toolkit improves the reliability of teacher assessment across the whole school. It helps staff to improve their subject knowledge and gives them more confidence. Teachers also feel increased confidence in cluster moderations and feel much more familiar with the expectations of their year group. It helps teachers to identify more precise next steps in planning and marking and helps their planning to become more precise, which in turn helps to improve writing outcomes across the whole school.

[prim-ed.com](http://prim-ed.com)



## 5 TAILORED SUPPORT

Hackney Learning Trust has a history of working collaboratively with settings, schools and academies to deliver outstanding results. Hackney is currently the highest performing LA in England in reading, writing and maths at KS1. At KS2 it's the fifth highest ranking LA at both the 'expected level' and 'higher level' thresholds in the combined reading, writing and maths indicator. HLT's results in the new Progress 8 measure also put it equal first in England, and its experience of working with schools to transform attainment levels can be tailored to support your school, whatever your current situation. Whatever your challenges are, HLT has the expertise to help. [learningtrust.co.uk](http://learningtrust.co.uk)



6



## TRY BEFORE YOU BUY

Paragon Multimedia, a leading integrator of interactive educational technology, is changing the way education providers select their interactive flatpanel solutions with its unique interactive showroom and test facility known as the Hub. Featuring panels from Smart Promethean and Clevertouch side by side, it allows users to compare the features and benefits of each panel. The test facility ensures existing software and legacy devices such as PCs, laptops and tablets will be compatible. For further details, contact 0845 226 1675 or email [marketing@paragonmultimedia.com](mailto:marketing@paragonmultimedia.com).

[paragonmultimedia.com](http://paragonmultimedia.com)

7



## CLASSROOM MAKING YOUR JOB HARDER?

Students with standard hearing can still miss up to 40% of what their teacher says, simply due to factors relating to distance, background noise, and brain development. Clarifying teachers' voices with a FrontRow microphone can help to avoid that disconnect, improving comprehension, attention, and outcomes. "The difference in the whole class is phenomenal," says Mrs. Sharpe, a year 3 teacher at All Saints Primary in Coalville, who began using the FrontRow Juno audio system this year. "I've had children going from three marks in a test up to 14 within half a term – a huge jump. Their listening skills have improved dramatically." Find out more at the FrontRow website...

[gofrontrow.com](http://gofrontrow.com)



8

## SIMPLIFY YOUR COMMUNICATIONS

SchoolsBuddy is the number one school solution for everything your existing MIS can't do, offering the ability to combine multiple requirements into a single system. It's especially useful for parental communications (including via SMS), for everything from breakfast club bookings and payments for bookings and trips, to after-school club signups, parents' evening appointments and secure child collection. According to Ben Miller, IT Manager at Chesswood Junior School, "SchoolsBuddy reduces the number of systems we need to manage our events, payments and communications. This saves us time and money, and enables us to do so much more. We are thrilled!"

[schoolsibuddy.com](http://schoolsibuddy.com)



9

## LEARNING THROUGH TRADING

Giving your pupils responsibility for a Healthy Tuck Shop or Stationery Shop can boost their confidence, provide them with real world maths practice, encourage them to consider their skills and experiences and develop a greater understanding of their career choices. Pupils Profit provides training materials that pupils can use to get their business up and running and make it profitable – the Healthy Tuck Shop snack range is fully compliant with Children's Food Trust guidelines, while the Stationery Shop's stock include eco-friendly scented pencils and ergonomically-designed pens to assist handwriting.

[pupilsprofit.com](http://pupilsprofit.com)

## BLENDED LEARNING

Engage and inspire students with Sparkol's VideoScribe – the easiest and fastest way to create immersive videos on any subject. Built for blended learning and the modern classroom, the company's highly intuitive software makes teaching rewarding, fun and truly interactive. Whiteboard animation can increase learning by 15%, with its powerful combination of spoken word, animated hand-drawn images, music and sound effects helping to boost knowledge retention, inspire creativity, build digital skills, teach storytelling and deliver better grades.

[www.videoscribe.co](http://www.videoscribe.co)



10



# Days to remember

Treat your pupils to a day that's rich in learning, cross-curricular variety and fun with a visit to the LEGOLAND® Windsor Resort...

The LEGOLAND® Windsor Resort is a unique and exciting venue for learning outside the classroom. Schools can use our National Curriculum Map to navigate their way around the Resort, making sure they tie in all of their learning objectives whilst they enjoy all of our 55 fantastic rides and attractions, including the brand new for 2017 LEGO® NINJAGO® World and LEGO® NINJAGO® The Ride.

The Resort is most suitable for pupils from KS1 to KS4, but we are also able to offer experiences for pre-school and younger pupils, particularly in our DUPLO® Valley area. Here, children can enjoy Brickville, where the landscape is designed for exploring and imaginative play.

Students visiting the park can partake in one of our 12 curriculum-focused workshops, where hands-on learning is key! Each workshop is led by LEGOLAND®s

**What they'll learn:**  
LEGOLAND® Windsor Resort allows students of all ages to engage and explore through imaginative play!



## 3 Top Attractions

1



Model scenes featuring nearly 40 million LEGO® bricks

2

4D movie with larger-than-life sound, wind, fog and lighting effects



3



The world's first LEGO® submarine underwater adventure ride



knowledgeable, fun and trained Education team, who have received training and support from LEGO® Education. This means that our workshops are finely tuned to complement the National Curriculum – with a LEGO® twist! Pupils can learn about STEM, English, art, geography and even history!

We provide a number of resources on our website to help teachers prepare for their school trip. Teachers can download permission slips to send home to parents and access our Risk Assessment form. We can also provide information regarding teacher to student ratios and ride height and age restrictions to assist in pre-planning for the day.

**To find out more and to book, visit [www.LEGOLAND.co.uk/Plan/education](http://www.LEGOLAND.co.uk/Plan/education) or call 0871 4232 280 to speak to one of our dedicated agents.**

**If you require further help or advice, please contact our Education team on 01753 626 236 or email [activelearning@legoland.co.uk](mailto:activelearning@legoland.co.uk)**





**Brecon®**

**Primary School Toilet Cubicles**  
Fun, Unique and Safe

Tel: 01924 457600  
Email: [sales@washroomcubicles.co.uk](mailto:sales@washroomcubicles.co.uk)  
Web: [www.washroomcubicles.co.uk](http://www.washroomcubicles.co.uk)

**Worrying about your school washroom refurbishment?**



Get the planning right. Download our free school washroom guide. The guide covers regulations, provisions and the best products.

Download the guide for free at:  
[www.washroomcubicles.co.uk/schools](http://www.washroomcubicles.co.uk/schools)

- A great cross curricular resource.
- A cost effective all weather system installed around the perimeter of the school sports field.
- Constructed using a polyurethane bound rubber chip laid over a geo-textile membrane, without the need for costly baseworks.
- Suggested routes and budget costings supplied using our remote survey system.
- Builds confidence, resilience and determination, all children succeed in The Daily Mile Challenge.

It's fantastic to see initiatives like The Daily Mile be established, showing real leadership from the education sector to improve children's fitness levels and their cognitive behaviour, and make a real difference to schools, teachers, parents and young people's lives. We know sitting still kills; not sitting still helps children build skills that will stay with them for life.

TANNI GREY-THOMPSON  
(BARONESS GREY-THOMPSON, DBE, DL)

Track Length	Laps Required
321.86m	5
268.22m	6
229.9m	7
201.16m	8
178.81m	9
160.93m	10

**COMPLETE SOLUTIONS FOR ALL YOUR OUTDOOR LEARNING AND PLAY NEEDS**

To find out more, please call us on 0800 002 9621, email us [info@edpsaceltd.com](mailto:info@edpsaceltd.com) or visit [www.edpsaceltd.com](http://www.edpsaceltd.com)



# Buildings & Facilities

## A SENSE OF CALM

We look at a school in Wales where two settings were brought together in style...

Burry Port Community Primary School is situated in Wales, around five miles west of Llanelli, and attended by around 210 pupils aged between 3 and 11 – but it wasn't always thus. The site was once occupied by separate infant and junior schools, until both were brought together as part of ambitious project conceived by Carmarthenshire County Council and designed in collaboration with the architectural firm Architype.

Part refurbishment, part new build, the £3.8 million project was completed under the Welsh government's 21st Century Schools programme. Following the amalgamation of the two existing schools, the infant intake was decanted into the site's Victorian-era junior building, while the old infants' school was heavily refurbished and added to with the construction of a KS2 extension.

Images © Architype / Leigh Simpson Photography



## A SCHOOL THAT FLOWS

As headteacher Alison Williams explains, "One thing we were all keen to have was a site that felt like one school. There's a pathway running from the old infants building, through our 'pod' performance hall [more on which later] and into the KS2 building. They're still separate buildings, but you can travel from one to the other without getting wet in the rain. There's this lovely feeling of the whole school 'flowing'."

The KS2 extension was designed and built to the Passivhaus standard developed in Germany, which is currently one of the most rigorous energy certification standards in Europe. To meet it, buildings have to feature good levels of insulation, make use of solar power and internal heat sources, be airtight and offer high standards of indoor air quality with the aid of mechanical ventilation.

When compared with equivalent buildings constructed to existing UK regulations, Passivhaus buildings can save schools a substantial amount on their utility bills – potentially as much as 60% to 90% annually. According to Williams, "The junior and pod buildings are both heated by a single domestic boiler that feeds a set of standard radiators, which we only put on when it's very cold. The buildings face the sun and get a lot of natural heat, so it's normally more of a challenge for us to keep the rooms cool enough, rather than heat them. Our gas bills have reduced dramatically."

The Passivhaus standard has also been found to improve the well-being of pupils and staff by reducing the need for artificial heat and light, boosting health and concentration as a result. "The classrooms are attractive, light and airy; there's a sense of calm and purpose," notes Williams. "We've also now got additional rooms that we didn't have before, including a meeting room, a nurture room where we develop children's emotional well-being and a very

comfortable and spacious staffroom."

The site's new and old elements are linked by the aforementioned central 'pod' – a striking elliptical building that's notable for marking the first use of the Brettstapel construction method within the UK education sector. This involves using short lengths of softwood – in this case, Welsh-grown Douglas Fir and Sitka Spruce – held together with hardwood dowels that swell and tighten with exchanging moisture content. It's a process that does away with the need for toxic glues or bonds, thus making it a highly sustainable alternative to traditional building methods.

Day-to-day, the pod building serves as a multi-use space employed for assemblies, pupil performances and various other activities. "It's a wonderful building," comments Williams. "We do a lot of music and drama, so it's often used for those purposes, and tend to hold assemblies and larger parents' meetings in there."

With the project having been completed back in 2015, how have the buildings held up since then? "The maintenance demands of these buildings are far fewer compared to the old site," says Williams. "I was used to having to deal with various building issues – maintenance, upkeep, painting walls that were letting damp through. If the wind was blowing, or there was heavy rain, you could guarantee that there'd be a problem with a roof. Now I'm able to focus more on the teaching and learning and less on taking care of the premises – which is the ideal, isn't it?"



*"The school has many environmentally-friendly features. Our Eco School Council members have become experts in leading tours around the school buildings and describing to visitors what we've had put in. The carpets in the KS2 block are made from recycled traffic tyres, for example, so it's been a fantastic learning opportunity for our pupils as well."*

**- ALISON WILLIAMS,  
HEADTEACHER**





“  
It's more of  
a challenge to  
keep the rooms  
cool than it is  
heat them.  
”

The buildings' interiors make use of wood wool acoustic ceiling panels and ply finishes stained with natural vegetable oil

The school's exterior spaces include an orchard, two forest schools areas, a sensory garden and playing pitches for KS2

Each classroom in the school's 30-place nursery incorporates multi-use areas for teaching and messy play, breakout space and access to covered outdoor areas

The KS2 extension is wrapped in a continuous air-tight duvet layer from the foundations up

Burry Port Community Primary School  
[burryportprimary.amdro.org.uk](http://burryportprimary.amdro.org.uk)

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

Archetype  
[archetype.co.uk](http://archetype.co.uk)

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



# teachwire

YOUR LINK TO THE BEST IN EDUCATION

## Quick & easy uploads



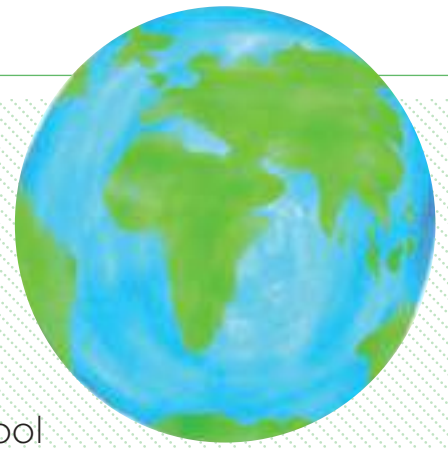
Have you ever devised...

- A memorable primary activity?
- Any behaviour or assessment strategies that have helped save valuable time?
- An effective approach to engaging with parents?

If so, Teachwire's resource archive is now open for submissions from primary teachers with creative and inspirational ideas.

Share yours at **[tinyurl.com/ResourcesTW](https://tinyurl.com/ResourcesTW)**

**[www.teachwire.net/teaching-resources](https://www.teachwire.net/teaching-resources)**



# HOW **GREEN** IS YOUR SCHOOL?

Adopting green technologies and policies in your school isn't just good for the planet – it can be a great learning tool, too...

## WHAT WE DO



**MARGARET LYNCH-DEAKIN**

EAL/H&S lead at Heald Place Primary School, Manchester

We've installed double glazing, solar panels, motion sensor-controlled lighting and push-stop taps, and have many other eco-friendly measures in place, including a recycling scheme and a staff cycling initiative. The decision to put these in place was supported by the school's SLT, parents and the school council, and driven by our headteacher, who is passionate about the environment and sustainability.

So far we've made savings on our energy and water costs, but with some of the building work still fairly new, it's too early to say what the long-term financial benefits will be. Our advice to schools planning something similar would be to visit other schools, invite agencies in to discuss how you can work together and keep relevant data, so that you can measure the impact over the coming years.

# 2,092

EDUCATION AND CHILDCARE PROVIDERS ACROSS ENGLAND AND WALES ARE SITUATED WITHIN 150M OF ROADS THAT EXCEED THE LEGAL LIMIT FOR NITROGEN DIOXIDE AIR POLLUTION

**Source:** Data from a joint survey carried out by Greenpeace and The Guardian in spring 2017

• A 2016 report produced by the Royal College of Physicians (see [tinyurl.com/rep-air-2016](http://tinyurl.com/rep-air-2016)) stated that 40,000 premature deaths each year can be attributed to nitrogen dioxide and particle air pollutants



**ORGANISED LITTER PICKS AROUND YOUR SCHOOL CAN BE AN EFFECTIVE AND CIVIC-MINDED WAY OF GETTING PUPILS ENGAGED IN ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES**

Switch Off Fortnight is an annual initiative run by The Pod that takes place each November, which sees participating schools receive a host of teaching resources themed around energy conservation – find out more at [jointhepod.org](http://jointhepod.org)



Since 1994, the Eco-Schools educational programme has helped schools across the world embed environmental education into children's everyday lives. The programme is run in England by Keep Britain Tidy and is open to any school – for more details, visit [eco-schools.org.uk](http://eco-schools.org.uk) or follow @EcoSchools



## *“We recently had a bio-dome constructed”*

We'd been talking for a while about adding a greenhouse to grow additional food for our kitchen, before receiving approval to go for something 'more extravagant' from SLT, so we recently had a bio-dome constructed.

It's essentially a large greenhouse with a solar-powered irrigation system and a temperature sensor that automatically opens the windows when the interior gets too hot. They're worth around £20,000, which we couldn't afford, but we were able to get half of it funded through Tesco's Bags of Help scheme for local projects. The dome's interior can accommodate 30 children, so we're now able to have a whole class involved in gardening at the same time.

Environmental issues have long been

part of the school's teaching philosophy. Each class its own representative on our Eco Council, which is run by two teachers and looks at various things around the school, from maintaining the gardening area to identifying opportunities for energy saving.

We've made sizeable investments into some things, but there's lots that can be done by simply being creative and having staff work together. We're lucky to have a garden area, but then we also have planters that some of the younger children use to grow strawberries and other fruit – it's possible to do things in a smaller amount of space – it just depends on how you use it.

**Gemma Kent, Deputy headteacher, Mission Grove Primary School, London**



# Rethink your CATERING

Tim Blowers highlights 10 points that schools should observe when developing a new kitchen facility from scratch, or overhauling their existing space...

1

## FREE UP SPACE

Things tend to go wrong when the catering provider or experts aren't involved from the start. Adding a new kitchen from scratch means either converting a room that's large enough (the cheapest option), building an extension or potentially adding a 'kitchen pod' that connects to the side of the school, but that isn't cheap.

2

## IS IT BIG ENOUGH?

One of the most common issues is facilities not being large enough for the number of pupils that will be using it. Lunch times can now last 35 to 40 minutes – if you can't stagger lunch times for different year groups, the space available might not let you feed all the children in the time available.

3

## REMEMBER THE PREP AREAS

A number of schools have gone from from bringing in frozen, pre-prepared portions to preparing food freshly on site – but if your kitchen isn't sufficiently large or properly planned out, you may well find that your preparation area is too restrictive for staff to be able to reliably prepare certain meals or dishes.

4

## ADOPT A WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH

It's usually down to catering providers to appoint kitchen staff, but what tends to happen is that someone from SLT will sit in on the interview appoint a school's supervisor or head chef – you'll want someone who works well with the school, parents and pupils, and has a real customer focus.

