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TEACHER WELLBEING

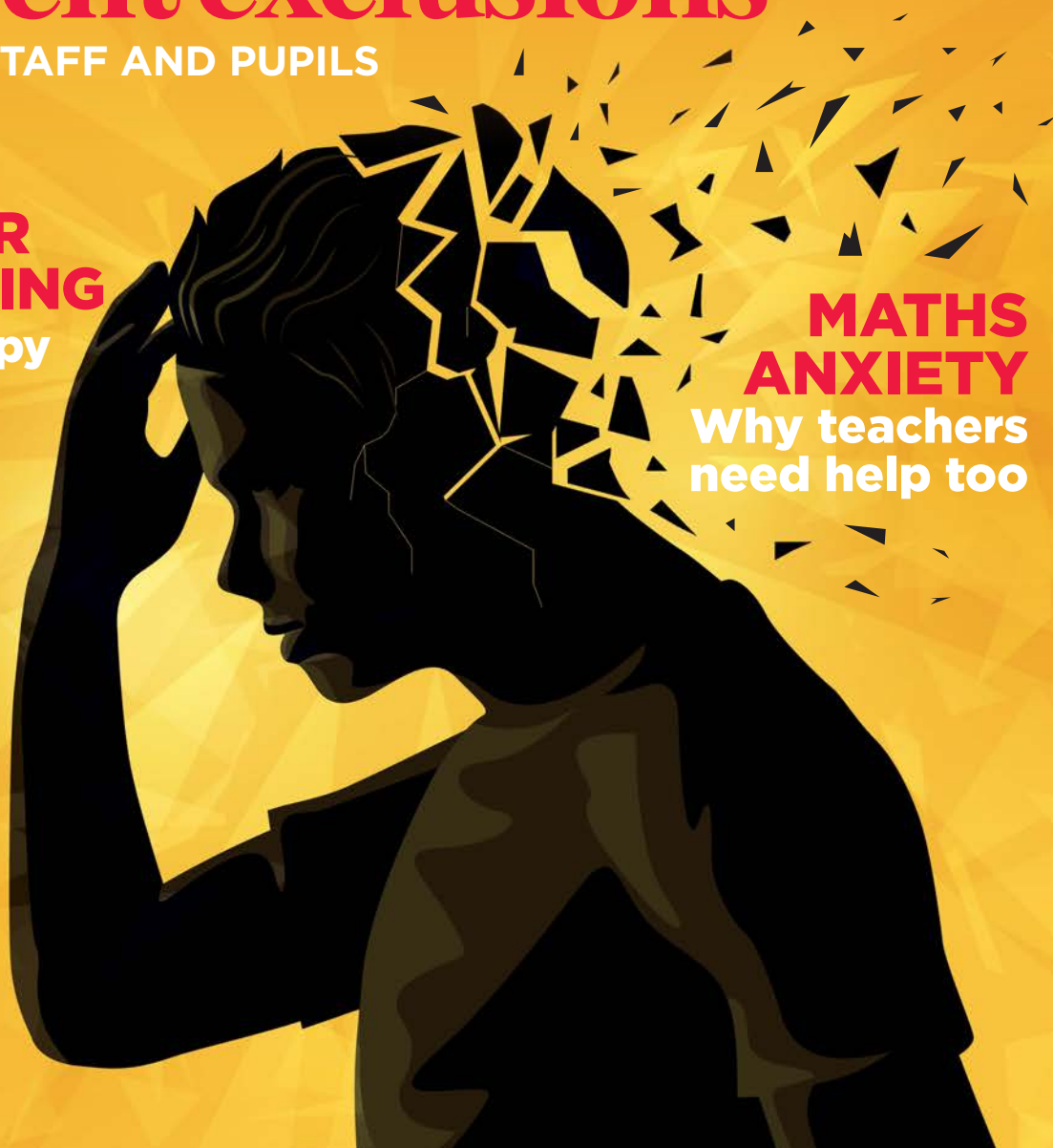
Lead a happy
school

MATHS ANXIETY

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need help too

HOW TO

- boost your fundraising
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From the editor



£7.1 billion in extra funding for schools by 2022-23 and teacher starting salaries of £30,000.

Those were the promises made by the Conservatives before their emphatic win last month, and with Gavin Williamson staying on as Education Secretary, it follows that both should come to pass. Whether that's the case, of course, will only become clear over the coming months.

What isn't in doubt is that is that schools are presently in a parlous state, with a government assessment of England's schools estate having found that 3,371 sites include buildings with an element – such as a window, roof or door – in need of urgent replacement or repair. Measures to put this right must start as soon as possible.

In the meantime, leaders can at least enjoy the certainty of knowing that Ofsted isn't going anywhere any time soon, and that procedures laid out in the regulator's latest education inspection framework will continue to apply for the foreseeable future. School business leaders can meanwhile attend to those budgets in the knowledge that allowances and predictions made last year will likely still apply in 2020.

PSM will continue to chart those continuities and changes, and feature the insights and advice of those serving at the front line – but without myself at the helm. This is my last issue in charge, as I move sideways to assume editorship of our sister title Teach Secondary. My successor, Mark Hayhurst, will be here to welcome you next month – and attending next month's Bett Show, if you want to say hello – but before I go, I'd just like to thank the readers and contributors who have made this job a pleasure. Here's to you all.

Enjoy the issue,

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Isle of Man



From the makers
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Support groups can be excellent for school leaders' mental wellbeing

SAY NO TO TESTING 4-YEAR-OLDS



More and more educators, experts and parents are realising the flaws in the roll-out of reception baseline assessment (RBA).

96%

of primary school leaders think they should not be spending the first few weeks of term preparing for the tests*

OVER
7,000

schools said no to running the pilot in September 2019 (less than 9,500 said yes)

OVER
70,000

people have signed a petition demanding a halt to the roll-out

WHAT DO THE EXPERTS THINK?

"Flawed, unjustified and totally unfit for purpose"

The British Educational Research Association

"Verging on the immoral"

Durham University Centre for Evaluation and Monitoring

"Pointless and damaging"

Letter signed by over 700 early years education specialists

THERE'S STILL TIME TO HALT THIS BROKEN TEST

More than 7,000 school leaders have already decided not to run the baseline pilot. If you *did* take part, please remember:

- You're not obliged to run the pilot for any pupils joining you this January.
- To provide a frank critique of the test. Is it of any real use to your teachers or children? What about the time commitment and additional staff workload for your Early Years team?

Say NO to this pointless test for 4- and 5-year-olds

Join our campaign today www.morethanascore.org.uk

more
than a
score

*YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 230 senior primary school teachers in England. Fieldwork was undertaken between 15th January and 4th February 2019. The survey was carried out online.



From fighting fantasy to opening a school - just turn the page

Ian Livingstone CBE explains why games-based learning deserves a place in every school

You recently published your 17th Fighting Fantasy gamebook [A series of books written as branching narratives, through which readers proceed by following directions to differently numbered paragraphs] nearly four decades after the first – what prompted you to revisit the series?

The Port of Peril was my 16th book, published in 2017 to mark the series' 35th anniversary on the back of its relaunch by Scholastic. Puffin published Fighting Fantasy between 1982 and 1995, and Icon Books re-published the series from 2002. To date, some 20 million copies have been sold worldwide since the first, The Warlock of Firetop Mountain was initially published. But there's been a huge revival of interest in recent years, hence Scholastic wanting to publish the classic titles again and adding new titles. Assassins of Allansia is my 17th, but hopefully not my last since the 40th anniversary will be in 2022.

Are you aware of FF gamebooks having a greater presence in schools now than they did during that initial publishing run?

They were very popular in schools throughout the 1980s, thanks to the Puffin Book Club. Scholastic has its own book club and fairs programme, which will hopefully

replicate that success all those years ago.

