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Welcome

H

appy New Year to all readers and contributors.

As we enter this brand-new year, we find out what it's like to launch from scratch a brand-new all-through school, with a visit to Glebe Farm in Milton Keynes, where the All-Blacks rugby team is setting the tone for its evolving ethos.

We speak to Robert Bakewell Primary School, in Leicestershire, which has lived with the spectre of poor inspection judgements for years. Well, not any more! The most recent visit reflected the hard work of the school leaders and staff in turning it around. We find out exactly what they did to impress the Ofsted inspectors.

Our Curriculum Clinic section is again full of great advice about how to review and reform your subject delivery. Jeremy Hannay's account of how his school "decolonised" its curriculum offers food for thought with its candour, and solutions to decades-long challenges around representation in schools. It's also great to hear from Ryan Ball that D&T seems to be making a comeback. Sticky tape at the ready!

Emma Hollis examines the implications of the government's approach to initial teacher education with a specific plea to primary schools, while Naomi Fisher asks what the right approach is with school refusers. It may not be what you think.

Check out our EdTech reviews, with some great ideas about how schools are using technology to enhance teaching and learning.

Meanwhile, our Meeting Needs section encourages you to adapt, rather than differentiate, work for children with SEND so they can be active, involved members of your classrooms.

If you'd like to showcase the excellent work going on in your school, please drop me a line. It's always great to hear from our readers.

I hope you enjoy this issue.

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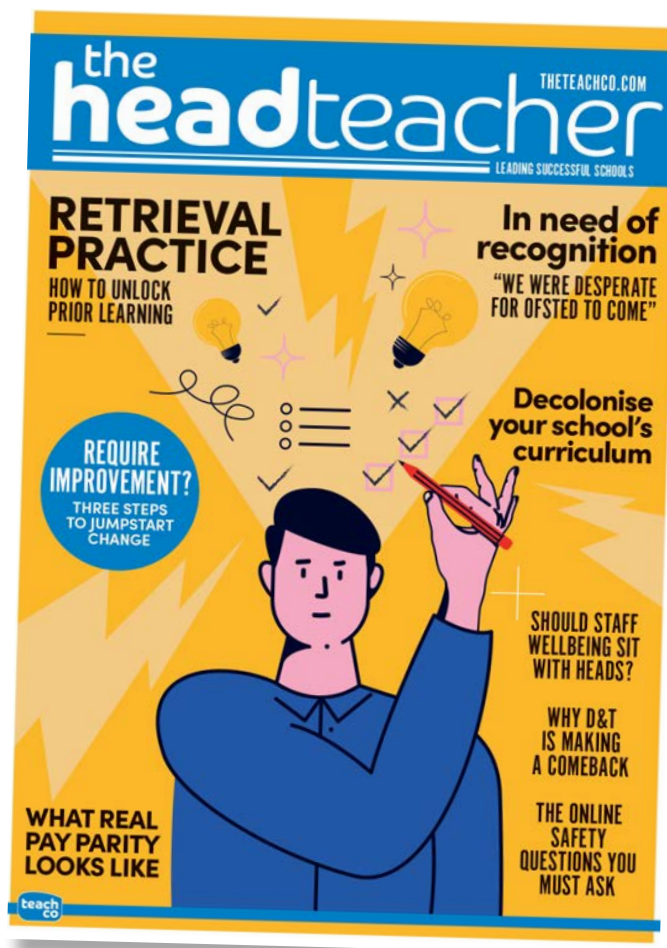


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Dorothy Lepkowska, Editor, The Headteacher

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Government commitment to training up educational psychologists to tackle the need for more professionals in schools

TWEET NOTHINGS

@VillageSchoolH1:

I'd forgotten what an absolute safeguarding nightmare St Bernadette's and Mr Poppy are.
#Nativity

@LouisEverett1:

The reality is, for those of us that choose to work in challenging schools, is that we'll always be criticised by those that choose not to, but think they have the ideas to do it better than we do.



SOCIAL MEDIA

Michelle Donelan, the culture secretary, has said social media companies will face "severe punishments" including huge fines if they do not stop young children using their platforms. Despite having minimum age limits, the advertising algorithms used by some companies have been found to be targeting much younger children, she warned.

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

No time to read the news?
Here's your five-minute catch up

Calls to end Christian assemblies

The daily act of worship in schools should end, education experts claimed, after the 2021 census, published in November, showed England was no longer predominantly Christian.

Currently, all state schools are legally required to provide a daily act of "collective worship" that is "broadly Christian". However, many schools no longer stick to this, and instead hold assemblies that reflect their pupil population. Nick Gibb, the schools minister, said last year that the Department for Education would investigate any alleged breach of this requirement. But Prof Russell Sandberg, an

expert on law and religion at Cardiff University, said: "The legal framework is stuck in the 1940s. The census underlines that requiring a daily act of worship is utterly archaic and discriminatory."

"There is a squeamishness in Westminster about discussing it because of the historical power of religion, but the law breaches children's human rights because they have no choice."

The Department for Education said there were no plans to review the law as it currently stands and added that schools could "tailor provision to suit their pupils' needs".



SATs rescheduled

Primary pupils will sit key stage 2 SATs a day later than scheduled next May because of the extra bank holiday to mark the King's coronation. The Standards and Testing Agency said tests will take place in the same week and usual order, but "one day later than originally planned".



MENTAL HEALTH

Young primary-aged boys showed a greater decline in their mental health during the pandemic than young primary-aged girls, a study by the National Foundation for Educational Research found. However, the mental health of primary-aged girls fluctuated more than that of boys, and the study suggested that the 2021 Covid lockdown had a worse effect on children's wellbeing than the first one, in 2020.

CPD Diary

LEARNING ABOUT ADHD

January 11th

The National Education Union is hosting a webinar aimed at SENCOs, teachers and support staff who would like an overview of the basics of ADHD. It will cover: what ADHD is and how you might identify it; how ADHD affects learning; and some simple strategies to support pupils with ADHD. For further details and to register, go to tinyurl.com/ADHDwebinarNEU.

COST OF LIVING CRISIS

March 9th

The British Educational Research Association is holding an event entitled *Education on the breadline: mental wellbeing and the cost-of-living crisis*, to look at how heads and teachers can provide timely and appropriate mental wellbeing support for their learners while simultaneously balancing escalating costs with ever diminishing budgets. Go to tinyurl.com/bread-line.

UNDERCOVER HEADTEACHER

Here are your New Year's resolutions, Secretary of State

We can't achieve your ambition of a world-class education system on a shoestring, and with no trust

Dear Gillian Keegan, I am sure that, by now, you will have been told of the sheer joy that working in education can bring. School staff at all levels work tirelessly to make the whole system work as well as it does. However, many professionals feel the strain of the enormous effort this takes.

The recruitment and retention crisis we face is not just about money. Look at the numbers of staff who work in schools for what is, frankly, derisory pay - professionals who struggle to make ends meet, but won't leave for different jobs as they feel so fulfilled by the daily difference they make.

As we ring in the New Year it is a good time to stop and reflect on a few of the more pertinent issues surrounding education. The funding announced in the Autumn statement is very welcome and, as someone who has been less than complimentary of the Department and wider government in the past, credit must go where it is due. The money will make a substantial difference to schools and children, but this must not be the end of it. It can't be. What has been announced is no more than a sticking plaster, and will provide merely a short-term solution to a very long-term problem.

Here are some new year's resolutions for you to consider as we begin 2023:

DON'T TURN OFF THE TAPS

Funding streams need to keep coming, as we are only now returning to something like 2010 levels. We all know the effect that the cost-of-living crisis is having on families, businesses and public services. Your government has long desired a world-class education system and, in many ways, it has one - it's just not sustainable. Please keep pushing for more funding for education. The shoestring doesn't have much more give in it.

MAKE YOUR PURPOSE CLEAR

What is your vision for education? What do you want children to achieve and what is the best way to go about this? Please consider whether the current path is the correct one. It is easy to say we want children to have knowledge and skills to rival

all other countries, but much harder to achieve, especially when the measure of education is seemingly only in high-stakes accountability. Other countries have taken a different route to that of testing, high-stakes inspections and measuring everything that moves, and have done so with huge amounts of success. A system based on trust and support, rather than judgement, might solve several current issues within the profession.

GET A REAL GRIP ON THE ISSUES

Review. Research. Consult. Listen, and then make decisions.

Base these decisions on what is needed, not on what you think is needed. Don't base them on what a small subset of the country and the profession need, but get a proper view. Find out what the challenges are for small schools, large schools, MATS, FE and individuals at all levels. Visit schools and speak to as many people as possible. Don't just invite consultations, don't ask people to volunteer, but get your hands dirty. Send every person who works in the DfE to work in a school for two weeks. Every single person, yourself included. Work their hours, live their lives and actually find out what it is like for us and our colleagues.



A system based on trust and support, rather than judgement and accountability, might solve some current issues within the profession

ACTIONS NOT WORDS, PLEASE

Words are easy. They can be uttered and forgotten in an instant, but they are meaningless unless they are backed up with tangible actions. The profession remains scarred by the barrage of thanks it received during Covid while at the same time being treated in the most contemptible way. You can say thank you, you can say we are appreciated, and you can say we are valued but every time those words are uttered, I am afraid that is all they are. Trust needs to be rebuilt.

Ring in this new year with a commitment to showing real improvements in the status, conditions and pay for school staff at all levels. This, in turn, will lead to marked improvements for the children as they move through school and achieve what we all dream of - an education system that works for everyone.

Help us to start 2023 with renewed hope. **HT**

The author is a headteacher in England and Tweets at @secreHT1. Go to: secretheadteacher.org

DR NAOMI FISHER

How do we stop them refusing school?

Forcing children to conform to adult expectations can lead to fear and distress

I

'm often asked what to do about children who are reluctant to go to school. By 'what to do', the adults usually mean 'how can we stop them protesting'?

I think a high proportion of school refusers have some sort of additional need which makes school harder for them than for other children.

They're disappointed in my response, because I won't tell them how to get the child to stop making a fuss. There are no quick fixes to create compliant children.

I work with families of children who have had problems attending school, and they tell some concerning stories. Sometimes their child is pulled off them, screaming, by teachers. They are told to bring in their child in their pyjamas if they won't get dressed. Or to make life very boring for their children – if home life is dull enough, the child will return to school.

They say that schools see the problem as 'refusal' and therefore their interventions are designed to turn that refusal into compliance.

This is worrying because the strategies schools use to manage refusal seem almost designed to make the situation worse, and that is often exactly what happens. Children become more anxious. It starts to affect every aspect of the family's life. Every evening is spent dreading the morning, with Sundays being the worst.

Why does this happen? When children are forced into school, usually one of two rationales is given. Some teachers tell parents that if they are anxious about school, avoiding the source of the anxiety will make it worse, and therefore missing school must not be allowed. This leads to the use of force. Others say that refusal is bad behaviour, and that this must not be reinforced by allowing the child not to attend school. This also leads to the use of force.

The child's perspective is not being considered. There's no space in either scenario for trying to work out exactly what has gone wrong at school which has led to the child refusing to go. Instead, the focus is on how to stop them refusing, whatever it takes.

But force has the potential to make things much worse, because of how our brains work. When we are afraid or angry, we store those memories in a different way to day-to-day memories. We collect them in our



amygdala, the alarm system of the brain and then use them as clues for signs of danger. This response kept our ancestors alive. If you have a close encounter with a lion, you don't want to risk another one. Your brain will be on the look-out for things which might be a lion – perhaps a lion-shaped rock or a person with lots of yellow hair. They will trigger your alarm system and your body's survival response, enabling you to fight or run away. The amygdala would rather you were scared than dead.

When children have repeated experiences of being forced into school in a state of high distress, it is priming them to respond to school as a place of danger. I've heard of children who can't walk past a school without panicking, or can't open a reading book without fear. This isn't under their conscious control. It's the inevitable result of lots of fearful experiences at school. The strategy which was meant to help makes things worse.

What's the alternative? There is no short cut. Adults must work out what the problem is. What's changed for this child? What do they say about why they don't want to go? When did it start? What is their day like, through their eyes? How is the school managing their needs? Are there particular flashpoints for them – playtime, or the toilet perhaps? What could be changed to make things better? And then they need to get alongside the child, and work with them with their consent. Re-integration should be done with, not to, the child.

Forcing may seem like the quickest and most efficient way to manage school refusal, but it's a strategy with the potential to entrench difficulties. Instead, we need to see refusal as a symptom. It alerts us to the presence of a problem, but the problem itself must still be understood. **HT**

The strategies used by schools seem almost designed to make the situation worse

DR NAOMI FISHER



Dr Naomi Fisher is a clinical psychologist and author

of *Changing our Minds*.
@naomicfisher on
Twitter, naomifisher.co.uk

5 REASONS TO TRY... TIB Services' School Caretakers

Trusted and Enhanced DBS checked school caretakers, premises officers and site managers



30 SECOND BRIEFING

TIB provide DBS checked site staff to schools across the UK, primarily recruited from the police, emergency services and British military. The company offers flexible help to cover site staff absence and permanent recruitment. With an operative pool of 2,500, they usually have people within 20 minutes' drive.

1 RECRUITING FROM POLICE AND MILITARY

TIB recruit proactive, mature and responsible people, mainly from the police, emergency services and British military, as well as from occupations such as engineering, teaching and the trades. They look for people who really want to help in their local community and want to make a difference to the schools they are supporting. Each professional background brings different experience and benefits; police officers with safeguarding and security, the military with practical problem-solving, and engineers and trades men and women with maintenance expertise.



3 RIGOROUS INTERVIEW PROCESSES

In addition to the requirements of the Department for Education's Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE), all new operatives undergo a rigorous selection process to ensure their suitability to work on school premises. They are individually interviewed by TIB's vetting and safeguarding specialists, who are all experienced retired police officers with expertise in interview procedures, and a deep understanding of their responsibility to safeguard children at the schools TIB supports. Candidates must also



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demonstrate the following: reliability, punctuality, initiative, organisation, problem solving, team working, following process, honesty and integrity.

4 APPROVED AND TRAINED

New operatives must complete a suite of CPD approved training, covering aspects such as control of substances hazardous to health (COSHH), fire warden, legionella awareness, asbestos awareness and safeguarding children. Plans are in place to roll out advanced training to the core team covering

First Aid at Work and IOSH Working Safely. With a pool of over 2,500 workers, TIB cover the whole of the UK and operatives usually live close to the schools they are supporting.

5 FLEXIBLE ADAPTABLE COVER

TIB provides cover when permanent staff are ill, or when schools are recruiting. They are flexible to your needs, with temporary assignments typically ranging from one week to six months in duration. Where the school and worker wish to switch to direct employment, there is a capped recruitment fee for changing from temporary to permanent contracts. TIB also now offers recruitment services for permanent school site and estates roles, which are better suited to many workers, in particular ex-military personnel seeking regular employment.

2 EXTENSIVE TRANSFERABLE SKILLS

Each team member has something to offer from their previous employment backgrounds, which are integral to being an excellent caretaker. These include outstanding communication skills, the ability to think on their feet to solve problems and great practical ability. As well as being good team players, they have the initiative to get on with the job and work under their own steam. Workers bring wisdom and life skills to the vital function of the school's site team, whether that be a small primary or a large secondary.

KEY POINTS

Insured and accredited:
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Constructionline; Crown
Commercial Service Supplier;
£5m public & products liability;
£10m employers' liability.

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Q HOW DO YOU SET GOALS?

As a community interest company, we constantly remind ourselves that every goal we successfully achieve is contributing to wider transformation. Everything we do is underpinned by strategy, which we use to map out clear, overarching goals for the organisation. It's important to prioritise individual goals as well, however. If everyone is encouraged to reflect on the question "what am I going to do to help the organisation achieve its strategic goals?", it unites all our colleagues in a combined mission without undermining their personal ambitions. At the end of the day, if something doesn't contribute towards the achievement of our collective goals, then it is not worth pursuing.

Q HOW DO YOU MOTIVATE STAFF?

Communication is key. Through the good and challenging times, keeping in touch with our colleagues has been an important part of keeping everyone motivated. From intranet articles to newsletters, we are always finding new ways to connect with members and remind them of the incredible impact their hard work has on local communities. I really enjoy delivering face-to-face updates through 'Minute with Mark' videos each week, which enable me to reach out to all of our members, and were an invaluable point of contact during the pandemic.

We aim to inspire colleagues not only to take ownership of their goals, but to connect with them. We offer every employee the opportunity to become a shareholder in the organisation, which gives them a say in the business' operations and to contribute new and innovative ideas to help us expand.

Only our collective goals are worth pursuing

Face-to-face updates and great communication help to keep Mark Heasman's staff motivated

which encourage colleagues to share their experiences and support one another across the organisation.

Growth has been a key focus for us as a company – not just in terms of turnover, which has grown by 50% in the last two years, but also geographically. We have been providing health and social care services to communities across Essex for many years. Recent workforce expansion has allowed us to extend our services into Dorset and the North East.

Q HOW HAVE YOU LEARNED FROM ANY MISTAKES?

Mistakes are a natural part of life. Without them, we would never move forward. I've learned the important lesson not to take myself too seriously. From experience, I've found that humour is a good tonic in challenging situations and can really bring people together. No matter how difficult the problem seems, taking a step back and trying to find a positive is the best way to keep a level head. Ambition and a drive to succeed can sometimes lead to a rush in making major decisions, which is why it's so important to involve stakeholders at every opportunity and avoid any miscommunication.

NEED TO KNOW:

Company:
Provide Community

Job title:
Group Chief Executive

Time in role:
2 years

No. of staff:
1300



Q WHAT SIGNIFICANT CHANGES HAVE YOU LED SUCCESSFULLY IN YOUR COMPANY?

We have undergone several major changes in recent years, including a rebrand and a restructuring, both of which impacted employee engagement. It involved the introduction of an extensive profit share plan, which ensures all colleagues can personally benefit from our success. This has been a popular innovation, evidenced through a 30% increase in employee ownership which now sits at a promising 98%.

We have also invested in employee-run networks across several departments,

Q WHAT CHALLENGES HAVE YOU OVERCOME AS A LEADER?

Being a newbie in the healthcare sector was a bit of a shock to the system. Jumping from infrastructure and charity work straight into an organisation like Provide certainly brought with it a few challenges, particularly with the pandemic in my first year as Group Chief Executive. Implementing large-scale plans in a realistic and quantifiable way, though challenging, has been integral to transforming the organisation into the widely accessible and innovative healthcare provider it is today. **HT**

CAREER PATH

1986
Masters degree in Chemical Engineering

1997
Director of Asset Management, Railtrack

2000
Director at Princes' Trust

2005
Group CEO of Osborne

2008
CEO of Rock Adventure Centres Ltd

2013
CEO of Ormiston Families

2020
Group CEO, Provide Community

2022
Business Leader Award

EMMA HOLLIS

Primaries must engage in training new teachers

We cannot rely on a dire economic outlook to ease the crisis in recruitment



Earlier this year, we learned that a third of school-based ITT providers, and one in seven teacher training universities, either failed to gain accreditation or chose not to apply, following the government's review of the sector.

Overall, 179 providers spanning school and university-based ITT were successful. Given there were around 240 providers operating last year, the review will result in a total reduction of around a quarter - once new entrants to provision are taken into account.

Whilst there have been some appeals, teacher trainers who are responsible for more than 5,000 trainees face mergers with others or closing altogether.

What will this mean for primary schools?

Firstly, there is the fundamental issue of access to an ITT provider, with fewer now available. The implications will vary across regions, as geographical factors were not taken into account when deciding which ITT providers were to be allowed to continue, despite prior warnings of the risk of supply problems. As a result, some 'cold spots' across England have now emerged in the teacher training landscape.

There are also implications for placements; travel for trainees will be difficult where there is a lack of places. The Department for Education's own research identified that 'distance from home' is a key driver in an applicant's choice of provider. Should placement opportunities not be readily available on their doorstep, prospective applicants may be unable or unwilling to travel significant distances for their training, further affecting teacher supply.