5

## MAINTAIN KITCHEN 'FLOW'

You need to have a 'flow' in your kitchen. When deliveries arrive, your storage areas for dry goods and refrigerated/frozen food needs to be the first thing they come across. You don't want delivery staff having to make their way right through the kitchen before they're able to put your deliveries away.

6

## CO-ORDINATE YOUR DELIVERIES

If you're having food delivered, arrange delivery times that won't clash with when parents are dropping pupils off. Schools obviously need to co-ordinate arrival times and the best way for providers to access the school premises; the provider's delivery staff will usually be DBS checked.

7

## DO THINGS BY THE BOOK

If a school wants to do its own catering, appoint staff and prepare fresh produce on-site, it must inform the environmental health officer based at their borough or city council. Once registered, they will then start to receive regular hygiene inspections.

8

## ARE YOU VENTILATED?

Regulations now state that commercial or public gas equipment can't be operated without ventilation being active at the same time. There are currently programmes under way across the country to replace older kitchen systems with ones that have gas cut-offs installed.

9

## CUTTING COSTS ISN'T EASY

When reducing costs, there's two main areas you can focus on – food and labour. A contractor or LA will manage those and have a staffing ratio based on meal numbers. Schools doing things in-house must be flexible and have a good kitchen manager if they're to stay out of trouble...

10

## MAKE YOUR MENUS EXCITING

Schools' customers are their pupils. As such, menus tend to be quite similar, usually including roast chicken, fish fingers and home-made pizza. For example. Some schools go a bit further by offering different choices and cuisines, but one reliable way to keep things fresh and exciting is to do special theme days and events.

**Tim Blowers is Chair of the Lead Association for Catering in Education (LACA) and head of the county catering service at Derbyshire County Council Children's Services**







## “TAKE-UP OF SCHOOL MEALS ROSE”

WE HEAR HOW ONE PRIMARY SCHOOL IN DERBYSHIRE WAS ABLE TO GIVE ITS EXISTING CATERING FACILITIES A MAJOR OVERHAUL WITHOUT THE NEED FOR SIGNIFICANT BUILDING ALTERATIONS, WHILE PRESERVING THE VISUAL APPEAL OF THE SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT...

Ashover Primary School is located in the picturesque village of Ashover, overlooking the beautiful Amber Valley in Derbyshire. Built in 1877, it was originally constructed as a girls' school and is currently attended by approximately 200 children. In June 2014, funding was approved by Derbyshire County Council (DCC) to upgrade the school's existing kitchen with a new facility.

### A MODULAR APPROACH

Given that Ashover Primary is located in a conservation area, it was agreed that the most beneficial solution would be to procure a modular kitchen in the form of a POD. The POD would be located in playground on the existing footprint, with meals produced there before being transported into the adjoining school hall.

DCC's catering department worked closely with the school over the course of the project, providing advice on the design and layout of the new kitchen and the choice of catering equipment. Details of the project were then made public, and an outside contractor appointed to deliver the work.

### A SPACE FOR EVERYTHING

The project took a total of six months to complete, with careful monitoring carried out at each stage of the build.

Close attention was paid in particular to the external appearance and finish of the POD, to ensure that it remained in keeping with the visual environment of the surrounding area and the stone finish of the existing school building.

The interior of the POD measures 9530mm x 7315mm in size. Specific areas were allocated to serve as discrete hot and cold preparation stations, and additional spaces were set aside to accommodate the kitchen's dishwasher, dry storage room and staff changing facility.

### A BOOST TO MORALE

The completed kitchen is a standalone unit with state of the art cooking equipment installed to ensure that high quality food can be served to the children each day. The kitchen was finally opened in September 2016, and as with many new builds there were some initial teething problems, but these have since been resolved.

The children, catering staff and school as a whole are delighted with what their new facility offers – and it seems to have improved staff morale and expectations regarding the school's dining experience too. Following the POD's installation, take-up of school meals at Ashover Primary rose from 82% in 2015-16 to 86% in 16-17.

## WHO'S HUNGRY?

Paul Evans, executive health consultant at School Health UK, offers some suggestions for making school lunchtimes smoother and more enjoyable for staff and pupils alike...



“Pupils can be more effective than any mid-day supervisor when it comes to basic tasks. Appoint some of your older pupils to specific roles with formal ‘titles’ – the ‘aqua-sommelier’, could be responsible for keeping water topped up, for example. This ensure that lunch staff can focus on communicating with pupils and encouraging social interactions.”



“In your dining hall, try to encourage a general atmosphere similar to a restaurant. Seat ‘dinner’ and ‘packed lunch’ kids together and don’t wipe down the tables while they’re still eating. Instead, have pupils wiping their own tables at the end of service – what this will do is allow pupils to feel accountable for themselves.”



“Instead of the traditional ‘long tables’ layout, try blocking tables together with pupils facing each other like a family. This can not only add to space, but further help pupils feel accountable for their tables. Adding a rota governing when tables get their food (Green table first on Monday, Red on Tuesday, etc.) will enable a calmer atmosphere.”





**TIMOTAY**  
PLAYSCAPES

**FREE**

Inspiration guide

Contact Us For  
More Info

INCLUSIVE

SENSORY

BESPOKE

NATURAL

PLAY

ENGAGING

NATURAL MATERIALS

SAFE

# Transform your outdoor sensory play space

Timotay Playscapes, your access to award winning inspiring outdoor play spaces using natural materials and creative thinking

Tel: 01933 665151



[www.timotayplayscapes.co.uk](http://www.timotayplayscapes.co.uk)

[enquiries@timotayplayscapes.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@timotayplayscapes.co.uk)





# ASK THE *expert*

Richard Jenkins, Chief Marketing Officer explains how Sparkol and VideoScribe can help teachers to engage and inspire students...



## What will primary pupils get out of using VideoScribe?

VideoScribe epitomises blended learning – the meeting of technology-driven education, student participation and traditional classroom methods. Our software ignites a child's imagination in ways that only video can, and the best approach is to let children loose on our software!

Learning with VideoScribe is extremely rewarding. Asking children to explain what they have learned through spoken word, animated hand-drawn images, music and sound effects boosts creativity, improves their ability to recall facts and teaches storytelling.

## How can it help primary teachers, particularly in terms of workload?

Managing a busy classroom every day is tough, so we've designed VideoScribe to help teachers be as productive as possible. Video engages children faster than any other medium, and once the videos are created, they have a consistent message and style.

Rather than distributing learning materials and working hard to capture – and maintain – the children's attention, teachers can... well, teach!

## What about children with special educational needs?

14.4% of children in the UK have special educational needs. That's a huge percentage ready to benefit from a VideoScribe multisensory approach, our assistive technology and a blended learning approach.

VideoScribe's applications within SEN are extensive. They range from entertaining and engaging videos designed for children with ADHD, to more visual and aural teaching materials for children with literacy difficulties or autism.

## Can you describe some examples of how VideoScribe can be used?

The possibilities are endless – we've seen everything from full-length animated books and simplified science explanations, to creative musical numbers and virtual geography tours.

There are also plenty of examples of teachers experimenting with entirely new methods. They've used VideoScribe to create digital art and in-class competitions, and in many cases have simply let children get hands on with the software to create narratives and videos of their own.

## What does setting up and configuring VideoScribe typically involve?

Very little, schools can manage VideoScribe easily. Students, teachers and all members of staff will receive login details that give them access to the software whether at school or at home. Users then simply visit our website, download the VideoScribe application and get started.

## What forms of support or training are available for users of Sparkol products?

We offer an extensive collection of online video tutorials, blogs, digital guides, supporting resources and training. We will be launching a series of weekly webinars in September this year, which are specifically designed for teachers and school support staff. Additional help and support is available from our technology support team as well.

# SPARKOL

 VideoScribe

To find out more, visit [www.videoscribe.co](http://www.videoscribe.co) or follow @SparkolHQ

# HUE™ can do it all

DOCUMENT DRAWING 21ST CENTURY SKILLS WAGOLL



DESIGN SKYPE ICT



ENGAGING LANGUAGES STEAM FLIPPED CLASSROOM SCIENCE SHARING TECHNOLOGY TEACH

ANIMATION TIMELAPSE MAKER SPACE IMAGINATION CAMERA

CREATIVITY HISTORY SOUND ART GEOGRAPHY CREATIVITY TEACH HISTORY SOUND ART

## What will you do with yours?

The HUE HD Pro classroom camera & visualiser

£44.95 + VAT

[www.huehd.com](http://www.huehd.com)

[sales@huehd.com](mailto:sales@huehd.com)

## FrontRow Juno: Essential classroom audio support

**C**lassrooms make teachers' and students' jobs harder. In fact, the average student misses 25% of what the teacher says just because of seating arrangements and background noise.

Gently amplifying teachers' voices with a FrontRow Juno improves **comprehension, attention and outcomes.**

### Juno - the most advanced soundfield system available

**Multi mics** – inclusive and accessible

**Lesson Capture** – easily record (audio and video) lesson to revisit or revise

**Rebroadcasting** – easily link with all personal FM systems

**Installation free** – can be set up in a few minutes



Why won't that child at the back listen?

Teaching is hard when I've got a sore throat.

I wish the other children didn't make so much noise.

Why is my teacher angry?

It would be great if I could hear all my teacher says.



**To find out more or to arrange a free trial:**

Email: [uksales@gofrontrow.com](mailto:uksales@gofrontrow.com) • Call: 01698 208268 • Web: [www.gofrontrow.com](http://www.gofrontrow.com)

 **frontrow**  
your school. connected.



# Technology

## HOW TO USE VIDEO OBSERVATIONS

Christophe Mullings explains how CPD based on recorded lessons can create a strong learning culture...

Video can turn lesson observation into a highly effective collaborative learning activity – one which can involve multiple teachers at a time that suits everyone, and without the need to arrange lesson cover. It can be used to enhance a twilight CPD session, for example, and facilitate empowering discussion about teaching and learning.

A video-based CPD session will, however, only be successful if there's buy-in from all participants. It's likely to work best when embedded into a school's CPD plan, allocated time and calendared. Try to keep the session relatively intimate so that everyone can get involved in the discussion; with larger groups, try splitting them into multiple sessions or working groups.

It's often a good idea to begin by setting 'norms' around discussion of the video.

Teachers may be unsure about recording themselves; watching a lesson clip depicting a neutral setting outside of your school can offer a risk-free introduction to the benefits of video lesson observation.

Ultimately, however, using footage recorded within your own learning environment will be much more engaging. If you're running a group



session, why not lead by example and share something with a specific learning focus for the others to review and discuss? It might be more productive to present this as an example of 'real practice' rather than 'best practice'. Best practice can often be subjective, and focus attention more on the teacher's performance than the learning.

The lesson video should be long enough to facilitate a rich discussion about the teaching and learning taking place, but not so long that this focus is lost. Maximise the time available by encouraging participants to watch the full video beforehand and re-watch snippets during the session itself. Pausing, rewinding and replaying the footage will help put participants' comments into context.

Begin any video-based CPD session by setting out some ground rules. The feedback and discussion should be constructive, non-judgemental and professional. By building a culture of trust and eliminating fear of judgement, your practitioners can develop the confidence to share and discuss videos of their own teaching in future.

Whoever's running the session should prepare some questions in advance to help facilitate the discussion. Think about how the dialogue can be opened up, and how participants can be encouraged to go beyond their initial impressions and reactions when analysing the lesson.

If you're interested in finding out more, IRIS Connect offers a free learning programme called Film Club, which provides schools with video clips, resources and questions for teachers on topics such as 'Learner talk and collective thinking', and 'Classroom talk' – see [tinyurl.com/iris-film-club](https://tinyurl.com/iris-film-club) for more details. A case study showing how Whitecote Primary School used Film Club to improve their staff's self-efficacy can be seen at [tinyurl.com/iris-whitecote](https://tinyurl.com/iris-whitecote)

*Christophe Mullings is Head of Education at IRIS Connect*

 @ChristopheMulli  
 [irisconnect.com/uk](https://irisconnect.com/uk)



## WHAT TO CHECK WHEN CHANGING YOUR BROADBAND

Make sure you're clear as to what your broadband provider can offer in four areas before switching, advises James Stoner...

It can be hard to know when switching broadband providers whether you're really making a change for the better. Ultimately, the four most important areas to consider are speed, cost, reliability and extras. So how do you know if making the switch is worthwhile?

### Speed

If you're looking for a faster connection, your broadband options will include VDSL (Very-high-bit-rate digital subscriber line), FTTC (Fibre to the Cabinet) and ADSL (Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Line) connections. Your provider can talk you through what each means in terms of performance and cost.

The final performance will depend on your local exchange, which means you can't always compare like for like with other schools. When looking at options, ask for real-world examples. Quoted speeds are often based on a 'best case scenario'. Busy times, when multiple demands are being made on the system, could throttle that speed. Ask what the quoted speed means in terms of upload and download speeds, for example, or how the solution will cope with your estimated demand.

### Cost

As with domestic broadband, it pays to shop around. Discuss the broadband service you're receiving with peers at other schools so that you can compare the respective performance and how much you're paying. Such comparisons

should help to ensure that you're not being oversold on capabilities you don't really need and that the price you're being charged is fair.

### Reliability

The best speeds in the world will be no use if the connection keeps failing during classes. Even the most reliable service will encounter issues from time to time, so make sure you have a service level agreement that comes with dedicated support. In the event of issues, you won't want to be hanging around on an automated phone line before even getting to know what the problem is.

### Extras

Once you've settled on a provider, check to see what extra value they might be able to offer. Ask how secure the connection is, whether the service has been tailored for schools and whether you might be able to access any additional benefits, such as content screening tools. Also secure some guarantees around the migration process and confirm the estimated downtime, so that you can plan around it.

**James Stoner is the founder of JSPC Computer Services, which provides ICT support to schools across Sussex, Surrey and Hampshire**

 @JSPCComputers  
 [jspc.co.uk](https://jspc.co.uk)



# *“Give children the education they deserve”*

If schools are to use EdTech solutions more effectively, the government needs to ‘Resource Our Schools’...

**F**or more than 25 years, we at the British Educational Suppliers Association (BESA) have carried out annual surveys on ICT use in UK schools. This year’s report was published in June and focused on the types of educational technology (EdTech) currently being used, and the impact that different implementations have had on schools’ management, teaching and learning.

We found that almost all (96.5%) primary schools use a management information system and that 70.5% use assessment systems. 86% of primary schools use cross-curricular EdTech content solutions; 70% use EdTech content solutions for reading and 67% for maths.

If that sounds encouraging, the picture’s not entirely bright. Only a fifth of primary schools stated that EdTech management systems were ‘very important’ in supporting the effective running of their school. A majority of the primary school leaders surveyed further identified that a significant percentage of their teachers weren’t making effective use of the technology available to them.

Overall, we found that the demand for EdTech solutions itself is actually quite limited. Only 18% of schools indicated a demand for learning management solutions, with just 7% and 5% noting a demand for assessment and lesson planning solutions respectively. Yet we also know that EdTech is useful, with 61% of primary schools saying they have successfully, or mostly, met classroom EdTech implementation objectives that they have previously set themselves.

The relative lack of EdTech training and CPD in schools helps to explain some of those figures. School leaders

told us that lack of willingness on the part of teachers to use EdTech, coupled with a poor understanding of the benefits that EdTech solutions can deliver, were key obstacles to making more extensive use of EdTech systems within their schools.

Another constraint is low internet bandwidth and slow wireless connectivity. Schools require both the means and resources if they’re to fully embrace EdTech and support their staff’s use of it – they can’t be held back because of budget limitations or infrastructure issues.

That’s why in May this year BESA launched the Resource Our Schools campaign. We’ve seen a sharp drop in resource expenditure among UK schools over the past two years, with primary ICT one of the areas that’s been hit the hardest, losing 4.1% in expenditure year-on-year. Hundreds of people who are supporting the campaign have reported an appalling lack of resources and support staff in schools where they teach, lead, work or where their children learn.

We hope the UK government will listen and act soon to address the critical shortage of funding for resources in UK classrooms – and give children the education they deserve.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Cleo Fatoorehchi is communications coordinator at BESA; the association’s ‘Resource Our Schools’ statement can be signed at [tinyurl.com/resource-our-schools](http://tinyurl.com/resource-our-schools)

 @besatweet

 [besa.org.uk](http://besa.org.uk)

# HOW SAFE IS YOUR DATA?

We hear what schools can do to keep their data secure, and why they should start preparing now for the arrival of the EU's GDPR law...



## “MAKE SURE YOU KNOW WHERE YOUR DATA IS STORED”

ANDREW WILLIAMS,  
INFORMATION  
SECURITY AND  
ONLINE SAFETY  
CONSULTANT  
FOR SWGfL

Data has come to occupy the centre of our world. Every day we rely on computer technology and internet connections to deliver vital services and information – but if something goes wrong, how long will it take you to resolve the issue?

Broadly speaking, cyber security threats will fall under one of the following categories:

### • NON-MALICIOUS

Issues that stem from user error, carelessness or lack of knowledge and training

### • MALICIOUS

Problems that are the result of deliberate actions on the part of others; such as fraud, sabotage, cyber-crime and phishing, among others

### • TECHNOLOGY SPECIFIC VULNERABILITIES

These will be caused by defective or ageing software, hardware and networking equipment

### • MAN-MADE THREATS

Severe issues arising from civil disorder, warfare, terrorist attack and other such incidents

### • NATURAL THREATS

Equipment failure, damage or connection issues caused by earthquakes, flooding, fire and so forth

To help secure its data, every school will employ a variety of

technologies, policies, infrastructure approaches and contractual relationships. Your school may well have a disaster recovery plan, but these can sometimes overlook your data and might never have been tested. If your system goes down and you discover a problem with your back-up, you'll have no way of accessing your school's core information.

