

the headteacher

THETEACHCO.COM

LEADING SUCCESSFUL SCHOOLS

STOP THE SWIPE

HOW TO BOOST READING STAMINA

The behaviour
myths disrupting
your school

ARE BUYING HUBS
THE WAY FORWARD?

SMART STAFF
STRUCTURES TO FIT
YOUR BUDGET

WHAT YOUR
BRANDING SAYS
ABOUT YOU

Eight steps
to support
teachers in
crisis

Cressida Cowell
BREATHING FIRE FOR
SCHOOL LIBRARIES



Always get 5 stars for safeguarding!

Using the idXtra system for total security:

Visitor Management, ID badges and Access Control... also allergen tracking at lunchtime.

Know who is on site at any time, who is late and why, all linked to SIMS / MIS

SPOTLIGHT ON...

VisiTapp - idXtra's Visitor Management system

With the market swamped with glamorous VM systems that are not cost-effective, VisiTapp does more for your money than any other.

VisiTapp is extremely flexible, advanced and adaptable, and can be tweaked to meet your school's precise requirements.



Why choose our VMS? VisiTapp can:

Print visitor badge labels with QR codes which can be scanned and registered into the system

Improve your security and safeguarding by telling you who is on-site at any given time

Record DBS certificate information and alert when they expire

Provide attendance monitoring for students at lunchtime

Track the amount of time students, staff, supply teachers and contractors spend in the building

Link to the most popular access control, MIS and email systems

Record any extracurricular, CPD, ad hoc or non-timetabled events

Be fully customised to include relevant features, and its interface can incorporate your school's logo, motto etc

Instantly ping a list of who is in the building by hitting the big red button

From the editor



Summer is fast approaching but an early release from all lockdown restrictions has been cancelled. The rise of the Delta variant to the Coronavirus saw hopes of full reopening moved back until July 19, perhaps. It threw a spanner in the works for some school sports' days but it was something a lot were ready for - having days for different classes and bubbles, a socially-distanced 'crowd' outside or the events were live streamed over social media channels. Plans are being made for the next school year and we still live in uncertain times. How will catch-up be dealt with? Will there be any more funds forthcoming? Will the school day be extended?

As to the school day being extended, Matthew Kleiner-Mann, leader of the Ivy Learning Trust, a family of ten primary schools in Enfield and Hertfordshire, takes a look at this thorny question and gives his opinion on what could happen. He looks at private schools to see if there are any lessons that can be taken from that sector.

The Covid-19 pandemic has put a strain on school budgets and it is a difficult time for anyone holding the pursestrings. Anthony David, executive headteacher, St Paul's CE Primary School and Monken Hadley CE Primary School, has interviewed a dozen leaders of schools that appear to defy the odds by being able to set surplus budgets. He looks at avenues where savings could be made, funds increase and how marketing could give you a boost.

And, if you want to know how important marketing your school is Dr Amanda Holdsworth, the founder of Holdsworth Communications and the School Comms Lab, will tell you why. She believes that you need to send out a strong message to attract new pupils to your school. But, how you do that is important. However, it doesn't have to be expensive, just make sure you stay on message.

Enjoy the issue,

Mark Hayhurst
mark.hayhurst@theteachco.com
July 2021

Our experts this issue



Gary Spracklen,
head at The Prince
of Wales School,
Dorchester



Dan Edwards,
principal of
Woodstock
Primary Academy



**Simon
Hepburn,**
founder of
Marketing Advice
for Schools



Hayden Tyers,
director of schools
at Lion Academy
Trust



Guy Shears,
chief executive
Central RSA
Academies Trust



Anthony David,
executive
headteacher



Catherine Jones,
headteacher at Blue
Gate Fields Infants
School



Julie Carson,
director of
education at
Woodland
Academy Trust



HIGHLIGHTS

11

SWAP THE SWIPE
Build pupils' reading stamina

31

SOLAR POWERED
Learning journeys powered
by the sun

24

**MAKING OUTDOOR
LEARNING WORK**
Use your space well

45

DIGITAL DIVERSITY
Be versatile with devices

From the makers
of **Teach Primary**

9 SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

- At the heart of the community
- It's a love match
- Swap the swipe

13 CREATE A CALM, POSITIVE CLASSROOM CULTURE

Five behaviour myths that could be affecting your classroom culture

14 BEYOND COVID CATCH-UP

Curriculum ("what") or Pedagogy ("how") - what matters more?

16 IT'S GOOD TO TALK

Oracy in the primary curriculum

19 EXPAND YOUR PUPILS' VIEWS

How to write your own global curriculum

20 IMPROVING DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOUR

How active lessons can make a real difference to classroom behaviour

22 THERE'S NO CATCH-UP WITHOUT WELLBEING

A focus on academic 'catch-up' must be built on firm foundations of mental wellbeing

24 HOW TO MAKE OUTDOOR LEARNING WORK

How to make the best use of whatever outdoor space you have



29 BUILDINGS & PROCUREMENT

- Buying the right way
- What are the risks?
- Solar power

33 A MODERN TIME-SAVING SOLUTION

The benefits of modular design builds for schools

34 KEEP A KEEN EYE ON YOUR FINANCES

How schools can best manage their budgets

37 BREAKING NEW GROUND WITH DFE FUNDING

The funding and design process involved for a new school

38 MORE THAN BRICKS AND MORTAR

Turning adversity into opportunity and using a new school building to create a community

41 LOOK AT THINGS DIFFERENTLY

Why rethinking space utilisation in the classroom can bring great benefits

45 EDTECH

- Digital diversity is essential
- Keep it clean
- Immersive teaching

49 HOW TO FACE A MATHS CHALLENGE

How online maths learning benefited special needs pupils during lockdown

50 SILVER DIGITAL LINING TO THE PANDEMIC

One of the most challenging years in education

52 ONLINE SAFETY IS PARAMOUNT

How to embed digital citizenship skills

55 IT'S TIME TO INSPIRE THE CODERS OF THE FUTURE

The need to boost engagement in STEM to combat the growing skills gap

56 WHY PUPILS NEED ACCESS TO DEVICES AT HOME

The importance of access to digital learning at home

58 THE VALUE OF VIDEO

The benefits of video for primary school communication

63 LEADERSHIP & HR

- Check up versus check in
- Support staff in crisis
- Strategic planning

EDITOR:

Mark Hayhurst
mark.hayhurst@theteachco.com
01206 508618

HEAD OF COMMERCIAL SOLUTIONS:

Richard Stebbing

ADVERTISING MANAGER:

Gabrielle Pitts
gabrielle.pitts@theteachco.com
01206 505956

SENIOR ACCOUNT MANAGER:

Chris Gibbs
chris.gibbs@theteachco.com
01206 505996

GROUP EDITOR: Joe Carter

ART EDITOR: Sarah Mayes

DESIGNERS:

Clare Brasier, Hannah Kemp
& Charlotte Weatherley

ACCOUNTS: 01206 505995

DESIGN & REPROGRAPHICS:

Ace Pre-Press
01206 508608

SUBSCRIPTIONS DEPARTMENT:

Andrea Turner

SUBSCRIPTION ENQUIRIES:

0330 333 0043

CUSTOMER SERVICES:

aceville@dctmedia.co.uk
0800 904 7000

PUBLISHER: Helen Tudor

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

aceville

67 WORKING TOGETHER TO IMPROVE EDUCATION

Collaboration and a shared language make trusts tick

68 GDPR THREE YEARS ON: IS IT PART OF YOUR SCHOOL'S CULTURE?

Make data protection much more than a box ticking exercise

70 PROJECT A STRONG IMAGE

The importance of primary school branding

73 STRONGER TOGETHER

Reflections on the impact of multi-academy trusts during the Covid-19 pandemic

74 BUILD A STRONG DSL TEAM

Safeguarding practices during the Covid-19 pandemic

76 STRATEGIES TO BUILD KNOWLEDGE

How can ITT providers develop the subject knowledge required by Ofsted?

LEFT: *The Promise* by Nicola Davies
and Laura Carlin

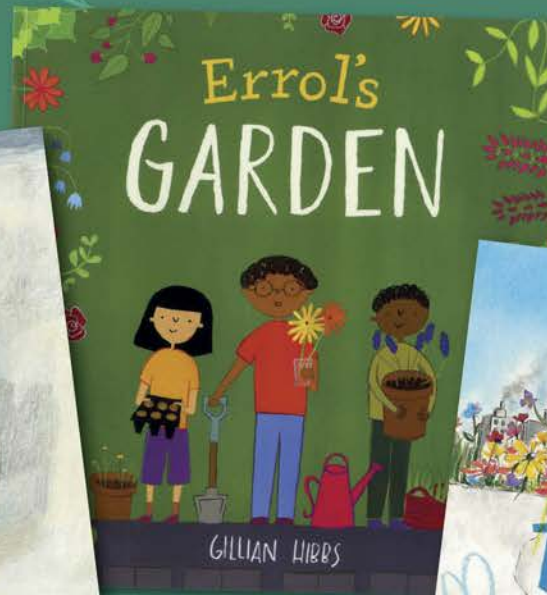
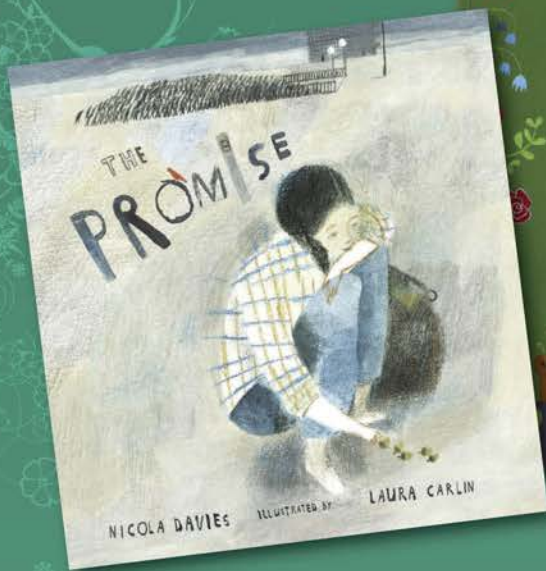
TARGETED AT PUPILS IN KEY STAGE 2

CENTER: *Errol's Garden* by Gillian Hibbs

TARGETED AT PUPILS IN EYFS

RIGHT: *The Secret Sky Garden* by

Linda Sarah and Fiona Lumbers
TARGETED AT PUPILS IN KEY STAGE 1



Support your whole school community with CLPE's back to school unit 2021-22 free literacy planning!

Register now to receive CLPE's FREE whole school teaching unit to support primary schools with the back to school transition in September. This year's two-week unit will focus on three high quality children's books, to involve whole school communities in a 'learning together, growing together' focus..

This unit will:

- Engage the whole school community in a project focusing on high quality talk, reading and writing.
- Involve children in a wide range of creative and outdoor activities designed to impact positively on social skills and emotional well-being.
- Encourage positive environmental action.

#CLPEGrowingOurFuture

Over 8000
primary schools
delivered our
Back to School
Recovery Curriculum
Unit in September
2020

Visit: www.clpe.org.uk/clpegrowingourfuture
to register your school now to receive this
free planning.



@clpe1



@clpe.org.uk



CLPE


CLPE

CENTRE FOR LITERACY
IN PRIMARY EDUCATION



Funding for primary school libraries is vital

Cressida Cowell MBE, Children's Laureate and author/illustrator of the *How To Train Your Dragon* series, speaks about the Life-Changing Libraries initiative

How did your career begin?

I read English literature at Oxford, I then went to St. Martins School of Art, and I ended up doing an MA in narrative illustration at Brighton University. So I was in education for a long time. Because I'm a writer and an illustrator, I use my education every day. At Oxford, I was studying Anglo-Saxon and that's where I first read the viking sagas. Obviously, that had a big impact! I was learning the nitty gritty of putting a book together and the visual side is a big part of what I do. I'm presenting books which are for the mass market, that are highly intelligent, not dumbed down at all, and it's an interesting challenge, but they are also highly visual. And that's a way of getting children reading - writing books that look like sweets, not brussel sprouts.

I write my books to be read aloud. If you think, from a child's point of view, things on telly are just beamed magically into their heads and they don't have to make an effort. Whereas books require decoding and it can very often come to represent something that makes them feel stupid. So a way of bypassing that is reading aloud, because then you're giving them the story to their intelligence rather than their decoding ability. So, I deliberately write them to be read aloud by adults to children, which doesn't always

happen, but it means that the children are still getting the words even if they're not up to the decoding. And books read to you in an adult's voice live with you all your life.

Do you feel the Covid-19 pandemic has put a strain on young children's reading skills?

Well, we already had a problem even before the pandemic. According to the Sutton Trust the most disadvantaged children were already starting school 11 months behind their better off peers. Following the pandemic children from less better off backgrounds are in a worse position. Research shows that the two biggest indicators of a child's later economic success, let alone their happiness or anything like that, were reading for pleasure and parental involvement in education. A study by professor Stephen Krashen, of the University of Southern California, discovered that one of the biggest indicators of doing well in reading scores was coming from a higher income economic status.

However, if you came from a position of poverty, you still had a likelihood of getting the same reading scores as somebody from a higher income if you had access to a library of 500 books. I mean, so school libraries are essential!

sense. Especially when there's so much data to show what an impact it has on literacy skills and your later educational success. Every increment that your literacy goes up the more likely you are to vote, to own your own home and more likely you are to not be in prison. How can a child become a reader for pleasure if their parents or carers cannot afford books, and their primary school has no library, or that library is woefully insufficient?

I've made this political ask for money over and above the present minute amount allocated, a bit like the sports premium, to be ring fenced for school libraries so that schools don't have to look within.

I'd like to see a yearly investment of £100m to help ensure that all schools have access to the key ingredients required to create and sustain a library space and develop a culture of reading for pleasure. Surely the opportunity to become a reader for pleasure is just as important as the sports premium? How is it fair that some children are being given this immeasurable advantage in life, but stark book poverty means many more are denied this same chance to change their future? Every primary school child should have access to a gold standard library.

What do you class as a gold standard library?

Space, book provision, expertise, and whole-school and parent involvement. We need books that look like sweets and not brussel sprouts and somebody in school who's in charge of that reading for pleasure culture.

What can you do to help this?

Well, with the support of the BookTrust, we are launching the Life-Changing Libraries initiative. Over the course of a year, six very different primary schools across England – all of which have at least 25 per cent of pupils eligible for free school meals – will be helped to develop a reading for pleasure culture.

A bespoke, dedicated library space will be created by BookTrust in each of the six primary schools and stocked with a specially curated book list of approximately 1,000 titles, selected by BookTrust's book selection team with guidance from the Centre for Literacy in

Skerne Park Primary School

Is that why you've called on the Government to increase primary school library funding?

Yes, I am not blaming headteachers or the teaching community at all. It has been an extremely difficult situation. But, we've ended up with a situation in which children on free school meals are twice as likely to be in a school that doesn't have a library. That just doesn't make





Benwick Primary School overview

Primary Education, to inspire and engage children. Staff will be provided with professional training and mentoring from specialists at the School Library Association, as part of a two-year membership.

The project is being supported by: Reading Cloud, who are providing a library management system subscription for each school; FG Library and Learning, who are helping refresh spaces with furniture and display products; Promote Your School, who are creating bespoke wall art; Rising Stars Reading Planet and Jobtrain; Tonies, who are providing each school a Toniebox; leading UK publishers, who are donating books to stock the new library spaces; and CLPE who are providing access to their Power of Reading resources.

The project will monitor the impact on pupils' engagement, attitudes and reading behaviour across 12 months, collecting qualitative stories and case studies.

“And that’s a way of getting children reading - writing books that look like sweets, not brussel sprouts.”

The six schools are: Benwick Primary School (Cambridgeshire), Dinnington Community Primary School (Rotherham), Griffin Primary School (Wandsworth), Saviour CE Primary (Manchester), Skerne Park Primary School (Darlington) and Woodchurch C of E Primary School (Wirral).

Why are you backing this project?

It's because 15 per cent of primary schools have no designated library space at all and only 34 per cent have a designated library budget. Only 38 per cent have a designated person responsible for the library space. Also, we want to draw the public's attention to the lack of library provision - you have libraries in prison but not in schools. So parents can then ask 'what's the library like at my child's school'. And it's also about book poverty. If a family can't afford to put food on the table then they can't afford books. So primary school libraries are vital.

Because I have visited so many schools over the years, I just want to say, again, how incredibly impressed I am by teachers and the hard work they put in and how valiantly they have been trying to make things work, and they're continuing to try to do that.

CAREER TIMELINE

1998

Wrote and illustrated her first published book, (Little Bo Peep's Library Book)

2003

Publication of *How to Train Your Dragon*

2010

Release of the first film in *Dreamworks' How to Train Your Dragon* movie franchise

2017

The Wizards of Once is a number one best seller

2019

Became the 11th Waterstones Children's Laureate

2020

Received an MBE for services to children's literature

CARE SUPPORT SERVICE

Easing
Isolation &
Exhaustion



We provide support, respite and home care to families who have children aged 0-19 with congenital heart defects or feeding issues across the North West of England.

- ♥ All staff are Enhanced Child DBS Checked
- ♥ CQC Registered and fully insured
- ♥ Minimum of 2 hours support each week
- ♥ Fully trained support workers (Hoist, Meds, Suction, CPR, Vent etc)

This service is free to access for families who do not qualify for a funded care package from local authorities or CCG's. To refer a family or indeed yourself please get in touch or complete our simple Referral Form online.



info@lagans.org.uk



01204 800300



www.lagans.org.uk



School Improvement

COVID-19, COMMUNITY AND COURAGEOUS ADVOCACY

Lisa Dale explains why Christian schools are at the heart of our communities more than ever before

As I started my day on 22nd February 2021, about to prepare my school for full opening – again, I did not expect a call from Ofsted informing me of a ‘bonus’ monitoring inspection. The inspection would be a remote one and our remote education provision would be under scrutiny four days before it was due to end. The next two days were interesting to say the least.

What we were able to celebrate, however, was that our ‘remote provision’ was as much about the wellbeing and support of our families as trying to keep children learning.

COMMUNITY

The challenging circumstances we have all adapted to during the coronavirus pandemic have reinforced our purpose as a Church School. Church Schools were designed to

serve the communities that they are in.

Many, established in the 1800s, were supporting the education of working children. A wider focus on spiritual and moral education was as important as helping children to learn skills or a trade.

In my view, never has this community-focused service been more necessary than during the last year.

Our endeavours to serve the school community included online access to school staff and pastoral support every day for both children and parents, phone calls and virtual meetings, signposting to mental health organisations and others for people in crisis, recorded worship with positive messages based around values as well as bereavement support.

This was extended to serving our wider community with the various messages of hope displayed on the perimeter of the school grounds, hidden in hymn books in the local church and in library books in town; letters written to residents of local

“Our actions to positively affect people’s lives is at the core of what we do, not an add-on to standard education provision.”

care homes and cards sent to local people to help combat loneliness and isolation.

One local resident wrote to me to say our messages were “considerate, inspiring and hopeful... and brightened her day”.

We provided food, (sometimes delivered by me, driving round in my car, getting lost), laptops, clothes and even fridges in partnership with our local church, food banks and other organisations. Sometimes for our children who couldn't make it in and other times hampers and packages for whole families. This made me feel that we were bringing a little bit of light to people but importantly, that, as a Church School, this is what we were designed to do.

Nothing was insurmountable and we overcame the new and unique challenges together, giving our children a unique perspective on what it means to be part of a community and how we are part of a real school family.

COURAGEOUS ADVOCACY

We have been able to increase everyone's awareness of the challenges other people face in life and how we can support local causes and make a real difference in our communities. Our staff and children are advocates for the common good. They know they can overcome barriers and change lives.

We have only done the same as thousands of schools up and down the country, but what is clearer to me than ever before is that, as a Church of England School, all of this is our duty. Our actions to positively affect people's lives is at the core of what we do, not an add-on to standard education provision.

We are now fully open, and we are still providing these services. The huge impact of Covid-19 will be with us for some time to come, but so will hope, aspiration and courageous advocacy, in abundance. It is my hope that this generation of children take with them the sense of innovation, outreach, and a need to act for the greater good, rather than focusing on this being a time of isolation.

A Year 3 child recently said to me, while running past playing with friends at breaktime, “I've enjoyed not seeing my family so much.” To which my surprised “Why?” was met with “Well, I have been reading to my grandad on Zoom and we'd never have done that without lockdown.”

A cup half full. Long may that continue.

Lisa Dale, headteacher Howbridge Primary, Witham



IT'S A LOVE MATCH

Dan Smith explains how tennis has played an important role in wellbeing

We signed up for the LTA Youth Schools programme after our School Games Organiser informed all our schools about the opportunity. We've always taught tennis as part of our curriculum, so we wanted to look at some new ideas to help keep our lessons fresh and up to date - we were really excited when we heard about the new programme.

We are always looking at getting our children to try different sports in school, in the hope that it sparks their enthusiasm to want to carry on playing after school hours. With LTA Youth Schools coming from the national governing body of tennis, we were confident that it would be of benefit to us.

EMPATHY

PE has always been an important part of the school curriculum, but it is arguably even more vital now due to the national lockdown which saw so many children being inactive over this last year. PE plays a key role in teaching transferable skills needed to play different sports and also developing basic movements that are needed to function in everyday life. Away from the physical benefits of PE, it also helps to develop resilience, empathy, confidence and social skills - which are all vital for good mental health. The LTA Youth Schools programme has a strand focussed on just this - developing key character qualities through assemblies and classroom-based challenges. We place a high level of importance on PE at our school, the children love playing, moving and learning all at the same time.

VOUCHER

LTA Youth Schools has been great for our school. Not only have we received amazing training through the free online course, but the resources that we now have are brilliant and we will continue to use them for years to come. We have access to the website which shows great video examples of how to teach each task and a resource book with all the same information as the website that can be brought into a lesson. And unlike any other training course, we were also given a £250 voucher so we were able to buy the equipment needed for the lessons. This is a huge statement from the LTA to show how dedicated they are to helping children develop both their tennis skills as well as basic fundamental movements.

FANTASTIC

LTA Youth Schools can be used throughout the school, as the lessons are aimed for children from Year 1 to 6. It's broken down into easy to follow schemes of work and sections which is great for any classroom teacher who might not feel confident teaching PE.

Tennis is a fantastic sport for children and adults to participate in. It's a sport that I was lucky enough to play growing up and I'd love to encourage the children at our school to play it as much as possible. Tennis is great as it can be played by yourself against a wall with just a racket and ball or with friends socially at a park or club.

Dan Smith, Manchester Road Primary Academy Sports Coach PE Lead

“Tennis is a fantastic sport for children and adults to participate in.”

How to swap the swipe and get children reading

Lockdown has affected children's ability to read longer texts and pupils need help to build their reading stamina says **Cathy Prole**

Technology was our salvation during lockdown. Online lessons, digital activities and smartphone apps kept children learning when they couldn't be in the classroom. Video conferencing enabled families to keep in touch with us and each other, and screens kept children entertained while get-togethers with friends were off the agenda.

The children adapted brilliantly to the virtual world. However, our enforced move to remote learning could be having some unintended consequences. An over-reliance on technology can shorten the attention span, and that's something we've noticed now the pupils are back at school. Children have become used to a constant stream of video clips and sound bites which they click, tap, like and swipe

"A sure-fire way to engage children in reading is to get them talking about books."



their way through at speed. Children may now be digital experts, but they're finding it harder to focus on reading for a sustained length of time.

For children who are accustomed to moving rapidly from one visual stimulus to the next, sitting in a quiet corner with a book is actually quite a challenge. The situation hasn't been helped by Covid-19 restrictions closing library doors and making book sharing all but impossible.

If pupils are unable to read longer pieces of text, they are going to find it harder to access other elements of their learning further down the line. They will also miss out on one of life's great pleasures, the enjoyment of a good book.

The positive news is that there are some simple yet effective strategies to help children reboot their powers of concentration and improve their sustained reading.

Mix online with offline

There is no benefit in ditching the screens entirely, in fact children's digital literacy can boost their offline literacy if handled carefully. In our guided reading sessions we divide children into three groups, one group reads an online text, another reads a book around the same subject and a third does follow-up work on the content.

These groups rotate so everyone has the opportunity to read in different ways and develop their understanding of what they have read.

Using this blended approach helps children access and process information and is a great way to bridge the transition from screen to paper.

Make it manageable

For children used to a fast-paced information feed, long blocks of text can look daunting, so it's a good idea to break content down into manageable chunks. This can be achieved by giving the child a highlighter pen and asking them to find words, or getting them to summarise a paragraph they have just read. Smaller chunks of time are easier to manage too, such as reading for 15 minutes followed by a break.

Our pupils enjoy being asked to scan and skim short pieces of text. We can then help the children consolidate those skills by gradually moving to longer extracts of writing.

Boost reading speed

Silent reading is an important skill but slower readers can be easily discouraged, particularly when they are used to accessing visual content at the touch of a screen. However, it's not always that easy to spot if a child is having difficulties reading alone. One of the assessment tools we use tracks a child's eye movements as they read. The technology analyses how long a child's eyes rest on one word, and how quickly their eyes move forwards and backwards across a series of words.

This helps us see which children may need additional interventions to help them improve their reading speed so they can read more text for longer.

Encourage shared reading

A sure-fire way to engage children in reading is to get them talking about books. Paired reading with time built in for discussion enables children to start questioning facts and enjoying stories together. Asking children about their favourite books brings new ideas to the class, and when a child recommends a book to a friend, that's a powerful thing.

As the world opens up, there will be more opportunities for children to take part in library reading challenges, book fairs and competitions. We have also been involving parents by suggesting ways they can get their children excited about reading, and create a buzz around books.

This past year has seen children's technology skills come on in leaps and bounds. By making reading accessible, engaging and fun, we can make sure their literacy skills grow stronger too.

Cathy Prole is deputy head at St Michael's C of E Primary School in Flixton, Manchester. The school use Lexplore Interventions to help pupils improve their reading fluency and sustain reading levels. You can find out more at: <https://www.lexplore.com/gb/>

Your fire risk assessment. **DO IT JUSTICE.**

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

Receive training to complete your Fire Risk Assessment.

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

Email: training@thefpa.co.uk or visit
www.thefpa.co.uk/training

Let us complete your Fire Risk Assessment.

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

- Accredited with BAFE SP205 Certification

Email: technical@thefpa.co.uk or visit
www.thefpa.co.uk/services

Do your Fire Risk Assessment
justice. Call us now on
01608 812 500 or
visit **www.thefpa.co.uk**



**Fire Protection
Association**



CREATE A CALM, POSITIVE CLASSROOM

Maria Taylor explains five behaviour myths that could be affecting your classroom culture

As the debate continues over whether Covid-19 has worsened behaviour in the classroom or not, it is possible to highlight five top myths that can hinder a positive classroom culture. Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI), which acquired Pivotal Education in 2017, consulted its in-house trainers to allay the top behaviour myths in schools.

There is no evidence to suggest that Covid has actually made classroom behaviour worse, as a lot of people may have expected. However, education is still shrouded in behaviour myths so we asked our team of education experts, all of whom are former teachers, to see what other myths they've encountered that they'd like to challenge.



“Building genuine connections with your learners is essential to developing a healthy rapport which in turn supports a relational approach.”

1 Don't smile until Christmas: While this is a metaphor for beginning the new term by establishing clear boundaries and expectations, you should be able to smile as often as appropriate and possible. Building genuine connections with your learners is essential to developing a healthy rapport which in turn supports a relational approach. Your learners need to know you value their presence and if you are too detached, they will question if you care at all.

2 Children just need to do as they are told: Thinking this doesn't help anyone. Children and young people are not mini adults, they are 'adults in the making'. We need to make sure we continue to model, teach and recognise key learning behaviours as they develop their own self-regulatory skills. Behaviour is learned; being transparent with boundaries, setting clear routines and supporting positive behavioural habits are essential elements when communicating expectations.

3 There will always be some who just won't behave and don't want to learn: We are born curious, wanting to seek and consume information about the world around us. Is it that they don't want to learn or don't want to behave, or have the adults not yet unpicked the origins of this perceived apathy?

Just because what you've tried hasn't worked yet it doesn't mean nothing will

work. There may be several factors influencing a learner's behaviour and so it can be difficult to quantify and measure strategies. The reality is human beings, trauma and life experience is complex, so we need to focus on what is within our power to change. By consistently giving our first attention to the behaviour that we want will allow us to be very clear about our expectations. You will get more of the behaviour you notice the most.

4 If I adapt my responses depending on a learner's needs, other learners will see it as unfair/special treatment: Differentiating for behaviour is not about letting some learners sidestep expectations because you're more aware of the difficulties they face at home. It's about keeping your eye on the culture you want everyone to be a part of and deciding on the best route for different learners to get there.