However, I spent time in the early years defending Fighting Fantasy against a backdrop of quite bizarre negative publicity. A religious group published a pamphlet warning that because they were 'interacting with ghouls and demons', children might become possessed by the devil. There was a worried mother who called her local radio station to say that having read one of the books, her child started levitating. Of course, kids then rushed out to buy them, thinking that for £1.50 they could fly! Petitions were sent to Puffin Books by parents worried about their children using their imaginations too much. Madness.

And yet, over the same period of time, many teachers realised how beneficial the books were for reluctant readers and those with short attention spans, and the extent to which they could impart a love of reading in children. Teachers recognised that being an interactive, rather than passive experience, Fighting Fantasy books could promote critical thinking, problem-solving and decision-making. Later research further established that the books also improved literacy levels.

Back in 2011 you were instrumental in the publication of Nesta's Next Gen review

(tinyurl.com/nesta-ngen), which contributed to a reshaping of the school computing curriculum in 2014 – what are your thoughts on the progress of computing education since then?

It was something that had to be done. Prior to the curriculum changing, the teaching of ICT had largely been a strange hybrid of office skills, where kids were shown how to use proprietary software – typically Word, PowerPoint and Excel – without being given a means of creating their own. It was effectively teaching children how to read, but not write.

There's been good progress since 2014, but we're still some way off from reaping the rewards of computing being core to the National Curriculum. Initially there weren't enough teachers able to deliver the new curriculum and moreover, it is rather dry. The DfE has a tendency to demand standardised metrics for evaluating children's progress in a subject, typically via written tests based on recollection of 'chalk and talk' lessons. The truth is, the traditional way of teaching ICT doesn't work for the computing curriculum if creativity is the goal it should be. Creativity gives us an edge as a nation, be it in film, television, fashion, music, advertising, architecture or video games. Our creative industries are arguably the best in the world, so it's vital that we nurture creativity in schools in both analogue and digital formats.

Children need to be engaged and encouraged to make their own discoveries, and games like Minecraft can help. Children are motivated to build wonderful 3D architectural worlds, share them with friends and gain an understanding of different disciplines in context. A child will discover that by applying the heat of a furnace to silica sand they'll create glass, which can then added to the building they're crafting. Applied learning in context will likely stay in a child's memory longer.

Learning-by-doing sometimes goes missing in classrooms, but it's vital. I'm not





suggesting children should be playing games all day in school, but children can move from playing games, to crafting content in games like Minecraft to building their own games using code. Using games mechanics and delivering cross-curricular learning in simulation games, for example, will benefit children in multiple ways. The problem is that whilst people might believe in the cognitive benefits of playing chess, digital games are usually seen as trivial and lacking rigour.

To what extent will you be looking to address those issues through your involvement in the government's academies programme? [The reception to 16 Livingstone Academy through school is due to open in Bournemouth in 2021]

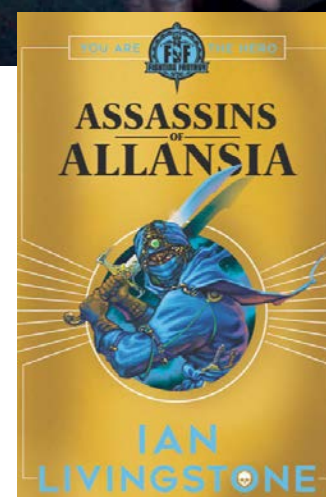
First, I should make it quite clear that The Livingstone Academies will serve the national curriculum. The pupils we admit won't be used as guinea pigs for our own benefit, but we'll try to ensure that the pedagogy used in delivering the curriculum will engage the children. Project-based learning will be very much a part of the education provided, and we'll be looking to partner with industry, having representatives

come in to give talks and set children projects that they can work on together.

Games-based learning will be used in part to deliver the curriculum, but when I say that, I don't want anyone to think that the children will just be playing games all day. We'll be applying game mechanics to some subjects for authenticity and context. Why can't learning be fun?

You're partnering with the Aspirations Academies Trust to open the school – how will the arrangement work, and what will the school's philosophy be informed by?

I'd thought about opening a school ever since the publication of the Next Gen review. Of course, I was aware that I didn't have the know-how or experience to run a school myself, so I needed to partner with a MAT that could. I met the CEO of Aspirations Academies Trust, who had heard about my work around digital creativity. We shared the same vision and I was invited to join their board, and we came to an agreement whereby the Livingstone Academy would be an Aspiration Academies school. The school will advocate the education values I believe



in, while Aspirations will operate the school itself.

The school will acknowledge the top three skills the World Economic Forum see as most important for living and working in the 21st century, namely critical thinking, creativity and problem solving. These meta skills will help school leavers to adapt to the furious rates of change in the digital world. With an entrepreneurial mindset and digital-making skills, school leavers might have ambitions to become job makers, not just jobseekers.

CAREER TIMELINE

1975
Co-founds Games Workshop with Steve Jackson and John Peake

1982
Co-authors with Jackson The Warlock of Firetop Mountain

1995
Oversees the post-merger creation of British video games company Eidos plc

2011
Co-authors the Next Gen review published by NESTA

2019
Appointed Non-executive Chairman of Sumo Group plc

2019
Planning permission granted for The Livingstone Academy in Bournemouth

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ACTIVE INTERVENTIONS

Kathryn Whittall and Natalie Richardson offer some advice for taking your PE provision to the next level

the most out of children in terms of their behaviour, academic outcomes and overall wellbeing.

WHAT DO YOU NEED?

There are various initiatives out there specifically designed to enhance the quality of a school's PE provision, but the first step should always be to look carefully at what your children actually need. What do they enjoy doing? What's likely to engage and inspire them? The best way of finding this out is by simply asking. Organise a pupil voice questionnaire and then follow it up with a similar survey for staff. Who feels confident teaching PE and who doesn't? Which areas do your colleagues feel most confident in, and what steps can the school take to better support them?

PRIMARY FOCUS

Consider also what you want the primary focus of your PE lessons to be. Should they revolve around discovering who's best at performing certain forms of sport and types of activities?

Or should they concentrate on seeing who can play honestly and abide by the rules, while being

There's a great deal of research that shows how physical activity can have a positive impact on academic achievement. That's why we're starting to see schools add active breaks into their daily routines, and getting children up and moving while in their classrooms. The Youth Sport Trust's Active 30:30 initiative (see youthsporttrust.org/active3030) is one example of this, in that it encourages schools to deliver half of the 60 minutes of physical activity recommended for all children as part of the government's Childhood Obesity Plan.

Between us, we've attended many PE conferences where medical professionals have discussed the positive impact that physical activity has on the human brain, and particularly how it can help get

considerate and respectful of others? You'll want to ensure the children can achieve their own personal bests, and persevere when learning a new skill – all of which is more important than simply focusing on who wins and who loses.

PE can do much to improve pupils' behaviour, particularly during break and lunchtimes. It's possible for incidents at those times and broader behavioural issues to filter into classrooms, but an effective way of preventing that can be teach children how to play together productively.

SELF-LED GAMES

Try setting up mini games at break times that the pupils are able to self-lead. Maybe appoint some Y5 and Y6 pupils to help lead activities for your KS1 cohort over lunch, or manage games played by your younger KS2 children. The social skills children will develop by doing this can play a crucial part in their development past KS2 into secondary and beyond, enabling them to communicate well with others, negotiate and achieve positive shared outcomes.

GET SUPPORT

Improving a school's PE provision is something that teachers, being trained professionals, are well placed to do with the skills they have. Some may need that extra confidence to push the necessary changes through, which is where support from an organisation like Get Set 4 PE can help – but the biggest obstacle will likely be their lack of time.