However, there are some things that everyone can do to improve their organisation's standards of data protection. A 2016 report produced by SWGfL and Plymouth University showed that schools recorded staff training as a consistently weak aspect of their online safety policies – despite staff having access to sensitive data about children – and often required regular training to re-enforce the importance of good data protection procedures.

First off, then, make sure you know where your data is stored. Then ask your staff if they know. If you know what data belongs where, you can start to control and contain the potential threats. Adopt a clear data protection policy, and ensure

your staff know what their obligations are and how to perform them – this can be an invaluable help in protecting your data later down the line.

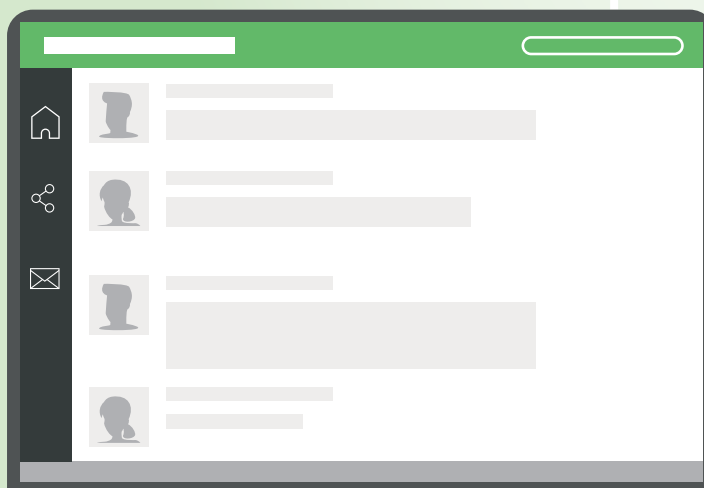
Encourage staff to use strong passwords. Use antivirus and malware applications and keep them updated. Monitor and log any apparent hacking attempts, and use data encryption where appropriate – all these are vital. Retain a good technology partner that's supportive and responds to requests promptly. If you don't, maybe rethink how much of your budget should go towards one.

You can avoid a lot of stress and headaches later on by developing an appropriate incident management plan and response process. Make sure that this includes data loss scenarios – and

don't forget that the importance of a carefully considered back-up routine can't be over-emphasised. Finally, consider taking out a cyber risk insurance policy. Check that the policy will provide sufficient cover to meet your requirements and be sure to use a large, reputable firm.

**South West Grid for Learning (SWGfL) is a charitable trust providing connectivity services and learning technologies to schools and other organisations**

 [swgfl.org.uk](http://swgfl.org.uk)





## “GDPR CAN’T BE IGNORED”

SARAH  
BRISCALL,  
COMMERCIAL  
SOLICITOR AT  
SHULMANS LLP

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is a new EU law relating to data protection which is due to take effect on 25th May 2018. One might question this need for compliance in light of last year’s EU referendum – but with Brexit unlikely to take effect before March 2019, all UK organisations (including educational institutions) will still need to comply with GDPR as of that 2018 deadline or risk being in breach.

Even after Brexit takes effect, the UK will need to adopt its own broadly similar legislation in place of GDPR. The UK’s Information Commissioner has made it very clear that this will be the approach, so any steps taken now to comply with GDPR won’t be a wasted effort, but rather a way of future-proofing your organisation’s compliance. On that basis, GDPR can’t be ignored.

GDPR will require educational organisations to designate a Data Protection Officer (DPO). That role may already exist at your organisation in some form, but GDPR imposes much stricter

requirements in terms of qualifications and experience. Simply having a colleague wear a ‘DPO hat’ alongside their existing duties is unlikely to be sufficient, so recruiting or training a suitable individual should be an immediate priority.

Within the education sector, a large proportion of processed data will be classified as ‘sensitive’ (such as details of individuals’ health records, ethnicity or religion, for example). Before 25th May 2018, your organisation should ask itself:

- Do we only collect information necessary for specific purposes?
- Do we hold on to that information only for as long as it’s deemed necessary?

Data relating to children also raises the issue of whether suitable consent has been provided for its processing. In most cases, you’ll be relying on the consent of parents or guardians. This consent needs to be clearly documented, and the reasons for processing it need to be specified. Under GDPR, consent is going to become much harder to rely on, so take steps now to address this.

Another factor to consider is that individuals are becoming more aware of their legal rights in respect to data

protection. The scope of these rights will increase under GDPR. Subject access requests have become increasingly common, with individuals wanting to know what data is held on file about them and their children. Does your organisation fully understand the nature of the data it holds and where it’s stored? Could you comply with such requests within the (stricter) GDPR deadline of 30 days?

Failure to tackle your GDPR preparations in time could result in significant consequences. The Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO) will be able to impose fines based on a percentage of worldwide turnover or a fixed sum, whichever is higher. In some cases, this can be up to €20 million – a sharp increase from the current maximum fine of £500,000.

More importantly, any steps taken by the ICO can and will be published. Not only will your organisation be under the scrutiny of the ICO going forward, but any breach or investigation will be put in the public domain. In organisations where trust and safety are paramount, this reputational risk could be far more damaging than any monetary fine.

 0113 831 3954

 [shulmans.co.uk](http://shulmans.co.uk)



# New Gratnells PowerTrolley makes big impression in product trial

*"We loved it and we don't want to give it back."*

Ms Keen,  
Project Leader and Deputy Head  
at Purford Green Primary School

The latest product releases from Gratnells, the **PowerTrolley** and **PowerTray**, were placed into a local school for a 6 week placement trial. The PowerTrolley and 3x PowerTray combination came through the demanding 6 week trial and passed with flying colours.

The equipment was supplied to Purford Green Primary School in Harlow, Essex, identified by Gratnells as a school with a reputation for excellence and local to the company's manufacturing and marketing HQ.

The School moved into an extensively remodelled building in April 2012 and is proud of its excellent facilities and light, spacious, well-equipped classrooms. With its emphasis on standards, skills, challenge and opportunity it was considered a perfect testing ground for the Gratnells PowerTrolley and PowerTrays.

## THE CHALLENGE

The School has 30 iPads, shared between different classes and year groups. The tablets are extremely popular with the learners and this often requires moving up to 20 devices at a time between different locations in the school.

Re-charging sometimes takes place in the classroom and each evening all tablets, including a number of storage cases and holders, are removed to the security of a lockable storage room.

## THE TEST

Use of the Gratnells PowerTrolley and PowerTrays was allocated across a number of teachers over the six week period in order to maximise usage, assessment and feedback.

Score sheets and feedback forms supplied by Gratnells were used to rate the products across six features;  
Functionality  
Mobility  
Safety  
Security  
Storage  
Ease of Use

On a scale of 1 (high) to 5 (low) the kit was rated as very good across no fewer than 5 categories, with Mobility scoring an outstanding maximum mark.

## FEEDBACK

Users were impressed with the trolley's ease of movement – particularly for children who enjoyed moving it around and putting it away.

This, combined with the unit's stability, safety and even weight distribution, made it a reassuring choice for classroom use.

The flexibility of the charging process was also popular – it was found that children could easily access and charge tablets either singly or in groups within trays. Perhaps most important for teaching staff was the ability to use and

charge devices where and when they required them, often dividing the trays between classes and charging while learners were accessing and using tablets. As a bonus the trays could be stored within the existing classroom furniture.

The small footprint of the trolley was identified as a further benefit, making it unobtrusive and easy to store away securely.

## CONCLUSION

Quote from Ms Keen, Project Leader and Deputy Head at Purford Green Primary School –

*"The Gratnells PowerTrolley/PowerTray combination will be a real asset to any school, with its manoeuvrability, ease of use, flexibility and safety."*

In summary –

*"We loved it and we don't want to give it back."*



Contact us to find out more!  
**Tel: 44 (0)1279 401550**  
[powertray.gratnells.com](http://powertray.gratnells.com)

*Gratnells*

# The pros and cons of 'Bring your own device'

Could supplementing your school's ICT equipment with gadgets your staff and pupils already own be a cost-saving boon – or a disaster waiting to happen?...

**E**nsuring a sufficient provision of educational technology on a limited budget isn't easy. What if you could offload the cost by letting pupils bring their own devices into school? Would that help matters? Well, it's not as simple as it sounds...

Under a 'BYOD' model, pupils use their own mobile devices (ie. smartphones, tablets and laptops) to access internet-based resources that help support their learning both in school and when at home. The obvious benefit of this for schools is that it allows them to potentially reduce their investment in computer hardware – but there are issues.

## Safety first

Firstly, there are the risks presented by allowing devices not commissioned by the school onto the school network. As Arik Fletcher from educational ICT support company Joskos Solutions ([joskos-solutions.com](http://joskos-solutions.com)) explains, "Devices can enter the school pre-infected with malware and viruses, which can then rapidly spread through the school network. Internet filtering also becomes a problem when you can't directly restrict access to certain web content and software on the devices. Incorporating BYOD within an existing network

often entails having to survey the network and install upgrades, such as wireless access points and IP Address ranges, to handle the extra traffic coming from those extra devices."

A BYOD policy will also require schools to keep multiple devices of different types properly charged, for which you'll need a range of different power adaptors (and potentially some additional mains sockets). The mix of high-end and low-end devices you can expect to see being used may further engender a sense of a digital divide among pupils. Finally, there's the risk of devices being damaged or stolen, and all the potential for parental complaints and thorny insurance issues that might entail.

## Acceptable use

An alternative approach may be to adopt a one-to-one device scheme funded by parental contributions, whereby the school buys lower cost Chromebooks or Microsoft devices (which can currently be found priced at under £200 per device) and uses laptop charging trolleys. These cloud-based devices will typically provide pupils with home/school access via the Google G Suite and Office 365 software packages.

If you're determined to make BYOD work, however, then you'll need to create a minimum specification for devices that will be permitted on the network – barring devices with older (5+ years) operating systems and insisting that internet security and antivirus apps be installed would be a good start. Have pupils' parents and staff sign an 'End User Agreement' (EUA) that authorises their devices to be monitored and managed by third party software operated by the school, and make 'Network Access Control' compulsory, so that your acceptable use policies can be enforced, backed up by appropriate staff training.

You'll also need a mobile device management solution that can push out and block certain software applications, and help teachers to maintain order in the classroom when the devices are in use. Finally, prohibit the use of personal Wi-Fi and mobile broadband connections so that pupils can't circumnavigate the school network.

James Grew, chief sales officer of the classroom management software provider Impero ([imperosoftware.com](http://imperosoftware.com)), concludes that, "BYOD can be a minefield – there's no one 'right way' of rolling out such a scheme. What's important to remember is that a BYOD scheme should fit around a schools' key objectives and learning outcomes."



**Dave Smith is computing and online safety adviser and business development lead at Havering Education Services**

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

 [haveringeducationalservices.co.uk](http://haveringeducationalservices.co.uk)

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

Google

Primary schools in local area  
All Maps Images News Videos More  
Your Primary School  
www.your-primary-school.sch.uk

## DISCOVERY

A school film makes your website 53 times more likely to show up on page 1 of a Google search

FORRESTER STUDY

YouTube is the second largest search engine in the world – responsible for about 5 billion videos viewed each day

FORTUNELOARDS

## ENGAGEMENT

Film means higher viewer retention – one minute of film is equal to 1.8 million written words

BRAINSHARK

46% of viewers take action after viewing a film

ONLINE PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION



Your Primary School

Amazing facilities all our pupils can enjoy



Visit us on our Open Day  
Book your place today!

First Name

Last Name

Contact Details

SUBMIT

"Your thoughtful scripting enabled our very young pupils to shine and deliver very natural performances. We also showed it to prospective parents at our Open Morning today & they were completely charmed. They said they felt it was a very accurate portrayal of the school. Four registrations were completed on the spot!"

[www.schoolfilm.company/our-films/case-studies/st-christophers-school](http://www.schoolfilm.company/our-films/case-studies/st-christophers-school)

SCHOOL GOVERNOR AT ST CHRISTOPHER'S SCHOOL

SCHOOL

FILM



COMPANY

## Want us to tell your story?

Get in touch today to find out how we can help tell your school's unique and personal story

[www.schoolfilm.company](http://www.schoolfilm.company)

[charnah@schoolfilm.company](mailto:charnah@schoolfilm.company)

020 7566 0190



# Community Engagement

## MAKE YOUR SCHOOL PHOTOGRAPHY COUNT

Decent photography is a must when it comes to communicating what your schools does – here's how to capture pictures that will really work...

**G**reat photography is immensely powerful in telling stories and bringing to life the ethos and brilliance of your school. The very first impression that your school makes on prospective parents, students and staff will be via a photograph, so it's vital that your photography is impactful, inspiring and able to capture hearts and minds on an emotional level.

Having a bank of professional photography on file makes things much quicker and easier for all involved when it comes to producing marketing materials such as prospectuses, internal newsletters or blogposts. Great photographs can be immensely powerful tools for helping to tell stories and bringing the ethos and brilliance of a school to life.

Having worked with many schools over the years, here are our top 5 tips for obtaining remarkable school photography...

### **1. USE A PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHER**

Professional photographers are experts at capturing magical moments, from bright-eyed pupils with a sense of wonder, to earnest, dedicated teachers and beautiful school environments.



## 2. PLAN WELL

A full schedule of activity and brief should be prepared prior to the day of the photoshoot. Being a design agency, we at Blue Apple Education can help schools prepare for this and additionally ensure that full parental permission for photographing students has been obtained. Doing this will enable the photographer to make sure everything runs smoothly on the day, and see to it that disruption to the school day is minimised.

## 3. MAKE SURE YOUR SCHOOL LOOKS ITS BEST

Ask your staff and students to be smart and tidy, and ensure your cleaning staff have left everywhere spotless. Staff should check that all those little details are seen to – that posters and artwork are up to date and hung properly, and that there's a fresh jug of flowers in reception. These finer points will all show up in photographs and go a long way to make your school look its very best.

## 4. APPOINT A PHOTOGRAPHY ASSISTANT FOR THE DAY

The photographer will benefit from being accompanied by a member of staff who can lead them around the school and won't be afraid of disrupting a class or asking for furniture or people to be moved around.

## 5. MAKE IT FUN

Treat the photoshoot as something special, exciting and fun to do. If the students and staff are able to enjoy it, that will be reflected in the photographs.

Great photography is both affordable and likely to pay off in the long-term. Even a one-day professional photoshoot can provide you with hundreds of photographs that could last you for two to three years and help to attract families and quality staff to your school. That one new pupil or member of staff could pay for the photoshoot several times over.

*David Limb is the founder and managing director of the educational design and publicity firm Blue Apple Education*

 @BlueAppleUK

 [blueappleeducation.com](http://blueappleeducation.com)

# WHAT TO DO IF YOU'RE THE STORY

How can your school manage unwanted media attention?



A school is criticised in the media – national, local or both – almost every day. This might be due to the actions of a rogue teacher, a student tragedy or a policy decision that's backfired and resulted in outraged parents, staff or students. But it's still a major issue for the school – one that can set back years of hard work in building a strong reputation.

These crises aren't going to stop, and there's a good chance that one day it will be your school's turn. However, there's a lot you can do to prevent a crisis from becoming a reputational disaster. The first thing is to make sure you're well prepared. Every school I know holds regular fire drills, but fewer create – and far fewer practise – emergency communication plans.

As well as setting out actions to take, these need clear lines of command that will work at any time of the day or year, easily accessible contact details for key stakeholders (local media, parents, staff, governors), and fast access to the school's own communications channels (website, social media, parent and student apps). Copies need to be widely available, taken on trips and kept at senior leaders' homes.

Once you have your plan in place, the next way to avoid a crisis is to listen systematically. If you're planning major changes in the school, such as redundancies or even just a new uniform policy, give stakeholders the chance to give their feedback – and don't be afraid to make changes if good suggestions are made.

If you receive a complaint, make sure you investigate it. It used to be the case that problems would spiral out of control

because a parent who didn't get a sympathetic hearing called the press. Now they're more likely to start a protest on Facebook. You need to monitor social media mentions of the school – if you don't already, try using tools such as Hootsuite ([hootsuite.com](http://hootsuite.com)) or Mention ([mention.com](http://mention.com)) – and if you find something brewing, try to diffuse it face to face.

If a crisis hits despite this, then be proactive. The 'no comment' stance didn't work back when relatively responsible media were the only audience. Refusing to comment now just inspires online conspiracy theories. Make a clear statement and put it on your website so that everyone can see it and staff can refer people to it. Acknowledge what has happened, say what you will be doing in response and state what support is available for those affected.

At the same time, look for expert help from your local authority, your trust or from crisis experts (ask your lawyers for recommendations if you're stuck). These people will take the weight off you and your team while you deal with the personal (or personnel) issues.

Finally, don't see a crisis as a reason to stop communicating good things. Your reputation will need rebuilding, and in the same way that new growth eventually covers forest fire damage, the best way of doing this is to put out positive messages.

*Simon Hepburn is the founder of Marketing Advice for Schools*

 @Mktadvice4schls

 [marketingadviceforschools.com](http://marketingadviceforschools.com)



# Get your pupils' parents to muck in

How can schools persuade mums and dads to give up their time and lend a hand...?

There are numerous reasons why schools need parent volunteers – to become school governors, run the PTA, organise fundraising events, supervise on school trips or at sports days or sort out costumes for a school show. Unfortunately, it can sometimes be tricky getting parents to step up to the plate. Often it feels as though the same group of parents take on all volunteering tasks.