Children and young people show notable sophistication in their understanding of fairness. Talk overtly to your learners about the need for varied responses and levels of support. Talk frequently about fairness, equality and equity and invite learners, when appropriate, to question decisions as

opposed to allowing their frustrations over what may appear to be special treatment to fester.

5 Punishment teaches young people how to behave: It takes time, effort, persistence to turn things around as well as consistent commitment across the staff team. The relationships you hold with your learners need to be robust as they can be fragile at times. The delivery of punitive sanctions will likely chip away at the core of these relationships.

It is far more effective to invest time and energy into supporting young people to identify their inappropriate behaviour choices and help them learn to improve their decision making. It is essential that a leadership team fully supports this ambition and you are not a lone voice championing a cause against the tide. For more advice go to www.crisisprevention.com/en-GB/Our-Programs/Classroom-Culture.

Maria Taylor, Crisis Prevention Institute's International Director of Programmes for Education

BEYOND COVID CATCH-UP

Hayden Tyers asks Curriculum (“what”) or Pedagogy (“how”) - what matters more?

When the Covid-19 crisis caused all schools across the country to close to most pupils in 2020, it was clear that this would have an impact on pupils’ wellbeing and learning. How big of an impact was unknown at the time, driving speculation about “lost learning” and the need for a “catch-up curriculum”.

This continued throughout the autumn term when pupils returned - and the infection rates caused further disruption to learning. Providing remote education further complicated the way in which children’s learning was delivered. For the Lion Academy Trust, there have been many positives that have come from this challenging time and it has made us think carefully about what matters more - is it what we teach or is it how we teach that makes the biggest difference? How can we make sure that the curriculum has an impact on improving outcomes when children return?

EXCITING CURRICULUM

We started with the end in mind and focused on the learning experience that the children would receive when they returned. Our work as a trust in reviewing and enhancing our wider curriculum offer for the last two years proved essential. Running ten schools nationally showed that irrespective of Covid-19 or the large-scale disruptions, all children benefit from an exciting curriculum that is curated and sequenced in a logical and well thought out manner. Our curriculum is designed so that all children are fully immersed in the learning experience and are able to talk about and lead on all aspects of their learning.

As a leading educational user of the Google suite of platforms, learning in-class and remotely was maintained to the same immersive, inclusive standards - implemented swiftly for September 2020. Alongside distributing over 1,000 devices to support learning at home, rich curriculum content was supplemented by regular and meaningful opportunities for assessing how well pupils were progressing with their learning via a range of questions to make children think deeply about what they have learned and

their next steps. This curriculum - The Lion Learning Pathways - can be found at www.lionlearningpathways.net.

WHAT SHOULD WE TEACH FIRST?

Assessment is the key to knowing what the gaps in learning, knowledge, skills and understanding are. Formal testing cannot provide all the answers; a programme of supporting the children back into school and then tailoring the learning to their needs requires planning and a range of opportunities to assess where each child was against all areas of the curriculum. Pupil conferences, limited testing and focus groups all were deployed to establish a per-pupil snapshot. For those that required additional support such as pupils with SEND that were not yet working on the national curriculum content, further tailored support plans were defined and implemented.

CLASSROOM LAYOUT

How well would the children engage with learning content and the curriculum when they returned and what might affect this? When children returned to classrooms in September, a key priority was helping them engage with the learning content in a new and adapted way. Classroom layouts had to be changed; entry and exit processes were amended; mealtimes and movement around the school were stringently controlled to meet infection control requirements. The period of closure had impacted on children’s ability to persevere with tasks, as well as their levels of independence and resilience to challenges in learning. In all key stages, it was clear that additional teacher development would be key to enabling content to be delivered effectively and to meet the needs of all our learners.

A coherent and consistent pedagogy in all

of our schools is a core element of successful teaching and learning. All lessons are underpinned with regular and meaningful opportunities for children to talk about what they are learning and how to be successful in their learning. As lessons are delivered in a similar way, children make better progress because how to learn successfully is established in a consistent manner. Temporary amendments to how this was enabled through changes in the set-up of each school therefore needed to be implemented.

REMOTE LEARNING

What core elements of teaching and learning had been impacted most significantly by the period of closure and the changes to remote learning? Remote learning became a greater challenge to overcome.

Leaders had to shift the focus of CPD for teachers in novel ways, ensuring children’s learning was not diminished because of imposed structural changes. Supporting staff via effective CPD was aimed at continuing to ensure children’s ability to talk coherently about their learning was not affected by the closure or move to remote teaching. We focused on developing staff ability to be able to:

- Provide regular and meaningful opportunities for children to discuss and collaborate

“Assessment is the key to knowing what the gaps in learning, knowledge, skills and understanding are.”

with their learning - what learning came before? How does this relate to current learning? More challenging to deliver remotely - this became a key development point when the children returned.

- Model learning in a systematic way that builds on prior knowledge and skills and uses assessment for learning strategies effectively to shape learning so all children progress.
- Manage the misconception about modelling learning and allowing the children to be clear about what they are learning versus explaining the task was a key support activity.
- Deliver effective focus groups that enable assessment of children's knowledge and understanding of skills and content - as well as teaching targeted learning to close the curriculum gaps.

Through this work, as well as discussions with leaders and a range of surveys, an emerging trend started to appear within different groups of staff.

TRANSITIONING

Are there any key groups of staff that have been more affected by this period? Two key staffing groups had been most affected - those that were new to teaching - currently NQT's and RQT's, and those that had recently secured a new leadership post.

The first year in post for new teaching staff had been significantly disrupted - breaking the cycle of the

peaks and troughs of the academic calendar. How to deliver teaching and how to lead teaching was also different due to the many changes and challenges emerging. This resulted in some staff thinking that the strategies for delivering remote education would be the same as successfully delivering this in the classroom. Equally, those that were responsible for leading teaching needed support in transitioning practice back into the class settings.

Some of the newest leaders felt that as we had to adapt the "way" in which learning was delivered (the technology that was used) that there was a need to adapt "how" it was delivered. To combat this, we transformed the teacher and leader development priorities to focus sharply on developing the knowledge, skills and understanding to deliver effective teaching through remote education to maintain consistency in "how" learning was delivered to ensure that when the children returned, the learning experience was seamless.

As such, the period of closure and the constant disruption to education has reminded us of the importance of the following foundations for enabling children to make great progress:

- Staff development to ensure that they understand what effective pedagogy is as well as accessing rich curriculum content are equally important.

A curriculum that is designed to help children make progress that is taught poorly will not have the right impact. Equally, highly effective teaching practice that is delivering the wrong content is also ineffective. It is by developing both curriculum and pedagogical expertise in a systematic manner that leads to the biggest impact on pupils' progress and raising attainment.

• The biggest key to unlocking success and enabling progress is making the learning and the learning process clear and consistent for the children.

• Assess the children very well, in a range of ways and with planned regularity, so that there is a clear understanding of the gaps in learning that the children have.

• Teachers and leaders are great at adapting and providing solutions, but also benefit from continuity - in how they are teaching and what they are expected to teach.

The pandemic and disruption has reminded us of many things. What it hasn't done is taught us anything new about how to support those who have fallen behind, or those who need a bespoke plan because of their individual needs. Simply, we need to know what the gaps are, to have an exciting curriculum for them to access that meets their learning needs, and to teach it very well, every day. This will make the biggest difference, and it always has.

HOW TO MOVE FORWARD

- **Work to ensure that the structures in every lesson are the same - to avoid losing time and quality through unnecessary variations in teaching practice.**
- **Keep children focussed and excited about their time in class through drawing on the broadest range of experiences, technologies and opportunities for learning - the progress required comes from this married with superb teaching - not through repetition and reducing the sense of wonder and passion for being back at school.**
- **Reach out to organisations with answers - the Lion Academy Trust (like many other MATs) have developed proven solutions - not just in pedagogical or curriculum terms - but more broadly in finance, estates, IT, staffing development and CPD - you're not alone and you don't have to solve every problem as a single school entity.**



Hayden Tyers, Director of Schools at Lion Academy Trust. For more information contact info@lionacademytrust.net

lionacademytrust.net

IT'S GOOD TO TALK

Sarah Davies talks about oracy in the primary curriculum

According to The Communication Trust (2015); 'Communication skills are at the heart of social interaction, participation, building relationships, making friends, and making sense of the human world around you.' At the heart of these positive effects is the knowledge that is acquired during those crucial stages of child development.

Early years settings and primary schools are often at the forefront of using oracy strategies for furthering knowledge acquisition, yet it is easy to become consumed in a trap of perceiving the teaching and the recognition of effective oracy skills being an 'add on'. In some situations, the concept of oracy can be deemed as a 'means to an end' as opposed to an integral component that requires explicit acknowledgement.

By considering the benefits of implicit strategies that practitioners may be using and making them explicit reference points for oracy development, embedding opportunities of developing this skill is integral to an inclusive and developed curriculum.

According to the English Speaking Union and various other charities that are working to raise awareness of oracy skills in the classroom, there are several reasons behind the explicit teaching of oracy skills in the classroom and the development of communication skills:

- Disadvantaged children are 2.3 times more likely to be identified as having speech, language and communication needs than those in more affluent areas (The Communication Trust, 2015).
- In many parts of the country, over 50 per cent of students start school lacking vital oracy skills (Lee, W. 2013).
- Some pupils in inner-city classes contribute on average just four words per lesson (National Literacy Trust, 2019).
- The UK's poorest children start school 19 months behind their wealthier peers in language and vocabulary (National Literacy Trust, 2019).

When we take into account the detrimental impact that the recent pandemic has had on the communication capabilities of

our students, the alarming likelihood that these statistics have actually become more significant is a realistic assumption. To reference The Matthew Effect, the recent pandemic will bring with it situations whereby students have not been exposed to a range of audiences and contexts. Instead, their communication may have been hindered by having to engage remotely and sometimes having limited interaction with others.

DISCUSSION

By consciously considering how and when we are teaching and engaging with oracy skills, we can therefore help our students in much more than their summative educational assessments. By developing a curriculum that has specific reference for discussions and recognition of effective communications, this consequently promotes the intrinsic skills that are required for post academia.

Although in Early Years settings this long-term aspiration may be a distant future, the foundations that are laid are vital to build confident structures. The implementation of these skills doesn't just result in a positive impact on the students. The more we develop our approaches to oracy in the curriculum, the more we can begin to establish:

- The ability to provide verbal feedback and consequently a reduction of workload.
- The ability to model effective oracy skills and support both colleague and student conversations, promoting focused and meaningful dialogue.
- The use of these skills to promote established behaviour management strategies and opportunity for restorative dialogues.
- The use of these skills to support staff/colleague health and wellbeing.

When we consider the origin of communication, the need to communicate is one of the first skills that babies are able to attempt from birth. Whether they are hungry, tired, uncomfortable, in pain, or in need of close physical contact with a caregiver,

babies demonstrate their own attempts to communicate. As children develop, their abilities often develop. Infants laugh when they are happy, they yawn when they are tired. They may not be able to hold a conversation, or articulate their needs, but through the use of body language, facial expressions and sounds, they can make you completely aware of their wants or requirements.

SURVIVAL

As discussed in Talking about Oracy (2020), it is from this young age that we see the emergence of two different sets of communication skills that will form the basis for their future development.

- Receptive communication is the ability to use vocalisation in order to acknowledge the comprehension and receiving of a message from another person. Although at the start this vocalisation could be a simple 'coo' or another sound, the response indicates some receipt of understanding.
- Expressive communication is the opposite. This is the ability to convey their message to others. No matter the form of communication (babble, crying, body language) this is the first key steps to effective communication.

From a Darwinist perspective, survival relies heavily on the ability to communicate, particularly when we are in our most vulnerable infantile state. From a modern-day perspective, it is during the early years, that these skills are nurtured and developed in a controlled and measured environment.

Although this is commonplace for all primary settings, the shift in focus to more skills based summative assessment foci towards the later years has acted as the catalyst for a less bespoke and considered approach to the significance of oracy skills. However, by promoting the development of these communication skills, the suggestion is that communication consequently leads to the ability to develop an internal dialogue that can be used to support knowledge acquisition and consideration.

Vygotsky, cited in Britton (1993), refers to this as 'speech for oneself'.

"When we consider the origin of communication, the need to communicate is one of the first skills that babies are able to attempt from birth."

This process of internalised language is essential for problem solving, reasoning and abstract thinking skills. This would therefore imply that the inability to internalise language would consequently have a detrimental impact on the cognitive development of the individual. Early infant and carer interactions are essential for all areas of a child's development. As language develops, they go from talking in the present tense and progressively to the past and future tense. Piaget suggests that not until a child has learned the concept of time will this be displayed within their language use; however, the more explicit we make these skills the more confident that children become in attempting to develop their vocabulary.

PROGRESS

The relationship between oracy and improved outcomes, (not just academically focused), can also be identified by the building of teacher/student relationships. In 2016, Pearson researched into the qualities of an effective teacher; the findings concluded that relationships were key to forming strong and reciprocal foundations on which learning can take place. It is the ability to develop a connection with the learner that enables them with the confidence to progress and develop.

Out of all of the contributing factors that were considered throughout the research, the three dominant elements that supported the efficiency of all practitioners was:

- The ability to develop relationships.
- The perception of being kind and caring.
- The ability to engage with learners.

HOW ORACY SKILLS CAN SUPPORT OUR STUDENTS

- Supporting a reduction in anxiety due to the encouragement of positive discussions that focus on the sharing of thoughts and feelings, even in our current situation.
- Expressing their thoughts and feelings in a more structured manner through articulation and recognition of contextualisation.
- Building an understanding of social issues through active discussion and debate.
- Providing strategies that can be used to encourage restorative practice or to manage difficult conversations effectively through clarity and awareness.
- Collaborating with others and maintaining a dialogue with peers that can develop into friendship as well as encouraging future professional networking for both practitioners and students.
- The ability to recognise the components of oracy skills and how these should be implemented for effective communication.
- The ability to develop critical thinking through communication and dialogue that encourages further development and deeper learning.

Consequently, explicitly referencing effective communication skills in our pedagogical approaches allows for a deeper recognition of a vital life skill to be embedded. It is also the recognition of its significance that provides us with the tools to support knowledge acquisition. From the perspective of all stakeholders, it is the ability to communicate that acts as the foundations onto which all pedagogical knowledge could be adopted.



Sarah Davies is a lead practitioner and head of English in a multi academy trust secondary school. Her book, Talking about Oracy: Developing communication beyond the classroom, published by John Catt Educational, is out now, price (£14) for more information go to <https://amzn.to/2TwmZYR>

Transforming Early Years Classrooms

"We are delighted with our new learning environment which supports and enriches all aspects of our curriculum. Our children now have access to a stimulating and exciting environment in which to learn and as a result, all children are thriving"

Thrussington CE Academy
Leicester



Design early years with expert support

Equip classrooms with specialist furniture

Planning to revitalise your early years classrooms?

Explore Early Excellence today

To find out about Early Excellence and gain expert help to equip your early years classrooms visit: earlyexcellence.com or call 01422 311 314

To explore our FREE design service visit: earlyexcellence.com/design



Early
Excellence
Inspirational
Learning



Order a brochure pack & explore today

earlyexcellence.com/brochures

Expand your pupils' views

Sarah Wordlaw explains how to write your own global curriculum

With the rise in awareness regarding race and gender equality over the past year, it is a perfect time to rewrite your school's curriculum to ensure it reflects a rich global history and citizenship. It is important that children see themselves, their heritage, their cultures, their religions reflected and taught. Not as a tokenistic celebration day or week, but weaved throughout the curriculum.

The curriculum should include a well-rounded British history, including Black British history, British Asian history, women's history, LGBTQIA+ history and role models from all of the above. Curriculum should teach social justice, sustainability, human rights and develop children's voices and confidence to articulate and justify their thoughts. Developing children's voices raises awareness and empowerment, particularly in marginalised communities and promotes empathy.

Does the curriculum reflect the local community? Do we teach role models from a broad spectrum of abilities, races, ethnicities, sexualities, genders and religions? How well-rounded will a child leaving my school be?

Of course, writing a curriculum based solely on the local community and not encompassing those from different communities is not helpful either. Children need a broad spectrum of local, national and international history and issues.

A blank whole school curriculum map can be equal parts exciting and daunting. Take it step by step. Here's a few tips on how to start.

LOCAL HISTORY

Look at your cohort and local community: ethnic breakdown, different religions, abilities and culture. Ensure there are projects for history, geography or literacy reflecting the cultures and backgrounds in your cohort. Use your local community for expertise. Get parents, carers, faith leaders, charities, local services and businesses in to speak to and inspire the children. Get out and about and involved in community issues and events.

NATIONAL HISTORY

Irrespective of your cohort, we are a diverse nation and the best way to improve empathy and reduce discrimination in all its forms is through education. A rich study of national history cannot be crammed into one year but ensure that by the time a child leaves your school, they've had access to an inclusive national history.



“It is important that children see themselves, their heritage, their cultures, their religions reflected and taught.”

Some suggested study areas for British history that extends pupils' chronological knowledge beyond 1066: the Windrush, migration to Britain through time, Emmeline Pankhurst, women's suffrage, London Olympics and Paralympics, Olive Morris, Mary Seacole, women in parliament.

INTERNATIONAL HISTORY

Obviously, it is impossible to encompass the world's history into a primary school curriculum, but ensure that your studies of a non-European society contrasting with British history are varied across the year groups. Even though Ancient Benin and Baghdad are suggested on the national curriculum, I've rarely seen them appear on curriculum maps. When studying the World Wars, look at the black soldiers who fought both for Britain and in Britain. Be sure to include freedom fighters from all walks of life when studying historical role models: Harvey Milk's fighting for gay rights, Emmanuel Ofosu Yeboah who brought the world's attention to the fact that disability does not mean inability.

GEOGRAPHY PROJECTS

Take a look at the UN Sustainability Goals. These are a collection of 17 goals set by the

United Nation to achieve a “better and more sustainable future for all”. These are: (1) No Poverty, (2) Zero Hunger, (3) Good Health and Well-being, (4) Quality Education, (5) Gender Equality, (6) Clean Water and Sanitation, (7) Affordable and Clean Energy, (8) Decent Work and Economic Growth, (9) Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure, (10) Reducing Inequality, (11) Sustainable Cities and Communities, (12) Responsible Consumption and Production, (13) Climate Action, (14) Life Below Water, (15) Life On Land, (16) Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions, (17) Partnerships for the Goals. These are a fabulous resource to teach children relevant geography deep rooted in activism for a better world. Another great resource is Oxfam's education resources for global citizenship.

Post Covid-19 really is a chance to start again. To develop new ways of working, to shake up the curriculum and to be part of building a better global community through rich, inclusive and diverse education. Let's shake things up. Let's make sure the next generation is more tolerant, empathetic and able to critically think and voice well-rounded views.

Sarah Wordlaw, deputy headteacher, Comber Grove Primary School, Camberwell, London

IMPROVING DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOUR

Joel Beeden explains how active lessons can make a real difference to classroom behaviour

Lockdown restrictions have affected everyone's activity levels. Playgrounds were empty, sports clubs were silent and swimming pools shut. Online PE with Joe Wicks just isn't the same as playing your favourite football game in the park with your best friends.

Figures from Sport England show that the majority of young people failed to meet the recommended 60 minutes of daily exercise in the 2019/20 academic year. And almost a third of children (2.3 million) were classed as 'inactive' thanks to restrictions during lockdown, not even doing 30 minutes of exercise per day.

EXERCISE DOES A WORLD OF GOOD

This sedentary living will have taken its toll. The positive impact of physical activity on children is a scientific fact. And it's not just about maintaining a healthy weight. Exercise strengthens bones and organs and improves coordination, balance, posture and flexibility. It also reduces the risk of developing heart disease, cancer and type-2 diabetes in later life.

Then there's the wellbeing side of it. Active children are more likely to sleep well at night, making it easier to concentrate and get along with others at school. Not to mention the effect of lowering anxiety levels.

RIGHT TO PLAY

Now restrictions are easing and we are able to get out and about more, we may start to feel we can go back to what was. But levels of inactivity are creeping up, which is having an effect on children's access to play and their ability to concentrate.

Play is not only fun for kids, it helps them develop socially and emotionally too. Playing with children from different backgrounds and encouraging them to think critically and solve problems as they build confidence and learn new skills.

Think about a child who attempts to go on a roundabout for the first time. There's the coordination and strength needed to learn to push the roundabout round. Then they have to figure out how to get on it once it's moving. This requires courage and a willingness to take risks. They fall off, pick themselves up and try again and again.

Motivation, perseverance and resilience are all at work here.

Once the child is on the roundabout there's a real sense of success and achievement, which in turn builds self-esteem and confidence. Going around and around they start imagining it's a flying saucer taking them to the moon. That's imagination and creativity taking over.

When another child wants to join in, they have to deal with sharing, turn taking and working together. In this interaction while playing, the child has learnt about engaging with others, social norms and even independence. As they take turns to push and ride the roundabout, they are talking to each other and listening too, strengthening their communication skills.

This is just one example, but it shows how much can be gained when young children are active and engage with others.

LINK BETWEEN ACTIVITY AND BEHAVIOUR

Play and physical activity are critical for students at my school, which is in a small, remote ex-mining village with high unemployment and deprivation levels. Over half of the children in school receive free school meals and more than a third have special educational needs.

The lack of exercise and play during lockdown has hit my pupils hard as many live in overcrowded flats with no garden or outdoor space.

This lack of physical activity can be a key contributor to challenging behaviour. It can be low-level disruption like talking in class, forgetting books or being late. It can also escalate to ignoring instructions, questioning authority or being abusive.

As sports lead and SENCO in our school, I can see a direct link between physical activity and pupils' improved wellbeing and behaviour. As a result, for some time now our school has been focused on adding more physical activity into our school day. It helped us manage behaviour and improve engagement after the first lockdown and will be a key part of our strategy in helping children readjust to the school routine this time around too.

RUNNING AROUND

A physically active curriculum is the cornerstone to improving behaviour at our school. This is not about doing more sport – although that is also important. It instead means getting all children up and moving about during their lessons most days of the week.

We decided on this approach as we began to notice the positive impact that PE lessons were having on many students. Some of our pupils who were disengaged and disruptive in the classroom became model students during PE. They loved taking part in the sports activities and were focused and well-behaved.

So, we thought why not take the element of physical activity and apply it to other lessons, like maths and English?

We started to incorporate activities into lessons with ready-made active lesson plans from Teach Active, which made it far quicker to adapt to the new style of teaching.

With this approach, instead of teaching fractions in class, we can take pupils out to the football field where they run around sorting groups of objects into halves, thirds, quarters or fifths and placing them in hoops.

Alternatively, we could set up a number hunt, encouraging children to use a map to navigate the playground to find hidden fraction cards with a problem they need to solve. They are asked to calculate the responses as quickly as they can before



“The positive impact of physical activity on children is a scientific fact.”

the stopwatch beeps, adding a sense of urgency and fun to the task.

Children don't necessarily realise they are learning when you tell them they are to become dictionary detectives and spot

misspelt words dotted around the room, but the results have shown us the learning is definitely sticking.

THE FUTURE

After using active teaching throughout the school, we have seen an improvement in behaviour as well as more enjoyment in class.

Children of all backgrounds and abilities find the active lessons inclusive and accessible.

Confidence in maths and English has grown, as has independence within lessons as pupils relish the opportunity to learn through active sessions that they can confidently engage with.

The best measure of progress was a 98 per cent pass rate in the SPAG test in the year before the pandemic struck, so active learning will be central to our approach to improving behaviour and filling any gaps in learning as a result of the lockdowns.

HOW TO GET PHYSICAL

- Games work well to get kids active and having fun. Think about playing charades in the classroom to act out the meanings of new words and expand their vocabulary.
- Get children up and moving as much as possible. This can even be at their desk where they could jump up and down while learning numbers. The same activity can be played outside with equipment, like hopping over a bean bag or a small cone while reciting times tables.
- Don't forget the excitement of competition. Teams can race against one another to find the correct answer to a comprehension question. Or pairs of children can compete to see how many balls they can throw into a box, counting how many balls reached the box and calculating their score.
- Download free active lesson plans from www.teachactive.org

We have seen so much success in managing challenging behaviour thanks to physically active learning that we decided to set up an annual active learning day for the cluster of schools in the local area. We used all available space and committed to spend at least half of the day doing active lessons outside.

Each year this initiative has continued to grow and it now includes all schools in Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire, with hundreds of children of all abilities taking part. We are hoping it will be a good way to get students together again if it is safe to do so this summer.

Outdoor class areas will be set up and students can jump, hop and skip their way through active lessons. The sounds of children playing will be heard throughout the playground. They'll be having much too much fun to even think about being disruptive or engage in challenging behaviour. And they will be reaping all of the benefits of physical activity and play, without even realising they are learning. The positives are numerous for children and teachers alike.



Joel Beeden is an expert SENCO, sport, mental health, wellbeing lead and promoter of active learning. He is a year six teacher at Duckmanton Primary School in Derbyshire. His school uses lesson plans from www.teachactive.org



THERE'S NO CATCH-UP WITHOUT WELLBEING

A focus on academic 'catch-up' over the coming weeks and months must be built on firm foundations of mental wellbeing, says **Diana Dewing**

Many children have undoubtedly had a tough time over the past 14 months or so. But as we emerge from the pandemic and return to what we hope is something approaching normality there must be a renewed focus on children's good mental health and wellbeing.

There is strong evidence that the mental health of our children has been deteriorating in recent years, and lockdowns will not have helped.

An autumn 2020 NHS report stated that rates of probable mental disorders had increased since 2017. The report said that in 2020, one in six (16 per cent) children aged five to 16 years were identified as having a probable mental disorder, increasing from one in nine (10.8 per cent) in 2017. The increase

was evident in both boys and girls.

The pandemic has been a challenging time for many families but the next few months should be viewed as a time of opportunity when schools can fully focus on the healthy social and emotional development of every child as an important foundation for growth and learning.

Rather than waiting to identify problems and then trying to put them right then, all of us who work in and with schools should support children to stay on a healthy trajectory, with teachers having the tools, skills and insights they need to help children and young people become more emotionally resilient so that they are better placed to engage with learning and with life.

Part of this is to understand that children's responses to the disruption which may be

manifesting themselves at the moment are entirely natural. Challenging behaviour is just one example of normal and healthy responses to what have been very trying circumstances. The key for all adults working in our primary schools is to recognise that these are symptoms of upheaval in these children's lives and then to support them to reconnect and re-engage as quickly as possible. If we can get these elements right, the catch-up learning will undoubtedly follow.

The evidence that prioritising children's wellbeing has a positive impact on happiness, health and attainment is substantial. Our own work with primary schools in Bath and North East Somerset over five years showed that targeted wellbeing support for children led to improved attendance and engagement with learning, fewer behaviour incidents and

improved academic progress. There are now encouraging signs that the machinery of government is aligning in recognition of the importance of wellbeing and good mental health in our primary schools. The Department for Education says that student wellbeing and mental health is a central part of its response to the pandemic – for example, schools can use some of their share of the £700 million Recovery Premium for pastoral as well as academic support. The Department for Education has also set up a Mental Health in Education Action Group to look at the pandemic's impact on children

and in the longer term is looking to introduce new mental health support teams.

That's the bigger picture, but what we're most concerned about is helping school leaders and teachers take practical steps that will put children's wellbeing at the centre of everything that they do so that they have a solid social, emotional and health basis on which to build.

Thomas Arnold Primary School in Essex is a good example of how practical steps to support children's wellbeing and mental health leads to improved behaviour and attainment.



Diana Dewing is Managing Director of Thrive, an organisation that specialises in training teachers and other education professionals to support children's emotional and social development. More information is available at www.thriveapproach.com

CASE STUDY: THOMAS ARNOLD PRIMARY SCHOOL, DAGENHAM

Holly Pottle, Deputy Headteacher said that their "moment of clarity" on children's mental wellbeing came about seven years ago: "At that time, we had interventions and strategies in place, but we felt they weren't purposeful and didn't offer the support some of the children so desperately needed.

"As a result, we had high levels of behaviour sanctions and fixed term exclusions which wasn't where we wanted to be as a school. We have 430 pupils and are based in East London in a community which has high levels of deprivation. We wanted to make a difference in our pupils' lives; to provide them with the support and stability that may be lacking for some and to help them fulfil their full potential.

"We realised that we needed to do things differently and for us this started with a recommendation from another school which had successfully embedded the Thrive Approach. Initially conceived as a way of helping to reduce school exclusions, Thrive now offers a whole-setting approach to supporting the social and emotional development of all children and young people."