RESEARCH

There might not seem to be enough hours in the day to engage in research, and plan specific activities in a subject areas they lack knowledge of – but if you can give teachers a plan based on what the pupils need, which addresses your staff's professional gaps and instruct them on how to implement it, every primary teacher will be able to deliver high quality PE.

Kathryn Whittall and Natalie Richardson are the co-founders of Get Set 4 PE

 @getset4pe

 getset4pe.co.uk



TIMES THEY ARE A CHANGING

Four top tips for supporting learning multiplication facts

1 Emphasise multiplication is commutative as soon and as much as possible. Knowing that for every multiplication fact you know you also get one free reduces the load. Know 4×6 is 24, then 6×4 is 24. The array is the best image for helping children get a sense of how and why multiplication is commutative. An image of a four by six array is transformed into a six by four array simply by rotating it through 90 degrees.

2 Focus on 2 times, 10 times, 5 times and 4 times. Being confident in the 'low hanging fruits' of 2s, 10s, 5s and 4s facts provides a strong foundation for the remaining facts. Working on doubling is central to two times facts, and doubling twice gives you four times facts. Ten is easy, and halving helps ground the five times facts.

3 Put the smaller number first. Pupils in Japan are explicitly taught to reverse multiplications calculations if the smaller number is second. Seven times four? Do not do that; do four times seven. This has a double pay-off. Firstly, you are often going to end up with 2, 4, 5 or 3 as the first number – and they are easy (see tip 2). Second, if you need to do some skip counting to get the answer, then that is going to be quicker with the smaller number first. Seven times two means counting "two, four, six, eight, ten, 12, 14". But two times seven, hey, it is just seven, 14.

4 Teach the Chinese tables. The astute reader may have noticed that I have not used the words 'times tables' so far. That is because I am not convinced that chanting tables is the best way of getting to know your multiplication facts. I would much rather a child knew that, say, four times nine is 18 (double nine), 36 (double again), than have to chant through the four times table. But if you think tables help, the Chinese versions are rather more sensible than ours. In China, the two times table is: $1 \times 2 = 2$, $2 \times 2 = 4$. And that's it! Three times and four times tables: $1 \times 3 = 3$, $2 \times 3 = 6$, $3 \times 3 = 9$; $1 \times 4 = 4$, $2 \times 4 = 8$, $3 \times 4 = 12$, $4 \times 4 = 16$.

Each table only goes up as far as the square of the table number. So, you might ask, if the two times tables ends at 2×2 , when do the children learn what 9×2 is? Well, they do not directly, but they work a lot on multiplication being commutative (tip 1) and putting the smaller number first (tip 3), so given 9×2 , they know that is equivalent to 2×9 and, hey, that is 18.

Mike Askew is distinguished professor of mathematics education at University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, and series editor of Oxford University Press's new primary maths programme MathsBeat.

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Let Artificial Intelligence take the strain

Jake O'Keeffe, co-founder of Atom Learning, explains how AI can transform primary school learning

It's easy to become fixated by the hype of AI and technical jargon and forget about the day-to-day benefits it can bring.

My reminder came recently, speaking to a primary school teacher who had successfully reduced her workload by three hours a week. She had found preparing for reasoning lessons the least enjoyable aspect of her job. Hours were spent having to source a number of different problem sets for the wide range of abilities within her class. Technology enabled her to, instead, outsource all reasoning lesson and homework preparation to an AI-powered online learning platform. Three hours may not seem like a lot, but it was significant for her.

AI may not have swept through education at quite the same speed as in other industries, but AI-powered adaptive learning is having a

meaningful impact on primary school teachers' workload and students' academic progress.

Adaptive learning

Traditionally, adaptive learning engines relied upon teachers to grade the difficulty of content and then feed easier or harder content depending on how students performed. However, this method was proven not to be effective; humans are unable to grade difficulty levels as well as computers, missing out on nuances such as poor question wording.

Modern adaptive learning systems use AI to grade questions by analysing how previous students have answered them. Such approaches are all the more sophisticated because they can determine relationships between content from seemingly different topics.

For example, the AI can create a highly adaptive lesson in percentages based on a student's completion of work in operations. For teachers, it helps to introduce a new topic at the right level for each student, ensuring the student remains engaged and does not become demotivated before they've spent time becoming acquainted with the new subject matter.

Instilling confidence

Very sophisticated adaptive learning machines go one step further, not only basing content on the likelihood of a student answering a question correctly, but adapting the probability based on the user's engagement profile.

For example, a student who has been revising for five minutes is going to have a different tolerance to challenging content to a student who has already been revising for 40 minutes. In practice this means a teacher starts a lesson with students answering 75 per cent of questions correctly and this percentage increases over time so that after 25 minutes, the students have an 85 per cent chance of answering questions correctly.

Why is this important? It gives students a sense of progress, which is fundamental to instilling confidence, and maximising their long term engagement.

Very sophisticated systems can also determine what topic a student should sit next in order to best improve their grade, ultimately providing the student with their own personalised learning path.

Rather than using a fixed learning path in maths for all students in the class, teachers could create flexible learning paths personalised to each student according to their pre-existing subject knowledge, strengths and weaknesses.

The benefits of AI-powered adaptive learning are easy to measure with significant time savings for primary school teachers. It won't be long before they create a lesson personalised to each student in their class in a matter of minutes, which will be a hugely improved learning experience for students.

"Modern adaptive learning systems use AI to grade questions by analysing how previous students have answered them"



COULD MATHS ANXIETY BE AFFECTING YOUR TEACHERS?

Alexandra Riley shares advice for school leaders to better understand the issue and build greater confidence and resilience among staff and pupils

You've heard – and probably witnessed first-hand – how maths anxiety affects pupils. But what about teachers? While one in ten eight to 13-year-olds in Britain are thought to suffer from maths anxiety (bit.ly/2DObKQz), less is known about its impact on teaching staff.

We sought teachers' and leaders' views on this in a survey as part of our mission to showcase the #PowerofMaths and it became apparent that maths anxiety is not confined to pupils alone.

The majority of primary school teachers are generalists and some, because they are not subject specialists, lack confidence when teaching maths. This can manifest itself as avoidance (for instance, turning down the opportunity to be Maths Coordinator), a tendency to teach procedures and "tricks" rather than deep conceptual understanding, reluctance to experiment with new lesson ideas or negative comments about maths in class. These feelings can overwhelm all teaching staff, not only class teachers. In our survey, one respondent shared how they've seen teaching assistants become distressed at being assigned to maths – a reaction that is not often seen in other subjects.

This highlights that maths anxiety among teachers and staff can have significant consequences on: their personal engagement with maths; their confidence as teachers and ability to support all pupils' learning across the attainment range; and in some cases, how pupils think and feel about the subject.

At Pearson, we believe in the power of maths and want to build skills and confidence so everyone can engage with opportunities, achieve and progress throughout their lives. Our second #PowerOfMaths Roundtable brought together teachers, academics, charity and business leaders to explore maths anxiety and how to tackle it.

Here are some practical steps and tools, drawn from those discussions, to help you build greater mathematical confidence and resilience among your teachers and pupils alike.

1. UNDERSTAND AND IDENTIFY THE ISSUE IN YOUR SCHOOL

Firstly, it's important that schools have a clear understanding of what maths anxiety is to be able to effectively identify, treat and even prevent it, as well as build greater resilience.

WHAT IS MATHS ANXIETY?

Leading academic, Sue Johnston-Wilder, explains that 'maths anxiety can be described as a negative emotional reaction to mathematics that acts as an 'emotional handbrake' and holds up progress in maths' (bit.ly/2Ygqd18). The severity can range from a feeling of mild tension to experiencing a strong and deep-rooted fear of maths.