The problems don't end there. If, for example, ITT provision is to be supported by a larger, centralised provider, the curriculum they provide may not be relevant to localised needs. Schools may end up working with organisations that do not understand their community as well as their previous ITT provider, meaning the opportunities to support local context may not be as forthcoming.

Another challenge is the availability of time and capacity for mentoring. Under new DfE requirements, to which all ITT providers will need to adhere from September 2024, lead mentors will be required to undertake initial training of 30 hours, with 12 hours

of annual refresher training. 'General' mentors will undertake 20 hours initial training and six hours of annual refresher training. They will be required to support trainees for a minimum of 1.5 hours per week. Without significant improvements to the issues currently faced by schools, there remains a considerable challenge in finding sufficient time and capacity to meet these new and exacting requirements.

The Department for Education, supported by organisations like NASBTT, is working to address these challenges. However, it is clear that we are in the midst of a teacher recruitment crisis, and increasingly schools are struggling to recruit sufficient numbers of teachers to support the learning of the children in our care. The government announced in November it will increase teacher training bursaries and scholarships next year to attract new entrants (albeit the total funding on offer is still £70 million lower than it was in 2020) but this alone will not solve the problem.

A glimmer of hope lies in the fact we are entering a period of economic uncertainty - and history shows that during periods of economic difficulty there is generally a boom in applications for teacher training. We should not have to rely on this. More must be done to make teaching an attractive, high status graduate profession, even in booming economic times.

We know that, nationally, some schools choose not to engage in ITT at all, but primaries must open up their doors to trainee teachers - not just when they are recruiting new staff but in supporting their training right from the start. If they do not, we will be faced with a teacher recruitment crisis of even greater proportions. **HT**

Geographical factors were not taken into account when deciding which ITT providers could continue

EMMA HOLLIS



is Executive Director of the National Association of School-Based Teacher Trainers (NASBTT)

ARE STAFF CONFIDENT dealing with mental health?

74%

Three-quarters of primary teachers believe that mental health will be a barrier to their pupils' learning over the next six months. Across all levels of intake affluence, this was the major concern among teachers, together with poverty and hunger. Worries about mental health were mainly concentrated in the more deprived areas of England.

FUNDING MENTAL HEALTH LEADS

Cast your mind back approximately four education secretaries, to the government White Paper. One of its most popular announcements, supported by three-quarters of teachers, was the additional funding of a senior mental health lead for all schools. Such a role would likely be welcomed, as only 40% of teachers said they'd be confident dealing with a safeguarding issue regarding mental health.

£1BN

When given the choice of how to direct an additional £1bn of funding, one in three teachers said they would like to see it go towards greater mental health support. Until recently, when the cost-of-living crisis assumed prominence, this was the most popular option among those presented to respondents, including developing the curriculum.



10%

Anxiety, depression and stress is a problem for both students and teachers alike. Almost one in three teachers say that they have consistent feelings of burnout - higher than at any point in the past five years. One in 10 teachers say they've had time off due to mental health within the past year, but this has remained unchanged in the past five years. A growing number of teachers admit to burn-out but don't feel they can take time off to recover.

TWO-THIRDS

Two-thirds of headteachers say their school has a mental health and wellbeing policy - but only 37% of classroom teachers are aware of this! It highlights a big difference in the perceptions of classroom teachers and heads - a consistent pattern across similar Teacher Tapp questions about staff awareness of school policies.

Teacher Tapp finds that primary staff are increasingly worried about pupils' state of mind - as well as their own

A recent NHS study revealed alarming statistics about the state of mental health of children and young people. It highlighted almost one in five 7-16-year-olds have a probable mental health disorder. Schools often bear the burden of students' mental health difficulties. However, staff wellbeing shouldn't be forgotten either and so Teacher Tapp has been looking at how confident teachers are dealing with students' - and their own - mental health.



Iain Ford is senior data and reporting analyst at Teacher Tapp. You can take part in and see the result of regular teacher surveys by signing up to the Teacher Tapp app (teachertapp.co.uk)

The Ofsted Report

GOOD

Robert Bakewell
Primary School
Barswell Drive
Loughborough
Leicestershire
LE11 5UJ

“Scrutiny took its toll and we were exhausted”

Preparations

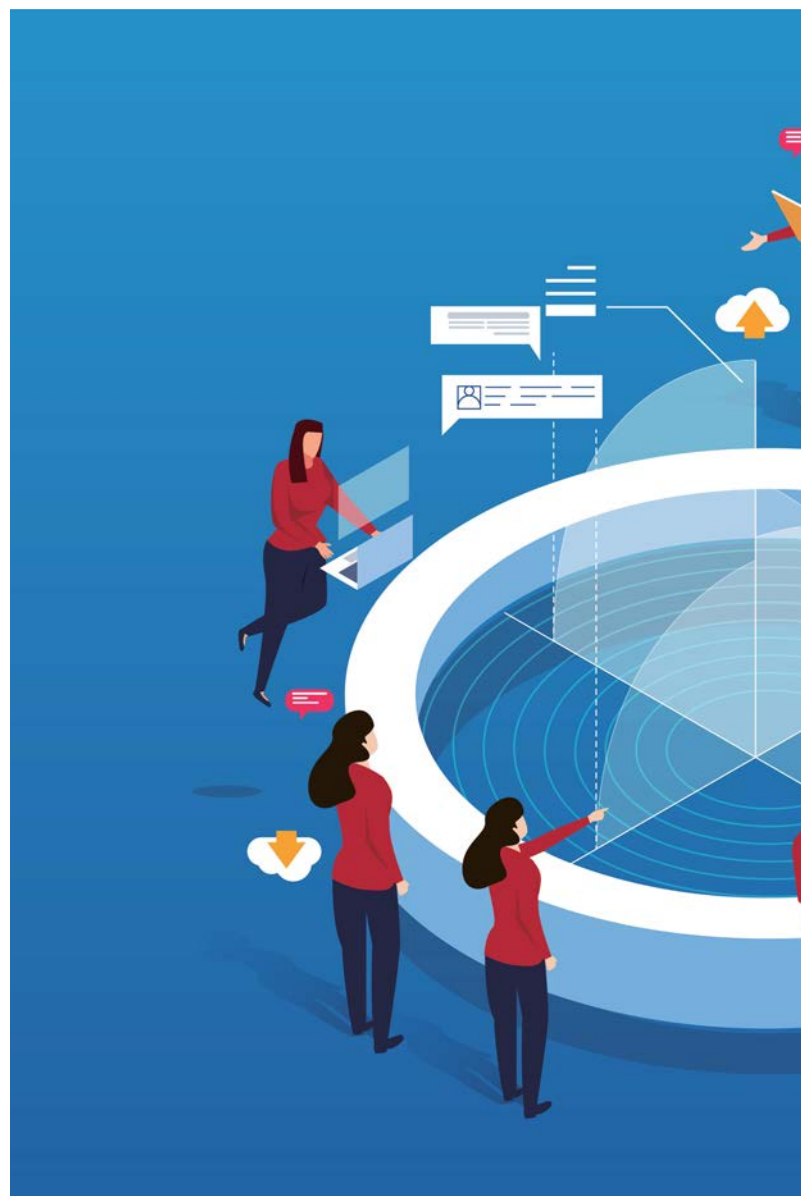
The school received two Requires Improvement judgements between 2017 and 2019, the second of which came just after I became head. That was followed by a change of framework and three further Ofsted visits centred around the effects of the pandemic, so the school has been through quite a bit of scrutiny and visits over three or four years, which took its toll on us and has been exhausting. But in the midst of this we created a culture of being open and transparent.

So, when this academic year arrived, we knew we were ready for the Section 5 inspection as an incredible amount of work had already gone into the

curriculum during the previous academic year. We spent a long time developing our subject sequences, making sure the curriculum we were offering was unique and bespoke to our school, and that we were able to show progression.










We spent some time reflecting on what had been positive about our previous inspections: aspects such as behavior; site development; parental engagement; and the leadership structure were all good, which in turn allowed us to focus on getting our curriculum right.

Immediately before the inspection, we discussed with trustees what it is that makes Robert Bakewell unique. We decided upon the top 10



USPs that we would want an inspector to know about, such as the development of our farm and how this enhances our curriculum offer, as well as our welfare support. We tried to make sure there was alignment across the whole

team about our central purpose, frequently revisiting our journey so far and celebrating successes along the way. I created a crib sheet of what the potential questions from the lead inspector might be in that initial phone discussion,

 Robert Bakewell Primary School  JON BISHOP Headteacher	 Ofsted rating: Good	 Previous Ofsted rating: Requires Improvement	 Pupils on role: 278	 Income: £1.63m	 Outgoing: £1.80M	 FSM: 35%	 Pupils reaching benchmarks in reading and writing: 47%

Robert Bakewell Primary School is located in Loughborough, Leicestershire. The school was inspected in October 2022, and received a judgement of Good, after a previous Required Improvement rating. Inspectors rated all five inspections criteria as Good.



and what our answers should be, which I shared with the senior leadership team and the trustees. It was worth doing because it came through in the report that there was a strong unified team culture towards school improvement.

We also made sure our website was up-to-date and that it celebrated the school. The lead inspector obviously read this closely and I was blown away by how much they knew about us.

When the call came, we were ready. The two hours of the conversation flew by and I just wanted desperately for them to come in and change the grading, as the staff needed that external validation for all their

hard work. Communicating that in the initial phone call was important because of the journey we had been on.

Ofsted's focus

Day one focused on deep dives. The lead inspector spent all day on early reading, phonics and our reading strategy, speaking at length with our reading lead. The other inspectors did two deep dives each – into maths, history, art and RE.

On day two, the inspection team did 'shallow paddles' on PE, science and computing, which seemed to have the aim of quality assuring the deep dives, just to check that what they'd observed the day before was typical across a wider range

of subjects. They didn't speak to the pupils or do lesson visits in the shallow paddles, as this was more of a leadership discussion than triangulation.

What went well

We are an incredibly inclusive school with quite a challenging demographic so we can, at times, manage some difficult behaviours. I told the lead inspector in the initial call that we would not be hiding from this fact; we haven't had any exclusions for three years, but we knew they could potentially observe children who struggle to access the curriculum. However, they would also see a strong welfare team managing this. I was nervous before their visit about whether they would understand our ethos, but I needn't have been. They completely understood – as demonstrated in the first line of the report, which mentions that Robert Bakewell has a big heart and clear ethos behind which our whole school community is united. I was so pleased that this had come across.

There was a good dialogue with the team which was constructive, professional and non-threatening.

Where we can improve

The report identified that the knowledge and content of parts of our curriculum needed to be better sequenced. The curriculum journey never ends and is constantly evolving, particularly in foundation and early years where we sometimes teach a mixed reception and Year 1 group, and we are working to address this observation.

The second was our approach to assessment and whether gaps in children's knowledge could be clearly identified. We are doing a lot of work on retrieval practice, quizzing children and recording where gaps emerge which, in turn, helps teachers with future planning. **HT**

BE PREPARED

What Ofsted asked

1 How do you manage progression and decision-making on learning objectives?

The staff are responsible for creating the sequencing and progress in the curriculum, and we teach through "golden threads" – for example all pupils learn about Robert Bakewell and his impact on agriculture – and we were able to show our mapping of this topic across all year groups in the school.

2 How do you train staff to teach reading?

The inspectors wanted to know about our fidelity to the DfE-accredited Little Wandle phonics programme and how we deliver this. We were able to discuss our culture of promoting reading across the school and the fact that we have a strong and robust ethos around literacy, which is supported by all school staff.

3 How do you protect a broad and balanced curriculum?

Over the course of the two days, inspectors saw the broad range of subjects we offer and this was mapped out clearly on our website. We do narrow the curriculum in the early years to make more time for literacy, which is allowed under the inspection framework.

4 How robust are your safeguarding procedures?

This was possibly the most challenging part, as the inspectors wanted to see case studies on specific pupils, which I found surprising. They asked to see details and what actions had been assigned to every logged incident, to see if they were robust enough. The welfare team was present during this discussion and their knowledge is second to none. The inspector was impressed with the support the school gives to our local community, which goes far beyond education.

WORKING AS ONE WITH YOUR PUPILS' TUTORS

Nicola Beaverstock explains how teachers and online instructors can collaborate to maximise success for students and schools



ou've spent time deciding which pupils will receive additional support, you've grouped them appropriately and set them up online and you've carefully selected a tuition provider and a tutor with your students' needs in mind,

so now what?

Tutoring has become a key word in staffrooms, with online support being a popular option. However, with a tutor only visible on a screen or at the other end of a phone or email exchange, can an effective tutor/teacher relationship really be possible? Can you both really sing from the same song book, virtually? I believe you can.

Some tutors, like me, are teachers too, so we understand the job and strive to ensure our work supports yours in parallel, rather than as a separate strand of activity.

Before tutoring begins – things to consider

At the group planning stage, it is a good idea to group students of similar ability. Some tutoring providers may be able to deliver separate content to each student visually (that is certainly something that can be done using Bramble, as I do for Pearson), but it is not possible to speak to each pupil individually. Where there are different abilities in a group, I always provide extra challenges or encouragement as necessary, to maximise the benefit for each student.

If the sessions are to take place at school a quiet space is helpful, so the students and tutor can hear each other. Headsets help with this too and, ideally, each student should have their own laptop or tablet. Supervision may well be required by your tutoring

provider for safeguarding purposes, which is also really helpful if there are any technical issues. One benefit of online tutoring is the fact that the students do not all need to be in the same place, as sessions can work equally well if they each join from home.

When your tutor knows they have been selected for your

It is motivational for students to know that their teacher and tutor both know how well they are doing

school's block of tuition, they will send you an introductory email. This will tell you all you need to know about the first session and provide you with contact information. If you have time to send a reply, that really

helps create a rapport from the start. The more information you can give your tutor, the better they can tailor their sessions to meet pupils' needs.

Ideally there will be a face-to-face meeting between the teacher and tutor at the start of the first session. This is an opportunity to put a face to a name, ask questions, and discuss the details of your requirements. If a meeting is not possible, you should send an email with details of the areas you would like the sessions to cover and any information about pupils which they may find helpful. If there are pre-tests to be carried out, your tutor will let you know how these should be administered. It may be possible for the students to each view their own individual version of the test on screen during one of the first tutoring sessions. If this is not possible, you may be asked to administer the test at school, then scan and send it back.

During tutoring – keeping track of progress

Once a block of tutoring sessions has begun, you can worry less about keeping in touch with your



tutor. You will receive details of any pre-test scores and feedback after each session. The process I follow is to give an overview of pupil attendance, engagement, understanding and confidence, plus brief comments to highlight particular progress or difficulty for each student. As well as keeping you informed, this may be helpful if you are planning a similar activity in the classroom. Of course, if one of the students in the tutor's group makes particularly good progress, your tutor would be delighted to hear from you. It can certainly be very motivational for students to know that their teacher and



ACHIEVING TUTORING SUCCESS

- Aim to group students of similar ability if possible, to remove the need for the tutor to differentiate and potentially spend less time with some students than others
- Decide what areas of learning you would like the tutor to cover and let them know how this fits in with what is being taught in class
- Compile brief details about students for the tutor so they have some prior knowledge, and know what to expect of the learner
- Ask your tutor what feedback you can expect, if this is not clear. You will need to know how pupils are progressing and if the tutor has identified any problems or new challenges
- Find a quiet space where tutoring sessions can take place, if it is to happen at school, so both the tutor and learner can concentrate without interruption
- Individual laptops or tablets with headsets are best, to avoid disruption and background noises and to keep the pupil focused
- Arrange for supervision (and technical support) to ensure that tutoring sessions can go ahead without any hindrances
- Inform your tutor of any particular progress a student may have made in class so that they can adapt their own session, if needed, or reinforce the work being done in lessons
- Let your tutor know as soon as possible if you need to reschedule for any reason

tutor both know how well they are doing.

Sometimes an entire tutoring block runs exactly according to plan - but there are often unforeseen events during the course of the block. I try to be as flexible as possible, changing the time or day where I can, or moving a session that is no longer convenient to the end of the block. Of course, tutors may also need to reschedule occasionally, and we very much appreciate your support if this happens.

With some tutoring providers, all sessions are recorded. You have access to the recordings whenever necessary, which can

be a helpful resource for students to practise a skill or for test revision. Some recordings have even been shared with Ofsted to illustrate the benefits of online tutoring for particular students - with the school obtaining all the relevant permissions, of course.

After tutoring – what happens at the end

Like the first session of a block, the final session could include a face-to-face meeting between the teacher, tutor and students, if possible. I always share individual pre- and post-test scores, areas of progress and next steps for learning, as well as general

comments about each student's approach to the sessions. This allows teachers to see at a glance how tutoring has benefitted each student.

From working with many teachers, I've noted that everyone has a slightly different approach to communication. The process I have described is one I follow and other tutoring providers may differ slightly. But don't forget, your students are in good hands and we are all working to the same goal - to give your students the extra support they need. We can work in harmony and, as a result, your students will flourish. **HT**



Nicola Beaverstock is a former primary school teacher, and tutor for Pearson. Go to: [pearson.com/uk/educators/schools/pearson-tutoring-programme.html](https://www.pearson.com/uk/educators/schools/pearson-tutoring-programme.html)

5 REASONS TO TRY... Money Heroes

Discover the free financial education programme that brings learning about money and finances to life



30 SECOND BRIEFING

Young Enterprise's award-winning Money Heroes programme helps teachers and parents deliver financial education for children aged 3–11. The programme's fun and engaging free teaching resources are available in various formats to introduce into your lessons, helping young people develop a positive mindset with money.

1 INSPIRES ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS

Learning about money is an important part of growing up. Research tells us that children are developing their mindset around money by seven years old, so we should be having these conversations during children's formative years at primary school. We also know that teachers are the second most significant influence in helping them develop this knowledge, after parents. That's why Money Heroes was created – to help children learn about money and finances in a fun and engaging way, both at home and in school.



2 OFFERS A RANGE OF RESOURCES

The programme is flexible and can be introduced at any point in the school year, covering topics such as savings, pocket money and budgeting. Resources are free to access and include storybooks, digital games, printable lesson plans and even board games that you can play in your classroom. There are also materials available for children with special educational needs and disabilities. With specific resources for teachers and parents, they are fun, engaging and designed to spark conversations around money and finances, while also helping to develop literacy and numeracy skills.

3 ENCOURAGES PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT

As parents (or carers) and teachers are the two key influencers in developing children's financial attitudes and behaviours, the Money Heroes programme has been designed to encourage collaboration between home and school to increase financial capability. Working together in partnership inside and outside of the classroom, teachers and parents can access resources with clear learning objectives that complement each other's activity, track progression, and provide real-world learning opportunities that bring their children's financial learning to life.



Find out more:
Visit moneyheroes.org.uk
or search Money Heroes

4 INTRODUCES EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

We know that children learn best when faced with real and relatable situations – that's why Money Heroes resources are based on practical, everyday scenarios such as going shopping or how we earn money. We also know that children have an increased social awareness – that's why we explore themes important

to them such as sustainability and food waste. And money can provide a powerful context for learning in other subjects too, so embedding financial education across the curriculum will help engage children with learning by making it more relevant.

5 PROVIDES ONGOING TEACHER SUPPORT

The Money Heroes resources are all designed to provide you with the knowledge, skills and confidence to help you teach children about money and develop their mindset. But we know that financial education is more than just providing resources – it also needs to adapt to the fast-changing financial landscape children face. That's why we offer free CPD-accredited teacher training sessions, access to a supportive advisory service, mentoring opportunities and much more to help you feel fully equipped to deliver engaging and relevant financial education lessons.

KEY POINTS

Support children to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes they need to manage their money, make informed financial decisions and achieve their goals in life.

Help young people navigate through an increasingly cashless and digital society where most access a smartphone at age 10 and use a debit card by age 11.

Encourage children to consider the connection between money choices and broader issues affecting the planet with our range of resources linked to the climate.

Enable conversations with teachers and parents to help children understand and avoid the potential risks involved in gaming and other online scams.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

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Decolonise your curriculum

Changing your books – and your mindset

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How to improve pupils' writing by

LETTING THEM TALK ABOUT IT FIRST



B

y 2016, the universal 'sigh' of pupil disapproval had become the herald for English lessons at our school, which required a ground-up review of how we planned and taught the subject.