She says that the approach has become an integral part of school life and that all pupils, parents and staff are committed to the approach.

"We have seen a positive shift in behaviour as a result," Holly adds. "Our exclusion and sanction rates have decreased significantly and the children are now able to communicate their needs and talk about why they're struggling. There has also been a real change in the atmosphere at school – the children are more



Holly Pottle (left) with her team at Thomas Arnold Primary School, Dagenham

confident, and they have a better relationship with staff. Attainment levels have also improved because children are in class, calm and ready to access learning."

Thrive trained practitioners have met parents and carers at consultation events who talk to them in much the same way as teachers talk to parents.

"This gives the parents a clearer understanding of how their children are progressing both academically and emotionally," says Holly. "Parents have a good relationship with our Thrive staff in school and they will often ask for support themselves. The approach is something that has really trickled out from school to home and parents often comment on the positive impacts Thrive has had on their children and home life in general.

"The changes in school have resulted in much better staff morale. It's made SLT more aware of staff wellbeing and it's created a culture where we all check in regularly with one other. Staff are much more able to talk about what is working

and what is not and, as a team, we have more of an open dialogue about all issues in school."

The approach has also helped the school manage the impact of covid disruptions. "We were quite worried about how the children would come back to school, but we have found that Thrive has definitely made the children more resilient," Holly adds. "When we remained open for vulnerable and key worker children during the first lockdown, we continued Thrive work with them. For the children that were at home, we published Thrive-based activities on the school website weekly. This was really important for us and, as a school, we prioritised Thrive support being available to all pupils during the lockdown. Pupils came back to school with such a positive attitude and they are really happy to be back.

"For us, this reaffirms that our approach to mental wellbeing is an ongoing success – our pupils are glad to be in school and they are thriving."

How to make outdoor learning work

Bethany Eadie explains how to make the best use of whatever outdoor space you have and take the classroom outdoors safely

Schools weren't built for social distancing, so it makes sense to take as much learning as you can outdoors, where it's easier to stay apart and safer for everyone. Research has found that spending time outdoors has a range of benefits for pupils, and some local authorities are exploring how outdoor learning could offer a template for socially-distanced schooling. Of course, not every school has huge grounds, or woodlands on its doorstep, but you can use even small outside spaces to provide meaningful learning experiences.

ASSESS YOUR AVAILABLE OUTDOOR SPACE

You might have a playground or sports field, but also consider whether there are any other outdoor spaces you can re-purpose. Get creative - for example could you close your car park to cars or use gardening areas? You can use cones or chalk lines to divide up larger spaces so that more than one class group, or 'bubble', can be outside at the same time. Make sure you complete a risk assessment for any areas you're planning to use.

Remember that children and staff need to be able to access toilets and hand-washing facilities from the outside area. If needed, create a hand-washing station outside with a small table, a water butt filled with warm water, a washing-up bowl, soap, paper towels and a bin to collect them.

OUTDOOR SPACE IS AN EXTENSION OF THE CLASSROOM

Ideally, every bubble would have a dedicated outdoor area to use whenever they want to take their learning outside - but this just won't be possible for all schools. Having a timetable that maximises the amount of time each bubble is outside is the next best thing. Look at how many class groups you expect to have in school and how many children you

can safely have in each outdoor space. Once you have this information, create an indoor/outdoor timetable - remember to include journey times between outside areas and classrooms, to minimise any crossover time outside or in corridors.

Don't worry that you might be limiting pupils' learning by timetabling them outdoors - this will be more than just "playtime" if you make it structured and focused. But it can also be more open-ended and child-led than classroom learning - it may not be exactly the same as indoor learning. For inspiration and ideas, there are lots of organisations that have a wide selection of free outdoor learning activities and resources for a range of different age groups and outdoor settings, such as Woodcraft Folk, Forest School Association, Learning Through Landscapes and Outdoor Classroom Day.

Outdoor learning works in almost all weathers, so don't let this put you off, either.

ADAPT OUTDOOR SPACES FOR LEARNING

Previously, your outdoor spaces might have been primarily for playing or break times, but now you need to make sure they're suitable for learning too. Consider what you can do to make these spaces fit for purpose.

- Take inspiration from your EYFS team: you're looking to replicate how they deliver continuous provision in their outdoor area, in a way that's age-appropriate for all your pupils. They're the experts on this, so talk to them first about how they do this and ask for their help.
- Create different 'areas': do this just as you would in the classroom, e.g. set up a quiet corner area for reading/independent work, choose an appropriate space for a whole group to sit together and listen to the teacher, and use open areas for group work or play.
- Create shade/shelter: this is key to keeping your outdoor area working in all weather conditions. Hang a play parachute or

tarpaulin between walls or railings to create shade from the sun and shelter from gentle rain showers, so children can stay outside for longer. Make sure your staff and the children have the right gear (e.g. a warm coat or sun hat/sun cream).

- Create displays to recreate the classroom environment: use waterproof duct tape to put up laminated displays, similar to displays you might have in the classroom (e.g. number lines, times tables, hundred square, key words or spellings) to create a learning environment outdoors.

- Make sure pupils have something to sit on and write on: children can sit on grass or wood - but if the ground is hard, take classroom cushions outside, use jumpers or coats, or invest



in some easy-to-clean outdoor waterproof cushions. Alternatively, bring classroom chairs outdoors if it's safe to do so, but make sure you include this in your risk assessment first. Buy each class group a set of clipboards if you can (they'll get plenty of use and can be cleaned regularly), or use mini-whiteboards or hardback books with a bulldog clip on the top to attach a piece of paper.

- Bring the natural world into your outdoor area as much as possible. Nature provides endless opportunities for learning, and you can seek out nature even in a concrete playground. If you can, create spaces to plant seeds and grow plants (in pots or raised beds), observe wildlife (put up bird feeders or bird boxes), measure the weather and changing seasons (make weather-vanes, sundials or wind catchers).

TELL PARENTS ABOUT OUTDOOR LEARNING

As you would for anything new you're doing in school, let parents know that children will be learning more outdoors. You could mention it in a letter or email to parents, or on your school website.

If you have a set timetable, let parents know how often and which days children will be learning outdoors. You should also explain to parents what you'd like them to provide. This might include weatherproof clothing (i.e. a waterproof coat, wellies, old clothes that they don't mind getting wet or dirty), warm weather protection (i.e. sun hat, sun cream, water bottle) and a spare change of clothes to keep at school.

“As you would for anything new you're doing in school, let parents know that children will be learning more outdoors.”

ADVICE FOR HIGH-QUALITY OUTDOOR LESSONS

Establish the ground rules early on
This could include rules like:

- “No picking, no licking” if children are unfamiliar with natural environments.
- Exactly where they can and can't go.
- What to do if they get too hot, cold or hurt themselves.
- General expectations for outdoor areas (children without gardens at home may have forgotten).

Take a more open-ended approach to lesson plans and timings

- Have learning objectives for the week rather than the lesson and see when you achieve them (it might be on Wednesday rather than by Friday).
- Let children explore and complete activities at their own pace, allowing for unexpected conversations and detours. However, mark each session with:

A BEGINNING: establish or remind children of ground rules and explain any specific activities.

A MIDDLE: have a water/snack break (all sitting in a circle, in shade/under shelter).

AN END: a calming activity (like listening to a story) to prepare pupils for going back indoors.



Bethany Eadie is a senior content producer at The Key. This article is an extract from ‘School reopening: providing high-quality outdoor learning’ - which they worked on with Kate Brown and Roger Chapman, who are experienced Forest School and Woodcraft Folk practitioners.



Relief for heads

Let Maestro lighten your load



DESIGN



COLLABORATE



PLAN



TEACH



ASSESS



MONITOR



ANALYSE



EVALUATE



REPORT



LEAD

The most connected, complete primary curriculum platform available.

- ✓ One value for money annual licence covers everything you need
- ✓ Cornerstones Curriculum 2022 projects with lesson resources
- ✓ Sequenced subject learning
- ✓ No need for extra costly assessment packages
- ✓ Training and ongoing support included

Full
assessment
package
included

REQUEST A DEMO

Call **03333 20 8000** or book online at **cornerstoneseducation.co.uk**

NEED TO KNOW- Q&A

Curriculum sequencing is now essential

Simon Hickton, Director at Cornerstones Education, discusses how to achieve curriculum sequencing using the Maestro platform.



30 SECOND BRIEFING

Curriculum Maestro is an online platform that helps you to implement and lead an outstanding primary curriculum. It includes the new Cornerstones Curriculum 2022 model, a fully sequenced, adaptable curriculum from Nursery to Year 6.

What is Curriculum Maestro?

Maestro is an online platform that we've designed for primary schools. It includes a sequenced curriculum progression model that you can adopt and adapt, to ensure that your curriculum offer becomes a guarantee. Simply log on to the platform to access your curriculum, lessons, resources, assessment and monitoring tools. You'll have everything you need for an outstanding, sequenced curriculum, plus ongoing support from our team.

How can Maestro help us with sequencing?

Curriculum sequencing is an Ofsted priority, but it's hard to get right. Since 2018, our experts have been developing the content for the curriculum 2022 model, so you now have carefully sequenced subject schemas that introduce and build children's declarative and procedural knowledge over time. The curriculum follows Maestro's inbuilt skills and knowledge framework, so you can articulate curriculum coverage, sequencing and progression easily to inspectors, and subject leaders are well prepared for deep dives.

What support is there for subject leaders?

Maestro really comes into its own for subject leadership. The platform shows you subject coverage across the school and where subject aspects are being taught, as well as allowing teachers to monitor their subjects in real time to check



children's progress. Crucially, you can spot where curriculum gaps are, drill down into specific aspects of each subject and identify where your colleagues need support. Maestro makes articulating your subject schema simple.

How does it make day to day teaching easier?

Maestro is perfect for busy teachers. You get immediate access to your curriculum projects and can plan, edit, adapt and add lessons to suit your classes. There's no more scrambling for the right



Contact:

www.cornerstoneseducation.co.uk

enquiries@cornerstoneseducation.co.uk

Twitter:

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

Facebook:

[@Cornerstonesedu](https://www.facebook.com/Cornerstonesedu)

materials, as every project comes with carefully researched lesson resources. Maestro allows you to assess promptly and accurately, and it keeps a record of the progress that individual children have made to inform your next steps.

What do you get with a Maestro licence, and what's the cost?

An annual Maestro licence costs between £775 and £2,750, depending on the school's size. This gives staff access to the platform; the sequenced and resourced curriculum model; teaching, subject leadership and assessment tools; assembly resources; an interactive educational visit map; plus ongoing customer support. We also offer discounts for multi-school and multi-year purchases – just give us a call to find out more.

What's the difference?

- + The only platform offering an interconnected, sequenced and fully resourced primary curriculum model.
- + Keeps everything live, easy to articulate and monitor – perfect for Ofsted's deep dives.

SCHOOL STORAGE

BiGDUG's shelving and storage helps you stay organised.

The trusted experts in space utilisation.
See full range of Gratralls Trays online.

BiGDUG®



WWW.BiGDUG.CO.UK 03450 177 721

canopies uk

Dine Learn Play

Get more from your outdoors

Create multipurpose outdoor areas for lessons and breaktimes with an outdoor canopy designed for your school.

01254 777 002

canopiesuk.co.uk



“

We are so happy with the canopies. When I saw them in place, I was blown away. They are brilliant. ”

Susan Byiers
School Business Manager
Wellington School

30 YEARS EXPERIENCE


We've been designing, manufacturing, and installing canopies for over 30 years.



Buildings & procurement

BUYING THE RIGHT WAY

Sue Birchall examines best practice to procure goods and services



Schools, along with all other areas of public service, are publicly funded and have a responsibility to procure goods and services in a transparent manner using the principles of best value and value for money while observing procurement rules and regulations.

This sounds like a big responsibility and it is! Understanding the dos and don'ts as well as making sure that you get the best products and services from your already stretched budget can be a bit of a minefield. Fortunately, there is a lot of advice available to guide us and help us to ensure that we are compliant.

Procurement in schools has changed. With the onset of academisation and the autonomy that came with it, with the subsequent reduction in what the LA's could provide and more procurement regulations for public bodies there is much more to consider when making purchases. The value of purchases has increased due to buying as a MAT or collaboratively and means in some instances they meet EU thresholds for purchasing requiring a different process. Details of these can be found at [Buying things that are over the procurement threshold](#) - Buying

procedures and procurement law for schools - [Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).

As School Business Professionals, regardless of the size of the purchase, our aim has always been to get the best value for the least cost. Historically this would be something that we would carry out in isolation, getting our three quotes and hoping to negotiate a good price for our schools, easing pressure on the budgets through the process. This continues and can be achieved in a number of ways.

SERVICES

As an industry we often relied on local authority to provide their own service level agreements which were often deemed to be the best value as they were 'safe'. Many of those products and services are now available on the open market and can in some cases offer a better product and better value. That is not to say that the LA is not ever good value, just that we now have the opportunity to benchmark and choose an alternative.

Frameworks - The DfE has created many different frameworks for purchasing, all with DfE approved

"As School Business Professionals, regardless of the size of the purchase, our aim has always been to get the best value for the least cost."

suppliers ranging from curriculum products to energy, facilities and consultancy services. These offer the SBP the opportunity to achieve best value in a secure and regulated fashion that comply with buying procedures and procurement law (OJEU). These can be found at Find a DfE-approved framework for your school - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk). Local Authorities may have other frameworks that you can access and suppliers such as KCS offer the same on products such as photocopiers.

PURCHASING

For some years now there have been buying consortiums which we could approach to try and achieve value through economy of scale purchasing. There is again some support with this through the DfE 'Schools Buying Strategy' available at <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/>. Launched in 2017 it was designed to support schools in non-staff-related purchasing, there is a current prospectus for 2020-2025. This has seen the introduction of trial buying hubs in some areas of the country, and a move to purchasing collaboratively. Their strategy follows the three c's, cost, compliance and convenience.

STAFFING

The largest purchase in any school, often taking up to 75 per cent of budget, while large enough in itself can incur additional costs through recruitment and of course supply. We all have our preferred suppliers for supply staff, the introduction of IR35 has increased the need to purchase supply through an agency and costs can vary. The Crown Support Service also has a site for recruitment at Find a job in teaching — Teaching Vacancies (teaching-vacancies.service.gov.uk) and offers a supply framework in which suppliers have published rates and preferable terms and conditions.

Through all of this, the main principles of transparency, probity and achieving value for money and best value is the key driver. Schools have pressured budgets and our desire to use our funding as efficiently as possible to provide for our students is paramount. Time spent doing it right reaps its own rewards.

Key Principles of purchasing:

- Produce a business case/plan
- Choose your procurement route and suppliers
- Set a specification
- Obtain your quotes

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



DO YOU UNDERSTAND THE RISKS?

Huw Evans explains the key differences between hand sanitisers on the market

With schools opening earlier than many other parts of society after lockdown, many have had to invest in processes and systems that can maintain staff and pupil safety while navigating the 'new normal'.

One change in the management of schools has been the need to supply hand sanitisers in classrooms and between lessons. However, some hand sanitiser products create new risks for pupils and staff. New entrants to the market have cut corners and created products that sidestep necessary testing or protocol required to ensure they meet the high hygiene standards the public needs in 2021. Effective and compliant biocidal products require months of continuous and rigorous development and testing before they are released to market.

BACTERIA

This isn't just developing the antimicrobial technology and finalising formulas. The chosen packaging, the product's stability within it and what information we put on labelling all must be controlled and compliant with several different regulations in the UK. This past year, we've seen some in the market regularly bypass these steps in a rush to get products into consumers' hands. Consumer organisation Which? investigated and reported that many alcohol gels on the market didn't have the requisite formula to be effective at killing bacteria and viruses, despite making a claim of greater than 60 per cent alcohol concentration on pack. In October 2020, authorities in the Republic of Ireland had to recall more than 50 products, including hand sanitisers which contained harmful methanol instead of ethanol. Ingestion of methanol in even small amounts can cause irreversible injury to the

nervous system, blindness or even death.

In schools, the risk of using alcohol hand gels goes further still. Hand sanitiser products that contain the requisite amount of ethanol are twice the strength of whisky and as a result can be hugely dangerous if ingested. Meanwhile, the flammability of the products can also create risks. Even small static shocks are enough to ignite hand gel on hands.

MANUFACTURERS

Over time, alcohol's damaging effects on the skin have been shown to actually reduce compliance. In a study completed by Byotrol, a staggering 47 per cent of UK adults experienced some skin irritation from alcohol hand sanitisers since March 2020. Alternative products on the market that are alcohol-free are as effective as alcohol-based hand gels but are often water based and therefore non-flammable. Some use Quaternary Ammonium Compounds as active ingredients such as Benzalkonium Chloride (BAC) or Didecylmethylammonium chloride

(DDAC) and some use Chlorhexidine, which is used in surgical scrubs.

For schools, finding a product that you can rely on means doing research, looking at alternatives to gels that may be posing risks, and, crucially, working with your supplier to understand how the product has been tested. You should ask manufactures for a

summary of the test data available for the product as well as which UK and EU regulations the product complies with.

"The risks of buying poorly-made alcohol hand gels have already started to gain media attention."

Huw Evans R&D Director at antimicrobial technology specialist, Byotrol plc

Learning journeys powered by the sun

An installation of solar panels can have surprising outcomes for pupils if you embrace the learning, says **Ann Flaherty**

You may think that a decision on whether to have solar panels or not is for the business manager, resources and site governors and the focus will be on financial outcomes. But the question about whether a school should have solar power should probably involve the teaching staff, the curriculum team, and governors and be focussed on pupil outcomes.

That may seem strange. But an installation of solar panels, bringing solar power to a school, also brings with it teaching and learning opportunities for generations to come; that can spill into all different areas of education for sustainable development, helping open doors for critical thinking, curiosity and creativity.

There is no doubt that having solar power brings greater energy security through on-site generation. It helps schools hedge against rising mains rates, saving money, and it brings schools a greater accuracy for budgeting. There are financial advantages in the medium and long term, if not in the immediate future. But the ability of the school to link its campus and its curriculum with relevant real-life technologies can have a far wider outcome if a school truly embraces the idea.

Sustainable

Primary schools are masters at project-based learning and it is possible to use the solar panels, and the live data that they generate, to explore subjects like energy, light, the sun and its power: letting pupils use their imaginations while delivering in subject areas of English, mathematics, science, geography, design and technology, to name a few. These topics will be a launch pad into other areas of sustainable development that will enhance further learning.

The diversity of ages from five to 11 years of age at a primary school is challenging, but solar panels and the power of the solar can start all ages on a lifelong learning journey about living more sustainably, caring for a planet and for each other. Solar power can be used to link schools in different countries, with similar goals, to learn about different cultures and through project-based learning, which is motivational and



“There is no doubt that having solar power brings greater energy security through on-site generation.”

inspirational, enhance pupil outcomes across all ranges of abilities.

There are plenty of resources online and there are plenty of educators in sustainable development. A mobile App, funded by UK Innovate, is being developed by Solar for Schools to encourage Years 5 and 6 to start their learning on the four Es: areas of the environment, electricity, energy and efficiency; that will take primary children into KS3 subject journeys that will prepare them for their GCSE qualifications and beyond.

Decarbonise

Today’s “what three words” for schools are “net zero carbon” (operational) schools. Solar power is a keystone in helping schools that are looking to decarbonise to be NZC over the next ten years. Solar panels will ensure that schools switching from carbon-intensive heating are able to offset the higher electricity demands from heat pumps with renewable resources. By taking the invisibility cloak off electricity, by monitoring its use in schools, school management teams can better assess the use of electricity, helped by the students who can become energy detectives. It is true that solar panels on schools are not new. Around ten per cent of primary

schools in England have solar panels. Schools have been installing panels on their schools for over ten years. The financial incentives offered by government in the early years no longer exist but there are other opportunities.

Many primary schools will face challenges when looking at how they can secure solar panels. There is no right way to do it. Schools have options and they need to look at what suits them best to find how they can embrace a technology that will increasingly be the norm. It is important to remember that schools do not need capital to have solar panels. Ownership of assets is not always the best approach and buying solar power rather than owning solar panels can be a good long lasting solution avoiding future costs.

The options may appear confusing at start, but what is clear is that installing solar panels on a school is only the start of a journey that can enhance learning outcomes for everyone.

Ann Flaherty is a director of Solar Options for Schools Ltd and has been working with schools and solar for the past ten years



Harnessing the natural power of Hypochlorous Acid to combat Coronavirus

Fogging with Hypochlorous Acid is proving to be highly effective
in helping to control and prevent outbreaks of Coronavirus
in education establishments.



Proven to kill 99.9999% of viruses* within one minute,
fogging with this naturally occurring substance sanitises areas in
minutes, providing a compelling return on investment compared to
traditional cleaning regimes.



Get in touch with us for more information,
a no obligation demonstration, or to hear about our
money back guarantee!

Call us on 0203 5358750 | Email sales@clearfog.co.uk
www.clearfog.co.uk

*More technical data on the properties of Hypochlorous Acid can be supplied upon request, please use the contacts above to request more information.

A modern time-saving solution

Dean Pettit explains the benefits of modular design builds for schools

The past year has seen an unprecedented shake up of the traditional school model, but there have also been major developments in the often-unseen aspects of educational infrastructure – one of which being a move towards modular designs.

Modular design builds for schools are a Modern Method of Construction (MMC) which have become increasingly popular in recent times, following last year's launch of the Department for Education (DfE)'s Offsite Framework. This signals a growing trend of school buildings being constructed offsite, with the DfE set to invest £3bn in modular renovation of multiple schools across the UK.

A modular classroom is a permanent structure constructed in component parts offsite, allowing for quick and easy assembly onsite. In the time taken to prepare the site, the manufacture of the new building itself can take place elsewhere. As such, the building can progress through phases of construction uninhibited by factors such as weather conditions and general site problems.

TIMESCALE

According to the National Audit Office, on-site construction time can be halved by adopting modular builds. It enables new buildings to be built in a very short time, i.e. over the summer holiday period. Whatever the timescale of a project, modular manufacturing gives a greater sense of certainty in terms of project delivery and this is a huge advantage for decision makers when it comes to budgeting, as the buildings have a crucial, definitive opening date, such as the start of school term.

This is particularly important as the very existence of construction work can be disruptive for the day-to-day running of a school and the pupils' capacity to learn.

Modular construction is also of benefit to those working on the building. The controlled environment reduces, and can even eliminate entirely, the need to work at heights. Without being constrained by the surrounding environment of a school site, this allows for greater mechanical assistance with the construction, as well as increased separation of workers and vehicles.

With workers not needing as much time on site, space is freed. This also further benefits the community local to the school,



“According to the National Audit Office, on-site construction time can be halved by adopting modular builds.”

with a reduction in traffic to the site and disturbance to residents.

This reduction in high levels of traffic is a key reason why schools should consider modular builds, CO2 emissions produced by the machinery and vehicles involved are lowered as a result. The buildings are manufactured to tightly designed specifications, meaning any left-over materials can be used for future projects. Furthermore, the carbon footprint from use of concrete in modular designs is limited and the energy consumed to keep them warm and lit is diminished in comparison to typical brick and mortar equivalents.

Using these types of construction methods provides the opportunity to use sustainable materials. This helps to comply with building standards and helps with quality control, as the manufacturing processes are much more meticulous.

ENVIRONMENT

Modular build classrooms can last for decades and provide a great replacement for the temporary classrooms which are often ugly with interiors ill-suited to creating an environment conducive for

learning. One of the main draws of those prefabricated huts was their portability. This is something you don't have to sacrifice with the modern alternatives, though, as modular classrooms can be deconstructed and then reconstructed in a new location.

These benefits are of little consequence if they come at an increased cost. However, the nature of the offsite construction and onsite installation makes for a more efficient and productive manufacturing process. This cost-effectiveness extends beyond the construction itself – modular designs are expandable, enabling the school to increase the pupil capacity of the building without incurring a large cost. They also allow for flexible management of space, meaning that schools can facilitate fluctuating numbers of pupils. Regardless of which routes schools decide to take, one thing is for certain: the space available to schools is becoming more at a premium every year and the appetite for innovative solutions is growing as a result.

Dean Pettitt, Sector Lead at Southern's Broadstock

Keep an eye on your finances

Anthony David examines how schools can best manage their budgets

Budgeting for the future has become an art. I've interviewed a dozen leaders of schools that appear to defy the odds by being able to set surplus budgets. This article distills key learning from how to strategically plan staffing; how schools manage self-generated income; the importance of a full school and what attracts families to a school where there may be spaces; and finally considers what local or national grants school leaders could be accessing to further inflate their budgets. At a time when school budgets have been on a virtual roller coaster caused by the pandemic, is it arguable that now is the time to pause and reflect on what is needed to re-set. Do you have the capacity to market your school more widely and fill empty spaces? Is now the time to restructure or simply not fill vacant spaces? Are you aware of local grants and, if so, are you accessing them?

BEST PRACTICE WITH FINANCE

It is quite hard to keep up with the government at the moment when it comes to finances, notably with recovery investment; one day it's 15 billion then the next one billion. This comes after a year where thousands of schools have found themselves moving heavily into the red while others have found the closure a lifeline. What appeared to be an opportunity (and frankly something that might have rendered this article irrelevant) has been missed following the limited investment into schools for recovery, arguably leaving Sir Kevan Collins' resignation as the only option left to him and his influence will be greatly missed. He commented recently that 'the adults were needed at the table' when it came to hard conversations about finances. Clearly the adults were unwilling to sit at the table and we will be left with the consequences. The estimate is £20 per child in the primary sector, an embarrassingly small amount (or as I found recently, two coffees and two sandwiches from Pret).

The national picture is bleak. A quick look on the government's new financial benchmarking tool will reveal the extent in your local authority. The vast majority of schools are living with in-year deficits, typically living on reserves with around a third of

schools living beyond reserves. There used to be a time when somebody from the LA would call you up if it looked like you were about to hit a deficit; not now.

It was at this point that I was asked to consult a number of seemingly successful schools who appeared to buck the trend to identify what it was that they were doing that was proving so successful. Their stories were remarkably similar and how they managed a shrinking budget fell into the following areas:

- Staffing
- Self-generated income
- Pupil numbers
- Grants and charity bids

STAFFING

Staffing is, by far, the greatest cost. A healthy picture would reflect staffing costs between 80-84 per cent of a school budget. With all of the school leaders interviewed, all had reduced their staff count over the last five years. If I take one of my schools as an example, it has reduced its staff count by 20 per cent over the last five years. How schools achieved this depended on circumstances. One head was very clear that he had had to implement a robust restructuring as soon as he started whereas other leaders had nipped away at it over time. This allowed for natural loss where staff were simply not recruited to replace leavers. The message was clear from all of these heads: they knew that if they stuck to a staff group that was larger than 85 per cent of total costs they were creating a long-term problem that was not sustainable. In all cases, school leaders had robust teaching commitments and minimum out of class leadership time (often with trimmed down SENCo or, in a couple of cases, a shared SENCo). Most had medium-term contracts with a percentage of TAs who would then leave once the contract ended.

Equally, these schools did not allow for UPS3 and in one case there were no TLRs. In most cases, the leaders had created a culture where the school was a 'career' school where colleagues would learn good practice then move on to other schools (though two heads acknowledged that this was hard in practice and also risked losing the best teachers). All were very aware that the colleagues they recruited could arguably earn more at the



school next door. These heads often went the extra mile in terms of well-being and support. Interestingly, although at risk of being paid less these schools reported high levels of staff satisfaction. All school leaders agreed, it was this aspect of the budget that was most challenging to manage and kept them awake at night.

SELF-GENERATED INCOME

This was an interesting aspect of the report. It also revealed how far schools were going to balance their books. Data for all schools interviewed showed a clear incline in how much schools had self generated over the last five years. The amounts raised went well beyond the traditional cake sale. School leaders were now acting as business people and considering their premises accordingly. One school leader had converted the former site manager's flat into teacher accommodation (to entice NQTs and generate an income); another was positively marketing their nursery and matching hours to generate the best income; commonly schools ran their own wraparound care which could add thousands to the budget; another had established a seven-day-a-week school letting strategy. Of these, wraparound care was the most common strategy and if schools were not running this themselves then leaders swiftly ended external contracts to run this in-house.



“With all of the school leaders interviewed, all had reduced their staff count over the last five years.”

