

VISIT [TEACHWIRE.NET/SECONDARY](http://TEACHWIRE.NET/SECONDARY)

# teach SECONDARY

Outstanding advice from the UK's top education experts

teach  
co

INTERVIEW



**LEAH WILLIAMSON**

*"I played on the football team with the boys"*

## TAILOR YOUR TRAINING

No more  
meaningless CPD

## FOLLOW MY LEAD

How to raise your  
subject's profile

# Excellent work!

**Plus**

MARKING  
STRATEGIES TO  
HELP YOU GET  
YOUR LIFE BACK

## SIR TIM BRIGHOUSE:

"The time has  
come for a new  
age of hope"

**DOES  
RELIGION  
BELONG IN  
ASSEMBLIES?**

£3.99 | Issue 11.2



Teacher  
burnout

School  
visits

Medical  
training

Competitive  
sport

Curriculum  
development

Oral  
skills

aceville





## Aashika's breaking news

It started with a trip to Sky Academy Studios. A chance to go behind the scenes, to get to grips with the cameras, and present from behind a Sky desk.

But ever since she set foot backstage, Aashika has been obsessed with becoming a news reader. Now she's documenting everything from the family breakfast to her little brother's haircut.

It's this creativity that Sky Academy Studios was built to inspire. Since its launch in 2012, it's opened the minds of over 166,000 children, developing their curiosity, collaboration and communication and providing an experience they might never have accessed.

Giving young people, just like Aashika, the belief they can have a future in film and TV.



## FROM THE EDITOR

### “Welcome...”



Is it over? Can we say that we're past it now? Writing this from the vantage point of mid-February 2022, as one COVID restriction after another falls away, it certainly feels like it is. Or as if someone, somewhere *wants* us to feel like it is...

In any case, good luck trying to convince the nation's schools of that. The pandemic has already wrought enormous harm on the education of countless children and teenagers, and with the continuing spikes in absence among both staff and students extending well into the New Year and beyond, the damage just keeps on coming.

Consequently, while there are many staff who have managed to – just about – hang on and contend with the challenges of the past two years, there's also a substantial number who will have felt deeply the kind of burnout symptoms discussed by Emma Kell on page 49 and need help in addressing them.

At a time of such punishing stress, then, it could seem almost crass in some ways to talk about the need for teachers to step up their CPD game, as one of this issue's themed sections would seem to suggest. Isn't there enough for you and your colleagues to be dealing with already?

But the thing is, effective CPD should never be yet another work burden to bear. It can certainly wait, if the day-to-day situation demands it. But as and when time allows, professional development can, and indeed ought to play a part in making your working life easier. Done right, it can help to encourage exactly the kind of collaborative, mutually beneficial connections between colleagues, and even between different schools, that many desperately need right now.

And hey, if a large-scale attempt at providing tailored CPD across multiple sites (page 32) or arranging a fact-finding mission to another school (page 28) aren't going to do much for you or your colleagues, there are alternatives. Like acquainting yourself with Bhamika Bhudia's time-saving approach to marking (page 40), or throwing caution to the wind and seeing whether the oft-maligned – with some justification – TikTok can offer anything of practical use for teachers (page 68).

With things continuing to be as tough as they are, now perhaps isn't the time to say 'Let's work on you.' Instead, why not try 'Let's work on each other, together'...

Enjoy the issue,

Callum Fauser  
callum.fauser@theteachco.com

## On board this issue:



Dr Emma Kell is a teacher, coach and wellbeing trainer



Robin Hardman is head of politics at a London school



Bhamika Bhudia is a teacher of English



Tim Brotherhood is a former head of D&T



Meena Wood is an international educational consultant



Jack Cockayne is head of geography at a school in Birmingham

## KEEP IN TOUCH!

Sign up for the weekly TS newsletter at [teachwire.net/newsletter](https://teachwire.net/newsletter)

## Essential reading:

36

### The other side

What can teachers learn from working with Ofqual?

40

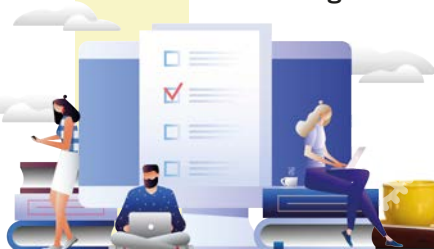
### Marking made easier

Behold the strategies that can help free up your evenings

46

### Good sports

How to make the competition within PE lessons less off-putting





## School of thought

### 21 MELISSA BENN

Recent education successes seen in the London borough of Hackney highlight how local authorities can partner with schools in a constructive and mutually beneficial way

### 23 TIM BRIGHOUSE

How much impact do Education Ministers realistically have on the education profession – and what tricky issues lurk in their ‘too difficult’ boxes?

## Regulars

### 11 VOCAB CLINIC

Alex Quigley's strategies to support word-poor learners

### 13 MAKING SENSE OF ... EXTERIOR ANGLES

Colin Foster explains why your students' attempts to measure the exterior angles of polygons might benefit from a little clarification...

### 17 WHAT I LEARNT AT SCHOOL

Leah Williamson recalls her experiences of playing in all-boys school football teams, and highlights the advances the sport has made since

### 34 OFF THE SHELVES

New titles for you and your students

### 51 CLASSROOM VOICE

“Teaching politics is unlike teaching any other subject”

### 82 THE LAST WORD

John Lawson serves up some behavioural wisdom from a public address he never got to make...

## Features

### 14 THINK PIECE

Toby Marshall broadly welcomes the DfE's incoming guidance on indoctrination, but urges officials to tread very carefully...

### 19 3 THINGS WE'VE LEARNT ABOUT ... WHY PEOPLE BECOME TEACHERS

Far from simply being in it for the holidays, it seems people's motivations for entering the profession are rather more noble than that...

### 24 DOES OFSTED CARE ABOUT ORACY?

Anthony David examines the regulator's current guidance with respect to speaking and listening, and its implications for teachers and students

### 36 INSIDE JOB

Neil Dixon shares his experiences of what teachers can gain from becoming one of Ofqual's external experts

### 39 INCLUSION IN PRACTICE

How one school in Solihull sought to make a new intake of students from Hong Kong feel welcome by going big on its Year of the Tiger festivities

### 40 MANAGE YOUR MARKING

Bhamika Bhudia serves up some practical ways in which those onerous marking tasks can be made less time-intensive

### 43 THE FUTURE'S SECULAR

The time has come for schools to be relieved of their collective worship obligations, argues Robert Cann

### 46 FRIENDLY COMPETITION

The competitive spirit within PE lessons can be off-putting for some, but it doesn't have to be, says Lee Sullivan

### 49 YOU'RE NOT A SUPERHERO

Dr Emma Kell offers some wellbeing and self-care advice that many will likely need now, more than ever

### 63 PROTESTORS IN RECEPTION

Headteacher James Saunders presents an object lesson in how to contain a very public and potentially volatile encounter

### 67 WORLD VIEWS

Meena Wood looks at what England could stand to learn from how other countries design their curriculums

### 68 A MINUTE OF YOUR TIME

Beyond the headlines, there's some teacher-friendly gold to be found on TikTok, maintains Nikki Cunningham-Smith

### 71 BUYER BEWARE

What schools need to know before enlisting the services of a medical training provider

### 78 UPHOLDING THE LAW

What role should schools have in helping to tackle teenage criminality – if indeed any?

## TS Special – Research and CPD

### 28 “THIS IS WHAT WE DO...”

Adam Riches presents a checklist of who to meet and what to ask when undertaking fact-finding visits to other schools

### 31 ATTRITION VERSUS AMBITION

We can continue bearing the financial costs of teacher attrition, or we can get serious about upskilling the staff we already have, says Chris Pope

### 32 ONE SIZE DOESN'T FIT ALL

Leyla Palmer explains why rolling out a programme of fully tailored CPD is more doable than you might think



## Subject focus – STEM

### 54 BANDWIDTH BLUES

Is your school's network able to meet the needs of today's post-COVID, tech-equipped classrooms?

### 57 ARE YOU SITTING COMFORTABLY?

Alison Weatherby on how storytelling can be used to bring STEM topics to life

### 58 ON YOUR MARKS...

Tim Brotherhood gives us the lowdown on a racing-themed STEM initiative that will get your students thinking like engineering professionals

## Learning Lab

### 82 BE INSPIRED

Whole class feedback unpacked; why describing behaviour is better than condemning it; how flow theory could help your students get into ‘the zone’; and five essential pointers for new teachers



Group editor: Joe Carter

Editor: Callum Fauser, callum.fauser@theteachco.com, 01206 505115

Head of commercial solutions: Richard Stebbing

Advertising manager: Ria Benthall, ria.benthall@theteachco.com, 01206 505240

Deputy advertising manager: Ashley Lower, ashley.lower@theteachco.com, 01206 505926

Account Manager: Laura Ingle, laura.ingle@theteachco.com, 01206 508628

Art editor: Richard Allen

Designers: Luke Rogers, Adam Barford & Steve Streeting

Photography: CLIQQ Photography cliqq.co.uk

Accounts: 01206 505995

Design & reprographics: Ace Pre-Press 01206 508608

Customer services: aceville@dictmedia.co.uk, 0800 904 7000

Publisher: Helen Tudor

Published by: Maze Media (2000) Ltd, 25 Phoenix Court, Hawkins Rd, Colchester, Essex, CO2 8JY. Tel: 01206 505900



# Invite leading authors and trusted experts to deliver a bespoke revision workshop for your students

- ▶ Virtually or In-school
- ▶ Any exam board, level and subject
- ▶ During the school holidays or term time
- ▶ Full-day (5hrs) or half-day (3hrs)

## What are the benefits of a bespoke revision workshop?

- ▶ Delivered by the experts that you know and trust who can focus on the key areas that your students need support with ie: challenging papers, topics or question types.
- ▶ Students will hear expert guidance and tailored advice into how they can plan their revision and access the best possible grades.
- ▶ Designed to suit your requirements – online or in-school, half- or full-day, during the Easter holidays or term time.
- ▶ Great value for money - prices start from £499 + VAT – with no hassle, transport or paperwork to sort.

“

Really easy process to organise, the Hodder team responded really quickly to my enquires. It was extremely useful because it was more targeted and geared to what we needed.

Linda Bradshaw,  
City of Leicester College

”

## How much does it cost?

- Online
- Half-day (3hrs)
- Full recording shared

£499 + VAT

- Online
- Full-day (5hrs)
- Full recording shared

£750 + VAT

- In-school
- Half-day (3hrs)
- Printed student workbook

£799 + VAT

- In-school
- Full-day (5hrs)
- Printed student workbook

£999 + VAT

Contact us today to request your own bespoke revision workshop

- ▶ Visit [hoddereducation.co.uk/bespoke-revision](https://hoddereducation.co.uk/bespoke-revision)
- ▶ Email [events@hoddereducation.co.uk](mailto:events@hoddereducation.co.uk)
- ▶ Call 01295 222777

 **HODDER**  
EDUCATION  
LEARN MORE

# The newsletter

Grab a coffee and spend five minutes exploring the lighter side of CPD...

## The UNINFORMED teacher's guide to...

### WORDLE

A simple conundrum presented on a straightforward webpage. You have six chances at guessing a concealed five-letter word, with each try generating clues – green markers indicating a correct letter in the correct space, and yellow markers showing valid letters in the wrong spaces. Did you get it right? Great, there'll be a new one along tomorrow.

The first thing to note about Wordle is that it's a teen craze in reverse. Adults are *obsessed* with it (your school's English teachers probably set their watches by when today's grid is uploaded), while most people below the age of 25 are barely even aware of its existence.

The second thing to note is how emblematic Wordle is of modern culture's hyper-accelerated pace. It's gone from being a cute online experiment created by programmer Josh Wardle for his partner, to a viral sensation spawning multiple copycats (see 'Worldle' 'Semantle' and 'Sweardle'), to being purchased by the *New York Times* for a 'seven-figure sum', all within the space of *five months*. Not bad for a text-based take on that hoary old 70s-era caravan holiday diversion, Mastermind...



**DON'T SAY**

"Egatr!"



**DO SAY**

"Great!"



## BEAT THE BUDGET



**What are we talking about?**  
The 'Food – a fact of life' programme overseen by the British Nutrition Foundation and Agriculture & Horticulture Development Board



**What's the targeted age range?**  
EYFS to KS4

**What's on offer?**  
School resources spanning various food topics, from production and distribution to dieting and cooking

**How might teachers use the resource?**  
The KS3/4 areas contain knowledge organisers, worksheets, schemes of work and assorted quiz activities

**Where are they available?**  
foodafactoflife.org.uk

### DON'T QUOTE ME...

"I was threatened that I would not get a school for Radcliffe if I didn't vote in one particular way"

Former Conservative (and now Labour) MP  
Christian Wakeford

## Think of a number...

**43%**

of parents are concerned that their school isn't preparing their child for the modern job market

Source: Parentkind

**409,347**

The number of under-18s referred to NHS specialist care in England for issues such as suicidal thoughts and self-harm between April and October 2021

Source: NHS Digital via BBC News

**3.9%**

COVID-19 related pupil absence in all state schools as of 3rd February 2022

Source: DfE

### ONE FOR THE WALL

"You don't have to become something you're not to be better than you were"

Sidney Poitier





## Mind the gap

A new report from the Education Policy Institute, 'Covid-19 and Disadvantage gaps in England 2020' has painted a bleak picture of the disadvantage gap in education across England. Having compared KS4/5 outcomes in the year 2020 across different regions, LAs and levels of disadvantage, it found that the gap in GCSE grades between students living in long-term poverty and their more affluent peers has scarcely changed over the last decade.

The report also points to continuing regional disparities in educational outcomes, identifying Knowsley, Blackpool, Salford, Derby and Sheffield as those LAs with the largest GCSE grade gaps. The smallest grade gaps were seen in the LAs of Kensington and Chelsea, Westminster, Newham, Tower Hamlets and Barnet. London boroughs moreover accounted for nearly all of the top 30 areas faring best in terms of disadvantage gaps.

On a slightly more positive note, the research also found that 2020's switch to teacher assessed grades didn't penalise students from disadvantaged backgrounds as had been feared, with all students making equal grade gains. The same didn't seem to apply to students with SEND, however, as the report shows how the gap between SEND students with severe needs and non-SEND students grew from 3.4 grades in 2019 to 3.6 grades in 2020.

The report can be read in full via [bit.ly/ts112-epi](https://bit.ly/ts112-epi)

▼ **SAVE THE DATE** ▼

## STATEMENTS AND CORRESPONDENCE

Forget the media-friendly soundbites – what else was in those speeches and letters you missed?



### THE STATEMENT:

### NEU comments on the government's Levelling Up White Paper

**WHO?** Dr Mary Bousted, joint general secretary of the National Education Union

**WHAT?** Union criticises absence of 'sensible' funding proposals

**WHEN?** 2nd February 2022

"There is much in the aspiration of levelling up that the NEU can agree with – but aspiration isn't sufficient, and there is little confidence in a government that has neither the right ideas nor the capability to implement them. Their answers of 10 years ago, such as free schools and academies being the panacea to educational achievement, have proven not in themselves to be the answer that children, families, teachers, leaders and support staff need today.

This White Paper does not provide sensible solutions to the lack of school and college funding, nor the exam factory culture – driven by national policies – which undermines progress on the skills and education agenda in England. It contains no recognition of the effect on the profession over the last two years and the number of teachers questioning if they can continue with so little tangible support, leadership or flexibility from the DfE.

"The DfE does not appear to be reading its own reports about the impact of Covid on learning, children's confidence, and on areas of young people's development such as speech and language and socialisation with peers. The White Paper should contain a proactive national strategy on student wellbeing and explain how the DfE will prioritise students' social and emotional learning."



### THE LETTER:

### Open letter calls on DfE to revised its policy on the teaching of reading and phonics

**FROM?** 256 assorted teaching professionals, academics and education specialists

**TO?** Nadhim Zahawi, Secretary of State for Education

**WHEN?** 17th January 2022

"Teaching children to read is one of the most important tasks of primary schools and early years settings. Reading is pivotal in enabling children to succeed in their schooling and in maximising their life chances. Although England's current approach to teaching reading has a number of strengths there are vital improvements that are urgently required if more children are to succeed.

Teachers should be encouraged to focus first and foremost on pupils making sense of texts: phonics teaching should be carefully linked with reading of whole texts as part of all reading teaching. Policy and practice must focus more on the importance of encouraging children's motivation for reading. Teachers should be supported to use a range of phonics teaching approaches, not just synthetic phonics."

23-25 MARCH 2022 Bett 2022 | 7-8 JULY 2022 Festival of Education | 10 NOVEMBER 2022 The Education People Show

### 23-25 MARCH 2022

Bett 2022  
ExCeL London  
[bettshow.com](https://bettshow.com)

With the recent omicron wave having nixed plans for this year's Bett show to be held in its traditional January slot, the event will now be going ahead over three days in late March. That aside, nothing's changed – attendees will still get to access an array of professional networking opportunities, explore a sprawling product showcase and receive professional advice from a host of experts, with the extensive list of speakers remaining as it was.

### 7-8 JULY 2022

Festival of Education  
Wellington College  
[educationfest.co.uk](https://educationfest.co.uk)

Following a COVID-prompted two-year hiatus, the 12th Festival of Education will once again be held at Wellington College this summer. The organisers plan to host stimulating talks and presentations by more than 200 speakers drawn from across the profession, and attract a crowd of more than 5,000 educators to what remains perhaps the most relaxed and convivial event on the education calendar.

### 10 NOVEMBER 2022

The Education People Show  
Kent Event Centre, Maidstone  
[theeducationpeopleshow.co.uk](https://theeducationpeopleshow.co.uk)

Formerly the EduKent EXPO & Conference, the retooled Education People Show is pitched as a free-to-attend, major networking event for school leaders and policymakers across Kent and neighbouring counties, combining inspiring keynotes with engaging workshops and an extensive exhibition of leading school and academy suppliers.



# LOGITECH'S LATEST LAUNCH THE LOGITECH PEN

Designed for young children and teenagers

With optimum comfort, shape and size, the Logitech Pen is thicker to fit neatly in smaller hands of students, has a rugged grip for easy use, and is 'roll-proof' so it is less likely to be lost.

Logitech for Education ignites the full potential of students, and inspires a love of digital learning through solutions designed with and for students and teachers. Committed to developing simple, affordable tools, Logitech for Education aims to embrace learning for all students, spark focus and stamina, empower teachers, extend schools' current technology investments, and infuse magic in learning.

In line with the rising demand for touch screen Chromebooks, Logitech for Education's latest launch of Logitech Pen further shows this commitment. Logitech Pen is the first USI-compatible stylus from Logitech, and the first digital stylus designed for young children and teenagers. It unlocks the full potential of Chromebooks in the classroom - helping students aged five years and above express, engage and connect.

Easy to deploy and use, the digital stylus is 'Works with Chromebook' Certified - meeting Google's compatibility standards and works seamlessly with all Chromebooks that support USI. It supports 4,096 levels of pressure sensitivity for exceptional clarity with line thickness and precision, and works with hundreds of Chromebook apps - helping students learn, create, sketch and design.

The Logitech Pen is also tough and durable - built to withstand the day-to-day needs of students in any learning environment. Its aluminum body is bend and drop resistant up to four feet (1.2m) - passing military standards - and is liquid-resistant. It is also designed and tested to withstand disinfecting after each use - supporting safe, and long-term shared use.

Learn more at [logitech.com/en-gb/education/pen-features](https://logitech.com/en-gb/education/pen-features)



logitech | for education



# TEACHER TALES

True stories from the education chalkface

## Get Into Film



RIDE  
(2014, 15, 115 MINS)

### CURRICULUM LINKS:

PSHE, citizenship

In 1984, a group of gay rights activists offered their support to striking miners, sympathising with what they saw as another marginalised group and recognising a common enemy in Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.

Initially rejected by the miners' unions, the campaign group Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners (LGSM) focused their fundraising and support on a small Welsh mining town, and eventually decided to visit the people they'd been supporting.

That unlikely true story forms the basis of this warm-hearted and funny film. Featuring terrific performances from its ensemble cast, *Pride* will leave you feeling both galvanised and uplifted.

### Discussion questions:

- Had you heard about this story before hearing about the film? Do you think that some aspects of British history are under-discussed?
- What obstacles and barriers initially prevent LGSM and the miners from working together? How do the two communities overcome them?

Head online to [intofilm.org/films](http://intofilm.org/films) to stream *Pride* and download our film guide, *Teacher Notes* and other accompanying resources. You can find more *Into Film* selections to mark LGBTQ+ History month this February at [intofilm.org](http://intofilm.org)



### Retweets

Who's been saying what on Twitter this month?

**Whistleblowing Teacher** @WhistleblowingT  
HT has appointed best mate as Ass Head after changing school management structure from DH to 2x AH. Advertised internally only. Heard by many staff saying publicly prior to interview how much they were looking forward to working with said friend...

**RF5** @RedFocus5

Surely in a case of National Emergency, Ofsted inspectors – as they are employed by the government – should be redeployed from inspection roles to the classroom. Given their “expertise” standards should rise? Would love it to happen, if only for the headteachers' lesson observations.

Follow us via @teachsecondary – and let us know what you're thinking!

### Safety first

"Giving senior students opportunities to coach younger members of the school can be beneficial to all concerned. That's why I once gambled on assigning two mischievous Y11 students the task of helping a Y7 boy pad up for his first batting session in the cricket nets.

Later, making my way to the nets area, I saw the two older students watching with great amusement as the 'padded up' younger boy faced a bowler while wearing a cricket groin protective box on each knee and a third strapped to his head..."

### Flashing the cash

"It's fairly standard practice for valuables to be collected before PE lessons for safekeeping. When doing this before one football lesson, however, there was a 14-year-old boy who was extremely reluctant to hand his valuables over.

I was aware that once a month this pupil would head off to a local market after school.

It now turned out that said boy would always be carrying a significant amount of cash on such occasions. Despite my repeated assertions that valuables had to be kept safe within the PE office, and pointing out the dangers of leaving money out in the changing rooms, he steadfastly refused, telling me that he had a 'safe place' in which to secrete his possessions.

During the ensuing match, this 'secret place' was made all too clear, as his partially laced and bulging boot flew off, promptly causing myriad loose £10 and £20 notes to flutter around the pitch in the rather gusty conditions. The other players had been moving at a normal pace up to then, but for some reason they very quickly began running at considerable speed..."

### From the absence record

"My Y10 daughter is not in school today, as I couldn't get her and her boyfriend out of bed and I didn't want to spoil my morning by having a quarrel."

## A FEW MINUTES OF DESIGN

#20 FLAT TO 3D

Draw each of the flat pieces from which you think the three-dimensional object on this card is constructed.

A Few Minutes of Design FLAT TO 3D



# The Diplomat™

Self-Service Loaning Lockers

See Us At  
Bett 2022  
Stand SB51

With the NEW  
Diplomat™ UV-C  
Sanitisation Station



## ClassBuddy™

Cost Effective Charging  
Trolleys & Lockers



0800 130 3456



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



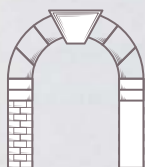
[lapsafe.com](http://lapsafe.com)

**LapSafe®**



# The Vocab Clinic

Support your students towards better language use, with the help of our resident word-wizard, **Alex Quigley**...



## TRY THIS TODAY: 'KEYSTONE VOCABULARY'

Lots of teachers and schools have been making concerted efforts with explicit vocabulary teaching, to ensure pupils can access the curriculum. Sometimes it can feel too small an approach, with too few words to address – and yet, by focusing on a small number of high value vocabulary items, teachers can unlock concepts and tricky topics.

Planning to address 'keystone vocabulary' is a helpful focus. The term describes a small number of key conceptual words that underpin a topic. With Romantic poetry, you might choose to identify six keystone words such as 'pastoral' and 'industrialisation'. As a strategy, it can provide a manageable and meaningful starting point for different topics right across the curriculum.

## Cracking the academic code

Secondary school pupils are required to frequently move from one classroom to another, and are expected to switch up their vocabulary and writing styles with different text types as they go. It's therefore helpful to make clear to all pupils that four writing styles are needed for academic success.

Those comprise 'narrative', 'descriptive', 'persuasive' and 'expository' (i.e. text that conveys information, such as the write-up of a science experiment). Pupils need to be supported so that they're familiar with the different structures, writing features and typical vocabulary of each style. All four of these near-hidden styles occur across the curriculum, but we need to make them explicit and obvious to pupils.



## DO THEY KNOW?

A new word is added to the dictionary every two hours – so is it any surprise that pupils can struggle with vocabulary knowledge...?

**I DON'T THINK IT MEANS WHAT YOU THINK IT MEANS...**

## RESOLUTION

### In English literature

A firm decision to do something, or a character who is determined.

### In science

The smallest change in a quantity that can produce a visible reading



## ONE FOR: FOOD / TECHNOLOGY STUDENTS

### HYGIENE

**Derives from:** the Greek '*hygieine technē*', meaning 'the healthful art'

**Means:** Conditions of practice that lead to healthy living and the avoidance of illness and disease

**Related terms:** Cleanliness, sanitation, purity, healthy, hygienics

**Note:** The Ancient Greeks personified hygiene in the figure of Hygieia, goddess of health



## One word at a time



For at least part of the month, the word 'salary' is often at the forefront of our minds. Its origins are interesting, dating back to Roman times with the Latin term '*salarium*', meaning 'salt money'. Salt was once perceived to be highly precious, and became known as 'white gold' for its preservative and antiseptic qualities. Such was its value that Roman soldiers were actually paid in salt, hence the modern use of the word to refer to a monthly payment in exchange for labour.

We have even generated common idioms based on the word's origins. The saying, 'To be worth one's salt' harks back to those Roman origins of salt being related to value and wealth.



Alex Quigley is a former teacher and the author of *Closing the Reading Gap* and *Closing the Vocabulary Gap*; he also works for the Education Endowment Foundation as National Content Manager



MATHEMATICAL ASSOCIATION



Supporting mathematics in education

# MATHEMATICAL VISIONS

challenging and inspiring mathematics for all

**12<sup>th</sup> - 14<sup>th</sup> April 2022**

A two day online event, followed by a face-to-face conference and exhibition in Stratford-upon-Avon

## KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



Dr Chris Pritchard  
MA President



Prof Anne Watson  
@annemathswatson



Jo Morgan  
@mathsjem



Susan Okereke  
@dothemathsting



Chris Smith  
@aap03102



**Book your place from £15**

**[www.maconference.org.uk](http://www.maconference.org.uk)**





## [ MATHS PROBLEM ]

# EXTERIOR ANGLES

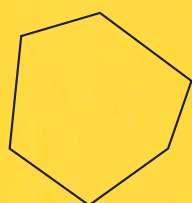
Students often misinterpret the meaning of exterior angles in polygons and how they relate to interior angles

In this lesson, students compare and contrast the correct and incorrect understandings of exterior angles

## THE DIFFICULTY

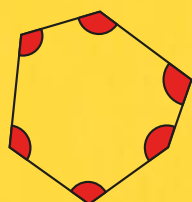
This task is intended to bring to the surface possible confusions over exterior angles:

Look at this polygon. (see [bit.ly/112-ext-angles](http://bit.ly/112-ext-angles) for a printable version.)

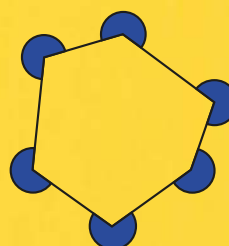


Clearly mark all the **interior** angles in red.  
Clearly mark all the **exterior** angles in blue.

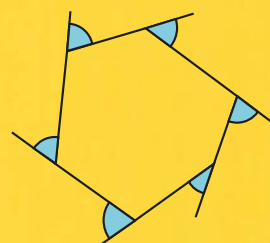
Students will probably correctly mark the interior angles as shown below:



But some students are likely to **incorrectly** mark the exterior angles in the following way...