Bear in mind that most of your parents will be busy working people and that they also have families to raise. A lack of volunteers will often not be about parental unwillingness, but due to parents having too many demands on their time already. Those parents

with enough time to get involved might work part time, or be stay-at-home dads or mums.

Make sure that you lead by example. If you want parents to run fundraising events for the school, then ensure that the headteacher and staff members attend and support them too. Be clear with parents about the benefits of volunteering. Beyond the money raised and the support given to the school, volunteering can also bestow personal and career benefits for the individual concerned. Working as a volunteer can significantly widen your skill set.

When asking for volunteers, try to observe the following:

- Remember that parents may be nervous at getting involved.

No matter how friendly and welcoming you are, some parents may have had a negative experience of school when they were children that will affect how they respond to you.

- Don't ask once for volunteers and give up if you don't immediately get them. You'll often need to ask several times before getting a positive response, but don't resort to emotional blackmail or nagging – *'We have asked a number of times for someone to organise the Spring Fayre and we are very disappointed at the lack of response.'* Doing this will only put parents' backs up.

- Be clear about what you need from your volunteers and what the role involves. Be honest about the time and commitment required in what you're asking, otherwise the drop-out rate will be high. If a DBS check is required for the role, make this clear from the start.

- Remember that parents are not the only people who can volunteer to help you. At the preschool I help to run we've had support from ex-parents, grandparents and members of the local community – even those who have never had a child attend our setting.

- Try not to see parent volunteering as a one-way street, where you tell parents what you want them to volunteer to do – get parents to give you their ideas about how they could help. For instance, I run a weekly magazine club for the children at my local primary school, where we create and publish a school magazine each term.

- Finally, parents know that schools are busy places, but a 'thank you' goes a very long way. Treat your volunteers like gold dust and show your appreciation for them at every opportunity.

*Sue Cowley is a parent, teacher, educator and author*



# STOP PRESS

If you want to get a message to the media, bear in mind that some press releases are more effective than others...

## Doing it wrong

Journalists have short attention spans. Fail to grab their interest with your top line and they simply won't read it, meaning the time you've spent lovingly crafting every word will have gone to waste.

Also, don't send out press releases as attachments – always paste the text in to an email – and be sure to get the facts in. On which day and date was the centre opened?

This sounds interesting, but it's very woolly. How did the architects involve the children?

£2m?! Hang on, who is this parent? What inspired them to support the build?

Oops – you've buried the most newsworthy part of your story among the final paragraphs. An internationally acclaimed composer backed your build? Tell us more!

Urgh. Provide brief notes at the end of the press release that include a named contact for further information, their email address and mobile phone number, plus a link to the school website – and ensure that this contact will provide an immediate response to journalists' enquiries. They'll give up if they're given the runaround or no one gets back to them.

### School opens new arts centre

Anywhere Primary School in Nowhereville has opened a new arts centre.

Headteacher Mary Principal said: 'We're delighted to have this unique new facility. We've worked incredibly hard alongside the PTA with fund-raising to make this possible. We're really grateful to everyone who has helped.'

The architects, Build & Partners, asked the children what they wanted from the building so they were really involved with the process.

St Nowhere Mayor Christopher Danglechain opened the facility on Saturday and said: 'This is a really exciting new facility and the council is thrilled to have had a major role in getting the project off the ground.'

The parent of a former pupil contributed £2m to the project, for which the school is extremely grateful.

The school plans to use the new arts centre for music and drama performances and preparation.

Last year, pupils appeared in a very successful performance of Joseph and His Technicolour Dreamcoat at the community centre, which composer Andrew Lloyd Webber attended.

Chair of Governors Peter Lingering said: 'This is a great achievement for the school and I congratulate Ms Principal on her hard work.'

For more details, contact the school.

Is it unique? Probably not. If it is, explain why. What fundraising did you do? This is also a very dull quote. Education is about changing young lives – what could be more inspirational than that? This just focuses on the effort of fundraising rather than the children. Also, avoid using abbreviations.

If this is for local media it's probably worth mentioning the mayor, but if you can't persuade him to say something more interesting than this, forget the quote.

This is from what Basil Fawltly might have called the 'Ministry of the Bleeding Obvious.'

No doubt the chair of governors is keen to be included in the press release, but he's not adding to its news value. Try to think yourself into the role of media consumer – would the story interest you if you weren't linked to the school?



### Getting it right

#### Andrew Lloyd Webber backs primary school in building new arts centre as grateful parent pitches in £2m

*Head says she hopes it will inspire new generation of performing talent as composer acclaims 'a building for future stars'.*

As cash-strapped schools battle against cuts, a primary has opened a stunning new arts centre – with a little bit of help from *Cats* and *Evita* composer Andrew Lloyd Webber and a grateful parent.

Mary Principal, headteacher of Anywhere Primary School in Nowhereville, said she had feared that in the current funding climate, the school's new arts centre would remain a pipe dream.

But when local resident Lord Lloyd Webber was spotted in the audience of a school production of his musical *Joseph and His Technicolour Dreamcoat*, Ms Principal said the project took on a new momentum.

"Lord Lloyd Webber was so encouraging and has been a mentor for the whole project," she said.

Meanwhile, the parent of a former pupil who is now enjoying a successful career as an actor came forward with a £2m contribution to ensure that the centre was built.

They wish to remain anonymous.

Ms Principal said: 'At Anywhere Primary, we are passionate advocates of the performing arts and believe that exposure to the arts at an early age can be a life-changing experience. The marginalisation of the arts in many secondaries as a result of the EBacc – which only includes 'academic' subjects – is a real worry to us.

Lord Lloyd Webber said: 'Anywhere primary is a school which understands the power of creativity in children's lives. Their new arts centre is a building for the stars of tomorrow.'

The centre's architects, Build & Partners, based in Somewhere Else, involved the pupils in a year-long design project for the duration of the build. Project Manager Dan Design said: 'The children showed fantastic creativity in their ideas. They came up with the idea of different types of seating in the theatre space to fit adults and children, and the chair designs are theirs.'

The new centre was opened on Friday January 14 by the mayor of Nowheresville.

Now that you've got a real story to sell, think about targeting. Do one version of the press release for local media flagging up your local connections and one for the nationals without.

Work the news agenda to your own advantage by hitching your press release to topical talking points and current discussions around education policy – in this case, funding cuts.

This is another big education policy topic that takes your story out of the realm of 'local school builds building'. The quote also keys into the idea of education as something that changes lives.

Great! You've got a quote from the main man.

Don't forget to send out sharp, high-resolution pictures with your press release. I can't stress strongly enough that images which 'say' something can make all the difference to your chances of success. It may be worth hiring a professional photographer for a few hours to capture a big event. It can be the best story in the world, but blurry, badly composed photos will scupper its chances of publication.

**Susan Delgado is media and policy director at the specialist education PR company Empra and a former assistant editor of *Tes***



# The inside story

Marshall Minibus tells about its mission to furnish schools with the transport that's right for them – including vehicles that every member of staff can drive

## DRIVER REQUIREMENTS

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

The good news from Marshall Minibus is that all staff may be able to drive one of our lightweight buses, provided that they are driving on behalf of a non-commercial body for social purposes (but not for hire or reward), and that they:

- Are in possession of a full category B driving licence
- Have held that licence for a period of more than 2 years
- Are aged 21 or over
- Receive no payment for driving the vehicle, other than out-of-pocket expenses
- Will be driving a vehicle with maximum mass not exceeding 3.5 tonnes (or 4.25 tonnes if said vehicle is adapted for disabled passengers)

## THE LIGHTWEIGHT MINIBUS

As the name suggests, our lightweight minibus is made from modern lightweight materials. As well as enabling more staff to drive one, this means your school will get to benefit from savings in fuel consumption while leaving a lower carbon footprint. Our range of lightweight minibuses are available in 15 to 17 seat configurations with various



**Chris Lavender from Marshall handing over the keys**

wheelchair accessible options, bespoke livery and a comprehensive inspection and maintenance pack.

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

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

## WHO SHOULD YOU TURN TO?

Choose your supplier carefully. If it's clear that they're trying to sell you additional services that you don't necessarily want, ask yourself if they're the right partner for you.

In addition to offering free and impartial

advice, Marshall Minibus is able to supply any type, make or size of minibus based on your requirements. Our inclusive service and maintenance packages will help you to stay compliant, whichever route you choose. Minibus training is available from a number of different sources, so shop around. In many cases, your local authority will be able to offer Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme (MiDAS) training at a fraction of the cost charged by commercial competitors.

We don't pretend this decision is easy. There

are many factors to consider, and while we can't make the decision for you, we can run through the options and risks to be aware of, and help to guide you through the maze.

Our advice is completely free, and with no vested interest in upselling our products, we are able to help you make an informed and sensible choice that matches the requirements of your organisation.

Marshall manages more than 6,500 vehicles nationwide, and is part of the Marshall Motor Holdings Group, which represents 24 vehicle manufacturers via 104 dealers across the country.

**For more information, contact Chris Lavender on 01480 220 444, email [info@marshall-minibus.co.uk](mailto:info@marshall-minibus.co.uk), follow @MarshallMinibus or visit [www.marshall-minibus.co.uk](http://www.marshall-minibus.co.uk)**

1909

David Marshall leases a small workshop from Cambridge University and starts hiring out and maintaining cars

1926

David Marshall's son Arthur, having learned to fly, opens an aerodrome that goes on to become the foundation of today's Marshall family-owned Cambridge Airport

1991

Marshall Leasing is established and proceeds to build a leased fleet of 6,300 vehicles, including Marshall Minibus

2015

Marshall Motor Holdings PLC is floated on the London Stock Exchange

# SCHOOLS NEED TO TACKLE PARENTS' CAR USE

Traffic congestion outside schools can result in parental frustration – but it's the threat that cars pose to health that should really concern us, says Dave Nichols...

**W**hether you're a veteran headteacher or relatively new to school management, it's inevitable that at some point you'll come across the dreaded 'P' word – parking.

Pick-ups and drop-offs should be an enjoyable experience and the highlight of a parent's day. They should be a time for emotional end-of-day hugs, reminiscent of a Hollywood blockbuster – but in reality, the scene outside most primary schools is more like a rescue operation from a war film. It's every person for themselves, as they briefly abandon their vehicles, grab their offspring, sweep them back into the getaway car and speed off into the sunset, not daring to look back at the chaos left behind.

Comical though it sounds, the truth is that these daily occurrences are putting children's lives at risk. It's a blatant and selfish disregard for the law. We all appreciate the pressures many working families are under, but as a charity that supports bereaved and seriously injured road crash victims – many of whom are children – it's disappointing to hear about such incidents from the many schools we work with.

The consequences of such actions outside the school gates are obvious. Best case scenario, a couple of irate parents exchange words; the worst-case scenario ends in tragedy.

The impact of poor traffic management goes beyond the potential for sudden physical injuries. It's estimated that poor air quality causes 40,000 premature deaths each year in the UK. Exposure to nitrogen dioxide has been linked to a range of respiratory diseases, while the presence of so many vehicles on the road further puts children off walking and cycling. The result, ironically, is that parents don't feel it's safe for their child to walk or cycle due to ongoing traffic and pollution issues, and so take the car instead – thus making the problem even worse.

Brake believes that the most effective way of tackling this is through government investment in public transport and active travel (walking and cycle routes), which would enable parents to leave the car at home. We are also pressing for 20mph to be the default speed limit in urban areas. Children can't judge the speed of approaching vehicles travelling faster than 20mph, and consequently believe it's safe to cross when it's not.

Schools can help by running campaigns themselves. Whether it's for 20mph limits to be adopted in their community, or for safer crossing places and more segregated cycle paths, we've seen some fantastic initiatives. Some schools have partnered with local businesses that have let parents use their parking facilities so they can walk the rest of the way to school. Organising pavement and street artworks can help make trips more exciting. Children can even design 'parking tickets' for local police to give to drivers, or take part in a 'Walk to School' scheme.

Consult with parents, governors and local residents as you go, and time your campaign well. Why not use Road Safety Week (20-26 November 2017, [roadsafetyweek.org.uk](http://roadsafetyweek.org.uk)) to focus people's attention? Brake also produces free school resources that can help you drive the message home. Whatever you decide, put the kids at the heart of it. They can be real advocates for change and be very persuasive – after all, it's their health and lives at risk.



**Dave Nichols is community engagement manager for the road safety charity Brake**



 @Brakecharity  [brake.org.uk](http://brake.org.uk)



# Discover teachwire

YOUR LINK TO THE BEST IN EDUCATION  
ONLINE!



Teachwire.net offers a daily mix of news, commentary and resources for primary school teachers. Find advice, lesson plans and assessment tools – all for free!



**MUST  
READ!**

*Sir Ken Robinson shares his vision  
for the future of education*

## Newsletter

Remember to sign up to our weekly email newsletter for highlights, including free lesson plans and resources sent directly to your inbox.



[facebook.com/teachwire](https://facebook.com/teachwire)



[twitter.com/teachwire](https://twitter.com/teachwire)



[uk.pinterest.com/teachwire](https://uk.pinterest.com/teachwire)

### Opinion



Michael Tidd wants your feedback – but not if it's based solely on data...

### Discussion



You can't measure wisdom with tests and scores, argues Debra Kidd

### Advice



Julie Price Grimshaw recalls what she learnt from mentoring trainees

### Resources



Head to Teachwire to download six of the best KS1 SATs resources for the maths reasoning paper.

## What's trending

1

*Ideas to engage reluctant writers*

2

*Teaching the selfie generation*

3

*Are you ready to be head?*

4

*Stop eating your shoes!*

5

*Can we still afford glue sticks?*

# Human Resources

## CAST A WIDER NET

When recruiting for a vacancy, how can you extend your candidate reach?

**T**o take control of your recruitment you need to approach it with a proactive strategy. Schools that tend to resort to costly 'fire fighting' recruitment strategies should dedicate time (not money) now to updating their approach. If you apply lower cost options, such as online advertising, more effectively in order to cast your net wider, you can get a better response from a lower advertising spend, whilst slashing your need to fall back on headhunter fees. So what behaviours can schools adopt to ensure their adverts are seen by more – and more relevant – teachers?

### Groundwork

First, back up your 'employer brand' with a career site. Our candidates tell us that applying for a teaching job can often take them an incredible two hours, and that as a result they now research schools thoroughly before choosing which to apply to. The aim of a career site is to position you as an employer of choice (see [coombeshead.careers.eteach.com](http://coombeshead.careers.eteach.com) for an example) while making the application process as straightforward



as possible. They can also include a prominent link back to your own school website so that candidates can easily find out more about you.

### Reach out

The next step is to use cheap and free resources to extend your reach yet further. A typical advert on an online job board will be seen by around 400 teachers; backed up by effective social media marketing, that number can increase to over 800. Have every parent and teacher in the school share the vacancy once it's posted – teachers know other teachers, and parents will obviously know others living nearby.

### Start a talent pool

Large employers will often look to build a community of people who have at one point thought 'I could work there'. You can use talent pooling software (see [eploy.co.uk](http://eploy.co.uk) and [hirestorm.com](http://hirestorm.com) for examples) or a manual method of your own to retain and organise candidates' details so that they can be considered for future vacancies. Done right, this can double the return of your previous job adverts, providing you with a free pond of brand advocates from which to fish an already receptive candidate – plus any other candidates registering an interest via your career site.

### Shop around

Finally, look for a service provider who will offer more bang for your buck. Using an education-only job board for your recruitment advertising will give you a large but very specific audience that extends nationally and internationally. Search for a job board annual licence that provides good value for money – ours, for instance, includes a bespoke career site for your school and unlimited advertising that covers leadership vacancies.

*Katie Newell is a content specialist at the education recruitment provider Eteach*



@eteach



[eteach.com](http://eteach.com)



## **“SOMETIMES YOU’VE GOT TO GET RADICAL”**

If we want to boost teacher recruitment, let's address what's keeping candidates away, says Stephen Tierney...

**B**oth the government and the regulator are guilty of causing excessive workload. In a culture of high-stakes accountability and imposition of policy, it's not surprising that teachers get fed up and move on. Graduates look at the lack of agency and home/work balance and choose other professions.

The recruitment and retention report published by the Education Select Committee earlier this year pulled no punches. It was clear about the damaging effect of concurrent excessive and ill-thought-through curriculum and assessment changes by the DfE, as well as the negative impact of a high-stakes accountability system.

In what was an otherwise eminently sensible report, I would suggest that a national entitlement for CPD that is checked by Ofsted is not the way to go. This would be a centrally driven policy imposed on schools, with Ofsted sent in to make sure it's happening – i.e. more of the same.

Sometimes you've got to tip things on their head and get radical. The government should not only give at least a year's lead-in for new initiatives, but there should be no new ones until we've worked through the massive changes to the curriculum and assessment system. It's time to pare back both Ofsted and the DfE. Too much time and money is being spent on things which have too little impact on pupils' life chances. Inspecting good schools, performance-related pay, academisation – none of these help retain good teachers or attract more into the profession.

Addressing the causes behind lack of retention and recruitment would lead to a reduction in workload, freeing up time for productive professional development. Teachers in receipt of this would also stay around to utilise it in the classroom. Within my trust we recently consulted on reducing contact time for all teachers by about an hour a week, in return for an enhanced commitment to their own personal professional development. That's about six days per year. This professional development could comprise lesson study among colleagues, formative lesson observations or external accredited courses.