We had long been tethered to a restrictive overview which placed whole genres into silos. Teachers were sharing the exasperated 'sigh' of the learners and it was time for change. The panacea came from Pie Corbett's Talk for Writing; a pedagogical approach, prioritising oracy.

Securing the support and enthusiasm of all the staff was always going to be tricky, as they were suffering from 'initiative fatigue' after repeated attempts to tweak the existing planning, teaching and learning structure for English. With this in mind, we first introduced the opportunities that Talk for Writing offers in relation to flexibility, creativity, cross curricular learning and, ultimately, greater teacher agency.

The freedom to choose their own focus text for units of work, facilitating purposeful links to other areas of the curriculum, was like a collective break in the clouds, where we could see beyond the established class texts that were once loved but now reviled after years of overuse.

Key outcomes

- Increase in pupil engagement and enthusiasm when working on written tasks.
- Staff feeling inspired to seek out new, cross curricular contexts for their sequences of learning and breaking out of entrenched silos of English teaching.



1. IMMERSION IN TEXTS

From this inspirational foundation, we then worked collectively to support each other in understanding the Talk for Writing approach. Mention the pedagogy to many colleagues and they immediately associate it with 'story maps' and 'waving your arms around' to tell a story. In actual fact, there is a much deeper process at the heart of Talk for Writing, which is endlessly adaptable and universally appropriate for all aspects of the subject.

In short, you start a unit by immersing the children in the text. Grab their attention with a hook (a mysterious letter, a surprise visitor, an unusual image) to get their creativity primed for what is to come. When the text is introduced, the children are already invested in the adventure ahead, as you explore a new literary world together. The children orally rehearse the original story structure, broadening their vocabulary and allowing them to hear the 'music' of the text. With a head full of language structures, the class then begin

to innovate around the original text - playfully developing character descriptions, experimenting with various punctuation, or popping speech bubbles to develop an awareness of direct speech. Finally, over a period of three or four weeks, the children are ready to invent, and are fully equipped to apply the many authorial tools they have developed to compose a piece of their own, of the same genre or structure.



2. PROCESSES AND PRINCIPLES

Supporting the staff to develop their own understanding of this teaching and learning sequence was achieved collaboratively and in small steps. We utilised many



staff meetings, INSET days and individual coaching opportunities to ensure that all our colleagues felt confident in leading their classes through the learning journey, grounded in a firm understanding of why these stages were important. This is the power of Talk for Writing. It guides staff to repeatedly return to the process and principles of learning, evaluating at each stage, rather than slavishly following the next part of a scheme.

The most compelling learning experience of all was allowing the staff to rediscover their inner author, as we explored writing together



3. SHIFTING ATTITUDES

Soon after our Talk for Writing revolution, some staff raised concerns about progression. How were we going to avoid cohorts inadvertently experiencing the same focus text as they moved through the school, if we can choose whatever text we want, whenever we want? This was a good question and one that

reinforced the shift in thinking amongst the staff. They were now seeing their English teaching as part of a larger, cohesive whole. The solution? A simple, shared spreadsheet. We introduced a text tracker, which the staff simply update with the title and author of the texts used, on a termly basis, which we can all check in with prior to planning for that cohort. Again, we avoided the urge to straight-jacket our curriculum planning.



4. EXPLORING WRITING

The most compelling learning experience of all was allowing the staff to rediscover their inner author. We held a full INSET training session which was solely focused on exploring different ways to playfully explore writing. There was no talk of 'checklists' or 'success criteria', we simply spent the day practically experimenting with poetry, character description, story starters and building more complex sentence structures. One of the main vehicles for this was Padlet - a collaborative digital workspace. We worked together to write for no other reason than the joy of it. We tried to scare each other, build magically vivid descriptions and support each other to develop our own skills. Staff commented that it had been their most enjoyable and memorable training experience, whereas others immediately applied the same techniques with their classes. Within the structure of this day, we had littered techniques, tools and tasks which could be adapted and applied repeatedly in different contexts. The staff left that INSET training with a toolkit of learning tools that they felt inspired to apply.

The development of Talk for Writing continues. Our most recent adventure has been to explore how the pedagogy can be applied to non-fiction texts. Again, there was some trepidation. How could we

WHAT WE LEARNT

- Talk for Writing is fundamentally inclusive. It is now common for us to start a sequence of learning with strong imagery and, increasingly, staff are using age-appropriate picture books as their focus texts. This immediately removes language barriers for children with additional learning needs or those who hold EAL status.

- A collegiate approach is essential to the success of our Talk for Writing implementation. Our support staff have been just as instrumental as their teacher colleagues, displaying enthusiasm, encouragement and innovation. Without their determination and desire to experiment with the new approaches, some teachers might have been less confident to do so too.

- Regular, progressive and varied forms of training are necessary to ensure all staff are part of the journey. The impact of Talk for Writing would not have been so powerful had we relied upon one launch event, which was then followed up by emailed reminders, circulated documents and 'monitoring' processes. Face-to-face, practical, experiential learning is just as important for education staff, as it is for the learners in their care.



Marc Bowen is a deputy head and primary teacher in South Wales, and welcomes any

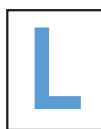
responses to this article or further questions through his email marc.bowen@raglan.schoolsdu.org.uk

teach these texts without a list of success criteria? However, the staff quickly grasped how the fundamental processes of building an oral vocabulary, immersing the children in many model texts and innovating around these texts works just as effectively with factual writing. **HT**



How to decolonise your curriculum

TO REPRESENT THE WHOLE COMMUNITY



Life hacks often equate to tiny paradigm shifts – seeing something you had considered to be one way in a new light, leading to growth and change. When scrolling a social media feed, algorithms will often show you short

videos that fall under the category of ‘life hacks’ – simple and effective ways to improve your life, and novel ways of managing everyday tasks more effectively and easily. For example, tying some bright coloured fabric to your suitcase so it’s easy to spot on the carousel – a small change in itself, but one which, added to others, can lead to an easier life.

The late Steven Covey had a great quote about changing our thought processes: “We think we see the world as it is, when in fact we see the world as we are.” The journey we have taken at Three Bridges with our curriculum started with a simple observation: there was a lack of diversity and inclusion in the literature we were using in lessons. However, what started out as a simple idea ended up creating a wave of change in the way we see, think, act and design – things we might never otherwise have considered.

Key Outcomes

- Our curriculum is global, multi-ethnic and inclusive
- Staff are engaging in deeper conversations about what they are doing and why
- Curriculum leadership as a collective is more powerful than individual curriculum leaders



REJUVENATING AN ANTIQUATED CURRICULUM

When I started working at Three Bridges in 2012, we had a pretty standard curriculum. We followed the old national literacy and numeracy strategies for the most part, as there was some ‘gray space’ between its abandonment at the turn of the decade and the national curriculum from 2014. We had a library filled with books that were older than the staff, and planning schemes and resources were ‘adapted’ each year.

Our teaching team was largely young, white and female. In books, children were exposed to white families, white male lead characters and white authors. It was an antiquated curriculum, with no leading women, no people of colour, and a heteronormative narrative throughout. We didn’t discuss neurodiversity or disability. If you were a white, middle-class, straight, neurotypical boy, our curriculum told you, explicitly and implicitly, that your future was limitless. If you were anyone else, you had to assume we were talking about you, too.



A GLOBAL AND INCLUSIVE CURRICULUM

In 2018, we started to look at our curriculum more intentionally – both that which was explicit and which was hidden or implied. We wanted a curriculum that was global, multi-ethnic, and inclusive. But where do you start?

I am not an expert in curriculum design, nor in inclusivity, globality or multi-ethnicity. We needed a consultant, better resources and partners. It takes a village to raise a child, and it also takes one to build an incredible curriculum. We asked parents, the children, governors and staff two big questions, that were thematically analysed:

- What are our aspirations, hopes, dreams for our young people now and in the future?
- What knowledge, skills and



habits of mind do they need to uncover this?

It ignited the discussion and helped school leaders to narrow down the thoughts of stakeholders.



QUESTIONING BIASES

We partnered with an incredible consultant, Karen Brooke from Oshun Education, who helped us begin telling stories of black British history and question our own biases in lesson, unit and curriculum design. She led whole staff training on black history and

bias, while supporting our conversation as a staff team about what our curriculum should look like. Karen helped teachers to plan and resource diverse, multi-ethnic and inclusive units of work using existing schemes as a starting point. She provided the content shifts, leaving teachers to plan, sequence and deliver.

We discovered the amazing work of Lyfta, an online platform that provides teachers and children entry into the worlds and lives of people from around the globe. The story worlds are creative and counter-intuitive, often providing a narrative that

challenges our assumptions about others. We changed our books, too, moving from exclusively white male characters to a lens that includes a range of inclusive factors in authors, narratives and diversities. When people see themselves within a curriculum, what they see needs to be great.

However, what we came to realise was the importance and necessity of alignment. Our hidden curriculum - that which is implicit and implied - also needed attention. This included a number of domains: who we are, how we interact with children and parents, how we engage with children in the presence of content, and what we prioritise.

These changes do not happen overnight, and must be carefully considered and woven into the fabric of your school. For Three Bridges, this journey is ongoing. Making quick shifts is possible but changing a curriculum is an organic process. We looked at subjects together, in teams, rather than creating subject leaders. This gave everyone ownership and in-depth knowledge of where we were going. We invited other schools to join us and learned together.



NEEDING TO FEEL SEEN AND HEARD

It was important to us that we made space for people, their ideas and their voices. We started to prioritise the recruitment and retention of a diverse range of staff. It's wonderful to have adjusted your content, but if the people standing at the front of the room all look the same, and do not reflect the world in which we live, that says something. Our website now encourages applications from diverse backgrounds and this has been reflected in our recruitment over the past two years.

We have to live and believe in what we teach. Children can see through tokenism and it is as damaging as neglect. Anything we want for our pupils must also exist for our staff. If we had any hope of teaching social justice - and if

WHAT WE LEARNT

- Our curriculum was historically shaped for white males. If you were a white boy in the school, you saw yourself everywhere and in everything. Everyone else had to use their imagination
- Change is possible and resources are out there, but it takes some dedicated time, work and effort to fit it all together
- It's helpful to bring in outside partners who bring new and different perspectives and ideas
- Giving everyone ownership of the process meant all voices and opinions were heard and considered
- The school's implicit curriculum must also evolve, otherwise the explicit one will not be effective. This includes looking at the ethnic make-up of the teaching staff
- Curriculum change is nuanced, challenging and a never-ending journey, and must be constantly reviewed - but it is worth the effort
- The process of redrafting the curriculum unexpectedly became something much bigger and better, and has reaped positive effects across the whole school
- We now see the school differently because it is different and has changed for the better



Dr Jeremy Hannay is the headteacher of Three Bridges Primary School in Southall. threebridgesprimary.co.uk

we wanted a dialogic pedagogy - then they had to feel free to speak up against injustice or mistakes, and that their voices were solicited, heard and acted upon. The magic we wanted in our classrooms had to exist in the staffroom.

Curriculum is both what is in the books and on the walls but, more importantly, what is in our hearts. Ensuring everything is aligned cannot be overstated. **HT**

If you're a white, middle-class, straight, neurotypical boy, our curriculum told you that your future is limitless

The Inside Story

RICHARD AYRES

IT Director – Relish School Food

Meet Richard, the IT Super Guru who created Relish-Ops, the pioneering school meal system



Richard Ayres is a committed petrol-head, an armchair F1 fan and a lover of all things 'Strictly' – sadly, he says, with the middle-age IT professional physique to match. He is a proud father and husband, and the owner of a 'bonkers' cockapoo called Bagel.

[MEET THE TEAM]



Sanjin Hadžić – API Developer & Connections Manager

Senior developer, San, looks after all Reli-Till school integrations and supplier ordering systems.



Adele Mitchell – Data Manager

Adele manages all incoming data and the integrity of all systems and back-ups. She is also responsible for Junior Data Handlers.

Richard's IT and system skills were already finely honed as he had worked extensively with Japanese automotive companies. Being fascinated with Asian methods of organisation he developed an advanced level of integration knowledge, working with supply chains across Europe. This was followed by stints in the mobile telecoms sector.

He was involved in developing commercial web portals, rapidly absorbing new methodologies to develop large-scale on-line ordering platforms.

He joined Relish in 2014, to design and develop a new approach to recipe and menu management, and has played a major role in the continual evolution and development of Relish. Richard intrinsically linked menus to the Government's School Food Standards, designing complex algorithms to enable catering managers to tailor menus to individual school requirements, with the assurance that they were compliant, something never automated before. The software was able to fully analyse three-week rotating menus within seconds, and a bank of over 4,000 recipes are now available within our software, another truly unique factor.

Another significant milestone integrated the entire supply chain.

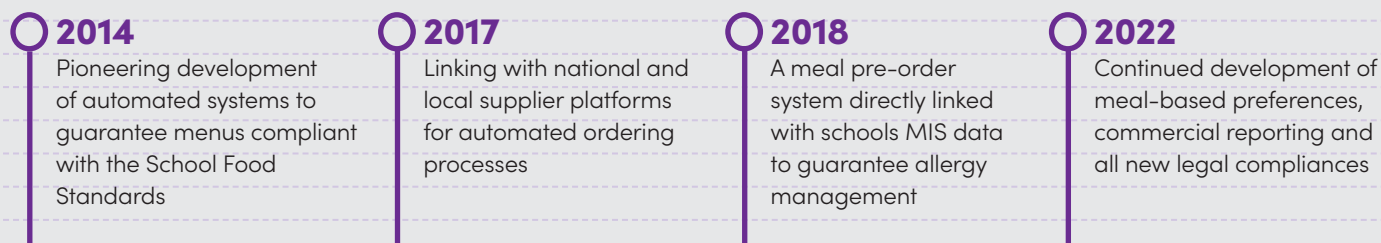
He designed a homogenised, yet flexible, system that was customer facing, accommodated all our supply chains' 'unique attributes' and ensured seamless and quick ordering processes. It was fully auditable, with valuable metric data and management information to hand. This facilitated real-time allergen control of ingredients ensuring that, at any given time, our ever-growing bank of recipes were automatically up-dated with full allergen, lifestyle and nutritional analysis. Any change to ingredient components now automatically feed through to all recipes and menus.

Richard then took Relish-Ops from a compliance management system to an all-encompassing customer-driven modularised kitchen management system. One module, Reli-Till, encompasses parent pre-order, class ordering and registration syncing, ensuring no child would have accessibility to a dish incompatible with their profile. Richard has also worked with MIS and cashless payment providers to ensure we can securely and automatically analyse the food requirements of tens of thousands of pupils. This led to the 'on-the-fly' importing of pupil data, automatic creation of labelling for compliance with Natasha's Law and ultimately guaranteeing to parents and carers that Relish can keep their children nutritionally well-fed AND SAFE. Thousands of validated meal orders are placed each day, up-to 50 per second at peak times.

CONTACT:

To discuss your options, contact Relish School Food on 03300 240016 or email: info@relishschoolfood.co.uk

Our Journey



School Profile



Name: Glebe Farm School

Headteacher:
Matthew Shotton

Location:
Milton Keynes,
Buckinghamshire

Size: 250, rising to 1,500

Extra info: The school
opened in September 2022



MATTHEW SHOTTON, HEADTEACHER

“We have the cleanest sheds in Milton Keynes”

Collegiality and a values-based vision drive academic achievement and progress at Glebe Farm School, finds Dorothy Lepkowska



“**H**ave you read this book?” asks Matthew

Shotton, reaching behind him for his bookshelf. “This is where the culture of this school was born”.

He holds up James Kerr’s *Legacy: What the All Blacks Can Teach Us About The Business of Life*. It comes as no surprise that rugby might be the preferred sport of a Welshman but it is clearly about more than just a game. As headteacher, Matthew is taking the culture of one of the world’s most successful rugby teams and applying it to Glebe Farm school.

“The All Blacks live and die by their values,” he says. “It means nothing to be the most capped player in the world if you have no humility and no team culture. They call it ‘sweeping the sheds’. It means that their changing room is in exactly the same condition when they leave, as when they entered.

“I asked the staff what ‘sweeping the sheds’ means here. And it looks like this: this morning we were short-staffed in our nursery so our secondary art and design teacher volunteered to go and spend half a day there to help out.”

Starting from scratch

This brand-new all-through school, in Milton Keynes, which opened in September, sits on the edge of an executive housing estate, still largely under construction, with major retail distribution centres within sight. There is the potential that, one day, those companies may partner with the school and provide apprenticeships and employment for Glebe Farm’s former pupils. But that is for the future.

For now, most of the school stands empty. The state-of-the-art £33 million buildings are an impressive feature on the local landscape but most of the classrooms remain locked, chairs are up-ended on desks and the floor coverings are clean like virgin snow. It will be another five years before these rooms are full and the school is at its 1,500-students capacity.

For the time being, there are children only in nursery, reception and Years 1 and 2. The secondary phase has admitted its first Year 7s, making around 250 pupils in all. Year on year, the school will grow as the next consecutive cohort arrives.

Glebe Farm is part of the Inspiring Futures through Learning (IFtL) multi-academy trust, which competed with other trusts



A SUSTAINABLE SCHOOL

At the heart of the school – from its buildings to the way pupils are taught and how they learn – is sustainability. Milton Keynes City Council aims to be carbon neutral by 2030 and carbon negative by 2050 and Glebe Farm is its first fossil-free and gas-free school.

The school runs a number of social enterprises. There is a shoe shop, run in conjunction with SALS Shoes and the Guinness Partnership, for families struggling financially. This will operate alongside a second-hand uniform shop.

A “top-up shop” allows people to purchase 10 items for £2, which can be food or hygiene products such as toilet paper. Local shops and supermarkets sell, cheaply, items that are close to their use by, dates. The money made from sales is used to top-up the stock.

Sustainability also cuts through to teaching and learning. Pupils have iPads, which keeps paper use down to a minimum.

Matthew says. “I’ve seen the amount of gluing and sticking and photocopying teachers are expected to do, only to have children rattle through a worksheet and then throw it away. None of this is conducive to teacher wellbeing.

“The time spent on preparing resources can be better spent on interventions. The accessibility features on iPads mean all pupils can access learning, and the Apple brand is beyond the financial capabilities of some of our families. This is an important tool, though not necessarily the solution to every challenge.”

for the right to create a school on this site, in keeping with local plans. The Trust has experience of turning around struggling, as well as managing high performing, primary schools and this is its first foray into the secondary sector, as Stephanie Boak, the Trust’s Head of Professional and Governance Services explains.

“We have always wanted the combination of capacity givers and takers, and the Trust has so far worked in partnership with schools that have brought different strengths to it,” she says.

“We work very closely with the local authority on its school-based planning, but we were keen to have a route into the secondary sector, and to grow the MAT.

“The staggered approach to admissions and entry felt like a real opportunity for us to grow gradually. There was a clear vision about how the school should be structured, that it should be one building and that there should be interaction between the youngest and oldest pupils.

“Linked to this was the development of our valued-based curriculum, with secondary teachers bringing their

specialist knowledge and expertise not only to older pupils but to the younger ones too, so that there is a continuum as pupils go through the school.

Driving achievement through key values

Glebe Farm has five of these key values - integrity, responsibility, endeavour, bravery and empathy - and three curriculum drivers: ambition, belonging and creativity.

“Within the primary phase, being a new school with a small

staff, we've taken an off-the-shelf option - Cornerstones Curriculum 22," Matthew explains. "This worked really well in my previous school, Fairfield's Primary, and we can slowly develop it here into our own version.

"We want to link the curriculum back constantly to those key drivers. So, for example, when thinking about ambition we consider how this is being reflected in what we are teaching. It could be talking about people who showed real resilience and overcame barriers, such as Rosa Parkes, about whom the pupils have learned.

"At every turn we try to bring in those drivers. And it isn't just about being creative in art, but in every subject. The challenge lies in how we make a subject such as maths creative and fun for our pupils, in particularly the children who might be struggling."