Understanding maths anxiety is the first step to identifying, preventing or treating it. You could raise awareness by running focused CPD with staff or putting the definition of maths anxiety on a board in the staffroom.

HOW DOES IT AFFECT YOUR SCHOOL?

Every school is different, so leaders should seek to understand the causes and scale of the issue in their own context.

Questionnaires for staff and pupils can be useful tools to support this. Surveys could range from anonymously asking staff about their feelings towards maths, if there are any areas that particularly invoke anxiety and what could help them to build greater confidence.



Pupils could be asked to rate their own anxiety from one to ten when they are given a maths question to answer.

These insights can help you to identify any patterns and inform prevention and treatment strategies, as well as open a healthy dialogue about feelings towards maths.

2. BUILD GREATER MATHS CONFIDENCE AND RESILIENCE AMONG TEACHERS

Teachers' passion for a subject plays a key role in inspiring and engaging pupils, and building their confidence. However, the reverse can also be true, where anxieties or insecurities around a subject can be unknowingly displayed, relayed, and then sensed by pupils.

Therefore, developing your teachers' confidence and resilience in maths is a vital step in embedding positive attitudes throughout the entire school.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

CPD models that include subject-specific training help teachers to gain a strong conceptual understanding of maths, as well as a good grounding in the most effective pedagogies. This in turn helps teachers to feel comfortable that they are planning and delivering lessons that will successfully develop pupils' mathematical knowledge and skills. It is important to embed this for all teaching staff, from NQTs to experienced teachers.

A common CPD framework across the school will give all teachers equal access to this vital support and, as an added benefit, will ensure you have a consistent approach to teaching maths across the whole school. This is particularly important since being taught multiple methods by different teachers can lead to confusion and is considered one of the causes of maths anxiety among primary school pupils (bit.ly/2OSrN65).

Encourage staff to use team meetings to share new learning and promote peer-to-peer lesson observation and reflection. Developing an open culture of collaboration will further enhance teachers' pedagogical practice and confidence.

GROWTH MINDSET AMONG TEACHERS

You may be familiar with strategies for developing a growth mindset among your pupils but it's also an approach everyone in your school can try – including staff. By creating spaces where teachers can ask questions about areas of maths they have found challenging, you will show that it's normal and acceptable for teachers to

face difficulties in maths. Sharing and finding strategies, resources and solutions together, will help every teacher to grow in confidence and transmit a positive mindset around maths to their pupils.

TRUSTED RESOURCES

Teachers need access to the right tools to perform their jobs confidently and effectively. High-quality resources, including textbooks, teacher guides, online materials and videos, are the ultimate multi-tool for teachers. They can outline essential subject knowledge for any given topic; provide carefully structured questions to consolidate pupils' learning and develop their reasoning skills; guide teachers in supporting learners at every attainment level and enable them to effectively assess their pupils.

Where possible, encourage your teachers to use a coherent set of teaching and learning resources. Knowing that they have prepared using trusted resources will give them greater confidence as they plan, rehearse and deliver their lessons.

3. CHANGE PERCEPTIONS OF MATHS: SHOWCASE THE CREATIVITY AND REAL-WORLD RELEVANCE

A key way to help reduce the anxiety that surrounds maths among staff and pupils, is to change the way the subject is commonly perceived. Too often maths is considered 'boring', 'uncreative' or 'unnecessary' outside of the classroom. The subject should reflect real life and include real-world contexts to help build enthusiasm and engagement. But how?

ENCOURAGE STAFF TO GET CREATIVE

Take a whole-school approach to bringing the creative elements of maths to the fore. Give teachers the freedom to develop their teaching approaches to make the subject tangible and conjure a sense of exploration and curiosity rather than just 'right' or 'wrong' answers.

Mathematicians regularly work in groups to explore concepts and challenges, so encourage teachers to bring more group working into their classrooms. You could even support termly whole-school maths challenges that involve staff and pupils working in teams to solve them.

Think outside of the box when trying to showcase the vibrancy of maths within your school. Why not take inspiration from the 'STEAM' movement, which includes the arts alongside science, technology, engineering and maths? As

part of the #HipHopEd initiative in America, urban youth communities are engaged with STEM subjects through Hip-Hop music. You can find out more about this initiative, and many other inspiring ideas from fellow school leaders and teachers, on social media.

SHOW MATHS AT WORK IN THE 'REAL WORLD'

Making connections with local industries and businesses can help to showcase the real-world relevance, opportunities and careers that maths can unlock.

Whether businesses go into schools, or vice-versa, the chance to see real-life mathematicians and the subject's practical application can help demystify maths for both pupils and teachers. Placements in industry for teachers, as well as pupils, can help to educate and enthuse adults about STEM, impacting how they discuss the subject with their pupils.

Making connections across different industries can help teachers to consciously break down the stereotypes about who is 'good at maths' that can lead to anxiety. You can further support this in your school by celebrating and raising the profile of diverse individuals who are breaking ceilings and excelling in STEM, from astronauts, mathematicians and engineers to amazing maths and science teachers!

These are just some of the tips we've explored through the Power of Maths Roundtable and Guide to Tackling Maths Anxiety.

Maths anxiety won't be tackled overnight but teachers can play a powerful role in driving out fear from their classrooms. Supporting teachers to reframe their own thinking about maths, providing professional development, and creating a culture of collaboration and openness to new teaching practices can enable teachers to grow in maths confidence. These steps are a vital part of the journey to building greater resilience and success for both teachers and pupils.



Alexandra Riley is Senior Strategy Manager at Pearson and part of the team

behind the #PowerOfMaths campaign. To read the Guide to Tackling Maths Anxiety, visit: go.pearson.com/pomuk

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LET US SAY – SOMETHING INTERESTING

As assemblies move away from collective worship,
how can you get the best out of them?

I remember my first day at school. I really do. The headteacher, (whose name I can't remember), read us a story in assembly about a boy with a fish, a stone and a knife.

I remembered it all year and I know this because I remember asking the headteacher in the summer sports day if she was ever going to read it to us again. There is another assembly I can recall when a different headteacher told us a story about buying a bag of 'wonky veg'.

He used it to explain to us about how a certain tomato, with its bumpy attached twin, was still a tomato. He told us how he had challenged himself to buy it, because it was clearly still a tomato. He taught me about difference and inclusion, seeking out one's unconscious bias, all in a moment.

Ofsted has not paid much attention to 'collective worship' requirements since 2004. Parents also have a very clear right to withdraw their children from collective worship, reinforced recently in a case which concluded that the parents with children in a faith school had a right to demand secular, prayer-free sessions away from the main assembly. So if assemblies are not there for collective worship, what exactly is their point and how can we get the best out of them?

ATTENTION GRABBING

One of the biggest things I worry about when planning an assembly is the knowledge that it's hard to find something that will gain traction with



"I return to the headteacher with his tomato. Tell a story and the children will hop on for the ride"

the full age range. I am only too aware of how much (or little!) the complicated language that may trip off my tongue actually lands in the minds of the five-year-olds in front of me. And equally, if I pitch what I deliver at the five-year-olds, how long will the Year 6 pupils last before switching off.

GET THEM HOOKED

Experience tells me that there are two things that ensure their attention is captured. The first is that you link your

assemblies with a connecting 'hook'. Build on something from week to week and it gives those young minds something to latch onto. I am currently delivering assemblies using a different page from 'What a Wonderful Word' by Nicola Edwards, beautifully illustrated by Luisa Uribe.

The first week was a little bit wobbly but now five weeks in, I can sense the expectancy as the children arrive.

TELL A STORY

I also ensure there is a story. Even if it is a little anecdote, the story is at the heart. You only have to pick up a book on change management to read about the power of stories, and how they are one of the most effective tools for introducing new ideas and making them stick. There, I believe, lies the purpose of an assembly. Our job is to provide transformative experiences for our children, to take them somewhere new and to stretch their thinking. Sometimes the machine of transformation might be a little bit crude - capturing all 400 or so children at one time is hard - but with the right hook, and the right story, you can definitely move everyone to another place.