PUPIL NUMBERS

One thing that all the heads clearly agreed on was pupil numbers. As one head put it ‘it’s bums on seats that bring in the most money’. Children will bring their Age Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU) but may also bring Pupil Premium, significantly adding to each child. Each space filled is the equivalent income generated by any summer fair (and the months of planning they require). How this was done included how the schools marketed themselves. Several of the heads that I spoke to had recently updated their websites, others were looking to market their unique selling points (forest school; tech centre; family school) but each had an angle that the school leaders spoke eloquently about.

GRANTS AND CHARITY BIDS

A final strand that came out was leaders’ understanding of local and national grants. They were aware that they had to spend time on this (and in several cases they had either a member of staff or parent who was experienced at applying for bids) but what they were able to do was to view aspects of school development with an eye on how it could be addressed through these grants. One head had a useful strategy where she would

write a 100 word, 200 word and 500 word statement for a project then could use these statements for a variety of small or larger charities. Depending on the grant size depended on the statement used but a rule of thumb would be:

- Grants up to £2,500 - typically a covering letter (100 word statement).
- Grants up to £5,000 - a more in-depth statement (200 word statement).
- Grants up to £10,000 - bespoke and larger statement.

These heads did not waste time on very large grants, choosing to access smaller grants more frequently.

CONCLUSION

The key point from all of my interviews was focus. Each of these school leaders kept a hawk eye on their finances. They cut their cloth accordingly and made hard decisions in good time to avoid impacted debt. That said, all were clear that they felt that they spent too much time on the budget and all said that they fully expected to set a deficit budget at some time in the future.

Arguably, all they have done was call the baying wolves from the door but in a culture where budgets and staff salaries are set centrally on an annual basis arguably pushing

WHAT QUESTIONS DO YOU NEED TO ASK?

- What is needed to re-set?
- Do you have the capacity to market your school more widely and fill empty spaces?
- Is now the time to restructure or simply not fill vacant spaces?
- Are you aware of local grants and are you accessing them?
- Do you take one year at a time?
- Will you take the hard decisions in good time to avoid impacted debt?
- How will you increase your pupil numbers?

a deficit budget back each year is probably the best we can do. It is not good business practice but until we live in a system where education is not politically influenced (which is unlikely) we must all become more comfortable with ‘one year at a time’ in our minds.



Anthony David, executive headteacher, St Paul's CE Primary School and Monken Hadley CE Primary School



NEWLY QUALIFIED TEACHER? NOW YOU CAN FIND A DIFFERENT WAY TO ENJOY YOUR WEEKEND...

We will treat NQTs as permanently employed and can lend to you one month before you start your first post, meaning you could get a foot on the property ladder before you even begin your teaching career.



TEACHERSBS.CO.UK



0800 378 669

Keep up to date...



Your home may be repossessed if you do not keep up repayments on your mortgage

Authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and the Prudential Regulation Authority (Register no 156580)

Breaking new ground with DfE funding

Ryan Kelsall explains the funding and design process involved for a new school

The Cavendish School, Cambridgeshire's first state-maintained special free school for young people with autism, has received sign off on official funding from the Department for Education (DfE), to cover the costs associated with opening the new school this autumn, as well as supporting the ongoing building works and general maintenance of the school site. Currently the building structure is being manufactured off-site in Northern Ireland by The McAvoy Group. Installation of the modular buildings is expected to take place later this month at the school site, which is co-located with Impington Village College and Impington International College.

FUNDING

The whole process for us started back in 2016 when we applied to open a free school through the Department for Education (DfE). At this time, we put in a bid, in collaboration with the Local Authority in Cambridgeshire, in order to meet the needs of young people with autism. Interestingly, at the point of our bid, there were under 2,000 children diagnosed with autism within Cambridgeshire; there are now over 4,000 children who have been diagnosed, clearly highlighting a pressing need for the school. All of our funding is supplied by the DfE; the Department covers all of the costs of opening the school and then will hand it over to us on completion.

We receive £10,000 placement funding per student direct from the DfE. Once the school is open and we have our first students, we will sit down with the Local Authority and agree a set amount to top up the DfE funding, based on our students' needs. This amount will be reviewed annually and will coincide with the EHCP review process for each of our students.

MODULAR BUILDING

The final decision for the building lies with the DfE, but the modular build was mainly chosen for speed with quality assured through off site manufacturing procedures. For example, one building on our current site was delivered on a Monday and by Wednesday our team was already able to get inside and walk around. This also

“Our school has been designed with the students in mind.”



means that, despite Covid-19, the building work on our site was able to start in January 2021 and we are currently on track to finish the development by this December!

DESIGN

We worked in collaboration with the DfE, as well as the site developers, throughout all stages of the design process; working closely as a team to respond quickly to any challenges or necessary updates.

Our school has been designed with the students in mind. The school includes calm sensory breakout rooms, a life skills room, a horticultural room and wider corridors to ensure that students do not feel claustrophobic when moving around the school.

COMMUNITY

Throughout all of the planning stages for the school, our team has drawn upon the latest research into autism and we have used our expertise in education and experience of working with young people with autism and their families.

To begin, we held a six-week consultation

for the local community and education leaders where we invited feedback on our initial proposal for the school. Following this, our 2018 discussion forum brought together over 100 families, professionals, researchers and educators to explore and discuss designing educational environments for children and young people with autism; all the information gathered was used to develop our plans.

Throughout this whole process we have maintained an active presence on social media, allowing the local community to ask any questions they may have, sharing information and videos on our YouTube channel and also working with local media to ensure the key messages about our school are disseminated correctly. We are all just so excited, which is evidenced in the high number of staff applications that we have had in recent weeks. Similarly, we have had a huge number of parents expressing interest for their children and I envisage that this will only increase as we move into the Autumn.

Ryan Kelsall, Deputy CEO, Eastern Learning Alliance

MORE THAN BRICKS AND MORTAR

Wayne Clayton discusses turning adversity into opportunity and using a new school building to create a community



Springhead Park Primary School, a new free school located in Ebbsfleet Garden City and part of The Primary First Trust, opened its doors for the first time in September 2020. Managing the construction of a new school and welcoming the first cohort of pupils can be challenging at the best of times, but Springhead Park undertook this during a pandemic, creating a whole new spectrum of uncertainty and challenge. It was a unique situation we faced but we turned adversity into opportunity, using the new school building to create a community.

Springhead Park Primary School was designed to serve the growing community of Ebbsfleet Garden City. There was such demand that within months of the school opening, our pupil numbers doubled, we employed a new teacher, and the nursery cohort is set to be a two-form entry from September 2021.

However, reaching this point has been a

long journey. As we know, working to open a school that does not yet exist is a feat of its own and when the pandemic hit, we faced a series of new hurdles including building delays and, once our school was built, how we could create a school community when no one could enter the building. The key to our success was seeing opportunity in adversity.

NAVIGATING THE BUILDING PROCESS

To take you back to the beginning, we had a nail-biting few months during the summer of 2020 as the pandemic caused massive delays in the construction industry, meaning our school building would not be completed for the summer holidays. These delays meant we could not hold our transition event during July and even the 'offsite' events were cancelled as a result of restrictions. Transition events are a crucial part of any school's calendar and for us, it would be the first time

our pupils could familiarise themselves with the school building, meet their teacher and make friends ahead of September.

We were determined to find a way to hold the transition events as we knew how important they would be to help our pupils settle into school life. We had to be flexible and adapted our plans to hold our transition week in late August. While unconventional, we found this was very effective as our pupils were visiting the school and taking part in a range of activities just a week or so before they started term. This meant in September, pupils were very familiar with the environment and felt as if they had not been away. As a result, our pupils were calm and, to our delight, integrated into their learning with real ease.

Delays to the building also meant we needed a Plan B if the school was not ready for the start of term. We worked with the contractors to find a solution and agreed that we would be able to use at least half the

building come September. This would be more than enough room for our first few year groups of pupils. Thankfully, the building was ready in time, and we were able to welcome pupils to the permanent environment for the start of the academic year.

We were very grateful for the skills and experiences of our Trust and leaders' tenacity in getting the school building open to provide the best experiences for our pupils. This shared vision and access to expertise was invaluable throughout the process.

CREATING OUR COMMUNITY

During the lead up to the school building being completed, we organised a series of events to give our prospective pupils and parents a sense of ownership over the building and begin integrating them into our school community. This was a key part of our vision for the school to act as a community hub, allowing people to share experiences and ultimately deliver the best outcomes for our pupils. This was also vital for the community itself as there were no other community facilities nearby such as a shop or town hall.

We invited prospective pupils and parents to a celebratory 'lifting in' ceremony to watch a crane lift the first pieces of the school building into place. This allowed them to witness the school building being created and made them a part of the school's history.

We also organised for local artist, Xtina Lamb, to run a workshop with our prospective families to make the school's hoarding more creative. Throughout the event, children created pieces of art with Xtina on the theme of Spring and these were displayed on the hoarding. This not only showcased the artistic talents of the children for whom the school was being built but also created a further sense of ownership and pride in the school building.

BENEFITS OF OUR SCHOOL BUILDING DURING THE PANDEMIC

Once we were given the keys to the building, due to Covid-19 restrictions, we, unfortunately, could not hold the large opening ceremony we had planned. However, once again, we found that this misfortune provided us with a new opportunity and way of doing things which ended up being of benefit to our pupils. Our

learners were able to go straight into their introductory week and establish a normal routine, not overwhelmed or disturbed by any big events, which improved their transition into primary school.

Another benefit of our school building during the hardship of the pandemic was the space. With only a few classes in school and multiple classrooms and social spaces available, we were able to maximise our

situation and follow the guidelines on social distancing and bubbling effectively and fairly easily.

Our pupils are also enjoying the many facilities that our new building offers, from state-of-the-art classrooms utilising modern technology, to our large school hall, innovative food tech

and science area and our plethora of outdoor spaces. Being located in the Garden City development, our school building is also well-considered, comprising a modular building design with high energy efficiency, reflecting the community we are in.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

We have many exciting plans to further develop our school building and truly establish it as a place for the community. Thanks to a grant from the Ebbsfleet Development Corporation during the pandemic, we can fast-track our plans within the next year.

For example, we will be creating an allotment and orchard on site which will give pupils the chance to learn about and immerse themselves in the growing process and harvesting produce. We also have plans to establish a rewilded area to attract small reptiles and mammals, giving our pupils hands-on experience of nature. Longer-term, we also hope to create a forest and Forest School.

Another exciting project is to transform our outdoor buildings into a celebration of Springhead's heritage. The area has an interesting history, especially related to the Neolithic era, with remains of a Roman temple and the Ebbsfleet Elephant nearby. This will bring the community and its heritage into the school and will be accessible to our pupils and community alike, giving our standard outdoor buildings a sense of purpose and place that can be enjoyed by all.

Our PTA, Friends of Springhead Park, is also starting to fundraise to enhance our building. They are planning to expand our

ADVICE FOR OPENING A NEW SCHOOL BUILDING

- **Be flexible:** Being able to alter plans to suit any unforeseen situation is essential with any build.
- **Be prepared:** It always pays to have a plan A, B and C so that you are ready for any change in the timescale or issue that arises.
- **Be ready to make quick, informed decisions:** When building a new school, there are many elements to oversee. Have a clear vision so you can make necessary decisions quickly and appropriately.
- **Build a strong trustworthy team:** Surround yourself with a team who you can trust with making decisions in your absence, confide in and bounce ideas off. We are also fortunate to be part of The Primary First Trust and receive expert support and guidance.
- **Focus on your initial impression:** When opening a school that does not yet exist, you represent the school, so make time to interact with prospective parents and create positive first impressions.

Library provision and we are looking into how we can incorporate technology into reading at the school, helping to prepare our pupils for the modern world. I also have ambitions to extend our technology facilities to include robotics and green screens.

Ultimately, our school building is not simply bricks and mortar, it is there to enable and facilitate our pupils to access the curriculum in a modern world, giving them the skills needed to thrive in the twenty-first century, and to be a central place that offers a welcoming space to bring together our community.

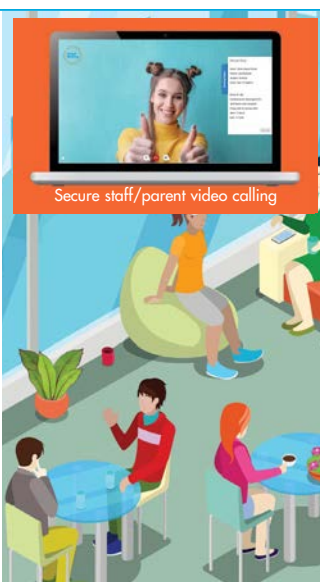


Wayne Clayton, headteacher of Springhead Park Primary School, part of The Primary First Trust

Organise effective Parents Meetings in only a few clicks

Staying in touch during these unprecedented times is vital for maintaining positive relationships between teachers, parents and students. With the SchoolBooking Parent Meetings service you can quickly create events and invite your parents to book appointments online with teachers. Provide your parents the choice of phone or video call meetings.

Setup your next Parents Meeting Event at no cost with our 30-day Trial.



KEY FEATURES

- Face to face, Phone or Secure video call meetings
- Sync data with your MIS or upload from Excel
- Online login appointment booking for parents
- Teachers can book and print appointments for students
- 'Live View' module to help teacher stay on schedule
- Record Parent Attendance and comments
- Single Sign On with Office365 or G Suite integration
- Create Parent Meetings for staff without Classes
- Insightful reports to track parental engagement



Call: **01424 406433**

Email: customer.services@schoolbooking.com
www.schoolbooking.com

eptsoft Directory of Education, Lifestyle and Leisure Suppliers



How to promote your business to teachers, parents and students across the UK.

Thousands of Products and Services from Early Years through Schools to University from over 250 UK Suppliers!

www.eptsoft.com/Directory.aspx



LEARNING COMES NATURALLY WITH ONE OF OUR OUTDOOR CLASSROOMS

Father Nature offers high quality landscape design, build and maintenance of outdoor learning areas, alongside horticultural education and community engagement.

We are a member of Learning Through Landscapes and work with *Natural Thinkers* and *Sowing the Seeds* (part of the London Sustainable Development Commission).

Father Nature holds Lambeth recommended status as a landscaping provider of Outdoor Growing & Learning Spaces. Father Nature is a family run social enterprise.



See how your school can transform its outside spaces.
 Book your FREE no obligation site visit today.

www.fathernature.org.uk

LOOK AT THINGS DIFFERENTLY

Mel Shute explains why rethinking space utilisation in the classroom can bring great benefits

At Trumpington Park Primary School, part of Cambridge Primary Education Trust, we have signed up to an international project that could fundamentally rethink space utilisation in the classroom and bring significant learnings for the sector.

Planning Learning Spaces was published in October 2019 as a guide for anyone involved in the planning and design of learning environments. The book brought together educationalists and innovative school architects from all over the world to pool their collective expertise and inspire the design of more intelligent learning spaces.

To support this, Planning Learning Spaces in Practice was launched to help schools translate their educational vision into learning space design principles, enabling them to create new, or refurbish existing, spaces that actively support their learning goals. Schools are guided through a reflective process, building the link between curriculum and design via a structured framework. Focusing on the school's vision, values and ethos, the process helps translate learning behaviours and activities into design principles.

VALUES

Our school was invited to participate in the global pilot of this project. One advantage to a new school like Trumpington Park Primary, which opened in September 2017, is that not all classrooms are in use for the first few years, so by joining the Planning Learning Spaces in Practice pilot project we have the opportunity to develop our learning spaces in alignment with its educational vision. A series of meetings and workshops were held with the Planning Learning Spaces team to define our ambition.

We started from the heart of our ethos and our values, and looked at those in terms of what we wanted to achieve in our teaching and learning, but then assessed the constraints of the current classrooms we have in being able to get that vision to work. While we want to emphasise collaboration and ownership of learning, this can sometimes feel restricted by the furniture and fixed features of a space and make it harder for children to be able to do some of the things we feel are fundamental in their learning.



Ultimately we were still presented with the inevitable standardised classrooms (measuring approximately 55m² for up to 30 children) in which to work so we wanted innovative and cost-effective ways to transform these spaces into inspirational learning environments. From there, we looked at different models to enable children to be able to work in different ways in that space to support their personalised learning. We have used the Planning Learning Spaces Design Framework to develop what we want to do next, looking at every aspect of school life, and how this relates to the design of learning spaces.

IMPACT

In the short-term, with social distancing in place, children have been more separated than we would want; bearing in mind that one of our key values is collaboration and one of the key drivers of the space. However, I am absolutely focusing on the expected longer-term impact. What we anticipate, and what we have seen from small groups of children using the space at this time, is being able to have a high level of flexibility around the organisation of a space will have a huge impact on the way in which teaching and learning happens there.

Now we are looking at all the different learning that can happen in that space in very different ways, and teaching children how they can have an impact on their independence and ownership within that space. Having the children as a very central part of the classroom environment will, I believe, make a significant difference to their overall development.

You look at a classroom and you take it as it is, particularly in a new build. This project has really forced our hand to look at that space in a very different way, go in with a different pair of glasses, and this has been refreshing. The whole process is suitable for schools looking to repurpose old spaces, or for those designing new buildings, and helps to ensure a successful transition into these purpose-designed learning spaces.

Professor Peter Barrett, author of The Clever Classrooms report, is monitoring the Planning Learning Spaces project to see how the learning outcomes of pupils are affected by this 'hands on' approach to creating their own learning environments. The rigorous assessment of outputs from this project will be available in the autumn term.

Mel Shute is Headteacher at Trumpington Park Primary School, part of Cambridge Primary Education Trust

fft.aspire

Scan here to find out how
we can help you meet
the 2021 challenge.



www.fft.org.uk/fft-2021-primary

5 REASONS TO TRY... FFT Aspire

Discover how FFT Education is supporting teaching and learning and meeting the 2021 challenge for primary schools



30 SECOND BRIEFING

A next generation range of products and services puts FFT Education at the forefront of educational data analysis. FFT matches powerful data with intelligent reporting within an easy-to-use integrated system, designed for schools and teachers. Make the most of next-day data, faster reporting, and more tools than ever to explore.



and easy way to identify and monitor attendance issues (including the impact of Covid-19) for specific year groups, pupil groups and individual pupils. Attendance Tracker automatically collects data from thousands of schools each week with no user overheads. This means that as well as tracking your own pupils' attendance, you can also compare it to similar pupils across the whole country using live, up-to-date information.

4 EVALUATING PERFORMANCE

For 20 years, FFT has been providing high-quality data to support self-evaluation and target setting. However, without formal national testing for two years, schools have struggled to effectively measure 'end of Key Stage' attainment and progress. This summer, FFT's End of Key Stage Assessment Service will provide schools with a full analysis of their EYFS, KS1 and KS2 teacher assessments. Schools can track progress against FFT estimates for all pupils, compare attainment against other schools nationally in 2021, and understand the impact of learning loss.

1 MEETING THE 2021 CHALLENGE

We know that Covid-19 has had a significant impact on children this past year, with pupils suffering learning loss and ongoing disruption to national tests. FFT's Aspire system reflects these challenging and changing circumstances with a brand new mix of services and products that aim to support senior leaders, teachers and children in 2021 and beyond. Simple and easy to use, Aspire is an integrated data system that allows schools to track and estimate future progress, evaluate performance and school effectiveness, identify intervention needs, and monitor and analyse attendance.

Tracker and Assessment Tracker. This means you can now analyse and track both summative assessment data and record formative assessment data in one place. Uniquely, Aspire automatically converts test and TA data into a single 'common currency' – a DfE scaled score. So whether you're using Rising Stars, PiXL, NFER, Renaissance, GL or any combination of assessments, you can now track and compare them all in Aspire.

Find out more:
Email subscriptions@fft.org.uk
Call 01446 776 262



2 TRACKING PROGRESS

The ability to track and monitor pupil progress has never been more important. Aspire includes two tracking systems in one—Curriculum

3 TRACKING ATTENDANCE

Attendance Tracker is FFT's brand new attendance reporting system. Launched earlier this year, it provides schools with a simple

5 LOOKING AHEAD

With a range of new services and features planned for autumn and beyond, we're making Aspire even easier to use. Automated data collections direct from schools will remove the need for manual imports and exports – saving you time, speeding up access to reports, and maximising the potential of your data. A key part of this is you – the FFT community. We believe that by harnessing the power of data from thousands of FFT Aspire schools, we can significantly improve the life chances of children across the whole country.

KEY POINTS

Our services benefit from a live connection to your school MIS, ensuring your school, class, and pupil information is always up-to-date.

Attendance analysis at school, pupil group, and individual pupil level against other schools nationally, with brand new reports every week.

Identify learning gaps with brand new features and services to help understand learning loss and meet the changing needs of schools in 2021.

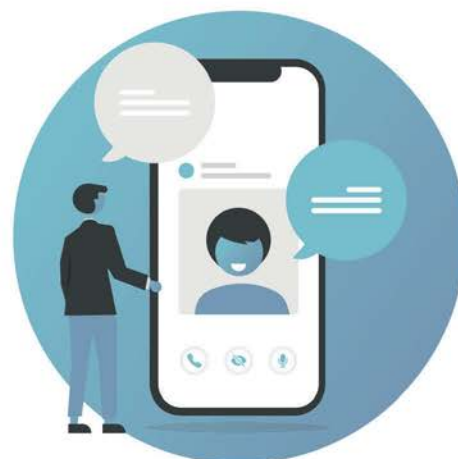
We're working with third party providers to keep all of your data connected. That means less importing and exporting and more time acting on data.

The best parents' evening possible. Sorted.

Tried. Tested. Trusted.

**3 million parents, pupils and staff using our system
and over 15 million meetings handled per year.**

parents-booking.com



Summer offer

**Half
price**

- ✓ **Full Online Parents Booking system**
- ✓ **Plus Video conferencing for parents' meetings**
- ✓ **Plus Clubs & events bookings system**

Not only that!

Order by August 13th

pay nothing until Jan. 2022

Want to know more?

sales@parents-booking.com

01463 731 000

Captivate. Inspire. Engage.

What will you do with yours?



**HUE HD Pro
1080p Document
Camera and Visualiser**

£49.95+VAT

#HUEcameras



hueand.com



DIGITAL DIVERSITY IS ESSENTIAL

Gary Spraklen says that young learners need to be versatile with devices



“My point is...
I need to be
competent on
multiple
platforms,
operating
systems and
interfaces.”

I have long been an advocate for the use of Google Chromebooks in the classroom. It's my belief that the Chromebook provides an excellent cost-effective solution for a range of learning tasks.

A Chromebook is a budget-friendly alternative to a Windows laptop or MacBook. Chromebooks run on the Google operating system Chrome OS, which means that Windows and macOS programs don't work on these devices. That doesn't mean that Chromebooks don't have advantages over other laptops.

DEVICES

Back in September 2013, I led the first large-scale 1:1 Google Chromebook deployment in the UK. The scheme had a massive positive influence on learners' enjoyment and attainment in learning and transformed teaching and learning in every classroom.

However, the world is not monotone, nor can EVERY task that supports learning be completed on just a Chromebook (or any other one device for that matter). We therefore must prepare our learners for this clear fact by using a range of devices.

I myself use a MacBook Pro for the majority of my work-related tasks, however, sometimes I use a Windows device and I regularly use my Android Smartphone or even occasionally my Smartwatch to complete my work.

My point is... I need to be able to use more than one device on a regular basis, I need to be competent on multiple platforms, operating systems and interfaces. If I need to be able to do this, what will our learners need to do in the future? Surely we need to prepare them to be more versatile and adaptive than I will ever be!

CULTURAL SHIFT

With the above in mind, one could argue, 1:1 provision in any school is not enough. Across my school now we have a rich range of devices with multiple operating systems and platforms used to support learning with all learners benefiting from

superfast fibre-optic broadband.

Moving forward, I am keen to develop infrastructure to support BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) and to build on the work we did in developing teacher's skills during lockdown.

From my experiences, an effective approach to learners bringing in their own devices to support learning is about more than just technology though. It's about a fundamental change in approach to learning and teaching, a cultural shift away from old pedagogy to an environment that embraces 21st century learning. This culture is one in which learning can happen from anywhere, any time and on any device! Our use of Google Chromebooks has supported this change in culture, not only for teachers but also for learners.

COMPETENT

I feel it's important to remind everyone though what a Google Chromebook actually is... essentially it's a web-browser, nothing more, nothing less. This therefore means, any device that has a web browser, can provide the same functionality for learning. Yes, some may work better for mobile work (tablets), while others will work better for typing sustained pieces of work (clamshell devices with keyboard), the choice here is often a personal preference. However, for our learners who are already competent working in a browser, the digital device doesn't need to be fancy! This I believe is where the beauty in our approach lies, we have built an environment for learning which is truly 'device agnostic'. Where any learner at any age, can access their personalised learning materials, anywhere, anytime and on any device!

This agnostic approach means that whether you are using a £400-£800 new iPad, a £200-£400 new Chromebook or a £20-£250 Android Tablet, the way that device supports your learning is still the same. In this way, all platforms have their value and can support learning.

We are now moving the language beyond BYOD, to UMOD (Using My Own Device). This is because it's no good just bringing your own device to school, you need to use it!

Gary Spracklen is Headteacher at The Prince of Wales School: Dorchester, Former Digital Educator of the Year and a member of UK Government's - Department for Education 'ETAG' (Educational Technology Action Group). He was recently named on the #Edtech50 - 'People of 2020' list by the Education Foundation. During the Covid-19 Lockdown Gary was named a BBC News 'Lockdown Community Hero' for his work supporting the #InspiredToLearn Community both physically and online with three live broadcasts every day.



HOW CLEAN IS YOUR COMPUTER?

Denise Crouch gives her advice on keeping your tech kit clean

How often do you clean your laptop or computer keyboard? I bet it's not that frequent. You might wipe your screen with the odd wipe every now and then but actually cleaning the keyboard, come on admit, not that often.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO KEEP YOUR LAPTOP OR KEYBOARD CLEAN?

You will be surprised to know that your keyboard can harbour more germs than a public toilet seat! Of course, not all germs are harmful but some can make you really unwell. The recent Coronavirus pandemic has encouraged us to wash our hands with soap and water more often and wipe down surfaces such as worktops, desks, door knobs and high traffic areas, but little has been said of the devices we use.

Viruses and bacteria left on computers and laptops increase when the devices are shared i.e., in education, hot desking and even in our homes. This is why, just as you wash your hands to stop the spread, you should clean your devices.

HOW DO I CLEAN MY LAPTOP OR KEYBOARD?

Here is some advice on how to go about cleaning your laptop or keyboard:

1. Firstly, shut down the device and unplug from the mains power.
2. If possible, turn the laptop or keyboard upside down to empty any debris that has accumulated.
3. To clean in between the keys, you can purchase a can of suppressed air which can help to remove stubborn particles trapped between keys. Cotton swabs such as Q-tips can be dampened (not wet) with water to clean keys and in between also.

4. Use a damp lint-free cloth together with an anti-bacterial spray (spray cloth not directly onto the keyboard) to clean the rest of the keyboard. Anti-bacterial disinfectant wipes can also be used.

5. Some keyboards are designed to let you remove the actual keys to do a thorough clean, this should be done carefully to ensure you do not break the keys.

6. Do not use anything other than a specific computer screen cleaner to clean the laptop or computer screen.

7. If using a desktop PC, you can wipe down other surfaces with your damp cloth also.

"You will be surprised to know that your keyboard can harbour more germs than a public toilet seat!"

HELPFUL HINTS TO KEEPING CLEAN

You should always wash or sanitise your hands before using the keyboard. If you are sharing a device then you should always wash or sanitise your hands after touching it.

You should discourage eating or drinking near your laptop or desktop.

Where devices are shared in education there is an easier

and less time-consuming way. In the autumn of 2021 LapSafe Self-Service Solutions Ltd will launch its Diplomat UV-C sanitising station that can sanitise a laptop in just 15 seconds! A semi-automated UV-C sanitising unit that sanitises your device quickly and effectively. Place your device into the cleaning bay and leave the unit to do the rest. While waiting users should sanitise their hands, leaving them with clean hands and devices ready to use with confidence.

99 per cent of bacteria and some viruses are inactivated when exposed to high-intensity UV-C light. Fitted with Phillips UV-C bulbs, you can have confidence that the Diplomat UV-C can help with your protection strategy and help stop the spread of Covid-19.

Denise Crouch, Head of Sales and Marketing at Lapsafe

Broaden horizons with technology

Serdar Ferit explains how technology can bring diversity and inclusion to life in the curriculum

Each year, Pride Month marks an international celebration of the LGBTQ+ community, promoting equality and inclusion as well as education around the history of Pride. While great strides have been made with LGBTQ+ equality in recent years, there is still so much more to be done to improve how these topics are discussed in school.

Teaching children about sex education, human relationships and gender identity is vital to creating more accepting and well rounded global citizens. Education plays a fundamental role here and this is an area about which many teachers are passionate.