The retention of "sticky knowledge" - the key information pupils need to recall in order to progress with their learning - is another important feature. "We ask ourselves 'what is the end point for our pupils?' What do we want them to remember at the end of Year 1 in history, for example? What are the things they will need to know by the end of Year 2, and how do we map that out?

"Our aim is that by the time they reach the secondary phase their humanities teacher will have a sound understanding, and will have had an input in the pupils' academic journey, so there is no time wasted at key stage 3."

Pulling together

The all-through structure of Glebe Farm has other benefits. It was decided early on, in the design of the school, that there should be one staffroom, with no

MEET THE STAFF



KELLY FORRESTER

English lead

There's a real buzz in the air and it's a privileged position to be able to shape the future culture of the school, which we want to be one of innovation and excellence.



NATALIE WEBB

teach reception
KS1 and early
years lead

We're all on a journey together and I love how the secondary specialist teachers come and teach the primary children. Hopefully I'll still be here to see my class do their GCSEs.



ERIN STEWARD

Deputy head

It so exciting to have a hand in every stage of the pupils' development. These early, formative years are so important and we have the right staff and curriculum to give them the best possible start in life.



ALICE JACKSON

Year 1 teacher

Seeing a school set up from scratch has been insightful. I love it when secondary art teachers bring me resources for the little ones. I've never experienced anything like this before. It's a very supportive environment.

The challenge lies in how we make a subject such as maths creative and fun for our pupils, in particular the children who might be struggling

separation of primary and secondary. Nor are teachers restricted to teaching pupils in their phase.

"We were clear from the start that if we're going to be an all-through school, then it has to be exactly that, with no staff divide," Matthew says. "We don't want secondary, or primary, staff thinking they know it all. Sitting in one staffroom means they get a sense of how each other's day is going and understand that their challenges are often similar. It's a chance to find out about problems across the phases, or where something is going well.

"We also use our secondary subject specialists in primary. From Year 1 pupils are taught music, PE, Spanish and computing by a specialist from the secondary phase."

Literacy, and particularly reading, is a priority across the whole school. "I'm really pushing the Ofsted focus on reading. We have a new cohort of Year 7 children, but how do we know how they learned to read? Do our secondary staff understand how phonics was taught in primary? So, we currently have all our staff going through phonics training to get an idea of where it starts."

His expertise as a primary and early years specialist means Matthew can see what effects that early experience has had on the older children.

"We use such a vast number of resources in primary, but we narrow these as children get older. I've watched some of our Year 7s go into the nursery and head straight for the toy vice and workbench, and I'm like 'yeah, you remember doing that but now we're narrowing this with talk of GCSEs, and leadership and responsibility'.

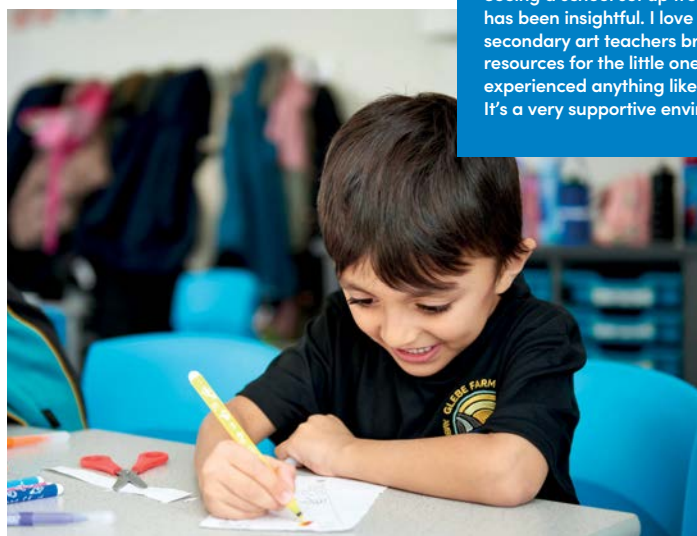
"As much as I understand it's about outputs and results, we also need to make sure children have clear and solid foundations for learning all the way through school, and not just in primary."

The importance of continuity of delivery across the phases, and the need to maximise the impact of teacher expertise between primary and secondary, takes us neatly back to rugby and teamwork.

"When we're in a meeting or doing CPD I sometimes ask the staff 'what is your legacy going to be here?' If you are the English or science lead, what are you setting up and doing now that will benefit the children who join us year on year? What is your impact, what is your purpose?

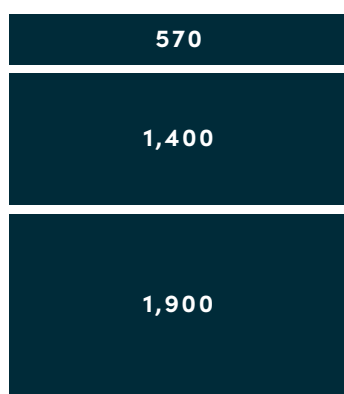
"It is what everyone of us needs to ask when we're 'sweeping the sheds'. What are we leaving behind? The staff have started using this terminology now when the opportunity arises or when I ask them to do something, and they respond: 'we're sweeping the sheds, Mr S'.

"We are all on the same journey and all having to do whatever it takes. And through their hard work and dedication, we have the cleanest sheds in Milton Keynes." [HT](#)

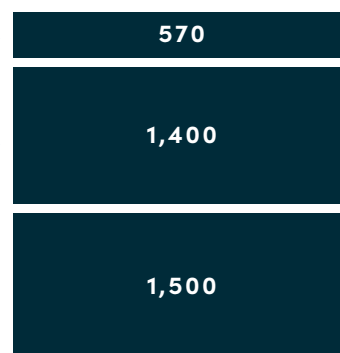


WHAT HAPPENED WHEN OUTSTANDING SCHOOLS WERE REINSPECTED?

**3,900 OUTSTANDING
SCHOOLS WHEN
EXEMPTION INTRODUCED**



**3,400 OUTSTANDING
SCHOOLS WHEN
EXEMPTION LIFTED**



In November, social media lit up following an eye-catching statistic that emerged from the Ofsted inspections carried out in 2021-2022. Of the primary schools previously designated as Outstanding, 21% had been downgraded to Requires Improvement or Inadequate.

Quite the headline, but there are other interesting seams of data that we can mine from the reports.

The exemption for those with an Outstanding rating began in 2012, though the inspectorate claimed that it would continue to desktop risk assess these schools. There has, it's fair to say, always been scepticism over whether Ofsted really did this, but records show that 64% of Outstanding schools did, in fact, experience reinspection despite their exemption – due to potential causes for concern reaching Ofsted HQ. And of the 2,900 inspections of Outstanding schools that took place during the exemption period (some were visited more than once) only 29% retained the same judgement, showing how hard it was to maintain the standard, even in the exemption years.

About 43% of the Outstanding schools not inspected during this period had not had the pleasure of Ofsted's company for over 10 years (their last inspection being between 2005 - 2010). That is a very, very long time, during which inspection changed hugely. Think back to the mid-to-late 2000s. It was

a period of Labour government, with Every Child Matters, Excellence and Enjoyment, and the Renewed Frameworks. With the education sands having shifted so much over the last decade, it is impossible to know how those exempt schools have changed and adapted while not being inspected. To put it another way, we just can't equate what was Outstanding then to what is Outstanding now.

In 2021/2022, Ofsted inspected 500 of the previously exempt Outstanding schools. Only 17% remained Outstanding, but that's not to say quality dropped across the board. Behaviour and attitudes, and personal development, were still judged to be Outstanding in over a third of schools. It was quality of education and leadership management, rather, that played the biggest part in the downgrading of schools for overall effectiveness (with only around a fifth getting top marks, and schools being twice as likely to receive a Requires Improvement or Inadequate grading in these areas).

With the current framework placing its focus firmly on quality of education, it is perhaps not surprising that inspectors' explorations of the intent, implementation and impact of schools' curriculums has been linked to a loss of Outstanding ratings in many cases. Schools that I work with have, anecdotally, backed this up when speaking about their recent inspection experiences.

Curriculum, pedagogy, and the effectiveness of knowledge acquisition are king, it would seem.

We've been looking at all schools up until this point, but it's worth making a comparison between primary and secondary schools specifically. Were primaries more or less likely to be downgraded than their secondary counterparts?

Over the past couple of years, many primary leaders have told me they believe this Ofsted framework is geared towards a secondary model – that they feel unfairly disadvantaged by being judged against it. Looking at the figures, they may have a point. Comparing the inspection data across both phases for previously exempt schools suggests an imbalance, with almost double the proportion of secondary schools remaining Outstanding. That said, the percentage of schools in both phases moved to either Requires Improvement or Inadequate was almost identical, so the need for more frequent inspections for top rated settings has been demonstrated across the board. [HT](#)



Adam Lowing is a school improvement and leadership development consultant. He is Managing Director of LB Integrity, which works with educational system and school leaders across the primary and secondary phases.

THE PROBLEM

MY STAFF ARE STRESSED AND EXHAUSTED. BUT IS IT MY JOB TO LOOK AFTER THEIR WELLBEING, OR THEIRS?



Iwould consider myself a kind leader who understands the significance of staff happiness. So much so, that there have been occasions where I've gone over and above, only to wonder why I had bothered. Let me share a scenario for context.

Parents' evenings can be demanding on top of the daily workload. To help to counter this, I bought in some slow cookers. On the day, each cooker was lovingly heating up soup, to be served with crusty bread, before the doors opened. The next day I asked a member of staff if it was OK and was told that the soup was a too hot. It was a throwaway remark, but it made me rethink what my contribution could look like. I learned that whilst this may have been a kind gesture, nobody had really expected or asked me to do this. I'm sure that many leaders will have made gestures like this only to question if headship is really all about making people happy.

Defining expectations

Wellbeing is a fascinating aspect of leadership because it often depends on how we define the expectations in our school setting. It's critical that we personalise and lead with clarity. It's also about what the head's personal contribution should look like; they should be able to provide their duty of care whilst promoting that staff should

be independent thinkers when managing their own wellbeing.

How do we lead wellbeing? The real aim for the headteacher would be to enable staff to safely hit peak performance. Once we see this as our goal, we can then consider all of the actions required to support this. This would place sustainability at the heart of our mission, making satisfaction and happiness a fundamental byproduct of our actions.

I learned that a healthy school would be one where everyone can take responsibility for their own wellbeing (staff), in an environment where there is a duty of care

(me). I recognised that staff valued job satisfaction, recognition and fairness much more than head massages and hot chocolate. I had stated, in jest, that I could not ensure people's happiness because that would be far too complicated, but I would be committed to providing them with the right conditions to thrive professionally. This enabled me to focus on the big things like lesson planning, directed time, collaboration, engagement and the channels for feeling valued. There were, of course, additional gestures too, in the interest of making the school a good place to work.

Recognising individual responsibility

As a result of taking this approach, other profound things began to occur without my involvement. Staff would often down tools and go for a run together at the end of the day. We had staff netball, rounders and football teams, regularly playing against other schools and when new staff joined, they quickly became involved. We even joked that we only recruited staff who were good netball players. Our staff demonstrated an individual responsibility for staying well.

I curated my own wellbeing with a selection of obsessive behaviours and strategies that would become engrained habits over time. This enabled me to discharge my responsibilities, and to walk the walk.

One quote from our inspection captured the cause and effect of this approach. It's an unlikely and rewarding statement, and it proves that whilst we may try our best to make our staff happy, if you can provide the slow cookers, then they will take care of the soup.

'The headteacher is unwavering in his vision to ensure that all pupils have a happy, healthy and positive start to their school years. Staff morale is high. Many comment on the positive atmosphere within the school, and when one teacher said, 'I love this school – this is the best job I have ever had!' many others enthusiastically agreed.' **HT**



David Rushby is a former headteacher and director of Nautilus Education

DON'T DIFFERENTIATE, ADAPT

A change of approach towards learning challenges at **Celina Walsham's** school ensured no child felt left out

Isolation amongst SEND pupils and their parents is becoming an increasingly prominent issue in many primary schools across the UK, forcing teachers and Sencos to re-evaluate their SEND provision in order to continue offering a high-quality education on a smaller budget. To navigate spending cuts without widening the gap between SEND children and their peers is a daunting task, but one that we've spent the last few years tackling face on.

We needed to find a way of adapting our SEND teaching so that children with special educational needs could receive the necessary extra provisions without being made to feel different from their classmates. As a school, we had to think less about introducing new and potentially isolating measures, and more about adapting our existing teaching methods.

Increased classroom isolation

When I started working as the Senco and inclusion manager, there were very few systems and processes in place to ensure that children with special educational needs were seamlessly integrated into each lesson. Although most colleagues knew how to include the whole class, including those with SEND, in groupwork and class discussions, many teachers were struggling to cater to the entire class without planning a series of separate tasks for children with more specialist needs.

As is the case in many schools, SEND pupils were beginning to feel isolated from their classmates during lesson time - not as a result of bullying or a lack of attention, but because of a teaching style that differentiated them from their classmates. It soon became clear that we had to change our mindset about what it means to be responsible for children with special educational needs; as a school, we needed to move away from our usual SEND teaching provisions and transition to methods of adaption rather than differentiation.

Becoming a strong unit

We knew that in order for this transition to prove successful, the whole school needed to get involved. SEND was gradually woven into different areas in the school's annual improvement plan, including teaching, curriculum content and leadership actions. Not only did this make SEND provisions a weekly focus in senior leadership meetings, but it also highlighted the key message that the inclusion of children with special educational needs is everyone's responsibility - not just the Sencos.

Over the course of several months, staff members took part in a series of training sessions based on 'adaption', wherein SEND pupils received the same learning experience as their peers, with

the added scaffolding of different resources and adult support. Using the Heuristic Scaffolding model, a framework designed to encourage pupil independence, teaching assistants were taught how to support SEND pupils without isolating

them from the rest of the class. This could be something as simple as including more images on the screen during presentations to help children who need visual stimulation to spark their imaginations.

The key was to make all pupils and staff aware of how to support those with special educational needs without making them feel singled out. On World Mental Health Day, for example, we held a

'Hello Yellow' event where the whole school were encouraged to talk about mental health. They learnt about strategies they could use themselves and to help others.

An important
part of
integrating
children
with SEN
seamlessly into
a classroom
involved
getting to know
parents as
individuals

The key message was
that inclusion of children
with special educational
needs was everyone's
responsibility
– not just the
Sencos

activities, both of which pose the risk of making those children feel isolated from their peers.

Adaption in action

Since integrating the new adaption approach to planning lessons, we have seen a huge spike in confidence amongst our pupils with SEND. One example that makes me proud of how far the school and staff have come since I joined as the Senco three years ago involves a child who was transferred to us from another school. He has severe ADHD and had been refusing to participate in English lessons at his former school, sometimes skipping school altogether.

When he first joined us, we spent a lot of time getting to know his individual needs, which then allowed us to provide the scaffolded support to be able to create fully

accessible English lessons that he would feel confident involving himself in. Having spoken to his mother recently, she can't believe how much his self-esteem has improved in such a short space of time and was over the moon that he was happy attending school every day.

I never thought that such a fast transformation would have been possible when I first joined the school. Although we are always searching for ways to improve our SEND provision, the progress we have made over the last few years is a strong indication of the positive change that adaption and scaffolded support can have on a child's educational experience. **HT**

is encouraging SEND children to become more independent with their learning. While it is important to ensure that each child feels supported, intervening too early can lead them to become dependent on extra help.

To overcome this issue, we do everything we can to make our children with special educational needs feel valued and capable. Teachers and teaching assistants work closely with each child to build their self-esteem and confidence levels using specific praise. Rather than making a general comment about how good a child's piece of writing is, for example, we would comment on how well that child had used descriptive words in their work. We've found that this helps children with SEND take more control over their learning without the need for teachers to plan separate tasks or group

Transparency is key

At the risk of stating the obvious, parents are the experts on their own children. An important part of integrating children with SEN more seamlessly into a classroom setting involved really getting to know them as individuals. Through discussions with their parents and carers, we were able to form a clearer picture of each child's specific needs, most of which were then used to create detailed support plans. These support plans were accessible to all staff across the school community, including teaching assistants and the senior leadership team. Not only did this enable wider discussions on how to adapt learning environments throughout the school, but it also encouraged all staff members to take responsibility for the pupils with special educational needs.

Building confidence from early on

An important part of adopting a Heuristic Scaffolding model

HOW TO INTEGRATE ADAPTION

- In order to ensure adaption is effective, it is important to carry out a thorough assessment. Teachers, Sencos, parents and carers can all contribute to this evaluation, where the child's educational and personal needs are established as early as possible.
- After building a clearer picture of each child, take a step back and start by looking at what they can do rather than what they struggle with. This will then help you bridge the gap to what they should be doing for them to make the most of their learning experience.
- When considering the child's learning journey, always have the long-term outcomes in the back of your mind. Think about each child's next stage of education and what they need to do to successfully reach it.
- When planning lessons, use the information gathered by SENCOs and other teaching staff to create scaffolds which will help you to adapt these lessons in such a way that every child can access the learning.
- Remember to reflect on the successes and pitfalls of your chosen approach and consider how it can be improved for next time. Ensuring each child can access each lesson is a process of trial and error, one that is far more achievable when teachers, SENCOs and parents work together.
- Consider carefully the words and language you use when giving feedback and praise. Descriptive, explicit words can be more effective than general remarks and help to focus the child on their learning, alongside the rest of the class.



Celina Walsham
is Senco and
inclusion manager
at William Martin
Church of England
Infant School & Nursery and
Junior School

DUSTING OFF D&T

Ryan Ball outlines how design and technology is making a comeback in primary schools – and wonders why you wouldn't give it a go

W

orking at the Design and Technology Association can sometimes be a soul-destroying gig. Don't get me wrong, there is air conditioning, free-flow coffee, and sometimes some left-over biscuits stashed away from the Christmas hamper. I don't mean it like that. Design and Technology as a subject has been going through some tough times lately, and it can feel like an uphill battle.

The subject has been hit in recent years by several contributing factors. This almost perfect storm has seen numbers opting for both GCSE and A-Level qualifications more than halve in the last 10 years, with another five per cent drop last year. Material costs continue to rise, budgets continue to fall, and teacher recruitment is at an all-time low, with many schools unable to employ suitably qualified staff to front the class – even if they are lucky enough to have a student cohort who want to study it.

But it's not all doom and gloom.

happen to have assembled an IKEA Billy bookcase, or watched one series of Sewing Bee.

One teacher I spoke to, who was on sick leave from work for a week and was duly nominated as D&T coordinator whilst off ill, declared "I'm never going to take time off again!"

Yet, D&T can offer our schools and pupils so much. When asked about its place on the curriculum, we are often greeted with an agreed consensus of problem-solving, resilience, teamwork, technology skills, creativity – all areas regularly cited by business and industry as fundamental skills and attributes for success in an uncertain world ahead. So why is it still a subject that schools are reluctant to embrace?

Constructing an engaging curriculum

Common reasons are apprehension and sometimes even fear, lack of subject knowledge and limited resources and time. Throw into the mix the perception of D&T as a bad version of Blue Peter with a class of identical-looking artefacts based on the Tudors or Vikings made from loo rolls and sticky tape, and we are in a problematic scenario again.

It may surprise you to discover that almost 20 per cent of primary schools in England are currently members of the Design and Technology Association, and we work with them to try to alleviate those challenges. We have a wide range of CPD opportunities, including face-to-face and virtual,

bespoke INSET and consultancy. We can help you construct an engaging curriculum using our best-selling 'Projects on a Page' planners covering the full D&T curriculum from Year 1 to 6 and we have EYFS guidance, too. Add in the free resources, webinars and magazines, and we have all the support you could need, from subject specialists, all in one place.

Instead of Viking longboats and Tudor houses, think of microcontrollers used to help tackle the UN Sustainable Development Goals, or 3D printing and augmented reality being used to demonstrate community structures designed by pupils to help improve the local area.

Many schools are doing



The elephant in the room

You may well have had 'the chat' by now. You know, addressing that elephant in the room – dusting off D&T and popping it back on the curriculum? I am fortunate in my role to speak with and support hundreds

of primary D&T teachers. As the subject association, we have seen a massive increase in engagement from primary schools over the last few years, primarily brought on by the changes in the latest Ofsted framework and the need for school to provide a 'broad, rich' curriculum.