I return to the headteacher with his tomato. Tell a story and the children will hop on for the ride. And you never know, one child in the room might remember it for decades to come.



Rebecca Leek is director of strategy at ASSET Education and a former SENCo

NURSERIES MAKE YOUR PUPILS FLOURISH

Your guide to maximise the potential of a school-attached nursey unit

Research shows that spending time in pre-school or nursery education enhances a child's development and supports their school readiness. There are a variety of different types of preschool provision; independent nurseries, statutory stand-alone nursery schools, nursery units attached to primary schools, private and voluntary preschool centres.

The focus of this article is not about giving preference to one provider over another, but rather is an opportunity to look more closely at the benefits of having a nursery unit attached to the primary school, and the "do's" and "don'ts" for headteachers of this particular model.

Primary schools are well suited to offering preschool provision as they are in a prime position to ensure smooth transitions for children as they move from preschool to primary school. In the best provision, headteachers and foundation teams get to

know and form relationships with the children right from the start of their school years. There is an opportunity for facilitating progression and continuity where reception, year one teachers and assistants can readily spend time in the nursery and vice versa.

Relationships can be established with parents from the very earliest opportunity, enabling trusting and authentic parental engagement as the children continue through the primary school system. Children with additional needs can be identified early and support programmes established, often with the support of the SEN coordinator from the primary school. Continuity in systems for children with additional needs and their parents is another real benefit. The nursery team also enjoy the benefits of being part of a larger school community; they are able to establish more friendships, avail of more staff expertise, support, resources, events and career movement.

Here are some Do's and Don'ts that will guide headteachers in maximising this potential of having a nursery unit attached to their school.

DO'S

DO ensure that you, the headteacher, are visible in your nursery unit. Make time on a regular basis to visit the unit to get to know the children, staff and parents. Spend time with the children at play so that you form positive relationships with them and become more familiar with their stage of development. If early years is not your area of expertise, then it is really important that you get to know the routines of the nursery, understand how children learn and develop, and know how the adults interact with children, observe and plan for learning.

DO attend training with your nursery leader to show your support and also to learn about their role. Become familiar with the content of the preschool curriculum. Be

aware of the observation and assessment process which is integral to planning for learning. Be aware of the more fluid approach to planning for learning which must be linked to observations. This means that detailed plans cannot be submitted to leadership teams weeks in advance of learning. Do consider alternative planning approaches and submission timeframes for nursery, reception and foundation stage teams.

DO maximise the opportunity for communication between nursery, reception and foundation teams. It is important that both teams are aware of, respect and share what each year group is doing. Where possible, make time for the reception and foundation teams to spend time in the nursery viewing how children learn in a less formal environment; and how the adults observe, plan for and deliver learning across the curriculum. Also make time for whole school subject coordinators to observe what is happening in the nursery. It is important that they recognise and value that the curriculum starts in nursery and not just in reception or year one.

DO facilitate shared staff training sessions for nursery and reception/foundation staff. There are many generic areas that the teams can productively address together; observation and assessment, creativity, emotional well-being, outdoor learning, interactions and role of the adult are just some of the areas that all early years practitioners should be considering regardless of which particular year group they teach.

DO ensure that the nursery team have appropriate time for observations, assessment, planning and administration, particularly if they operate a dual day system where they have back-to-back sessions running in the morning and afternoon. Considerable time is also required for the sourcing and preparation of





engaging low cost and no cost materials to support learning. Additional time is required for communication with parents and making links with other agencies and professionals. When appropriate time is allocated, teams excel and are in a better position to provide an excellent service to the children and their parents. The primary school reaps the benefits in the long term.

DO ensure that the development objectives for the nursery are clearly linked to whole school development objectives. In the best practice, the nursery leader is co-opted on to the senior leadership team and is aware of the whole school strategic plan. They are well placed to ensure that the nursery is fully integrated into the working life of the whole school and can ensure that the nursery is fully aware of what is happening throughout the whole school.

DO ensure that the nursery team and children are fully involved in the life of the school; that they are invited to and included in school assemblies when appropriate, and invited to concerts and other events. This can be difficult given the different structure of the nursery day and the possible physical

separation from the main school building, but in the interest of staff morale, professional development and children's well-being at transition stage, every effort for inclusion should be made.

DON'T'S

DON'T redeploy staff from the main school to your nursery unit without appropriate training. This is a highly-skilled job that requires staff who are well trained and in tune with how young children learn. The delivery of the nursery curriculum requires a less formal approach. Adults must be able to deliver the curriculum in a non-prescriptive manner.

DON'T assume that your nursery leader can manage independently. They will require support and continuous professional development like any other member of the school team.

DON'T forget how lucky you are to have a nursery unit attached to your school. It is a privilege to have influence over the quality and delivery of the pre-school experiences

of these young children. You will reap the rewards!

DON'T forget to celebrate nursery success within the main school - too many people have limited appreciation of how crucial the pre-school experience is, and lack knowledge of what children gain during their pre-school year. It is important to share all the gains, particularly with reception and foundation stage teams, as they need to know where and how to pitch the next level of learning.



Clare Devlin is a provider of primary and Early Years training for individuals, early years settings, primary schools and other organisations

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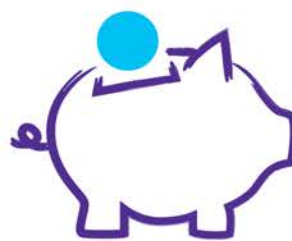
Packed with demonstrations, hands-on experiences and inspiring careers advice, this workshop is an exciting way to enhance a classic literature adaptation, offering the older pupils an opportunity to broaden their knowledge of the arts combined with STEM, enjoying a practical insight into what goes on behind the scenes.

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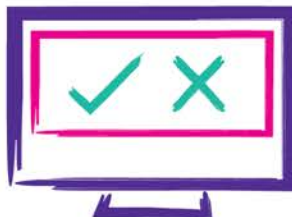
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Buildings & Facilities

ARE YOU TAKING TOO MANY RISKS?

Ken Diable looks at how to set high safety standards while working at height



In 2019 the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) issued costly penalties for severe injuries on school sites caused by dangerous working at height. Financial penalties included a fine of over £120k following a fall from height from a school sports hall. Another case saw a contractor suffer life-changing injuries falling from a school roof. Despite harsh repercussions, HSE figures showed that falls from height continue to be the most prevalent workplace killer in 2018.

IT IS NOT A LEGAL BURDEN OR BUREAUCRATIC CHORE

With this in mind, as school leaders set goals for 2020, we'd like to see thoughts turn to higher standards for safe working at height. As the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) says, health and safety planning in schools "... should not be seen as simply another legal burden or a bureaucratic chore. A planned approach to managing risk should be seen as an enabler, not just to prevent accidents... but to build a culture of sensible risk management."

Echoing RoSPA's statement, we believe that a safe working culture can only be achieved through proactive, informed and

consistent approaches – something that needs to be supported by the highest standards.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR BUILDING THAT CULTURE?

Popular answers are the site manager, caretaker or facilities manager. However, the role of Headteachers and other senior members of staff shouldn't be underestimated. For school leaders, the first step in supporting a height-safe culture is to make sure you are informed.

The 'Work at Height Regulations 2005' are set out to prevent death and injury caused by a fall from height. If you are an employer or are in control of work at height, (including contracting works externally) these regulations apply to you. You must ensure work is appropriately planned, supervised and carried out by competent personnel – including the use of suitable equipment.

WHEN WOULD THEY BECOME APPLICABLE?