...rather than the correct answer, as shown here:



## THE SOLUTION

The light blue exterior angles are sometimes called **turn angles**, because they are the angles that you would turn through if you were walking around the polygon.

How are the red, dark blue and light blue angles related to each other?

If students find this difficult, they might benefit from using protractors to check their ideas, or from making drawings of different polygon examples to check that their conjectures work.

Every light blue exterior angle is **supplementary** to the red interior angle at the same vertex:

$$\text{red} + \text{light blue} = 180^\circ \text{ at each vertex}$$

Every dark blue angle is the reflex angle of the red angle at the same vertex:

$$360^\circ = \text{red} + \text{dark blue} \text{ at each vertex}$$

Finally, every dark blue angle is a **straight angle more** than the light blue angle at the same vertex:

$$\text{light blue} + 180^\circ = \text{dark blue} \text{ at each vertex}$$

This third equation can also be found by adding together the first two equations (the red cancels out).

### Checking for understanding

Conclude the lesson by asking students to see if they can write down **general** statements about these angles for an  $n$ -gon. (Here, with a hexagon,  $n = 6$ .)

$$\text{The sum of the red angles} = 180(n - 2)^\circ$$

$$\text{The sum of the light blue angles} = 360^\circ$$

$$\text{The sum of the dark blue angles} = (360 + 180n)^\circ$$

This means that the sum of all of the dark blue angles and all of the red angles must be  $(360 + 180n) + 180(n - 2) = 360n^\circ$ , which makes sense, because it corresponds to a full turn for each vertex.



Colin Foster (@colinfoster77) is a Reader in Mathematics Education at the Mathematics Education Centre at Loughborough University. He has written many books and articles for mathematics teachers. [foster77.co.uk](http://foster77.co.uk)

# “Indoctrination is miseducation”

We’re facing the prospect of a war for children’s minds, argues Toby Marshall – which is why the DfE has to take great care when preparing its upcoming guidance on indoctrination within education...

**T**owards the end of last year, I was pleased to learn that the Education Secretary, Nadhim Zahawi, had decided to take action on the thorny issue of indoctrination within state education – an area often accompanied by much-needed, if tempestuous debate over the proper relationship between politics and what happens in schools.

Zahawi will publish new guidance for teachers later this year. If it’s to be effective, however, he must be clear as to the precise meaning of ‘indoctrination’, and be consistent in the approach he advocates. Above all, he must present the issue in a manner acceptable to those who don’t share his party political beliefs.

## Positions versus fact

In this respect, Zahawi must act as a representative of the English state, rather than as a member of the Conservative Party. He should dare to be stridently educational and avoid being narrowly political in his reasoning, focusing instead on our common interests. Education, after all, belongs to everyone.

Going by reports of his intentions thus far, however, we have seen Zahawi primarily express concern over the way in which left wing, anti-racist teachers have been teaching ideas of ‘white privilege’ as fact.

On one level, he’s quite right, of course. No moral, political or religious position should ever be taught within education as fact (including those of HM government) – this is a foundational tenet of liberal education, perhaps *the* foundational tenet.

Nor is Zahawi alone in voicing those concerns. The campaign group Don’t Divide Us has similarly drawn attention to what it sees as a propagandistic and inflammatory use of reverse racist ideas within schools.

Speaking before Parliament in October 2020, the Minister for Equalities, Kemi Badenoch, stated that much teaching around race in English schools might even be in direct breach of indoctrination law. More

problematically, the Conservative MP, Jonathan Gullis, suggested at a 2021 party conference fringe meeting that teachers who use the term ‘white privilege’ should be referred to the government’s Prevent counterterrorism programme – a body that more typically deals with threats from potential suicide bombers and far right activists.

To date, I’m not aware of any convictions, referrals or even sackings of teachers over the content of anti-racist teaching in schools, but hearing an MP describe left wing teachers as ‘terrorists’ gives me pause. I am myself left

wing, a teacher and a trade unionist. It strikes me that this is a debate that’s starting to feel dangerous.

## McCarthyite moves

My guess is that less angry heads than Gullis will prevail in the DfE as Zahawi and his team develop their new guidance. The last thing we





## Join the CONVERSATION

The Academy of Ideas Education Forum gathers monthly to discuss trends in educational policy, theory and practice. Find out more at [academyofideas.org.uk/education-forum](https://academyofideas.org.uk/education-forum)

want is the drawing up of teacher blacklists. This important societal and educational issue should be debated vigorously, but with a sense of optimism and in a spirit of mutual respect. I think we've all had our fill of zero-sum culture wars.

Of course, those groups that Zahawi has previously accused of practising indoctrination reject his diagnosis of the problem. Sections of the left have tried – with some success – to argue it's actually Number 10 that's been deliberately stirring up a divisive culture war within education. They have also (rightly) pointed out that it was the government, not 'lefty teachers', that produced a list of resources that mustn't be used within state education. The argument goes that such McCarthyite moves are clear evidence of the State itself seeking to indoctrinate through education.

Similar accusations have also been made by

other interests. A significant number of Orthodox Christian groups have voiced their opposition to the statutory Relationship, Sex and Health Education 'guidance' that's been mandatory in all English schools since September 2020, claiming that it undermines traditional values and represents an assault on the moral autonomy of family.

## “We're all capable of indoctrinating students inadvertently, even when acting with the best of intentions”

### ‘British values’

All this follows in the wake of long-standing criticism of how government has, for many years, instructed teachers to promote the ‘British Values’ of tolerance, democracy, rule of law and individual liberty. There's nothing objectionable about those values, but it's hardly the job of teachers to ‘promote’ them.

For the most part, our job is to educate young people about values, and where time allows, introduce them to those principles by which moral and political decisions might be made.

This is best accomplished

through basic introductory classes in moral and political philosophy. Uncritical promotion of any value proposition, whether presented by government or activists, within education is merely an invitation to propagandise. And education is not the place for propaganda.

There needs to be an acceptance, however, that teachers, like any other professional grouping, will include some individuals who get things wrong, for both good and bad reasons.

Nobody here is pure. We're all capable of indoctrinating students inadvertently, even when

children to schools and colleges for an education, not a sermon. For those parents who wish outsource the moral education of their child, there are ample mosques, temples, churches and synagogues.

However, we should also remember that we live in a democracy. It's quite right that teachers prepare young people for their future roles as citizens and educate them about politics. They should possess knowledge of the mature, albeit somewhat ramshackle and constitutionally contradictory democracy that they will inherit. Alongside that, we should be clear that when teachers or the State seek to manipulate young minds and persuade them of the ‘truth’ contained within a particular religious, moral or political perspective, they cross a line. We have a duty of intellectual care.

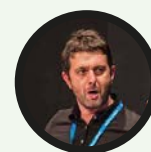
Definitions of indoctrination vary, of course. For some, it will stem from a teacher's intent; for others, it can be found in a curriculum's content selection, or how that material is presented. What ultimately unites them is the sense of adults somewhere abusing their power in order to secure political, moral or religious objectives unrelated to education.

acting with the best of intentions, and our own acts of indoctrination will always remain invisible to ourselves.

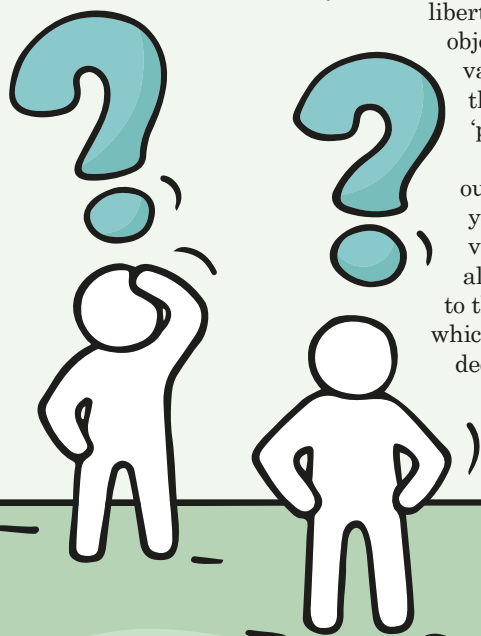
At the same time, we have to bear in mind that indoctrination is miseducation. Any perception that teachers are deliberately miseducating students serves to drain the profession of trust among both parents and wider society.

### Intellectual care

If teachers, or indeed the Conservative Party, were to use education for political purposes, it would be a gross abuse of power. Parents send their



**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**  
Toby Marshall is an A Level film studies teacher





DON'T MISS OUT ON

# 15% OFF\*

## 2022 SCHOOL TRIPS!



REWARD  
TRIPS

KEY STAGE  
3 - 4  
WORKSHOPS



BOOK BEFORE 28TH MARCH TO GET TICKETS FROM JUST  
£10.65 PER STUDENT AT [CHESSINGTON.CO.UK/SCHOOLS](https://chessington.co.uk/schools)

\*Up to 15% off valid against Primary and Secondary school tickets on select off-peak dates. Full terms apply. Valid until 28/03/22. Workshops cost £1.75pp



# WHAT I LEARNT AT SCHOOL

**Arsenal and England defender Leah Williamson looks back on the efforts her school made to help her realise her footballing ambitions...**

I was the kid that always wanted to go to school. When I was there, I absolutely loved it – I'd go back in a heartbeat if you offered me the chance to spend a day as a kid again.

I was lucky in that there was always lots going on. It was quite a sporty school, which was obviously great for me, but thinking back, it was also really good in terms of drama, music and getting us to be creative. I'm nowhere near those kinds of fields now, but back then, that really helped to get the most out of me as a kid. I learned a lot, for which I'm very appreciative.

I was also lucky to have teachers who went out of their way to accommodate me, 'the girl who played football'. From an early age, I wasn't met with any barriers. There wasn't a girls' football team at my school, but I was allowed to play in the school team alongside the boys – which sounds horrific to me now, but at the time, at least people went out of their way to make that happen. Big shout out to Mr Kearsley, because he was great to me at school, and helped me in any way he could.

When we did eventually have a girls' football team, I'd be there rounding up my mates, telling them that I really wanted to do this, and



could they come and play? Now, I can talk to classes of 25 to 30 kids, and the engagement levels from girls will be just as high as the boys.

Women's football isn't yet at the same stage as the men's football, so my job is to be a footballer but also to grow the game. That'll probably never stop, because we'll be chasing that level of

men's sport for a long time, but it's still lovely to know that what we're doing is already making a difference.

I have to thank those who came before me, who had it worse than I did. When my mum was younger, she actually cut her hair off to play in her school's football team with the boys. It was easier for me, and girls now have it easier than I did. If

it's something they want to do, they can just do it without having to fight for it.

Now that the interest is there, we can help to inspire girls, and give them an avenue into the sport that they maybe don't know is available to them. They might be doing a task where they're creating a poster of a women's footballer, and it's accepted now that she's just as valid in what she does as her male counterparts. That kind of thing opens kids' eyes and helps them see a world where they can be what they want to be. That kind of work isn't just targeted at girls, though, it's for boys too. It's important that all young people get to see this world where women can be and do what they want.

When I think back to school, and those times when the (men's) World Cup was on, we'd all go into the assembly room and watch it on the telly. The memories of those good times really stay with you, so I hope this year's UEFA Women's EURO – with all the engagement that comes from taking part and the resources schools can use – gives those kids a summer they can remember as well.

You can teach children those lessons, and they'll go on to be the generation that acts on them. It's important for girls to realise they can have ambitions to play football professionally, and for boys to see it too. They can then hopefully enter a world where there's no hierarchy; where someone doesn't live their life believing that they're somehow above another person, just because they're male.

Leah Williamson is a member of the England Women's Senior Team that will be competing in the England-hosted UEFA Women's EURO tournament, which takes place from 6th to 31st July 2022; teachers can download a series of accompanying cross-curricular KS2 and KS3 resources by enrolling for the UEFA Women's EURO 2022 Schools Programme at [figc-fis.eu](https://figc-fis.eu)

# Reuniting the global community for education technology under one roof



**225+**

Inspiring  
Speakers



**90+**

Hours of CPD  
Content



**550+**

Solutions  
Providers



The themes  
powering Bett to  
**Create the Future**



Leadership



Futures



Inclusion



Wellbeing



Skills



Innovation

"I keep coming back to Bett to see new technologies, some cutting edge innovation and to give us ideas for our curriculum and students."

Director of ICT, UK

**Register now**  
[uk.bettshow.com](https://uk.bettshow.com)





# 3 things we've learnt about... WHO BECOMES A TEACHER

People these days enter the teaching profession via a host of different routes, but what is it that compels them to start the journey in the first place?

## 1 Some people have always wanted to become teachers

Almost a quarter of teachers say that they wanted to train as a teacher upon leaving school, but a near equal proportion told us their past self would be very surprised at them ending up with such a career. Science teachers felt this the most, with over 30% saying their younger self wouldn't have expected them to one day become a teacher.

Only a third of teachers point to the holidays as a contributing factor to them entering the profession. More common reasons include wanting to make a difference to people's lives, as cited by two thirds. When asked what's more important to them in their job now, over two thirds of teachers still say making a difference; for 10% of headteachers, it's wanting to leave a legacy.

## 2 Many teachers share common traits

Despite coming from all walks of life, teachers share a number of personality traits. 81% say they're not easily irritated, and a further 87% insist that they don't get upset easily. Perhaps the most interesting commonality is that only 21% of teachers say they feel 'comfortable around people' – despite being around people all day. In a similar vein, a surprisingly low 11% reported that they 'didn't mind being the centre of attention'...

Headteachers appear to possess the most inner zen in comparison to others. Just 9% of them admit to getting stressed out easily, versus 22% of classroom teachers. As a result, heads are less likely to be worriers, with 32% saying they worry about things, compared to 38% of classroom teachers.

## 3 All teachers possess unique skills

As they spend more time in the classroom, teachers inevitably develop skills that allow them to perform their role more efficiently. It's a common trope that teachers have eyes in the back of their heads, yet only 52% of primary and secondary teachers claim to actually have this power. The ability to read and write upside down might have limited use outside of teaching, but nearly three quarters of teachers are apparently able to. 61% of teachers also confirm having bladders of steel – something that definitely has its uses, both inside and outside the classroom...

Finally, students might think they're being successfully sneaky when using mobiles in lessons, but *au contraire* – an impressive 74% of secondary teachers told us they were able to spot students using mobile phones from a distance.

### WHICH TEACHING SUPERPOWERS DO YOU POSSESS?



Read/write upside down	67%
Silence a class with one look	53%
Eyes in the back of my head	50%
Navigate crowded corridors with your hands full without accidents	59%
Spot a student on a mobile phone	73%
Bladder of steel	58%
Fearless in the face of an angry parent	34%

Responses gathered from 4,047 secondary teachers on 19/09/2021 (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

For more snappy insights like this, and to be part of the panel, please join in via the free Teacher Tapp app available to download for iOS and Android. You will learn something new every day.



# Book your place at one of our Cambridge Nationals Showcases

All redeveloped Cambridge Nationals qualifications included on the 2024 KS4 performance tables.

Explore our approved redeveloped Cambridge Nationals by attending one of our free online showcases this spring term.

At each subject showcase you'll be able to:

- discover more about the approved specification
- hear about support, textbooks and resources available
- Q&A with our Subject Experts
- meet like-minded colleagues in your region

Book your place at [teach.ocr.org.uk/cambridgenationalsshowcase](https://teach.ocr.org.uk/cambridgenationalsshowcase)



Those wanting to see schools operate outside of local authorities for the sake of ‘greater autonomy’ would do well to observe the collaborative – and consistently successful – approach to education policy taking shape in Hackney..

# Melissa Benn



**Those who have followed the politics of education in recent years will be familiar with the insistent calls for more school autonomy. Cut schools free from the dead hand of local authority control! Rely instead on private and charitable endeavour!**

There was a brute, ideologically supercharged emphasis to this debate during the Gove years, but the idea itself wasn't new. The governments of both Margaret Thatcher and Tony Blair had previously expressed clear distaste for locally-run schools.

In truth, ‘school autonomy’ is an insidious myth. In practice, few schools do, or even can, stand alone. Success is usually best achieved through collaboration, on everything from payroll to CPD.

## A distant Whitehall

The Coalition government soon learned this first-hand. Once ties to LAs were severed, many schools were notionally accountable only to a distant and distracted Whitehall. This arrangement didn't work, and soon led to the rapid growth of MATs, culminating in the government declaring its intention to eventually drive all schools into some kind of trust arrangement.

In any case, relatively few now argue for a return to the wholesale LA model of old, even within the Labour party. In part, this is because LAs themselves have been shredded through sustained underfunding and marginalisation, particularly since 2010.

Enter the London borough of Hackney, which has risen from the ashes of despair and mismanagement to create a new, contemporary model of LA-led education.

## Big lessons

In the late 1990s, the borough was one of the poorest and most ethnically diverse in the country, and notorious for its chaotic schools. In 2002 its schools were handed to a not-for-profit body, The Learning Trust, which helped turn the borough's provision around before services were returned in-house in 2012.

Standards have remained high ever since, with around 90% of the borough's primary and secondary schools judged Good or better, and 37% Outstanding.

There are some big lessons to be learnt here, as detailed in the publication ‘Educational Success: The Hackney Picture’ ([bit.ly/ts112-mb1](http://bit.ly/ts112-mb1)). The borough's experiences send out a clear message to central government that a strong, well organised borough can make an extraordinary difference to an area's children and young people.

Under the Hackney model, children's services, health agencies, social workers, youth workers and safeguarding teams all work in tandem with schools, helping young people and families in trouble and keeping

students in education.

The heads, teachers, governors, councillors, parents and young people of Hackney have numerous forums in which to exchange ideas, share problems and innovate. This collaboration recently resulted in the development of Hackney's ‘Diverse Curriculum – the Black Contribution’ – a learning pack that hundreds of schools around the country have subsequently signed up to.

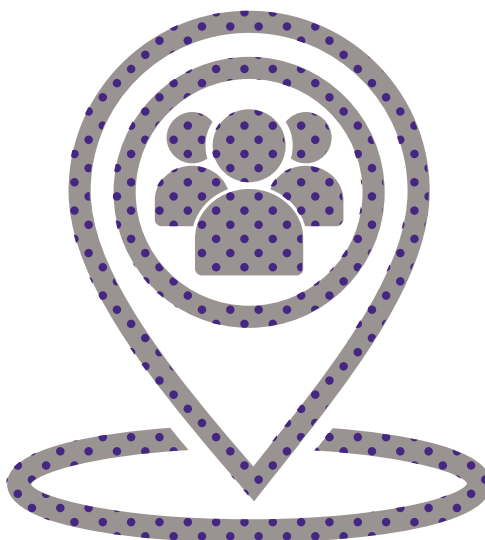
School leaders in the borough report feeling well supported, and having a strong sense of belonging within the local community, but this model also holds some more pragmatic lessons for progressive educationalists.

## A public good

While the borough's primary schools remain under the council's wing, most of its secondary schools have converted to academies or free schools. Legally, these ‘independent state schools’ are technically free from any relationship with their home borough, but in practice, Hackney Education has forged strong relationships with all of them, offering a range of professional support services and regularly inviting their headteachers to numerous curriculum and leadership meetings.

Moreover, all schools within the borough work together closely on the crucial area of school admissions, in an effort to avoid damaging practices such as off-rolling. Nor is Hackney the only LA to have developed this kind of locally rooted partnership model, with similar approaches having also been adopted in neighbouring Tower Hamlets and Birmingham.

All offer a beacon of light to those who believe, as former Education Secretary Baroness Estelle Morris puts it in ‘Educational Success’, that “Someone needs to hold the ring for education as a public good in a locality.”



futures4students

# CAREERS JAM

virtual careers fair by F4S

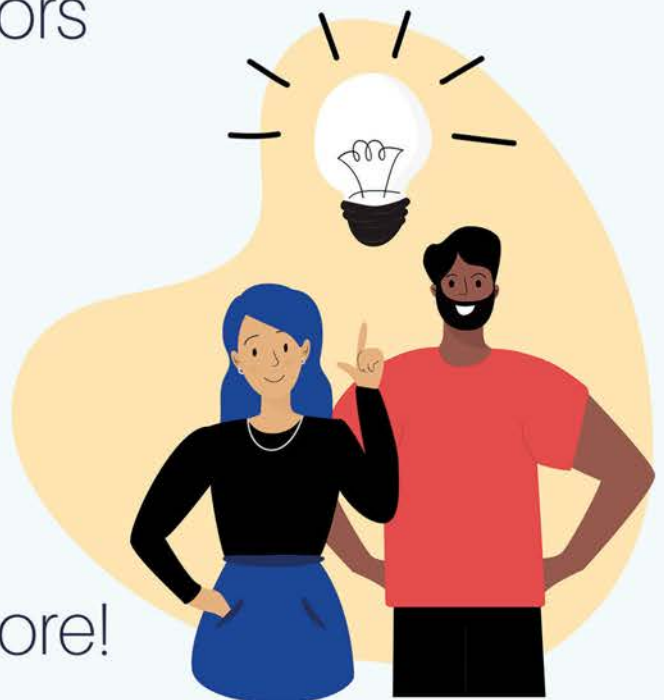
**TUESDAY 3RD MAY**

## INSPIRE YOUR STUDENTS' FUTURE CAREERS.



Students can chat live and book 1:1 meetings with prospective employers & educators

Live stage sessions from industry leaders on career pathways, digital skills, practical employability & more!



**WWW.F4SCAREERSJAM.COM**



Talk to enough former Secretaries of State for Education, and you'll quickly discover where the scope of their powers end, and where the issues they consider to be intractable begin...

# Tim Brighouse



**Interviewing 14 former Education Secretaries (including the unfortunate Gavin Williamson) for an hour each, as well as over 90 others – including the most senior figures at Ofsted, MAT CEOs and assorted teachers and leaders – can't help but make you think about the changes needed in order to make teachers' lives just a bit easier.**

That's what drove Mick Waters and myself to write the book *About Our Schools: Improving on Previous Best*. We were driven by the belief, backed up by evidence, that it's the teacher who makes the difference.

As Haim G. Ginott famously put it, "It is my daily mood that makes the weather. As a teacher I possess tremendous power to make a child's life miserable or joyous."

Both how a school is run and what governments do clearly affect the chances of individual teachers to 'make good weather' – but our hunch is that too often, changes promoted nationally turn into thunderbolts by the time they reach the classroom.

## Good judgements?

So what did we learn about those Education Ministers? Well, on average they stay for just over two years in the job – and we all know what's said in school if a department or school leader leaves within less than three years.

It really isn't sufficient time to make good judgements about key issues – especially given that almost all Ministers said that the notice they received before starting the job was between 6 and 12 hours. Before then being appointed without interview, having seen no job description, and in most cases, with no knowledge of the subject. It's a little like appointing a

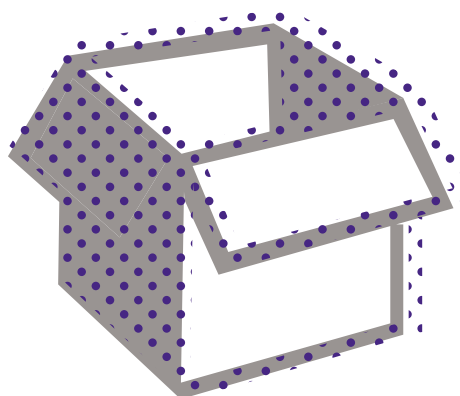
clinician in obstetrics as the head of modern languages in an academy.

There are exceptions, of course. Estelle Morris and Gillian Shephard both had long teaching careers, and it showed. Four more had spent considerable time contemplating education prior to their appointments. David Blunkett – pioneer of focused school improvement, citizenship and taking deprivation and disadvantage seriously – had been Shadow Education Secretary for years before taking up the post. The same goes for Michael Gove – sender of those King James bibles that are doubtless frequently read in staff rooms, initiator of the EBacc and overseer of its narrowing of the curriculum.

Those who stayed and oversaw lasting change include Kenneth Baker, whose 1988 Great Reform Act paved the way for Ofsted and league tables, and ushered in delegation of school budgets and the National Curriculum. Another was Ed Balls, who introduced Every Child Matters and merged children's services with education.

## The 'too difficult' box

While these Ministers achieved much, they also neglected to address



problems that must be resolved if all pupils are to live fulfilling lives, think for themselves and act for others. These problems lie dormant in what Charles Clarke (Education Minister from 2002 until 2004) aptly calls the 'too difficult' box.

In here are placed matters that include the likes of...

- An exam system specifically designed (through norm-referencing and algorithms) to fail a predetermined percentage of pupils, irrespective of performance
- Admission arrangements that allow some schools to select pupils (or, more accurately, their parents), rather than vice-versa
- A curriculum inclined towards the academic, at the cost of vocational and arts subjects and other wider experiences
- Levels of resourcing that serve to further widen the gap between the privileged private sector and state schools, making a mockery of equity and social justice for our future citizens

We address all these blemishes (and many more) in our book, and also set out six 'foundation stones' – new features which will help teachers win what H.G. Wells once called the race between education and catastrophe.

Factor in the complexities of pandemics, climate change and prospects for future employment in the face of automation, nanotechnology, robotics and AI, and this race has never felt more urgent. The time has come for us to usher in a new age of ambition, hope and collaborative partnership among schools.

# Ofsted, oracy AND YOU

**Anthony David** considers the extent to which Ofsted cares about speaking, and what that might mean for teachers...

**I**n April of 2021, an Oxford-based think tank, The Centre for Education and Youth, published a report on Ofsted's reporting of oral skills that largely went under the radar. Its aim

was to examine whether students' oracy skills been impacted by the pandemic, using prior inspection reports as an evidence base.

When those reports were analysed, the picture they painted of speaking was mixed, to say the least. Oracy is clearly something inspectors are sensitive to, with 54% of the reports

mentioning speaking in some form, following a steady increase since 2015. However, the emphasis of oral comments were often lighter in tone than those on core skills. And while the number of reports referencing oral skills might have grown from 174 in 2015 to 446 in 2018, that's dwarfed by the total number of Ofsted reports produced each year, which typically amount to 10 times that number.

## Commentary or judgement?

When it comes to mentions of oracy in key findings,

that proportion shrinks even further – from a 2012 peak of 236 reports referencing oracy in their key findings, to just 42 in 2019. It could therefore be argued that Ofsted either isn't particularly minded towards speaking, or that its inspection process lacks the framework needed to accurately assess oracy in the same way as core subjects.

The latest 2021 Inspection Handbook (see [bit.ly/ts112-oracy1](https://bit.ly/ts112-oracy1)) references the spoken word as often as reading, deploying a variety of words – including 'oral', 'talk' and 'speaking' – when referring to oracy in varying contexts. What's





different, though, is that the emphasis is typically on the oral skills of *teachers*, and how they provide feedback and model language, over how *pupils* use newly acquired language. With reading, it's always the child's capacity that's being measured.

As such, there's the risk that any references to oracy skills in Ofsted reports are purely commentary with no particular judgement, whether positive or negative. That said, there seems to be something of pattern in Ofsted reports in that positive comments on oracy typically reflect a teacher's skill in developing language in the classroom, while negative comments are usually made in reference to resourcing or students' use of language.

### The spoken word

In *this* context, it would be easy to conclude that Ofsted aren't especially minded to assess oral skills – but good schools know that if they want students to be better writers and readers, they need to have experiences that stimulate that.

Students need parameters within which to exercise

newly acquired language skills, opportunities to play with words and feel how they sound, and chances to use them in a safe, supportive environment.

Within this context, Ofsted's interest in the spoken word increases significantly.

Much of the

Inspection Handbook centres on students being able to speak about their learning experiences, which may well include activities such as organising a campaign or working in support of a charity. Even book looks

have changed, with child conferences and book scrutinies now approached as a single activity, where students bring their books to the inspector and discuss their learning with those books to hand.

What we do know is that overlooking oracy presents a risk for deprived students. Prior to the pandemic, it was thought that students from low income families heard approximately 30 million fewer words than those from high income families. What has yet to be analysed is the diversity, context and opportunities

## “The DfE is emphasising the importance of speech, and encouraging schools to not shut down spoken word opportunities”

for speaking that higher income families are able to access.