Irrespective of the reasons why there is renewed interest, and why organisations such as ours are so passionate about the subject, this is not shared by all. How many eager staff members did you have with hand aloft, shouting 'me, me, me!' when the coordinator role was discussed? Possibly not many. I've lost count of the number of teachers who were volunteered to be D&T coordinators because they



inspirational things like this and come to us for support, and to celebrate the progress they've made. Often, they look for the next area to access. It might be working with us on a Blueprint 1000 initiative, our project for linking education and industry, which gets subject experts in to schools to inspire pupils further and get them working on briefs set by the company.

Dust off the doubts

Don't let setting out seem like a daunting journey. It can often begin with a look in the old store cupboard, discovering the binca fabric, tenon saws and frying pans hidden behind the well-used science kit. "Time to dust it all off and see how we can use it all again", we

The perception of D&T is of a bad version of Blue Peter, with artefacts made from loo rolls and sticky tape

often hear. I'd encourage you to put the duster down. Were the D&T schemes you last did at school all those years ago conducive to problem-solving, resilience, teamwork, technology skills and creativity, or a fun, craft-based activity based on a history unit you covered? The answer is almost certainly, yes.

So, rather than a dust, it may be time for a complete clear-out and to start again. As educators, we need to do what we can to prepare young people for a

future we can't yet envisage, but which can be supported through an inspiring D&T curriculum that teachers love to deliver and pupils thrive on.

D&T is experiencing renewed interest and popularity in schools. While there may be challenging times for the subject in many secondary schools, the green shoots we see at primary suggest the future looks rosy. Let us help you help your teachers and pupils access the best subject on the curriculum. **HT**

PULLING IN THE SAME DIRECTION

- Before introducing D&T into your school's curriculum, you should agree what purpose the subject will serve. What attributes will it help to develop? Why should we teach it? Compile a list of responses from your staff and you will probably find elements such as problem-solving, creativity, innovation, resilience, teamwork, use of modern technology, motor skills amongst many others.
- An interesting next step is to ask staff to list all the attributes that business, industry, higher education suggest are vital for an uncertain future ahead. Search engines, research papers and anecdotal remarks will bring up a startlingly similar list. This is key. This gives the subject validity and lets you know its worth.
- When planning, refer to this list constantly. It can be easy, with the constraints of time or when your TA is off ill, to revert back to a Blue Peter experience of simply making stuff and following a teachers' demo, and losing sight of the purpose of the subject. Are you able to pinpoint lessons and units where 'problem-solving', 'resilience' and other aspects are engineered into the lesson? Using the Ofsted mantra, would we be able to 'see it together in action'?
- Whilst a rhetorical question, it is an important one. Your curriculum and getting everyone pulling in the same direction is key. Take a look at our free 'D&T Progression Framework' (tinyurl.com/DandTAssoc). This, along with other tools and resources available from the association can help you plan a relevant, exciting and rich D&T curriculum for your school.



Ryan Ball is director of education at the Design and Technology Association. Go to www.data.org.uk or info@data.org.uk.

HOW TO UNLOCK PRIOR LEARNING

Understanding retrieval is key to improving attainment and progress, says **Anthony David**

“**D**o you understand?” I recall my PE teacher yelling at me. If I had been a bit bolder and older, I would flatly have replied: ‘No’.

Understanding is a delicate thing, not least as it can often reflect a point of view as well as facts. “Do you understand?” is a loaded statement which requires building. You don’t simply understand in one hit – it suggests depth, which takes time.

Understanding retrieval

In its simplest form, retrieval is when we look to unlock prior learning and build onto it with new. At one of my schools, St Paul’s, we sought to align this with research that shows that this ‘building’ approach is the most efficient way to retain knowledge (Hattie & Zierer, 2018). But prior learning can be elusive. Children don’t automatically draw upon understanding from the past, particularly if the subject was first covered one or more years ago, as happens in some foundation subjects.

Sometimes we need a nudge. This can come from another child’s recall, which they share with the class, or from the teacher who shares the “collective memory”. We have all sorts of names for this, with the least offensive being ‘magpieing’ - where you actively seek use another student’s ‘shiny’ idea. This takes time to embed. Children are, by nature, competitive with an innate sense of intellectual property; the phrase ‘he stole my idea’ took some time to quash. However, it was a wry comment made by Professor Sugata Mitra at a conference many years ago that consolidated my thinking: “In academia we don’t call this stealing; we call it research.”

This seems like good enough justification and so ‘active research’ was given licence at St Paul’s.

It is important to understand the process behind retrieval in order to better appreciate why some children can retrieve more than others. In 1968, the late Arthur Melton identified three stages for this: attention and coding, storage, retrieval. All are separate but inter-related, and reliant on capacity. Ultimately, learning to retrieve is an art in and of itself, which is why we have set up a process for it at

Children are, by nature,
competitive with an innate sense
of intellectual property

St Paul’s. We recently revisited Melton’s process and added two further steps: application and transfer. Arguably it is these last two stages that contextualise learning and provide the learner with the future capacity to use that retrieved learning within a different context, but one that is equally valid.

Getting the language right

If we genuinely believe that retrieval is the start of all

learning - or at least the basis from which we can build future learning - then we need to consider carefully the language that we use. Is it lazy to refer to this as assessment? In truth, no, but there is a heavy weight behind that word. Unlocking a student’s learning should be exciting and light. It is a great moment for a child to shine and at least to think “I know this, and I know more than you think I know”. It also sets out the stall for where learning

will start. Really what we are seeking to unpick is a child's understanding.

Knowledge organisers

The author and education blogger, Joe Kirby, has been identified as the modern leader of knowledge organisers. A good knowledge organiser sets out the core aspects of learning that a student would expect to come across during a unit of work. What Kirby did was rapidly broaden their appeal by setting them out in a simple and easily accessible way. Today, it is hard not to come across a set of learning where there isn't a knowledge organiser on the very first page. Yet, a decade down the road, are we really using them correctly? At their best, knowledge organisers are a rapid route for retrieval - unlocking core language, facts and linking learning to prior understanding.

At their worst they are simply wallpaper. Knowledge organisers are an efficient way of retrieving past understanding (forgotten or otherwise), but they need interaction from the pupil, which demands intentional teaching.

Spaced learning

Primary curriculums don't typically build on each other and look to deepen skills, like the sports person or musician who builds up their skills through constant practice. Often, years can elapse between sets of learning. An example at St Paul's was the teaching of colour. In Year 2, when colour is taught for a second time, it mainly considers how colours are made. When we return to this topic a couple of years later, we are not just looking at how we create colour but how it impacts mood. It is a vastly different approach.

Providing space between learning can deepen understanding by giving it room to grow

in a child's deeper memory or it can be lost. There is an inherent risk that a child will have to rely more on 'borrowed' memory than their own. The reasons behind spaced learning are often more practical than strategic, with time being the main contributor. There is an argument for deep, intense moments of learning such as immersive weeks, but timetabling practicalities can make this difficult. Units of learning can often be spaced out, making the process of retrieval all the important to ensure pupils possess the understanding to move on to the next phase of their learning.

Retrieval is not a solo moment at the start of the lesson. It will only have a fighting chance if children understand both the context of their learning and can retain the new learning. It requires constant checking for understanding. If the context is not understood, then there is an immediate risk to understanding the current learning; if the current learning is not understood then, naturally, future retrieval will be limited. **HT**

BUILDING A SOLID BASE FOR LEARNING

Retrieval is a rich and complex element of learning. When planned and delivered intentionally it can create a solid base on which to build new learning.

- Collective memory is probably the most common approach. Applying an intentional 'retrieval' approach gives licence to children collectively owning a memory. It is rare for one child to recall all of what happened in the past, much like it is rare for one person to recall everything that happened in a family event. We must approach the sharing of knowledge with the same grace that we share knowledge from a family event; joyfully and with the understanding that together we have a broader understanding.
- Knowledge maps have grown in sophistication and style over the last decade. They distil the essence of a bank of learning (for example a historic period) with key facts, word banks and 'what to expect' during lessons. That said, to use them well needs planning and engagement otherwise they risk becoming wallpaper. However, they are a great way of launching and reviewing a project.
- Spaced learning is inevitable in schools - it is usual to have months or years between topic themes. Providing space to reflect, retrieve or sieve memories from others is critical. Children (and adults) need warming up; it is not reasonable to expect somebody to immediately recall a unit of learning that is not part of the current working memory. However, if the learning has been impactful then a period of space can actually enhance the depth of memory and allow it to mature.



Anthony David is executive headteacher of a partnership of two church schools, Monken Hadley and St Paul's CE primaries, in North London.

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The Head's Guide To...

FACILITIES AND FINANCE

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44 Building the future

A first look at the concept school of the future



THE MISSION:

PROVIDING BUSINESS CONTINUITY WHILST APPOINTING A NEW FINANCE OFFICER

MAT: Severn Academies Educational Trust

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER: Alison Powell

M

y role as chief operating officer is to look after the business operations for all of our schools, which support children and families withing schools ranging from nursery provision to post-16. We have moved away from having individual business managers working within each school towards a centralised service for the key business functions such as finance, HR and estates management.

We have the same challenges as any other school or academy trust - in that we have faced increased energy costs and an expectation that we will absorb unfunded increases in staff costs. The extra funding announced by the Chancellor in November will help, but it is not clear how much that will benefit us with energy costs expected to rise further.

We also have the challenge of retaining our existing staff and maintaining our provision for our young people with reduced resource.



1. Starting out with interim support

The pandemic gave us a chance to structure our central MAT services in a way that would create maximum efficiencies at school level and take away some of the operational burden from the, and allow the headteachers to focus on school improvement. What this means is that it is vital that we maintain our level of financial management expertise within our organisation, which comprises eight schools - six of which are primaries. We can't afford to have large gaps of time when we are missing key personnel, especially when budgets are under so much pressure. Some of the changes that we made within our

central structure meant that we didn't have the expertise of a management accountant within our team. We asked School Business Services, a global specialist providing support services and products to the education sector, to support us with interim finance support into the new year while we were recruiting to fill the CFO role.

They put me in touch with other MATs that had used their service, which helped me understand how the interim approach could help us. Those conversations informed my expectations, giving me a clear picture of what I could and couldn't expect from interim finance support.

We worked with two consultants - one focusing on our management processing, with a more senior consultant



“We can't afford to have large gaps of time when we are missing key personnel, especially when budgets are under so much pressure”

Alison Powell
Chief Operating Officer

in an oversight role. Our finance team had a weekly catch-up call with the consultants to steer them on what needed to be done.



2. Meeting key challenges

School Business Services very quickly got to grips with how our organisation runs financially and were able to quality assure some of our processes for us, as well and recommend improvements.

They started supporting us



just before we were due to submit our annual budget forecasts to the Education and Skills Funding Agency, a process with which I had had no detailed involvement in the past. The consultants were very thorough, however, and put together a shopping list of every piece of information that they needed before holding a virtual meeting to pull everything

together and to talk me through what they had done. That gave me confidence to put my name on the submission and to send it to ESFA.

They also supported us through our year-end audit, detailing the areas in which they could help us and advised us what we needed to do. Management was through email and virtual meetings, which seems to be second nature to us nowadays. It is easier than in-person meetings and fits in with our focus as a trust on sustainability.



3. Managing the return to normal

Our new chief finance officer starts with us at the beginning of February, but we have maintained the external support for a few additional months so that there can be an effective

“My advice for school leaders contemplating using interim finance support is, don’t be afraid to seek advice, and to try and be as clear as you can in terms of the gaps that you need to be filled, so that any external provider can understand your requirements”

handover process.

The new CFO is a qualified accountant who has worked in education finance at a local authority level, but not in an academy trust. The handover process will involve them working side by side with our interim support staff, so that the new CFO can develop a clear understanding of the accounting processes our external resource has been using. That is helping her run with things until she understands enough about our organisation to move forward in her own way, and to implement her own processes and procedures.



4. Make clear your requirements

My advice for school leaders contemplating using interim finance support is to try and be as clear as you can in terms of the gaps that you need to be filled, so that any external provider can understand your requirements. Don’t be afraid to seek advice or clarification yourself. Questioning the people who have more experience of this approach than you will help to assuage any concerns you might have.

It can be quite daunting to put your trust in an outside organisation, but if you recognise that there are people out there who have used this approach really successfully, that should give you confidence. **HT**

How schools can cut costs

Helen Dowsett, of School Business Services, says there are a variety of ways in which schools can cut costs as budget pressures continue.

- Create a buying group. Academy trusts can bulk buy to get better pricing on any goods and services. Some suppliers will allow you to have multiple delivery addresses. If your school is not part of an academy trust or is a single academy trust, then local schools can band together to create a buying group. This approach can also be used for energy contracts.
- Work your reserves. If your school or academy trust has cash reserves, check that the money is in accessible high interest accounts. There’s now a good choice of banks offering higher interest rates that schools can sign up to.
- Review contracts. Rather than letting contracts auto renew, schedule in a contract review to ensure it is still value for money and being used efficiently.
- Be smarter with staffing. Reduce cover agency fees by considering employing your own cover staff. This can be particularly cost effective for multi-academy trust, where staff can be employed centrally and then ‘bought in’ on a day rate by trust schools.
- Create additional income. Can your school or its grounds be let out? If your school site is in a town centre, renting out the car park at weekends and evenings could be an option. Depending on the space and facilities available, hosting conferences or other large events during holidays could also provide valuable additional income.
- Review your budgets regularly – and ensure each budget remains current. Just because a department had a large budget last year doesn’t mean they will need it this year. Check with colleagues what is essential and desirable for them to have in their budget. Also, check stock regularly.

Helen Dowsett is a former MAT financial controller and now a budget management expert for School Business Services.

ICT IN ACTION:

EDTECH IMPACT

Three technological wonders that will help support teaching and learning

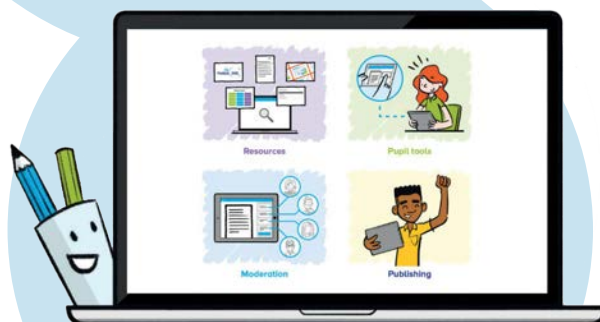
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2



3



1 | MYTUTOR



Anna Froggatt, deputy
headteacher at Victoria
Primary School, part of
Nova Education Trust

“PUPILS FEEL THE SESSION GIVES THEM BEST VALUE WHEN THEY HAVE OPPORTUNITIES TO REASON ABOUT THEIR MATHEMATICAL CHOICES”

Aim

To plug the gaps created by the pandemic and provide some extra one-to-one support to our Year 6 pupils who have a big year ahead.

Why did you choose My Tutor?

We tried MyTutor's online tutoring programmes because other schools in our Trust have had a positive experience with them, and students found them

very helpful. We really like the idea of personalised support for our Year 6s, and the online format made it much more accessible and easier to schedule around the school day.

How is MyTutor used?

Fifty pupils access an hour of tutoring each week. They have 30 minutes on consecutive days, and get tutoring towards the end of the school day in a different classroom on school

laptops. Engagement in these sessions is high. Pupils feel the session gives them best value when they have opportunities to reason about their mathematical choices. The tutors are interested in what they have to say – questioning their reasoning as well as extending pupils' thinking.

What impact has MyTutor had?

We are nearing the end of our

first programme with MyTutor and the online lessons have had a very positive impact on the confidence of the pupils. They have engaged well with their lessons and they had great things to say about their tutors. We are positive that the personalised support they are receiving will give them the best chance to make progress before their SATs, despite all the disruptions they've experienced over the past couple of years.

2 | GOOGLE CHROMEBOOKS



Emma Dallimore,
headteacher at
Shawley Community
Primary School

Aim

To improve technology access for pupils and increase their sense of confidence and ownership over their learning.

Why did you choose 1:1 Google Chromebooks?

When we began our journey with LEO Academy Trust in 2021, its established EdTech strategy inspired us to further incorporate and utilise technology. It was essential for us to find a cost-effective option that accommodates the varying learners in our schools; Chromebooks were the answer to our problems. Not only were they inexpensive but also privacy-focused, removing

many external dangers children can face on the web. Every child received their own Chromebook to use at school and at home.

How is the Chromebook used?

The Chromebook's versatility makes it a brilliant digital tool for pupils to use independently and as part of teacher-led activities. For example, we might encourage children to use Chromebooks to develop a digital presentation in their English class or to create a quiz to test each other's knowledge in a maths lesson. This helps children to have fun and design their own learning, while teaching independent study

skills. The Chromebooks also support great applications such as Jamboard and Nearpod, which we use in almost all subjects.

What impact has the 1:1 Chromebook programme had?

It enables pupils to be creative in how they learn, resulting in stronger engagement and resilience, with more pupils leading conversations and debates in class. The 1:1 programme is further a great aid for families who can't afford digital devices for their children, helping to break down barriers between home and school learning.

3 | POBBLE



Anthony McGeeney,
headteacher,
Galley Hill Primary
School

Aim

To support the whole writing process across our school, both to engage and motivate children to write and to support staff with teaching and assessing writing.

Why did you choose Pobble?

We had used Pobble 365 before but were keen to hear more about what else it could offer. We were particularly keen to make better use of the writing prompts and provide our students with more opportunities to write. We were also looking at ways to improve our writing moderation and

could see immediately how Pobble could support us.

How is Pobble used?

Pobble offers lots of interactive ways to enable short-burst writing, as well as longer pieces of writing from the stimulus given. Recently, we started using the online moderation part of the platform, with the feedback aspect enabling comments to be saved, as well as a grading to be given at the end, if required. For pupils, it offers a platform to publish their work, which gives them a purpose to write. The scaffolded approach, from a story starter to vocabulary and

sentence work, enables pupils to find their starting point and engage with lessons.

What has been the impact?

It has been great for developing teaching ideas which significantly reduces teacher workload. The moderation part is amazing; it's enabled the whole process to become very efficient and purposeful. The online support with moderation has really helped refine teacher knowledge. By giving pupils a purpose to write, Pobble has made them want to improve their writing.

TECH TASTERS



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STAY ON TOP OF ONLINE SAFETY

It's up to you to protect your pupils from inappropriate material and interactions, says **James Simoniti**



Online safety has become a more complex challenge for all school leaders over the past decade. With the huge growth in the use of social media platforms by primary age children it is becoming a priority issue for primary headteachers.

A recent Ofsted report into media use, attitudes and understanding among children and young people revealed that 33% of parents of children aged five to seven and 60% of eight- to 11-year-olds, said that their child had a profile on at least one social media app or site.

These statistics suggest that younger children are increasingly habitual users of social media. For most children it is a fast-moving world of shared fun, interest and entertainment. But social media – and the internet as a whole – contain safety risks that schools can play their part in tackling.

Fast and efficient filtering and monitoring – restricting pupils' access to the internet, investigating inappropriate usage and then reporting it to staff – should form part of these efforts, underpinned by the curriculum. The 2022 version of the government's Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) statutory guidance, which came into effect in September 2022, says that the effectiveness of filtering and monitoring processes should be regularly reviewed, and that all schools should review their approach to online safety every year.

The four Cs

Before we look at how schools can ensure their approach to online safety risks is effective, it's worth assessing the nature of the risks children face online. According to KCSIE, these safety

risks can be categorised into four main areas, or the '4Cs':

Content: Exposure to illegal, inappropriate, or harmful content, such as pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny, self-harm and suicide.

Contact: Harmful online interaction with other users, including peer-to-peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them.

Conduct: Including online behaviour that causes or increases the likelihood of harm, such as online bullying and the sharing of explicit images.

Commerce: Including online gambling and inappropriate advertising.

Educating children about online safety is of course the bedrock of any school's approach to this serious issue. The topic has been covered in the curriculum in its present form since 2014 and there's much to commend its inclusion, as long as it covers current online threats

and practical tips for countering them.