Well, consider the challenges that older, traditional primary schools present; high ceilings, ageing roofs, vaulted halls, etc. Whether a caretaker takes

responsibility for cosmetic repairs or engages a contractor, the employer must ensure it is carried out appropriately, using proper equipment. In Heightsafe's experience, schools, old and new, large and small, are often unaware of the assets they need and the equipment they already have in place to support safe working at height.

For newer builds, it's vital that, as part of the development planning, proactive and preventative safety measures and equipment needs are considered.

When it comes to maintaining new buildings, facilities managers or caretakers are likely to bear the responsibility and should, therefore, be consulted about ongoing health and safety requirements.

That could include, for example, safe roof access which we often see forgotten as part of the new build process.

It's only when access is needed that safety equipment might be considered. Unfortunately, this consideration is sometimes entirely overridden by the 'it'll be fine' mentality. And that's when potentially life-changing falls from height are most likely to happen.

ANNUAL CHECKS

Even if a school houses the right safety equipment, it may lack up-to-date equipment records. Knowing what you have is the first challenge.

The next is making sure that schedules are in place for annual checks of these assets to ensure they are still fit for purpose. Audit and assessment should ideally be a yearly activity.

Across industries, the main sticking points when it comes to safe working at height is education and preparation. It's not wilful rule-breaking that often leads to dangerous falls - it's a lack of training and awareness of the risks associated with working at height.

School leaders can help to overturn this through understanding the risks and empowering facilities staff to adopt proactive, preventative safety strategies in 2020 and beyond.

Ken Diable is the managing director and founder of Heightsafe



HEALTHY HANDS EQUAL HEALTHY SCHOOLS

Chris Brooks examines how to prevent illness outbreaks and promote hand hygiene in primary schools

With the winter months often comes a spike in cases of norovirus, sometimes known as the 'winter vomiting bug'. How can school business managers and staff manage the spread of illness and prevent against it?

It is crucial that the spread of germs is minimised and that good handwashing habits are taught from an early age. In fact, the Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) programme for Key Stages 1 and 2 specifies that pupils should be taught how to maintain personal hygiene and improve their health and wellbeing.

According to the Health Protection Agency, almost one million bacteria can be created by one person in a school day, and hands are the main vehicle for germ transfer, either by person-to-person contact or touching everyday surfaces. Hand hygiene is by far the best method of infection prevention in schools. Norovirus, for example, can survive outside the body for several days according to the NHS. Washing hands with soap and water is one of the simplest and easiest ways for schoolchildren to protect themselves and others from a range of illnesses.

Resources such as child-friendly posters and activities can help raise awareness amongst pupils. Teaching materials such as presentations and activity sheets can also help highlight the basics of handwashing and its importance, as well as how, why and when to wash hands.

However, it is within the school itself where hand hygiene compliance can be most effectively targeted. Bespoke, colour-coded dispensers can help pupils learn which product to use when, as well as

being simple reminders to use soap for example. Bright and attractive dispensers can bring handwashing to life in the washroom and help engage pupils. Washroom foam soap provider, SC Johnson, make bespoke decals for their dispensers which gives an opportunity to get pupils involved in the design of the images, helping to raise the importance of hand hygiene in a constructive and participative manner.

School business managers should also look at the types of dispensers installed; hygiene compliance can be an irrelevant factor if the washroom itself is unhygienic. Bulk-filled, open soap systems are most commonly seen in washrooms, but in reality they can present a serious hygiene problem. Airborne germs and bacteria can enter the soap reservoir, risking contamination. According to a study by Chattman, Maxwell and Gerba, 25 per cent of refillable bulk soap dispensers are contaminated with unsafe levels of bacteria and can actually leave the hands with a shocking 25 times more bacteria after washing.

Sealed cartridge soap dispensers will bring maximum hygiene, with a measured dose of fresh product dispensed each time. The maintenance of washrooms has a significant impact on hand hygiene, and with a more readily replaceable cartridge, this is made easier and simpler for cleaning professionals.

Chris Brooks is a Technical Product Manager at SC Johnson Professional

 @SCJProfessional

 www.scjp.com

Is your school secure?

As a school leader do you have things all locked up?

The starting point for any school security policy is the separation of children from visitors who have no contact rights. Your first priority should therefore be to maintain a daytime working hours requirement that visitors be channelled away from areas where children are present.

This should involve directing visitors from perimeter entry points to wherever the school chooses to 'receive' and 'process' them. Ensure that any visitors are easily identified thereon, ideally using brightly coloured visitor badges and lanyards, which can help with identifying authorised visitors from a distance. It

"Intruder alarms are an important part of a school's security apparatus"

may be helpful to have DBS-checked visitors wear differently coloured lanyards, thus indicating their authorisation to move around the school unaccompanied.

Certain aspects of school security can often be seen more as a luxury than a necessity, particularly when budgets are tight, but it's still essential to take care of the basics first. Anyone with a responsibility for ensuring the school buildings are secure out of hours needs to have a clear plan concerning the locking of all windows and doors. The best way of doing this, as a final check, is to walk around the exterior of the building, rather

than the interior – this will allow for direct and immediate visual inspection of all potential access routes, without the need to navigate corridors and enter every classroom and space with outside-facing doors and glazing.

Intruder alarms are an important part of a school's security apparatus, and relatively cheap to install, but will only be an effective tool if deployed wisely. Motion sensors can sometimes be too sensitive or temperamental for certain school environments, but it's possible to install alarm systems fitted with a 'dual path configuration', whereby additional combination passive infrared/microwave sensors are used to prevent false positives.

Many schools will also employ access control devices, typically in the form of combination keypads, proximity cards and/or tokens. These will commonly be used in place of traditional keys and assigned to individual members of staff. Cards can be programmed in a number of different ways, and potentially used to prevent certain staff from accessing the school grounds or specific areas outside of working hours.

Security of sensitive items is always an important consideration, with items such as cash, keys and sensitive documents requiring 24-hour protection. A safe, or security rated cabinet located in either the Head teacher's office, or school office is not unusual. Check that this safe is fire/security rated to at least the minimum recommended by insurers and/or local authority or trust. It goes without saying that it should be secured at all times, but just in case, my personal recommendation is that it has a securable cabinet within the safe to secure the most sensitive of items, even if the door is open periodically throughout the working day.

Finally, it's also worth reviewing what arrangements you currently have in place

concerning basic key security away from the school environment. This policy will need to be regularly reinforced with every person holding a key to the school. The keys themselves should always be kept in a safe, concealed location rather than simply left in full view or abandoned by the front door. Always secure them fully out of sight, away from any locations that can easily be accessed by an intruder.

John Archbold is a member of the association of security consultants and Principle consultant of Archbold Security Consultancy – a security advisory service specialising in security planning within the education sector.

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COMMUNITY SPIRIT

We find out how an innovative design for a mixed use development resulted in a primary school with teaching facilities to rival those of many secondaries...



ABI HOPPER
Headteacher,
Nightingale
School



REBECCA WATTS
Architect and
project associate,
Hawkins\Brown



All images © Jack Hobhouse

INTENTION

RW: We were approached by Hackney council to develop a new building for Nightingale Primary School and a residential development on a shared existing site – one occupied by a single-storey building used by several local schools for additional classroom space.

AH: I was appointed as headteacher when the project was still on paper. Our old site at the time was fairly close by, allowing us to remain within the same catchment area and community that the school has always been a very big part of. It was important for everybody that we wouldn't be moving far away.

RW: Our brief was to maximize the site in terms of residential provision, while simultaneously providing a high quality school. The project took five years, from the securing of the bid to final completion in June 2019, though the school was able to occupy the building and start using it from February of that year.