### The COVID effect

Sadly, from what we've been able to observe so far, the pandemic has had a significant impact in this area. Students have spent prolonged periods during lockdown with little or no access to the kind of casual spoken opportunities that were previously part of everyday life. Even after they returned to school, we've seen students unable to participate in activities such as singing, performing in class assemblies and shows, or participating in traditional singing games.

Between March 2020 and September 2021, there were significant restrictions on spoken communication. The data we have shows that more

than 10% of students continue to miss out on education due to COVID-related absences. In many ways the situation is worse than last year. The home learning we experienced may have been difficult, but we at least knew that the vast majority of students were accessing learning via remote provision, compared to the current chaotic patchwork of students being in and out of class.

On 27th April 2021, the BBC ran a report highlighting the impacts the pandemic had had on young people's learning. The list of lost speaking opportunities

was stark, spanning a dearth of intergenerational conversations with visiting grandparents or extended family, a lack of social opportunities both in and outside school and fewer chances to practice visual communication, thanks to the wearing of face masks and social distancing.

### Long-term impacts

When all this is taken into consideration, we can see that there's strong anecdotal evidence indicating lower confidence levels among students than might have been expected in the past.

The specialist SLCN firm Speech Link has estimated that 20% to 25% of rising reception pupils will require additional support with their speech. This may well be true, but the supporting evidence won't be available until the end

of this academic year, when schools submit their Early Years data.

So far there hasn't been a similar study examining the speech skills of students at secondary, but my instincts would lead me to suggest that the impact may be just as significant – though the consequences may take years to be felt.

There will be some students who manage to bridge the gap, but also a far larger group who won't.

### Different priorities

What's become clear in recent months is that the DfE is once again emphasising the importance of speech, and encouraging schools to not shut down spoken word opportunities (though there have been a couple of clumsy tweets from the DfE on this topic)...

And yet, whilst general the picture may seem bleak, the Education Endowment Foundation recently highlighted a form of positive impact that's highly focused, and which points to the benefits speaking opportunities can deliver.

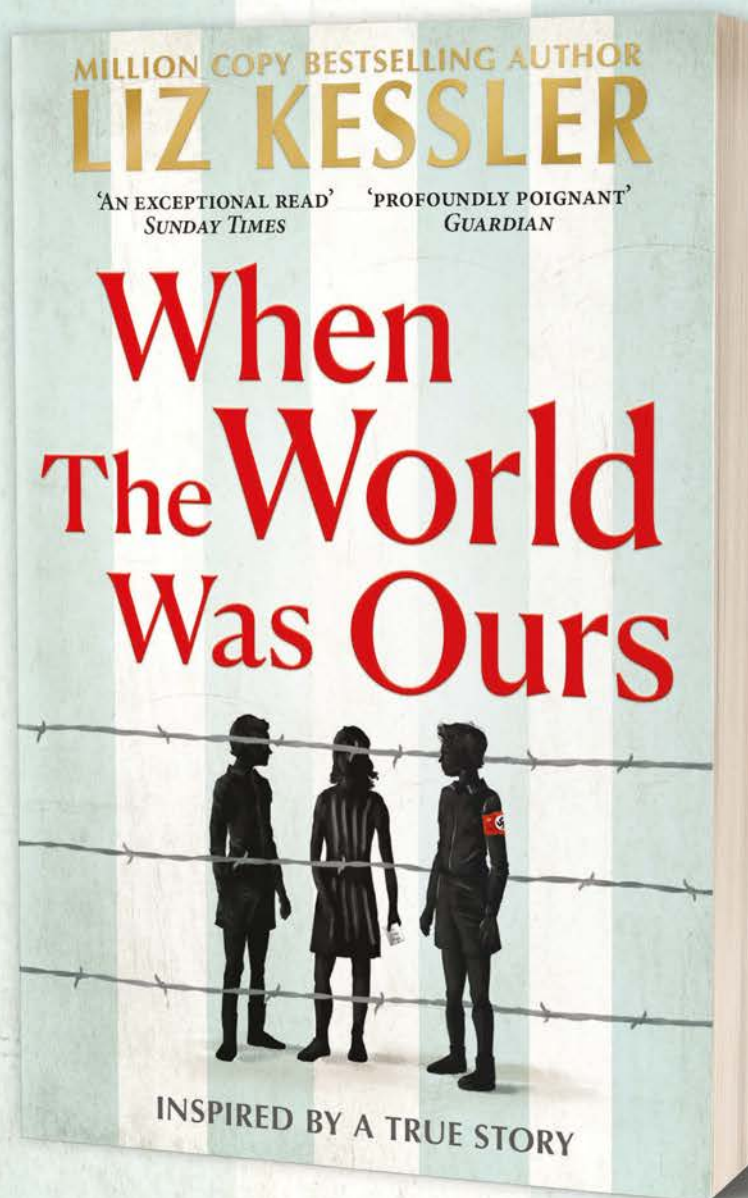
Key to enriching students' language and narrowing the spoken word gap will be access to resources that focus on language in a safe environment, and give students opportunities to exercise speaking abilities purposefully.

What teachers need to avoid is downplaying students' adoption of new language. Instead, we should be celebrating the joy to be had in learning new words, and using them to express our ideas and thinking.



**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**  
Anthony David is an executive headteacher

*The powerful story of wartime friendship  
inspired by true events*



*Three friends. Two sides. One memory.*



'A moment on a Danube Steamer in Vienna – where my dad, aged four, knelt on a chair and nearly scuffed a woman's dress with his feet – led to a conversation between the woman and my grandfather. The conversation led to the woman and her husband missing their stop, which led to a day spent with my grandparents, which led to a thank-you letter some time later. This letter would be the final, essential key that would lead to my dad and his parents escaping Nazi-occupied Czechoslovakia five years later.'

Perfect for KS3 and KS4 discussion.  
Reading notes available by emailing [ChildrensBooks@simonandschuster.co.uk](mailto:ChildrensBooks@simonandschuster.co.uk)





# THE TS GUIDE TO... CPD

Whether it's a fact-finding visit to another setting, or a far-reaching development programme you're planning to roll out in-house, there's no shortage of ways in which to make your practice even better than it already is...

## IN THIS SECTION

### 28 "THEY DO THINGS DIFFERENTLY THERE..."

Adam Riches looks at how to maximise the benefits and long-term impact of fact-finding visits to other schools

### 31 TEACHER TRAINING AS CRISIS RESPONSE

At a time of severe teacher retention issues and spiralling recruitment costs, the need for more and better CPD has never been greater, argues Chris Pope

### 32 TAILORED TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

Leyla Palmer tells us why instructional coaching may well be the CPD delivery mechanism you've been looking for...



## IN FIGURES:

**HOW MUCH CPD ARE TEACHERS REGULARLY ENGAGING IN, AND HOW EFFECTIVE CAN IT BE IF WHAT THEY LEARN IS APPROPRIATELY IMPLEMENTED?**

**43**

The average number of hours that full-time, lower-secondary teachers spend on professional development within a year

Source: 2018 OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey

**12,000**

The number of full-time teachers estimated to be retained in the profession, if all teachers were entitled to 35 hours of high-quality CPD (as defined by DfE quality standards)

**£61bn**

The net societal benefit over 10 years (in terms of improved teaching/learning and educational outcomes) of instituting the above 35 hours policy, which would cost £4bn over the same period

Source: 'The effects of high-quality professional development on teachers and students' - EPI report commissioned by Wellcome

**3** TEACHWIRE ARTICLES FROM THE ARCHIVES

### 8 TIPS FOR DELIVERING KNOCKOUT CPD

Leading CPD in your school is a great way of demonstrating leadership, vision and staff management, says Paul K. Ainsworth

[bit.ly/112special1](https://bit.ly/112special1)

### BUILD YOUR SKILLS ON A BUDGET

Julia Knight highlights several low-cost ways of developing your CPD provision that will have a measurable whole-school impact

[bit.ly/112special2](https://bit.ly/112special2)

### IMPROVE YOUR CPD WITH CHECKLISTS

Harry Fletcher-Wood explains how checklists are the perfect tool for making your professional development efforts go the extra mile

[bit.ly/112special3](https://bit.ly/112special3)

# “They do things differently THERE...”

**Adam Riches** looks at how to maximise the benefits and long-term impact of fact-finding visits to other schools

**A**mong the many knock-on effects of the pandemic has been its forced limiting of valuable networking opportunities.

While there have been some huge benefits to working online and time savings from needing to travel less, what many of us have missed are face-to-face interactions with teachers working at other schools.

School visits can offer so much to both experienced and early career teachers. Seeing how others do the same, or at least similar things to you can have a transformative impact on your practice. Seeing the application of approaches in different contexts often also allows teachers to critique their own teaching and students' learning.

When done right, school visits can result in major gains – but how can we get the most out of them?

## Pick the right place

Visiting other schools costs money and can involve complicated cover arrangements, so when the opportunity arises, it's important that you pick the right school.

You may choose to visit a particular school because it's renowned for its good results in certain subjects, or due to its reputation for reforming behaviour. Maybe its SEND provision is notably strong.

The obvious thing to do might be to focus on those settings with the best

reputations, but it doesn't always follow that they're the best places to visit. Developing schools can be just as useful as more 'polished' schools. You can learn a great deal from examples of things done well, but also just as much from centres that approach areas differently to how you'd tackle them yourself.

Yes, having the chance to study model lessons or curriculums can be great – but more often than not, you'll learn just as much from examining what *isn't* being done.

## Go with an aim in mind

Another big consideration is context. I work in an area of high social deprivation, but that's not to say that visiting an independent school wouldn't be a useful exercise. I can't reduce my class size to eight, and I might not be able to provide the kind of cultural experiences they can, but pedagogically, there's still much I can glean about the teaching taking place there.

The real value of the exercise is to see how varying approaches can be applied within your context. It's rare for a model to be directly translatable between contexts, however similar those schools may appear, since there are simply too many variables involved.

You aren't going to carry out a school visit and promptly change the world upon returning to your own

school. It can be motivating and inspiring to see how things are done differently, but we must accept that one visit is just the start.

Approach any school visit with a clear mission objective in mind. Simply turning up there in the hope of seeing something, anything, that will help you and your colleagues or students is a risky strategy, so consider what you want to get out of the visit.

This might sound obvious, but setting out your end goal at the start will help you stay laser focused on one, or several aspects of the school you're visiting. We know how busy and chaotic schools can be; by heading there with some simple goals in mind, you can minimise the white noise and make sure you come away with something genuinely useful.

Be sure to liaise with staff before you go. You want to talk to the right people about the right things. If you're going with a subject focus, narrow it down to a specific





Key Stage and make sure that Key Stage is being taught when you're there. Similarly, if you're hoping to look at how a topic is being taught, make sure it's actually timetabled.

When it comes to behavioural approaches and other variable focuses, you can't really account for whether you'll see more or less of these in action, but you can still ensure that the staff there will be willing to immerse you into how the school addresses those areas.

## ***"The real value of the exercise is to see how varying approaches can be applied within your context"***

### **Go with realistic expectations**

School visits are brilliant for helping you to build and reflect on what you do in your school, but can also be great opportunities for establishing wider collaborative networks with others outside of your immediate bubble. They can highly effective motivators and catalysts for

overcoming acute and persistent issues in your own context, but the visit itself won't necessarily solve the issue.

In all likelihood, you'll need to spend some time reflecting on, and then putting into action what you've seen, in a way that actually enables some sort of impact to be had. Yes, there may be some techniques and strategies you can start using straight away – but go in with a set of realistic expectations.

View any visits to other schools not as solutions in themselves, but as a part of a map pointing to where the solution you're seeking might lie.

### **Don't be an observer**

To make your visit truly worthwhile, be proactive. Talk to staff, talk to students, ask questions, look at students' work, books and data. Take it all in.

This can be overwhelming, but you need to get a feel for the approaches, styles and most importantly, impact of the teaching and learning you encounter during the visit in order to accurately judge if, how and when you might be able to apply similar (or indeed different) things yourself.

Simply listening to a curriculum lead drone on about how they structure their topics might seem helpful on the surface, but in reality, actually seeing how that curriculum is delivered, and has been delivered, will be much more valuable.

Interacting with students can also be massively helpful.

Canvassing their views and opinions will give you a useful way of examining alternative approaches

through an informative lens. Of course, I happen to think that the way my department teaches English is the best way, because that's how I've instructed them to do it – but do the kids that I teach share that view? Ask them!

Whether you're able to gain genuine insight into how well things are working, and crucially, how those approaches might be improved upon within your school, will rest on the quality of your interactions during the visit. Simply jotting everything down into a notebook isn't going to be as helpful as actively getting involved.

### **Keep it going**

A one-off visit is helpful. Ongoing communication and two-way dialogues between schools more so. Regular structured peer support is better still. Taking the time to visit other schools can do much to help both parties realise the value that comes from centres working together, so after your visit, keep those communication channels open.

Invite teachers back to your school, and make the most of this newly opened dialogue around teaching. Some of the biggest improvements made within departments, across whole schools and even trusts will often start with a school visit that later turns out to be a genuine game-changer.



#### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Adam Riches is a senior leader for teaching and learning and author of the book *Teach Smarter: Efficient and Effective Strategies for Early Career Teachers* (£16.99, Routledge); follow him at @teachmriches





## ASK THE EXPERT

# Support for safeguarders

Vikkey Chaffe explains the origins of The Safeguarding Community and the difference it hopes to make with its new platform for safeguarding professionals

### What is your background and why have you created this community?

I started my teaching career 15 years ago and swiftly became an Advanced Skills Teacher and then a Safeguarding Lead. Five years ago I founded the network Primary School Leaders, due to the need for leaders of every level to connect, regardless of their location.

There was also a necessity for a place where anyone involved in safeguarding could reach out for support and ask questions, regardless of their sector. Thus, The Safeguarding Community was created!

### Why is there such an urgent need for our 'safeguarders' to connect with each other?

Working in safeguarding can involve harrowing cases, demanding situations, challenging conversations and upsetting circumstances, which many Safeguarding Leads must deal with alone. Sometimes you just need to talk to someone, or seek some advice regarding a particular situation you haven't experienced before. All of us sometimes need a safe space where we can support each other, learn from each other, share our experiences and talk to people dealing with the same situations.

### What does this 'safe space' look like?

At The Safeguarding Company we have invested in creating a bespoke platform to host our community, rather than rely on an existing social media platform. Doing this will ensure that our community remains secure, and allow us to better meet the needs of our safeguarders. We will look to monitor the community closely, and set out ground rules so that all members feel supported and respected.



### EXPERT PROFILE

**NAME:**  
Vikkey Chaffe

**JOB TITLE:**  
Head of Community Relations

**BEST PART OF MY JOB:**  
I love supporting safeguarding leads, to enable them to safeguard children and young people

### What are some of the Safeguarding Community's key features?

We will have three different rooms for different needs. In the 'Staff Room', everyone can ask broad questions and share resources, just as they would in their real-world equivalent. Our 'International Room' is for sharing any questions that specifically relate to international safeguarding queries. Finally, there's our 'Safe Room' – all posts made in this room will be marked anonymous, for discussions around more delicate issues. Members can ask anything in here that would otherwise be considered too sensitive and confidential for the 'Staff Room'.

### Will members need to pay to join?

We care about the people who keep our children and young people safe. To reflect that, the community is free and open to join for everyone involved in safeguarding. We truly believe that giving safeguarding specialists a safe place in which to communicate will make a significant difference to their wellbeing. We will also use the platform to share legislation and guidance from governing bodies, while also hosting expert-led Q&A sessions. There will be free resources and blogs, but most important of all – the ability to connect with others involved in safeguarding.

## ASK ME ABOUT

**SAFEGUARDING SOLUTIONS** - We provide a range of safeguarding solutions to help you with recording and managing safeguarding concerns, safer recruitment, staff allegations and training.

**JOINING THE COMMUNITY** - Join the community and connect with others involved in safeguarding who understand how challenging the role can be

**W:** [thesafeguardingcompany.com](https://thesafeguardingcompany.com) **T:** 0330 6600 757

**E:** [info@thesafeguardingcompany.com](mailto:info@thesafeguardingcompany.com)



# Teacher training as crisis response

At a time of severe teacher retention issues and spiralling recruitment costs, the need for more and better CPD has never been greater, argues **Chris Pope**

**F**or 15 years, the Prince's Teaching Institute has been providing professional development designed to feed teachers' love of, and expertise in, their subjects. In that time, countless teachers have told me that they only remained in teaching thanks to the lifeline we provided them with.

Right now, for example, I know of two new teachers currently taking our New Teacher Subject Days courses who were previously so disenchanted with the prescriptive teaching regimes at their schools that they were on the verge of quitting the profession. They've told us that we're the one thing that's kept them sticking at it.

## Depressing statistics

There are many more like them. Each year, around 42% of our 375 or so new teachers tell us that they've seriously considered leaving the profession, despite being only one or two years in. That figure rises to 63% and upwards when it comes to the 120

subject leaders who attend our annual subject enrichment residentials.

Those statistics make for depressing reading when you consider that these teachers aren't the whingeing or unmotivated type. They're deeply committed to giving their students the best possible start in life, to the point of choosing to give up their weekends in order to attend our courses.

The good news, however, is that we often succeed in convincing such teachers to remain within the profession. Upon completing their training, more than three quarters of teachers tell us that they feel reinvigorated and more excited about teaching their respective subjects, rising to 98% for subject leaders. And more than 60% say that they're less likely to leave the

profession as the result of having attended a PTI course.

## Over and above

We've been collecting similar retention statistics since 2017, but sceptics still tell me that they find our data circumstantial. I was therefore delighted when the Education Policy Institute confirmed our experiences by concluding in its April 2021 report, 'The Effects of High Quality Professional Development on Teachers and Students' (see [bit.ly/ts112-tt1](https://bit.ly/ts112-tt1)) that around 12,000 teachers could be retained in the profession per annum if all teachers were entitled to 35 hours a year of high quality professional development.

Bear in mind that secondary schools are going to require an additional 11,000 secondary teachers by 2024 – over and above the 15,000 to 20,000 teachers who need replacing each year already.

With its recent Wellcome CPD Challenge, the Wellcome Trust identified that teachers upping their professional development to 35 hours a year feel able to teach their subjects more effectively, grow in confidence and experience fewer issues with pupil behaviour and attendance. Those findings are consistent with what teachers have told us themselves.

## The economic case

Economically, the Education Policy Institute has calculated that over 10 years, a £4bn investment in more CPD would yield £61bn in returns – principally from the

increased earning power of children with higher grades. But we wondered whether there might be a more immediate kickback. If 12,000 more teachers remained in the profession, that's 12,000 fewer trainees needing to go through ITT. Would the costs of more professional development outstrip those ITT costs or not?

We commissioned the economists at Pro Bono Economics to look into this for us, and in their recently published 'Learning to Save' report (see [bit.ly/ts112-tt2](https://bit.ly/ts112-tt2)), they conclude that investing in an entitlement of 35 hours CPD a year for all teachers would indeed be cheaper than training up new teachers to fill the gap.

As things stand, a teacher crunch is looming. Our teachers spend around 20 hours a year less on CPD compared to the OECD average. We could almost halve the impending additional teacher supply gap by giving all teachers access more high quality professional development, and doing so would be cheaper for the country. So what are we waiting for?



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Chris Pope is co-Director of the PTI – an education charity providing a wide range of teacher CPD courses focused on the development specialist subject knowledge; for more information, visit [ptieducation.org](https://ptieducation.org) or follow @ptieducation

# TAILORED TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

**Leyla Palmer** of Windsor Academy Trust tells us why instructional coaching may well be the CPD delivery mechanism you've been looking for...

**S**chools across the country are often faced with the difficult challenge of ensuring that their teacher CPD is impactful. But what does impactful CPD look like?

With our long history as a provider of CPD, we've carried out a considerable amount of research in this area to try and answer that age-old question, and better understand what really makes for effective and meaningful CPD.

## Closing the loop

We're well aware of the difficulties school leaders will often grapple with when it comes to CPD. All too often, you'll hear teachers remarking on how regular whole school CPD is often poorly aligned to their subject-specific and individual needs. Most school leaders are conscious that this type of CPD often fails to close the loop in terms of teachers actually going away and implementing what they've 'learnt' in their own classrooms.

Instructional coaching is an approach that aims to address the issues often associated with traditional teacher CPD, and allow for a greater degree of individualised and subject-specific training.

A core principle of instructional coaching is that trained coaches work individually with teachers to develop their expertise. A coach will regularly drop in

on a teacher's lessons for around 10 to 15 minutes, and identify a bite-sized area for improvement. They will then consider what the ideal outcome for that teacher would look like, and identify this as the teacher's 'target performance'.

Through a subsequent conversation between coach and teacher, the teacher will then move from their current performance to the target

teachers right up to highly experienced practitioners, can benefit from this form of coaching. What's important to note, however, is the approach the coach adopts will be specifically tailored to the skill level, experience and existing expertise of each respective teacher.

Generally speaking, coaches are more likely to adopt a more facilitative approach when working

and leaders' thinking around how this might be achieved.

Having engaged with a great deal of research around instructional coaching from Dr Sam Sims and Steve Farndon, and having seen Jon Hutchinson (director of training and development at the Reach Foundation) present a talk on the topic during a Future Leaders conference, I wanted to explore how we might introduce instructional coaching at my school. This led me to launch a pilot programme, which saw us share the vision and research around the initiative with other senior and middle leaders in order to gain buy-in.

The next step involved identifying and training a team of teachers to become expert coaches, as well as finding solutions to various practical and logistical complexities. Where would we find the time to do this? What ongoing support could I provide the coaches with, and what resources would we need? Those were just some of the questions that needed addressing prior to the pilot's launch.

## 'Cringey, but vital'

In common with many of the coaches who took part in the pilot, I personally found the approach's deliberate practice aspect to be the most challenging. My first attempt at acting out a suggested strategy with a coachee ended up feeling

## "Trained coaches work individually with teachers to develop their expertise"

performance by practising the identified classroom strategy, with support and direction from the coach, in a process referred to as 'deliberate practice'.

This allows teachers to close the knowing/doing gap, enabling them to overcome existing ingrained habits and adopt new behaviours, thus closing the loop between theory and implementation.

## Productive discussions

Instructional coaching seeks to impart contextual and pedagogical skills and knowledge to those teachers being coached based on where they're currently at, rather than assuming a one-size fits-all model – as is so frequently the case with generic, whole school CPD approaches.

Everyone, from trainee

with experienced practitioners. With junior and relatively inexperienced teachers, a more directive-based approach will be more effective.

Allowing the resulting coaching conversations to fall somewhere between the two ends of this spectrum allows for input from teachers and more productive discussions. Teachers thus retain opportunities to demonstrate autonomy and creativity, while coaches acknowledge and respect that teachers know their students and understand their specific classroom context.

## Getting started

I was looking for an approach that could drive forward our teacher performance, while transforming our teachers'





really awkward at first. That said, we have since received positive feedback on our instructional coaching pilot programme from the coaches and teachers involved, and observed a noticeable impact on teacher effectiveness in lessons.

This prompted us to scale up our instructional coaching approach from being simply school-wide, to one encompassing the entirety of our school trust. At the time of writing, I've just completed our first five months of implementation.

There were numerous considerations to make when doing this. One priority was to be aware of individual school contexts. For example, larger schools tend to require a staggered, term-by-term approach to one-to-one coaching, where weekly one-to-one sessions usually aren't possible due to the sheer volume of coaches required.

Whole school, teacher deliberate practice was then built into staff meeting time, further developing the coaching culture. We also

needed to ensure that we effectively trained our teams of coaches in each school before implementation.

To assist with the latter, we enlisted the support of Jon Hutchinson, who delivered three bespoke

coaching training sessions for our coaches during the first term of implementation.

As one coach put it, "The training on identifying action steps with the highest leverage has really helped me to focus on targets that really move practice forward.

"Deliberate practice is cringey, but it is vital. We are now comfortable with it, and can see how it prepares us to do it for real. It means that we can approach different actions in the classroom with confidence."

### No silver bullet

School leaders leading the charge on this alternate approach to CPD across our schools

have had to ensure their coaching pairings are well thought out. It's critical that these are built upon trusting relationships, where teachers feel safe to practice with their coach, without fear of judgement or any negative repercussions. We've further found that pairing coaches with teachers who share their subject specialisms has allowed for greater subject specificity in the ensuing coaching conversations.

There's no silver bullet for the complexities associated with teacher CPD, and I would stress that instructional coaching is definitely no 'quick fix', since it involves different challenges of its own. To ensure it has a fighting chance of being effective, schools have to allocate sufficient time for the implementation process, and ultimately decide for themselves which elements of their prior CPD approach have to go in order for the new method to be successful.

Looking ahead, our next steps will involve refining our approaches to instructional coaching, and utilising feedback to inform our future practice. We're also in the process of designing a coaching programme for our professional services teams, and have high hopes for the impact this will subsequently have across our family of schools.



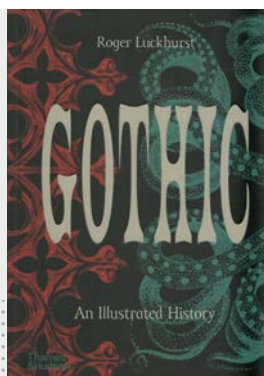
#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Leyla Palmer is head of professional learning and talent at Windsor Academy Trust; to find out more, visit [windsoracademytrust.org.uk](http://windsoracademytrust.org.uk) or follow @WinAcadTrust



# Off the Shelves

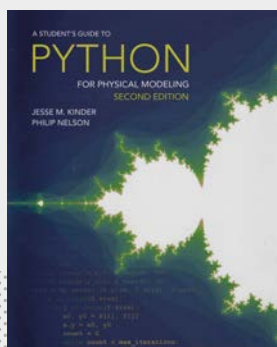
Brilliant titles for you and your students to explore



**Gothic: An Illustrated History**  
(Roger Luckhurst, Thames & Hudson, Wiley, £25)

The English Programme of Study provides plenty of scope for reading a wide variety of literature, and if you're interested in covering the area of Gothic stories, then this book is a must-have. Luckhurst guides readers through four broad aspects of the Gothic: 'architecture', 'the land', 'points of the compass' and 'monsters'. Within those sit a number of subcategories, including 'the labyrinth', 'the village' and even 'the cosmos'. The book's scope is impressive, extending out to a number of iconic films, the writing is beautiful and the illustrations lavish. While it could be argued that the discussion is more broad than it is deep, teachers will still find much in here that warrants further investigation by your students. A delightfully comprehensive resource.

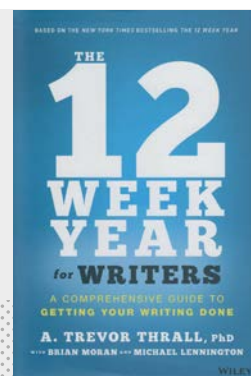
Reviewed by Terry Freedman



**A Student's Guide to Python for Physical Modelling**  
(Jesse M. Kinder and Philip Nelson, Princeton University Press, £20)

This book begins with explanations of several computer programming concepts, touching on algorithms and algorithmic thinking. The explanations given are very clear, and presented with the aid of coloured boxes and text. The text points to examples of code and data sets that are available separately online, though if you want to gain access to the cited 'Instructor Resources' you'll need to apply for them via an online form. The book's chief concern is how Python can be used for manipulating and plotting large datasets, dealing with image 'noise' and other advanced topics. It would perhaps be overkill to keep a copy to hand for those KS3 computing lessons, but it may well prove to be a useful resource and reliable companion for those overseeing GCSE classes and sixth form teachers.