But education must be accompanied by vigilance to ensure that children's exposure to these risks is limited while using school systems. During our safeguarding audits we often find that leaders know very little about their filtering and monitoring systems. This is concerning because they depend heavily on these to prevent their pupils being exposed to inappropriate content while at school.

Keeping up to date with guidelines

Keeping abreast of the regulations and guidelines is your first step. KCSIE states that governing bodies should ensure their school has appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place, and that schools should "ensure that the leadership team and relevant staff have an awareness and understanding of the provisions in place and manage them effectively and know how to escalate concerns when identified".

Teachers do not need to know everything about the systems in detail, for example the list of websites blocked, but they do need to know the basics of how the filtering and monitoring works, so that if it picks up inappropriate usage, they are clear what happens next.

Schools should also have a clear procedure in place for when a monitoring report detects a safeguarding concern, with staff knowing, for example, how this is transferred to a pupil's child protection file and who makes sure this is done. Most importantly, reports should be

directed to the relevant staff, most likely the DSL or a deputy, as quickly as possible.

Drawing red lines

The hazards that can emerge if these principles aren't followed are pretty clear. If, for example, a child has used the school network to search for material in relation to suicide or terrorism, the monitoring report needs to be processed and directed to the right person within the shortest time possible. If the monitoring report is received by the school's IT technician rather than the DSL, then the seriousness of the information might not be fully appreciated and escalated accordingly.

According to KCSIE the appropriateness of any filters and monitoring systems are a matter for individual schools, so essentially it is down to you and your team to draw your 'red lines' and decide what to filter. And this will look different depending on your setting.

Auditing your filtering and monitoring systems

Professional safeguarding audits will pick up any problems with your filtering and monitoring systems but it's worth carrying out your own health check to highlight any issues before you bring the experts in. Kick off the process by asking these five basic questions:

- What is working well and not so well?
- Does our approach reflect the latest threats and online harms?
- How many concerns has your filtering and monitoring system raised so far?

- How were these actioned?
- Was this consistent?

Sharing information with parents

Schools also need to think about parents when it comes to reviewing internet filtering and monitoring systems. New guidance in KCSIE 2022 states that schools should communicate with parents and carers what students are being asked to do online, including the sites they will be asked to access. They should also inform parents exactly who from the

school will be interacting with their children online. Being clear about how students are expected to conduct themselves on virtual learning environments or Google Classroom is also a key consideration.

Next steps

The following documents will help you to abreast of the trends, guidance and information online safety:

- The 2022 version of the Department for Education's Keeping Children Safe in Education
 - Ofcom's paper, published in March this year - Children and parents: media use and attitudes report 2022
 - Advice on appropriate filtering and monitoring is available from the UK Safer Internet Centre (saferinternet.org.uk)
- You can also visit judiciumeducation.co.uk/safeguarding-service for more on Judicium's safeguarding support and advice. **HT**

BEST PRACTICE FOR MONITORING AND FILTERING YOUR SYSTEMS

- It is important to understand the difference between filtering and monitoring and which systems you have in place.
- Test the filtering system to see that the restrictions are not too high e.g., that students are blocked from most websites.
- Monitor and review what is being filtered at regular intervals.
- Ensure you have an effective and appropriate monitoring system in place, that you know what it monitors, and you review this accordingly.
- Check staff, in particular the safeguarding team, are aware and alerted to what is being monitored.
- Review regularly both reports and make adaptations based on developments both internally and externally.
- Ensure that you are communicating with parents and carers what students are being asked to do online, including the sites they will be asked to access, and with whom from the school their child will be interacting online.



James Simoniti is a former police detective who now offers advice and support as part of Judicium's safeguarding service. Further information is available at judiciumeducation.co.uk/safeguarding-service and by following the safeguarding team on Twitter: @JudiciumSG

“A unique experience for every child”



The primary school of the future could be a net-zero, biophilic structure providing outdoor learning for the majority of the curriculum

E

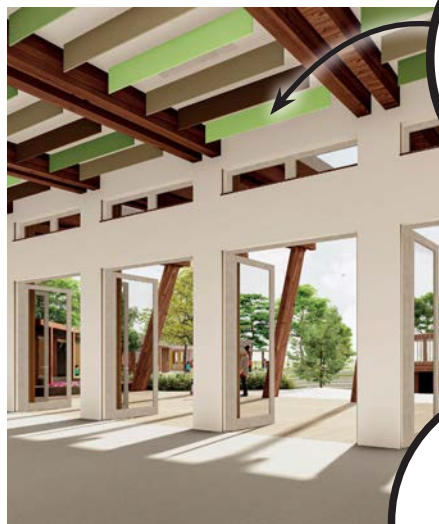
ducation building designers, TG Escapes, recently unveiled their one form entry concept school to educationalists and policymakers. It could be built for as little as £4 million.

The design incorporates separate pavilions for various functions, allowing the school to be built in stages, all connected with canopies and covered walkways. Instead of walking indoors, pupils will move around the school outside, taking in fresh air and the smells of nature.

The layout, landscaping and design encompasses a central terraced area, with seating, outdoor play and learning facilities and sedum roofs where flowers and grasses can grow and flourish. Biodiversity is a priority, with bird and bat boxes, insect and bug hotels and rainwater capture being among the main features of the school.

The buildings will have high ceilings to make classrooms bright and airy, with exposed timber and abundant glazing for natural light and ventilation.

Designers believe the school will encourage environmental citizenship among pupils, helping children to understand the principles of sustainable construction.



STATE OF THE ART BUILDING

The buildings are erected using modern construction methods and are clad in easy to maintain natural timbers.

USING NATURAL RESOURCES

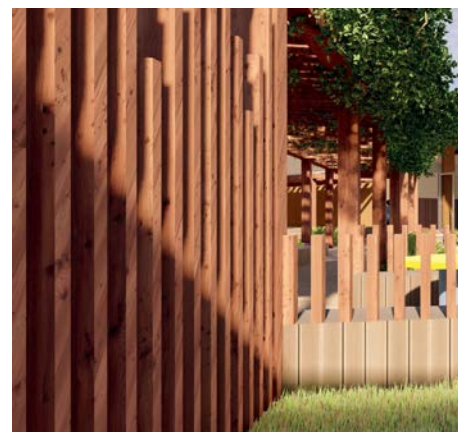
High ceilings and abundant glazing are essential for ventilation and natural light.

VERSATILE ENVIRONMENT

Landscaped, terraced site and play areas allow flexibility for teaching and learning.

SEEKING SHELTER

Canopied walkways between buildings allow children to move around the school outdoors, rather than inside.



INNOVATIVE USE OF SPACE

A central landscaped teaching area has an outdoor classroom at the centre and covered spaces.

PAVILIONS

The school comprises a number of stand-alone buildings, with an option to add more as pupil numbers increase.

GOING GREEN

Green sedum roofs allow flowers and grasses to grow, attracting bees and insects.

WATCHING OUT FOR WILDLIFE

Bird and bat boxes and insect hotels promote biodiversity and encourage nature to thrive and flourish.

“WHO KNOWS WHAT THE FUTURE WILL LOOK LIKE FOR TODAY’S CHILDREN”



Mark Brown, consultant at TG Escapes, reflects on the design of the concept school

Q Why the need for biophilic school buildings?

Children in the UK face the perfect storm of a pandemic, social media, a rigid education system and a mental health crisis. Who knows what their future will look like and what skills they will require. A biophilic design will allow teaching and learning to be creative, adaptable, and will instill personal skills such as resilience, emotional intelligence and social adaptability in young people. We want children to be energised and the agents of change, and in control of their futures.

Q What did you consider when designing the school?

We gave ourselves a simple brief, which was to create a school where the individual can thrive, and education is tailored to meet pupils' needs. We also wanted to give practical and creative skills the same status as academic achievement. Our school design will give young people the chance to discover who they are and to understand that this will change over time.

Q What makes these buildings so unique?

I think it's the excellent learning environment, coupled with sustainability and biodiversity. Builders will use the most modern construction methods to provide low-cost, high performance and durability. These schools can be built very quickly and landscaped to create a perfect environment for learning and personal development.

5 REASONS TO TRY... MyPlace by The Safeguarding Company

Find out how your safeguarding team can avail themselves of a secure and supportive online space to call their own



30 SECOND BRIEFING

MyPlace is an online safe space that sits within the Safeguarding Community. It enables teams to share resources and communicate securely, thus enhancing your safeguarding culture, while allowing senior officers to access information and contact staff all from one central location.

1 CONNECTS SAFEGUARDERS

MyPlace, like all our products, is designed by safeguarding experts. Vikkey Chaffe, our Head of Community Relations, is herself an ex-safeguarding lead and knows first-hand the vital roles that community and communication play in safeguarding: "We know how challenging it is to be able to speak to your safeguarding leads in one central, safe place. MyPlace not only allows you to do that, but also gives you the chance to share calendars and resources, so that good practice is distributed throughout your organisation!"



2 UNLIMITED EASE OF ACCESS

Safeguarding topics are vast and varied, and we understand the need for multiple forums – sometimes even within the same subject. Unlike other internal programmes, MyPlace doesn't limit the number of virtual rooms that can be created for different topics, groups or themes, allowing staff within your organisation to communicate and share resources as they wish. When it comes to safeguarding, data protection is essential. All of our software and programmes, including MyPlace, thus carry Cyber Essentials Plus certification from Cyberlab (cyberlab.co.uk).

3 SHARE SCHEDULES AND DATA

MyPlace gives team members the ability to share resources, access shared calendars and even post team-wide news updates, complete with any pertinent articles or guidance your colleagues need to see. MyPlace can also help senior safeguarding officers communicate safely with other leads when geographically or logistically difficult to do so, and additionally give primary safeguarders the opportunity to securely share files, policies, and practices from one central location.

Contact:
thesafeguardingcompany.com

thesafeguardingcompany.com/myplace

info@thesafeguardingcompany.com

4 PRIORITISE YOUR WELLBEING

We care enormously for the people who work to keep our children, young people, and vulnerable adults safe – which is why we created MyPlace! We understand how challenging and demanding the role of safeguarding can be, and how crucial maintaining your own health and wellbeing is. MyPlace offers staff a means of easily sharing blogs and resources, as well as a space for chatting about any issues they have. Discussing the challenges safeguarders have can open up conversations that help others better understand the responsibilities and unique challenges safeguarders face

each day – particularly in a post-pandemic world.

5 CONNECT TO OUR WIDER COMMUNITY

MyPlace is an extension of, and sits within, our Safeguarding Community, which currently includes over 5000 active members. This is a free and secure platform where you can raise questions, share best practice and discuss safeguarding issues with other 'Safeguardians'.

Praise for our community:

"Genuinely, The Safeguarding Community has helped me feel not so alone! To know that I can ask those sensitive questions and be totally anonymous just gives me the support I need!" – Anonymous

KEY POINTS

Embed a proactive safeguarding culture in your organisation through improved communication and a spotlight on the importance of safeguarding

MyPlace can be fully customised with your own branding, colours and logos to make it look like part of your own collateral

"A great place to communicate with each other in a safe place, we don't have to email each other now!"
– Luke Ramsden, Deputy Headteacher

Overlay your instance of MyPlace onto the wider Safeguarding Community for access to an even greater network of safeguarding professionals

The Head's Guide To...

LEADERSHIP

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Succession planning

It's all about the teamwork

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Deeplish Primary Academy pupils helped the dying and bereaved through the toughest of times



THE CHALLENGES OF MAT EXPANSION

Barry Smith reports on survey findings that highlight what to consider when growing your organisation



Chancellor Jeremy Hunt's Budget announcement of a four percent (£2 billion) rise in the core schools' budget in each of the next two years, was a welcome surprise for school leaders.

Just how far that extra money goes remains to be seen. With so many pressures on school funding, many standalone academies, smaller academy trusts and LA maintained schools will be contemplating joining established MATs as a way of making existing budgets go further.

Government policy has been urging schools to do just that since the 2022 schools White Paper, but academy trust expansion can't happen if leaders are not ready for the complex challenges that come with more schools and more employees.

Strictly Education carried out a MAT Leaders' Survey (tinyurl.com/MATleaderssurvey), and discussed the findings with a panel of leaders from several major academy trusts during a special online event. Their comments and insights provide food for thought for MAT and school leaders who may be considering their next steps.

Acquiring new schools

Our survey said: 27% commented that the process of acquiring and converting a new school for their academy trust was difficult or very difficult. Just 17% found it easy or very easy.

Due diligence is important during the process of welcoming a new school or trust into your MAT. A memorandum of understanding is a good starting point. "It gives both parties the time to agree that you want to work together," said one of our

panellists. "Then it's about taking your time over due diligence, making sure you're not missing anything. If you're rushing and you're not looking deeply into the financial background of the school or trust then this can have serious implications."

Working out which schools are the right fit is a key question for both the expanding trust and the school interested in joining.

"We have a moral imperative to work with schools that need the support, but it also has to fit with your trust board as well, because they're the people that are making the ultimate decision about whether you can take these schools on," said one contributor.

Another highlighted the concerns of smaller MATs that might feel compelled to merge with larger neighbours. "Smaller MATs fear losing their independence, and having to comply with different operational models," she said. "Getting the right cultural fit is vitally important. If you're taking on a trust or a school that doesn't really want to align with your values, and teaching and learning vision, then you will have problems from day one."

Capacity to expand

Our survey said: While 65% said they were not worried about their academy trust's capacity and resources needed to add new schools, 35% said they did have concerns.

Capacity to manage the onboarding of new schools was a key concern raised during our discussion. One MAT leader said he currently had little capacity to do the day job, let alone begin a time-consuming due diligence process.

"Making sure that you've got the capacity there is vital," said

Working out which schools are the right fit is a key question for both the expanding trust and the school interested in joining



another. "As you grow it gets easier because you're able to pull in more staff who can take responsibility for one element of the process. When we were a smaller trust, it was very much me doing almost the whole of the due

diligence, but as we've got bigger – we're 20 schools now – we're able to have staff who specialise in different areas rather than one person doing everything."

Time-consuming tasks

Our survey said: HR, financial planning, admin and budget management and compliance were the three areas most likely to take up the majority of our respondents' time.

Scaling up back-office systems to deal with areas such as HR, pensions and salaries is easier for larger MATs because of economies of scale. "Adding one more academy to the 20 already in your trust isn't as debilitating as going from four to five as you've already got those systems in place," said the panellist.

Budget setting was a particularly

time-consuming area that expands as the MAT increases, we were told. "It's important to be aware that the reports get more complicated as you grow," said one contributor. "There's more compliance on areas such as the gender pay gap and sustainability, for example, and financial returns are more complex."

Stress of the job

Our survey said: 88% of respondents felt stressed at work. Staff workload and stress, education funding and staff recruitment were the biggest non-academic management challenges facing schools.

Mitigating the impact of stress on your workforce should be part and parcel of your preparations for expansion, our panel agreed. "As we came out of pandemic, some of our senior leaders hadn't had a proper break in three years and their level of stress was absolutely massive," said one panellist. "We have got a wellbeing charter with strategies and structures in place so that is certainly helping."

Strategic aims

Our survey said: Almost a third said that the Opportunity for All White Paper had changed their academy trust's strategic aims. 31% said that it had had no impact and 36% were unsure.

Strategic planning is a challenge in an ever-changing policy context for MAT leaders. "Keeping abreast of changes in policy and legislation creates stress as well," said one respondent. "The pooling of pensions and the contributions into a single funding pool is also a major issue for us, along with staff mobility. We have 20 academies which are based across eight local authorities.

The movement of staff across the trust for their development is another layer of complexity because of the need to respect national level agreements and gradings and also take into account geographical issues." **HT**

KEY FINDINGS

Strictly Education carried out a survey of MAT leaders earlier this year to assess the readiness of trusts to expand in response to the government's MAT targets, articulated in the 2022 white paper.

Just over a fifth (22%) of the respondents were school business leaders, with 21% describing themselves as school administrators. 16% were CFOs and 14% CEOs.

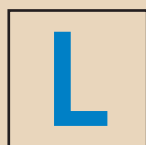
- While 65% said they had no concerns about their academy trust's capacity and resources needed to add new schools, 35% said they did have concerns.
- 27% said the process of acquiring and converting a new school for their academy trust was difficult or very difficult. Just 17% found it easy or very easy.
- 87% said that their personal burden of administrative duties had increased in the past 12 months.
- The three statutory reports most likely to be regarded as time consuming to complete were workforce census, chart of accounts and the pupil census.
- Time, resources and funding were the three areas most commonly cited as affecting our respondents' ability to remain compliant with education legislation, regulations and requirements.
- Almost two-thirds of respondents (64%) were unable to take external CPD in the last 12 months.
- 88% of respondents said they felt stressed at work.
- Staff workload and stress, education funding and staff recruitment were the biggest non-academic management challenges facing schools in the future.
- 15% of respondents said they did not plan to stay working in the education sector, with 29% saying that they were undecided.



Barry Smith is head of business development at Strictly Education, which provides professional support to more than 2,000 schools, 900 academies and 180 MATs across the country – strictlyeducation.co.uk

JUMP-START YOUR SCHOOL'S IMPROVEMENT JOURNEY

Leading a school out of the Ofsted doldrums needs clarity of thought and self-belief, says **Morgan Williams**



Leading a school is challenging at the best of times. For schools judged 'less than good' by Ofsted, these challenges can feel insurmountable.

A poor Ofsted report affects schools in so many ways. Staff morale invariably dips and it's difficult to avoid reputational damage - with the hit on admissions and the resulting funding challenges that often arise.

Leaders in struggling schools often find themselves overwhelmed and confused by the number of support mechanisms extended to them. Ofsted monitoring visits, external observations from academy trusts or local authorities, and extra professional development - it's a lot to take in. What do you prioritise first? And how?

I've held several positions in school leadership, including three headships over a period of 15 years. I know what it's like to have the buck stop at your feet. I have lain awake at three in the morning, staring at the ceiling and wondering what on Earth I'm doing. I've agonised over projected (and actual) SATs results. I've dealt with parent petitions, unpredictable staff members and loose-cannon governors.

I know that, whilst headship can be the best job in the world, it can also be one of the most stressful, frustrating and emotionally draining. It's not possible to know it all, but the best way to learn is to speak to the people who have been there.

If the above sounds familiar, here's my three-step guide on how you can jumpstart your school's improvement journey.

Step one: ask for help

Schools facing challenges get bombarded with advice from every corner - advice that's often contradictory, confusing and cognitively burdensome. It often feels more like scrutiny and does little to ease the pressures on leadership.

Be selective with the advice you take on board. Is it relevant to your school's specific circumstances? And is it coming from someone who is impartial?

Networking is crucial, but try to connect with schools that are only slightly further along the improvement journey than you. There's nothing worse than being sent to visit the outstanding school up the road, with a view to transplanting their successful processes onto your school's setting. Processes

Leaders often find themselves overwhelmed and confused by the number of support mechanisms extended to them

are context-specific, so trying to directly replicate best practice elsewhere won't always work.

Take ownership of your own school improvement journey and engage the services of an external coach if possible.

Step two: prioritise your needs

A phrase I use a lot with school leaders is "frontload the effort". It's



vital to be proactive rather than reactive. You should take time to really understand your school and its situation so you can be sure you're working on the right things. Use a root-cause analysis tool like the Five Whys to nail down the underlying issues. When you've identified where you *are*, think about where you would like *to be* and formulate a clear vision statement.

Use your vision statement as the focus for your future planning strategy and plan backwards

from it. In order to achieve this vision, what needs to happen at every stage? Maintain your focus and avoid any initiatives that do not contribute directly to this vision – use a structure like Theory of Change or the Kellogg Foundation Logic Model to keep you on track.

Step three: remember, good leadership is a team effort

Being a school leader can often be a very isolated and lonely existence – especially for new heads. But, contrary to what we often hear in the media, leadership is not a one-person job.

From the outside, a headteacher is frequently seen as the sole reason for a school's success. Whereas, in fact,

the best schools have structures that are underpinned by strong leaders at all levels, where

leadership is distributed and staff can act with autonomy. Where no one needs to be reminded of the feedback policy or nudged to hit a deadline.