While everything is up for discussion, I've built three non-negotiables into the system. Firstly, there must be verifiable evidence produced of the professional development undertaken. Nothing onerous, but a sharing of professional learning is a must. Secondly, the increased CPD time needs to correlate positively with improved outcomes for pupils (causation may be more difficult to show, but I'll accept correlation for now). Finally, the reduction in teaching time has to be affordable within our budget. I don't need a national entitlement for CPD driven by government. I need a profound cultural change in the way we do things.

**Stephen Tierney is the CEO of the Blessed Edward Bamber Catholic MAT and chair of the Headteachers' Roundtable**



@leadinglearner



[leadinglearner.me](http://leadinglearner.me)



# How to conduct good job interviews

Jill Berry outlines what headteachers should know when meeting job applicants for the first time...

**A**s a head, I always found appointing people to be one of the most positive and enjoyable elements of the role.

Selecting support staff, teachers or leaders at all levels provides you with the opportunity to get what Jim Collins describes in his book *Good to Great* as “The right people in the right seats on the bus”. There’s something exciting about welcoming into your school community new members who you’re confident will enable you to take that bus where you believe it should go – and alongside whom you know you will enjoy the journey.

So how can you make sure you get the process right?

## Be timely and efficient

Plan carefully so that you give yourself sufficient time for a thorough and considered process, but don’t waste any time and let strong applicants slip through your fingers. Schedule the different stages of the selection process sensibly, communicate it clearly and stick to it.

## Be respectful and fair

Ensure you treat all applicants at all stages equitably, and with consideration and sensitivity. Be aware that internal candidates can feel particularly anxious about putting themselves forward against unknown competition from beyond the school; communicate

carefully with them about how the process will be managed.

## Be warm and welcoming

Interviews are potentially tense and testing. It’s not necessary – or even advisable – for selection panels to add to this pressure by seeming overly formal, cold and unfriendly. I’d suggest that you’ll be better able to gauge the potential of each applicant if you help them to relax.

## Be positive and professional

Organise the interview day – which may include different activities, such as teaching a lesson or completing administrative tasks, depending on the role – so that things proceed efficiently and smoothly. Communicate carefully so that all involved know exactly what is expected of them and how the day will be managed. Show positivity about each candidate’s contribution to the day.

## Be sensitive and supportive

I would strongly advise that at the end of the selection process, decisions are made and communicated promptly. In my school, I’d always telephone all interviewees on the evening of the day we’d met them, offering the post to our

selected candidate and informing the unsuccessful. To be kept waiting for several days is, I think, discourteous. Disappointed internal candidates in particular may need a carefully considered debrief, but I’d always follow up the interviews with supportive, constructive feedback to any disappointed applicants requesting it.

Recognise that the candidates you don’t appoint are still potential ambassadors for your school. Ideally, you want them to say afterwards that although they were sorry not to be successful, the experience was positive, well-organised and handled with care and consideration throughout. If you’ve made a strong appointment and shown the school to good advantage to others, that would qualify as a win/win.

Good luck with your appointments over the coming year!

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jill Berry is a leadership consultant and former headteacher; her book *Making the Leap – Moving from Deputy to Head* is available now, published by Crown House





# How can your appraisal processes be improved?

Educate tells us how its Standards Tracker system can make staff appraisals a more effective tool for driving school improvement



## What are the main weaknesses of the yearly staff appraisal system that schools have traditionally used?

It doesn't allow for reflection and progression to take place easily. In the same way we provide feedback to students regularly, we should also do the same with our staff. If issues aren't discovered until the mid-term review point, and then not looked at again until the end of the cycle, it can be very difficult to judge ongoing progress and impact. If appropriate support hasn't been offered, it can become troublesome to say that objectives haven't been met.

## How can Standards Tracker address that?

Standards Tracker adopts a 'little and often' approach that enables continual feedback and progress within the annual cycle. It allows short term goals to be set outside of formal appraisal objectives, so that staff can be supported and their issues be addressed in a timely fashion. This way, staff members can meet their appraisal objectives and attain the career progression

they deserve. At the same time, the school as a whole is able to demonstrate that staff progress and the impact it's having.

## Can Standards Tracker help alleviate the workload of senior leaders?

Absolutely! With paper-based approaches, tasks will often be completed by different people at different times, and sometimes in different ways. Standards Tracker pulls tasks that you and your colleagues may already be doing into one central place. A recent survey of our existing schools told us that not only did senior leaders find the Standards Tracker service easy to use, but that it saved them time too – according to one school, upwards of 14 hours of time per senior leader!

## What does the initial set up of a Standards Tracker service typically involve?

For a typical set up, each school is assigned a project manager who will guide them through the service for the first year and

will be given access to our support team. The scope of the set up will be established at an initial project planning meeting. Several follow-up meetings will then introduce additional elements, such as how to embed triangulation forms and produce reports. Being an online, cloud-based service, there's no need to change, configure or update any existing systems or technologies.

Training will be provided through remote meetings with the project manager and the school project leader(s), and disseminated to staff via online video and support materials, so that they can learn at their own pace.

## What changes to the appraisal process will staff perceive if a school adopts the system?

Staff feel more valued, supported and invested in. They have more ownership and accountability for their own development and career progression. CPD needs are easily identified and supported using the school's existing best practice, with little impact upon CPD budgets, allowing more development opportunities to be provided. There should be little functional change to how things work, since the same elements are applied – they'll just be implemented in a slightly different, more effective and efficient way.

## Are you aware of any notable Standards Tracker success stories?

Very much so. We work with several Advocate Schools, who each have their own success story about how Standards Tracker has positively impacted on their performance management and in turn their quality of teaching and learning, and school improvement.



To find out more about how Standards Tracker can impact your school, call 0203 422 6500, email [info@standardstracker.co.uk](mailto:info@standardstracker.co.uk) or visit [standardstracker.co.uk](http://standardstracker.co.uk)

# Do your governors have a groupthink problem?

Ruth Agnew considers whether schools can – or indeed should – do more to foster greater diversity in their governing boards...

There's an old HR adage that says 'We recruit in our own image'. Recent reductions in the numbers of elected school governors and trustees has meant that school leaders are increasingly appointing individuals to governing boards themselves. If it follows that many individuals will, to an extent, be naturally inclined to recruit others similar to themselves, then we run the risk of boards across the sector becoming much less diverse.

We've also seen a push towards recruiting on the basis of skills and a gradual 'professionalisation' of governance roles, which may cause boards to become ever more homogeneous in terms of background and experience.

This lack of diversity is arguably an even higher risk in church schools, where foundation governors will usually be in the majority, yet often be drawn from a small pool of potential applicants.

I use the word 'diversity' here in the widest possible sense. A survey of school governors in England carried out by the National Governance Association and *Tes* in 2016 found 93% to be white and 89% to be over 40. An earlier study in 2014 by the NGA and University of Bath concluded that "Governing bodies typically do not reflect the ethnic diversity of their area," – but for me, issues of gender, age and ethnic diversity

are only a proxy for more important issues relating to diversity of perspective.

The UK Corporate Governance Code (see [tinyurl.com/ukcorp-gc](http://tinyurl.com/ukcorp-gc)) warns against the dangers of 'groupthink' – a striving for consensus and lack of challenge to decision-making – in non-diverse boards. One of a governing board's key roles, however, is specifically to bring challenge. Governors and trustees must be able to challenge one another and their executive leaders to ensure that decisions are robust and governance practices remain effective.

Beyond that, if the board is to properly understand and engage with its community, then drawing some of its membership from different elements of that community can be enormously helpful. Research on board diversity in companies indicates that greater diversity results in better decision-making, widens the recruitment pool and enhances the organisation's reputation.

## Plan of action

So what can, or should schools be doing? We can start by asking ourselves the following questions:

- 'Is this an issue for us?'
- 'How diverse is our governing body in terms of age, gender, ethnic origin,

level of education and professional background?'

- 'Is our board membership reflective of our community?'
- 'Is there a diversity of opinion within our decision-making processes? Is there any evidence of 'internal challenge'?'
- What is our recruitment strategy? Are we successfully recruiting outside the pool of people our governors know personally, or do we need support with this? (The sites [sgoss.org.uk](http://sgoss.org.uk) and [inspiringgovernance.org](http://inspiringgovernance.org) may be helpful here).

The evidence suggests that diverse boards lead to more successful organisations – which in our context, means better outcomes for our children and young people.



**Ruth Agnew is a National Leader of Governance, chair of a maintained primary school and director of RMA Governance, which provides**

**governor training and consultancy services across North West England**

@ruthagnew

[rmagovernance.com](http://rmagovernance.com)





# “IT WAS A CLASSIC CASE OF COASTING”

Martine Clark recalls the swift changes she made upon assuming headship of Byron Court primary school – and how she brought her staff with her...



**Martine Clark is the Headteacher at Byron Court Primary School**

**W**hen I first arrived at Byron Court in 2011 it was antiquated, having been led by the same head for 26 years. The teachers were very good for the most part, but there was little evidence in place to qualify the standards of teaching and learning. Initially, it was hard to say how many children would get a level 4 in English and maths – individual children would just be picked out if there was cause for concern. There were no recorded percentages, likelihoods, anything like that.

Assessment was similarly led at a personalised level, where the attainment and achievement of individuals was well known, but the broad overview and percentages of those that could get their expected level wasn't readily available. The school also had cross-phase classes that the parents weren't very happy about, and which the teachers found to be a bit of a struggle to manage, due to the extensive differentiation demands.

## A SENSE OF DIRECTION

Ofsted had last visited a couple of years before I arrived, and gave what was then a 'Satisfactory' rating. Standards had been dropping – it was classic case of what we'd now define as coasting. Things were pretty much just 'ticking along' with no real vigour, enthusiasm or any innovation happening.

One of the first things I did was create faculties, and explained my thinking behind this to the staff. Over a series of table discussions I asked them what Byron Court was about – how the school came across to them, what their own values were, what they wanted to achieve. The staff found these sessions really interesting, because nobody had actually asked them such questions before.

The faculties proved to be incredibly empowering. Each faculty wrote out action plans that underpinned the main priorities of the school development plan

– which until that point didn't actually exist. This way, everybody knew the direction of travel and had the power and freedom to affect that direction. I found that I had many inspired teachers and support staff, who when given free reign and some empowerment helped to make a difference very swiftly.

## OUT WITH THE OLD

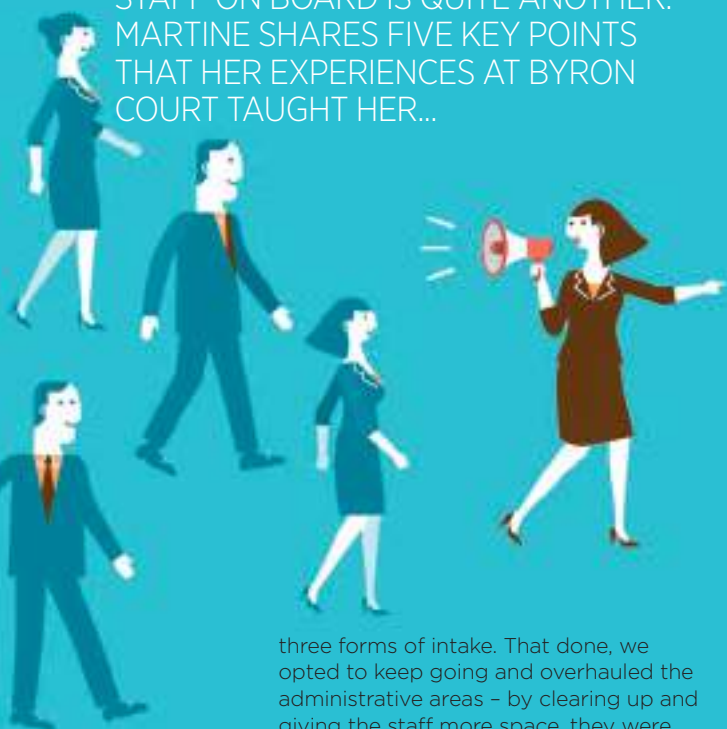
I gathered some TAs in my office and set them to work shredding stuff – everything older than three years just went. We ordered in skips and had everyone start chucking out loads of dusty things that should have gone years ago – Victorian desks, hideous paintings. We then enlisted an architect I'd worked with at two of my old schools and began drawing up plans for what we could do.

We completed a new top corridor first, then built an extra classroom to create



# BE A GOOD FARMER

HAVING A PLAN AND VISION FOR CHANGE IS ONE THING – BRINGING STAFF ON BOARD IS QUITE ANOTHER. MARTINE SHARES FIVE KEY POINTS THAT HER EXPERIENCES AT BYRON COURT TAUGHT HER...



three forms of intake. That done, we opted to keep going and overhauled the administrative areas – by clearing up and giving the staff more space, they were able to start making our systems far more streamlined.

The school's younger staff were largely gung-ho and embraced these changes – older colleagues, less so. One member of staff wanted to establish an 'open forum', in which staff members could discuss their concerns. I told her that staff were welcome to write down, anonymously if they wished, those things they were worried about or not happy with, and that I'd address them. In the end I only received 11 responses – things like 'Who's monitoring the expenditure?' and 'Why did you order those lights?'

In March 2012 Ofsted came for two days. We received 'Outstanding' across the board, particularly in our standard of provision. That led to us applying to become a teaching school, which we were awarded a couple of years later.

Until relatively recently, Byron Court didn't have a motto. We decided to get the children to write one, and they came up with 'Believe it, achieve it'.

It's a case of sowing those seeds – as a headteacher, you've got to be a good farmer.

## 1. Inspire people

There has to be an inspiring vision of positive change that people want to buy into. You need to tap into people's values and what they believe in. Ultimately, your teachers are all there to make a difference to the lives of children, and if you can support them in achieving that, you can get that buy-in and get a lot of things done.



## 2. Focus on policy and procedure

There'll be wobbles and resistance from some, but it's a case learning how to manage that. The answer isn't to put yourself out there as a target, but to work with the school's senior leaders and strategic decision makers. If people can see you've got clear systems in place, they'll feel secure and work better.



## 3. Embrace the new

Empower every member of staff (including TAs) to have a voice in setting the direction of the school. Outline the broad strokes of your five main priority areas according to the Ofsted framework and what you need to sharpen up. Allow staff to create their own action plans for how they're going to meet them, you'll release a great deal of energy and creativity.



## 4. Let go of the past

Allow people to clear out the school's accumulated rubbish. Some staff asked me if they were really allowed to do that, and I had to say "Of course! If you're not using it and it's covered in dust, throw it away!" People can be excited when getting a new leader, but also nervous because it spells change. If you can show how this change will let them develop, grow and have a stronger voice in how the school operates, that's really powerful.



## 5. Listen

On your very first day, give staff a chance to express what their strengths are, what should be kept and what they'd like to see change. You'll get a collective wishlist which you'll tend to find feeds into what you want yourself.



# WHEN LETTING GO IS **HARD TO DO**

Simon Thomas looks at how schools should respond when staff complain of unfair dismissal...

Before bringing a complaint of unfair dismissal, an employee will normally need to have been in two years of continuous employment with the same employer. In schools, however, there are some circumstances where employment under different employers still counts as continuous.

One is when a school is transferred to a different employer, which most commonly occurs when a school becomes an academy. Another is when an employee moves from being employed by the governing body of a school (such as an aided or foundation school) to being employed by the LA that maintains the school, and vice versa.

However, there are also around 25 categories of dismissal (sometimes referred to as 'impermissible reasons') where dismissal is automatically unfair and no qualifying period of service is required.

## **TIME LIMITS AND FAIRNESS**

Strict time limits apply to bringing claims. Most claims have to be started by filing details with the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) under early conciliation procedures within three months, starting with the date of dismissal.

If the employer believes that the employee doesn't have the requisite term of service, or that the claim hasn't been brought in time, the employer can apply to have the claim dismissed.

Potentially fair reasons for dismissal are **conduct, capability, illegality, redundancy** and '**some other substantial reason**' (SOSR). If the dismissal is not for one of these reasons, it will be unfair. If it is for one of these reasons, then the employment tribunal (ET) will go on to consider whether the dismissal was 'reasonable'.





In most unfair dismissal cases involving schools, the reason is clear and the issue is 'reasonableness'. When considering 'reasonableness', the ET must not substitute its own opinion for the opinion of the employer. That applies to both the employer's findings in relation to the reason for dismissal, and to the decision to dismiss.

This is fundamental to understanding the law of unfair dismissal and the role of the ET. Let's apply it to those different types of dismissal.

### CONDUCT

Following a fair investigation, the employer must form a genuine belief based on reasonable grounds that the employee was guilty of conduct which justifies dismissal. The ET does not decide whether the employee was or was not guilty of the misconduct alleged, or whether they (the ET) would have dismissed.

The employer must act within 'a band of reasonableness'. An employer may be found to have stepped outside this band of reasonableness and dismissed unfairly if, for example, the investigation is conducted with a view to establishing the employee's guilt, rather than get to the truth.

Dismissal for a first offence will usually be unfair, unless the offence is gross or serious misconduct.

### CAPABILITY

This includes dismissals for both lack of competence and illness. Again, the principles of reasonableness apply here – the ET must not substitute its opinion for the opinion of the employer.

In competence cases, the employer should be able to demonstrate that the employee was given a reasonable opportunity to address the shortcomings but failed to do so within a reasonable period. The ET won't generally decide whether or not the employee was competent.

Illness can cover both long-term absence and frequent short-term absences. The acid test for the ET will be whether the employer could reasonably have been expected to wait any longer before dismissing the employee.