Reviewed by Terry Freedman



**The 12-Week Year for Writers**  
(A. Trevor Thrall, Wiley, £19.99)

English teachers working at KS3 and KS4 will find plenty of useful material between the covers of *The 12-Week Year for Writers*. Despite being principally aimed at people who actually write for a living, rather than for use in schools, it actually contains a great deal of useful wisdom that students would benefit from being exposed to. Not just the obvious stuff – like advice on deciding what to write about, planning techniques and working to deadlines – but also strategies for actually getting the writing done, such as practical suggestions on how to break down any 'big goals' into smaller, much more manageable ones, along with tips on how to harness the power of scorecards. A great read, especially for any teachers about to embark on an extended writing project.

Reviewed by Terry Freedman



## ON THE RADAR

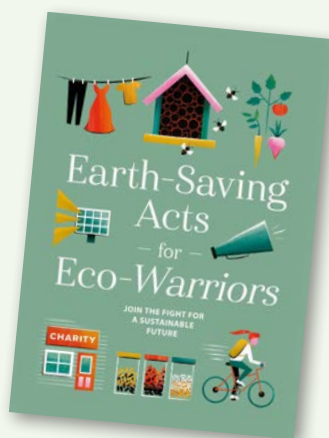
A friendly explainer and 'how to' guide aimed at aspiring environmental campaigners

### Earth-Saving Acts for Eco-Warriors

(Ammonite Press, £12.99)

The 'manual for school-age activists' genre is becoming an increasingly crowded one. Often written by seasoned campaigners, educators or artists, they'll typically combine a potted history of a specific cause with fun, engaging and responsible calls to action, naturally stopping short of anything that could be construed as incitement to actual law-breaking.

*Earth-Saving Acts for Eco-Warriors* doesn't stray too far from this template. Over a series of easy to digest, self-contained mini essays, the book gives readers a whistle-stop tour of the climate crisis and its social and political implications, before serving up a wealth of ideas and practical suggestions for leading a greener, more sustainable lifestyle and communicating the benefits of that to others. The passages extolling the virtues of cycling, vegetarianism and gardening are perhaps to be expected, but they sit alongside commentary on an impressive range of hot-button contemporary issues, ranging from palm oil and microfibres, to eco-anxiety, mindfulness and disinformation.



## Meet the author

**AOIFE DOOLEY**



Credit: Ruth Medley

### How did the idea for *Frankie's World* first come about?

At the age of 27 I found out I was on the autism spectrum – up until that point, I'd had no idea. Having spent the last few years processing that information, I really wanted to do something for kids like me, who would sometimes read books but never see any characters who were like them.

### Has your diagnosis caused you to reflect on your childhood memories and perceive them differently than before?

Absolutely – I think that's something a lot of people go through when they first find out. There's a lot of, 'Oh, that makes sense, that's why I did that', and 'That's why I behaved that way.' It can also be quite sad sometimes, because you look back and see different reasons for why you might have been bullied. After feeling so unsure of yourself for so long, you finally get this information that causes a lot of things to suddenly make sense.

### Did you draw on inspiration from any other artistic influences or specific works when creating the book?

Not really – the main thing that influenced how the book looks is that I didn't like reading when I was a kid, and grew up thinking that I hated reading. I actually don't – I just never had the chance to read books I really enjoyed. I deliberately chose the format for *Frankie's World* to give children today, who are similar to how I was then, something that's easy for them to read. And it seems to be working – I've had messages from parents telling me that their kids aren't especially fond of reading, but are really interested in my book.

### How much of your own past is in *Frankie's story*?

There's a good chunk of stuff in there based on my own life. My mother was similar to Frankie's in that she had a heart condition. She passed away in 2013, so writing the character was difficult, but it did help me process and come to terms with that. Like Frankie, I also love rock music, used to cover my room with posters and still always seem to say the wrong thing at the wrong time. I spent much more of my time drawing compared to her, but I did have a friend in school who used a wheelchair – that part's true, at least...

## The Teaching Life

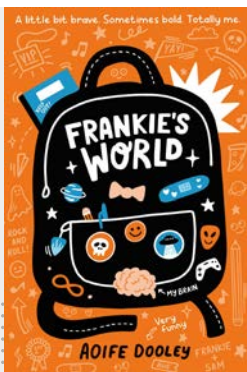
Professional Learning and Career Progression

Kate Jones and Robin Macpherson  
Foreword by Dame Alison Peacock

### The Teaching Life: Professional Learning and Career Progression

(Kate Jones and Robin Macpherson, John Catt, £15)

At a time when many teachers could be forgiven for feeling demoralised, overworked and unhappy, *The Teaching Life* has the potential to serve as a bracing tonic. Jones and Macpherson set themselves the task of showing teachers the many different options and potential avenues available to them in terms of moving forward in their careers, and proceed to explore a wide range of roles and scenarios, offering advice on becoming a more confident ECT near the start, and presenting some tips on applying for senior staff and leadership roles later on. There's even a chapter for those interested in entering the field of international teaching. The book does a good job of mapping out the increasingly varied career paths that have emerged within the profession over recent years, and more importantly, helps to show readers that they've little to lose and lots to gain from pursuing them.



### Frankie's World

(Aoife Dooley, Scholastic, £8.99)

A graphic novel with a difference, *Frankie's World* uses a distinctive two-colour aesthetic to present a sensitive, honest and frequently very funny semi-autobiographical portrayal of how it feels to navigate family, friends and adolescent angst as a teenager with autism. The book's protagonist and narrator is 12-year-old Frankie – a girl self-consciously different to her classmates, who struggles with the social demands of school and possesses a wildly imaginative mind, her inner flights of fancy almost leaping out of Dooley's spare, but vividly-drawn frames. It's not long before we find ourselves accompanying Frankie and her best friend Sam on a classic quest narrative, as they search for the father who seemingly walked out on Frankie and her mother when Frankie was just a baby, and who may hold the key to figuring out why she feels as different as she does...

# The view from THE OTHER SIDE

**Neil Dixon** reflects on his experiences as an external expert for Ofqual, and the positive impact the role has had on his practice

**I** became an external expert for Ofqual chiefly through being in the right place at the right time.

I've been teaching chemistry for 18 years, all of them spent at the same school, albeit in a variety of different roles. A number of years ago, during the early part of my career, I sat on the Royal Society of Chemistry's committee for schools and colleges. When Ofqual asked the RSC to nominate teachers for a comparative study of Level 2 science qualifications – to weigh up, for example, whether a C grade pass at GCSE applied science was equal on a qualitative subjective level to a Level 2 BTEC pass grade – I was among those chosen.

I enjoyed my involvement in the project a great deal, and after chatting to the Ofqual staff who were leading it, was encouraged by them to become one of the regulator's external subject experts.

## Technical demands

I initially approached the role in open-minded way, excited by the opportunity. It was my first experience of regulatory work, and quite a contrast to what I'd been used to. Much of the work I'd done previously was in the service of teacher education and training, consultancy and writing – work that was perhaps a little more creative, in that sense of starting with a blank page.

In contrast, most of the regulatory work I've carried out for Ofqual since then has been quite technical, such as checking that certain criteria have been met, which presents a set of interesting, and quite distinct challenges.

There's huge variety within the work we do, making it difficult to summarise what a 'typical year' for an external expert might consist of. Quite often a year might go by without much involvement on our part. I'm not directly involved in the annual summer awarding process, for example. I play a small role by submitting my opinions as teacher on Ofqual processes from time to time, and have had some input as a subject expert in efforts to clarify expectations around centre-assessed grades, but only as a small part of what was an extremely large and complex process.

## Flexible working

There will sometimes be the occasional mini research project that external experts can help out with, but the majority of the time I've spent with Ofqual has been centred on reforms to exams and accreditation processes. Around the time that science A levels were moved to a practical endorsement, for example, I became involved in a project to

examine whether or not the new endorsement was going to be as good, better or worse than the existing system.

Larger accreditation projects can sometimes see us effectively living in university conference centres for several days, and therefore need to be scheduled into our summer holidays – but I've personally found that whole side of things to be

genuinely fascinating.

The rest of the time you're expected to squeeze your Ofqual work into weekends and evenings, but then teachers are no strangers to working flexibly throughout the week – you just have to manage things carefully and fit it all in.

There are some similarities to working as an examiner, which lots of my colleagues do, but it's my understanding that my Ofqual work precludes me from that. The arrangement





suits me fine, though – I'd rather get to experience assessment from the regulator's point of view, than partake in the drudgery of gazing at a screen for hours on end, marking the same exam questions late into the evenings over the summer term.

### High-profile officials

I'd say the highlight of my Ofqual work to date related to the move away from centre assessment contributing to GCSE grades. When I first started teaching around 2003, coursework formed 25% of GCSE grades, which was then gradually reshaped into – largely similar – controlled assessments.

One of the things I'd pressed for through the RSC and anyone else who would listen was that it wasn't fair for teachers to be assessing in core subjects like science.

I understand the importance of coursework in many subjects, and how important practical work is in my own subject, but at that time, teachers' assessment of students was impoverishing the practical experience they were able to provide.

people in their care.

If you ask a teacher to assess a child whose results fall in a grey area, then if there's anything the teacher can do within the bounds of their professionalism to 'nudge' them over that threshold, that's what they'll do. It's not fair to ask

work I've done with Ofqual, helps you understand how to better support your students as they prepare to take the exams themselves.

It can also be particularly helpful during periods of major change. Back when the GCSE assessments for science were being reformed, I was able to support my colleagues in terms of understanding how, say, written extended response questions would be assessed, and the importance of understanding the new maths demands. Assisting colleagues with understanding what those expectations were definitely made a difference not just to my own classroom practice, but also that of the people I was working with.

I'd recommend applying to become an external expert for any teacher who wants to experience a different side of education. You need to be flexible in terms of capacity, but don't approach the role with the expectation that you'll suddenly be rushed off your feet with demands for your involvement.

It's not equivalent to the predictable workload of becoming an examiner, where you can expect to be doing little in autumn, attending moderation events in late spring and then being deluged with marking in the summer. It would certainly appeal to somebody wanting a little extra variety in their month-to-month workload, and wants to gain some valuable insight into how assessments are carried out and regulated.

## “Being an external expert once resulted in me getting a phone call from the chief regulator”

Teachers and students alike were being made to jump through hoops in order to obtain the evidence needed to push their grades as high as possible. There was a tension in the teachers wanting their students to score as highly as possible, while having the responsibility of accurately measuring the outcomes of the young

teachers to play a dual role of assessor – the analogy I always used was that it's like asking people to referee their own football matches.

Instead, assessments should be done externally, with teachers allowed to teach practicals in the way they wish. The moment you describe something as a 'practical assessment', both teachers and students can't learn anything from it, as the pressure's on to try and meet the criteria.

Having shared those thoughts in a response to a consultation, they ended up getting escalated all the way up to the chief regulator at the time. Being an external expert resulted in me getting a phone call from her, which then led to a meeting with several very high-profile officials who ultimately agreed with me on the need for robust exams and assessments that could put students on a level playing field, regardless of their teachers' ability and capacity to support them.

### Inside information

The inside information you get from being an examiner, or from the



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Neil Dixon is a chemistry teacher and deputy head of year

# BECOME AN OCR EXAMINER

Join our team of  
valued Assessors

Mark A Level and GCSE exams in:

**Physics, Chemistry,  
Computing and  
Geography**

- Build confidence supporting your students with assessment
- Enhance your subject knowledge
- Great for your Professional Development



**JOIN OUR TEAM:** [ocr.org.uk/assessor](https://ocr.org.uk/assessor)

**OCR**  
Oxford Cambridge and RSA

## RIBA National Schools Programme

Every year the Royal Institute of British Architects offers a free and national schools programme for all key stages enabling teachers, children and young people to;

- Learn about architecture and the built environment by working with professional architects
- Explore a range of curriculum subjects through creative and practical activities in school and at 66 Portland Place, London
- Develop critical thinking, teamwork and design skills

To find out more and to take part visit [architecture.com/schools](https://architecture.com/schools)



\*Don't miss RIBA's brand-new film for Key Stage 3 and 4 pupils exploring architecture and climate change



Brampton Manor in school workshop © Luce Oliver

**RIBA**   
Architecture.com



# “Guò nián hǎo!”

**Abid Butt** explains how Lyndon School sought to put its inclusion principles into practice when marking Chinese New Year...

**H**ere at Lyndon School in Solihull, late January and early February saw us immersed in organising celebrations for Chinese New Year. To see in the Year of the Tiger we wanted to do something really big, having had a significant cohort of new students from Hong Kong join us last September.

We were delighted to welcome the children of around 30 Cantonese families to our school, since we know that our school is strengthened through the diversity of its student and staff body. I believe that having students from a wide variety of cultures makes our school richer,

and imparts to our young people the importance of listening to others and demonstrating respect for different views.

## Justifiable anxieties

I was aware, however, that these new joiners must be nervous. It's difficult enough moving schools as a child, but starting a whole new life in a different country at the same time is something else entirely! I wanted to ensure that they felt as welcomed and as comfortable as possible, and that the school lived up to its Inclusion Quality Mark – Centre of Excellence accreditation.

The first step I took was to set up a working group with the new students to

discuss what we could do to celebrate Chinese New Year when it came around. As the most significant special event on their calendar, it seemed only fitting that we try to mark it with the sense of occasion it deserved.

Making this initial effort went down well with their parents, who had justifiable anxieties of their own as to how their children would take to their new school and surroundings. I've always felt that actions speak louder than words. While I'd already pressed upon these parents the extent to which Lyndon prizes its inclusive ethos and champions different cultures, I know that sadly, people can sometimes spend more time talking about such things than actually putting them into practice.

## Bridging cultures

We ended up with a diary full of events for the first week of February, to coincide with the main Chinese New Year celebrations. I wanted to make sure there was a striking visual demonstration befitting one of the world's biggest holidays, so we went ahead and decorated the school with prominent banners commemorating the Year of the Tiger.

We then held assemblies focusing on the topic of Chinese New Year, so that all students in the school could understand

its history and cultural significance, followed by further discussions that took place during tutor periods. I was also keen to incorporate a language element, so we made an effort to teach the students some basic Cantonese, including how to say 'Happy New Year' to the new joiners.

We all know that nothing bridges different cultures like food, so to that end, the Cantonese students worked closely with our canteen staff to develop a menu based on the special dishes traditionally served during Chinese New Year festivities. A selection of these foods were offered throughout the week, and students were set the task of learning how to make them in their food technology classes.

I hope our efforts at planning a series of Chinese New Year activities and then experiencing them together showed our new joiners us that they truly have a place here at Lyndon. I would like them to feel that we have embraced them and their culture, since I know that what they have shared with us already has only made our school richer.



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Abid Butt is principal of Lyndon School, part of the Birmingham-based Summit Learning Trust which includes four primary and three secondary schools and a sixth form college in Solihull; for more information, visit [summitlearningtrust.org.uk](http://summitlearningtrust.org.uk) or follow @Summit\_LT



# Marking GETTING YOU DOWN?

**Bhamika Bhudia** offers some suggestions for tackling those marking demands in a smarter, more streamlined way...

**H**aunting every practitioner is the spectre of unmarked books, incomplete assessments and ungraded homework tasks. No matter how organised you are, you know that such tasks will never be fully 'finished'.

With so much required of practitioners in their day-to-day teaching, it's thus inevitable that book scrutinies and surprise assessment-focused learning walks will often cause resentment. Unmarked books leave us open to criticism and the feeling that we aren't doing our jobs adequately – despite investing countless hours in planning, contacting homes, emails, training, and many other teaching and learning responsibilities.

What gets lost amid all this, however, is the actual purpose of marking. It's not there to make books look pretty, prove we're doing our jobs and let us tick the right boxes. Marking student work is an incredibly valuable tool for facilitating long-term progress.

As well as helping teachers better understand their students' needs, it helps students themselves better understand how to move forward and improve the quality of their work.

The need for marking isn't going away anytime soon – and if it helps students progress, nor should it. But we can manage our marking

in a more time-efficient and meaningful way.

## The planning process

'Ticking and flicking' has long been recognised as an inefficient use of teacher time, since it doesn't allow students to act on the feedback they receive or understand how to improve. No matter how beautiful those books look, if they can't guide students forward, it's just precious time wasted.

Seen in this light, marking because you

**“Marking isn't just there to make books look pretty or prove we're doing our jobs”**

haven't looked at student books for a while can be fruitless. Unless it's in line with your scheme of learning's objectives or students' long-term goals, you run the risk of investing time for no real benefit.

Additionally, with exam classes now undergoing more assessment and data entry points, your remaining classes – particularly at KS3 – can end up at the bottom of your priority list. Chances are, they'll be well-represented among those books that go for weeks without being looked at, the window for valuable feedback opportunities having long since closed.

## A simple grid

One labour-efficient way of tackling this is to decide what should be marked alongside your lesson planning. This needn't require any major adjustments to what most teachers already do, nor will it entail any huge organisational upsets.

All it takes a simple grid containing all classes taught. These can be filled in during the lesson planning process, highlighting marking opportunities that will

same things out over and over again in different students' books.

What we need are time-saving strategies that can be relied upon once common strengths and errors have been properly identified.

## Marking codes

For subjects requiring the same set of skills to be demonstrated across the board, coded marksheets can be stuck in student books.

Consider the lengthy 'WWW: You have started to explain your argument' and 'EBI: Comment on the effects of writer's methods' – both can be shortened to 'WWW: Good R6' and 'EBI: R10'. Not only will this save time in writing your feedback, it also makes thinking of appropriate feedback that much easier, since there are always go-to examples to hand.

By keeping marksheets inside students' books, you can be sure that they'll all have an accessible success criteria to refer to when completing future work. These marksheets can also provide valuable guidance for students on how to act on the feedback they receive, rather than simply identifying strengths and weaknesses.

## Whole class feedback

Whole class feedback is an excellent strategy for addressing misconceptions in whole groups and informing future planning.



Give students sheets containing overall successes and areas for development, alongside guidance on which are applicable to individual students, a section for student praise and space for a model example.

This is a huge time-saver. It can help you assess the progress of the class as a whole, while also being something students can refer back to when developing future work. It can even be used to configure seating plans, when considering how different student strengths can complement each other.

### Spreadsheets

Another approach that minimises rewriting is to use formulated spreadsheets. Teachers can quantify common strengths and weaknesses, and assign individual students specific targets by entering the relevant numbers. The formula will then generate the feedback, saving you the time of continually rewriting it.

These can vary in complexity. For example, you can go with a comparatively simple 'What Went Well' and 'Even Better If' setup, where inputs can be entered into a table that's then printed off and cut into small strips that are handed out to students.

At the other end of the scale are sophisticated spreadsheets capable of automatically submitting student targets, indicating how close students are to reaching them and highlighting strengths and weaknesses within students' work. These can be used to create assessment feedback sheets for printing out and sticking into students'

books, making student feedback consistent and quick, while demanding minimal writing on the part of teachers.

### Taking it forward

Yet even with the aid of these and other time-saving processes, marking tasks still entail considerable time investment – so make sure it's time well spent.

Marking should never involve more input than output. Creating processes where students are able to use prior feedback to develop future work will aid their long-term progress – particularly when their marked work has been carefully considered, rather than decided on a whim.

Simple and resource-light strategies in this vein can include having students look through books and answering the prompt, '*My last EBI was...*' before an assessment, or as they plan for it. If you're using coded marksheets, get students to add stars as they receive new EBIs to see if they're continuing to make the

## SEE IT IN PRACTICE

### Marksheet

A sample marksheet designed to facilitate the marking process and help guide students towards meeting success criteria in English can be downloaded from [bit.ly/TS112-marking1](http://bit.ly/TS112-marking1)

### Whole class feedback form

A whole class feedback form pertaining to a Y11 lesson on Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, compiling WWW/EBI, praise criteria, AAF tasks and an illustrative 'Wow' moment can be downloaded from [bit.ly/TS112-marking2](http://bit.ly/TS112-marking2)

### Criteria / Marking / Printing

An editable Y10 Assessment spreadsheet with embedded instructions and accompanying 'marking' and 'printing' sheets can be downloaded from [bit.ly/TS112-marking3](http://bit.ly/TS112-marking3)



same mistakes. They can apply this guidance to their work independently.

You could also arrange for blank grids to be stuck in books, into which students copy out feedback to help track their progress. Over time, this will provide them with an easily-accessible sheet of prior teacher feedback they can use to remind themselves of previous errors, and thus hopefully avoid making them again. Wherever possible, feedback should carry long-term impact and ultimately

build more independent learners.

Marking will always be a difficult part of the job, but with the right systems and strategies, you can save yourself countless hours and stress. Above all, see it for what it actually is – a process that helps teachers and students progress – rather than busywork to satisfy the higher-ups.



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Bhamika Bhudia is a teacher of English and lead teacher in a mixed comprehensive secondary school in London; follow her at @MissMika\_Eng.



# HELP US LIGHT UP THE DARKNESS

for every critically ill child on

# WORLD WISH DAY®

## 2022

**Mikey, 9**  
undiagnosed  
condition

On **Friday 29th April 2022** we'll be bringing the country together to grant wishes for children living with a critical condition.

**Sign up to hear how your school could be involved**, or for more information on fundraising opportunities across the year email [fundraising@makeawish.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@makeawish.org.uk)



Make-A-Wish Foundation® UK  
Charity Registration Numbers:  
England and Wales 295672  
Scotland SCO37479

**Make-A-Wish®**  
UNITED KINGDOM



# “A change in the law would be popular”

**Robert Cann** makes the case for why schools' collective worship obligations need replacing with inclusive assemblies

**D**raft legislation intended to reform school assemblies law is currently making progress through Parliament. At Humanists UK, we believe assemblies are best when they bring school communities together by focusing on the values that unite everyone – regardless of their religion or belief.

To this end, we've been supporting Baroness Burt and Crispin Blunt MP, sponsors of The Education (Assemblies) Bill in the Lords and Commons respectively.

## 'Broadly Christian'

Unearthing ancient laws that remain on the statute book long after their time can be an entertaining use of one's time. Despite the old wives' tale, it definitely *is* illegal to shoot a Welshman with a longbow within Chester's city walls (or indeed anywhere else), but you definitely *must not* enter the Houses of Parliament wearing a suit of armour, or you'll be in breach of the Coming Armed to Parliament Act 1313.

There's another outdated law, one dating from 1944, that requires every state school in England – including those without 'religious character' – to hold a daily act of collective religious worship. Where schools are faith schools, this worship must be in line with the faith of the school. Where they're not, it must be 'broadly Christian' in style. This makes the UK the only sovereign state in the world to impose Christian worship



in state schools as standard, which is a remarkable legal anomaly given our increasingly secular times.

Some readers might be rolling their eyes at this point. Your own school may have assemblies less frequently than every day, and perhaps without any sign of collective worship at all. Yet many schools continue to comply with this law, either in whole or in part. A YouGov poll of parents taken last year found that 20% thought their child definitely took part in a daily act of collective worship, with 25% unsure. Fewer than half (47%) said such daily worship definitely did not take place.

Just because a law isn't universally complied with, it doesn't follow that reform is unnecessary. Indeed, the government indicated last year that if it was made aware of English schools breaching the requirement to carry out daily worship, they would be 'investigated' and

'reminded of their duty on this matter'.

In schools where such daily acts do take place, those children who are withdrawn can, at best, be left twiddling their thumbs, and at worst, be ostracised from their peers as the structured school day starts without them. No higher authority than the United Nations has got involved, with the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child having urged the UK to repeal its collective worship laws.

## Inclusive assemblies

It's therefore high time that things were brought up to date, which is where the Education (Assemblies) Bill comes into play. At the time of writing, it's gone through the Lords and is currently awaiting its Second Reading in the Commons. The Bill proposes to remove the collective worship requirement in schools with no religious character.

Instead, those schools will have to hold inclusive assemblies that are suitable for all children, regardless of their religion or belief.

These assemblies could, of course, include religious topics, but would lack the worship element. Collective worship in faith schools would be left alone, though the Bill does specify that children who have been withdrawn from worship in faith schools must be provided with a meaningful educational alternative.

A change in the law would be popular. The aforementioned YouGov poll further found that 60% of parents with school-age children oppose enforcement of the collective worship law, while just 24% are in favour. Parents surveyed in 2019 ranked religious worship last among 13 possible assembly topics, with 29% thinking it appropriate, compared with 76% who opted for 'the environment and nature' and 74% choosing 'equality and non-discrimination'.

The Education (Assemblies) Bill would be both long overdue, and a socially important new law. If you agree with us that inclusive assemblies are the way forward, please contact your own MP and request that they speak up on your behalf in support of the Bill – just leave the suit of armour at home if meeting them in person...

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Robert Cann is education campaigns manager at Humanists UK; for more information, visit [humanists.uk](http://humanists.uk) or follow @humanists\_uk

# Rip it up and START AGAIN

**Jack Cockayne** recalls how he and his colleagues sought to wipe the slate clean and rebuild their school's geography provision from scratch...

**W**hen I first started as a geography teacher at Broadway Academy in Perry Barr, Birmingham, there wasn't much of a curriculum in place. There were some schemes of work, but things had been allowed to become a little ad-hoc.

Upon taking over as head of geography the following year, we took on an ECT – who's still with us now – and I set about overhauling everything. That meant deleting everything we'd had up to that point and starting again completely from scratch. All processes for KS3 and KS4, our CPD approach, the mapping of our curriculum – it all went, leaving us with a clean slate on which to build something new.

## Threshold concepts

Our intention was to return to the very threshold concepts of geography and devise a new overall vision.

For us, those threshold concepts included sustainability, scale and the need to be both critical and analytical.

We spent time looking at wider research around the geography curriculum, including the books of Mark

preventing that from happening.

We ultimately managed to complete all the KS3 and KS4 work that needed to be done in just over a year, though that did admittedly involve a tremendous amount of hard work.

taken our students to a residential on the coast

We're additionally extremely fortunate in that the school actually has its own outdoor education centre, situated at a campsite in Worcester.

It's a plot of land leased by the school that gives us access to a sizeable lake and large safari tents, allowing us to perform fieldwork in relation to, for example, ecology invertebrate surveys and building bug hotels, while also taking part in some cross-curricular activities. The centre allowed us to continue organising outdoor trips upon students' return to school following lockdown, in full accordance with government guidance.

***“We added challenge to our curriculum by introducing elements found on university courses”***

Enser, as well as the work carried out by the Geography Association. With a firm foundation in place, we were then able to map out how each of our topics would fit together and start working through it all. Curriculums can sometimes drift after acquiring various bits and bobs that are added over time – ensuring that solid base was there at the start was our way of

## Filling the gap

One of our key aims was to add challenge to our curriculum by introducing elements found on university courses to KS3 and KS4. We looked at what universities were doing, as well as primary schools, and tried to fill the gap in between, rather than simply teaching what the textbooks told us to.

Geography is a subject that lends itself well to school trips, so we looked to provide the students with numerous opportunities to carry out geographical fieldwork. We brought in equipment for the purpose, and upskilled ourselves in organising and supervising fieldwork activities. Every unit now has a fieldwork element, whether that's measuring the carbon content of trees or monitoring infiltration rates in soil. We've also

## Enter the 'super curriculum'

As we were redeveloping our curriculum, I found myself reading around concept of the 'Super curriculum' – the idea that carefully planned activities can infuse your curriculum and extend it further, rather than simply serving as add-ons.

This helped to inform our planning efforts, in that each unit we teach now includes a competition students can opt to enter, involving some form of engagement outside of school. As a result, we've connected with many external businesses, most recently Tarmac. We've also worked with the design consultancy Arcadis on







activities based around the 2022 Commonwealth Games being held in Birmingham, and sought to provide internship opportunities for students over the summer break.

At other times, we've hosted book Q&As and helped organise a multitude of events for our students, from lectures to online seminars. A charity representative based in Paraguay recently gave a lecture for us via Zoom on the topic of deforestation in the Atlantic Rainforest, for example.

We also produce reading lists for all year groups, populated with books bought in by the library or procured by the department, and share careers advice with our students at different stages, so that within each unit from Y7 to Y13 there are clear steps on how geography can help them access specific jobs and careers.

### A genuine love

Since the start of our development process, the school's exam results have improved dramatically. There's been increased uptake at GCSE, which has in turn made it possible for us to start teaching the school's first A Level geography class since the 1970s.