To achieve this, a culture of individual responsibility and collective accountability needs to be developed. This is not easy and takes years rather than months, but it's worth the effort in the long run as it releases a huge amount of leadership capacity.

This culture needs to start from a position of trust. And it must start with you – the headteacher. Place your trust in leaders and allow them to act autonomously. It may even be necessary to let them make certain low-stakes mistakes, so that they can develop professionally.

Further support

There is a lot of support available to help you start your leadership improvement journey – some of which can be at no extra cost to your school. For 20 years, Teach First has been providing lasting solutions to help schools tackle the toughest challenges.

Teach First's fully-funded Leading Together programme (tinyurl.com/Leadtogetherprog) is unique in that we work with the entire senior leadership team to accelerate your school's improvement strategy. We do this by matching your school with the bespoke support of an experienced coach and former headteacher to build capacity and offer expertise to make a real, long-term impact.

Driving change

The road to good leadership isn't a quick fix. By taking the time to carve out capacity and seek impartial advice, you can access support to address your school's needs and priorities. As headteachers, the buck may stop with you, but by engaging the whole leadership team and creating a culture of trust, your school can make long-term, sustainable improvements for the good of your pupils, staff and the entire school community. **HT**

BUILDING SCHOOL LEADERSHIP FROM THE GROUND UP

Amanda Arnold was headteacher at an outstanding infant school when she was called in as an emergency replacement to improve leadership and learning at nearby Delves Junior School in Walsall.

"Staff had been through a very difficult time and there were pockets of poor practice. In my first year, there were a lot of staff changes. I think eight staff members left. Having the Ofsted 'requires improvement' judgement at the beginning of the journey gave us somewhere to start from. We made some new leadership appointments, and then the Leading Together programme came along at just the right time.

"From day one at Delves, we had to really take control. The next stage on from there was to distribute that leadership – to get more people involved and enable them to make decisions.

"Coaching from an experienced school leader has helped leaders be prepared to support their teams emotionally. Not only with their professional lives, but also to make sure they feel like they are valued and looked after.

"The staff have really pulled together and the difference with our year group leaders is how they are able to steady the ship. There is no longer micromanagement of every single decision.

"We know that our senior management team have really benefitted from the Leading Together training and now we need to make sure that their understanding and belief in our approach is shared effectively with all the other staff. In this way, we can make sure the gains we have made are secure and sustainable in the future."



Morgan Williams is a former headteacher and Achievement Partner at Teach First



Kathryn Pennington, headteacher at East Hunsbury Primary School, Northampton

A day in the life

A one-day diary from first alarm to lights out

WAKING UP

My alarm is set for 5:30am but I hit the snooze button before I get up. I check our SLT WhatsApp group to see if anything happened overnight, and make sure my eight-year-old twins' breakfasts and uniforms are ready. Then it's action stations for us all!



MY MORNING

I have a 35-minute journey to work, and call and message friends and family during this time. I meet families at the school gate and patrol the school carpark; I want to be a visible presence in the school community. After meetings and assemblies, I walk around school and visit lessons.



MY AFTERNOON

Meetings and visits to classrooms continue and, at the end of the school day, I try to go out on the gate again or will be involved in staff training.



LUNCHTIME

When I get to eat will depend on what's happening in the school, but I try to go into the school dinner hall. I might grab something quick from my fridge like a bagel or soup but a special treat comes on a Friday when the coffee van visits our school.



MY EVENING

It's time to be mummy for a while. At dinner, we discuss our 'highs, lows and stars of the day'. I prepare lunchboxes, and look ahead to what's coming tomorrow. We always end with a bedtime story and togetherness time.

Once my girls are in bed, I open my laptop to do some work.



BEDTIME

Typically, I am in bed by 11.00pm, either reading or reflecting on the day, in order to be up for the 5.30am alarm.

QUICKFIRE QUESTIONS

- **Career plan B?** I considered going into the theatre as I loved studying drama and theatre studies at school.
- **Must-listen?** Music to dance to, or listening to artists like Jack Savoretti and Jack Johnson.
- **Must-watch?** The Ted Lasso comedy-drama series, and the film: The Blind Side. Both have influenced my approach to headship.
- **Must-read?** *The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse* by Charlie Mackesy and *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* by Stephen Covey.

www.easthunsburyprimary.org.uk

HOW TO HIRE THE PERFECT...

Site Manager

Getting the pupils involved can help to identify the right candidate, says **Rebecca Leek**

1 WHERE YOU ADVERTISE

I have found this role difficult to recruit, but sometimes you already have a diamond in your midst, or at least someone very local to your school. We advertised in the staff room, local shops, and we featured the role in our parent newsletter. We also posted onto some Facebook and social media pages for the local community and tradespersons. The latter brought us the greatest interest and reached a different demographic.



5 MITIGATING RISKS

Your site manager cannot compromise on managing safety risks any more than your Year 1 teacher would leave the teaching of reading to chance. You would want him or her to nag you about any hazards or problems they come across on-site. I asked what they thought the key risks were and what they would do to mitigate these. Fire and legionella should definitely feature in their answers.

2 KNOW YOUR SCHOOL

Make sure that you, the headteacher, know your school site before the interview phase. If you are relatively new, you may still be getting to grips with the quirks of your site. Do you have a biomass boiler? What are the issues with the gates? When was the last gym equipment health and safety audit? Remind yourself what the job entails so that you can use this information at the interview.

Make sure you know your school site before the interview

3 CHILD FRIENDLY

Every adult member of staff needs to commit to being in loco parentis and to actually like children! I planned a school tour for each candidate with two children and an adult. The pupils were the real guides; the adult was there to support. The site manager doesn't have to know their digraphs from their trigraphs, but a knack with children is a must.

4 KNOWING CONTRACTORS

Ask the candidate which types of contractors they thought the school currently used (I had a list to hand for reference). This gives an insight into whether they understand the breadth of managing a school site and how the school calendar affects to-do lists - for example, marking out a football pitch. Ask what they feel confident or qualified to do, such as PAT testing.

6 ON CALL

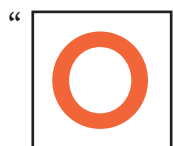
You need someone you can rely on and who can help with situations outside of working hours. The site manager may occasionally need to get in early when there has been snowfall, or manage an alarm that goes off in the night. These instances may be rare, but it is important this is understood. We talked this through carefully at interview. They don't have to be on call, per se, but willingness and flexibility are essential.



Rebecca Leek is a former headteacher, Senco and MAT CEO, and is the executive director of the Suffolk Primary Headteachers' Association.

DELIVERING TRUST-WIDE PAY EQUALITY

Natalie Harris describes how her MAT ironed out years of historical wage disparities among its teaching support staff



Over recent years, the senior leadership team at Focus-Trust undertook a review of salaries across its schools, since fairness to all staff is a priority and something that's deeply rooted in our ethos.

We were motivated to carry out the research in the belief that no two people employed to undertake the same role across the Trust should be paid differently, regardless of their local authority or demographic of school, and that no staff should receive a salary below the government's national living wage.

In order to truly understand the current landscape, we used the National Joint Council (NJC) evaluation scheme – which assesses the job, not the employee performing the role – to evaluate all support staff roles. This was no mean feat, since the Trust comprises 15 primary schools with 930 members of staff, spread over seven local authorities.

Huge pay variations

This process affected all 680 support staff. Pay differentials were significant in some areas – in some cases thousands of pounds – and the approach to the payment of allowances was varied. Some of the inherited LA pay and grading structures were mainly in line with the Trust, but others were completely at odds. An extreme example was a teaching assistant in a Bradford school who was being paid the same as a cleaner in Oldham.

Teaching staff have graded pay structures, so in order to harmonise salaries for support staff we needed to apply the same principals. It was a process to which all members of the team were committed, to ensure fairness and consistency.

Plans were initially presented to introduce the new salary banding to the senior leadership team, which was then passed for approval by the board in Spring 2021.

Tackling the cost of living crisis

With the current cost of living crisis, it felt more important than ever for everyone to be paid fairly, equally and in line with similar

roles across the local authorities.

The proposal was initially presented by Claire Livingstone, formerly the head of HR and organisational development at Focus-Trust, for approval by the Board. The entire process was supported by Trade Union Colleagues at Unison and GMB, and the Trust also received support from its external payroll and HR provider, Ruth Holroyd, from Working with Schools. They supported both in an advisory capacity and with tangible support. Some were evaluators and some heard appeals.

To manage this transition a job evaluation panel and advisory group was established with headteachers, business managers, and

representatives from the trade unions. The groups met at least weekly at the outset and then monthly thereafter.

All staff were asked to ensure the job descriptions/person

specifications for their role were updated and sent through for evaluation. Deliberately, no names were attached to any role – this was simply about assessing the job and not the person.

Fairness and consistency

The process of evaluating the roles of 680 members of support staff across the 15 schools was meticulous and absolutely worth it! All schools were asked to review job descriptions and complete questionnaires from June until



the first assessment began in the October. The whole process took just over four months. All scores were moderated against the baseline, with support from local government job evaluation experts.

We found that, in many schools, staff pay had been decided and fixed before they had joined the Trust. Ultimately, this was the root cause of the varying wages. This disparity was also evident within school settings.

Following the evaluation, consultation with staff commenced. One-to-one meetings were held and FAQ documents were prepared for staff, pre-empting and answering all major questions. The consultation briefing sessions were delivered by me with union colleagues, with the support of Ruth Holroyd. One-to-one meetings were also held with Ruth and me, and sometimes with TU colleagues

A teaching assistant in Bradford was being paid the same as a cleaner in an Oldham school

too, if requested. There was no detriment to staff on higher levels of pay but anyone could appeal if they were unhappy with their grade. The movement to a higher grade was particularly notable in our Bradford schools, with around 147 members of staff benefiting from increased pay.

Budgeting implications

To have achieved a fair and consistent pay and grading structure for all members of support staff across all roles and schools within the Trust has not been without its challenges, but it has certainly been worth every small collaborative step taken to reach this point.

Schools were understanding of the financial impact and committed to budgeting for

increased costs to reflect the changes that were set in place to come into effect beginning the 2022 school year.

Budget implications varied from school to school depending on the starting position. Some staff were almost aligned with the Trust's structure anyway, so for them there was very little change, but for others there was a significant difference. An estimate of the financial impact was provided to schools so this could be factored into budget planning, and pay protection applied. This affected all support staff working for the Trust, as even those on Focus-Trust's grading structure may have seen a change to the banding for a particular role. However, there has been no detriment to current pay for any member of staff.

The next stage is to embark upon the next phase of pay harmonisation, which involves moving all staff completely onto Focus-Trust terms and conditions. **HT**



Natalie Harris is chief operating officer at Focus-Trust

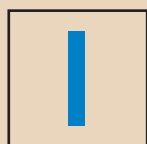
IMPLEMENTING TRUST-WIDE PAY PARITY

- Plan the project, with clear timelines and agreed milestones
- Provide appropriate training for all involved, covering the use and understanding of the scheme
- Ensure effective working relationships with trade union and HR colleagues
- Be mindful to always evaluate the roles and responsibilities, and not the person
- Don't underestimate the time it takes for all job descriptions to be reviewed
- Ensure a detailed person specification is in place for each role, with specific emphasis on required knowledge and qualifications
- Ensure a structure, which identifies roles, is submitted as part of the process as this allows for lines of accountability to be highlighted to the team of evaluators
- Be very clear around the pay protection principles, particularly in terms of allowances and increasing annual leave entitlement. There is no model approach, however it is important to discuss and agree this with TU colleagues from the outset
- Allow a appropriate period for notice letters to be issued after the end of the consultation process
- Hold Trust-wide briefings to allow for clear and transparent communication throughout the process
- Make sure the offer of one-to-one meetings is time-factored into the schedule, in case these are requested
- Ensure the pay and grading structure clearly summarises the new grades for each role
- Allow time, after the date of implementation, to support with any final queries which may be raised



SHARING THE LEADERSHIP LOAD

A staffing hierarchy, set by up **Emily Proffitt** to get her through a new headship at the start of the pandemic, continues to reap benefits to this day



In my seven years as a headteacher I have seen many staff come and go. They move on for their own reasons and career changes, but also to pursue growth and success within education. I have always enjoyed creating a culture that nurtures staff, encourages development and inevitably sees colleagues fly the nest to pastures new, sharing their educational excellence with even more pupils. During these times, I feel an immense sense of pride for the individual, like a parent watching their child take their first steps.

Growing new talent

The development and movement of staff also encourages growth and new talents amongst everyone in school, building further passion and excellence, and providing space for the less experienced to begin their own career journeys. At times the cycle of progression and succession creates challenges and new priorities, but it also builds strength through the excitement of new opportunities, allowing us all to thrive and take stock of our goals.

The past two years have been interesting for all of us. I started my role here - my second headship - in January 2020, not long before the pandemic began. I am not going to sugar coat it - it has been tough and the pressure has nearly broken me on many occasions. In fact, I probably would have broken had it not been for the tremendous support of my deputy (who was quite glad she was no longer acting headteacher), the governors and my team.

The hardest bit for me, apart from the unknown of the pandemic, was that I hadn't yet built my team. In fact, I barely even knew who my team were. To me, as a leader, relationships are vital for making anything work. Having no time to build these relationships and to understand the uniqueness

of every colleague proved challenging.

Blind faith

During the crisis, the staff in my school had to put their trust and faith in a leader they knew very little about. This is where the importance of 'team' comes in. Well and truly out of my comfort zone, and imposter syndrome at its strongest ever, I had no choice but to quickly build relationships through a clearly defined structure and expectations.

My deputy and I had to come up with a plan to reorganise the school and develop a hierarchy of staff. This started with the leadership team, which consisted of me, four senior leaders and my office manager. Each senior leader also led a team of staff which consisted of teachers and TAs, who had a variety of essential responsibilities. Shared leadership, with clear objectives, risk assessments and expectations, was needed for us all to survive.

Divisions of labour

The school was divided into four teams, each with an SLT leader, (some of you will know these as bubbles) who were trained and developed to tackle all eventualities including planning,

safeguarding, staff development, risk management, and first aid - the list could be endless! Some of this training was achieved in-house, and some virtually.

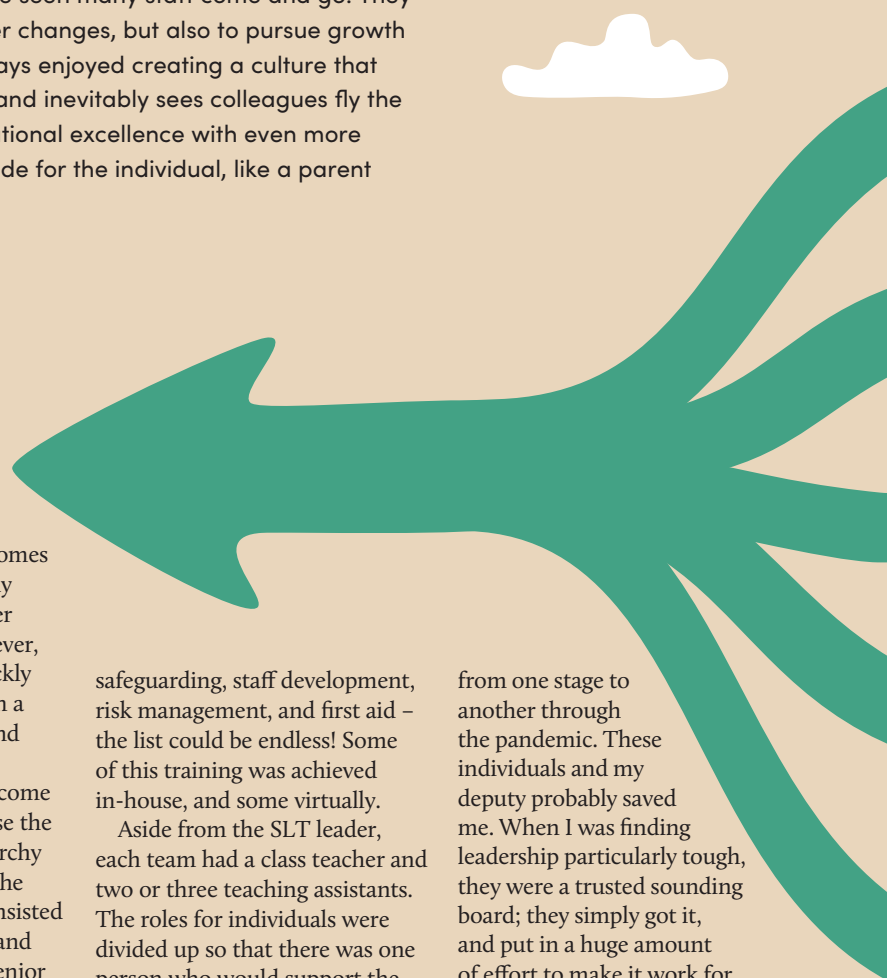
Aside from the SLT leader, each team had a class teacher and two or three teaching assistants. The roles for individuals were divided up so that there was one person who would support the emotional wellbeing of pupils, one who would manage first aid, another who was a trained safeguarding lead and one who would deal with educational tasks. Being in teams also supported remote learning when children were at home, as it meant that no one person was trying to juggle teaching a class and managing remote teaching at the same time.

The SLT team would meet regularly to discuss next steps, concerns, hiccups and government updates as we moved

from one stage to another through the pandemic. These individuals and my deputy probably saved me. When I was finding leadership particularly tough, they were a trusted sounding board; they simply got it, and put in a huge amount of effort to make it work for their teams, for the pupils and for our community. As a leadership team we have grown together, laughed together and even cried together. Headship is certainly not about doing it alone. It is about empowering others to share responsibility, understand their value and to dream big!

Ongoing challenges

The last few years have posed challenges for all schools for many different reasons. The pandemic has



Headship is about empowering others to share responsibility, understand their value and to dream big

HOW TO BUILD A GREAT TEAM

- Have a clear, shared vision that everyone can buy into. Staff who strive for the same vision will work better together.
- Get to know your team's skills and flaws. Putting people with different personalities together will inevitably end with some struggling to get on. Knowing who clicks and who doesn't will help things run smoothly.
- You need time – to reflect, to think and for your staff to develop their roles and lead alongside you. Overworked staff will never thank you for additional responsibilities.
- Share expertise amongst the team. When you have a golden nugget on your staff, recognise this potential within your school. Celebrating skills and sharing expertise can also save you a lot of CPD money.
- Listen to your staff. If they have an idea, allow them to explore it and investigate the potential that it has. You might transform the experiences for the children in your school in ways you had never imagined.
- Embrace ideas and passion. A passionate individual will always go that extra mile because they enjoy what they are doing.
- Lead together! Have a clearly defined structure providing roles of accountability and responsibility at different levels.
- Celebrate even the smallest wins. An email, feedback from parents, attendance at sporting and music events. Every moment counts!

made recruitment virtually impossible. The growth we'd all love to see in our staff has been stifled by new priorities and a lack of opportunity outside of school. Many saw staff leave due to the pressures of the role, sickness and burnout. Budgets have become harder and harder to maintain and staff in many schools have not been replaced. Furthermore, there are many occasions where staff are put off the lead roles due to the

immense pressure on leaders they witnessed during two years of the unknown.

Positive signs for the future

In our school, however, it feels like staff have risen to these challenges and, on the whole, are happier, thanks in part to our leadership structure and the wider opportunities for growth and self-fulfillment that this provides.

However, we did see people leave, retire early and move on. The pressures of life made many reflect on their own priorities. But despite this, we have seen huge growth in our team. My deputy (who said she was never going to be a head) has just taken on her first headship. One of my senior team leaders has been appointed as my new deputy, another senior team leader is taking on NPQEYL and yet another teacher has stepped

into a team leader role and is beginning NPQML.

The COVID structure we created, the shared leadership and expectations, will endure. No idea is a daft idea at our school. **HT**



Emily Proffitt is headteacher of Cooper Perry Primary School, Stafford

Challenge older pupils to be good role models

Behaviour expert, Sue Cowley, shares three scenarios that benefit from positivity when tackling poor discipline

1 One of your ECTs is complaining about the behaviour of their Year 1 class, telling you that the children 'won't do what they're told' and 'can't sit still for more than a few minutes'. The teacher wants you to come in and 'tell them off'. How can you best support the teacher and the children?