### REDUNDANCY

Here, there must be a 'redundancy situation' – that is, reduced requirement for workers to carry out work of a particular kind, or in a particular place. The reduced requirement is for *workers*, rather than work; if an employer can get the same work done with fewer

employees, that is a redundancy situation.

It's generally up to the employer to decide how it selects employees for redundancy and who should be in the 'pool' for possible selection, but this should be objective and non-discriminatory.

Redundancy dismissals can be unfair if the employer fails to take reasonable steps to offer the redundant employee(s) any available alternative employment.

### SOME OTHER SUBSTANTIAL REASON [SOSR]

This is potentially wide in scope, but the cause must be 'substantial'. It's not a catch-all for cases where the employer can't provide any other fair reason. It may, for example, cover the expiry of a genuine fixed term, such as cover for illness, or maternity absence where the substantive post holder is returning. Where a breakdown in relationships is affecting the way the school is run it may be fair to dismiss for SOSR, even if it can't be established that the cause is conduct or competence.

(It should be noted that cases of unfair dismissal for reasons of illegality are fairly uncommon).

## CONSTRUCTIVE DISMISSAL

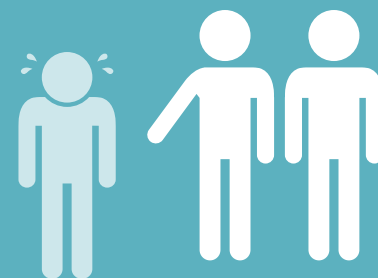
When an employee resigns, with or without notice, in circumstances where he or she is entitled to resign without notice because of the employer's conduct, this is treated as a dismissal, giving rise to a right to bring a claim for unfair dismissal.

The employer must have committed a breach of the employee's contract of employment – one so serious as to amount to a fundamental or repudiatory breach. The employee must have resigned because of the breach, and must have acted promptly in resigning – otherwise he or she may be treated as having affirmed the contract.

There is an implied term in every employment contract that the employer will not conduct itself, without reasonable cause, in a manner calculated or likely to undermine the relationship of trust and confidence between employer and employee. Constructive dismissal cases arising in schools often revolve around alleged breaches of this term.

Constructive dismissals can, in principle, be fair – but because the employee must show that the employer has committed a breach of contract, it's usually difficult for the employer to successfully argue that the dismissal was fair.

## DISCRIMINATION



A dismissal on the grounds of a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010 will give rise a potential claim for discrimination. No qualifying period of service is needed to bring a discrimination claim.

## COMPENSATION



- Compensation is made up of the basic award (which is based on pay and years of continuous employment, up to £14,670) and the compensatory award (which is 'capped' at £80,541) OR a year's gross pay – whichever is lower.
- There is no cap on the compensatory award for most 'impermissible reason' unfair dismissals, and also no cap on compensation for discrimination.

**Simon Thomas is senior solicitor at the National Association of Headteachers**

 @NAHTnews

 [naht.org.uk](http://naht.org.uk)



**MAKE-A-WISH®**  
United Kingdom

Call  
**01276 40 50 80**  
to get your Christmas  
Fundraising Pack today!

## *This Christmas, Make a Wish Come True*

By fundraising in your school this Christmas, you can help make a huge difference to the lives of the seriously ill children and young people who turn to us every day – like Mia who's living with a kidney condition and wished to go to Lapland!

Christmas is a magical time, but for a child fighting a life-threatening condition, Christmas can be spent in hospital or enduring gruelling treatment. A wish gives them something to look forward to beyond their daily realities. You can help grant the wishes of the hundreds of children that turn to us at Christmas and beyond, bringing hope to their lives when they need it most.

Get your Christmas Fundraising Pack by calling **01276 40 50 80** or visiting  
**[make-a-wish.org.uk/christmas-fundraising](http://make-a-wish.org.uk/christmas-fundraising)**



Registered with  
**FUNDRAISING  
REGULATOR**

Charity Reg Nos. 295672/SC037479



## THE FUNDING ROADS LESS TRAVELLED

With budgets tightening, what alternative funding avenues can schools explore?

According to The Key's latest State of Education report (see [tinyurl.com/key-stateofed](http://tinyurl.com/key-stateofed)), Over six in 10 (62%) primary schools said they would need to make savings to balance their budgets in 2017-18 – which for some schools could mean having to find hundreds of thousands of pounds.

School leaders report renting out their buildings as wedding venues, opening nursery provision, running second-hand shops and even using qualified staff to provide fitness classes to the wider community to raise funds. Not every school will have the facilities for those, but all schools can play to their strengths and think creatively about opportunities that may be open to them.

### WORKING WITH LOCAL BUSINESSES

Business arrangements can take many forms, and don't necessarily require significant amounts of staff time and energy. One school in Solihull made an arrangement with a local restaurant – the pupils designed a new cover for the children's menu, and each time a customer orders a meal from that menu, the school receives a 50p donation.

The school actually has a number of similar 'passive income' streams, which earn a combined total of £5,000 per year, and also benefits from several sponsorship arrangements. The





school newsletter, for example, is sponsored by a company that prints copies for free.

Good business relationships can in turn generate further opportunities. Another school's partnership with Hilton Hotels, for example, resulted in Hilton staff using their annual CSR day to help carry out maintenance and repairs across the school site.

## MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR PREMISES

Could any local community groups make use of your facilities? We know of one Nottinghamshire school that hosts Scout groups, training sessions for local sports teams, monthly cinema nights and business meetings. The school sets different rates for business and community groups – the former at a level similar to local leisure centres or conference facilities, and lower for the latter.

You could also offer your car park as additional parking facilities for weekend shoppers, or liaise with organisers of car-boot sales and negotiate payments to the school based on a percentage of each car's entry fee.

## REACHING OUT

Parents and members of the wider community will often voluntarily lend their time to help school budgets stretch further. Asking parents to help out with school DIY projects at the weekend could potentially negate the need to employ contractors or additional staff, for example.

There may also be further opportunities beyond your local community. We're aware of one small rural school that received 25 free books from a publishing house, simply because the headteacher asked. As she put it to us, the worst that can happen is that somebody says no. Other schools have received similar donations of playground equipment, art supplies, and even vehicles.

*Sara Martin is a researcher specialising in school funding and finance at The Key*

 [schoolleaders.thekeysupport.com](http://schoolleaders.thekeysupport.com)



## WHAT'S YOUR LACK OF PLANNING COSTING YOU?

If your planning is playing second fiddle to firefighting, it's time to change things up – and fast...

**S**omething that immediately struck me when I started working in a school years ago was the lack of planning that the local authority had completed around a £100k building refurbishment to house an after school club on our school site. Three years later, that same building was torn down as part of a larger £1m development. Questions as to why the initial works had been allowed to go ahead, prior to what should have been a strategically planned greater expansion, were met with indifference and unsatisfactory answers. It felt that resources were being wilfully misused. And that was my introduction to the world of education and school business management...

It's essential that school business managers focus on increasing productivity, driving quality improvement and increasing resource efficiency throughout the school – but that can only be done through effective strategic and operational planning, even if that's something not performed by those around you.

'Effective planning' sounds simple, but I've encountered a number of SBMs who tell me that their lack of time makes operational planning hard to even consider, let alone implement. SBMs know how essential planning is, but find that it takes a back seat to those other daily demands clamouring for attention the moment they walk through the door. This creates a perfect storm of stress and firefighting, helps foster an environment in which performance and impact are less than they could be, and which over time will affect the well-being and motivation of staff, allowing feelings of resignation

and complacency to creep in.

Make time to take a step back. Avoid procrastinating by not channelling all your planning efforts into a single time-consuming task that feels so onerous you end up doing nothing. If you need support with the planning process – from someone within your school or an external consultant, for instance – then ask for it. Start by simply identifying, by month, key milestones for the next 12 to 24 months, working backwards and identifying what your workflow and tactics will need to be in order to achieve those milestones, while ensuring that accountability, deadlines and budgets are allocated to each individual tactic.

Effective planning will lower your school's staffing costs by eliminating wasted time and improving process flow. Communicate your plan visually to everyone involved, so that the schedule of tasks is made available to your team ahead of time and kept up to date. As well as following up with the various staff involved in order to rectify any problems, you'll also need to continually monitor and adjust your plans as needed.

Planning allows you to feel more in control of your day, rather than your day in being control of you. Above all, good planning will lead towards the creation of a leaner, and hopefully more responsive working environment.

**Nazli Husein is a freelance school business manager with experience spanning independent, maintained, academy and free schools**

 [@sbm\\_support](https://twitter.com/sbm_support)

 [sbm-support.me](http://sbm-support.me)

# In with the new...

Farewell, National Association of School Business Managers  
– and hello to the Institute of School Business Leadership...

**I**t's an exciting but challenging time to be a school business professional (SBP). Recent changes to government education policy, the reduced role of local authorities and increasing requirement for technical expertise have all contributed to rapid change within the profession.

Schools need to become more business-savvy, without losing sight of their ultimate goal – improved learning outcomes for children. But with high numbers of practitioners from non-teaching backgrounds now entering the education sector, the school business profession is undeniably in a transitional phase. This poses obvious challenges, but also provides a fantastic opportunity to reshape the school business landscape for the future.

As CEO of NASBM, I know our members have a desire for greater professional recognition. The school business community is facing increased levels of scrutiny and accountability, for which it needs clear standards, robust CPD and rigorous evaluation of practice. That's why, in November, NASBM will transition to become the Institute of School Business Leadership (ISBL).

The ISBL will have greater powers to help the profession evolve and face those scrutiny and accountability challenges. It will play a

central role in professional development, qualifications and quality assurance. We'll also provide research, resources and policy interpretation to keep our members on top of their game, and boost the overall reputation of the profession.

The narrative around education often focuses on the challenges faced by secondary schools, but NASBM's move to institute will elevate the profession for all SBPs – not least those working in primary schools. With purse strings tightening, primaries have a particularly tough job ahead in demonstrating efficiency and sustainability, which can strain the relationships between teaching staff and SBPs – but that really needn't be the case.

Under a new school business leadership professional standards framework, SBPs will be able to integrate more easily into school management and leadership teams and forge stronger relationships with headteachers. Our members will be equipped with the skills necessary to improve financial efficiency, without necessarily having to resort to severe cuts.

Many primary SBPs will feel further isolated if their school isn't part of a MAT,

but there are solutions here too. One of our members, for instance, recently established the South Yorkshire School Leaders Group – see [sysbl.org.uk](http://sysbl.org.uk) for more details. Initiatives like this are excellent for meeting like-minded professionals and facilitating the sharing of experiences, best practice and fresh solutions to new problems.

ISBL will be the only professional institute offering a clear career development path for both experienced SBPs, such as School Business Directors, as well as aspiring SBPs from outside the sector or those already working in education and pursuing a change of career. If you're keen to have your work recognised, or want to help shape the future of school business leadership, then consider joining NASBM/ISBL today.

**Stephen Morales is CEO of NASBM, which is transitioning to the Institute of School Business Leadership in November this year**

 @NASBM\_news

 [nasbm.co.uk/isbl](http://nasbm.co.uk/isbl)



# THE SMART *money*

Why grapple with multiple admin systems when SchoolsBuddy can do it all?



## Pay for one system, not many

When you pay for SchoolsBuddy, you will receive activities management, handling of fees and parent communication facilities within one web and mobile solution, saving time and money, because each area of SchoolsBuddy talks to the others. Aside from the obvious cost saving of using one system versus several, office staff and parents will no longer have to juggle multiple logins, and all information can be kept in one convenient, consolidated system.

## Save SMS and printing costs

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

No longer will you have to cross-check multiple systems, or chase outstanding payments manually. SchoolsBuddy has been able to help schools save up to 25 hours of admin time per week. Trip consent; after school club sign-ups and allocation; event fees; parents evening bookings; wraparound care bookings; parent communications; school lunches – all can be handled by just one system, the 'Simply amazing' SchoolsBuddy.

To find out more, call 01903 898 119, email [info@schoolsbumuddy.com](mailto:info@schoolsbumuddy.com) or visit [schoolsbumuddy.com](http://schoolsbumuddy.com)



A web and mobile software solution that saves primary schools time & money by combining your needs into one system



ORGANISE

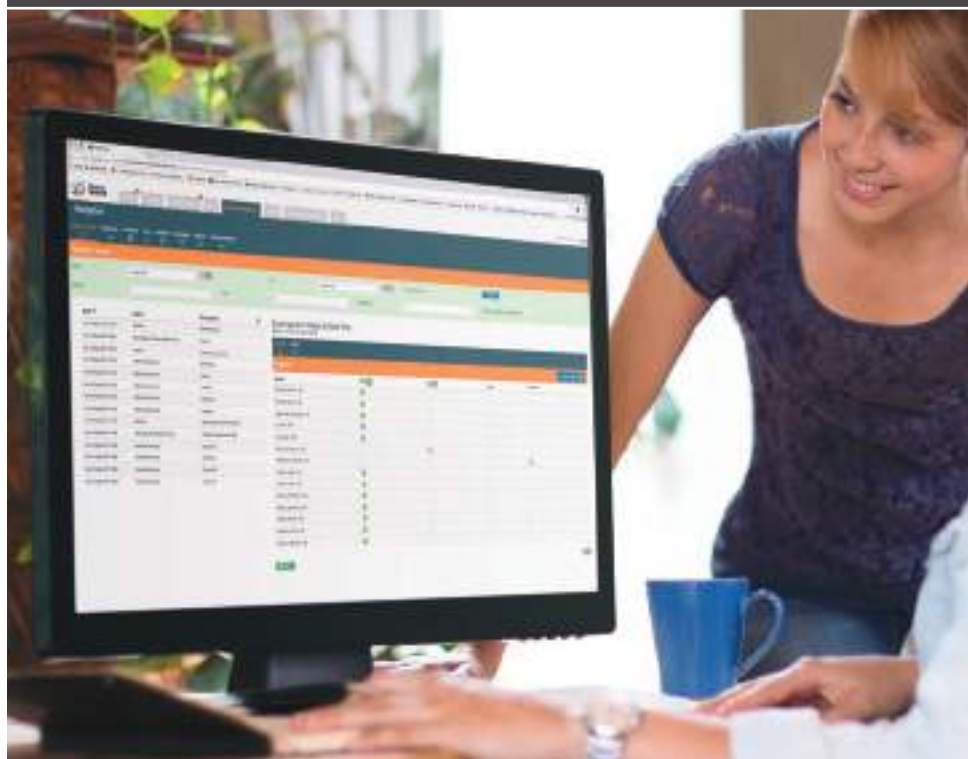


ENGAGE



SAFEGUARD

[www.schoolsbuddy.com](http://www.schoolsbuddy.com)



**PARENT COMMUNICATIONS**  
**PARENT CONSENT**  
**SCHOOL TRIPS**  
**AFTER SCHOOL CLUB SIGNUP & ALLOCATION**  
**PAYMENTS**  
**BOOKINGS (E.G LUNCHES/ BREAKFAST CLUBS)**  
**SMS**  
**SECURE CHILD COLLECTION**  
**PARENTS EVENINGS**  
**BOOKINGS**

To book a demo call  
 01903 898119 or visit  
[www.schoolsbuddy.com](http://www.schoolsbuddy.com)



# “THE ISSUE IS THE FUNDING – NOT JUST THE FORMULA”



Schools are having to meet standards that they're being prevented from reaching, argues Caroline Collins

It's been a tough few years for schools, who have been left feeling anxious and uncertain about their future. These uncertainties have been brought about through the planned national funding formula, the real term cuts and the constant dangling of the forced academisation carrot.

Just two years ago, schools were sent into a frenzied panic as the government announced its plan for all schools to become academies by 2022. Yes, that decision was later revoked, but I'm sure there are some schools who moved to academisation based on Nicky Morgan's announcement and were undoubtedly left dismayed when the U-turn came just two months later.

As for those maintained schools that didn't take the plunge, I'm sure that said U-turn was a relief, but most school leaders that I've spoken to believe that the academisation programme hasn't fallen off of the government agenda – it's simply going to come in via a different route. Of course, there are still instances when schools can be forced into academisation because of an order made by their local authority, or if an Ofsted inspection deems them to be failing.

This means that all schools are pushing harder than ever before to ensure that they're judged to be Good or Outstanding – and while nobody would argue that every child in England deserves to be taught in a school that is Good or Outstanding, the fact remains that Ofsted

inspectors are inconsistent with their judging and often known to focus on relatively insignificant admin issues, ensuring that every single 'i' is dotted and 't' is crossed.

That leaves schools feeling vulnerable, believing that if we don't do everything in accordance with Ofsted 100%, they'll be taken away from the LA and forced to become an academy. The jury is still out on whether academisation really does raise standards, with many sources indicating that it actually doesn't.

As well as the pressures being faced by maintained schools, all schools are currently facing challenges and threats around funding. The promise of the National Funding Formula appears to have been around for significantly longer than anybody would expect, and yet there still seems to be little certainty regarding its implementation or how schools will be affected. Irrespective of what the NFF brings in, and regardless of whether rural schools benefit and city schools lose out, the fact remains that the issue lies in the funding, not just the formula.

There have been many publications showing that all schools face real term

cuts, and that by 2020 those cuts will be up to 11% per pupil. This year, many schools began to see changes in their budgets that have resulted in them having to make savings. The biggest spend for all schools is staffing, and we've seen many stories published about schools needing to reduce their numbers of support staff by way of making cutbacks. This is only going to worsen – if schools don't have money to pay staff, they'll quite simply have to lose them.

It's ironic, isn't it? As schools endeavour to achieve the best they can so as to avoid forced academisation, the likelihood of that happening is intensified by the fact that they can no longer afford high quality teaching and learning staff. This government clearly needs to re-think its priorities.