Our current vision for the department is to provide students with a cutting edge, 21st century knowledge of geography. Our intention is for students to study a 'living curriculum' that we can chop and change as the subject itself evolves. Establishing a strong starting point early on has been really helpful in that respect. Mapping out geography skills across both Key Stages has allowed us to 'slot in' new areas as needed, and highlighted to us that our latest GCSE cohorts are much more able than in previous years, because they've had that clear development.

Our next focus is to look at how we can link the curriculum we've developed to KS1 and KS2 by visiting our feeders and other primary schools. Our hope is that they will eventually be able to provide their pupils with a geography education that connects seamlessly with Broadway's geography curriculum, and hopefully onwards to the universities our students might attend.

When I arrived at the school, geography simply wasn't seen by the students as being important. Yet over time, as they've experienced more intense lessons, been pushed that little bit further and challenged, students are now talking about geography much more, with some

coming to love it as a subject.

Our success criteria is ultimately whether students have enthusiasm for geography, not just good exam results alone. If they can develop a genuine love of learning for the subject, we tend to find that positive exam results will follow, as a result of them wanting to do well.

### DOWNLOAD

Broadway Academy's KS3 geography scheme of work, geographical threshold concepts and knowledge development document from

[bit.ly/ts112-gss](https://bit.ly/ts112-gss)



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jack Cockayne is head of geography at Broadway Academy in Perry Barr, Birmingham

## PROFESSIONALISM AND THE PTI



My first encounter with the PTI came when attending one of its online subject leadership days, during which I was asked questions about our department's curriculum and various activities. This was followed by an interview process, where I was asked to explain our curriculum development process in more detail, and the interviewers seemed quite impressed by what we'd achieved.

Based on the evidence we supplied, we were initially awarded with a PTI mark, and then the following year we were nominated for – and won – the organisation's Bernice McCabe award, given in recognition of inspiring subject teaching, earning the department a trophy and a £5,000 cheque.

As I've further explored what the PTI has to offer, variously watching its online lectures, and attending its CPD days, our department's professional development has noticeably improved. In August 2021 I sat in on a PTI lecture given by the journalist and author Tim Marshall, on the topic of geopolitics and astropolitics – the latter of which is so cutting edge it's barely even entered the realm of academia yet. It's a topic that really enthuses us as teachers, which we can then talk about with our students and hopefully use to enthuse them too.

**For more information, visit [ptieducation.org](https://ptieducation.org) or follow @ptieducation**

# WINNING ISN'T EVERYTHING

**Lee Sullivan** looks at how building meaningful competition into PE lessons can deliver plenty of teachable moments, while also making the subject more enjoyable for everyone...

**E**very Sunday morning, my local park comes alive. The typically empty car park is suddenly packed, and the usually desolate green space full of youngsters with their parents, variously shouting 'Player on!' and 'Shoot!'

Sunday mornings, you see, are when the local football teams play.

During one recent weekend, I stopped for five minutes to watch a men's game and an under 12s game being played on parallel pitches. The men's game was a close contest, whilst the youth game was anything but.

On one side I could see grown men swearing at the referee and squaring up to each other, along with plenty of pushing and shoving. On the other were parents shouting when mistakes were made, frequent laughter at the one-sided scoreline and yet more referee-directed swearing.

I was left wondering whether this was the sort of behaviour we should expect from competing sides in team games. Do young people actually enjoy it? Is there anything we can learn from it, and how might it apply within a physical education setting?

## A polarising topic

Competition plays a major role in sport, which in turn makes up a significant proportion of PE. For some,

competition can induce feelings of excitement and joy, while for others it can incite feelings of dread and anxiety. It's therefore worth considering the attitudes young people seem to have towards competition:

- 45% of girls say 'sport is too competitive' ('Changing the Game for Girls' policy, 2017)
- 30% of girls and 50% of boys indicate that 'playing to win' is one of the reasons they enjoy being active in school (Youth Sport Trust, 2018)
- 64% of young people say they would be 'relieved', 'not

## "We should play to win and behave to educate"

- bothered' or 'happier' if the competition element was removed from sport (Chance to Shine, 2018)
- Only 10% of young people surveyed considered themselves 'sports enthusiasts' (Sport England's 'Under the Skin Research', 2014)

While feelings around competition appear to be mixed, I would argue that competition plays an important role within PE lessons, and that there can be little doubt as to the learning potential it can provide.

True competition entails much more than just rules, points, winning and losing. If harnessed effectively, it can dramatically change a

student's experiences in PE, deliver meaningful learning and help nurture a more positive relationship with physical activity.

## The 4 R's

Our key task should be to make competition *meaningful* for all learners. When planning competition as part of our offering, we should thus observe the 4 R's:

- **Rethink:** consider the 'who' and the environment
- **Reframe:** consider process over outcome
- **Relevancy:** consider

- conceptual learning
- **Role model:** consider behaviour

In his 'Awesome PE in 5 Ways' blended learning course, the teacher educator and former PE teacher Will Swaites asserts that considering the needs of the students we teach is of utmost importance. After all, how can we expect to nurture genuine physical literacy if we don't know what motivates our students to engage in physical activity in the first place?

Recent research suggests that young people value other outcomes in physical competition over simply 'winning'. These include the enjoyment that comes from participation, the development

of skills, time spent with friends and health improvements. That makes it wise to consider the learning you're hoping to deliver through a lesson's competitive elements, and the nature of the students who will be experiencing it. Once you know the 'who', you can better meet their 'why'.

## Reframing the experience

Once we know our students' needs and motivations we can then start to *reframe* their experiences of competition as something more meaningful.

It's common practice in schools to enter into full games and matches using rules applied at the elite level of the relevant sport, but we're not teaching adults or professionals. By adapting the level of competition to better meet our students' needs, we can ensure the activity is more developmentally appropriate.

That involves focusing on *processes*, rather than *outcomes*. Consider the teachable moments that can emerge from competition and deliver powerful learning, while ensuring that any given game remains fun and inclusive, and that everyone has a role to play. Reward positive attitudes and progress over raw performance and ability.

In truth, some of the skills we teach in PE will be wholly irrelevant to certain students. When will most of them ever need to perform a drop shot in



badminton outside of a PE lesson, for example? It's for this reason that some will struggle to see the value in PE, and feel a weak connection with the subject as a result.

In 2021 I published the 'Concept Curriculum' on the PE Scholar website (see [bit.ly/ts112-pe1](https://bit.ly/ts112-pe1)), with the aim of ensuring that the 'education' in PE could remain relevant and meaningful to all students. The PE Concept Curriculum seeks to change the content of PE lessons, so that there's less reliance on skill-specific learning that will be irrelevant and/or unachievable to most students, and instead more emphasis on learning that is inclusive, relevant and meaningful for all students.

Competition provides a perfect platform from which to deliver conceptual learning that's relevant to everyone, covering areas such as resilience, teamwork, communication and leadership, to name but a few. By adopting a conceptual learning approach, competition can assume a deeper level of meaning, particularly for those not naturally motivated to compete.

### Be a role model

That said, the way others behave during competitive

activities is a key factor in whether young people come away with positive or damaging experiences of PE.

PE teachers are expected to encourage and motivate everyone during lessons, but how are the students behaving towards each other? If a pass is misplaced or a point is conceded, do the students encourage each other, or do they publicly call out their peers' mistakes? It's necessary to set the climate and inclusive nature of your PE lessons very carefully. Identify the etiquette, attitudes and best practice you

expect from your students, and model these with the class.

The main role model within a competitive PE lesson will, of course, be the teacher. One might expect PE teachers to always set the best possible examples of behaviour to their students, especially during competitive fixtures with other schools.

I was interested in finding out how many PE teachers had experienced poor behaviour from their counterparts at other schools during such occasions, and therefore set up a Twitter poll. Among those who responded, 90% had

experienced poor behaviour from other teachers at inter-school sports fixtures. Examples included swearing (at both adults and children), cheating, rudeness, anger and even actual fighting.

The thing to remember is that we're not coaches. None of us are elite professionals who stand to receive bonuses for winning. *We are educators.* Yes, it feels nice to win, but it's far more important that we model high standards of sportsmanship, etiquette and respect. We should congratulate effort and reward contribution. We should play to win and behave to educate.

### A Marmite subject

For many young people, PE is a 'Marmite subject' they either love or hate. The experiences we deliver now can have an impact on their engagement with physical activity that spans many years.

Winning is fun for some, but not what motivates most. We must rethink and reframe how we present competition in our lessons. We should ensure the behaviour of *everyone* – including ourselves – is fully in line with this approach.

Competition within a school context should always, first and foremost, serve an educational purpose. It should be used to enhance the learning environment, while encouraging motivation and self-improvement – not destroy it.



#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Lee Sullivan is a head of PE and author of the book *Is PE in Crisis? Leading Meaningful Change in Physical Education* (£18.99, see [amzn.to/3IBCWRS](https://amzn.to/3IBCWRS)); follow him at @Lee\_Sullivan85



# 5 REASONS TO TRY... Studio You

Discover this free video-based PE lesson platform for girls aged 13-16



## 30 SECOND BRIEFING

Created by Hopscotch

Consulting in partnership with Sport England, Studio You is a new digital platform designed to help PE teachers engage the least-active teenage girls with exercise. Part of the This Girl Can campaign, Studio You provides free video-based lessons that help students feel confident exercising, and make being active fun.

### 1 CO-CREATED WITH GIRLS

Teenage girls were consulted throughout the development of Studio You, to ensure the video-based lessons incorporated what they wanted while meeting curriculum requirements. With findings from Sport England's Secondary Teacher Training programme showing that less-active girls are turned off by the competitive nature of many PE lessons, Studio You focuses on self-improvement over competition. The platform also offers new ways of bringing PE to life through alternative activities such as yoga, Pilates and barre – disciplines girls told us they wanted to try.

### 2 DEVELOPED USING TEACHER INSIGHT

Having been developed in close collaboration with PE teachers, Studio You is purposefully built to be flexible, simple to use and easy to incorporate into lesson planning. It supports curriculum delivery, while offering alternative disciplines for you and your students to explore together. "Studio You has given me and my colleagues the confidence to teach girls new disciplines, particularly boxing and dance, that none of us had tried before. Plus, the fact that all the lessons are curriculum linked is fantastic!" – Secondary school PE Teacher, Leeds.



### 3 DEDICATED GUIDANCE

Once registered, you can browse through the available lesson videos, filtering by discipline and duration to find exactly what you're looking for. There are also supporting resources on the dedicated Teacher hub, so that even if you're not a 'yogi' or 'dance enthusiast', you can still access breakdowns of the disciplines and their movements, as well as suggested schemes of work to help your class meet their goals. The Studio You Twitter channel

#### Contact:

[studio-you.co.uk](https://studio-you.co.uk)  
[studioyoupe@hopscotchconsulting.co.uk](mailto:studioyoupe@hopscotchconsulting.co.uk)  
[@Studio\\_YouPE](https://twitter.com/Studio_YouPE)

**studio you**

Powered by  
 THE CAN, SPORT ENGLAND, HOPSCOTCH

(@Studio\_YouPE) is a great starting place for sharing tips and receiving the latest updates.

### SUPPORTED BY EXPERTS

4 All Studio You video lessons have been created alongside the Association for Physical Education and the governing body for group exercise, EMD UK. You can therefore feel confident that you're delivering comprehensive physical education that's in line with the national curriculum. The accompanying educator resources have been created with input from Activity Alliance – a national charity that's a leading voice for disabled people in sport and activity – to provide teaching and technique points, movement modifications and tips on making lessons accessible to all students.

### 5 CHAMPIONS CHOICE

With lack of choice proving to be a key barrier preventing teenage girls from actively engaging in their PE lessons\*, Studio You encourages them to instead have their say on the disciplines and lesson styles they want to participate in. Through the Studio You app, lessons can be shared directly with students, allowing them to take part independently via a mobile or tablet device and focus on self-improvement by building confidence in their strength, stamina and flexibility.

\*Reframing Sport for Teenage Girls: Building Strong Foundations for their Futures' research report by Women in Sport, 2019.

## KEY POINTS

Free video-based PE lessons designed for teenage girls aged 13-16, which seek to engage young people with physical education and improve their confidence

"You don't always want to be outside playing netball; it's refreshing to do something you'll feel better about after doing it." – Teenage student aged 15-16

Supports schools' existing curriculum delivery by offering alternative, non-competitive activities like yoga, dance and barre

"Girls love the fact that they have a say over what disciplines they do in their lessons. Some activities are to be proving real favourites!" – Secondary PE teacher, London



# Steer clear of the rocks

Preventing burnout requires self-care, knowing your limits and being attentive to those who care about you the most, advises **Dr Emma Kell**...

**T**here is arguably no greater sense of wellbeing for teachers than that of travelling home at the end of a Friday with aching bones and a buzzing brain, knowing that our work has changed lives for the better. So we keep giving – and there's always more to give. We could work for 24 hours a day and the to-do list would still never be done.

As a result, we'll often throw ever more time, energy and passion into our work. But if we're not careful, we can find ourselves giving too much. The more exhausted we get, the more stubborn we become. And that's the point where burnout starts to descend.

## Implisions and explosions

Burnout takes its toll and leaves scars. It frightens those who love us the most when we admit to – as one headteacher once did – *'Regularly considering ways of crashing the car on the way to work, just to make it all stop.'*

I've seen too many brilliant, principled and talented people hit rock bottom in the last 23 years. If, as Mary Myatt observes, teachers aren't able to be 'humans first', they risk either imploding, exploding or walking away.

*Implision* is where chronic stress turns inwards, resulting in profound feelings of inadequacy, frustration, rage and self-doubt.

*Explosion* occurs when the pot boils over, causing a teacher to lose control. At the receiving end might be a student, a colleague or a loved one. *Walking away* is, of course, what thousands of our teachers are presently doing each year, perpetuating a retention crisis that's been causing issues for as long as I can remember.

Self-care is therefore essential. We all know – and the evidence backs it up – that when we're happy, we're at our most effective.

## Listen and learn

So, how do we do that? Here's some advice based on my research and experience of working with hundreds of teachers every week as a wellbeing facilitator and coach...

### • Recognise stress signs

During a particularly stressful period in which I'd said yes to far too much, a coach once said to me, *'Your body is screaming at you – why aren't you listening?'* Learn to pick up on signs that you're moving from manageable into dangerous levels of stress. They're different for all of us. You might lose your sense of humour, become tearful, catastrophise, get headaches – once you know them, listen.

### • Name your rocks

Let's imagine you as a boat, with the sea level standing in for your wellbeing and resilience. Your aim is to

keep the water level safely above the rocks ahead, so identify what buoys you – time spent with old friends? A great detective novel? Anticipate those rocks and name them. Your tendency to perfectionism? Your desire to be liked? Fear of the next inspection? Naming them reduces their power.

### • Trust your loved ones

Chances are, those who care about you will spot the signs before you do. It might feel deeply vexing for those late-night email checks to be interrupted, but our loved ones can be wise. So listen to them.

### • Model vulnerability

Teachers can forget that we're all human, make mistakes and get upset at times – and that that's okay. Stop striving for an impossible ideal, because therein lies the road to burnout.

Let's instead model honesty about our struggles, and show how mistakes aren't disasters, and that challenges are great for learning something new.

Whilst few would deny that 'the system' could do with some serious changes for the better, our focus should be on what we can control, and being mindful of where we're placing our limited attention and emotional energy.

It's hard, but it can be done. Indeed it *must*, because our profession needs you – not as a superhero, but as a precious and valuable human being.



#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr Emma Kell is a teacher, coach, wellbeing trainer, governor and writer; for more information, visit [thosethatcan.net](http://thosethatcan.net) or follow @thosethatcan

# 5 REASONS TO TRY... The Big Bang Competition

Help your students harness their creativity and pick up some vital skills in the process via this engaging STEM contest



## 30 SECOND BRIEFING

The Big Bang

Competition is the UK's top STEM competition for young people. It's free and open to all 11 to 19-year-olds studying in the UK. Students can enter a project on their own, or as part of a team before **20 March 2022**.

### 1 SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

Projects for The Big Bang Competition can involve absolutely anything in the field of STEM. From sport and health to the environment, and from computing to design and technology, the options are endless! Whatever your students are interested in, there's room for everyone to get involved and spark a passion for STEM using their unique talents and skills.

### 2 LEARN THE STEM PROCESS

STEM is all about finding the right methods to achieve a goal, but we rarely achieve our desired outcomes on the first try. The Big Bang Competition allows students to experience the science and engineering process. If they don't get the expected results during an initial experiment or test, our judges are keen to see how they changed their method and tried again!

### 3 DEVELOP COMMUNICATION SKILLS

The Big Bang Competition gives students the opportunity to develop their abilities at communicating effectively. Students are encouraged to learn how to talk about their project clearly, so that a range of audiences can understand their work. This is a



valuable skill that they'll utilise when presenting their project, and which will serve them well when pursuing a career in STEM.

### 4 MAKE AN IMPACT

The Competition inspires inquisitive minds to think big, challenge facts, ask questions and devise solutions. The nature of the project work gives students the chance to consider what problems they want to see solved. This in turn allows teachers to ignite their passion for STEM by

#### Contact:

[info@thebigbang.org.uk](mailto:info@thebigbang.org.uk)  
[thebigbang.org.uk](http://thebigbang.org.uk)



getting them to think outside the box. Could their project have a real world application? Could it make a difference within their local community?

### 5 WIN BIG

Last but not least, there are plenty of prizes up for grabs. The Big Bang Competition offers a fantastic opportunity for young people to win amazing prizes in recognition of their hard work. These range from generous cash awards, to prestigious titles that students will never forget. All winners and runners-up will also get opportunities to showcase their work both online and in person at the upcoming Big Bang Fair, which takes place at the NEC Birmingham from 22 to 24 June.

## KEY POINTS

Take part in a UK-wide competition aimed at inspiring curious minds to get creative and igniting a passion for STEM

Receive advice from experts and top tips to assist your project – find out more at [bit.ly/33Try51](http://bit.ly/33Try51)

Be in with the chance to win up to £2,000 and be awarded 'UK Young Scientist of the Year' or 'UK Young Engineer of the Year'

The Competition is open to all young people aged 11 to 19 studying in the UK, and closes for entries on 20 March. To enter, visit [bit.ly/33VTm8](http://bit.ly/33VTm8)





## CLASSROOM VOICES

# “We have to think about how we ‘sell’ politics”

Satire provides an easy ‘in’ when engaging students with the study of politics, says Robin Hardman, but it risks undermining the subject’s most profound lessons

In an era when our politicians sustain panel shows and the meme industry by embroiling themselves in scandals on a near daily basis, it can be tempting to engage teenagers with politics through the medium of satire.

Sharing laughter and despair with our pupils at the depths to which our representatives have lowered themselves and our democracy can take on a cathartic quality, as well as helping to engage them in politics as an academic discipline.

## DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT

But teaching politics isn’t like teaching any other subject. While all teachers have a responsibility to look beyond the narrow requirements of their curriculum and exam specification – formalised in references to fundamental ‘British values’ in inspection frameworks – this task weighs especially heavily in the politics classroom.

That’s because we’re helping to mould not just A Level pupils and future undergraduates, but active, engaged, and well-informed citizens who can enrich our democracy. Alongside guiding success in public exams, that must be our aim.

The Victorian critic John Ruskin famously deplored architectural short-termism with the waspish maxim, *‘When we build, let us think that we build forever.’* Well, when we teach politics, let us think that we teach politics forever.

In practical terms, this means infusing our teaching with opportunities for developing the knowledge and skills fundamental to meaningful democratic engagement – such as criticality

of thought, dexterity of expression and deep, empathetic listening. It also means that we have to think about how we ‘sell’ politics, both to prospective pupils and when explaining to those who have already chosen to study the subject why our lesson content matters.

## A WIDER SIGNIFICANCE

Politics may be by turns amusing and dispiriting, but we do our pupils and the subject itself a disservice if we neglect the wider significance of what we’re teaching. We’re teaching students about power, corruption, trust, policy, inequality, hope, truth, deceit, the histories of different societies and our planet’s future.

If our pupils are to become the active, responsible citizens we want them to be, then they will require an understanding of how these components interact with one another. They will need an awareness of how power can corrupt. They should be mindful of how the past can be appropriated to serve future goals, and be

sensitive to the ways in which deceit can be disguised as the truth.

Rather than protecting our pupils from politics by indulging merely in satire, let’s instead unleash its full impact upon them. Teach students about suffering, and those policies that work compared to those that don’t. Show them how powerful ideas can stimulate change. Impart the instinct to question at every turn. Explain that all opinions should be respected equally, but with the expectation that they should be substantiated with robust evidence.

Organise debates; model attentive listening and mature rebuttals. Encourage writing not just as a mode of assessment, but as a tool for self-expression and the development of reasoned thought. Analyse speechmakers’ intentions while appraising their delivery. *Why is she saying this to him? Why use that word rather than this one? Why even deliver that speech at all?*

In doing so, you’ll soon encounter opportunities for satire – probably many, if our politicians carry on as they have been. You’ll find that your lessons see plenty of laughter and engagement, but also deep and meaningful learning. You’ll observe your pupils developing the capacity to think for themselves, while also becoming adept at interpreting sources, constructing arguments, and defending their own opinions. And most important of all, you’ll hopefully find that one day, in the not-too-distant future, our democracy will have been enriched by your efforts.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Robin Hardman is head of politics at a school in south-west London and a freelance writer and author; his latest book, *The Writing Game*, is available now (£15, John Catt)



# Collins

## UNBEATABLE VALUE GCSE REVISION

**30% OFF  
SCHOOL  
PRICES!**

With exams getting the go ahead for 2022, you can now save an **extra 30%** on our regular school prices – our best value offer ever!\*

### COMPLETE REVISION AND PRACTICE

A revision guide, workbook and full practice paper in one book!

SCHOOL PRICE:

~~£4.99~~

**£3.50**

Collins

**Edexcel GCSE 9-1  
Maths  
Foundation**

*Complete Revision & Practice*

3 books in 1  
*Revision guide, workbook & practice*

with online  
quizzes & video  
solutions\*

Collins

**AQA GCSE 9-1  
Maths Higher**

*Complete Revision & Practice*

with online  
quizzes & video  
solutions

Now includes  
interactive recall  
quizzes, updated  
practice questions  
and worked solution  
videos

### REVISION CARDS

Lots of practice questions for each topic to help you prep for assessments

SCHOOL PRICE:

~~£4.00~~

**£2.80**

Collins

**Edexcel GCSE 9-1  
Maths  
Foundation  
Revision Cards**

10 cards to revise & practise

Collins

**Edexcel  
GCSE 9-1  
\*\*\***

Collins

**AQA GCSE 9-1  
Maths Higher  
Revision Cards**

100 cards to revise & practise

Collins

**AQA GCSE 9-1  
Maths  
Higher  
Revision  
Cards**

100 cards

Order at  
**collins.co.uk**  
using code  
**Revision30**

\*UK schools only. Ends 30.4.2022. Not to be used in conjunction with any other offer.  
Prices shown are VAT exclusive.



# FOCUS ON: STEM

We look at how an innovative engineering project, cross-curricular links and a robust technological infrastructure can help schools deliver important lessons in science, technology, engineering and maths

**How can schools best use their technology and teaching expertise to prepare students for life in tomorrow's world?**

## THE AGENDA:

### 54 MAKE THE CONNECTIONS

COVID-19 presented the education sector with a host of challenges that illustrated just how valuable investment in a school's technical infrastructure can be, says Tammie Proctor

### 57 A STORY OF STEM

There's a rich seam of learning to be found at the point where STEM subjects and literature intersect, says Alison Weatherby

### 58 THE CAR'S THE STAR

Tim Brotherhood explains how an ambitious STEM project involving Scalextric cars was a great success in its day, and is now ripe for a revival, given schools' access to modern edtech...



# Make the CONNECTIONS

COVID-19 presented the education sector with a host of challenges that illustrated just how valuable investment in a school's technical infrastructure can be, says **Tammie Proctor**

**V**irtually all sectors and forms of work have been impacted one way or another by COVID-19, but among the hardest hit has been the education profession. This wasn't just limited to

the UK, course. Reporting by the Turkey-based Anadolu Agency (see [bit.ly/ts112-nw1](https://bit.ly/ts112-nw1)) showed the extent to which educators across Europe were initially caught off-guard and impacted by subsequent events. Approximately 94% of all learners across the continent had to contend with school closures and switching to being homeschooled by their parents – many of whom in turn had to juggle the responsibilities of their day jobs.

As soon become clear during those initial months, most parents were ill-equipped to dedicate the time needed to help schools remotely deliver the thorough education their children required, particularly those working towards GCSEs, BTECs, A-Levels and other crucial assessment stages.

## From static to agile

One of biggest factors in this lack of preparation and subsequent disruption was the situation concerning schools' technology infrastructure. The extent of the impact varied according to the size and resources

of different schools, as you'd expect – but a common thread among those settings that struggled at first was that they'd previously given little thought to remote learning, and thus hadn't invested in the software and hardware necessary to support it.

The onset of the pandemic instantly forced what one could have described as fairly 'static' institutions into becoming agile organisations overnight, but without the necessary infrastructure already in place, putting together a robust remote learning provision on the fly within a matter of days was always going to be very difficult to achieve.

At the time of writing, the longer term issue is that it appears COVID-19 will be with us in one form or





another for some time to come. The successive waves we've seen thus far have left the education sector in a highly vulnerable position with respect to pupil attendance and staffing numbers, leaving open the prospect of pupils once again having to learn remotely en masse.

Solving underlying infrastructure issues will go a long way towards helping the sector deliver a thorough, safe and robust remote learning experience in future, at whatever scale required. Here, then, are the areas schools and academies should be thinking about when assessing their technical infrastructure, and what the benefits of investing in it will be.

### Scalability

While the majority of schools are now at the point where they can provide adequate remote learning solutions for those students that need them, the experiences of the pandemic look set to continue driving demand among educational users for solid and scalable infrastructure solutions.

Tools that were already seeing frequent within schools and elsewhere, such as Microsoft Teams and WebEx, rapidly came under strain, but their owners were quick to introduce extra capacity to deal with the sudden rise in demand.

At this point it's worth highlighting virtual private networks (VPNs), which are used extensively in the business sector but remain less common in schools. A VPN can create a safe, encrypted connection back to the school's network away from the public network, providing greater privacy than users would have from simply connecting via a

secured WiFi hotspot.

Having a VPN in place enables staff, teachers and students to remotely and securely log in to the school's systems, while allowing administrators to control who is able to access what files and tools. This helps to establish a great deal of control, particularly in situations where a student or member of staff may have left a school, but still retain access to its network even years later.

It can also assist with schools' efforts to protect students from harmful online material, alongside whatever content filtering and safeguarding systems

external VPNs, this could potentially cause a firewall to become overloaded – something that few schools are likely to have experienced before.

The million dollar question is whether schools currently possess sufficient online bandwidth and security protection to educate their students remotely at a moment's notice. Following the events of 2020, it seems all but certain that digital education will now play a much larger part in schools' learning provision than ever before, so it's something they need to be prepared for.

However, given the difficulty of predicting what learning provision in schools will even look like in the long term, the government should carefully consider how it can assist these low-income families and children. There is certainly technology available that can help them, which can be deployed rapidly and at low cost.

### Final thoughts

The Delta and Omicron variants have presented schools with huge, logistical challenges, but at the time of writing they remain fully open. The hope is that both the education profession and the country at large won't see a repeat of the situations we faced in 2020 and 2021, but if the pandemic has taught us anything, it's that we simply don't know what lies around the corner – and that it's therefore always best to be prepared.

If schools and academies wish to avoid the worst impacts of a future COVID-19 variant or some other pandemic next time – whenever that might be – they'll stand a much better chance of doing so with a robust technical infrastructure in place.

By implementing technology that's scalable, secure and streamlined, teachers, students and families will be much more able to cope with the complex demands involved in remote learning, and better positioned to ensure it's never faced with such a predicament again.