As of September 2020, it is mandatory for all English schools to teach an LGBTQ+ inclusive curriculum. Educating children from an early age about diversity and equipping them with the skills to better understand and celebrate this is one of the most important things we can teach in schools. It is the key to eradicating discrimination in society and fostering a future generation who are more empathetic and inclusive towards one another.

Real-life stories

Teaching pupils, particularly younger children, about Pride and what it means to be LGBTQ+ is sometimes perceived as a

thorny subject. Sex education should be treated with sensitivity in schools, to ensure that children feel safe if they wish to open up and express themselves. It's vital to equip teachers with the resources and skills that will help them confidently teach diversity in the curriculum and usualise it as a subject for children. Sharing real-life stories from people who come from different backgrounds can be a powerful way for schools to approach this. Hearing people share stories of their own lived experience, helps to nurture empathy

“It's vital to equip teachers with the resources and skills that will help them confidently teach diversity in the curriculum and usualise it as a subject for children.”

and understanding and can make sensitive themes such as inclusivity and sexuality easier to understand.

When these real-life, story-based lessons are presented in an immersive way, the impact is even greater, offering an incredibly powerful and engaging way to introduce children to different themes and allowing them to explore new cultures and perspectives which they otherwise might not experience. This is especially powerful when teaching an inclusive curriculum. Some pupils might have never met someone who is openly LGBTQ+, or they might have even witnessed, or been subjected to, negative stereotyping and homophobia. Sharing human stories with pupils through an interactive, 360° learning environment gives them the freedom to explore and hear first-hand from people whose lived experiences can help broaden understanding and foster inclusivity.

Virtual trips

Immersive storytelling platforms like Lyfta allow schools to take pupils on virtual trips, for example to Curacao in the Caribbean, where they can hear from Qwensley, a young gay man living in a conservative Christian community. Children explore what it means to Qwensley to be LGBTQ+ and the challenges he faced, while discovering the power of resilience, empathy and acceptance. Introducing children to multiple perspectives, and demonstrating diversity, will not only help to broaden pupils' horizons and sense of cultural capital, but will also equip them with the knowledge and confidence to express their own identities and be proud of who they are. Human storytelling enables teachers to bring depth, breadth and meaning to sensitive and complex concepts for children and can create a safe space for the class to discuss and engage with the themes.

With the coronavirus pandemic limiting travel and close human interactions, speaking to children about diversity around the world is more important than ever. Technology is a wonderful tool for broadening students' horizons, bringing human stories to life and helping to develop more confident, empathetic and globally-conscious thinkers who will go on to make a positive impact in the world.

Serdar Ferit, Co-CEO of Lyfta



WWW.THEHEADTEACHER.COM

Theheadteacher.com has hundreds of articles written by headteachers and school business managers looking at how to run a successful school. New content is being added all the time, covering a wide range of issues from increasing school funds to mastering your budget management and getting the best out of difficult members of staff.

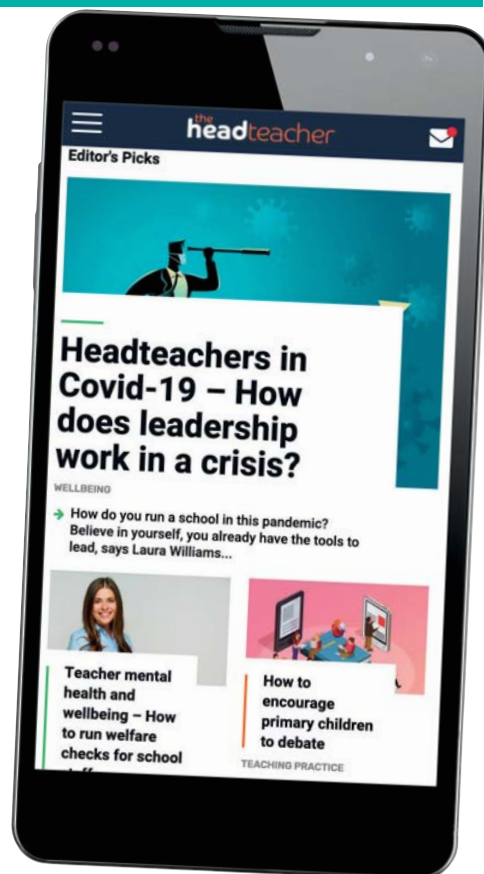
Take a closer look at outstanding examples of leadership in some of the best primary schools across the UK

FREE digital copy

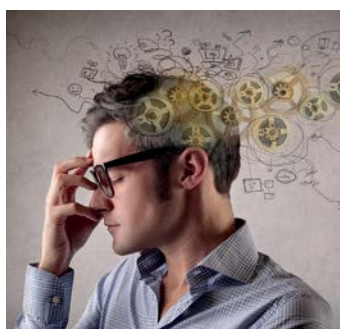
Missed an issue? On the website you can download a free electronic version of the previous edition of The Headteacher.

Weekly briefings

Get great advice from fellow leaders sent direct to your inbox by signing up to our weekly newsletter. Topics so far have included how to rethink your catering, and why heads need to stop micromanaging and start leading.



Staff Management



Neuroscience can teach you how to push the right buttons
theheadteacher.com/buttons

Health & Safety



Newly qualified teachers need support
theheadteacher.com/support

Technology



Are you protected from cyber criminals
theheadteacher.com/criminals

Attainment & Assessment



A digital transformation of learning
theheadteacher.com/digital

WHAT'S TRENDING

1

Getting to know children is paramount
bit.ly/3wz5MNI

2

How learning can be enhanced post Covid-19
bit.ly/3gJiXo7

3

Safeguarding for the new RSE guidelines
bit.ly/3gw3f0g

4

Do you have your finances in order?
bit.ly/35J0lu1

5

Are you providing the best digital practices?
bit.ly/3vAZN9j

How to face a maths challenge

James Akerman explains how online maths learning benefited special needs pupils during lockdown

Earlier this year, the National SENCO Workforce survey (<https://bit.ly/3uQvj2T>) was published. Produced by Bath Spa University and special needs association Nasen, it surveyed more than 1,000 SENCOs in special schools and mainstream. It showed that the pandemic has made schools reassess not only their universal offer, but also the potential benefits that learning online can bring, especially for learners with SEND.

Those surveyed expressed their concerns. The first, perhaps predictably, was the digital divide and how to make sure children with special needs had access to suitable technology to use at home. Staff reported an increase in workload and nearly three quarters of SENCOs highlighted the difficulties of providing appropriately differentiated work online for children and young people with SEND.

CHALLENGE

Arbour Vale School is an all-age special needs school. Our pupils have a wide range of abilities: some have profound and multiple disabilities and need high levels of personal care as well as educational support. Others have emotional and behavioural difficulties and for many this means they can become frustrated and disengaged when they do not understand a task.

Maths has always been a challenge. We have learners who have good basic number concepts but cannot deal with sentence-based questions, but we also have those who struggle to add up single figure numbers. We needed accessible and engaging content which would work whether learners were at home or in the classroom. This meant it had to be an online resource which could provide immediate feedback, rather than worksheets.

Our learners love computers and technology. Pupils on the autistic spectrum and those with ADHD also respond well to gamification. It draws them in and focuses their attention and I have been impressed with the way certain strong maths resources work.



If pupils find the content hard, the technology will help them try again or adjust to their level of understanding.

However, many of our learners needed even more support. For us, a maths resource would need to be appropriate for all ages, be interactive and engaging and cover the whole curriculum. Our MLD pupils enjoy a challenge, and a competitive element works well for them. Having features such as a leader or achievements board keeps them interested and encourages them to learn more. It would also have to be able to read text out loud so pupils could break down the questions and hear what they had to do.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Lockdown made us realise that we had to keep on top of tracking our learners' progress, even if we weren't seeing them in person. We needed to see their achievements, the number of right and wrong answers, the progress they had made in their understanding of the topics. And the resource we chose also had to record how many times they had attempted a

question because when some learners get questions wrong, they start from the beginning again. If we had clear records of what pupils could do, where they needed more support and where they had succeeded, I could assign activities that would help them make better progress. For example, if the four times table is too hard, we could revise the two times table for longer.

We talked to one company - Mangahigh - and explained that because of the severity of our pupils' learning disabilities, only ten of them could benefit from their resource. We needed extra content to support lower key stages. Subsequently, Mangahigh and Arbour Vale School have worked together to develop new content to improve accessibility and support more pupils. This has led to the introduction of new content for KS1 which can be used across different ages in SEND schools.

We want to build independence for every child. Now we find our pupils are enjoying their learning and as they become more confident in their maths ability, that confidence is spilling over into other parts of their lives.

"Pupils on the autistic spectrum and those with ADHD also respond well to gamification."

James Akerman is Head of ICT, teaches secondary pupils at Arbour Vale School.
www.arbourvaleschool.org



SILVER DIGITAL LINING TO THE PANDEMIC

Julie Carson describes her EdTech journey during one of the most challenging years in education

EdTech is the current buzzword in the education sector. The Covid-19 pandemic has thrown into sharp relief the need to close the digital divide and invest in new education technology to bring teaching and learning into the modern age.

Early in 2020, I had the opportunity to visit the Apple Headquarters in the United States. I was excited to gain some new ideas to help reinvent our computing curriculum but had little expectations beyond this. However, I was inspired by what I discovered and returned to the UK ready to jump into the world of education technology and explore what it could do for our schools.

As a Trust, we decided to not only redesign our computing curriculum, but our whole curriculum to introduce a more digital approach to teaching. We felt embedding education technology in our schools was essential to prepare our children with the skills to excel in the modern world. The traditional method of

teaching was based on learning information, but with the modern-day overload of information at our fingertips, our pupils need to develop IT skills to navigate, verify and know how to use this information effectively and our teaching style needs to reflect this.

DIGITAL CHAMPIONS

We initially organised a pilot project, introducing 30 iPads at each of our four schools to see how they would work and identify any issues. We also agreed to ten days of training for our staff with Apple Education.

The first five days were dedicated to training our Digital Champions so that we had key staff across the Trust and within each of our schools to support our collective tech journey, become the in-school experts and guide other staff members. Our Digital Champions have been instrumental in launching our EdTech transformation.

The other five days of training brought together year group teachers to practice developing resources to support the delivery of the curriculum using the iPads. For example, our Year 5 teachers developed a resource to support the teaching of Space. We then had a professional development meeting for all staff, focusing on areas that had been identified through discussions on concepts such as how to use the accessibility tools to support pupils with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities), and how to use Augmented Reality in the classroom.

Our pilot was incredibly successful, and we saw an immediate increase in engagement, including some of our pupils who previously found it difficult to access the curriculum. It also sparked exciting conversations with our pupils and the iPads helped them to explore their creativity in ways that we had not considered, and we discovered new skill sets that we did not know our children had.

“While having the EdTech embedded before the pandemic would have been fantastic, it has been an eye-opening time to be employing a new form of technology.”

Some of our pupils said: “We have loved creating videos to showcase our learning, as we have been able to share these more easily with our parents than we would have done if they were in our books.”

“I have lots of great ideas for stories but find writing really hard. Using the iPad to record my thoughts and turn it into a story has been really helpful, as I am not worrying about my spelling or handwriting anymore.”

The trial also had a positive impact on our staff, who were particularly enthused to see how using the accessibility tools to support some of our SEND and EAL (English as an Additional Language) children had a particularly quick impact.

STRATEGY

Shortly after our pilot, we entered the first national lockdown of the pandemic. I felt my newfound enthusiasm for education technology had come at the right time as I now knew the types of programmes we could use to not only facilitate home learning but transform some of our teaching practices. Even though I had already started on the digital transformation, my challenge suddenly became developing it just as the nation shut its doors.

We pushed ahead and the next step was to produce a clear digital strategy that linked cohesively with our education strategy. As part of this process, we spoke to other schools with EdTech programmes to see how they worked in practice. We also formed a working party that involved representatives from across the Trust, including each of the schools, the Trust finance team and Trust services. This was a great way to take everyone with us on our EdTech journey, engage with their feedback and make sure the digital strategy would work for everyone. Over the last several months, we have worked together to establish a strategy that has clear goals for each academic year, over the course of the next three years.

Before implementing the strategy, we communicated with our staff, parents and pupils so they understood why we had decided to take a whole curriculum approach to our digital transformation, the benefits it would bring and what was required of them over the next few months to integrate the technology successfully.

STAFF SURVEY

As we continue to progress through our transformation and begin turning our ideas into practical outcomes, we are working

closely with Apple to monitor the impact that implementing education technology will have on our schools. We conducted an initial staff survey to capture how our team was feeling about the process, their experiences so far and expectations about what was to come. We will carry out another staff survey in six months' time to see how their opinions have changed and record any impacts they are witnessing with their pupils and as teachers themselves.

While having the EdTech embedded before the pandemic would have been fantastic, it has been an eye-opening time to be employing a new form of technology. We have experienced first-hand what it is like for our pupils and teachers to work remotely and have been able to see what works well for them and areas that our new technology could help to address. The timing has also helped to bring our stakeholders on board as everyone from parents to board members have seen how necessary it is for our pupils to have devices and develop IT skills.

Furthermore, there has been lots of conversation about EdTech and we have been learning about other schools and trusts' experiences and using their advice to avoid the same pitfalls. There are also new versions of software and apps being developed all the time and we are benefiting from a huge range of options to choose from.

Now we have completed our successful pilot project, collaborated with our working party, created our digital strategy and communicated with our staff, pupils and parents, we are excited to move into the next phase of our transformation. We aim to introduce an iPad for every pupil across our schools within the next three years. This will close any digital divide and ensure all our pupils have access to the same quality devices to pursue their learning both in and outside the classroom.

TECHNOLOGY

We will also be investigating how we can use this technology to boost parental engagement and reach some of our more isolated families by live streaming school events and making it easier to share and review their children's work through their iPads.

Our Trust is building a brand-new free school that is set to open in 2022 and will implement our digital strategy from day one with all pupils having their own iPad. We are

WHAT TO DO NOW

- **Visit other schools with EdTech programmes.** It is useful to hear the experiences of other schools, see how they have embedded it and what has worked.
- **Communicate with your community.** These transformations work most successfully when your pupils, staff and parents understand what is happening and the value it will bring.
- **Set clear and achievable goals.** Implementing a new technology can feel overwhelming so set achievable goals and lay out a roadmap of how you will reach your overall aim.
- **Identify digital champions.** Appoint digital champions amongst your staff who can help drive the project and also within each classroom so that the project is supported by the children.
- **Involve parents.** We held a series of parent workshops to explore using iPads so they felt comfortable in supporting their children with home learning.
- **Negotiate to secure the best deal.** Do not be afraid to negotiate with providers to get the best deal and the support you need.

currently working with our IT contractors to build in state-of-the-art whiteboards, a specialist sensory space, and an interactive table for our Early Years pupils and other technologies throughout the school so that our pupils can benefit from the latest equipment.

Our end goal is for all our schools to become Apple accredited schools. This accreditation is given to schools that Apple believe are centres of leadership and educational excellence and demonstrate Apple's vision for learning with technology. We will be working towards this status and sharing our learning with other schools and trusts in our community and across the UK.



Julie Carson, Director of Education at Woodland Academy Trust

ONLINE SAFETY IS PARAMOUNT

Al Kingsley explains how to embed digital citizenship skills

Even as adults, we may not be totally up to speed with every aspect of digital citizenship. There are nine key areas – passwords, privacy, personal information, photos, property, permissions, protection, professionalism and personal brand (first defined by US educator and author Vicki Davis) – and I can tell you now that if everyone kept their personal information safe, didn't share birthday dates online or photos that reveal crucial background information about their homes, incidences of burglary and ID theft would be much lower!

There's a lot to take on board, so it's never too early to start introducing digital citizenship to even the youngest learners. In a primary setting, teachers may choose to begin by focusing on just a few of these, for example:

- **Not sharing personal information.**
- **Keeping passwords secret.**
- **Telling a parent or teacher if pupils receive a message that makes them feel uncomfortable.**
- **Not sending photos to people they don't know.**
- **Not downloading anything without permission from parents or teachers.**

Covering these bases introduces the idea to pupils that they have a responsibility to keep themselves safe online but they can still speak to an adult if something happens that is out of their control. This way, they can learn to participate safely online and gain the benefits from all the internet has to offer, without becoming caught up in its darker side.

TEACHERS AND SCHOOLS

Communication is the bedrock of all our interactions, whether virtual or in person. For the youngest children, that starts with learning the concepts of being kind, respectful to others and so on. Practising these skills in person is the first step before

they then transfer them to the online world as digital citizens.

Having conversations with pupils about how and why we need to be so careful when using devices and on the internet is essential to ensure a thorough understanding right from the start – and providing a safe learning environment for pupils to take their first steps online is key. Schools can do this in two ways: firstly, by locking down and controlling what pupils have access to online to prevent exposure to unsuitable content. After all, they need to be able to make mistakes in safety – it's how we learn! Secondly, teachers can use safe spaces within the school's protected setting for pupils to practise the skills they have learned, for example by employing child-friendly search engines such as Swiggle, using appropriate online games to teach the pillars of digital citizenship, like Google's Interland, and introducing children to the concept of social media in a completely safe manner by using a solution such as GoBubble.

The other side of the coin is reporting. Pupils must know where to go to report any problems they may have (online or in person) and, most importantly, feel comfortable in doing so. We're all aware now of the "Everyone's invited" website. To date, it has received over 16,000 reports of sexual abuse from all educational settings – including some from primary level. Within the framework of digital citizenship, it has been a catalyst for schools to renew their efforts to ensure there are safe pathways for young people to report issues of any kind, whether they have a problem themselves or are worried about a friend. However, for some,

reporting a concern face-to-face can be embarrassing, depending on the nature of the abuse or interaction they have had. So providing a means for digital communication (i.e. a form on the school website or a tool that specifically allows pupils to report concerns) ensures that there's a pathway for everybody to find a trusted member of staff to confide in.

PARENTS

Schools can play a significant role in enabling parents to have confidence in their children's technology use by regularly updating them with developments such as the latest online trends, giving them tips on how to navigate online safety at home, and suggesting approaches on how to talk to their child about the virtual situations they may encounter.

Where device use is concerned, within the home, parents can start with the very simple policy of always having an 'open door' to ensure that they have a degree of

"A popular and effective way to strengthen digital safety throughout a school is to implement a Digital Ambassador programme."



supervision over what the child is doing online. Some may prefer to make sure that all home technology use only happens in a communal area, so other members of the family can keep an eye on children's technology activities too and can redirect them if needed.

Parents can go further than this by setting parental controls for access, as well as boundaries on how long devices will be used. It's all about establishing good habits from an early age and ensuring children don't get carried away using technology for hours at a time. Lately, the attention has switched from simply focusing on the length of time they are on the device, to what they are actually doing on it and whether it is constructive and/or productive, e.g. research for homework or learning how to do something that interests them, rather than just being on social media for hours.

Schools can also help parents to understand why certain rules are in place, for example, reinforcing that the age guidelines

for different social media platforms are applied to keep their children safe from content that they simply should not be seeing at a young age. Parents can then monitor their children's social media use with new understanding.

PEERS

A popular and effective way to strengthen digital safety throughout a school is to implement a Digital Ambassador programme. I've seen this be highly successful in a number of primary schools. There are some superb programmes available (e.g. eCadets and iVengers) that coach the older children in school to be online safety experts. These 'ambassadors' then promote the safe and responsible use of technology to younger pupils. The ambassadors' voices often carry more weight than that of the teacher and, when the younger pupils have problems or are worried by something that has occurred online, often it's easier for them to tell someone closer to their own age first – and the ambassador will then report it to the member of staff in charge of the programme.

Interactive, whole-school programmes like these help build digital skills for life. They develop a sense of responsibility in how pupils conduct themselves online and a sense of pride in how they have helped others, as well as empowering them to recognise – and speak out – when things are not as they should be.

MULTI-LAYERED APPROACH

Even though the virtual world is constantly evolving, the essential pillars of digital citizenship still apply, whatever age we are. The success in sticking to them comes from the understanding of why they exist and how they help to create an amenable online environment where everyone can participate safely. Schools, parents and pupil digital ambassadors all have a significant role to play and the unique emphasis of each approach ensures that the key learning points are all covered multiple times, with at least one voice striking a chord with pupils.

STAY UP TO DATE

Digital trends change quickly and being aware of what's out there, as well as having quality resources on hand to use with pupils, is half the battle.

Some great sources of information for teachers and parents include:

- ChildNet (<https://www.childnet.com/>) – Online safety resources and toolkits for parents/carers and teachers.
- Common sense education (<https://bit.ly/3gdxhpJ>) – Example digital citizenship lesson plans for Years 1-6.
- NSPCC (<https://bit.ly/3pGLuP4>) – Advice on how parents can talk to children about online safety.
- CEOP ThinkUKnow (<https://bit.ly/3zcuWTs>) – Online e-safety toolkits and resources for teachers.
- InternetMatters (<https://bit.ly/2RIMiGG>) – Online safety advice for parents of children aged between six and 10-years-old.
- Childline (<https://bit.ly/3czvR6P>) – Cyberbullying information for teachers and older children.
- Internet Watch Foundation (<https://www.iwf.org.uk/>) – Advice about and reporting of child sexual abuse content.



Al Kingsley, Group MD at NetSupport, is Chair of two MATs (as both a Trustee and Member), Chair of his local Governors' Leadership Group, and is a member of the Regional Schools Commissioners' Head Teacher Board for North London and the South East.

Subscriptions
from only
£40
per year!

GET ANIMAL PLANET FOR YOUR SCHOOL!

**EXPLORE OUR WORLD'S MOST
AMAZING ANIMALS, HABITATS AND
ECOSYSTEMS WITH YOUR PUPILS**

WHY SUBSCRIBE TO ANIMAL PLANET MAGAZINE?

- Add breadth and depth to your pupils' knowledge about our Earth's biodiversity
- Encourage reading for pleasure with fascinating facts, incredible information and stunning photography in every issue
- Inspire your pupils to discuss and engage in global issues such as conservation and plastic pollution



©2021 Discovery



HOW TO SIGN UP...

Visit animalplanetmagazine.com/schools

It's time to inspire the coders of the future

Richard Hamer explains the need to boost engagement in STEM to combat the growing skills gap

Over the past year many of us have radically shifted to remote working and home schooling due to Covid-19 lockdowns and school closures. There is no doubt that technology has played a pivotal part in not only facilitating this change but also opening up new and innovative possibilities for working and learning, making tech even more ingrained across all sectors.

THE COVID-19 SKILLS DEMAND

As we gradually ease out of lockdown and return to a semblance of normality, digital skills are set to play an essential role in revitalising the economy. Indeed, skills development and retraining amongst students and adults are a core pillar in the Government's levelling-up agenda post Covid-19. A recent report from Accenture highlighted a surge in demand for artificial intelligence (AI), cloud and robotics skills amongst businesses in the UK over the past six months, suggesting these capabilities will be key to the nation's socio-economic recovery.

Despite this clear need for digital literacy amongst the next generation of workers, new research has found that less than ten per cent of

'Gen Z' learners are planning to pursue science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) related studies. This is not to say that children and young people are not interested or inspired by STEM. In fact, a recent study of 2,000 young people by BAE Systems found that healthcare, engineering, science, technology and digital are among the top industries which young people believe hold the best long-term career opportunities, in light of the Covid-19 pandemic. It appears the problem lies with a lack of awareness around the skills young people need and what a career in the industry looks like in practice, as well as opportunities for students to practically develop their STEM knowledge and confidence in schools. If we can boost and

“Primary school is the ideal place to give students practical experience in coding.”

sustain engagement in key disciplines such as coding and robotics amongst children throughout their primary and secondary educational journeys, we can help inspire the coding and computer science innovators of the future and meet the rising skills demand.

INSPIRING THE NEXT GENERATION

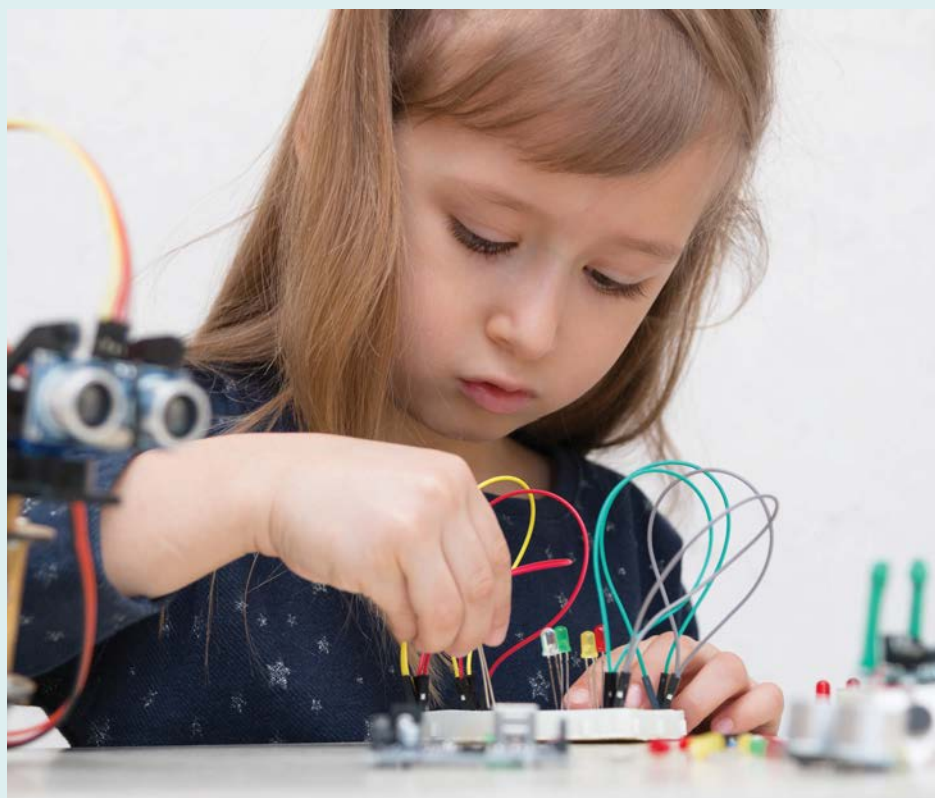
Primary school is the ideal place to give students practical experience in coding. Starting at a young age and continuing through to secondary school will help to dispel any misconceptions around STEM and spark a curiosity and passion for robotics, ensuring that girls, as well as boys, are as engaged in STEM subjects. Furthermore, making sure that all teachers, no matter what school or location, are equipped with the resources, training and support they need to confidently teach coding will help ensure digital literacy is something all children can enjoy.

Hands-on learning, which encourages children to take the lead and learn through creating and making something themselves, is one of the most engaging and effective ways to teach coding in the classroom. Coding resources such as LEGO Education SPIKE Prime enables students to get stuck into building and programming their own robot, testing what works through trial and error and, most importantly, to have fun learning through play. While this gives students a strong foundation in coding skills, it also fosters creativity, teamwork and problem-solving skills which will stand them in good stead across all aspects of later life.

Too often, children and young people falsely believe that programming and robotics is not 'for them', which means they are less likely to consider a STEM subject at GCSE or A-level. It's important that children get first-hand experience of the exciting world of robotics, whether that is coding a robot to take part in a virtual humanitarian mission or cracking a complex piece of computer code. This is the key to breaking down barriers and showing students that anyone can be a skilled scientist, technologist or engineer.

Coding is rapidly becoming a vital part of the curriculum to help combat the future skills gap. Providing more practical learning experiences in schools is a brilliant way to kick-start children's passion, confidence and proficiency in robotics and programming.

Richard Hamer, Education and Skills Director at BAE Systems



WHY PUPILS NEED ACCESS TO DEVICES AT HOME

Catherine Jones discusses the importance of access to digital learning at home

ABOUT OUR SCHOOL

Blue Gate Fields Infant School is a three form entry school located in Shadwell, Tower Hamlets, East London. We currently have 353 on the pupil roll including nursery and reception children - broadly half girls and half boys. The majority of pupils in our diverse school population are learning English as an additional language; with 89 per cent Bangladeshi, four per cent Somali, two per cent Pakistani and five per cent from mixed backgrounds.

Deprivation levels in the area are higher than the national average, 28.3 per cent of pupils are eligible for Free School Meals and 28.6 per cent eligible for Pupil

Premium. Many of our families live in rented or temporary accommodation which is often overcrowded. Currently one in four (10,000) school children in Tower Hamlets have no access to digital learning. Following our last Ofsted rating in 2019, Blue Gate Fields continued to be judged a Good school.