**Caroline Collins is a specialist leader of education and head**

**of school business strategy and resources at Miles Coverdale Primary School**

[@caroline\\_261](https://twitter.com/caroline_261)

“By 2020 those cuts will be up to 11% per pupil”

# BUDGET FOR THE YEAR AHEAD

Julie Cordiner and Nikola Flint outline what an effective 12-month plan for a financially successful school ought to look like...

## JUNE TO SEPTEMBER

### *Link SDP and budget*

A school budget calendar should start with properly costed school development plan (SDP) priorities. If they're not reflected in the budget they're unlikely to happen, so make sure these are built in and regularly reviewed.

## SEPTEMBER TO DECEMBER

### *Place your school in context*

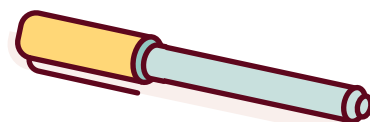
What do you know about your school in relation to issues affecting the local area, historic issues specific to the school itself (such as loans and deficits) or any collaborative arrangements that might be in place? Find out by going back through school records, identifying past trends, consulting with leadership colleagues and liaising with your LA.

## SEPTEMBER

### *Gather information*

Autumn is when you want to start gathering information. Watch out for decisions made at your local Schools Forum as well as your LA's budget strategy, as these may affect your school's future funding.

Familiarise yourself with the school's pupil numbers and pupil profile (the proportions with SEN or EAL, for example), which will be found in the school's admissions data and census information. Similarly, clarify the school's staffing profile (in terms of structure, age, teaching and learning responsibilities and so forth) by consulting with HR and your school's management information system.



## OCTOBER TO MARCH

### *Check your funding*

Your October census return data will be used as the basis for your school's funding, so make sure it's accurate. Use the October census to produce an early estimate of your available funding, and update this upon receipt of your school budget share. The following March, check receipt of all allocations and update your budget, using estimates for Pupil Premium (usually issued in June) and nursery funding (adjusted in-year). Keep records that show how grant and ring-fenced funding is being spent.

Start preparing a current year outturn prediction. Be mindful of the differences between one-off variances and ongoing variances where the budget is not a true reflection of need. Will you need to alter future budgets to reflect changing pupil numbers?

Analyse your spending to gain a

better understanding of your unit costs and how they'll behave when circumstances change. Understand the difference between funding and income, and avoid double counting. Income targets should be realistic and achievable; not meeting them will cause an overspend.

A well-constructed income strategy can mean the difference between surviving and thriving. Our blogpost 'Schools generating income: a risky business?' (see [tinyurl.com/sfs-gen-income](https://tinyurl.com/sfs-gen-income)) offers further advice on the different types of income schools can access, their associated risks and practical advice on how to mitigate these.

This October to March period also includes several other tasks that warrant further discussion – see 'Breaking down the detail' opposite.



# BREAKING DOWN THE DETAIL

## Forecasting salaries

Check that your budget planning software reflects the national and local context for staff pay. Are oncosts and assumptions for staff movement through the pay ranges applied correctly? Do you check individual details for each member of staff?

Ensure that you have a sound understanding of current staffing structures, how they may change in the future and any potential movement of staff through the relevant pay ranges (bearing in mind that this is more complex for teaching staff since the introduction of performance related pay). We offer detailed advice on how to approach this in a blogpost titled '10 top tips for forecasting teacher pay budgets' that you can find at [tinyurl.com/teacher-pay-forecasting](https://tinyurl.com/teacher-pay-forecasting).

Budget setting always involves some unknowns. The safest approach

is to assume the most expensive scenarios, but your professional judgement is also important. Ensure that assumptions are realistic, as well as cautious – especially when funding is tight. Consider your approach to covering absence, namely the costs of agency or directly employed cover staff and staff absence insurance. Whatever

your set-up, ensure each element is accurately costed, taking the trends of previous years into account.

## Annual reviews and operational costs

To ensure value for money (VfM), review all services, contracts and buybacks at least annually. A renewal calendar can support a rolling review, help to promptly identify any need for change and ensure that sufficient time is set aside for making alternative arrangements. Use your negotiation skills to get the best deals for your school.

Ensure that your budget reflects any changes in contracts (such as task frequency and labour hours), energy consumption and prices, and the costs of any needed repairs and maintenance. Does your school have a regular programme of refurbishment? Do any special circumstances apply, such as private finance initiative payments?

You should also use financial benchmarking tools to compare your spending with that of other similar schools. If any significant differences arise, use deeper analysis to justify that spending or evidence the need for things to change. Contact other schools for tips on how to do this. Finally, have a clear plan for using balances and keep it under review.

## What if the budget doesn't balance?

Double-check everything for accuracy. See if any support is available from peers, your LA, MAT officers, local SBL networks or any other collaborative arrangement. If you really can't balance your budget, you must alert your funding body and seek their support and guidance regarding the next steps.

The best way to avoid a deficit is to plan three to five years ahead. If you wish to foster a VfM culture in your school and produce an effective budget plan, multi-year budgeting is essential.

Develop a range of scenarios that you might encounter in future years. That way, you're effectively buying yourself time by identifying issues and resolving them well in advance. You can find further advice on multi-year budgeting

in our blogpost 'Using our SFS tools: A real life experience' (see [tinyurl.com/sfs-real-life](https://tinyurl.com/sfs-real-life)).

Your solutions might involve staffing reductions, re-negotiating contracts or encouraging cultural changes in staff behaviour aimed at reducing waste and generating efficiency savings. Consider your income strategy and undertake a full budget review.

**Julie Cordiner is an education funding specialist; Nikola Flint is a school business leader. Both are co-founders of School Financial Success – aiming to help schools navigate difficult financial challenges.**

 @juliecordiner

 [schoolfinancialsuccess.com](https://schoolfinancialsuccess.com)

## MARCH TO JUNE

### *Finalise your budget plan*

Between the provisional and final budget plan, your previous year financial position will be finalised. This is a key recruitment period, during which you may see some changes to your staffing costs.

Keeping organised, planning ahead and understanding every aspect of your school will drive your budget planning, and ultimately lead to your school's financial success.





New & updated  
for

2017

# SPAG.com

2,500 schools can't be wrong!

## Online SPaG tests for instant gap analysis

**KS1** Y2 practice grammar and punctuation SATs tests

**KS2** Y6 practice grammar and punctuation SATs tests

**+ 80** tests covering all grammar objectives from Y1-Y6



Prices from just 58p per child for a one year licence. Please email [support@spag.com](mailto:support@spag.com) for a FREE demo account.

## “THE BEST SCHOOL LEADERS INVITE **DIVERSITY OF THOUGHT**”



Ilesha Small explains why school leaders who fail to embrace diversity of thought among their colleagues will be missing out on tomorrow's opportunities...

**T**heoretically, schools are operating in a time of almost unparalleled freedom. SATs have been abolished for some time at KS3. Ofsted has been clear that it doesn't require any particular style of marking or teaching during inspections. Schools can create their own assessment systems in order to best meet the needs of their students, free from national curriculum levels.

It's a freedom that many would have thought impossible when I started teaching over a decade ago, yet research by LKMco suggests that many school leaders aren't equipped to flourish in this new, more school-led system. Different viewpoints are needed, and leaders must avoid recruiting in their own image.

The first team I managed had about 10 people in it. All were older and more experienced than me, and hardly shared my worldview or approaches to life and teaching. At first, I found this frustrating and wondered why they couldn't just see things the way I did. Surely it was obvious? If they just did things the way I wanted, without wasting time debating, we could achieve things much quicker and turn the department around like we needed to.

But as I got to know my team more, I realised that this difference was actually a strength and asset to my leadership. One colleague's methodical approach meant I didn't have to worry as much

about some of the more administrative parts of the role. Another could see my vision, but was able to diplomatically step in when she thought I was going off on a flight of fancy.

Later, as a senior leader, I remember a line management meeting with the head where we talked about how he'd assembled his team. I noted how we were all very different in personality and approach, and he said that this was entirely deliberate. He needed people to make him think and challenge him, but we didn't all need to be the same. What mattered to him was our value system. That's what he hired us for.

Diversity is quite the buzzword at the moment, typically associated with the idea of employing more women or ethnic minorities. As somebody who ticks both those boxes that's obviously important to me, and I wholeheartedly support grass-roots movements like #WomenEd and #BAMEed, which are seeking to address deficiencies in school leadership in these areas. However, it's entirely possible to hire in such a way that schools are run by groups of people who might look different on the surface, but are exactly the same in how they think. And that's a dangerous thing.

The best school leaders invite and appreciate diversity of thought to discourage groupthink and continue growth. They encourage senior team meetings where challenge, question and debate are valued. They create a school environment where all members of the school community feel they can question the current course and make constructive suggestions. They cultivate a governing body that acts as true critical friends, rather than rubber-stamping 'yes (wo)men'.

**Ilesha Small is an experienced teacher and leader associate at LKMco**

 @ieshasmall

 lkmco.org



## DON'T LOSE YOUR STAFF TO A COMMUNICATION VOID

Organisational resilience is essential if a school is to function properly – and one way of getting it is to foster the right kind of communication...

**U**p to a point, acquiring resilience involves choice – we choose to be built up and strengthened, rather than worn out and torn down – but it's hard to be resilient if you're out there on your own, unprotected and constantly in the firing line. To be truly resilient, you need a resilient workforce around you.

Think of a frozen pond. The ice might look solid enough, but if only the top layer is frozen, it won't take much for it crack. Imagine if instead the water were frozen solid – now, only a significant force would be able to damage it. Organisational resilience needs to be built in the same way, from the top down.

There are many ways of building resilience within your workforce, but one simple and effective method is through consistently targeted and meaningful communication with, and between, different members of staff. This would see them start sharing what matters most – their values, vision, aims and goals, their sense why we're all here, why we do what we do and where we're all going. You want to ensure that everyone's sharing the same journey and pulling in the same direction.

It's essential that the wider workforce, including admin and site teams, is included in this. Communicating what's central to the school is how you get buy-in, which in turn brings resilience. When the going gets tough – and it can be very tough for all staff at times – things can get a whole lot tougher if you don't know why you're doing what you've been told to do.

See to it that everyone in school understands the contribution they make, and that they're all central in some way to helping the children realise their life chances. That's what will bind people, enmesh them, and help build the school's organisational strength.

The right kind of communication, whereby you listen in order to understand your colleagues, will soon let you know if there's been a build-up of misunderstanding or resistance. It will give you the chance to provide explanations and defuse such issues before they become more serious. Try to encourage this type of communication between colleagues wherever you can, so that they feel free to share their concerns and challenges with each other and ask for support. Done right, this will help them understand each others' roles and give them a way of working through their problems collaboratively.

The late naval historian C. Northcote Parkinson summed it up nicely when he observed that, "The void caused by the failure to communicate is soon filled with poison, drivel and misrepresentation." Those three things will quickly exhaust everyone. Conversely, positive communication will bring you together, creating a resilience that empowers you and everyone else.

**Nickii Messer is a school business leadership consultant and trainer**

 @NickiiMesser

 nickiimesser.com



# Let's retain our leaders by co-operating

Region-wide schools partnerships are the key to tackling the leadership recruitment challenge, says Tarun Kapur

If we're to ensure that enough people become heads and senior leaders and can pursue sustainable, enjoyable careers, then it's imperative that we give them the training and support they need. The challenge is acute. England may face a shortage of between 14,000 and 19,000 school leaders by 2022, which will affect almost a quarter of all schools. We know that we need to tackle this, but we can't if we continue gathering together in small clusters. United we stand, divided we fall.

I accept there are many excellent teaching school alliances operating alone that provide excellent leadership development programmes, but this approach has its drawbacks. Small scale can mean costly, especially in these straitened times. It takes time to organise open days, delivery sessions and workshops, and to process the resulting paperwork.

Operating at a small scale makes it harder to gather the intelligence you need to understand what local pressure points and needs there are, and can create coverage gaps. In some areas of the country there's lots of competition between smaller providers and plenty of options for prospective candidates. In others, things are distinctly patchy.

Our response should be to organise and join partnerships that allow us to deliver leadership development programmes at scale – and an approach we're taking in the north west could show the way. I lead an MAT of eight primary and secondary schools that's part of the Outstanding Leaders Partnership – a large collaboration between teaching school alliances, trusts and individual schools first established five years ago that's now working with almost a quarter of all schools in the region.

The partnership comprises almost 30 groups – or hubs – of schools with experienced leaders who are delivering the NPQH, NPQSL and NPQML leadership programmes. We're unusual in that we've partnered with a specialist training provider, Best Practice Network, which looks after the practicalities of organising the programmes' delivery, and running the online element and quality assurance for our courses.

At the centre of it all is a single strategic board that partly comprises senior school leaders from across the partnership. The headteachers leading the strategy and running the programmes have direct knowledge of what's involved in training up new

leaders, and have roles to play in ensuring that the right programmes are delivered to the right areas, with content tailored to the needs of particular local areas.

We're above the national average in terms of NPQH graduates securing headships within 18 months at 60%, and more than half of the candidates completing our NPQML and NPQSL qualifications have secured promotions. It also makes financial sense – we've been able to plough back a surplus of £36,000 into creating scholarships to support candidates taking our qualifications.

With national strategies now a thing of the past, it's up to us as school leaders to work together in a spirit of co-operation and common purpose if we're to ensure that every school is well-led by leaders who possess the skills they need, the support necessary to have sustainable careers – and a desire to stay in the profession.

**Tarun Kapur CBE is Chief Executive and Academy Principal at The Dean Trust**

 [outstandingleaders.org](http://outstandingleaders.org)



# GET YOUR SCHOOL IN JEANS! FRI 22 SEPT

Gabrielus, 4, has epidermolysis bullosa, a genetic disorder that causes his skin to fall off at the slightest touch. He has to be fully bandaged four times a day and is at constant risk of serious infection.



## ORGANISE A JEANS FOR GENES DAY ON FRIDAY 22ND SEPT

Bring your school together at the beginning of the new school year in aid of a wonderful cause and help raise vital funds to support children with life-altering genetic disorders.

500,000 children in the UK are affected by a genetic disorder. By encouraging your school to wear jeans and make a donation, you will be doing something amazing for these children.

**SIGN UP FOR YOUR  
FREE FUNDRAISING PACK**  
[JEANSFORGENES.ORG](http://JEANSFORGENES.ORG)



# DEPLOY YOUR COACHING WISELY

Coaching and mentoring are useful tools for staff development, but it's possible to overuse them, cautions Andy Vass...

**W**orkplaces are characterised by constraints and uncertainties. There will often be exhortations to achieve more with less and a relentless raising of expectations, alongside a lowering of available resources. You can add to that the simple, stress-inducing truth that as a leader, you're ultimately judged on the back of performance delivered by others.

'VUCAA' is a relatively new acronym used to describe the challenges faced by leaders in organisations today. It stands for 'Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, Ambiguity and Adversity' – and what I'm going to discuss here is how it might resonate with your own experiences of managing the multiple challenges involved in giving children the best start in life.

don't believe that clichéd (and slightly insulting) phrase that 'People are our greatest asset', but I do believe that an organisation's greatest assets will be its people's strengths and personal resources. These are what high quality coaching will seek to bring to the fore.

Learning, improved performance, better results – whatever you call it – will ultimately be achieved through conversations, of which coaching is just one example. Coaching is a powerful approach and skillset that leaders at all levels can incorporate into their roles and benefit from – yet in my

“Coaching is merely a conversation which has a clear focus on learning and movement”

How can you ensure that you and your senior colleagues are able to help others become stronger and more capable? How can you see to it that your staff thrive and flourish, remain independent and creative within their roles, assume responsibility for their professional development and model the attitudes and behaviours of a growth mindset?