#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Tammie Proctor is business development manager at the specialist WiFi consultancy Performance Networks; for more information, visit [performancenetworks.co.uk](http://performancenetworks.co.uk) or follow @PerformanceN

## “The onset of the pandemic forced what one could have described as fairly ‘static’ institutions into becoming agile organisations overnight”

they might already be using to keep students safe online.

### Network access control

Network access control (NAC) has already changed the face of higher education in recent years, and now the time may have come to introduce it to schools as well. At its simplest, NAC refers to a system feature that enables very tight control over who is able to enter a network and what resources they have access to.

Without it, the process of monitoring users' network activities can be strenuous for IT teams who are already stretched to their limits. NAC-enabled systems help to streamline this process, providing those teams with much greater visibility when it comes to monitoring how the network is being used and how secure it is.

Again, however, scalability is something to consider. If your school uses multiple

### Future essentials

Another area to consider is secure access. This can relieve a huge burden from teachers' shoulders by allowing them to remotely and securely access their resources and documents wherever they are. This applies to students too, allowing schools to virtually expand their infrastructure offering into peoples' homes.

All it requires is a secure connection – usually established via a software client installed on the remote user's device – without the need for any fiddly adjustments on the part of the user.

That said, low income families are going to need additional support if they're to cope with any further moves towards digital learning. This might involve supplying some families with 4G devices on a temporary break/fix basis, enabling them to make those kinds of secure connections to the school network.





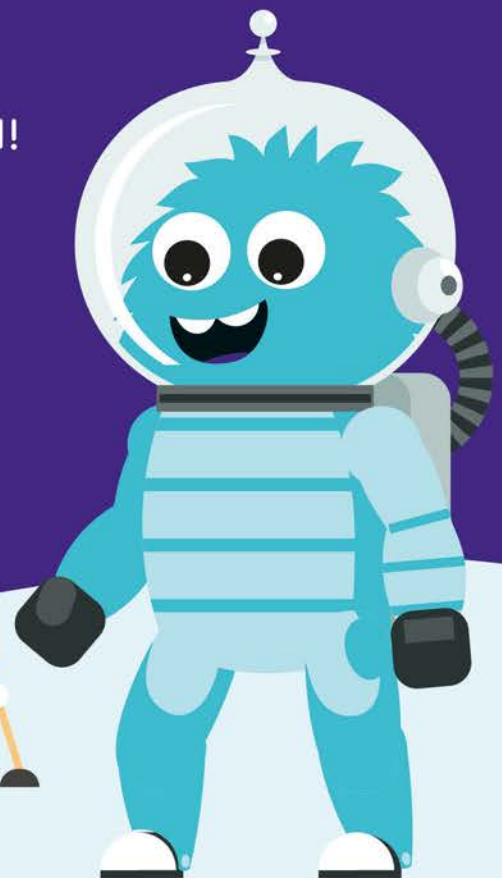
BRITISH  
SCIENCE  
WEEK

11-20  
MARCH 2022

# Download your free British Science Week activity packs now!

British Science Week is taking place in March, but there's still time to get involved!

Download our FREE Secondary activity pack, tailor-made for ages 11-14 which includes activities like 'Everything's connected' and 'GDP gorillas'.



[britishscienceweek.org](https://britishscienceweek.org)

Delivered by



Principal Partners





# A story of STEM

There's a rich seam of learning to be found at the point where STEM subjects and literature intersect, says **Alison Weatherby**

A few years ago, my family and I visited Bletchley Park as tourists, knowing virtually nothing except that it had once hosted Alan Turing and the Enigma code breakers. But after we left, I couldn't stop thinking about the *women* of Bletchley Park.

75% of Bletchley's workforce at the time was made up of young women, who were variously employed as codebreakers, messengers and archivists, as well as some who worked on Turing's Bombe machine. After learning about their stressful work, long shifts and formidable

puzzle-solving prowess, I knew their stories could be inspirational to young girls of today – particularly those interested in science and maths.

## Seizing chances

The young women working at Bletchley were, like the character of Ellen in my book, *The Secrets Act*, recruited from universities and excelled in maths and sciences. Being a girl in the 1940s who loved STEM subjects wasn't easy, or considered the 'norm'. Joining Bletchley was a therefore a tremendous opportunity for these young women, who would otherwise have been

denied holding such positions within the field.

With many of the men those positions were typically reserved for away at war, these girls were able to seize chances they could otherwise have never previously dreamed of. As I read their personal accounts and listened to interviews, it became clear just how mixed their emotions were regarding the war as a result. Many feared for the lives of their brothers, partners or

relatives, of course – but some actually wished for the war to continue, so that they could carry on working in such an exciting place.

Having worked in the tech industry myself since graduating from university, I can sympathise to some extent. It must have been amazing to enter a world where there was suddenly no glass ceiling; where they could love maths, science and technology, and explore them alongside other young women who were just like them.

It's just as important that children, and girls especially, get to develop the confidence to explore STEM subjects now. When writing *The Secrets Act*, I wanted today's kids to identify with others their age who not only loved maths, ciphers, and codes, but could also use their skills to help win a war.

## Interdependent processes

When delivering presentations concerning the book's themes to schools, I'll introduce students to the world of Bletchley Park. I'll highlight those young women, the work they were required to do and its place in our collective history. After a short reading from the book, I'll then talk about the craft of writing, and my approaches to writing and researching. If there's time, we'll do a short, character-based writing exercise, and then we'll play with ciphers.

I'll unpack the difference between codes and ciphers, explain how each are used and work through some examples. The kids love trying their hand at the puzzles portrayed

in the book, and feel a huge sense of accomplishment upon finding solutions alongside their classmates.

And yet, we still see fewer girls taking up STEM subjects, both here and around the world. Using YA books, like *The Secrets Act* and others dealing with STEM subjects can help teachers introduce topics such as ciphers and codes in an engaging way that cuts across history and English.

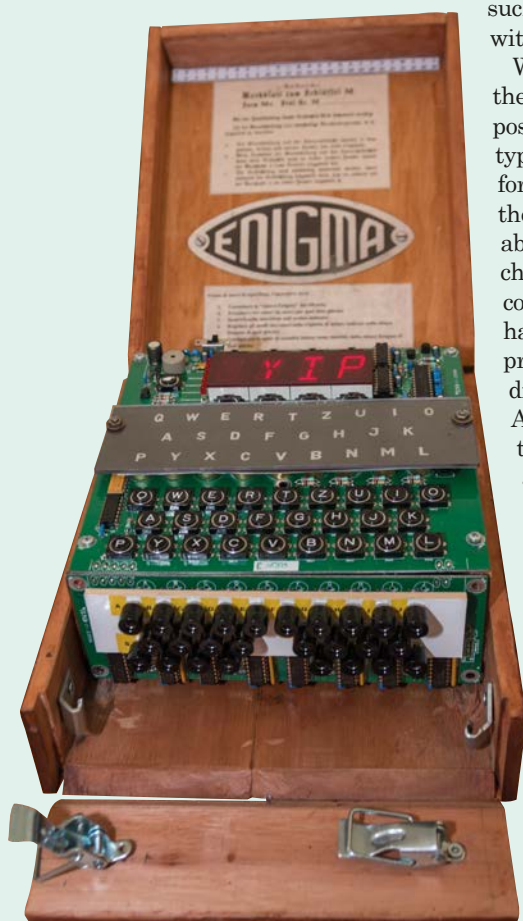
A teacher could potentially use the characters and narrative of *The Secrets Act* to discuss the Enigma code – how it was created and subsequently broken, and how Bletchley Park staff first approached the problem of an 'unbreakable code.'

The interdependent processes adopted within Bletchley help to reinforce the importance of effective teamwork and cooperation, as well as other skills teens need to master before entering the modern workforce. By providing examples of what they can aspire to via historical and contemporary fiction, we're showing them just how powerful STEM knowledge can be – and hopefully driving them to succeed in similar ways themselves.



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Alison Weatherby is a children's author and former Seattle-based professional in the tech industry; *The Secrets Act* is available now in paperback (£7.99, Chicken House)



# The car's THE STAR

**Tim Brotherhood** recalls how an ambitious STEM project involving Scalextric cars was a great success in its day, and is now ripe for a revival, given schools' access to modern edtech...

**A**s the pupils gather in the digital design and manufacturing studio after school, there's a buzz of excitement in the air.

At the last session, they tested out the performance of their Scalextric cars on a tight and twisty test track. After some exciting races, they recorded a wide range of parameters for each car, including the motor position and layout, gearing, key dimensions, lap times, and how each car coped with the track's layout.

Today, the pupils will be using the data captured at that previous session to

inform what will be their first design. At the same time, they'll be needing to ensure throughout that their designs comply with a set of competition rules that they've been studying at home.

## Designing in 3D

Students Tony and Alice open a web browser and log into Onshape (onshape.com) – an online CAD platform that's free to access for schools. Tony proceeds to open the starter assembly from their team's digital workspace, before choosing the preferred motor layout and changing the design's

dimensions according to the measurements of the track, wheelbase, and slot guide position. The assembly updates in seconds, allowing him to then start creating the chassis of what will be their car.

Alice then opens the same assembly on her phone, seeing instantly the design elements Tony has configured, and begins modelling the car body that will enclose the components in a strong, light and streamlined shape.

Elsewhere in the group, Rhi is busy using graphic design software to produce information packs aimed at generating interest among local businesses in sponsoring her team. Once the sponsors are finalised, Rhi will set about designing graphics for team's uniforms, as well as transfers containing logos and other graphics for the car, once its shape and design is finalised.

Nicole and Tom, meanwhile, are planning out the digital manufacture of their car with the aid of a virtual workpiece, which will be machined on a computer-controlled router in order to form the mould they'll use to vacuum-form the car's body.

Having researched the mechanical properties and sustainability characteristics of Acrylonitrile Butadiene Styrene (ABS) and Polylactic Acid (PLA) polymers, Tom now loads PLA into the 3D printer,

ready to purge the previous material. His first print will aim to test that everything's working properly, while also producing standard shapes that his team can use for impact and tensile strength tests.

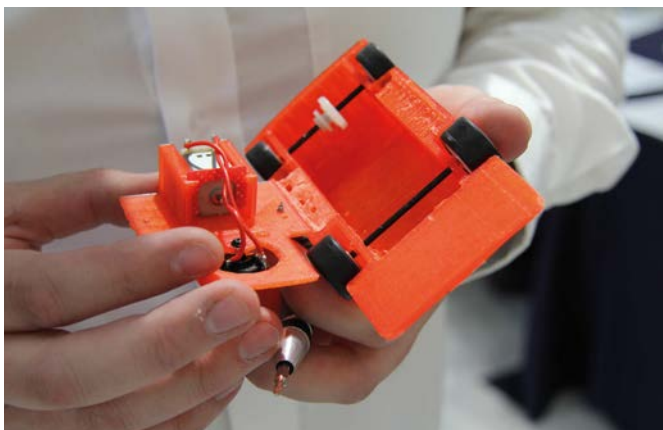
As the weeks go on, the students carefully follow and iterate upon their designs, testing as they go, in an effort to improve their car's performance at each stage.

All the above describes a typical scene in schools that have opted to run the Scalextric4Schools Challenge (S4S) as an after-school STEM club project.

## Applied knowledge

S4S was borne out of a KS3 project originally developed by Edgecliff High School in Staffordshire in partnership with Hornby, commercial owner of the Scalextric brand. Brokered by the 3D modelling software supplier PTC, S4S was first launched in 2009 as both a KS3 project and a competition. Hornby's contribution included giving students access to its designers and engineers, examples of commercial slot car designs and supplying cost-price components and track, as well as various competition circuits and prizes.

Students taking part in S4S got to design, make and race their own slot cars, following the same processes used by



Pupil design for a Scalextric4Schools chassis and body



The winning car of the 2009 competition, designed by an all-girl team from Sandbach High School





Pupils at Bishops' Blue Coat High School in Chester, working on a CAD model

## **“Students followed the same processes used by professional product designers and engineers”**

professional product designers and engineers. The project called on students to demonstrate a scientific understanding of materials, control systems and motion, and apply their knowledge to the development of fast and efficient racing cars. Students also had to apply maths skills to quantify their car's virtual performance and physical motion on the track.

The result of all this testing then guided the students as they sought to improve their designs over a number of iterations – while also having plenty of fun, racing the cars they had created against each other.

I was working for PTC at the time, and helped develop the rules for the competition while also authoring accompanying guides to the software, design and manufacturing processes involved. The S4S Challenge ran for several years, with the finals eventually finding

a home at the Royal Air Force Museum Cosford. Teams from across England and Scotland took part initially, later with schools from Russia also taking part. Spin-off challenges were latterly run in Australia and Dubai.

Over the course of the competition's run we offered two additional challenges. One was a 'Bloodhound Land Speed Record Challenge', which saw pupils attempting to break the speed of sound at 1/32 scale, plus an Eco Challenge centred on designing a new form of efficient transport for people or goods. Over the two years in which the Eco Challenge was offered, however, no schools opted to enter. Sadly, 2014 was the last year in which I worked for PTC, and the final year in which the competition was held in its original form.

Fast forward to late 2021, and a Facebook group set up around the original

challenge initiative suddenly burst into life. By Christmas 2021 it had attracted hundreds of new members – albeit mostly D&T teachers. The original curriculum guides can now be found there, alongside a wealth of new resources submitted by others and some lively discussions. To find it, simply search Facebook for 'Scalextric4Schools'.

### **Virtual testing**

With schools now routinely using externally produced resources to support their lessons, there are fewer barriers than ever for teachers who are keen on helping their students to tackle ambitious design challenges.

As can be seen by our previous success with S4S and the continued interest in the project, schools have it in their power to offer their students rich, yet highly cost effective STEM learning experiences. PTC's

Onshape remains available in a free, browser-based version accessible by schools on almost any digital device, including mobiles. With no software installation required, classes don't even have to run the security gauntlet of their school's computer networks.

Moreover, many more schools now possess the kind of desktop manufacturing equipment – such as CNC routers and 3D printers – needed for projects like S4S to be properly realised. When taught well, D&T can offer pupils highly engaging and memorable STEM experiences – not ones based on single-subject tasks, but far-reaching, multidisciplinary projects that are relevant to their interests and suitably challenging.

Technological advances since the initial run of S4S challenges mean that students can now use analysis software to test the performance of their virtual designs in simulated wind tunnels; explore the heat build-up in small electric motors; use kinematic and dynamic motion simulation to measure gearing, acceleration and cornering; and Finite element analysis to identify areas where chassis material can be removed without compromising strength.

This virtual testing can result in even greater improvements before committing to physical manufacture, further testing and improvement – the very same processes that design and engineering professionals will follow every day.



#### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Tim Brotherhood is a STEM ambassador and former head of D&T, now working as an education programme manager for a global software company





**My Learning**

A hub website hosting FREE learning resources from arts, cultural and heritage organisations

- National curriculum linked
- Real stories, real people, real objects
- No fees, no marketing

Dive into a world of learning resources at **MyLearning.org**

**teach teach co SECONDARY**

**TO PLACE YOUR BRAND IN FRONT OF TEACHERS NATIONWIDE THIS IS WHERE YOU NEED TO BE!**

**for more information email:**  
[ria.bentham@theteachco.com](mailto:ria.bentham@theteachco.com)  
 or call 01206 505928



Canopy & walkway solutions to increase outdoor learning, sport & dining opportunities throughout the year

Contact us to see what we can bring to your school

[info@fordingbridge.co.uk](mailto:info@fordingbridge.co.uk)

01243 55 44 55

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

**FORDINGBRIDGE**  
 inspiring design build



# 5 REASONS TO TRY... STEER Tracking

An innovative assessment tool that measures, tracks and improves students' mental health



## 30 SECOND BRIEFING

STEER Tracking measures, tracks and improves the mental health and self-regulation of students aged between eight and 18. Through a unique and easy to administer online assessment two or 3 times per year, the tool alerts schools to students who may have emerging mental health risks, but are not showing visible signs of vulnerability.

### 1 IDENTIFY 'THE HIDDEN MIDDLE'

Research shows that young people increasingly keep their worries and fears to themselves, making it difficult for teachers to spot vulnerable students. Student voice tools, such as online surveys and chat hubs, only detect a fraction of the students who need schools' support. They fail to spot 'the hidden middle' – those who may be showing early signs of self-harm, bullying, anxiety and unhealthy self-control.

STEER Tracking alerts schools to these students and provides targeted, personalised action plans for each pupil, to help address any identified risks.

### 2 ADDRESS PANDEMIC'S IMPACT

STEER Tracking has measured and supported more than 150,000 students in over 250 schools since 2016, and continued to do so during the pandemic.

It has found that students' ability to self-regulate – that is, to choose an appropriate, measured response to life's challenges – was 40% worse during the third lockdown than before the pandemic.

Schools find STEER Tracking invaluable when it comes to measuring the impact of the pandemic on students' social-emotional health. In one case,



school staff credited it with reducing self-harm by 20%.

### 3 ACCESS A PASTORAL NEEDS DASHBOARD

Whether you are a head, executive principal or CEO, you will want to have a clear and accessible overview of your school or MAT at all times.

Do you have a 'pastoral dashboard' as detailed and evidence-based as your academic dashboard? Do you have sight of the wellbeing and mental health of all the pupils

across your schools? STEER Tracking will provide you with an Executive Summary Report (ESR) that allows you to shape your strategic plan for your pupils.

### 4 QUANTIFY STUDENTS' WELLBEING

Whether you are justifying a grade on your SEF to inspectors, reporting back to governors or sharing your vision with staff, you will never have to rely on merely soft, anecdotal or qualitative evidence of your excellent pastoral care ever again. You can now have sharp, focussed and quantitative evidence to back up your team's instincts. STEER schools have found the ESR Dashboard to be a game changer when it comes to their inspection experience.

### 5 TRUSTED BY MORE THAN 250 SCHOOLS

The company behind STEER Tracking, STEER Education, has the largest continuous database of young people's social and emotional development in the UK, and has advised the DfE and Public Health England on young people's mental health. Its founders, through work at Oxford University and then in doctoral studies, set out to identify early indicators of wellbeing concerns so that schools could proactively safeguard young people's mental health. STEER Tracking has since gone on to help schools measure, track and support students longer than any other UK organisation.

#### Contact:

[steer.education/contact-us](https://steer.education/contact-us)  
[fiona@steer.global](mailto:fiona@steer.global)



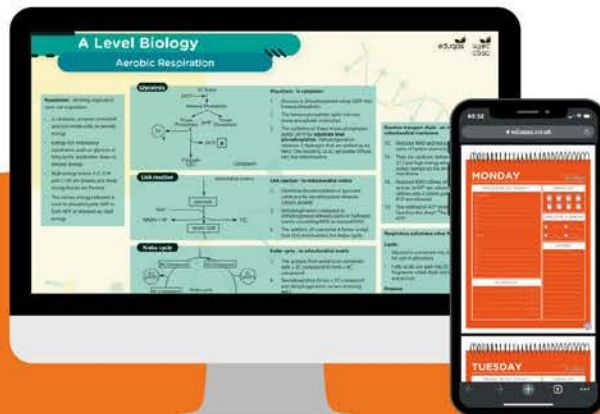
## KEY POINTS

STEER Tracking measures students three times a year, spanning ages eight to 18, producing assessments that provide early mental health risk flags

The tool was launched to support students year-on-year; STEER Tracking has since measured and supported more than 150,000 students across 250 schools

Schools are given a wealth of resources and support materials, including training for all staff that's among the best pastoral CPD your staff will receive

You'll get a dedicated school consultant to support you through launch, analysis and action planning; STEER also provides practical guidance for children's families



# FREE RESOURCES

TO HELP YOUR STUDENTS GET EXAM READY!



Our Teams have been busy creating a wealth of digital resources to support student learning. From NEW revision tools to helpful wellbeing tips, we are here to support your students!

- **Exam Walk Throughs**

Take exam preparation to the next level by walking through past exams with the help of our Subject Officer's audio script!

- **Blended Learning**

These interactive sessions are perfect for students to practice and test their knowledge, using the handy 'Check my Answers' tool.

- **Knowledge Organisers**

Our knowledge organisers are a one-stop shop for aiding revision. Students can find all the information they need for their topic/subject in one digestible document.

Here for you and your students

[www.eduqas.co.uk/StudentSupport](http://www.eduqas.co.uk/StudentSupport)

@eduqasforstudents





# You've been ... served?

**James Saunders** reflects on his recent run-in with a group of protestors possessing a somewhat shaky grasp of legal procedure...

**R**eaders will be aware of how contentious the discourse regarding COVID vaccinations has become in certain quarters. I myself have watched many clips via social media showing amateur justice warriors influenced by a barrage of misinformation and propaganda campaigns, attempting to serve 'legal notices of liability' to all manner of public institutions.

I never thought they'd one day make it to our little village school. But they did.

Their visit coincided with the end of what had been a tough week. We'd been struggling with our highest COVID numbers since the start of the pandemic, when one Friday lunchtime they sauntered in.

I ruminated on the incident over that weekend, and then resolved to do what we've always done. I told our families about it, in a letter I'm reproducing here. What the pandemic has taught me is that a little bit of honesty and authenticity really can bring your community together. And I, for one, am grateful for mine.

## 'Evidential footage'

Dear Family,

I would like to take a moment to share with you what I experienced on Friday afternoon. It was only a matter of time until I had the joy of meeting a group of well-intentioned, well-meaning individuals who handed me my 'personal notice of liability for conducting medical trials on the public'.

On top of everything else the pandemic has thrown at us, this one has really topped things. In came the group, armed with their weapon of choice – the mobile phone camera – to capture evidential footage of me being personally handed my notice.

Make no mistake. I have been served, and there is no denying it. So I am not sure what to do next. The world is full of ideologues, fundamentalists and just plain crackpots. I am still unsure what I was dealing with.

Helpfully, within the paperwork, instructions were included on how to serve such a notice as an amateur.

Unfortunately, step 1 states that the server should write their name and address in the top left-hand corner of the notice on page 1, and date the document underneath the address. They did not do this. As they have been unable to follow simple, basic instructions, I do not hold much weight in the legality of their actions.

## Doing our jobs

The pandemic has a lot to answer for. But is it really to blame for this group's actions? Or could it be the spaces that exist in society that allow the growth of such a multitude of polarised and extreme viewpoints?

My notice was served in a quiet and emotionless manner. In truth, it was a simple exchange of documents that had less gravitas for us than the people doing the serving. This event was clearly planned by people with time to spare. I really do hope that they were not parents.

Unfortunately, we did not have time to do their visit justice, as we were all busy doing our jobs, trying to keep our learners and staff safe. We could really do without such intrusions. I wish I had known the group were coming. I could have informed them that COVID-19 has been quite rampant in the community, and that it was a high risk for them to enter the premises. I hope that they left unscathed.

I am informing you of what took place on Friday because we are all in this together as a community.

To affront the school is to affront us all. This was most likely a response to the national vaccination programme. You know how I feel about this topic.

On a serious note, I would ask for your support. The school asks for your support. You are a fantastic community, and that is what keeps me going each week.

Do not let things like this try to break us apart. Please make your children aware. I have come across stories of groups approaching learners in the streets around schools to hand them propaganda leaflets and generally harass them. We will remain vigilant.

Have a great week.

Yours sincerely,  
James Saunders



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

James Saunders is the headteacher of Honywood School in Coggeshall, Essex

# What's New?

Our pick of the latest solutions and innovations for secondary education

## 1 Scientific explorations

For many students, their teen years are a time when they start to figure out where their interests and aptitudes lie. Encouraging exploration of these interests in school can reap great rewards, and British Science Week – a 10-day celebration of science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) – is a great opportunity for this! The Week is run by the British Science Association, a charity whose work includes encouraging and supporting STEM education. Included in the resources it's offering this year is a Secondary Activity Pack containing activities that encourage out-of-the-box thinking and student-led work.

It also runs a 'Smashing Stereotypes' campaign, designed to show students that scientists can come from any walk of life, amid other work spanning a broad range of topics. Find out more and download your free activity pack from [bsa.sc/British-Science-Week-22-home](https://bsa.sc/British-Science-Week-22-home)



## 3



## Building skills

Develop your students' critical thinking, teamwork, communication and design skills by taking part in the Royal Institute of British Architects' National Schools Programme. This free and inclusive programme enables teachers, children and young people to learn about architecture and the built environment through working with inspiring architecture professionals.

Participants will get to enjoy taking part in practical activities such as 3D model making, master-planning, sketching, technical drawing and digital drawing. Pupils can also explore a range of core curriculum subjects, including science, literacy and numeracy, through the completion of architecture-focused activities in school, online or at RIBA's historic London headquarters and galleries at 66 Portland Place. The activities are designed to suit your schedules and enrich your curriculum – **find out more by visiting [architecture.com/schools](https://architecture.com/schools)**

## Safeguarding connections

The Safeguarding Company is pleased to announce our launch of a brand new online community. Free to access, this community is intended to be a space where safeguarders can connect in order to seek support, share resources and receive advice.

The Safeguarding Community has three different rooms: a 'Staff Room' for day-to-day communications, an 'International Room' and a 'Safe Room', in which anonymous questions can be posted.

We understand that safeguarding can often be a challenging and lonely job. We believe this community will be beneficial to the mental health and wellbeing of those involved with safeguarding, giving them a much-needed safe space in which to connect with others who understand what they're feeling. For more details, visit [thesafeguardingcompany.com](https://thesafeguardingcompany.com)

We have launched! **4**

**The SAFEGUARDING COMMUNITY**

Connecting and Supporting Safeguarders, Everywhere.

[Sign Up Now](#)

## New A level English Literature texts



## 2

## Diverse literature

Interested in more diverse teaching options at AS and A level? We want to ensure students are being exposed to literature from a variety of British authors from different backgrounds, and that they're reading about contemporary issues they can engage with and relate to.

In response to feedback from educators, and from a desire to offer a more representative choice of literature from a more diverse range of voices, we are pleased to introduce four new texts to our Pearson Edexcel AS/A level English Literature qualifications: *Home Fire* by Kamila Shamsie; *Sweat* by Lynn Nottage; *Les Blancs* by Lorraine Hansberry and *The Cutting Season* by Attica Locke. To find out more and register for our free webinar, visit [quals.pearson.com/aleveltexts](https://quals.pearson.com/aleveltexts)

## Mental health monitoring

STEER Tracking measures, tracks and improves the mental health and self-regulation of students aged between eight and 18.

Self-regulation is our ability to choose an appropriate and measured response to life's everyday challenges.

Through an innovative and unique online assessment carried out three times a year, the tool alerts schools to students who may have emerging mental health risks, but are not showing visible signs of vulnerability. It also identifies students who may be hiding safeguarding concerns.

The assessment tool provides schools with guidance tailored to each student, so that they can act early to prevent problems escalating.

Find out more at

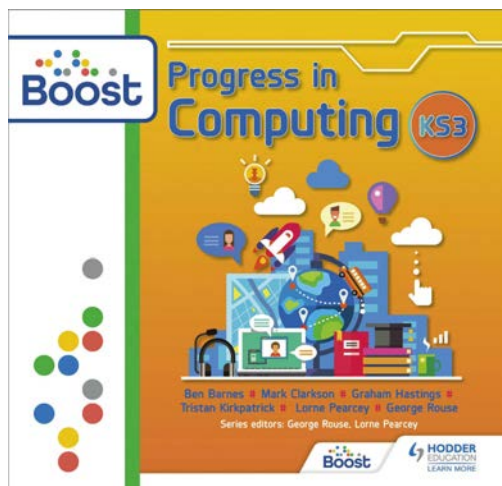
[steer.education/contact-us](https://steer.education/contact-us)



## 5



6



### Digital know-how

Hodder Education has listened to how you teach computing at KS3 and designed a fantastic new toolkit of digital and printed resources around you, containing everything you'll need to confidently deliver the National Curriculum in computing and develop your students' ICT and digital media skills.