“Our brief was to maximize the site in terms of residential provision, while simultaneously providing a high quality school”

AH: The building work went right up to the point where we were supposed to be moving, so there wasn't much opportunity to show the children around beforehand. I was pushing to get us moved in as quickly as possible, which we managed after the February half term. I told the teachers to prepare their lessons and not do anything differently in the

new building – to just take the children into their new classrooms, sit them down and carry on as normal. It was interesting to see how quickly the children adjusted – they really took it in their stride.

RW: We wanted to use the space dedicated to the school as effectively as possible, but also make this particular mixed use scheme feel united in its built outcome. We located the school and residential entrances on opposite sides of the site, so that they could work independently and have their own identity from ground level, while outwardly appearing as part of a single building.

AW: The architect and LA's technical advisor listened to what we needed there to be in the school and translated those requirements really well, particularly the specialist teaching rooms. We have a cooking room with space for 30, two ovens, two sinks and two dishwashers.

There's also an art room, a dance/drama studio and a climbing wall that we've had installed. The outdoor areas are gorgeous, too – there are vegetable planting boxes on one of the roofs, alongside a wildflower meadow, and we keep bees up there.

IMPLEMENTATION

RW: What we tried to do with this design was ensure the school had rooftop play areas that weren't encroached on by the residential side. When you're on the site, you simply feel like you're in a school – you're not aware of any residential structures looming over you. As you move further up the building, the storey flats have screening at the lower portions of their windows so that they're looking out and across, rather than down at the school.

AH: The parents and staff are so wowed by the building that they barely notice the residents above us. I can't think of a time when I've seen someone on their balcony, or even been aware of their presence. As the community above us grows, with more people moving in, I'd like there to be some form of collaboration. I want to invite them in to our Christmas concert and other events. Rather than simply ignoring each other, the best outcome would be to create a community that perhaps goes beyond the school.

RW: It's a two-storey building that has two wings. The classrooms are all located along the edges of those, so that they're looking out onto different play spaces, each designed with a specific use in mind. There's a MUGA on the ground floor to the east, and a KS1 play area in the centre that has water dams and interesting play equipment based around physics and balance. On the west side is the nursery play space, and on the east roof there's a calm play area with seating for storytelling and similar activities. Finally, there's my favourite – the west roof, which has planting areas for horticulture and a space for beekeeping.

AH: The move to a new building coincided with a change in our site management. Our former site manager had decided to retire at around the

same time, so we began using a facilities management company and were very lucky in that they appointed as our site manager someone who had previously worked with us as a TA. There are some new challenges to manage, such as ensuring the wooden equipment on our exposed rooftops is regularly checked for splinters and other types of wear, but in general it's worked out well so far.

RW: The school uses roof lights that act as passive step ventilation chimneys, while bringing light deeper into the classroom spaces. Those are connected to a building management system that can be overridden from the classroom spaces, and we utilised a concrete frame to keep the building cool and prevent overheating, which can be a common occurrence in schools.





AH: If I was to pick my favourite bit of the school, it would have to be the climbing wall. I just adore it – seeing the children coach each other from being terrified, to being able to climb to the top is something I'll never tire of. I make the same joke to everyone we show round – 'We're the top primary school in Hackney for rock climbing...'

RW: We've been back a few times to gather user quotes and experience on how the building is working in practice. The variety of spaces it has allows the school to offer a curriculum that's really forward-thinking and quite different to other schools in the area.

AH: The thing that pleases me the most is simply seeing the children – particularly those who I know who I know live in difficult situations outside of school – and how happy and proud they are when arriving each day, and how excited they are to learn here.

 @weareaiLDN
 nightingale.hackney.sch.uk
architectureinitiative.com

AH: The classrooms are big and the ceilings high, so everything feels light and airy, and the underfloor heating in the classrooms is set at just the right temperature. In our old building we used to lose at least a month of learning during the summer term, simply because the children were too hot, uncomfortable and unable to concentrate. This year we simply breezed right on through to the holidays with barely any issues at all. Everything felt so much more comfortable.

IMPACT

AH: We have a number of children at our school who have autism, and we wondered how they'd cope with the change, but they've all found the new building to be very calming. There's

the lightness, the sense of space and size of the classrooms, but other aspects too – the classrooms are all fitted with baffling to dampen the sound, which means the school feels especially comfortable on a sensory level to children with additional needs. That's made a huge difference.

RW: In the centre between both wings there's a 'heart space', which is where the school's learning resource centre and main breakout area is located. There's a set of feature stairs centrally positioned there which look up to an area called the Park Room, which is a versatile space for reading, holding exhibitions and other uses with a view over Hackney Downs. I think this, alongside the breakout area, is one of the development's most successful spaces.



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THREE WAYS TO ENGAGE THROUGH OUTDOOR PLAY

The Association of Play Industries (API) examines how to plan an engaging outdoor space for Key Stage 1

After spending a large proportion of time in the Early Years Foundation Stage learning through play, it's important to keep children engaged through outdoor play and exploration throughout Key Stage 1 and beyond. In this critical stage of their primary education, the playground is not just a space to let off steam at breaktime but is also an extension of the classroom to support the whole curriculum.

Playground space is often at a premium, and many schools have a dedicated EYFS area with the rest of the school then sharing the main playground and often the same equipment. In this article, we look at three key ways to make sure that shared spaces, such as this, support the needs of pupils between the ages of five and seven.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

In KS1, children are developing the fundamental movement skills that are so important for both physical and cognitive development and these activities should be woven into all areas of the curriculum for this reason. Supporting the core areas of agility, balance and co-ordination can be done using traditional play equipment such as trim trails and climbing walls or creating a multi-use games area for more formal PE activities and team games, as well as loose resources.

Providing opportunities for regular physical activity within a school environment is critical not just for children's health but also for their development and academic success.

The key to this is to include increasing challenges that allow children to test their physical skills, starting with basic movements, progressing to more challenging tasks as children gain confidence and ability.

THE CURRICULUM OUTDOORS

We don't need to tell you that taking the curriculum outdoors is a great way for children to connect theory to the real world.



“Providing opportunities for regular physical activity within a school environment is critical”

Mathematics is a great example of this and a precondition of success across all of the curriculum subjects. Size, shape, time and counting are all things that can easily be explored outdoors with some simple prompts. Surfacing and line markings are a great way of doing this – think number lines, simple games with targets and scores to record and add up as well as outdoor stopwatches to record time and calculate speed.

As long as you are not too prescriptive about specific games, all of the above could be used in lessons for younger or older pupils depending on the activity, as well as during free play time.

FLEXIBILITY

In a limited space and with limited budgets, it's important to make the best use of any spend in your playground.

Employ an expert to advise you on the best equipment to choose, while making the best use of your space. Many API members will provide free consultations to help you achieve this. Remember to choose a supplier that can demonstrate their experience in designing school playgrounds specifically and one that takes the time to understand the needs of your individual school and which age ranges will be using different areas.

The Association of Play Industries (API) is the lead trade body in the play sector. It represents the interests of manufacturers, installers, designers and distributors of both outdoor and indoor play equipment and safer surfacing. The API promotes best practice and high-quality play provision within the play industry.

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REFINE YOUR 'READ ME' FILES

Is your edtech strategy fit for purpose and future-proofed?



It's crucial that schools have a coherent vision of what they want to offer in terms of educational technology. Ideally, this should be a simple statement, something easy to understand that will help keep things on track. You could, for example, phrase it as, 'By the time pupils leave this school, they will be competent and confident users of a wide range of technology.'

Once you've settled on what your statement should say and how it should be worded, it can then act as a yardstick by which to judge your future edtech purchases and practices. The question you should be regularly asking yourself during those procurement and development processes is 'Will this help us to realise our edtech vision?'