LESSONS LEARNED DURING LOCKDOWN

The impact of the pandemic brought home to us the importance of ICT as an essential teaching tool, ensuring our pupils continued to learn outside the formal face-to-face classroom setting. We were very aware of the disadvantage gap widening due to the digital divide and wanted to find ways to address it.

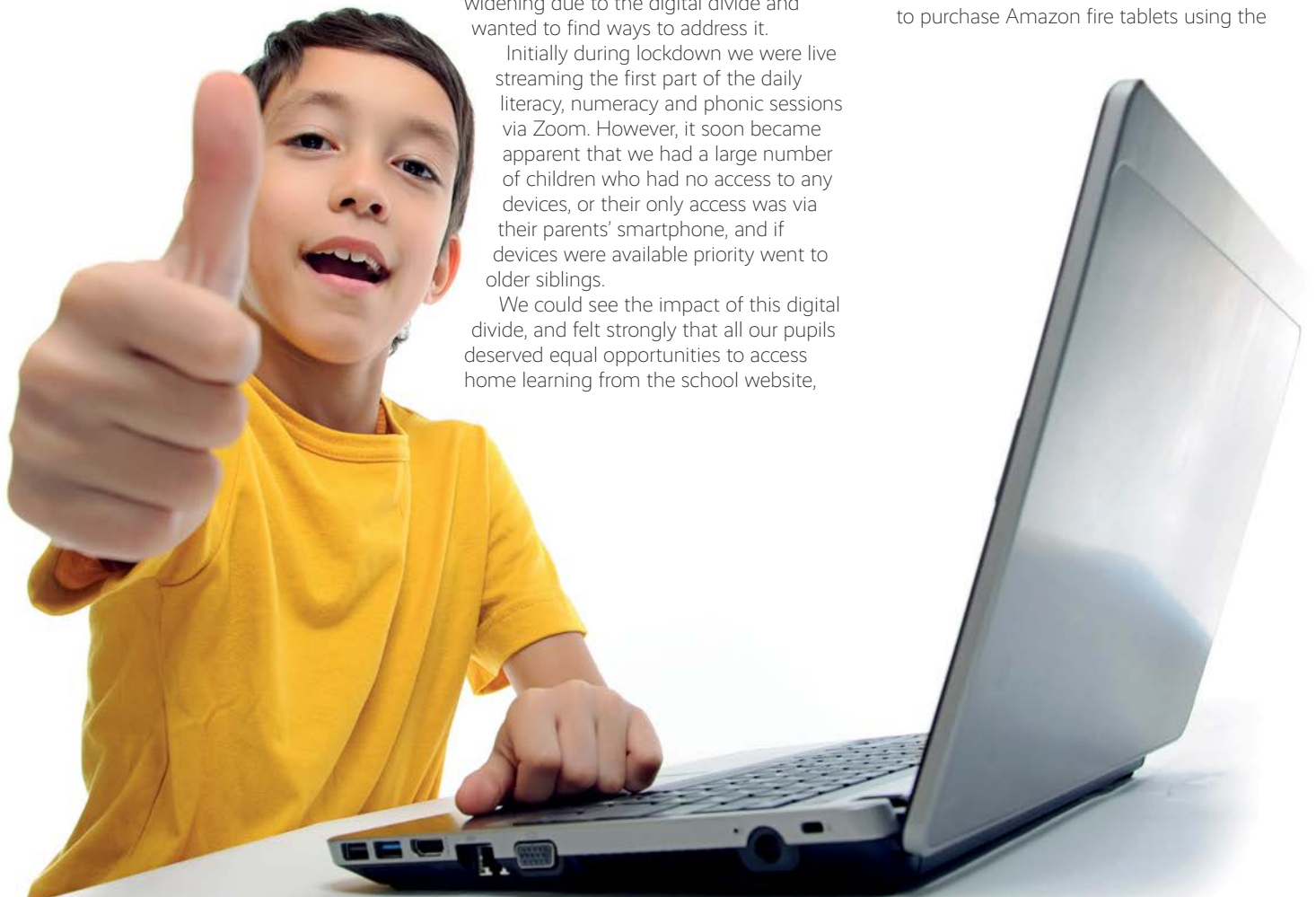
Initially during lockdown we were live streaming the first part of the daily literacy, numeracy and phonic sessions via Zoom. However, it soon became apparent that we had a large number of children who had no access to any devices, or their only access was via their parents' smartphone, and if devices were available priority went to older siblings.

We could see the impact of this digital divide, and felt strongly that all our pupils deserved equal opportunities to access home learning from the school website,

but as an infant school we were not eligible for the Government's free laptop scheme.

Fortunately we were supported by the London Borough of Tower Hamlets' EveryChildOnline campaign in partnership with LGfL- The National Grid for Learning's #BridgeTheDivide initiative, and received 12 laptops as part of the borough's initiative to provide every school child with access to a device and connectivity. Seven of the laptops were paid for through personal donations to the borough's campaign and five additional devices donated in support of The Mayor's Fund by LGfL. Our pupils were overjoyed to receive the devices - there was lots of laughter and excitement that day!

As a school we also made the decision to purchase Amazon fire tablets using the



“Now we are back in school, we recognise all the benefits and flexibility blended learning can provide.”

school's budget. One of our parent governor's then notified us of a scheme Vodafone was running, we applied and they kindly donated SIM cards for the parents with no internet access, which was also a great help. Finding out about local and national schemes to support the purchase of devices has really helped us towards our goal of one device per pupil.

THE BENEFITS OF ACCESS TO DEVICES AT HOME

With the rapid move to remote learning during lockdown, we became aware of the benefits to both pupils, parents and carers of having devices available at home. Parents were often around for the live streamed lessons so they learned how certain concepts - for example, fractions - were taught, and felt more confident supporting their children's learning. Live streaming also gave us the opportunity to communicate directly with our pupils, supporting them in their learning, giving them feedback in “real time” and checking in on their well-being.

Pupils could practise their skills and recap and consolidate concepts at their own pace, outside of school time. They loved using Purple Mash, and eagerly engaged with many of the online learning platforms available for free via LGfL, including online maths games reinforcing important mathematical concepts. They also engaged in phonic sessions from different sources to strengthen and extend their phonic knowledge.

With the closure of libraries and with no physical books being sent home due to Covid safety measures, it was even more vital for our pupils to have access to e-books to ensure they did not fall behind with their reading. Guided reading books were also available on the school website and pupils were encouraged to read a variety of books at their own reading level, and share books with other family members.

The whole experience helped develop independence and pupil's ownership over their learning. It also ensured that all our pupils were practising and extending their English skills, alongside their home languages.

We didn't want to lose the advantages

that their devices had brought to them during lockdown; combining what we had learnt about digital teaching and learning with the more traditional classroom setting, blended learning seemed the obvious way to go.

GOING FORWARD

Now we are back in school, we recognise all the benefits and flexibility blended learning can provide. Going forward we envisage a blended learning approach. We have an ICT suite that pupils can access from their class timetable and we are introducing Google Classroom. The platform will serve as the access point for home learning projects and weekly homework, so learning does not just happen in school - all our pupils will have the opportunity to carry on learning at home. We are also providing parents with guidance and support on how to use the new platform.

By facilitating the continuity of learning from school to home we can continue to develop independent learning through longer-term projects linked to humanities, science and PSHE, with a focus on research, developing skills and understanding and sharing knowledge. Devices will be brought into school at regular intervals so students can share work they have completed at home with the class staff and their peers. And with the school's “Fit in Five” fitness programme available on the school website, we hope to encourage pupils and their families to be more physically active at home.

We also want to make it easier for working parents to become more involved in their child's learning, and make communication easier. Previously we were limited to running parent workshops in school, which we knew reduced the accessibility for working parents or those with larger families, but there wasn't an alternative. Now we aim to run online curriculum workshops so parents can attend the live sessions or access the workshop video in their own time. We hope to continue using the devices as another way to communicate with working parents who we don't necessarily often see at the school gates.

Having access to electronic devices and connectivity ensures more opportunity for

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- **Just having a device available does not ensure that the opportunities for learning and communication can be accessed. Pupils and parents need to feel confident about accessing and using the programmes. Training workshops and contacts in school who can troubleshoot and support parents are vital.**
- **Use the school website or learning platform as the hub for learners - it's important to have one place from which pupils can access their learning. Ensure that access is straightforward for pupils and their parents.**
- **Plan future investment in technology. Although the pandemic forced this rapid development in the use of technology, in the future schools need to consider the cost of maintaining and purchasing new equipment, and making provision in the yearly budget.**
- **Contact edtech charity LGfL - The National Grid for Learning (<https://www.lgfl.net/default.aspx>) who provide schools with a one-stop-shop for advice, information, resources and devices at significantly discounted prices.**

all our pupils to extend their learning and for their parents to be part of their education. Access to digital learning has a genuine life-changing impact on our pupils, it opens up avenues of learning and a whole range of educational opportunities and experiences that would otherwise be beyond their reach.



Catherine Jones, Head at Blue Gate Fields Infants School, Shadwell, Tower Hamlets, East London

THE VALUE OF VIDEO

Simon Hepburn explains the benefits of video for primary school communication

Eighteen months ago, you might have occasionally used Skype to talk to family members living overseas. You probably watched YouTube clips and perhaps used them in assemblies. But as a school leader you probably didn't think much more about recording and sharing video.

How things have changed! I've used Google Meet, Microsoft Teams and Zoom to teach, to meet colleagues and to deliver and receive CPD, as well as sharing video-based content from the likes of Oak National. I've been on guided video-based school tours as well as watching amazing 360-degree tours, sat on both sides of remote parents' evenings and watched school leaders deliver parent meetings over Facebook Live. All through video.

What does the future hold? Do we go back to solely face-to-face communication as the pandemic fades? I'd argue that the best solution, as with all types of communication, is to go with what works – as long as it is both safe and affordable!

Andrew Goff, Founder of school video specialists Just Teach and a former senior school leader, suggests schools look at three areas where video can make a real difference focussed on their school development plans – supporting teaching and learning; communicating essential information inside and outside school; and external celebration – showing off the best of the school.

SUPPORTING TEACHING AND LEARNING

2021 is an exciting year for teacher development with the introduction of the Early Career Framework (ECF) across England as well as enhanced funding for teachers at other stages of their careers. One of the key areas of focus within the ECF is the role of mentors, who will work closely with early career teachers to ensure they can quickly solve classroom-based problems. Using video to record lessons (with the agreement of the teacher) can solve two problems that often arise with mentoring – the so-called 'Hawthorne Effect' where the presence of a senior teacher means that fewer problems arise; and the need for cover for lesson observations.

Other schools and trusts have been using classroom video to build up lesson banks in case of future school disruptions (even just snow days!), to share best practice across multiple schools, and to improve professional development for more experienced teachers through techniques such as Lesson Study, and to introduce new ways of teaching such

as Maths Mastery (this article from classroom video specialists ONVU Learning shows how one primary school did this (<https://bit.ly/3xt800N>)).

COMMUNICATION

Staff and pupils in many schools have become accustomed to remote meetings and assemblies. While many will be delighted to return to face-to-face events, there are advantages to continuing to deliver them in hybrid form – not least in schools where the main hall is not large enough to accommodate all pupils!

External communication is also important. The future of parents' evenings is perhaps the most interesting – with only 24 per cent of parents and 30 per cent of teachers wanting to go back to fully face-to-face meetings in this survey by Parent Ping and Teacher Tapp (<https://bit.ly/3pVdmui>).

CELEBRATIONS

Every school has major events – sports days, productions, visiting assemblies – and as a parent it's been great to experience many of them. But it's never possible for all parents to make all of them – let alone sharing them with wider family members and the local community, including prospective future parents. You might have created a DVD of events in the past, but these often took a long time to distribute, losing the impact.



“Technology never stands still and there are always innovative ideas for schools to explore.”

And there are also many exciting events that haven't ever been open to the wider community – class presentations, inter-class sports fixtures and so on.

CASE STUDY: Orwell Park School, in Suffolk, is working with Just Teach to live-stream events including cricket matches and their 'Battle of the Bands' – allowing parents to watch in real-time through a secure digital portal (<https://bit.ly/3cJK9lh>).

HOW DO YOU DO THIS?

Almost every adult now carries a video recording device (a smartphone) and free or inexpensive video-editing software and fast digital connections (either via school Wi-Fi or increasingly 5G mobile) are common. There are also more expensive alternatives that are higher-quality, easier to use or faster.

The challenge for schools is finding the right solution for their needs, as well as the time and expertise to produce high-quality video in a safe way. We look at the choices below.

• **Hardware:** Mobile phones are extremely useful for video capture but using personal equipment can breach safeguarding policies and produce variable quality footage. Alternative dedicated cameras include 'action cameras' such as GoPro or mirrorless cameras made by the likes of Canon or Sony. Some schools also own and fly drones such as those made by Mavic, although recent changes in legislation mean that both drones and pilots need to be licensed (see this article for the latest information (<https://bit.ly/35o1ZGA>)).

And you can also use high-quality webcams to record messages and interview people externally. Other equipment can include 'green screens' to record in front of (or you can just use any colour of cloth left over from a production!), as well as lights, microphones and encoders to allow live sharing. Andrew Goff argues "simplicity is important and that's where hiring the latest equipment can make a real difference."

• **Software:** Entry-level video editing software comes free with almost every device, with the best probably being iMovie on Apple Macs and iPhones. There are many free and paid-for alternatives – ranging all the way up to Final Cut Pro and Premiere Pro which are used professionally.

Always look for education discounts and make use of free trials to make sure they are right for you. For streaming content publicly, it's much easier than before to share live on YouTube or on social media such as Facebook or Twitter.

It's best to seek professional advice though if you want to set up your own secure site or make your live streams available on parent portal web pages.

• **Connections:** The rise of 5G connection is something that excites those working in video, with the bandwidth to live-share '4K' content now available in many cities. In other parts of the country, schools may still rely on broadband connection for sharing.

In terms of receiving content, 97 per cent of UK adults aged 35-44 have smartphones, and during the COVID pandemic the Government distributed 1.3 million laptops and devices in England, meaning there are very few families that cannot receive content, data costs permitting.

• **Policies and safeguards:** Sharing video carries obvious safeguarding issues. Including identifying vulnerable children and those whose parents have not given permission for them to be filmed, and this is especially true of live-streamed content.

However, these risks can be avoided through effective preparation and by using secure portals that only specific people have access to – or by recording content and then editing it for later release on open channels.

• Expertise:

Digital skills are going to be in greater demand in the future so more schools are training pupils in using video technology – in different roles such as scripting news bulletins, filming, editing footage and presenting

Take a look at Eldon Primary School in Preston (<https://bit.ly/3gDK7N9>) or Stranton Primary School in Hartlepool (<https://bit.ly/3wrui2x>).

WHAT WILL THE FUTURE HOLD?

Technology never stands still and there are

ADVICE FOR USING VIDEO

- **Identify who will benefit – teachers, pupils and parents but perhaps also prospective parents and your wider community?**
- **Look at what equipment and skills you already have – in your staff, pupils and parents.**
- **Test new equipment and software before buying – or rent the latest kit when you need it.**
- **Train your pupils to help – digital skills are valuable in themselves and can help with areas as wide apart as self-confidence and literacy.**
- **Consider live-streaming as well as recording for later – especially for keynote events that parents can't attend – once your confidence in using video grows.**
- **Make sure everyone is clear on safeguarding principles - but don't let them put you off!**
- **Be open to new ideas – a great way to stand out from other schools.**

always innovative ideas for schools to explore.

Taralyn Cox, Founder of 360 Marketing Lab, has been extremely busy helping schools show off their facilities during lockdown but sees a bright future focused on engaging visitors with content.

For example, she's worked with Hampton School to offer a 'gamified' tour (<https://bit.ly/3zsnuUr>) – where prospective pupils gain points for finding out information about the school – 'tell me a ten-year-old boy wouldn't love this!', she adds!

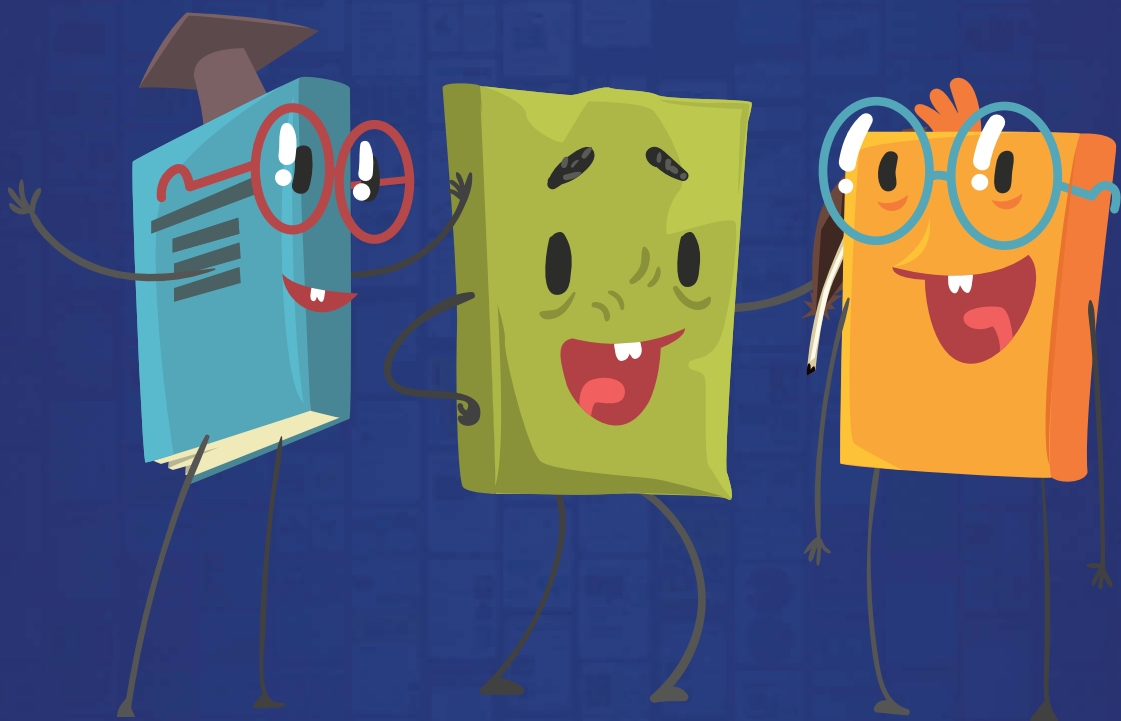


Simon Hepburn is a teacher, marketing consultant and author of *Marketing Your School*

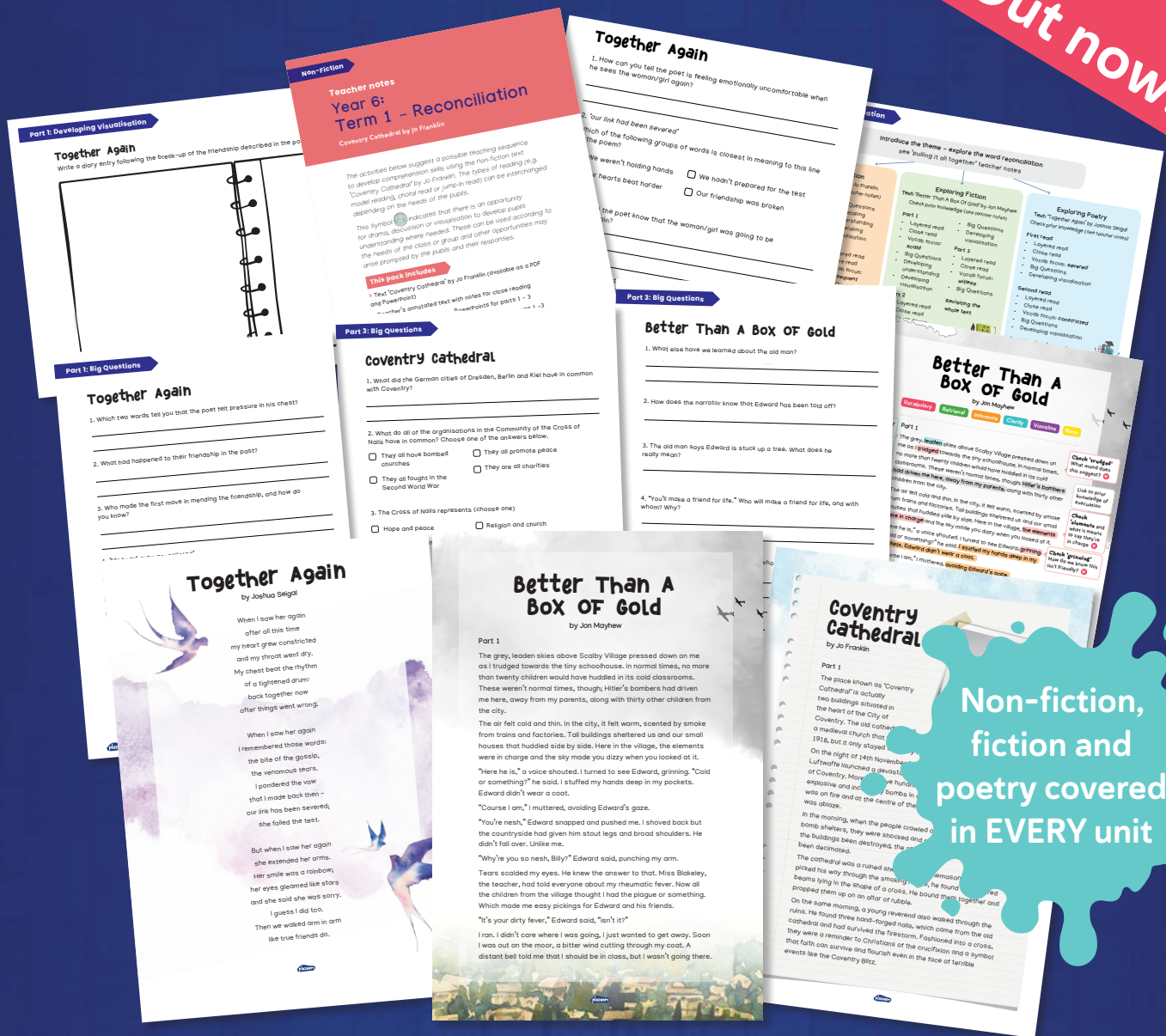


Ensure REAL progress with **REAL Comprehension**

Real Comprehension is a powerful whole-school reading programme designed to develop **sophisticated comprehension skills**, build **rich vocabularies** and encourage the **identification of themes and comparison** between texts.



Out now!



- 54 units original texts by published children's authors - age appropriate, thematically linked, and annotated for ease of teaching.
- Build deeper understanding through close and guided reading techniques, plus fully resourced teaching sequences for every text.
- Improve pupils' ability to make high-level inferences and links between texts, and extend their vocabulary with focused lessons.

Try it today!

Download a FREE unit now at
plazoom.com/comp-sample



CPD CERTIFIED
The CPD Certification Service

BRITISH SIGN LANGUAGE ONLINE COURSE




- ✓ Beginners
- ✓ 20hrs CPD
- ✓ Study from home
- ✓ Staff training
- ✓ Learn at your own pace

Sign up at:
british-sign.co.uk

£3

Pay what you can: To enable more people to learn British Sign Language we are asking people to pay what they can for this course (minimum contribution of £3).

DCRS

By Appointment to
Her Majesty The Queen
Supplier of Two-Way Radio
Communications and Paging Systems
Direct Communications Radio Services Ltd
St Ives



PROTECT YOUR STAFF AND PUPILS WITH TWO-WAY RADIOS AND COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS

What Benefits Do Two-Way Radios Deliver?

- ▶ Increased staff safety & security
- ▶ Easy to use
- ▶ Remote control of activities
- ▶ No call charges
- ▶ Clear audio even in noisy environments
- ▶ Remote campus connectivity (connect to other sites)
- ▶ Emergency & lone worker functions
- ▶ Connecting into BMS, fire alarms & security systems
- ▶ Licensed & license-free equipment available
- ▶ New digital interference license free radios
- ▶ Lockdown - alert all staff over many communication methods at the touch of a button



Call FREE: 0800 043 2688
email: sales@dcrs.co.uk
www.dcrs.co.uk





OUR SUPER POWER ALLOWS YOU TO MANAGE YOUR SCHOOL WITH EASE

See your asset, compliance and maintenance issues before your very eyes.
Get your hands on this super power
@altuity.com



Altuity Solutions
SIMPLE | EFFICIENT | EFFECTIVE

Leadership & HR

CHECKING IN VERSUS CHECKING UP

Catherine Carden and **Virginia Bower**
examine approaches to leadership



“Could life,
as a teacher,
be different
if our school
leaders
focussed on
checking in
rather than
checking
up?”

Two words - just two tiny words can change the experience of teachers so profoundly. How do you feel as a teacher? Do you feel checked IN on or checked UP on?

With regards to checking IN or checking UP, there is a significant difference between how these play out within a school culture, and the results can see teachers feeling supported and developed or judged and monitored.

Let's think about it. If you check IN on your staff, as a leader, you imply that they are of value and that you care. If you check UP on your staff you are seen, as a leader, to be judgemental; constantly monitoring performance against a dialogue and discourse of measures, performativity and outcomes.

ACCOUNTABILITY

It cannot be denied that leaders in schools are held accountable for all aspects of school life - pupil progress, staff performance, parental satisfaction, the budget, health and safety... the list goes on. This puts extraordinary pressure on the senior leadership team and in particular the headteacher and we are in no way suggesting anything different. Because of this, schools can become consumed and driven by the fear of accountability; always being expected to show immediate impact and constant improvement year on year. The pressures of SATs, phonics screening, the multiplication test, league tables and the Ofsted inspection regime can lead to a culture of surveillance, monitoring and checking UP on staff. This is often undertaken with the best intentions and justification from senior leaders thinking that they have no choice but to undertake activities such as regular observations of teaching, learning walks (observation by another name), book scrutiny and regular data and progress checks.

ANXIETY

In the minds of many educational leaders, born out of an implicit message from external agencies, checking UP on staff is the best, and only, way to gauge the quality of teaching and learning, progress and outcomes in order to inform self evaluation and feed into predictions and target setting. Yet, this in turn projects fear, anxiety and constant stress onto the shoulders of the classroom teachers.

We would argue that checking UP leads to:

- Time wasted.
- Teacher attrition.
- No proven impact on children's learning.
- A negative culture of distrust.

Conversely, a culture attuned to checking IN - regularly and authentically is more likely to lead to:

- An embedding of positive, shared values.
- A happier and more productive workforce
- A commitment to professional development and learning specific to each individual.
- Happier, more academically successful pupils.

As leaders - whether this be teachers as leaders of their classes/subjects/Key Stages or members of the SLT - checking IN on colleagues can enable a move beyond compliance towards empowerment. Here are two brief examples of what this might look like:

- Taking time in staff meetings for teachers to discuss what seems to be going well with their planning/teaching/assessment currently and challenges they are addressing with their pupils. From this would need to emerge shared ideas and suggestions for professional development and learning, moving forward (going beyond the traditional 'let's send you on a course' methodology).

- Senior leaders engaging in authentic discussions with their staff, focusing on learning and development opportunities, hopes and dreams for the future, and ongoing conversations relating to how the school might be a more supportive, productive environment for both staff and pupils.

In recent years, our profession has seen significant challenges which have resulted in a public 'image' issue and teaching being perceived as a far from attractive career. In recent times, teachers have been making the difficult choice to leave the profession that they entered with such promise and passion. The numbers leaving are seemingly increasing, especially during the first five years of their careers with DfE statistics stating that just 67.4 per cent of those joining the profession in 2014 remained in teaching in 2019 and the National Education Union (2020) stating this significant attrition rate. Many teachers cite workload and stress as a key reason influencing their decision to leave.

Does the future lay in the hands, in part, of our leaders? Could life, as a teacher, be different if our school leaders focussed on checking in rather than checking up?

Catherine Carden, Director of Learning & Teaching in a Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Education and a contributor to Bowden Education. Dr Virginia Bower is an experienced tutor in Initial Teacher Education and is a contributor for Bowden Education.



LISTEN AND SUPPORT YOUR COLLEAGUES

Adam Robbins explains how to support a staff member in crisis

I'm sure you have been there. You walk into the staff room to get a fresh cup of tea and find a colleague hunched over. "Are you okay?" you ask, knowing full well they are not. As they look up with red eyes full of tears you begin to hear what has caused the crisis in a broken sobbing voice. We all have those moments. Sometimes they are caused by events that occur in the classroom. Bereavement, health concerns, money worries and relationship issues can all hit emotional trigger points and leave us distraught.

As a colleague you want to help them, but how? Below is a simple guide that you might find helpful.