Progress in Computing: Key Stage 3 combines ready-to-use lesson plans, presentations, videos and animations, multimedia assets, interactive resources, quizzes and assessments with an expert-written Student Book. Want to find out why it won the 'Technology and STEM' category in the 2021 Teach Secondary Awards? Visit [hoddereducation.co.uk/PiC](http://hoddereducation.co.uk/PiC) to register for a free trial of Progress in Computing: Key Stage 3:

Boost and request

an inspection copy of the Student Book.

For more details, contact [computing@hoddereducation.co.uk](mailto:computing@hoddereducation.co.uk)

### Rich in resources

MyLearning is a hub website that hosts free learning resources created by arts, cultural and heritage organisations from across England. Designed by teachers, for teachers, MyLearning makes it quick and easy to find what you need. Whether you're looking for accurate information, high quality media materials or discussion and activity ideas, we can provide resources that will support you in creating lessons that suit both your teaching style and the needs of your students.

MyLearning covers the whole curriculum, from KS1 through to KS4. We're a non-profit, funded by Arts Council England and have been established 16 years. To find out more, visit [mylearning.org](http://mylearning.org) or drop us a line at [info@mylearning.org](mailto:info@mylearning.org)

7



8

### Rapid sanitisation

LapSafe® offers an extensive range of mobile storage and charging trolleys – the safest available on today's market. Having specialised in safe power management solutions, enabling convenient charging and data transfer for laptops, Chromebooks, tablets and other mobile devices, LapSafe® has now introduced a new item for 2021 in the form of the UV-C sanitiser station.

This innovative product can be added to an existing LapSafe® self-service locker configuration or used as a standalone product. The semi-automated UV-C sanitising unit will sanitise in around 15 to 20 seconds, deactivating 99% of bacteria and some viruses exposed to its high-intensity UV-C light. To find out more, contact [sales@lapsafe.com](mailto:sales@lapsafe.com) or visit [LapSafe.com](http://LapSafe.com)



9



### Learning in the wild

At Outward Bound, we create highly impactful and memorable outdoor experiences. We partner with schools and colleges to teach young people the most important lesson they could ever learn – to believe in themselves. It's the superpower that transforms their behaviour throughout school, work and beyond.

We take young people away from everyday life and into our world, giving them life-changing experiences they won't get from home or inside the classroom. Our tailored outdoor learning courses deliver an alternative education, giving young people the confidence to tackle the real world head-on. Find out more about our residential courses for schools at [outwardbound.org.uk/schools](http://outwardbound.org.uk/schools)

### Get creative

The Big Bang Competition is a free to enter STEM contest that's open to 11- to 19-year-olds studying in the UK. Projects submitted to The Big Bang Competition can relate to any areas falling within the field of STEM – whether it's a sport and health accessory, or a solution for environmental issues, the choice is yours.

The prizes include generous cash awards of up to £2,000, as well as opportunities for participants to showcase their winning entries online and in person at the upcoming Big Bang Fair, taking place on Wednesday 22nd to Friday 24th June 2022 at The NEC Birmingham.

Students can enter a project on their own or as part of a team before 20th March 2022. For more details, visit [thebigbang.org.uk](http://thebigbang.org.uk)

10



# CALLING ALL TEACHERS

## 3 ISSUES FOR £9.99\*

**WHEN YOU SUBSCRIBE TO  
TEACH SECONDARY TODAY!**



Teach Secondary's mission is simple: to help you become the best teacher you can be. Packed with evidence-based advice, simple strategies and free resources to boost student progress and reduce your workload, every issue is designed to support your career progression... and make your busy schedule that little bit easier!

## SUBSCRIBE ONLINE OR BY PHONE

[www.teachsecondary.com/9220](http://www.teachsecondary.com/9220)

**T: 0800 904 7000**

**Quote: 9220**

\*Terms and conditions apply. See online for details.



# INTERNATIONAL INSPIRATION

**Meena Wood** explains why, when it comes to curriculum development at secondary level, there are some powerful lessons to be learnt from overseas...

In today's global society, school curriculums should be enabling young people to acquire powerful knowledge equally across humanities, arts, science and technology.

In countries as diverse as Singapore, Finland and Estonia we've seen settings utilise an 'adaptive curriculum pathways model', designed to ensure equal parity for academic, creative and technical subjects. In Singapore and Estonia, for example, learners can choose between different disciplinary pathways or opt to combine them. This flexibility demonstrates a commitment to social levelling, as well as a recognition that all skills and knowledge can facilitate viable pathways to lifelong learning and employment.

## Occupational know-how

A key aim within the Estonian education system is for students to become creative, multi-talented, socially mature and reliable citizens. Vocational education is seen as a valuable way of fostering certain skills and attitudes, passing on occupational know-how and preparing students socially for employment and lifelong learning. Young people there can move from vocational education into higher education and vice versa, in the event that they wish to change direction later in life.

The Finnish curriculum meanwhile, employs the popular 'Yrityskyla entrepreneurial village' – a model that facilitates 'applied learning', enabling students to gain authentic, hands-on



experience of knowledge and skills as applied in various real-world contexts.

Or consider the curriculum followed by schools in Singapore, which allows for flexible, academic and technical curriculum pathways, with students free to transfer between courses during higher level studies.

## Ownership and purpose

England's EBacc curriculum, however, continues to sit apart from its international equivalents in that creative/performing arts, technology and computer science don't presently enjoy equal status with more traditional 'academic' subjects.

Widening the EBacc by introducing a similar system of adaptive pathways would enable KS3 students to continue studying core subjects while retaining the freedom to choose a broad, balanced and inclusive curriculum at KS4.

This would bestow upon students a greater sense of ownership and purpose. Subjects and studies relevant to students' interests

contribute greatly to those moments where learning becomes truly memorable and meaningful.

## Phenomenal learning

Another notable feature of the Finnish system is the 'phenomenal' – a multidisciplinary curriculum touching on multi-literacy, entrepreneurship and creative thinking, based around self-directed and enquiry-based learning.

Students are given structured opportunities to examine complex global and local challenges from a wider perspective, helping them develop critical thinking skills while being encouraged to understand the bigger picture by viewing issues through multiple lenses – such as those of a geographer, historian, sociologist, scientist or economist.

For instance, a sustainability project might seek to evaluate the impact of global climate change since the Industrial Revolution by examining historical changes in scientific understanding, people's lifestyles, favoured habitats and eating habits,

and draw on these to try and predict the future.

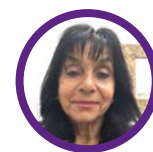
Rather than keeping different subjects in separate silos, project-based learning of this kind can help connect students' knowledge and skills within a relevant and authentic context.

## Holistic thinking

That's why we should be paying closer attention to curriculum development, teaching and assessment approaches that have proven successful in international contexts, and potentially adapt these within the English curriculum for the greater good of all learners.

Innovative schools, such as School 21 and Firth Park, have already implemented project-based learning. Similarly visionary schools including Thomas Tallis, REACH and Cabot have meanwhile sought to shape their curriculum through their values.

Moving educational objectives away from simply *knowing information*, as indicated by exam results, and towards *holistic thinking* – learning to learn – while applying knowledge acquired in real-life contexts should, therefore, be seen as a key objective for all teachers and practitioners.



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Meena Wood (@WoodMeena) is an educational consultant, trainer and author of *Secondary Curriculum Transformed: Enabling All to Achieve* (Routledge, £19.99); receive a 30% discount when ordering a copy via [routledge.com](http://routledge.com) with the code **SCT230**

# *In defence of* **TIKTOK**

It may have had a bad rap of late, but TikTok nevertheless contains a bounty of inspiring and entertaining content just waiting to be discovered by teachers, insists Nikki Cunningham-Smith...

**I**t's not been great these past few months to be a teacher and in the vicinity of TikTok, that's for sure. This particular social media platform has been giving our great educators considerable cause for anxiety, sadness and even paranoia in our workspaces.

As is often the case with social media activity, TikTok-related incidents have the potential to consume mindsets 24/7. It goes without saying this is a far from healthy state of affairs, with some teaching professionals expressing worries over whether they're going to appear on their students' social media feeds without their permission being sought, or if they're going to be a victim of the latest TikTok 'challenge'.

Having said all that, I'd like to raise a different, but related point – that TikTok can be also an incredibly positive, collaborative, and uplifting space for educators to participate in. So before readers write off TikTok entirely, I'd just like to highlight a few of its more positive uses and potential impacts...

## **CPD opportunities**

As an ICT and computing teacher by trade, I love seeing examples of how teachers have used tech to their advantage.

In-depth teaching and instructional videos have been available via YouTube for years, but I'm at a stage in life and in a professional role where I'm often time-poor. Being able to quickly view the concise, one-minute-max videos served up by TikTok has given me frequent injections of inspiration, as well as useful pointers I can choose to pursue or not,

highlights to share with their audience, feels to me like a very privileged position from which to observe lesson advice from fellow practitioners.

Really, it's no different from the days when teaching professionals used to film their lessons over the top of pupils' shoulders and sell the end result in the form of CPD videos. I've often felt

This ability to hear pupils in live examples is fantastic – listening to how they respond, noting what works and what doesn't, where the excitement spots are and the areas to be aware of when delivering certain topics. I think it's an invaluable tool for all teachers, but

***"I'm upskilling and feeding my knowledge without even thinking about it"***

and highlighted potentially useful investments in learning tech.

I've watched an extensive range of teaching opportunities and learning activities accomplished with micro:bits and Raspberry Pis that I'd never have thought of myself. It's been a wonderful source of CPD, without me having to attend (or indeed pay for) any courses. I'm regularly upskilling and feeding my knowledge without even thinking about it.

## **Live teaching**

Watching teachers who have filmed their day, then edited together golden

like a classroom observer, watching as teachers walk pupils through the use of self-regulation skills so as not to derail the lesson.

I've seen a teacher use press-on lights when discussing behaviour management with their class, and even curriculum-based examples – such as the maths teacher showing their TikTok followers how they helped their class grasp a concept they'd previously struggled with.





especially for prospective and student teachers who can now get real and honest insights to what classroom spaces can and do look like. They've been granted access to everyday, raw and unfiltered examples of what life as a teacher actually involves.

### Sources of inspiration

The educational ideas you can find on TikTok aren't just limited to the classroom. It's also a fantastic space for seeing how other schools are engaging with national and international events, such as Children In Need, World Book Day and Black History Month. It can give you new ideas for using traditional spaces, such as libraries, calm corners, or playgrounds.

Whatever teaching idea or activity you might have in mind, there's sure to be at least some information on there that you can use to try and get your project off the ground. The great thing is that many of the schools you'll find are most likely facing similar problems as you, be it lack of funds or limited space, alongside an abundance of creative suggestions for how to tackle such challenges.

Static glimpses of the classroom spaces used by other teachers have long been available via Pinterest, but they're now increasingly accessible as snappy videos that serve as great visual examples of what you can do (and often on a more reasonable budget than you might think).

### Niche teaching connections

If, like me, you're someone who works in a specialist area, your professional connections will typically be limited to others within your own school. TikTok has seen enough uptake by teachers that there are now numerous networking opportunities available at the touch of a hashtag.

I can simply type '#behaviourteacher' and there it is – teachers like me, working in spaces just like mine. At my fingertips, in real time, are educators across the globe experiencing the same educational existence as me – who understand how intense the trials, tribulations and victories in education settings can be, and who are willing to share insights that validate my own in a way my equally amazing mainstream colleagues sometimes simply can't.

### Entertaining humour

As teachers, we'll often get pumped full of information about the many negative elements to teaching. Yes, on TikTok and elsewhere you can easily find many videos and viral creators who enjoy taking the time to poke fun at teachers by exaggerating the things we do – from the way we carry an ungodly amount of keys around our necks, to the nature of our interactions with pupils whilst we're trying to eat our lunch.

Though mildly triggering, such videos can often actually be quite funny. I've certainly watched a few myself and been able to laugh along, having sometimes recognised myself in the caricatures shown.

However, some TikTok teachers give as good as they get, serving up a gentle ribbing for students – not to mention leadership, parents and dinner ladies... For some teacher creators, no-one is off limits, and I'm here for it. Teaching is simply too intense to not find the fun in certain situations, and attempt to be taken seriously all the time.

## PICK OF THE TIKS

If you're a TikTok newcomer, try searching these hashtags or users and see where you end up...

### EVERYONE

#teachersoftiktok  
#tiktokteacher  
#teachertok  
#teachersontiktok  
#edutok

### SECONDARY-SPECIFIC

@missenglishteacher  
@harrysurplus

### SEMH

@mrgteacher  
@mrscs8

### EXAMS

@firststratetutors  
@hannahkettlemaths  
@gcsepotential  
@revisionrecharge  
@revisescienceofficial

### COMEDY

@teachwithtadgh  
@mrdtimes3  
@lovemsslater  
@teachersoffduty podcast



With every resource, there's always two sides to how something is used – but I'd urge readers not to write off TikTok completely. By all means, approach it with caution and protect your space – but there's a lot to be gained from jumping in and seeing what you can take away for yourself. Get on the app and search '#teachersoftiktok' – just don't blame me if you blink and find that you've accidentally been on it for the past four hours...



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Nikki Cunningham-Smith is an assistant headteacher based in Gloucestershire

REASONS TO TRY...

# 5 Connecting Safely Online

An online safety support hub targeted at teens with SEND



## 30 SECOND BRIEFING

Internet Matters is an award winning not-for-profit that helps parents and professionals support children to be happy, healthy and safe online. The Connecting Safely Online hub was developed to provide advice on connecting safely on social and gaming platforms, tailored to teens with SEND.

### 1 MEETING NEEDS

Our report, 'Refuge and Risk', shows that while the internet provides many benefits for vulnerable children, they're also significantly more likely than their non-vulnerable peers to experience online risks and harm. We want to empower vulnerable children and the adults in their lives, so that they can enjoy the advantages of being online while managing the risks. The Connecting Safely Online hub was developed to do exactly that.

### 2 CO-CREATED CONTENT

We recognise that standard online safety advice isn't always suitable for children with SEND. That's why we engaged with young people who have additional needs and their parents, carers and teachers when developing Connecting Safely Online. Their insights were invaluable to the creation of the hub's unambiguous advice, aimed at helping adults and young people learn together in a step-by-step way. More on the hub's creation can be found in our 'Life Online for children with SEND' report.

### 3 STEP-BY-STEP ADVICE

It's important to think about wellbeing from the very start of a child's online journey. Connecting Safely Online thus offers advice on what to consider before a child has



even started to use social media. In formats tailored to users with additional needs, support for both adults and young people is broken down into first steps, basics and only then the trickier stuff.

### 4 SHARED ACTIVITIES

As well as guidance, the hub also contains a section dedicated to activities for adults and young people to complete together. These can be easily adapted for the classroom or shared with parents, so that they

#### Contact:

[internetmatters.org/  
connecting-safely-online](https://internetmatters.org/connecting-safely-online)  
[info@internetmatters.org](mailto:info@internetmatters.org)



can continue their child's learning at home. Examples include the 'Am I Ready?' resource, 'Chat Check-ins', 'What If...?' scenarios and 'Get Help' cards.

### 5 CROSS-TOPIC SUPPORT

Connecting Safely Online includes practical guidance on setting up devices and configuring privacy controls (a particular concern among parents), as well as help with related issues, such as cyberbullying, nudes and sexting, scams and screen time. Hub users will additionally be signposted to further sources of support, including helplines, forums and other external organisations.

## KEY POINTS

In common with all Internet Matters resources, the Connecting Safely Online hub, is entirely free to use and doesn't require any form of site registration

We conduct continuous research that informs the hub and our activities, including surveying parents of vulnerable children three times a year

The Connecting Safely Online hub was developed by online safety and wellbeing experts, alongside individuals with personal experience of SEND

The hub forms part of a wider programme of support from Internet Matters, aimed at adults involved in supporting vulnerable children



# First aid essentials

**Harrison Young** runs through the questions schools should be asking when they enlist a paediatric first aid training provider

**T**he increased pressures on UK ambulance services and NHS hospitals caused by the pandemic mean that any child who is injured or becomes unwell whilst at school may now be under the care of a paediatric first aider for much longer than anticipated.

It's therefore more vital than ever that organisations equip their staff with an appropriate level of training, so that they're able to deal with this heightened responsibility. Collectively, UK workplaces see a whopping 693,000 first aid incidents per year, but only 5% of individuals within those workplaces possess sufficient knowledge and skills to deal with first aid incidents safely. Fines levied by the Health and Safety Executive for poor practice can average out at £100,000 per incident.

## Navigating the minefield

However, sourcing the right training can be a challenge. The paediatric first aid training market has become saturated in recent years, and is now crowded with courses from a variety of providers.

As someone who has witnessed first-hand the devastating consequences of substandard paediatric first aid provision, I know only too well the importance of giving organisations the information they need to navigate the options available to them.

That's why I've published a short guide detailing the questions they should ask training providers, so that they can avoid overspending, medico-legal litigation, media scrutiny and huge fines.

Readers can access the guide via [bit.ly/ts112-mts1](https://bit.ly/ts112-mts1). Here, by way of a preview, are 10 areas you should always consider when sourcing a paediatric first aid training provider.

## 10 key considerations

### 1. Is the training accredited?

Booking an accredited course is vital for keeping on the HSE's good side. Ensure that it's at least a Level 3 Award (RQF) – an authentic qualification that's widely

recognised and legally compliant.

### 2. Is the training regulated?

Find out which awarding organisation the course is accredited by, and check that they're regulated by Ofqual.

### 3. Is it quality assured?

This is typically non-negotiable for centres wanting to deliver accredited training under an awarding organisation, but it doesn't hurt to double-check.

### 4. How long does the certificate last?

Typically, three years is the industry standard period after which an awardee will need to re-qualify, usually by attending a refresher course.

### 5. What qualifications do the instructors hold?

Every first aid instructor enlisted by an awarding organisation should have, at minimum, a valid First Aid at Work certificate and an entry level teaching qualification.

### 6. Do they offer a mobile service?

Sending staff to external venues can be difficult, so it's worth enquiring as to whether the provider can bring the training to you. As well as saving time, money, and energy, it can also enable teaching scenarios

to be tailored to your particular context.

### 7. Do they have adequate insurance?

This is your guarantee that you'll be compensated if any of your staff become unwell during training, or if they carry out treatment in accordance with their training, but cause harm to a child as a result of the training being incorrect.

### 8. What learning options are there?

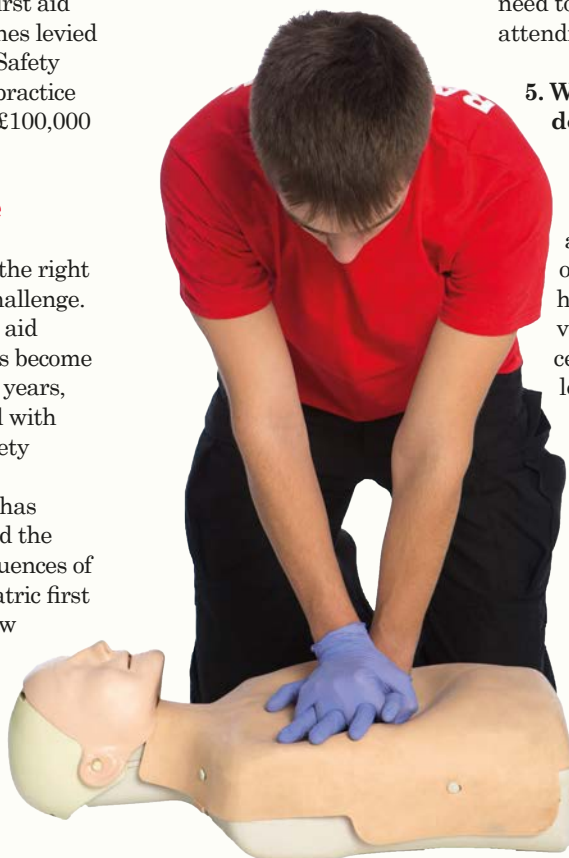
A provider's e-learning offer should only extend to a 'blended learning' format. First aid is a highly practical subject, and so shouldn't be delivered exclusively online.

### 9. What's the provider's track record?

Some providers promise the world, only to fall short when it comes to delivery. Be sure to check their track record via client testimonials, Trustpilot reviews and other online sources.

### 10. Will they look after you?

A great service provider will be approachable, proactive, sensitive to your needs, sympathetic to your goals and ready to help you achieve them.



**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**  
Harrison Young MCPara is a paramedic, educator, writer and founder of Medical Training Solutions; for more information, visit [mtscourses.co.uk](https://mtscourses.co.uk) or follow @MTCourses

# SCHOOL STORAGE

BiGDUG's shelving and storage helps you stay organised.

The trusted experts in space utilisation.

See our full range of Gratnells Trays online.



## BiGDUG®

**WWW.BIGDUG.CO.UK 03450 177 721**

# teachwire

YOUR LINK TO THE BEST IN EDUCATION

**Quick & easy uploads**



Have you ever devised...

- A memorable secondary activity?
- Any behaviour or assessment strategies that have helped save valuable time?
- A handy assessment trick that's saved you valuable time?

If so, Teachwire's resource archive is now open for submissions from secondary 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)**



# LEARNING LAB

## IN THIS ISSUE

- + The 'Describe ASAP' behavioural technique
- + A new resource for whole school SEND
- + A brief guide to whole class feedback
- + Phonics teaching reappraised
- + Free online safeguarding CPD
- + Could your maths classes benefit from Flow Theory?
- + How diverse are your literature texts?
- + 5 essential tips for ECTs

## CONTRIBUTORS

### ROBIN LAUNDER

Behaviour management consultant and speaker

### ADAM RICHES

Senior leader for teaching and learning

### LINDSAY SKINNER

Headteacher, St James' School, Exeter

### ZEPH BENNETT

PE teacher and school achievement leader



## How to...

# MAKE PLAYS MORE APPROACHABLE

Plays on the page can often feel impenetrable, academic or irrelevant to the young people studying them, but they shouldn't be. Bringing them to life through performance can make them fun, accessible and relatable.

- The best way to explore a play is to experience it – either through watching it or performing it yourself. Students will remember much more about a character or scene if they can imagine them, having seen them come off the page.
- There are lots of recordings of theatre productions available to stream for free in your classroom covering many set texts and introducing new, bold and challenging plays. Time-poor teachers needn't commit to watching an entire production; it's easy to jump to specific scenes or speeches, or even compare the interpretations and creative decisions of different productions.
- If your classroom space allows, push back your tables and get everyone on their feet. If sight-reading the text of a scene feels like too much of a challenge, ask students to read it themselves and then perform a version of the scene in their own words. They can mine the original text for clues, making lists of facts and questions regarding particular characters and situations.
- If getting on your feet isn't an option, get creative on paper instead. Think about the various ways in which stagecraft can transform words on a page into a piece of theatre. Ask students to explore a character through costume design, or consider how lighting can enhance mood and aid storytelling. You might also like to ask them to write a missing scene.
- Ask students 'Why does it matter?' and 'What's the point?' – get them to think about how the play relates to them, and encourage them to express their opinions on it. This might help them to understand more about the play's social, historical and cultural context.



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jane Ball is education manager for the National Theatre Collection – an online library comprising 50 productions and accompanying resources, available free of charge to UK state schools. For more information, visit [nationaltheatre.org.uk/learning](https://nationaltheatre.org.uk/learning) or follow @NT\_Schools

## SEND KNOW-HOW



*A new publication from Whole School SEND and nasen may well become a go-to source of SEND knowledge for your staff...*

The National Association for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (nasen) has partnered with the Whole School SEND consortium to produce a free book, titled *Teacher Handbook: SEND – Embedding inclusive practice*.

The Handbook's lead authors are Amelie Thompson, headteacher and head of inclusion at Gipsy Hill Federation, and Katherine Walsh, lead for inclusion at River Learning Trust. The advice it contains draws on the perspectives of children and young people and their families, teachers and support staff; subject specialists, SENCOs and other senior leaders, as well as educational psychologists, and specialist agencies.

The book aims to provide support for primary, secondary and specialist teachers, as well as TAs, senior leaders and headteachers, working with children and young people with SEND and learning

differences, and covers the following areas:

#### 1. Understanding the role of the teacher

Guidance on legislation, Ofsted requirements, intersectionality, safeguarding and language used between colleagues

#### 2. Knowledge of the learner

Understanding how children learn, the importance of pupil voice, working alongside families

#### 3. Planning inclusive lessons

Quality Inclusive Pedagogy, inclusive teaching and learning approaches, unconscious and conscious barriers; the language used with learners; working with TAs, and remote education provision

#### 4. Creating an inclusive environment

Barriers to learning; reasonable adjustments; classroom environments, teaching routines and practice; resource implications for learners with SEND; supporting learners with sensory needs and transitions

#### 5. Subject-specific guidance

Primary and secondary guidance for maths, English, science, drama, PE and computing, plus secondary MFL

#### 6. Graduated approaches

Teachers' role in identifying SEND, attaining a holistic understanding of learners; working with SENCOs, specialist teachers and external agencies and advice on exploring the engagement model

#### 7. Strategies for scaffolding learning

Cognition and learning; communication and interaction, sensory and/or physical needs, SEMH, neurodiversity, and co-occurrence of need

#### 8. Teacher wellbeing

How teacher wellbeing can be enhanced within the workplace, distributive leadership of SEND in schools, the impact of teaching environments and supervision measures and SEND resources that can assist with teacher wellbeing efforts

## TRY THIS

### DESCRIBE ASAP

*EXERCISE BETTER CLASS CONTROL WITH THESE TIPS FROM ROBIN LAUNDER...*

Describing exactly what the student is *doing* is often more effective than instructing him or her to *do something*.

For example, rather than telling Lynda to be quiet or Dan to sit in his chair, say "Lynda, you are talking" or "Dan, you're standing up." Keep your tone neutral. You're not reprimanding, but simply bringing the situation to the student's attention. Don't add phrases like 'again' or 'as always'.

The power of 'describe' is that it sidesteps much (though not necessarily all) confrontation. You're just stating a fact as you see it. Now it's up to the student to change his or her behaviour. If they don't, up the strength of the intervention.

Make sure you describe the misbehaviour as soon as possible (hence the 'ASAP'). This will not only add extra oomph to your intervention, but also communicate something very important about you – that you're on top of student behaviour.

Don't let the apparent simplicity of this tip make you think that it's not effective, because it is – very. Not so long ago, I was visiting a school when a teacher – who had previously attended one of my behaviour management training sessions – approached me to say that 'describe' had remained her default behaviour management intervention. When I asked her why, she said, "Simple – it works." So there you are.

**Robin Launder is a behaviour management consultant and speaker; find more tips in his weekly Better Behaviour online course – see [behaviourbuddy.co.uk](http://behaviourbuddy.co.uk) for more details**

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO DOWNLOAD A COPY, VISIT [BIT.LY/TS112-LL-SEND](http://BIT.LY/TS112-LL-SEND)



# 32%

**Of schools reported between 5% to 10% of their staff being absent due COVID-19 at the start of this term**

Source: Sutton Trust / Teacher Tapp polling conducted on 7th January 2022

Teachers keen to improve their online safeguarding knowledge may be interested in a series of free online workshops currently being offered by the youth engagement agency, Beatfreeks.

The organisation's 'Train the Trainer' webinars are accredited by the PHSE Association and designed to equip teachers with the skills they'll need to support young people between the ages of 11 and 16 to stay safe online. Aimed at teachers, safeguarding leads, deputy and headteachers, the sessions are two-and-a-half hours in duration and set out to cover a number of issues, including fake news and misinformation, unconscious bias, discrimination and how to distinguish between free speech and incidents of hate speech.

Attendees will additionally receive a suite of accompanying resources to help them deliver lessons in online safety, including session plans, supporting handouts and reflective journal templates.