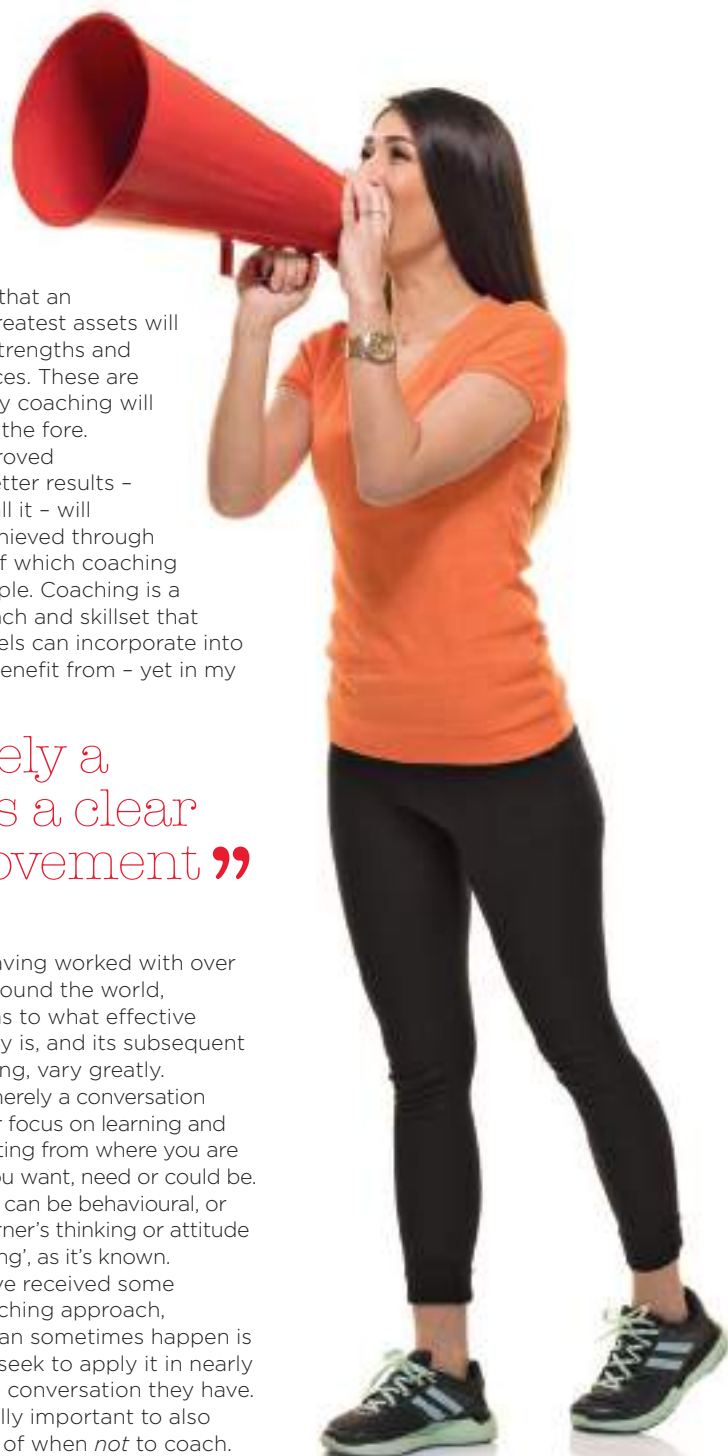
## KEEP IT SIMPLE

A quote widely attributed to Einstein holds that, “Everything should be as simple as possible, but no simpler than it really is.” In striving for simplicity we should remember that there is one constant in the world of VUCAA – the quality of the people who work with us. I

experience of having worked with over 2000 schools around the world, interpretations as to what effective coaching actually is, and its subsequent impact on learning, vary greatly.

'Coaching' is merely a conversation which has a clear focus on learning and movement – shifting from where you are now, to where you want, need or could be. This implicit shift can be behavioural, or rooted in the learner's thinking or attitude – 'Doing or viewing', as it's known.

Once staff have received some training in a coaching approach, however, what can sometimes happen is that people will seek to apply it in nearly every workplace conversation they have. It's therefore really important to also build awareness of when *not* to coach.





## THE CONVERSATION CONTINUUM

Workplace conversations occur along a continuum. At one end there's the managerial approach, in which people are told what to do by someone possessing authority, experience or expertise. There's nothing inherently right or wrong with this, incidentally.

At the opposite end of the continuum

there's coaching. This is a facilitative approach, in which the coach makes a deliberate choice to hold the coachee as expert. They consciously decide to not provide answers, but rather take a significantly curious approach in order to elicit the coachee's strengths, resources and options for change (WHAT to do). After this, they will explore and rehearse the strategy and steps for action (HOW to do it) – though this is just one possible option.

Then there's the middle ground, which is where we find the mentoring approach. This is where the coach/mentor will offer some suggestions and ideas to the coachee, encourage them to be responsible for the choice of action and then explore the 'HOW' of taking that action.

## REMEMBER THE CONTEXT

The crucial thing to bear in mind is that it's okay to occupy any of those points on the continuum if the approach is contextually appropriate to the outcome you're looking for. If you want to be fully in control of what happens – or if there's a specific direction you need to take with regards to a child protection, health and safety or school policy issue – then the direct, managerial approach will be most suitable.

If, however, you want the coachee to take ownership of their development in order to build their initiative, independence and increase their motivation, while ensuring that their decision making remains sharp and their performance sustainable, then a non-direct approach will be most apposite.

I would encourage those in 'coaching'

roles to enter just those conversations that really matter – and even then, only with clarity around the desired intention and outcome. Deciding on the most useful approach – be it telling, sharing or asking – should then become much more straightforward.

### A SIMPLE FRAMEWORK FROM WHICH A COACHING CONVERSATION COULD DEVELOP MIGHT INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

- What have you done over the past month that you're pleased with?
- What personal resources or qualities did you call upon in doing that?
- Where would you like to focus your attention over the coming month to become even better?
- Who or what would help you achieve that?
- How will you go about putting that plan into action?

ANY SCHOOL WANTING TO EMPLOY COACHING AS A WAY OF BUILDING CAPACITY IN STAFF SHOULD CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:

**1** Reach consensus as to what you, as a school, mean by 'coaching' and how you wish to use it to support learning. Encourage SLT to read around the subject (you can email me at [enquiry@andyvass.net](mailto:enquiry@andyvass.net) for a suggested reading list).

**2** Source high quality training from someone who has made an impact elsewhere. Ask to talk to other schools.

**3** Don't just use coaching to tackle underperformance or problems. Engage your good and outstanding staff in the process too – remember that they want to be even better.

**4** Be clear with your staff that this is not 'just another initiative', but rather a way of making conversations that you're already having more elegant and effective through the use of coaching.

**5** Create opportunities to practice and build these into all meetings. Ideally, you'll be able to share your approach to training with the rest of your school cluster or partner schools. Not only is this more economical, it will also allow you and your colleagues to develop a wider skillset.



**Andy Vass is a psychologist and professional coach with 40 years' experience in education, and**

**author of the *Coaching in Schools Pocketbook* (see [teacherspocketbooks.co.uk](http://teacherspocketbooks.co.uk))**

 [andyvass.net](http://andyvass.net)



# STAY INFORMED with **PSM**'s weekly bulletin

Sign up to our free newsletter and get regular updates on how other heads and school business managers are improving leadership and procurement in their schools.



You can register for our weekly bulletin here:  
**WWW.PRIMARYLEADERS.COM**

Over the coming weeks,  
we'll be tackling key issues  
in leadership, including:

You'll also get updates on key  
education announcements, and  
links to free resources.

**SMARTER WAYS TO FIND NEW  
FUNDS FOR YOUR SCHOOL**

**COULD BIGGER CLASS SIZES  
SOLVE THE RECRUITMENT CRISIS?**

**THE BAD BUSINESS PRACTICES  
THAT DON'T BELONG IN SCHOOLS**

**HOW TO WRITE RECRUITMENT ADS  
THAT ATTRACT THE BEST TEACHERS**

## *Missed issue 1 of PSM?*

Not to worry, a free download of our first issue is also  
available on our website, **www.primaryleaders.com**



# BECOME A BETTER PUBLIC SPEAKER

Make your assemblies more memorable, your speeches more motivating and presentations more engaging with these public speaking tips from Bruce Waelend...

It's not often that you'll see a headteacher stand on his head in a bowl of porridge with a daffodil between his teeth, while singing the National Anthem. It's even less likely that you'll then witness the deputy head arrive with a glass of water that he throws over the headteacher, while telling him not to be so ridiculous.

I believe it was my best assembly, because people still come up to me and remind me of it, even today. And it was a good way of teaching a difficult message – I'll tell you what it was at the end.

Thinking back on it, it was effective for several reasons, and the lessons we can learn from it go beyond simply 'how to engage children's interest in assemblies'. The same simple principles can be used to help sharpen our public speaking skills when communicating with parents, during staff meetings, when addressing senior leadership meetings and when interacting with children in the classroom.

## 1 MAKE AN IMPRESSION

With assemblies in particular, aim to create something that will grab children's attention and stick in their memories. Things that are unusual, funny, shocking or curious will work well (though it doesn't necessarily need to involve turning cartwheels or eating flowers).

Sometimes a planned interruption can be effective. Having a TA call out during an assembly to raise an objection will

mark a departure from the norm that your children are used to – and that will make it memorable. Whatever it is you do, though, don't just do it for the sake of being amusing or surprising – use it to create a situation that will convey a clear message.

## 2 SIMPLE CAN BE GOOD

You don't have to make something complicated for it to be memorable. Your approach could involve something as simple as using a picture or a photograph that everyone can see clearly. For example, the photographer Yann Arthus-Bertrand has produced amazing collections of photographs of the world taken from the air, which present striking, unusual images of this incredible planet. Combine something like this with a simple, yet searching question and pupils (or other audiences) will start to draw out all kinds of meanings for themselves.

Great questions about pictures that spring to mind might include; 'Would you trust this man?'; 'If this picture was in a story, what might have led up to it?'; or, 'What title would you give this picture?'

## 3 TELL A STORY

A vital piece of equipment in the leader's toolbox is storytelling. Every teacher should be a storyteller, and a good one at that – no exceptions. They should be able





to tell stories that they know with expression and enthusiasm. There's nothing quite like the collective groan of a class when you come to the end of the chapter, nor the collective enthusiasm at taking on the challenge of continuing the story in their own words. The ability to tell stories is an ancient tradition, but one that I fear that we may be in danger of losing unless we keep passing it on.

Storytelling might have its most obvious uses with children, but it has far wider applications too. I can't think of a single public speaker I admire who doesn't pepper their presentations with funny, inspiring or thought-provoking stories. Stories bring public speaking to life. They personalise presentations and give them a human quality that would otherwise be missing. I can't imagine giving a public presentation without stories. Storytellers can open up whole worlds to people who would be unable to access them in any other way.

## 4 DRAW ON PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

This won't come easily to some leaders, but don't shy away from it. Think of a story you can tell new parents about a pupil who flourished at your school against the odds (though no names, of course). Seek out a story for your staff about the value of persistence, or curiosity or some other quality you're seeking to embed in the school. Tell a story from your own schooling, or your own catalogue of memories. Practise storytelling regularly and encourage your staff to do the same.

When I taught a more able maths group in recent years, I used to start the lesson not so much with a story, but with a narrative: 'We are about to enter the fog of learning,' (spoken in hushed tones). 'It's a strange, almost scary place, because nothing here is quite familiar, although there are some things that we recognise a bit. But we mustn't be nervous, or give up if things become hard. If we keep going the fog will clear and we'll discover that we've learned something new and have skills that we don't have right now...' Such narratives can offer real richness to learning, in lessons, in staff meetings and with parents.

## 5 TREAT POWERPOINT WITH CAUTION

When preparing for public speaking engagements, large meetings with parents or key staff meetings, I would encourage leaders to think carefully before using PowerPoint. Without question, the worst use of PowerPoint I've ever had to suffer through was during a talk by a very eminent figure in education who had an excellent message to convey. However, the text was crammed onto the screen in such density that it was quite impossible to read a word of it – nor was it necessary.

The best advice I can offer is three short words: Only. Use. Pictures. When asked to give a presentation on 'the journey to outstanding' at my interview for headship, I used a small selection of photographs. I could tell you what they were now, and so could a number of my staff, as they told me when I left. They were all carefully chosen to draw out the principles of the book *Good to Great* by Jim Collins, and said much more than any number of words could have done. Using text might be reliable and easier, but using pictures is a far more powerful way of getting your message home.

Oh, and the daffodil story? I told it at Easter one year. I told the children that they would go home and get the usual question about what happened at school today, but that they might struggle getting people to believe their story. Just like the disciples after that first Easter Sunday.



**Bruce Waeland is a former headteacher, a trained Ofsted inspector and educational consultant**

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

[bdweduction.com](http://bdweduction.com)



## ORATION INSPIRATION

ONE WAY TO HONE YOUR PUBLIC SPEAKING SKILLS IS TO STUDY OTHERS IN THE PROFESSION WHO ARE GOOD AT IT. HERE ARE SOME EXAMPLES TO GET YOU STARTED...

### SIR KEN ROBINSON – 'DO SCHOOLS KILLS CREATIVITY?'

As one of the most celebrated education speeches of all time with almost 13 million YouTube views and counting, it's worth taking some rhetorical cues from Ken Robinson's TED talk on why schools 'squander' children's talents.

[tinyurl.com/kr-schools-creativity](http://tinyurl.com/kr-schools-creativity)

### ALISTAIR BRYCE-CLEGG – 'SUBVERSIVE TEACHING'

On a further TED tip, Alistair Bryce-Clegg's address at the 2016 TEDxNorwichED event is an object lesson in how to explore a serious topic – the beneficial impact that play can have on the achievements of children and adults – in a highly engaging (and very funny) way.

[tinyurl.com/abc-subversive](http://tinyurl.com/abc-subversive)

### KATHARINE BIRBALSINGH – 'TIGER TEACHERS' EVENT

You can agree or disagree with the points that Michaela Community School's headteacher makes in this response to an audience question – can the school's teaching and behaviour model be replicated at other schools? – but you can't deny the passion and conviction with which she delivers the impromptu speech that follows...

[tinyurl.com/kb-mcs-speech](http://tinyurl.com/kb-mcs-speech)

# Claim your *2 free issues* now!

## *Outstanding advice from the uk's top education experts*

**Teach Primary** is packed with

- **Outstanding advice** – get guidance from educational experts
- **Activity ideas** – innovative lesson plans to save you time
- **Subject specials** – dedicated sections packed with inspiration
- **Opinion** – lively debate and comment from big names



To request your 2 free issues visit us online at:



# THE LEADING MAGAZINE WRITTEN

## EXCLUSIVELY FOR PRIMARY EDUCATORS

Teach Primary is a large and vibrant staffroom filled with talented colleagues. **Our readers are also our writers.** They are **experienced heads, senior leaders, academics** and **consultants.** The magazine is **a conversation that spans the big issues shaping education, the daily substance of classroom life,** and the **career concerns of every school professional.**



### *Message from the editor*

*"In my role as editor, I have the pleasure of visiting some of the country's most innovative schools and talking to outstanding teachers to bring you news of the latest initiatives and best practice."*

Elaine Bennett

### Our expert panel



MIKE ASKEW



MICK WATERS



SUE COWLEY



KEVIN HARCUMBE



NANCY GEDGE



DEBRA KIDD



# A MAT MONSTER WILL HAPPILY GOBBLE UP PRIMARIES

There are clear advantages to joining a MAT, says Hilary Goldsmith – but primaries need to know what they're getting themselves into...

**M**uch has been said about the need for primary schools to consider academisation as a means to collaborate and seek financial efficiencies. I've written articles about it myself, I've worked for a MAT and supported primaries, and when it's done in a mutually beneficial way, it can be an excellent way of collaborating. I'm a fan, believe me.

However, a partnership will only be truly successful if the needs of both partners are met and respected – and balanced. A MAT monster will happily gobble up primaries along the way, filling its belly with succulent morsels of universal free school meals funding, disproportionate lump sums and the tantalising promise of financial efficiencies from the centralisation of back-office functions.

Changing your legal entity will allow you to enter into joined-up, MAT-sized arrangements with all the purchasing power – and opportunities for saving on administration costs – they entail. However, this may mean the driving factor in negotiating new deals sits with the MAT's majority need, requiring you to compromise more than previously.

## DUE DILIGENCE

My advice for primary schools considering joining a MAT, be it a chain or local cluster, is to therefore consider the following questions, which may well sit outside of the due diligence you're already undertaking:

### 1 Understand the governance arrangements

Joining a MAT will diminish your governing body's powers significantly. Make sure you get a seat at the top table of whatever the new structure will be. If possible, you'll want to have member voting rights too.

### 2 Ask what your top-slice will get you

MATS will almost always take a chunk of money from your budget before you get it. The percentage take will vary, but you need to see a breakdown of exactly what you're paying for. Ensure that there'll be a mechanism for annually reviewing that top-slice figure.

### 3 Establish the terms

You'll need to have a service level

agreement in place for those central services the MAT will provide. What happens if they don't deliver? You'll be signing up to a long commitment, so make sure you've got a voice or comeback route if things go wrong.

### 4 Whose cash?

Find out what happens to your cash reserves. If you have any funds, private or carried forward, make sure that these will remain exclusively yours and won't get subsumed into the MAT pot upon conversion.

### 5 How are the other schools doing?

Ask for the current and 5-year projected financial positions of all partner schools, not just the MAT as a whole. You need to know that your funding won't be used to support other less viable concerns within the Trust. Ask what happens if a partner school drifts into deficit.

### 6 Who gets the final say?

What is the MAT's decision-making process for contract renewals, IT purchasing and premises works? Small MATS can bid into the Condition Improvement Fund for capital building projects, but who will ensure that your school's needs are met? Larger MATS receive a formula allocation for capital works, but who makes the call on which projects will go ahead? Make sure you know before signing over control of your infrastructure and buildings, however tempting it might be to pass on those responsibilities.

Those are my general tips for surviving the yellow brick road of multi-academisation and avoiding any lions, tigers and bears you might meet along the way. Be honest, ask questions, stand your ground – and don't be afraid to click your heels and head for home if the Emerald City isn't all you hoped for.



 @twitter

 website.com

# Great Ormond Street Hospital is a place where extraordinary things happen every day

Your school can help us save more lives, develop new treatments, build new wards and support our young patients and their families.



**Start fundraising today!**

Visit **[gosh.org/schools](https://gosh.org/schools)** for great ideas, fun activities and handy resources.



**Schools**

Get in touch:  
**[schools@gosh.org](mailto:schools@gosh.org)** or  
020 7239 3131

# DE-STRESS WITH TTS

feel  
brilliant



**BIGGEST BRANDS  
AT THE SMALLEST  
PRICES**



we save you money

**SWAP  
AND  
SAVE!**

**OVER  
£1500 by  
choosing  
TTS**



**FREE DELIVERY**  
on all orders

**ORDER ONLINE**  
and be invoiced

**DOWNLOAD**  
our catalogue into SIMS

**SAVE LOADS  
OF MONEY**

when you place  
your big summer  
order with us!

yes!



[www.tts-shopping.com](http://www.tts-shopping.com)



0800 318 686



**FREE Delivery**