GET ORGANISED

The first thing to do is to recognise that this is going to take some time. If you are the first on the scene then you will need to make sure any classes they are responsible for are covered. If there is already a small group surrounding them then you can give those people jobs to do. Send someone to pass a message to whoever supports cover, send another to your class to supervise.

Find a space

Find an office or a similar place for you to talk with the person for about 20-30 mins undisturbed.

Meet them there in five minutes

On your way check the classes. It's ok to leave them to get there on their own if it means you can arrive confident the students are settled and with a large supply of tissues.

Listen to them

This is the hardest step. You might have to start them off with a simple question like "What's happened?" Listening is the most difficult thing. You will instantly try to draw similarities between their experience and your own. You will have urges to find solutions to any problems they have. Squash those urges as much as possible. Just listen.

It's ok to ask questions

Don't be afraid to ask questions in the pauses. It will help you and them clarify what has happened and help them to process the event. It's also ok to make notes, just tell them why.

Stay the course

Sometimes the things you can hear are very emotive to you and will elucidate a strong emotional response. Just stay the course and know that you can deal with your feelings later. Right now, they are your priority.

Follow up and follow through

Make sure any actions that need to be carried out are followed up that day. This might involve informing a line manager. The next day make a point to get in touch with a simple message just to show you care.

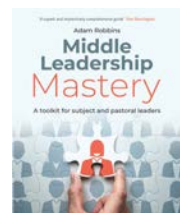
Decompress

Supporting a colleague or student in crisis can be a rewarding but exhausting process. Try to find time to discuss it with someone later in the day. You might have to maintain confidentiality, but there is value to sharing what you did. This can help you get ready for the next day.

WHAT ABOUT STUDENTS?

It's worth pointing out that this guide is not designed for students who are just upset. Often those playground and friendship issues do not need this level of response. When dealing with a primary student who is in crisis it can get a little more complex. While this list still applies there is a large safeguarding aspect to be considered. With students they may not be able to fully verbalise why they feel this way, but by actively listening and resisting the urge to solve their problem you can find out enough information to support them in the next steps.

Teaching is a caring profession. I am sure you are as grateful as I am that these events are not commonplace.



Adam Robbins is a head of department at a large comprehensive school, where he also oversees and

supports teacher development. Adam's new book Middle Leadership Mastery (Crown House Publishing, 2021) is out now and is available at <https://bit.ly/3ibz4go>

Preparing for an education harvest

Dan Edwards looks ahead to planning for the next academic year

The sun has begun to shine and the long days of darkness and bitter cold mornings are moving further and further away. The clocks have rolled forward into the start of summer time and a sense of hope, yet again, is beginning to unfurl its leaves and face skyward as we approach the midway point of the summer term. A term of, what has been, the most interesting and challenging time in education we have known.

As the Earth warms steadily beneath our feet, farmers, gardeners and those whose daily toil is categorised by the turning of soil, slowly rotavating the damp colds of winter to the fine tilth of spring, have started their planning for the future; reviewing which seeds will grow and which will not.

These plans are, of course, never perfect. As they scan the horizon for the blight that may undo their work, the storm clouds that may wash away the seeds before they have even felt nourished and enveloped by the matter around them, to the weeks of blistering heat that may scorch the earth to render the season utterly void, they continue focused and dedicated for the harvest ahead. After all, 'he who hesitates is lost' and now is not the season for uncertainty.

The success of any seasonal crop is in the preparation. Plant the seeds too early and the ravages of frost and the remnants of the previous season takes its toll. Too late and the required outcome won't be ready in time for picking.

The year, like no other we have seen, will, no doubt, require us to reflect on what really is needed for the next

academic year. We all know too well that the cacophony of opinion and attitudes, theory and speculation circulating around the concept of catch-up and knowledge loss has been deafening of late.

As educators, the next few weeks that are left are those which will require us to make the most important plans. Possibly the most needed in a generation. The academic year of repair, sculpted and shaped in the routines of a new normal,

will begin in earnest in September and the need to prepare the soil is now. Like those farmers who watch the weather, consider the historical impact of seasons past, we need to ensure we plan, not for the harvest we hope to reap but to ensure the seeds we planted, viewed on the first day back, were right, the weeds and dying matter from previous growth removed from the soil and the bed prepared for growing.

With each seed we select, we need to ensure that we have considered the fruit it will produce. Will the end result be worth the labour? Can we guarantee that the seed we are about to sow will have the right conditions in each phase of growth and, importantly, do we have the collective courage to watch it wilt away each day when we need it desperately to flourish. These are always the gambles we

choose to take when we make the plans for strategic change within our schools.

Reflecting on the harvest we want, at the point of sowing, is this term's most important task. Are we hoping for the exotic? The juice of fruits and berries we have never tasted or do we need to rely on the hardy staples that we may need to see us through another dark and isolating winter? I suppose this is where collaboration and conversation is needed.

Sharing techniques, plans, ideas and well-used methods are what makes the successes of some more evident than most. As each field or allotment ripens in the sun, the same seed may have resulted in rather different yields. No doubt, the field full of ripe fruit has been harnessed through discussion and significant consideration rather than those who had the willingness to go it alone and embrace the solitude of autonomy. After all, this year, whatever we choose to plant, we all want it to be plentiful and provide for all. The aim is the collective success for all our pupils.

So now is the time to look upon our hectares of lands, our rolling fields, small private gardens and, soon to be, vistas of lush green growth and consider what our next steps will be. For whatever we plant now, will be the seed we need to flourish and feed us in order to build the future.

Dan Edwards, principal of Woodstock Primary Academy, Leicester

"Sharing techniques, plans, ideas and well-used methods are what makes the successes of some more evident than most."



Policies for Schools



Comprehensive School Policies Database
300+ school policies covering 20 different statutory areas



School Policies regularly updated
in line with the DfE's latest guidelines and recommendations



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

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



Professionally written and researched

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



Easily Customisable

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



Value for money at just £225 per year

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



Available 24/7

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

If you wish to view some sample policies before subscribing, we have several school policies available. Just call us on 01600 891506 or email us at sales@policiesforschools.co.uk and we will send them to you free of charge.

To subscribe to Policies for Schools just go to our website at: www.policiesforschools.co.uk

Teachers Resource Centre Ltd Telephone: 01600 891506 Website: www.policiesforschools.co.uk Email: sales@policiesforschools.co.uk

Resources for Headteachers

Helping headteachers and senior leaders manage their workload

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

Some of our most popular products are:



Managing Headteacher Workload



School Risk Assessments



School Health and Safety Staff Handbook



Questionnaires for School Improvement



Safeguarding Handbook for School Personnel

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

www.resourcesforheadteachers.co.uk

Teachers Resource Centre Ltd Telephone: 01600 891506 Website: www.resourcesforheadteachers.co.uk Email: sales@resourcesforheadteachers.co.uk

Working together to improve education

Guy Shears believes that collaboration and a shared language make trusts tick

The past year has proved unprecedentedly challenging for schools, pupils, educators and parents, with 65 per cent of primary school parents and 68 per cent of secondary school parents concerned their child has lost out on learning.

Despite the disruption, it has led many educators to examine the fundamental platforms upon which their schools and trusts are based and look at next steps to ensure their curriculum frameworks are pragmatic and adaptable to any challenges ahead.

At Central RSA Academies Trust (CRSAAT), we have worked hard to ensure that our consistent, collaborative curriculum frameworks have a fantastic impact on our pupils and staff. The key to successful implementation is ensuring frameworks are developed in a thoroughly collaborative manner and underpinned by a shared language understood by all.

COLLABORATIVE DEVELOPMENT

We see learning as more than knowing and rehearsing information – powerful knowledge is essential to help us think critically and creatively. Skills need developing alongside knowledge as information is not received passively and we must consider how we engage our pupils to develop their expertise. To ensure we delivered our vision consistently, we gathered subject teams from across the Trust to create a series of shared

curriculum frameworks. Our schools are mission-led, focusing on social justice and aiming to support every individual flourish. It is within this context that we agreed on a viable, evidence-informed and trust-wide definition of learning: “Through experiencing and reflecting on a succession of challenging experiences we develop long-term capacities as thinkers, problem-solvers and active social participants.”

Our curriculum is unified by this definition. It is driven by developing expert subject knowledge alongside skills that create thoughtful critical thinkers who can communicate ideas with clarity, while ensuring our pupils experience a wide range of cultural opportunities.

SHARED LANGUAGE

By creating the curriculum frameworks collaboratively, we developed a shared language of learning, enabling our teachers and pupils to work together, support each other and adapt to the challenges of the pandemic.

Our curriculum offer identifies the Knowledge, Attributes, Skills, and Experiences (KASE) we seek to develop in all our pupils. KNOWLEDGE refers to developing pupils who are Experts, Purposeful, Fluent and Self-regulating and directing, ATTRIBUTES include Risk-tolerant, Resilient, Reflective and Empathetic, SKILLS comprise Problem-solvers, Collaborative, Communicative, Metacognitive and Pragmatic, and finally EXPERIENCES refers to developing pupils

who are enthused and engaged in cosmopolitan rich experiences; ones which enable pupils to be open to ideas and different ways of doing things, being Autonomous, Responsible and Champions of causes. Each school has a Teaching and Learning Development Group that promotes these and helps our schools remain aligned in our shared mission.

To embed KASE in our classrooms, we centred our professional development programme around our pedagogical focuses: ‘10 Components of Great Learning and Teaching’. The role of oracy in these pedagogical priorities is key because of our drive for social justice – we want to develop young people who can articulate their thoughts and ideas, a vital precursor to strong writing and communication skills.

FRAMEWORK

Our Learning Cycle has been designed to consider pupils and staff at all levels and allow teachers across our schools to think about and plan lessons that are structured, effective and draw on what we know works best. The cycle follows four phases of INFORM – provide new information, EXPLORE – guided exploration, APPLY – apply new knowledge or skills and CONNECT – review and preview. CRSAAT teachers strive to become subject experts within the classroom where subject knowledge and expertise is vital and sharing this expertise is a key part of co-design work. The shared delivery cycle supports sharing planning.

The curriculum frameworks have proven hugely effective so far in supporting co-design of subject knowledge and sharing delivery ideas. Working together with a common language for teaching and learning has enabled us to support each other during a tough year. Our frameworks provide our schools with a strong level of collaboration, while freeing them to be innovative in how a concept is delivered. Our curriculum work will continue to support rich subject experiences while developing vital attributes and skills for our pupils. We will continue to work collaboratively to develop confident and creative young people who can thrive in an ever-changing world.

Guy Shears, chief executive Central RSA Academies Trust



GDPR THREE YEARS ON: IS IT PART OF YOUR SCHOOL'S CULTURE?

Craig Stilwell urges schools to make data protection much more than a box ticking exercise

Remember what you were doing on Friday, May 25, 2018? With all that's been going on since then you'll be forgiven for not remembering without looking back at your calendar, where you'll probably find some reference to the EU's General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) because that's the day when they came into force.

The regulations defined how organisations, including schools and multi-academy trusts, should store, use and send information relating to 'data subjects', including children, parents and staff.

The introduction of GDPR just over three years ago was important because it ushered in a new era of data regulations and correspondingly increased our awareness of our rights and responsibilities when it came to the storage and use of the data.

A lot of turbulent water has rushed under the bridge since then. The UK left the EU at the end of 2020 but UK data protection laws, now known as UK GDPR, continue to be closely aligned to EU GDPR, at least for the time being.

The regulations created a big shift in the way schools handle data and deal with data requests. There is now a higher awareness of data security and privacy but that wasn't always the case. Five years ago data requests were so rare in schools that they barely existed. Now, if I polled schools I would say that at least nine in ten would say that they had at least one data request of some description.

Data requests are now commonplace and often emerge when there is some kind of difficult situation, disagreement or concern. Requests from staff could be linked to performance or conduct issues. With parents it may be associated with an incident with a child. Changes in regulations, such as safeguarding legislation, can also result in more data requests.

So, the demand is there and growing and as a result schools have to ensure that they are on top of GDPR or they risk a breach of

the regulations which could result in them being reported to the Information Commissioner's Office.

CHANGING APPROACHES

In those three years since the introduction of the regulations the approach schools take to data protection has changed in many ways. And in some ways it has changed very little.

A study of the processing of personal data in 11 multi-academy trusts published by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) reported plenty of areas of good practice, but also highlighted a range of areas where practice needed to improve. These included the management of information risks; the report suggested that 63 per cent of MATs did not sufficiently manage these risks because they did not have a specific information risk register in place identifying the key information risks at academy and trust level, with no assigned risk or information asset owners. Although the study was carried out two years ago, the same issues still occur.

Who takes responsibility for the role of DPO is one area that has changed. When the regulations came in, that role was often taken by someone internally. This may have been the school business manager or another member of the SLT.

That approach has created problems. Although the regulations say nothing about who a DPO post holder can or can't be, it does require the person responsible to have expertise in the area of data protection and that the

role must not result in conflicts of interest with their primary responsibilities.

RULE OF THUMB

The more senior you are, the more difficult it is to be a DPO. If you are, for example, a DPO who is a school business manager you might suggest that the school buys a new photocopier. In order to comply with data



protection regulations you would, as a DPO, recommend features that complied with data protection regulations, such as requiring a code to release print jobs. But if your management team then recommends against it because of cost then this could create a clear conflict of interest. A good rule of thumb is to avoid any situation where responsibilities of allocating budgetary resources overlap with doing what is best for data protection.

The UK GDPR says that you should appoint a DPO on the basis of their professional qualities, and in particular, experience and expert knowledge of data protection law. That level of knowledge and experience is, of course, rarely found internally so DPOs are increasingly appointed from external organisations.

Although most schools took heed of the regulations back in 2018 some thought that they could comply by adopting a few policies and then assume that from then on they would be compliant without having to do very much more.

That approach may have been fine at the start but compliance means that data protection should always be front of mind

or, to paraphrase the guidelines, data protection by design and default. For example, if your school is about to buy a new piece of technology, such as new laptops, or a service such as a new learning platform, then issues such as security of any personal data generated should be considerations as important as cost.

If schools can embed this data protection awareness in their cultures then they are far less likely to come up against data protection issues in the future.



Craig Stilwell is Head of Data Services at Judicium Education. For further information and advice

on GDPR for schools, go to
<https://bit.ly/2TNjFZv>

“Data requests are now commonplace and often emerge when there is some kind of difficult situation, disagreement or concern.”

HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO DO

So, how can you build an awareness of data protection in your school? Here's my advice:

- **Train.** You may have enrolled staff in training in 2018 when the regulations came in but it's important to update their knowledge every couple of years, ideally annually.
- **Build day to day awareness.** Flag up the regulations and the role of the DPO together with updates about policies, recent incidents and risks to watch for at team meetings or briefings. Posters highlighting GDPR and data risks in key areas such as reception, offices, PPE rooms and the staffroom will provide a useful reminder.
- **Keep up to date.** Ensure that policies and notices are up to date and accessible, ideally via a central folder.
- **Data protection from the off.** Start completing data protection impact assessments when using new apps or software.
- **Audit.** Carry out an audit of data use and risks in your school. This can be done as an internal audit but is more effective if you ask an external expert to come in. Share compliance and progress with the SLT and governors.
- **Use your DPO.** Ask them if you have a question or concern about data protection.



PROJECT A STRONG IMAGE

Dr Amanda Holdsworth explains the importance of primary school branding

Picture this: a parent is looking for a new school for their child. Conducting their due diligence, they've asked friends for recommendations, scoured social media channels, signed up for the email lists of potential schools and checked out various websites.

Now, ask yourself: do our materials stand out from the others? Are they memorable? Do they align with what parents say about us? With what we want them to say about us? Do they tell our true story?

ISN'T BRANDING JUST MARKETING?

Now, more than ever, parents have choices for their children's education. During the pandemic, some families switched schools or even educational models in pursuit of what would work best for their children and for their personal situations. Many families may not return to the traditional classroom, with plans to stick with virtual or homeschooling. Recognizing that a dip in enrollment may not be temporary as originally anticipated, schools have scrambled to purchase social media ads, update their websites or create new enrollment packets. This is not necessarily a bad thing; however, branding isn't just marketing, and throwing money around without a plan can be wasteful in more ways than one. Let me explain.

BRANDING BEYOND THE LOGO

Jeff Bezos, founder of Amazon, famously once said: "Your brand is what people say about you when you're not in the room."

Think about that for a moment. Whether you like it or not, your brand is out there, and it goes beyond your logo. It is the feeling evoked when someone hears your school's name or sees something that reminds them of you. It's the collection of stories that you've told, the images you've shared and the testimonials of the students and families you've served. Your brand encompasses both real-life experiences and the perceptions of those in and around your school community. As a school leader, you need to play a role in shaping your brand narrative both internally and externally.

BRANDING STARTS ON THE INSIDE

If you have a poor school culture, your brand will reflect that. There are few other industries where employees and "customers" are so connected, day-in and day-out, than education.

For example, if a teacher is miserable at work, after a while, that misery will be hard to hide from students and from parents who will then question what is happening at the school to cause that. Or, if your receptionist answers the phone in a curt manner, a potential family could be turned off from applying. Or, if your development officer is trying to fundraise, but cannot tell the school's story in a cohesive, compelling way, you will likely not get that donation.

So, before you spend money on marketing initiatives, spend some time refining and understanding your brand, and, if there are things that need to be fixed with your culture, do so. As a communicator who has worked in and with schools for more than 20 years, I've always said that I can get families interested in schools, but I'm not going to misrepresent the culture because that's unethical and if families don't get what they've bought into, you'll face attrition and a poor reputation.

HOW TO RE-DISCOVER YOUR BRAND

To figure out who you really are as a school community, you must start with research:

- **Talk to your teachers, staff, students, families, community partners and alumni.** What do they have to say about your school? Take note of both good and bad things because they make up your brand story. For a sample questionnaire go to <https://bit.ly/2RjZ2DC>
- **Make an action plan to address the negative feedback.** Some of the feedback may be true, some may be caused by misinformation. Figure out what you can easily address in the short-term and make plans to tackle the others over the year.
- **List your brand differentiators.** What does your school do well? What is it known for? How do people describe your school (circle back to the first bullet point)? How are you different from your competitors? Answering these questions will help you develop a strong brand story.
- **Conduct an audit of all your outward-facing materials and digital accounts.** Do they all align and look like they represent one school? Are your key messages conveyed consistently? Do the images on social media and the website reflect your student body?



- **Determine your brand vision.** Determine what you want to be known for and why. How does this tie in with your research and differentiate you from your competitors?

SHOWCASING YOUR BRAND

Now that your brand is defined, you can begin planning communications and marketing strategies. Although this article will not go into the variety of tactics you can use to promote your school, I have some tried and true favorites that I utilize for every school branding campaign I work on:

- **Student, teacher, parent and alumni testimonials.** You would be surprised at how a one-to-two-sentence quote from an actual person your school impacted can positively affect brand perception. I have often used single-line quotes with a strong image in print and digital advertising campaigns because they are so powerful. Be sure to use actual quotes with written permission; anonymous testimonials are not as believable.
- **Professional photography.** This is a must-have for schools because although the everyday snapshots posted on Instagram show the authenticity of school life (which is also important), professional photos can really showcase your community in ways

you never could have imagined. Professional photographers, especially those with a photojournalistic style, are trained to look for the special things that we might overlook. And, when those photos come back and you share them with your community, not only does the brand vision begin to make sense, but you'll notice an air of excitement and pride around the school: "This is our school? Wow! I never looked at it that way before." For examples of examples of strong photography go to <https://bit.ly/3uS8iN3>

- **Develop a brand ambassador program.** Brand ambassadors are community members who are engaged and vocal about your brand and want to share their enthusiasm with others. They can be parents, teachers, staff, students or alumni who will support your branding efforts in many ways from speaking to potential families to providing testimonials to volunteering at school events. Make sure these people are properly trained on your marketing key messages, get them some school-branded swag and check in with them frequently to better understand what they are hearing about your school from outsiders.

BRANDING DOES NOT HAVE TO BE DAUNTING

My takeaway for you is that branding does not have to involve a big, expensive campaign. Rather, the increased competition with the pandemic has given all schools the opportunity to revisit their core mission, vision and values. Embrace the chance at

re-discovering what makes your school so great and then work strategically to share your stories with others.

Even if you are a neighborhood school that every child in the area must attend, you still have a brand, you are still making an impact and you still have wonderful people who work and attend school there. Be proud of everything you've accomplished together, particularly over the last year, and don't be shy about showcasing the great things happening at your school.

As I often say to clients: all schools have a story to tell. What's yours and who's telling it?

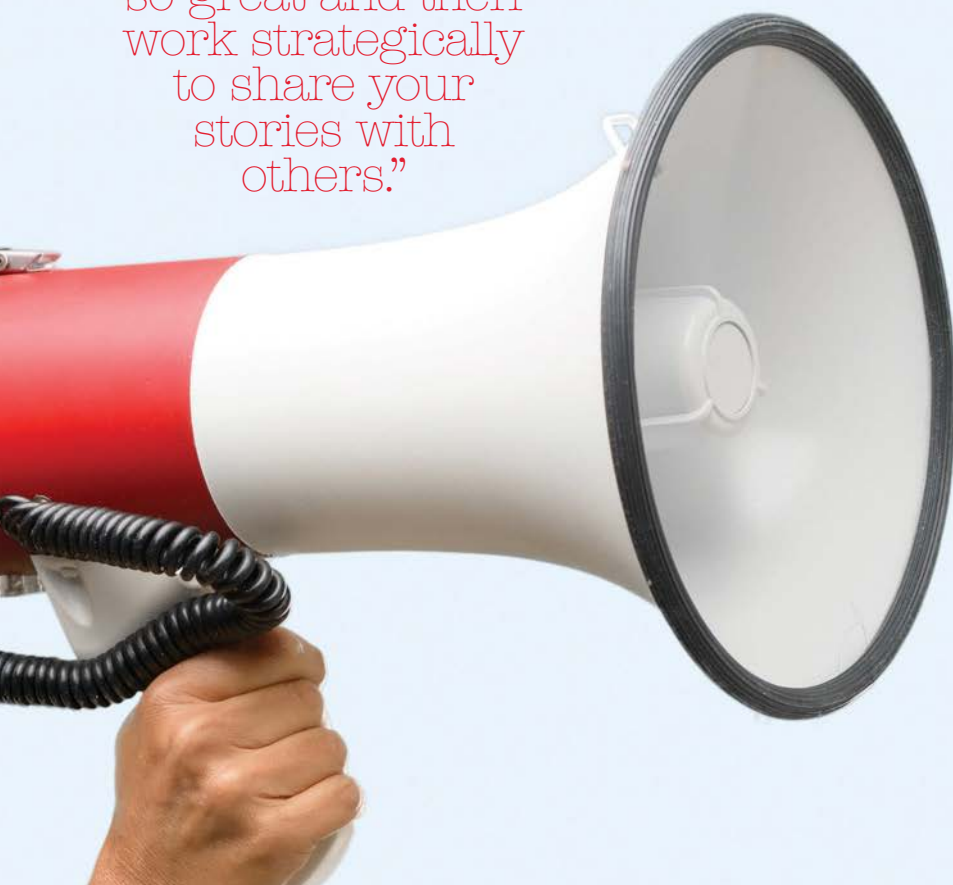
BRANDING ADVICE

- **What do you want to be known for? When you determine your brand differentiators, you can more effectively communicate it to your target audiences.**
- **Conduct a materials audit. Does the look and feel of your website match that of your prospectus? Do the newsletters your current families receive look as good as the recruitment pieces you used to attract them? Take all your physical materials, spread them out on a table and quickly glance at them. Do they look like they came from the same school? If you answered, "No," to any of these questions, start updating and refining.**
- **Develop a brand style guide and use it. Create a simple document that shows all approved variations of your school's logo, your school color codes, school fonts, mission, vision and values, and whatever else should be part of your standardized brand. Then present it to your school community, explaining why branding is important, why the style guide was created and how it can help everyone stay consistent with the school's brand. To download a free, editable template to create your brand style guide go to <https://bit.ly/3ibCfEX>**



Dr. Amanda Holdsworth, APR, has worked in school communications for more than 20 years and is the founder of Holdsworth Communications and the School Comms Lab

"Embrace the chance at re-discovering what makes your school so great and then work strategically to share your stories with others."



SAVE 50%

get your
first three
issues for
just £6*
when you
subscribe
today



"The Headteacher gives leaders essential insights into running a top performing school. By subscribing you'll get regular inspiration from school leaders on which strategies are making the biggest impact on everything from parental engagement to staff development and curriculum planning."

Mark Hayhurst, The Headteacher Editor

SUBSCRIBE TO the **headteacher** LEADING SUCCESSFUL SCHOOLS **FOR:**

- SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANS FROM SUCCESSFUL HEADS
- LEGAL AND HR KNOW HOW FROM TOP PROFESSIONALS
- BUDGET-SAVING STRATEGIES USED BY LEADING BUSINESS MANAGERS

2 EASY WAYS TO SUBSCRIBE

- 1 www.theheadteacher.com/subscribe
- 2 **0800 904 7000**

PLEASE QUOTE: **4220**

Freephone lines are open Monday-Friday 8am-6pm. *Terms and conditions apply, for further details please refer online. For customer service enquiries email us at: aceville@dctmedia.co.uk

3
ISSUES
FOR JUST
£6*

Stronger together

Helen Rowland reflects on the impact of multi-academy trusts during the Covid-19 pandemic

Britain's schools have been some of the most hard-hit institutions over the past year. During a time of major disruption which has seen us push the pause button on many aspects of life, schools have had to think creatively, devising innovative solutions to ensure that children continued to access their education despite, for many, a physical absence from the classroom.

Naturally, Ofsted has been hot on the heels of academies during this time, evaluating their pandemic procedures to ensure as minimal disruption as possible to education. In January, Ofsted published a blog discussing the vital role of multi-academy trusts during this time (<https://educationinspection.blog.gov.uk/2021/01/19/the-trust-in-testing-times-the-role-of-multi-academy-trusts-during-the-pandemic/>).

In fact, visits to schools revealed that those who were part of a multi-academy trust found themselves in a much stronger position than those who were not.

CRUCIAL

The trust's strong ethos of 'collective efficacy – a shared commitment to work together on the things that matter to improve outcomes for all' is what enabled and supported colleagues to pull together during this time, much to the benefit of all children, staff and communities.

Navigating the world of education through a pandemic has been challenging, to say the least, but in our experience as a trust, there have been some real positives.

A key point highlighted by Ofsted was the role which trusts played in helping schools to navigate the plethora of guidance received on a daily basis from the DfE. The establishment of the Trust's Covid Committee was crucial in leading the discussion and decision making over the past year. This involved the Central Team, trustees and five headteachers making strategic decisions around health and safety, risk assessments, how to manage social distancing, form social bubbles, review safeguarding, attendance and behaviour policies, allowing new risks to be accounted for and mitigated.

Indeed, nobody knows the difficulties of enforcing social distancing and maintaining bubbles better than reception teachers managing classrooms of four and five-year-olds.

Kyrstie Stubbs, Principal at Boothroyd Primary Academy, recently said to me that

“A key point highlighted by Ofsted was the role which trusts played in helping schools to navigate the plethora of guidance received on a daily basis from the DfE.”

the support from the central team in the development of our Covid procedures was fantastic, and that as a leader in her own school she felt that she had an extra level of security as plans were checked and signed off by not only the team, but also by the Board.

SUPPORT

Lizzie Egan-Walsh, headteacher at Lyndhurst Primary School, noted how the Covid committee has been an integral driver in enabling Trust leaders to develop robust risk assessments with confidence, and that the support provided to one another through document sharing and other forms of communication using Teams has been second to none.

Perhaps the biggest transition which staff and children made over this past year was the switch to online learning. Many teachers suddenly found themselves acquiring new digital skills, juggling face to face teaching in the classroom with remote lessons through Zoom and Microsoft Teams.

Donna Tandy, our Deputy CEO and Academy Improvement Partner, led the implementation of the Trust's Digital Strategy, the introduction of Digital Champions in all academies, and the move to Microsoft Teams and increased use of Microsoft 365 which involved a significant training programme for all colleagues and governors.

Commenting on the transition to online learning, Andrew Chadwick, Head of School at Wilsden Primary School, said the Digital Strategy enabled him and his team to move quickly – overnight – and have effective learning taking place immediately.

He added that they are now looking at the ways to continue using digital technology to further improve the school even now all children are back in the classroom.

It has been a tough year, but we've come a long way and learnt a huge amount about how things can be done differently. It is our ambition to capitalise on all the skills and knowledge gained to enhance the trust's educational offer to children, improving the professional development of colleagues and continuing to achieve the Trust's vision of 'great academies at the heart of our communities.'