Since the pandemic began, the youngest children have gone through a period where the 'norms' of early childhood were disrupted. Prior to school, they missed out on many activities which promote self-regulation, such as soft play and toddler groups. Inevitably, this is starting to show up in their behaviours.

Sitting still takes up a considerable amount of executive function for children of this age – they are primed to move around, in order to develop. Support the teacher to find ways to make the learning less formal and more active, for instance using sand timers to remind them to limit the periods for which children are static.

Consider different positions for activities such as writing – it can work well for children to stand at desks, lay down on their fronts, or write on a clipboard or flipchart.

Look at the daily timetable, together with the teacher. Talk about a realistic amount of time to expect children to sit still. Look together at how some of the carpet or desk work could be made more active, for instance by getting children to join in with actions or take a short physical break. Remember that some of the children might only have turned five years old recently – they are still very young.

Think about how the transition into KS1 was managed –

perhaps the approach has been formalised too quickly, and children are struggling to handle what they perceive as a big change from their reception class? Active play is still vital for learning and development in this age group.

Give the teacher additional support by going in to talk to the children, but not to tell them off – reset the class with a more positive message instead. You could say to the children that you have asked their teacher to share examples of when they are learning and behaving brilliantly. This will help encourage the teacher to focus on and praise the positive.

2 The manner in which the children move through the school on their way to assembly each afternoon has become increasingly chaotic and noisy. Class teachers are saying that the poor behaviour of older children is triggering poor behaviour in younger ones too.

Moving quietly and sensibly around, outside of the classroom context, can be a big ask for children in terms of their self-regulation skills. Remind class teachers to talk to their children each morning about the timings of the day and what happens in what order. This supports children to understand the daily routines and helps them prepare for the transition required when moving from classroom to assembly.

Encourage teachers to find creative ways to get their children moving quietly and carefully. For

instance, asking them to imagine that there is a giant sleeping under the floor, so they need to tiptoe quietly to assembly in order not to wake him. Challenge each class to see who can come to assembly 'as quiet as a mouse', giving an award to the class which does best each week. Challenge the older children to be great role models for their younger school mates, by showing them 'what a good one looks like' (WAGOLL). Children generally respond much better to positive targets and goals, and to supporting their

peers, than to negativity or sanctions.

Sometimes the best solutions to behaviour issues occur when you think laterally, so consider some alternatives. Can you change the timing of assemblies so that they don't take place

when children are likely to be tired and fractious? Do you need to hold daily whole school assemblies or would in class 'acts of worship' and year group assemblies work better, with a single whole school gathering once a week?





Ask children to imagine there is a giant sleeping under the floor, so they need to tiptoe quietly

KEY POINTS

THINKING SELF-REGULATION

When we discuss behaviour, what we're actually talking about is children's ability to self-regulate. Can they control impulses, direct attention, face challenges and cope with failure? Helping children build these skills has a direct impact on outcomes.

- Rather than seeing behaviour as something best controlled by extrinsic motivators like sanctions and rewards, remember that the aim is make positive behaviours intrinsic for each child.
- Encourage teachers to look for the positive – praise children who are doing the right thing to offer positive role models for peers.
- When thinking about curriculum, consider how you develop key attributes that support behaviour, such as empathy, self-control and cooperation.
- Find ways to get the children to be 'active agents': making choices and taking responsibility are great for self-regulation.
- Incorporate activities that ask children to 'hold' their impulses, so they understand what it feels like. Playing sleeping lions or games like Grandmother's Footsteps support impulse control.
- Focus on building children's imagination to support empathy – utilise role plays and talk about what characters in stories are feeling.

3

The behaviour of some of the older and most disadvantaged children in your primary is becoming increasingly difficult to handle. You have been applying sanctions but are concerned that their behaviour will escalate to the point where you might need to suspend them. You want to act to avoid this becoming a necessity.

Instead of looking at this issue from a 'behaviour' angle, have a think instead about what these children are missing, in terms of the skills that they need to cope at school. Often, this is to do with self-esteem – children get so used to a negative feedback loop, that they start to behave poorly because they feel like it is 'expected' of them.

Rather than continuing with an approach that majors on the use of sanctions, consider the question from a 'needs-based' angle. What do these children

need from their time in school, to support them to change their behaviours? You could look at setting up a nurture group in which they learn some key social skills. You might give them something or someone to care for, to support the development of empathy. Some primary schools are finding that having a school dog can really help to turn around a downwards spiral of negative behaviours.

Start planning now for when these children transition to secondary school, as this is often a point at which problems with

behaviour can escalate, as children must interact with a much higher number of different teachers. Liaise with secondaries to ensure that key information about children with high levels of need is passed on.



Sue Cowley is a bestselling author and teacher educator, who helps to run an early years setting. Her latest book is *Learning Behaviours: A Practical Guide to Self-Regulation* (John Catt).

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any school with an existing supplier the ability to switch to Schoolcomms and not be charged until their current contract is up.

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6

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8 SAFEGUARDING IN STYLE

Visitor management is an area of great interest to schools, not just because of GDPR but also for safeguarding purposes. Many schools highly recommend idXtra's visitor management system, VisiTapp, which is user-friendly, flexible and affordable. Using VisiTapp, schools can deal with visitors, contractors and supply teachers – keeping 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. idxtra.com



“Children could discuss loss in a safe environment”

Pupils at Deeplish Primary Academy made jewellery, photo frames and calendars as part of an enterprise project to support the ill and dying in their community

I have worked at Deeplish Primary Academy for three years. In that time, as vice principal, I have seen the school continue to improve in leaps and bounds, despite the pandemic – thanks to both teachers and the community’s support.

I’m proud to work where I live and give back to my locality and the future adults of our community. Teaching where I grew up, and once attended school, allows me to offer support from a comparative perspective. Understanding how the mindset of our pupils is formed by their surroundings enables me to be effective in my job.

Community cohesion

We are fortunate to be surrounded by a wonderful community here in Rochdale, and we’re very aware that building good relationships locally is incredibly important in enhancing student learning. The children are taught to understand and appreciate the importance of where they live, and helping those in need. These are topics we cover as part of our community cohesion lessons within PSHE, alongside themes such as business and enterprise. Our pupils need to leave Deeplish having been prepared for what the future might look like for them. PSHE helps children and young people

to be safe, healthy and ready for life’s opportunities.

Community cohesion covers an extensive array of topics linked to society. This year, children have been learning about the importance of charity and the role it plays in supporting those in need.

The project’s learning objectives included the role that money can play in life and, therefore, how to keep it safe, what being part of a

community means, and how to support groups both locally and nationally.

We encourage the children to research, discuss and debate topical issues, such as homelessness, crime and the justice system – and what support they can offer.

Being supportive and engaged

Charity and fundraising are brilliant tools for involvement in your locality, but we don’t stop there. We teach our pupils about options such as volunteering, donating, and even supporting local businesses. Having a personal understanding of the school’s relationship

with the surrounding neighbourhood can act as a bridge when addressing challenging issues with pupils.

We wanted to connect our annual enterprise project to the PSHE curriculum this year, by linking it to a local initiative called ‘Raising Rochdale’. Its vision is for Rochdale to meet the needs of all children and young people with SEND from birth to the age of 25 years.

With Raising Rochdale in mind, we devised an enterprise project to engage our pupils with

Having a personal understanding of the school’s relationship with the surrounding neighbourhood can act as bridge when addressing challenging issues with pupils



supporting people in need. We believe that when children are physically and emotionally close to their home, family and community, they can be supported to build resilience, awareness and to achieve positive outcomes in life.

Annual charity project

Each year, we implement an annual charity project as part of our curriculum. The children are given a list of charities that we can support, which encourages them to delve into local issues and challenges, and is an exercise in democracy. This year we picked five local charities and, after an assembly discussing what each organisation does, we let the children vote for their chosen one.

In our most recent enterprise project, pupils were split into small groups, each receiving £50 to create a product that would generate profit for the pupil-chosen Springhill Hospice, a specialist palliative care unit.



WHO WE ARE

WHAT'S THE CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL AND ITS COMMUNITY?



Location:

Deeplish Primary Academy is located in Rochdale, Greater Manchester. The school currently has over 400 pupils, reflecting the diverse surrounding areas and a vibrant and supportive community.



Our community

The school works hard to teach pupils the importance of giving back to the community and supporting those in need. It is important for our pupils to become lifelong learners who thrive in an educational environment, feel safe, have fun and enjoy success. Our pupils are at the heart of everything we do. Social cohesion in a town such as Rochdale means cooperation despite differences; it minimises marginalisation and discrimination whilst improving the quality of life for many community members. We have found that an involved cohesive community encourages our pupils to form healthy and robust relationships with individuals from all walks of life.



Our school

Our school has 439 pupils with an attendance score of 96.7%. It is a member of the Focus-Trust – a charitable primary school trust based in the Northwest of England and West Yorkshire, with a vision of providing great education at the heart of communities where children can thrive, achieve, and succeed.

representative from the charity came to visit the school to thank them for their donation, and to tell them how the money would be used to make a real difference to patients and staff. The family members of some of our pupils have relied on the care of the hospice, and came in to school to tell their stories, so it is close to our hearts here at Deeplish.

The school staff, meanwhile, also learnt lessons by engaging with the project, and reported that initiatives involving the local community had great meaning and added depth to the curriculum.

Respect for duty and service

It was clear that, following our project and fund-raising activities, the pupils demonstrated a deeper understanding and respect for the duty and service that people who work within the NHS provide.

Staff at the hospice commented that it had been a tough year for fund-raising and they were thrilled with the support from Deeplish. The money raised will allow them to offer counselling sessions and visits from specialist palliative care nurses to patients in their own home.

Our involvement with the community, and the hospice in particular, raised awareness among the pupils about the need for good relations, and taught them how to be successful members of society. We believe that community involvement is crucial for cementing a school's reputation as a welcoming, caring and supportive place. We have found that these links contribute to extra curriculum learning, and having an established network of local relationships can be a valuable asset for schools. **HT**



Hannah Rowe is vice principal at Deeplish Primary Academy, Rochdale

The pupils made a range of products, including photo frames, vases and flower arrangements, key chains, necklaces, bracelets, stress balls, calendars and rocky road cakes, which they then sold to families, friends and neighbours.

The pupils have, in the past, written letters and made artwork for the residents and staff of the hospice during lockdown, to show their support and thank the staff for all their hard work during the Covid pandemic. This relationship allowed discussions to take place around loss and bereavement and for the children to experience these conversations in a safe environment.

The children raised just short of £800 for the hospice, and a



SAFEGUARDING

Mentor

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AT A GLANCE

- Practical advice and learning for safeguarding leads
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- Staff get to choose between on-demand, self-guided sessions or tutor-led live training
- Trainees gain access to a personalised learning platform

REVIEW BY JOHN DABELL



All staff need to possess up-to-date safeguarding and child protection training, so that they can capably discharge their responsibilities within a modern school setting. But for this, they require high quality, accredited CPD training and specialist support services from those in the know.

The Safeguarding Company would be my first port of call, since they offer a comprehensive training programme delivered by staff who possess a deep knowledge of essential safeguarding processes and strategies.

Their aptly named Mentor service provides schools with exactly what they need to manage the wide spectrum of challenges teachers can face in the course of their duties – including digesting the voluminous quantity of statutory guidance and legislation out there, and translating it into usable resources and handy summaries.

Mentor provides schools with an impressive suite of training courses designed to enable all staff to confidently carry out their roles while effectively safeguarding the children and young people in their care. They offer a choice between self-paced, on-demand learning delivered online, or interactive online tutor-led sessions that run throughout the year.

The courses themselves come in different forms to suit the various needs of teachers, and any support or volunteer staff working regularly with children. As such, the individual training can be introductory, general or specialist in nature, though there are also

offerings designed with whole staff training in mind, including refresher courses that cover the 4 'R's of 'Recognise', 'Respond', 'Report' and 'Record'. Beyond that, there are further courses geared towards yet more specific needs, be it those of DSLs, governors or even staff at international schools.

For those seeking an all-inclusive safeguarding training solution, The Safeguarding Company's Mentor Pro option includes access to its full range of on-demand, CPD-accredited courses and specialist safeguarding resources, as well as a useful download library that includes INSET packs, policy templates and guides for handling child abuse disclosures. If, on the other hand, you're looking for something more specialised, bespoke training and services can be arranged via the Mentor Plus package.

Common to all Mentor options are online community rooms and calendars that can be used to share best practice, obtain support and gather resources, as well as access to a host of materials that include case studies, presentations, guidance documents, glossaries and explanatory booklets.

Safeguarding is a complex and demanding area, in which schools need all the help they can get. With its high quality training and impressive array of resources, The Safeguarding Company's Mentor service can provide such help in spades – thus ensuring that school staff can develop and retain the vital skills and knowledge they'll need to keep children safe at all times.

the
headteacher

VERDICT

- ✓ Offers a depth and breadth of training that's second to none
- ✓ Provides staff with informed, practical knowledge and the skills they'll need to ably safeguard students
- ✓ Helps ensure compliance with the latest statutory guidance
- ✓ All course content is supported by a host of high quality resources
- ✓ Can optionally support the delivery of whole-school safeguarding training

UPGRADE IF...

You're looking to change the behaviours, attitudes and skills within your school in a way that creates a better safeguarding culture, or are wanting to equip safeguarding leads with the confidence to oversee consistently high safeguarding standards.

For more details and to obtain a quote, contact 0330 6600 757 or visit thesafeguardingcompany.com/mentor

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STABILO EASYoriginal pens & EASYgraph S pencils

Ergonomic pens and pencils developed by experts specifically for both left- and right-handed children



AT A GLANCE

- Skilfully designed pens and pencils based on ergonomic principles in penmanship
- Left- and right-handed versions
- Focused on comfort and efficiency
- Tested by expert scientists
- Pencil is sourced from responsibly-managed forests

REVIEW BY JOHN DABELL



How much do we think about handedness when we consider children's needs? Handedness is the preference for using one hand over another and when it comes to the school environment this really matters.

Left-handed children often struggle when the resources aren't there to support them. This is often the case when it comes to writing utensils and scissors. Left-handed pupils can often appear uncoordinated or disorganised as most equipment is set up for right-handed children.

STABILO has thought long and hard about the user experience to cater for everyone and its product range is impressively inclusive. Every operational characteristic has been considered from the size, weight, shape and length of the instrument to the surface texture and hardness of the shaft, ink flow, smoothness, writing fatigue and more.

The EASY Start range is a vibrant and ergonomic family of writing equipment specifically designed for learning and improving handwriting skills at a young age. Led by the latest research in handwriting ergonomics, these are clever products that put writing comfort, legibility, efficiency and motivation right at the centre of design so that children can have fun improving their skills.

STABILO's EASYoriginal pens are a joy. These really attractive wide-barrel refillable

pens have been ergonomically moulded so that children use the lightest grip possible while writing. The slightly arched shape helps pupils to achieve the recommended tripod grip, eliminating strain. It also features a rubberised grip around the pen barrel for increased traction.

The STABILO ergonomic pens use a rollerball design which flows freely. This helps reduce writing pressure which can lead to pain over longer pieces of written work. The nibs are broad and flexible and use royal blue erasable ink, ideal for school use.

STABILO's handwriting pencils with break-resistant 2.2mm lead have also been designed specifically for left- and right-handers. EASYgraph S pencils have a brilliant triangular design and non-slip grip moulds which magnificently support a relaxed hand posture. They also have a subtle yellow and red colour coding at the end of the pencil to indicate whether it is a left- or right-handed version.

They come in a range of five shaft colours and the S (slim) versions have a slenderer barrel than the original, but still with a space for inscribing your name.

Every child should benefit from adopting an ergonomic way of working and STABILO has given us the tools to work in a more efficient and child-friendly way. These are writing resources that truly break the mould.

the
headteacher

VERDICT

- ✓ Sophisticated, intelligent and intuitive designs to tackle handwriting issues
- ✓ Non-slip, comfortable to hold and prevents stress, tiredness and potential damage to hand posture
- ✓ Revolutionary, fun and attractive designs
- ✓ Quality through and through for a great price
- ✓ Takes the stress out of handwriting

UPGRADE IF...

You are looking for writing resources that truly cater for left-, right- and mixed-handers.

Pens from £3.29, pencils from £1.04, stabilo.com/uk

plazoom

Years
1-6

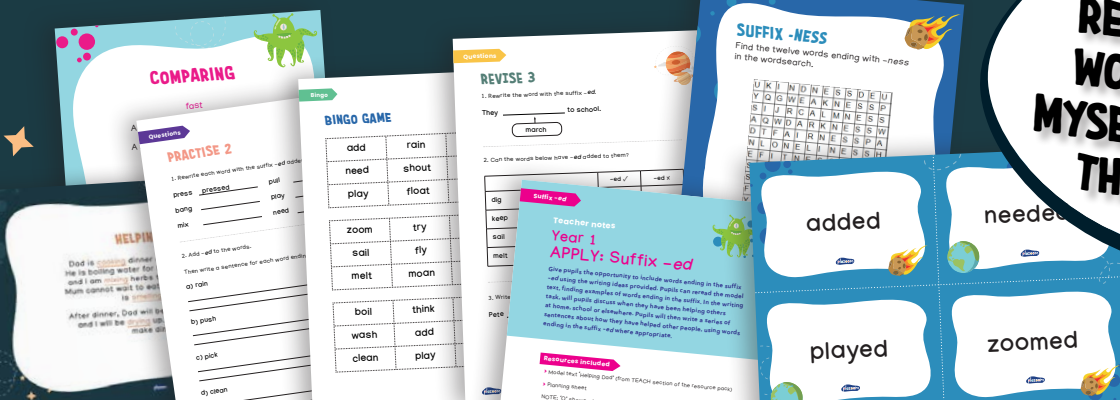
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WOULD MAKE
MYSELF IF I HAD
THE TIME!"

Alice Griffith, Peppard
CE Primary School



A SIMPLE AND EFFECTIVE 5-STEP STRUCTURE

Ensuring progression and complete coverage of the
whole curriculum

Can be used
flexibly to
suit the needs
of your class

1

TEACH

Comprehensive teaching sequences ensure your pupils grasp every concept and can apply their learning in context

HELPING DAD

Dad is cooking dinner and I am helping him. He is boiling water for the carrots and peas and I am moving herbs to go on the chicken. Mum cannot wait to eat it. She said the food is smelling great!

After dinner, Dad will be washing the dishes and I will be drying up. I love helping Dad make dinner.

2

PRACTISE

3 differentiated practise activities that can be used flexibly to consolidate learning and identify any gaps or misconceptions

PRACTISE 2

1. Rewrite each word with the suffix -ed added.

press pressed pull _____
bang _____ play _____
mix _____ need _____

2. Add -ed to the words.

Then write a sentence for each word ending in -ed.

a) rain _____
b) push _____
c) pick _____
d) clean _____
e) buzz _____

3

REVISIT

A range of games and activities that will ensure your pupils embed their learning

BINGO GAME

add	rain	moan
need	shout	buzz
play	float	melt
zoom	try	wash
sail	fly	pick
melt	moan	collect
boil	think	need
wash	add	pull
clean	play	pull

4

APPLY

Extended writing tasks are used to encourage children to identify and apply the skill in context

I HELPED

Draw some pictures showing how you helped others.

5

REVISE

3 differentiated revision exercises to prepare your pupils for their end of year assessments

REVISE 3

1. Rewrite the word with the suffix -ed.

They _____ to school.

_____ march

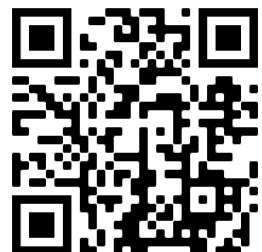
2. Can the words below have -ed added to them?

	-ed ✓	-ed ✗
dig		
keep		
call		
melt		

3. Write a word that ends in -ed to complete the sentence.

Pete _____ the door.

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