At the time of writing, the remaining sessions are scheduled for Thursday 10th March, Tuesday 29th March and Thursday 26th May. For more information and to secure your place, visit [bit.ly/ts112-LL1](https://bit.ly/ts112-LL1)

## YOUR GUIDE TO ...

### WHOLE CLASS FEEDBACK

Master whole class feedback and you'll reduce your marking load significantly – it's as simple as that. Implementing a well-devised whole class feedback system is one of the most effective ways to move learning forwards sustainably, through addressing misconceptions and giving learners the opportunity to reflect on the topics they have been taught. Don't be drawn in by gimmicks, though – be sure to keep things simple.

#### Consider the format

The format really does matter. A complicated sheet will only add to students' extrinsic load, while a sheet that changes each week can create ambiguity for learners. Make your whole class feedback method visible and consistent. A simple sheet with pre-assigned boxes – such as praise, literacy and most importantly, the misconception – is all that's needed. You might wish to later embellish this with sections that further stretch and challenge your classes, but start with the basics.

#### Overcome the misconception

Whole class feedback is effective when learning time is dedicated to overcoming the misconception. Not all students need to have the misconception for this to add value to their learning; a good way of reinforcing what *not* to do is to reflect on common mistakes others make. Whole class feedback allows you to help learners move on, as well as supporting others to consolidate. Explicitly teaching it is of paramount importance – merely identifying it isn't enough!

#### Embed the routine

Making your whole class feedback visible is all about getting learners into routines. Keep your language consistent and dedicated, so that the feedback you give is acted upon. Do you expect learners to respond in a different colour? How often do you give feedback? You also need to consider how you'll gather the data required for your whole class feedback. Will you look through the books? Monitor progress in class? Make this a part of your teaching routine.



ADAM RICHES IS A SENIOR LEADER FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING; FOLLOW HIM AT @TEACHMRRICHES

# 13%

of young people aged 10 to 17 say the portion of their life they spend online has a 'mostly negative' impact on their school work, including homework; 37% report it having a 'mixed impact' while 35% cite a 'mostly positive' impact

Source: The Children's Society

## Need to know

One of the most notable research stories this past month concerned a study carried out by Dominic Wyse and Alice Bradbury of UCL's Institute of Education, examining the impact of phonics teaching is it's currently practised in England's primary schools.

Drawing on data gathered from 'A systematic qualitative meta-synthesis of 55 experimental trials' and a survey of 2,205 teachers, they conclude that England's approach to phonics teaching is an outlier among English-speaking countries, based on insufficient research evidence and should be re-evaluated.

According to Wyse and Bradbury's findings, the most effective reading interventions are those that combine the teaching of phonics with the reading of whole texts, which they describe as 'contextualised teaching of reading'. In contrast, separating the teaching of the alphabetic code from the context of whole texts – a tendency within England's present approach – is found to be less effective, which they observe, 'Poses a significant risk to to typically developing children's education and life chances.'

The full research report can be accessed via [bit.ly/TS112-LL2](https://bit.ly/TS112-LL2)



## WHAT WE DO FLOW THEORY

*Lindsay Skinner presents some suggestions for fostering a deep-level engagement with maths among your students, to the point of almost tuning out the world around them...*

Being 'in the zone' is an important factor that helps our students engage with maths. It's sometimes known as 'Flow Theory' – a term first coined by the Hungarian-American psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi.

Flow Theory can be used to describe a range of different, but closely related individual experiences, including intense concentration on the present moment; the sensation of being fully engrossed in an activity; the feeling of receiving instantaneous feedback from a particular action; and the pleasurable sense of being intrinsically rewarded.

Most teachers can intuitively grasp the idea of Flow Theory and its value in the classroom. We've identified three strategies that can help to encourage it – particularly in maths lessons – which you might want to try.

### 1. Get the balance right

Matching the level of challenge to students' ability is an important first step. We need to provide enough challenge, without making things so hard that students feel overwhelmed and want to give up. Students need to know tasks are

achievable – this is key – since this will encourage them to increase their concentration.

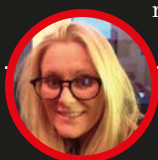
### 2. Provide immediate feedback

Letting students know how they're progressing in real time is similarly important. Our school uses Sparx Maths, which provides students with immediate feedback, while at the same time enabling teachers to see how students are progressing from one moment to the next. This lets teachers rapidly identify where students might be struggling and provide appropriate support. The end result is a lowered fear of failure within the class.

### 3. Reduce fear of failure

It's quite common for children to lack confidence in maths. Attaining the right level of challenge, and balancing that with suitable levels of support, means will create more opportunities for students to be successful, in turn making them feel more positive about their progress and outcomes.

Encouraging 'flow' in maths has helped us increase our students' enjoyment of the subject. We've seen a growing uptake in both GCSE further maths and statistics, while across all year groups, maths has become twice as popular as other school subjects.



LINDSAY SKINNER IS HEADTEACHER AT ST JAMES' SCHOOL IN EXETER; FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT SPARX MATHS AND ITS USE IN THE CLASSROOM, VISIT [SPARXMATHS.COM/IMPACT](https://SPARXMATHS.COM/IMPACT)





## TRENDING

Our pick of the recent resources and launches teachers might find useful...

**HOLOGRAPHIC MAGIC**

Holo-Museum – a collective formed of six museums spread across four countries – is inviting schools in the UK and elsewhere to order free sets of paper 3D glasses, which they can use to view unique online exhibits via desktop augmented reality technology.

[holo-museum.com/school-partnership-program](http://holo-museum.com/school-partnership-program)

**THE FT FOR FREE**

Teachers and students can gain free access to the news reporting and financial expertise available at FT.com by signing up for the FT Schools Programme. Registered users will also receive a weekly newsletter and be able to consult a regularly maintained class discussion page, featuring teacher recommended content, competitions, and a personal finance board game. [ft.com/schoolsarefree](http://ft.com/schoolsarefree)

## Could your texts be more diverse?

Pearson and Penguin books have announced a continuation and expansion of their Lit in Colour Pioneers programme, which is seeking to support hundreds of schools across the UK in diversifying their English curricula, free of charge.

Now in its second year, the Pioneers programme is currently open for applications, ready to assist any school or college looking to diversify its English literature curriculum by incorporating a text by a writer of colour included on Pearson's September 2022 A level or GCSE set texts. As was the case last year, books will be donated to participating schools by

partnering publishers Bloomsbury, Hachette, HarperCollins, Serpent's Tail, Farshore and Concord Theatricals Ltd, as well as Penguin.

Those schools taking part will receive extensive guidance for teaching GCSE and A Level English literature set texts by Black, Asian and minority ethnic writers, including four new GCSE texts introduced by Pearson at the start of this academic year – *Les Blancs* by Lorraine Hansberry, *Sweat* by Lynn Nottage, *Home Fire* by Kamila Shamsie and *The Cutting Season* by Attica Locke.

Schools will additionally get to take advantage of a free

programme of work and a series of free resources, including CPD training webinars for teachers and school librarians. Also included in the welcome package will be a Lit in Colour mini library, including 300 free Penguin books by writers of colour intended for all age groups with accompanying posters and artwork, and materials for setting up a reading for pleasure club.

Schools can register their interest in participating in this year's Lit in Colour Pioneers programme by visiting [go.pearson.com/litincolour](http://go.pearson.com/litincolour)

## TEACHER WALKTHROUGH

### 5 TIPS FOR NEW STARTERS

ADVICE FOR TEACHERS, BY TEACHERS, AS VISUALISED BY ZEPH BENNETT...

1



Taking the time to learn names quickly will allow for more effective questioning

2



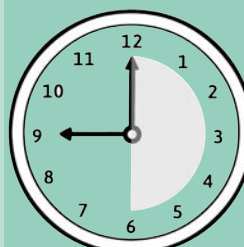
Focus on a few selected projects – don't overstretch yourself

3



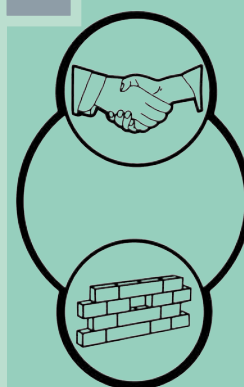
Really listen to staff and students in order to better understand your context

4



Make time for yourself – do less, but do better through effective planning

5



Put effort into developing and building your relationships with students and staff

ZEPH BENNETT IS A PE TEACHER AND SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENT LEADER WITH 25 YEARS' TEACHING EXPERIENCE; YOU CAN FIND MORE OF HIS EDUCATIONAL ILLUSTRATIONS BY FOLLOWING @PEGEEKSCORNER

Got a great learning idea? Email [editor@teachsecondary.com](mailto:editor@teachsecondary.com) or tweet us at [@teachsecondary](https://twitter.com/teachsecondary)

# Breaking the cycle

**Seema Dosaj** asks what role, if any, schools can play in reducing crime rates amongst teenagers

**I**n 2021, 30 teenagers were murdered in London alone. That number constitutes a new peak in incidents of extreme violence amongst young men and women, surpassing the previous equivalent figure of 29, back in 2008.

The government has pledged £780 million for the purpose of addressing gang crime and county lines issues in England, as part of a 10-year strategy – but is that money being targeted appropriately so that it can have a lasting impact? And what, if anything, can educational institutions be doing to help these efforts?

## Driving factors

Many will unthinkingly absorb the stereotype that drugs and crime tend to only affect the lives of young people from poor, low-income families in urban areas, but that's far from the case.

The drivers of youth crime are factors that can ultimately affect all families, regardless of background or location. A mental health condition, a troubled home life, a history of exclusion from school – these and other related issues can be directly responsible for young people becoming involved in criminality, and the drug trade in particular. With the advent of social media the reach of gangs is arguably greater than ever, since they can now directly target vulnerable young people for recruitment.

And yet, there have been numerous funding cuts in



recent years to schools and other vital institutions, such as youth centres – crucial spaces that give young people of all backgrounds opportunities to feel safe, and to learn from role models with a strong set of core values.

If these cuts persist, we'll see more young people lose opportunities for education and work, feel further excluded from society and become more likely to find themselves caught up in criminal activity. As they grow up and go on to have children of their own, this lack of youth provision will increase the chances of them experiencing the same cycle as their parents. But it's a cycle that can be broken.

Appropriate funding for educational and social institutions serving young people will ensure they're given spaces in which they can feel safe and better included within society. The teaching of good morals will reduce the impact of youth bullying and mental health issues, and allow us to begin formulating a new cycle, in which today's younger generation grow up to become adults with jobs and a means of contributing to society – values which they will in turn pass on to their own children.

## Reducing the rates

There are multiple ways in which the government can go about making this a reality. One option would

be to do more to decrease poverty. As noted above, any young person can be influenced into gang and criminal activities, but the worst affected demographic still remains those from poorer households.

Increasing the income received by these families will afford them access to more forms of support within their local community, such as local clubs and extracurricular activities, which can give young people the chance to discover their true passions and fill their time in ways that keep them away from the criminal world.

Increasing funding for schools and educational services could also help reduce crime rates amongst young people. With greater resources at their disposal, schools can do more to educate young people on how to identify grooming techniques, and how to respond if their friends or peers become involved with criminal activity.

Of course, this form of activity within schools can only go so far, given the time available to them. That's why it's similarly important to fund other services, such as youth centres. These can provide young people with important sources of support, at times when they might feel unable to approach a parent or teacher, and can also serve as safe havens for young people with unhappy or unsafe home lives.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

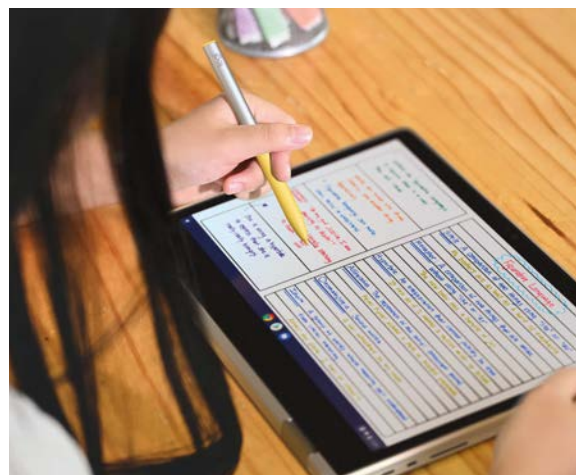
Seema Dosaj is a managing partner at Berris Law; for more information, visit [berrislaw.co.uk](http://berrislaw.co.uk) or follow @LawBerris



EDTECH

# Logitech Pen

A sophisticated stylus for electronic devices that can be used just like a real pen



## AT A GLANCE

- Works with any Chromebook, tablet or learning app that supports the Universal Stylus Initiative
- Allows users to fully utilise the input features of certain touchscreen devices and compatible apps
- Designed with proportions and responses that mirror those of traditional pens
- Suitable for use within a wide range of learning activities

REVIEW BY ADAM RICHES

As technology has become increasingly commonplace within schools, we've now reached the point where learners routinely use many different items of hardware on a daily basis. Now the Logitech Pen aims to bridge the gap between traditional schoolwork and modern learning technology.

One of the Logitech Pen's most impressive features is that it physically looks, handles and feels just like a traditional writing implement. Not only that, it's exceptionally well-balanced for a wide range of different users.

It's not too cumbersome, nor too dainty; it's weighted perfectly for teachers and students alike, allowing them to use it on screens almost exactly as if they were writing on paper. Logitech carried out extensive research and testing with the Pen in classrooms during its development, which would seem to have paid dividends.

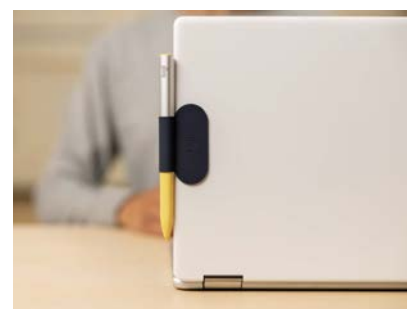
The Logitech Pen is designed around a 'no-pair' connection method, making it easy for students to simply pick up the Pen and start writing straight away. On a full charge, the Pen should last for around 15 days of use during a regular school day. In the event that someone forgets to put theirs on charge, users can get an impressive 30 minutes of use from the Pen after plugging it in for just 30 seconds, so you can rest assured that those electronic writing activities needn't come to a sudden standstill. Charging is carried out

via a standard USB-C cable, of the sort that typically come supplied with Chromebooks, which keeps things nice and simple.

The Logitech Pen works seamlessly with chromeOS on USI-enabled Chromebooks and is supported by numerous apps. It provides students and teachers with a tool that couples traditional study with new technology, adding to classroom engagement levels.

The Logitech Pen is capable of performing a variety of different pen strokes. Its 4,096 levels of pressure sensitivity will enable students to write more clearly than they otherwise could with fingers or a rubber-tip stylus. Combined with one of the many third-party apps that support palm rejection, the Logitech Pen makes it easy for students to work naturally and study more efficiently, while utilising the many advantages of electronic writing, such as instant text capture from handwriting, highlighting and colouring. The possibilities are endless.

As teachers will be all too aware, children can be notoriously heavy-handed with sophisticated edtech. That's why the Logitech Pen has been tested to meet military standards and is designed to withstand drops of up to 4 feet (1.2 m). In short, it can take some serious knocks, making it ideally suited to secondary classrooms. It's also engineered to withstand the kind of frequent cleaning that's required for shared equipment in school environments.



teach  
SECONDARY

## VERDICT

- ✓ Hugely versatile and suitable for a vast range of applications out of the box
- ✓ Quick, convenient and efficient mains charging
- ✓ Can be adapted to a diverse range of learners' needs, allowing for the same level of expression as a traditional pen
- ✓ Marries traditional learning activities with cutting edge technology

## UPGRADE IF...

You're looking to make the most of your school's touchscreen-enabled devices, while ensuring that students develop the skills required for traditional writing. Also worth considering for staff keen to streamline their note taking processes and reduce their paper consumption.

Find out more at [logitech.com/education](https://logitech.com/education)

## SAFEGUARDING

# Confide

An online system designed to ensure that your school's safeguarding procedures are as robust and effective as possible



## AT A GLANCE

- A secure software solution for recording and managing allegations and concerns made against staff within your organisation
- Enables secure sharing of relevant information with key partners
- Helps track trends and produce accurate data reports
- Fully compliant with GDPR and the 2018 Data Protection Act

REVIEW BY JOHN DABELL



The business of keeping children safe in education is everyone's business. Schools have a duty to safeguard all pupils, and create a safe learning environment by ensuring that only adults suitable to work with children are employed there.

It's therefore crucial that there be a robust process in place for dealing with any allegations of harm or abuse against students by staff members, supply teachers, volunteers or contractors, in accordance with the government's statutory Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance.

Schools are expected to have in place a two-tier system when it comes to dealing with safeguarding cases, with allegations either meeting an active harms threshold, or being grouped under 'low level concerns'/'neutral notifications' – but how should you go about recording and managing these?

Enter Confide, by The Safeguarding Company makers of MyConcern – a strategic safeguarding tool intended to help schools handle safeguarding cases professionally and transparently, and respond in ways that will stand up to any subsequent scrutiny.

What Confide enables you to do is chronologically record all aspects of a safeguarding investigation, while keeping all accompanying documents in a secure storage environment and providing users with the

facility to produce accurate data reporting.

Needless to say, the systems schools use to manage safeguarding concerns have to be highly resistant to any form of unauthorised access or tampering, and be trusted by a school's community, lest future incidents go unreported. Confide will ensure that your staff feel safe in submitting those reports, while allowing you to restrict access to the system so that any sensitive data gathered is seen only by appropriately authorised personnel.

Any school's safeguarding has to be absolutely watertight. Confide will help ensure that any concerns regarding the adults in your setting are shared promptly with the right people and accurately logged, thus engendering an open, transparent, supportive and respectful culture.

Confide can also go a long way towards helping identify any weaknesses or oversights in your organisation's existing procedures. It's an innovative software solution that ought to be hardwired within a school's culture, where it can play an integral role as part of a safeguarding system that identifies concerns swiftly and accurately, while maintaining confidentiality and security at every step.

Ultimately, Confide is a must-have case management platform for all headteachers/principals, designated safeguarding leads, values guardians and safeguarding champions.

**“Confide will help ensure that any concerns regarding the adults in your setting are shared promptly”**

teach  
SECONDARY



CONFIDE®

BY THE SAFEGUARDING COMPANY

## VERDICT

- ✓ Can help schools improve their strategic and operational safeguarding arrangements, objectives and policies
- ✓ Is able to improve the quality and reliability of a school's accountability process
- ✓ Contributes to a culture of positive safeguarding practice, with a focus on prevention and early interventions
- ✓ Helps ensure that children's best interests are protected, while fostering a hostile environment for any potential perpetrators

## UPGRADE IF...

...you're looking for a well-crafted, fair and ethical system for managing safeguarding allegations made against staff, in which matters of confidentiality and student protection are given appropriate priority.



## ARTS & HUMANITIES

# MyLearning

A free online information hub offering National Curriculum-linked resources produced by arts, culture, heritage and education specialists



### AT A GLANCE

- Managed by Leeds Museums and Galleries
- Features a wide range of resources spanning Key Stages 1 to 4
- The diverse selection of topics covers most subject areas
- All content produced by educators and checked by experts
- Includes over 250 learning stories, from more than 70 different organisations

### REVIEW BY MIKE DAVIES

Do you remember when the internet was still young? If not, it was an interesting time. Back in the far off, distant 1990s it was (rightly) heralded as bringing about a revolution in knowledge sharing.

Fast-forward a decade or two, however, and you now need a range of skills, shrewd judgement and often simple luck in order to pick your way through the endless piles of online dross. And even when you think you've found something interesting, there's less certainty than ever over whether the material's creators can be trusted.

How wonderful, then, that teachers can now turn to MyLearning. Managed by Leeds Museums and Galleries, part of Leeds City Council, MyLearning is an online information resource designed to make the wonderful objects held in the city's museums and further afield available to classrooms nationwide, along with the fascinating stories they have to tell.

Users of the site gain instant access to a wealth of reliable, age-appropriate information without spending a penny, and without having to run the gauntlet of advertisements. And as you'd hope, there's a sensible filtering system in place, helping teachers navigate straight to KS3 or KS4 content, depending on their needs.

The learning resources featured on the site are accompanied by a mix of teacher notes, primary sources and activity ideas. I

particularly like how the background information and stories presented tend to be somewhat off the beaten path, rather than well-worn tales that most of us will already be familiar with.

For example, to my shame I hadn't previously encountered George Africanus, a former slave turned Nottingham-based entrepreneur, before exploring MyLearning. I soon found myself completely absorbed in his life story, and thinking how I might be able to draw on it for a citizenship lesson.

Browsing elsewhere, I already knew a bit about penal reform in the UK, but was nevertheless fascinated to find examples of prisoner badges and read about the details they provided about the lives of convicts within the prison system of nearly 200 years ago. MyLearning really helped to bring these very human stories to life.

Whether you're searching for a quick visual stimulus or a more substantial lesson resource, MyLearning is well worth a look. Registered users also get to access additional bells and whistles, such as the ability to create Pinterest-esque 'Work Boards' that can be reused and shared with students and colleagues alike.

In an ideal world, all our museums and galleries would be connected in this way. Hopefully MyLearning will serve as an inspiring example to others – but for now, there's plenty here for teachers to discover and immerse themselves in.

## teach SECONDARY

### VERDICT

- ✓ A fascinating selection of different artefacts
- ✓ Helpful supporting materials
- ✓ Easy to navigate
- ✓ Celebrates diversity
- ✓ Helps teachers rediscover the joy of chancing upon unexpected discoveries

### VISIT IF...

...you need to freshen up your lessons right across the curriculum with often little-known, yet touchingly human stories that speak to our rich history and heritage.



#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

John Lawson is a former secondary teacher, now serving as a foundation governor and running a tutoring service, and author of the book *The Successful (Less Stressful) Student* (Outskirts Press, £11.95); for more information, visit [prep4successnow.wordpress.com](http://prep4successnow.wordpress.com) or follow @johninpompano



#### THE LAST WORD

# The speech the faculty never heard



While teaching at a US high school, John Lawson was almost appointed Dean of Students, with responsibility for student discipline. Had administrators not opted for the other candidate, here's what would have been his inaugural address...

Dear friends,

I'm excited and honoured to address an anomaly that continues to puzzle educators – namely, how do partially educated children so frequently frustrate and outmanoeuvre dedicated teams of caring, skilled, college-educated professionals?

Effective educators share two passions – a love for learning and teaching their subjects, and a love of students. They disdain retributive punishments that merely generate resentment and resistance rather than aiding reform, which is the noble aim of discipline we should aspire to. Those who love children will teach them why certain behaviours are unacceptable in our classrooms and throughout society.

However, they will also reject the permissive approach that says any child's problems can be repeatedly cited to justify behaviours that risk the wellbeing of their teachers and peers. Ironically, those children with the most severe problems will often prove to be the least troublesome.

So from now on, please send out of the classroom any child whose misbehaviour prevents you from teaching, for that is a toxic misdemeanour. That said, note that laziness, apathy, and boredom aren't misdemeanours.

#### 'Cannot' versus 'Won't'

I require no explanatory notes or assignments to be completed – I would rather you all simply carry on teaching. I respect your professionalism, and will discover for myself the reasons behind a student's dismissal.

To that end, I'm happy to announce that the principal has designated a 30-seat classroom for my use each day. From there, I will do my utmost on a daily basis to resolve any behavioural challenges that might emerge. The personal problems students frequently encounter tend to be far too complex to be dealt with in lessons, which is my challenge rather than yours.

Your primary task is to engage those teenagers who respect your right to teach. Mine is to separate the few 'cannot behaves' from the many 'won't behaves'. Such critical judgments are almost impossible to make fairly and accurately while teaching and managing a classroom, especially for ECTs.

#### Mutual respect

My programme will teach students how to

negotiate the two-way traffic on 'Mutual Respect Boulevard' with the aid of some terrific motivational material. Students won't rejoin any courses they previously disrupted until they accept the importance of the three Rs when it comes to effective discipline: *repentance*, *reparation*, and *reconciliation*.

Reparations will take the form of written apologies. Lasting reconciliation between staff and students, meanwhile, cannot happen until the instigators of the disruption are willing to make amends and change.

Although we will swiftly remove disruptive students from classrooms, we will simultaneously commit to keeping those same children within the school community and helping them. Nobody cares more for them than their families and teachers. As educators and carers, we must forge partnerships of our own and connect those three Rs to the three Es of education: *enrichment*, *empowerment*, and *enjoyment*.

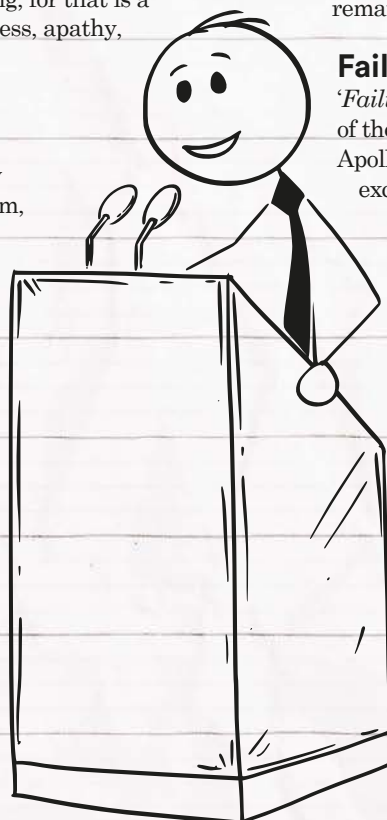
Every child has the right to an education, but that right must include a non-negotiable responsibility to be respectful of teachers. There are no winners when poor conduct remains unresolved.

#### Failure is not an option

'Failure is not an option' became the mantra of the NASA team that helped the astronauts of Apollo 13 return to Earth. It also makes an excellent mission statement for any school.

I first heard about the notion of the 'Power of One' from the speeches and writings of Sir Winston Churchill, Sir Alex Ferguson, and Desmond Tutu (RIP), and see it as something we can all learn from. This says that when dealing with serious disciplinary issues, we need to support one passionate and compassionate leader, rather than an engage with an entire staffroom full of varying dispositions, ideologies, and levels of experience.

Every school has at least one gifted teacher who can discern goodness in even the most perplexed souls. These are the individuals we must empower. I would maintain that accepting an 'inclusive zero-tolerance policy' – one that unites us all in a supportive quest to find every student's best self – is the best way of ensuring a happy and successful New Year for ourselves.







# Proven solutions. Successful student outcomes.



As a pioneer and innovator of classroom management software, **LanSchool** helps teachers connect with students to create more meaningful online experiences, both in the classroom and remotely.

Backed by **Lenovo** and building on 30 years as an **edtech** leader, **LanSchool** helps guide learning, increase collaboration and makes the most of class time.

**30+**  
**years**

**75**  
**countries**

**12M**  
**customers**

**15**  
**languages**

“We have been using LanSchool for a number of years now and absolutely love it. It has proven to be an invaluable tool for teachers to monitor and assist pupils whilst in IT rooms. From a technical point of view, it's been so easy to deploy and manage.”

Colin Dean, Network Manager Ferndown Upper School, Dorset, UK

**Lenovo**

 [info@its-group.com](mailto:info@its-group.com)

 +44(0)20 8869 1950

 [www.its-group.com](http://www.its-group.com)



Support your SEN and struggling readers at  
**Key Stage 3**

## Why choose Rapid Plus?

- Rapid Plus is independently proven to **more than double progress** in just a few months
- Our resources offer age-appropriate content with **real-life topics** that are relevant and engaging for KS3 students
- Rapid Plus on ActiveLearn gives students the chance to **practise reading independently**, with in-depth reports to **track their progress**
- **Teaching support** that both specialists and non-specialists will find easy to use
- Shortlisted in the **2020 Teach Secondary Awards**

## Real progress, proven results

Average gain in <b>reading</b> age	16 months
Average gain in <b>comprehension</b> age	20 months

*Source: independent study conducted across schools in Neath, Port Talbot.*



Find out more at: [pearsonschools.co.uk/RapidPlusAd](https://pearsonschools.co.uk/RapidPlusAd)