Helen Rowland, Chief Executive at Focus Trust, a charitable multi-academy trust based in the North West of England which consists of 15 member academies



BUILD A STRONG DLS TEAM

Nikki Cameron talks about safeguarding practices during the Coronavirus Pandemic

I started my job as OAT Safeguarding Manager in August 2020. Over my years in education, I've worked in a variety of roles. This included teaching RE, PSHE, History and English in both secondary and middle schools across the north of England, as well as being a Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo). I've also worked in Cumbria as an assistant headteacher for Inclusion and Wellbeing.

Prior to working at OAT, I'd been in Malaysia working at an all-through Early Years to Sixth Form international school teaching IGCSE English, managing provision for those children with barriers to learning and leading on safeguarding and health and safety. I was extremely happy in Malaysia and only an exceptional role, such as this one, would have tempted me back to the UK.

Starting at OAT in the midst of a lot of uncertainty has really proven to me that I made the right decision coming here. While it has been strange meeting people for the first time over Teams, everyone has been incredibly friendly and helpful, really making me feel welcome, and it's shown me that OAT is a great place to work.

GOLDEN THREAD

I really take pride in my role, because nothing is more important than ensuring children are healthy, happy and safe, and therefore able to learn and achieve the best outcomes. This view is held across the Trust, with safeguarding placed as the top priority within the OAT 8 priorities. I'm pleased to work for an organisation that recognises its duty to the children in our care, not only to keep them safe from harm but to actively promote their health and wellbeing. The Trust understands that safeguarding touches everything we do, not exclusively in schools, but through our HR functions, IT and Estates, Health and Safety and much more, and it is becoming the 'golden thread' running through our work.

In my position as OAT Safeguarding Manager, I support all the Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) across the academies. The role of a DSL is one of the most challenging in a school. On a day-to-day basis DSLs and their teams are dealing

with what can be extremely distressing cases, while trying to develop preventative strategies, ensure compliance, develop a safeguarding culture and, as they are also senior leaders, support the principal in running the school as well as teach. In our smaller schools the principal is the DSL. They are an extremely resilient group of professionals and often their work goes unseen.

"They are an extremely resilient group of professionals and often their work goes unseen."

SUPPORT

Since starting at OAT I have been working hard to build strong professional relationships with all 40 DSLs and their teams, putting in place half-termly one-to-one meetings, termly network meetings and providing daily 'drop in' sessions (all done remotely via Teams). I was fortunate enough,



before lockdown, to be able to visit ten of our academies to carry out safeguarding reviews and my plan is to visit all schools by the end of the academic year. While DSLs can contact me for advice and support at any time, 40 DSLs working together, sharing their experiences, good practice and resources is a powerful tool. There is a dedicated DSL Teams site to enable the DSLs to contact each other for advice and support too.

During the pandemic DSLs and their teams have risen to the challenge of ensuring that all the children in their care are safeguarded by putting in place sophisticated and robust processes for regular, sometimes daily, check-ins with children and families, as well as encouraging and supporting attendance at school for vulnerable children. They have been in regular contact with social workers and other agencies to ensure CP and CIN plans are actively followed, challenging practice if necessary.

RESILIENCE

DSLs and the safeguarding teams are ensuring all staff are being vigilant for signs of concern in all children. At the top of concerns at the moment is the rise of domestic violence as well as the negative impact the pandemic is having on children and families' emotional health and wellbeing. In addition, many families are struggling to make ends meet and financial hardship is increasing.

Schools have found that some children have developed a resilience during the pandemic that is seeing them through, while others have become more vulnerable. Sometimes it is

the least expected child who is showing signs of distress. It is an ever-changing picture which all staff are constantly monitoring and reporting concerns immediately. Staff are trained to ensure that even the smallest concern should be reported, as it could be the vital piece in the 'jigsaw' that enables the bigger picture to be seen. DSLs get this key message across to all staff on a regular basis through their weekly, or in some cases daily, staff briefings.

We are all also very aware that there is likely to be an increase in mental health issues as children and their families process what they have been through. We are already beginning to see evidence of that now that most children have returned to school. It's imperative that schools and organisations are working to put the right infrastructure in place now, so that they have the capacity to support their students further down the line.

DIGITAL STRATEGY

While the DSLs and their teams are doing a brilliant job, looking after the emotional health and wellbeing of both children and staff requires a whole-school approach, which is very much the strategy at

OAT. Many academies have staff who are trained mental health first aiders for escalating and emergency situations, and we are also ensuring that they adopt a climate where emotional health and well-being is a top priority, through policies, procedures, curriculum and ethos. There are many highly-effective resources that schools can access, to support both staff and student emotional health and wellbeing.

We also know that online harms have increased during the pandemic, several schools have identified it as one of their top safeguarding priorities. We are therefore developing a digital safeguarding strategy and will be appointing a digital safeguarding lead to support schools to help keep children safe in the online world. As a practical measure, OAT academies have access to the Safer Schools App which is a tool for staff, parents and children to help them stay up to date with online safety. The app is free for OAT staff, students and parents to make use of, and we recently held an information session

for senior leaders, governors and relevant personnel to help academies get the best out of the app. Each academy also has filtering and monitoring software in place which flags up concerns to the DSL and safeguarding teams.

Overall, my role as OAT Safeguarding Manager is proving to be a really fulfilling one, and I am enjoying working with a team of dedicated staff across the academies who are truly committed to keeping our students happy and safe. I am looking forward to continuing to develop our provision across the Trust, as we build on our strengths in this field and further embed safeguarding into all that we do.

WHAT YOU SHOULD DO

- Put safeguarding as a top priority and recognise it as an element of all the other work you do.
- Ensure the monitoring of children's well-being is dynamic and the list of vulnerable students kept under review, so that no child falls through the net.
- Train staff to report even the smallest concern about a student.
- Work with staff, students and parents to ensure they are well versed and regularly updated on digital safeguarding.
- Prepare school infrastructure now for a potential increase in mental health issues facing the student body once the pandemic is over.
- Equip your school with filtering and monitoring software that can flag any concerns about online activity to the Designated Safeguarding Leads.
- Ensure your Designated Safeguarding Leads have a supportive network around them that they can turn to for help.



Nikki Cameron is Safeguarding Manager at Ormiston Academies Trust (OAT). OAT is one of the

largest not-for-profit multi-academy trusts in England, educating over 30,000 students across six English regions, and is one of the longest established trusts that has been sponsoring academies since 2009

STRATEGIES TO BUILD KNOWLEDGE

Emma Hollis asks how can ITT providers develop the subject knowledge required by Ofsted?

In June last year, Ofsted introduced a new Initial Teacher Education (ITE) inspection framework. This established a one-stage inspection model with a particular focus on the quality of the ITE curriculum and with two key judgements: the 'quality of education and training' and 'leadership and management'.

Previously, Initial Teacher Training (ITT) providers were inspected in two stages across two different terms, with less focus on the curriculum and more on trainees' outcomes. Ofsted was due to start inspecting under this new framework in January, but suspended its plans due to the third national lockdown. From May, however, the first inspections under the new inspection framework have been under way. They also seek to understand the impact of Covid-19 on each partnership and how leaders have responded.

The importance of subject knowledge and curriculum development is clear from ITE inspection framework. We have seen excellent practice in the development of highly ambitious ITE curriculums, many of which we have collated and shared. The introduction of an entirely new curriculum expectation, if it is to be done thoughtfully and to a high standard, is always going to take time and this new inspection framework fell right in the eye of the Covid-19 storm. Despite this, the work we have been doing with ITT providers has not lost sight of the importance of curriculum design and implementation.

For ITT providers who might have had a greater focus on more general teaching strategies and pedagogy

as the focus of their teacher development programmes, there may be some additional development needed in these two areas.

Many frameworks that have been published to guide providers of ITT and CPD (such as the Core Content Framework and Early Career Framework) are excellent documents but lack subject specificity. There is, therefore, work for providers to do to shape professional development programmes which are truly based around subject. Learning theories and pedagogy are still vitally important, but it will be necessary to teach these within the context of how they apply to particular subjects.

So what can ITT providers, and school leaders, do? Here are five strategies to consider:



• Work closely with national subject associations

They are your first port of call and hold a wealth of knowledge and understanding around their subjects. Provide membership to the appropriate associations for your staff and trainees and (most importantly) ensure they are engaging with the content. The Council for Subject Associations is a great place to start that conversation.

• Promote subject-specific professional development

Prioritise CPD opportunities and training which is grounded in subject rather than

generic approaches to teaching. From Primary Art and Primary Geography to Secondary History and Secondary Religious Education, there are organisations (including ourselves) which provide the subject-specific development that is needed.

• Use your networks, share resources and expertise

Identify and utilise subject knowledge experts across networks of schools. Carefully select trainers and facilitators, working with them to ensure their own subject knowledge is up to date and relevant. Offer them opportunities to engage in high-

quality professional learning opportunities which extend their knowledge of subject and encourage them to share this across your ITT provider (and school) networks.

• Be part of the wider conversation

Regularly engage your ITT trainees and school teachers with the big debates relevant to their subject. Encourage critical thinking around the wider subject and, while this can be tempting, avoid a focus on exam specifications. Expertise is created through knowledge and passion for subjects, and there is a need to foster both of these.

• Seek external support as needed

Look at the tools that promote subject-focused discussions between trainees/teachers and their mentors. For example, the NASBTT Curriculum Design and Assessment Toolkit (<https://bit.ly/3vWwrmA>) and our Subject Knowledge for Teaching Toolkit (<https://bit.ly/3vJYLsh>) both include approaches for promoting subject-focused discussions between trainees/teachers and their mentors. Take the opportunity to engage with NASBTT Networks Live (<https://bit.ly/3pf0GCI>) to supplement your subject knowledge development offer for trainees, early career teachers, mentors and subject leads.

“Prioritise CPD opportunities and training which is grounded in subject rather than generic approaches to teaching.”



Emma Hollis is Executive Director of the National Association of School-Based Teacher Trainers (NASBTT)

www.nasbtt.org.uk

EDTECH

HUE HD Pro Visualiser and Document Camera

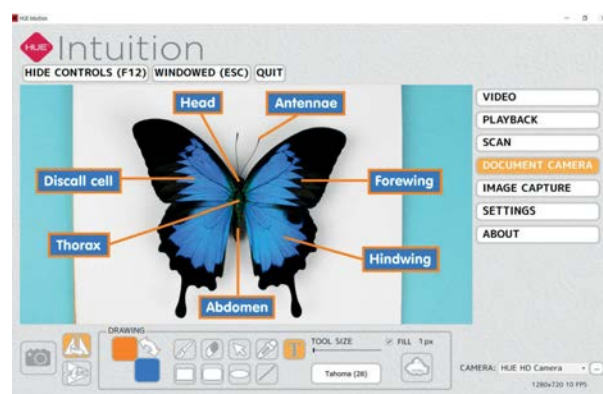
A multi-tasking gooseneck camera that's easy to use and very functional



AT A GLANCE

- A lightweight, portable, Full HD (1080p) USB document camera and visualiser with wide-angle lens.
- Plug and play straight out of the box for instant use
- Built-in touch-sensitive LED lights for crystal clear image
- Activity light showing video feed is live
- Presents text, images and objects to captivate your classroom or CPD event
- The perfect fit for an array of educational environments
- Comes with specially-designed intuitive software

REVIEW BY JOHN DABELL



Please try not to blush but I really like HUE, I really do. In fact, I've always liked HUE.

Having a relationship with a resource might sound a bit odd but there are some things in a classroom that are just there for you no matter what and never let you down.

The HUE HD Pro is one of those products. It gives itself unselfishly to maximising learning potential, it effortlessly promotes interaction and supports collaboration. It works straight out of the box too, which is my kind of resource.

User diversity is what makes HUE stand out. Its inclusive design means it will adapt to any classroom content and context, so use it as a facecam/webcam or document camera.

The value of good design is everything and HUE have got it right. They have produced a fit for purpose multi-tasking camera that isn't complicated or convoluted but easy to use, very functional and comes with a sturdy base. This Pro version isn't loaded with extra features that don't add anything and it isn't in love with itself. Instead, it understands that simplicity is powerful.

The defining feature that will have you head over heels is its flexible gooseneck arm that can twist and turn where other cameras can't. The length of this means you can easily view a full A4 page if need be and because it is more agile you can reach what you need to show learners without breaking your own neck as it rotates 360 degrees and can be positioned horizontally, diagonally and vertically.

You might expect a modern bit of kit like this to have automatic focus but it doesn't. Instead it has a manual focusing ring so that images don't go in and out of focus all the time when your hands pass in front of the lens.

The HUE HD Pro has also taken on a new role as a remote teaching companion too. It can admirably support distance learning by giving an up close and personal view of whatever you want to teach and record. It makes sharing joyfully easy and allows you to demonstrate and support learning painlessly as if you were in class.

The fact that it is small and portable means this nimble and responsive device can give you the back-up you need for delivering high-quality learning and it works with Windows, macOS, Linux and Chrome OS, video conferencing apps and popular school apps. HUE have also produced handy guides to support navigation and use.

For back in the classroom use, the ability to record lessons is a wonderful option because they can then be shared with any pupils who might be absent from school, for whatever reason, and also for accessing at any time for revision purposes.

The software that comes with this versatile visualiser is called HUE Intuition, the latest version, and its single-user licence allows installation on multiple devices.

I'm head over heels for HUE. This is an approved teaching resource that is visual, tactile, exciting and an all-round lifesaver.

the
headteacher
LEADING SUCCESSFUL SCHOOLS

VERDICT

- ✓ A lightweight, portable, Full HD (1080p) USB document camera and visualiser with wide-angle lens.
- ✓ Highly inclusive, accessible and a cross-curricular support extraordinaire
- ✓ An outstanding user experience
- ✓ Contemporary, stylish design with top-quality images and sound
- ✓ A hands-on and minds-on tool full of pedagogical and practical prowess

UPGRADE IF...

you are looking for an engaging, classy and inexpensive visualiser to transform your teaching, learning and assessment.

Cost: comes in black, green, red or blue and is priced at £49.95 ex VAT
Resolution: Full HD 1920 x 1080p

For further information visit huehd.com/contact/



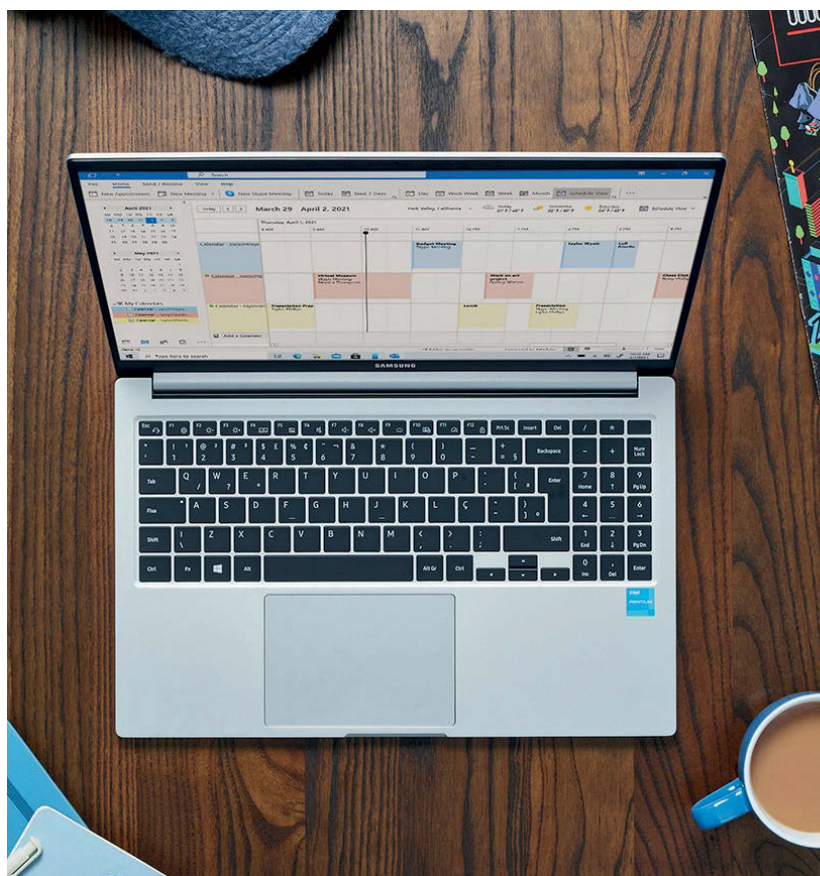
Samsung Galaxy Book

A reliable Windows laptop that's ideal for the post-pandemic blended learning now common in schools

AT A GLANCE

- A sleek, functional and stylish laptop that's perfect for educational settings
- Fast processing speeds and exceptional display
- Works seamlessly with other Samsung devices
- Designed with simplicity and functionality in mind

REVIEW BY ADAM RICHES



As we've seen over the past year, learning from home can brilliantly supplement what's being taught in the classroom, assuming learners and teachers are able to work in sync – a task for which Samsung's newest Galaxy Book is ideally suited.

From the moment you pick it up, it's immediately apparent that considerable thought has gone into the Galaxy Book's design. It's a laptop that's light, yet durable and sized well for usability and transportation. The interface is smooth and intuitive, with users able to quickly acclimate themselves in just a few clicks.

The Galaxy Book range is powered by 11th generation Intel Core processors that can handle any classroom tasks you throw at them. The sleek casing is perfectly sized to suit the confines of a school bag, and the on-board battery packs plenty of stamina.

The Galaxy Book comes with Windows 10 Pro pre-installed, which gives you all the comprehensive security and tools you'll need to keep your files and data safe. There's also a hardware fingerprint scanner that can be used to unlock the device, thus ensuring that you're ready to go right off the bat.

With the growing popularity of remote learning, it's become more important than ever that teachers and students are able to stay connected throughout the day. Between its wifi and 4G compatibility, I found the Galaxy Book's robust connectivity to be a

notable positive during testing. There's nothing more frustrating than having to constantly troubleshoot the causes of intermittent internet connections while teaching, so I'm happy to report that the stability of the Galaxy Book in this regard was exceptional.

Samsung's proprietary 'Quick Share' feature allows users to easily and rapidly send media and other files between different Samsung devices with a minimum of fuss. Support for that is included here, opening up the potential for hassle-free interactive classroom experiences by using the Galaxy Book in conjunction with Samsung displays and tablet devices. A compact USB-C charger comes included in the box, though the 54Wh capacity battery ought to provide users with enough power to last a full school day under normal use.

When using technological solutions in their classrooms, teachers want peace of mind. In this respect, the technical support Samsung can offer will keep you moving in the event of any difficulties, and help you make the most of their range. In addition to the manufacturer warranty you'd expect, Samsung goes a step further by offering to pick up any faulty devices, before repairing and returning them to your school's doorstep as quickly as possible. It's these little touches that make the Galaxy Book laptop range a brilliant fit for schools.

the
headteacher teach co
LEADING SUCCESSFUL SCHOOLS

VERDICT

- ✓ An exceptionally functional and versatile Windows laptop
- ✓ Designed with the needs of students and teachers in mind
- ✓ Easy to use, with comprehensive support available in the event of any difficulties
- ✓ Loaded with features out of the box and easily adaptable for different learning contexts

UPGRADE IF...

You want to boost the use of technology in your classroom, or want to support staff to help children who require specialist provision.

Visit Samsung Experience Stores to explore the range or get in touch on 0333 344 1916 or email samsungexperiencestores@prs-and.com

NEW FOR SCHOOLS

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



1 EASY-TO-USE AND CREATIVE

HUE products are designed to inspire creative learning, work and play. They are easy-to-use, affordable and perfect for classroom teaching, remote or blended learning and after-school clubs. The award-winning HUE HD Pro visualiser and document camera is a cross-curricular resource that can be used to show good

work, model answers, and increase student engagement. It is intuitive, requires no training and helps to maintain social distancing while reducing teacher workload, facilitating assessment, and saving time and resources. At £49.95 plus VAT every classroom can have one. Jacqui Wilson, headteacher at Flimby Primary School, said: "Easy to use, reliable and great value for money." Follow @HUEcameras or get in touch via huehd.com/contact. huehd.com



3 PARENTS' EVENINGS BY VIDEO

Social distancing meant that on-site parents' evenings stopped and so schools started using video conferencing (Teams, Zoom, etc.) but found this caused additional admin to arrange all the individual video meetings.

Happily, Parents Booking rushed to develop tools to help schools. Now, schools

using Parents Booking can create their parents' evening with video conferencing in minutes – and the evenings all run exactly to schedule too!

Schools that have used the Parents Booking video conferencing system have said they will be continuing to do so even after the pandemic because their staff and parents alike prefer it!

parents-booking.com

2 ADAPTABLE AND ACCOMMODATING

With average UK school class sizes increasing every year and primary schools oversubscribed, headteachers are looking for practical ways to make space.

The pandemic showed the importance of having enough room. Buildings must be adaptable and accommodating spaces that make everyday activities safe and secure. Break and dinner times are where having the right set up makes life easier for staff and kids.

Outdoor canopies are a fraction of the cost of building extensions. Installed over a series of days, they cause minimal disruption and can be installed during term time.

To find out about outdoor classrooms and dining canopies contact Canopies UK on 01254 777 002 or info@canopiesuk.co.uk. canopiesuk.co.uk



4 COLLECTIVE VOICE

NAHT is the definitive voice of school leaders.

Alongside our members, we work to create a better education system for both educationalists and students alike.

We represent school leaders working within a number of different areas of the education sector, and our members include head teachers, deputy and assistant heads, school business leaders, special educational needs coordinators, middle leaders, virtual school heads and leaders of outdoor education centres.

NAHT is democratically run and supports its members through offering unparalleled protection and representation. We are committed to developing the profession through the excellent training opportunities we offer, and we use our highly-respected collective voice to influence the policy decisions of Government. naht.org.uk/join

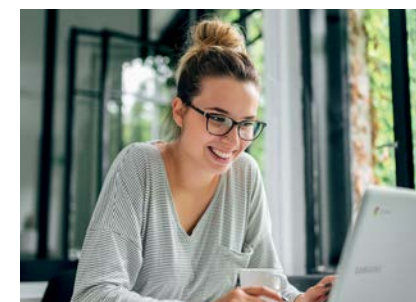




7 SAFEGUARDING IN STYLE

An area of great interest to schools is visitor management, not just because of GDPR but also for safeguarding purposes. Highly recommended by many schools is idXtra's visitor management system: VisiTapp. It is user-friendly, flexible and affordable.

VisiTapp helps your school to deal with visitors, contractors and supply teachers and keeps track of who is in the building. If the big red button is pressed, a list of everyone on the premises is instantly sent to key members of staff. For further information, a free demonstration or quotation, call us today on 0800 083 6053 or visit idxtra.com



8 RELIABLE TECH

When it comes to remote learning, you need reliable technology that's quick and simple to use. The Samsung Chromebook 4 and Chromebook 4+ are designed to help teachers and students work productively. The built-in Google ecosystem helps to simplify and enhance learning, offering greater possibilities in and out of the classroom. The all-new solidity design helps protect the devices from the rough and tumble of daily life. The Samsung Chromebook 4 Series offers outstanding performance at an affordable price. Call 0333 344 1916 or email samsungexperiences@prs-and.com

5 DEVELOP INSPIRATIONAL LEARNING

Early Excellence is a unique and highly-specialist organisation with an unparalleled reputation for supporting schools to develop the very best practice and provision for young learners. They provide a wide range of services and products to support school improvement, offer high-level consultancy and expert training from an experienced

Curriculum Team who support teaching, learning and assessment, and work closely with schools to design and resource learning environments for children aged two-seven years. Discover how Early Excellence can support you in understanding how young children learn and the importance of establishing a well-planned, rich and stimulating environment to underpin children's personal development at earlyexcellence.com

6

Curriculum maestro™

Cornerstones

Everything you need for your primary curriculum and assessment, all in one place.



DESIGN



COLLABORATE



PLAN



TEACH



ASSESS



MONITOR



ANALYSE



EVALUATE



REPORT



LEAD

PASSIONATE ABOUT CURRICULUM DESIGN

We are Cornerstones, passionate experts in primary curriculum design. We provide schools with everything they need to create a knockout curriculum. Curriculum Maestro is our smart online platform that helps you to design, plan, teach and assess your curriculum all from one place. It streamlines your workload and includes over 100

engaging and adaptable projects, resources, assessment and monitoring tools, making it the most complete platform available. Used in over 1,500 primary schools across the UK, Maestro is proving to be a gamechanger for leadership, teaching and learning. For more information call 03333 20 8000.

cornerstoneseducation.co.uk



The long and the short of it

Extending the school day – **Matthew Kleiner-Mann** asks what can we learn from private schools?

Will they? Won't they? The question of whether the school day will be extended is in danger of turning into a political hot potato.

After months of speculation that it was likely to be a key pillar of the education recovery plan, it was thrown into doubt following the government's long-awaited funding announcement and the subsequent resignation of its catch-up tsar Sir Kevan Collins.

However, the Department for Education has indicated that a review on time spent in school will be included in the next stage of the recovery plan, suggesting that the proposal hasn't been taken off the table for good.

Evidence on the effectiveness of extending the school day is mixed, according to the Chartered College of Teaching. It looked at a wealth of global research which found that increased instruction time can improve achievement, but it was dependent on other factors such as quality of instruction and classroom environment.

Attainment gap

Earlier this year, the government's Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities recommended that the school day be extended to help disadvantaged children succeed. Those in favour argue that children need more time at school to make up for the significant face-to-face learning they've missed. It would also help tackle the widening attainment gap between

disadvantaged pupils and their peers, and Sir Kevan has previously said that the extended day would need to be compulsory to reach all pupils.

The benefits go beyond the academic. After being cooped up inside for months, having more time to socialise with friends and take part in extracurricular activities could improve children's mental health and teach them important life skills.

The sticking point for critics is that quality is better than quantity. Spending more time doing something doesn't automatically make us better at it if we're not engaged or inspired.

"The sticking point for critics is that quality is better than quantity."

There are logistical challenges too. Is it reasonable to expect teachers to increase their hours or will we rely on after-school clubs? If it's the latter, the provision of these varies enormously, so how will we ensure they are consistent in quality?

Is it fair to tell children they have to stay later? Reception and Year 1 pupils are already exhausted at the end of the day, so a one size fits all policy on hours that might work in a secondary school wouldn't in a primary. Even parents don't seem to be on board – a YouGov poll for The Times found that 60 per cent opposed extending hours.

However, we don't need to look far to see a successful model of a longer school day. Private schools have been doing it for years and they extend their daily timetables by including a rich variety of extracurricular activities. The purpose is for children to gain skills and knowledge to grow in confidence and grasp opportunities in the future.

Funding

This is the critical factor. A longer day shouldn't be about cramming in as much maths and phonics as possible, it should be about providing children with more opportunities and making the day less rushed, so they have the headspace for their learning to sink in.

By all means, let's have a longer day but let's do it properly – with the appropriate funding, collaboration and infrastructure. Let's talk to private schools and learn from their already well-established provision. Let's ensure we have the highest quality after school clubs run by professionals. Let's take drama pupils to the theatre and arts pupils to a gallery. Let's bring back competitive sports which has all but completely vanished from state primaries. Let's make sure that every child leaves Year 6 able to swim.

If we can prioritise quality over quantity and use this as an opportunity to really rethink the school day, then we could achieve something amazing in education.

Matthew Kleiner-Mann is Leader of the Ivy Learning Trust, a family of ten primary schools in Enfield and Hertfordshire

Great Ormond Street Hospital is a place where extraordinary things happen every day

Your school can help us save more lives, develop new treatments, build new wards and support our young patients and their families.

Start fundraising today!

Visit gosh.org/schools for great ideas, fun activities and handy resources.



Get in touch:
schools@gosh.org or
020 7239 3131

Schools

JOIN OUR COMMUNITY TODAY

**WE REPRESENT OVER 46,000 MEMBERS;
THE DEFINITIVE VOICE FOR SCHOOL LEADERS**



Join NAHT today and receive a
£50 M&S voucher

Visit: [www.naht.org.uk/join/
headteacher-mag](http://www.naht.org.uk/join/headteacher-mag)

Already a member?

Refer a colleague for a £50 M&S voucher
and the member you refer will also
receive a £50 M&S voucher

Join NAHT Edge, the union for middle
leaders and receive a

£30 M&S voucher

Visit: [www.naht.org.uk/join/
headteacher-mag-edge](http://www.naht.org.uk/join/headteacher-mag-edge)

Already a member?

Refer a colleague for a £30 M&S voucher
and the member you refer will also
receive a £30 M&S voucher