The strategic plan itemises who is going to do what and by when, while serving as a basis for your budgeting. Securing agreement for your planned IT spending over the next three to five years may be virtually impossible, but it's much more likely to happen if you can point to how such spending will help the school meet the objectives set out the strategic plan.

Once your vision and plan are in place, don't let them languish in the bottom of a filing cabinet. Make sure both are available for all to see via the school's Learning Platform, or stored in a cloud location where all staff can access them. Consider also adding them to the school website, where they can act as a selling point.

FACILITIES LIST

Staff can't be expected to use your edtech and ICT facilities if they don't know what they are. Display a comprehensive list of your school's hardware, software and any other relevant edtech facilities in the staffroom, as well as in the cloud. It may also be worth keeping a list of software licences, as examined in one of my previous PSM articles (see bit.ly/psmLicences).

'HOW TO' DOCUMENTS

A key barrier to effective edtech use can be staff's lack of knowledge over how to use it. It's a good idea to produce a series of simple and concise 'cheat sheets' that can help get people started,

alongside lengthier guides for the more savvy and ambitious. These can similarly be stored in the cloud so that colleagues can print off what they need when required, though it's helpful to also keep some physical copies on hand. The cheat sheets can be subsequently collated into manuals and kept close to any shared laptops and computers or potentially turned into wall posters.



FACILITIES BOOKING

The procedure for booking your edtech/ICT facilities should be easy, quick and convenient. Situate the relevant booking form, wall planner or similar in a suitable shared space, such as the staffroom, and ensure that your colleagues know where to find it.

REPORTING FAULTS

A guide to the procedure for fault reporting is essential. After all, when a device, item of software or online service goes wrong, what can teachers do about it? Collate advice on all three into a single document so that everything staff might need help with is in one place. Again, there can be benefits to hosting this type of information in the cloud where everyone can access it, but ensure that the relevant link is set as 'Read Only' to prevent unauthorised editing.

Terry Freedman is an independent education technology consultant and writer

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 ictineducation.org



PLANNING YOUR EDTECH STRATEGY

Al Kingsley points out what not to forget when developing your digital plans

The driver behind spending on primary edtech sometimes doesn't come from teacher-identified needs, but from a finance team saying, "we've got £10k to spend – what do you want?" This 'use it or lose it' sentiment means strategic thinking is quickly discarded. This is a false economy and means vital considerations are often overlooked.

1 What's the long-term goal?

Without a digital strategy and training that looks ahead and understands what needs to be achieved to support the school, enthusiastic purchases like tablets quickly lose their lustre.

2 Mapping infrastructure now, and in the future

Sometimes investment in underlying infrastructure makes more sense than new gizmos. For instance, just 27% of primary IT leaders think their Wi-Fi is good enough to support their school's digital aims. Get advice, and check you have the infrastructure to support edtech now, and in years to come.

3 Make the most of what you have

As part of the audit of your existing ecosystem consider the assets you already have and whether devices can be upgraded or redeployed, rather than replaced. For example, Karl Denton, IT manager at St Bede CofE Primary Multi Academy Trust recalls one primary school finding ten ageing laptops in a storeroom. Instead of replacing them at a cost of £2,500, they upgraded them to SSD hard disks at a tenth of the cost. They were redeployed into an intervention room where they are used to aid children's research.

4 How does edtech help teacher workload?

The DfE's annual workforce study (see <https://bit.ly/2PuOlut>) reports primary teachers are still working on average 50 hours a week. Understandably schools are mainly motivated to procure edtech because it will improve children's learning. However, always ask yourself the question "How does this make teachers lives easier?" before purchase. Whether cutting planning time, making parental communication easier or providing flexible tools for creating resources, it proves you truly value your teaching talent. Another example from IT Manager Karl Denton, points to a primary school who introduced Learning by Questions finding, from teachers' feedback, that they were saving five hours a week and were finding the process much less stressful.

There are similar countless examples of edtech being used brilliantly in primary schools. However, there are also many examples of short-term wins that have not delivered in the long term. Taking a longer-term view can feel daunting but primary schools already think long term about many other aspects of school life, it's important we add edtech to the list. That's why alongside ICT Evangelist Mark Anderson we've launched A Guide to Creating a Digital Strategy in Education (see <https://bit.ly/2s94Wub>), a free resource any school can use to lay the tracks of a successful edtech strategy.



Al Kingsley is a Primary School Governor and MD of NetSupport

To own or to lease?

When procuring ICT, it's essential to consider not just what you're buying but how you buy it, says Mark Seddon...

In broad terms, 'ICT investment' can include the cost of software and licences for numerous purposes, be it for educational, administrative or general use (such as your office applications and antivirus software). It also covers hardware, of course, from computers and their associated peripherals (printers and scanners, for example) to the devices, components and cabling needed to transport data around your school network.

There are also the service costs to bear in mind when it comes to commissioning and installing ICT solutions in the first instance, plus the sums you can expect to pay for ongoing remote support and hardware maintenance. It may be that a colleague has to be trained in the skills of network management and maintenance, in which case they'll have to further reckon with the costs to them in terms of time and commitment.

As schools strive to provide their students with the most advanced digital equipment they can, the question of how they intend to purchase said equipment becomes increasingly important. Schools really only have two options – buy it outright or lease it, which means renting over an extended period and spreading out the accompanying payments.

Why lease?

There are several key benefits of leasing over outright ownership:

• **Regular updates**

Leasing saves you from being stuck with outdated equipment

• **Less upfront expense**

There's no lump sum to pay, freeing up cash for other essential items or tech upgrades sooner than your budget might otherwise permit.

• **Predictable costs**

Leasing school equipment over time can lend stability to your budget, but take care to track what payments will be due and when.

• **Complementary maintenance**

Depending upon your lease package and provider, the future maintenance costs may already be included.

What's the catch?

Leasing arrangements aren't always straightforward. Back in 2012, a BBC investigation discovered that at least 169 schools had been substantially overcharged for IT equipment, leaving

some with debt repayments amounting to six-figure sums (see tinyurl.com/bbe-ict-2012). Contracts of this type vary tremendously in price and conditions – I wouldn't advise anyone to enter into such contracts without first seeking professional advice. Schools then have a second hurdle to clear, in that they're only able to take out 'operating leases'. The alternative is a 'finance lease', which can often represent better value, but these are classed by the DfE as a form of borrowing and therefore prohibited in all but very rare cases.

Dos and don'ts

Do:

- Seek advice before committing to any lease agreement
- Carefully consider all outright purchase and leasing options
- Maintain an audit trail of actions taken in relation to the arrangement of contracts

Don't:

- Sign a lease agreement without first seeking expert advice
- Sign an incomplete agreement – ensure that the costs are broken down and the contractual obligations are clear. The total amount charged should typically not exceed 90 per cent of the value of equipment being hired
- Sign if anything in the contract is unclear and instead seek appropriate advice
- Let the representative take all copies of the paperwork away with them; always make photocopies of any signed documents
- Sign rollover contracts

Mark Seddon is ICT Director at One Education Ltd

 @oneeducation

 oneeducation.co.uk



DO YOU NEED TO TEACH FACTS?

Dave Coplin believes it's time for a radical rethink of how technology is used in primary education

What do you do when you are asked a question to which you don't know the answer? Do you just simply say "I don't know", heave a sigh and move on or, like most of us, do you say: "I don't know, but give me a minute and I'll take a look" and then proceed to pick up the nearest digital device, punch in a few details to bring up enough knowledge for you to be able to form the most appropriate course of action? I suspect it's the latter far more than the former.

But it seems this is a lesson that we have yet to translate into how we both approach and deliver primary education where much of the focus remains placed upon a pre-digital world where technology is the thing that you only do once a week in the computer room or when the "laptop trolley" gets wheeled out.

Given education is really about helping children become adults that can thrive in the world they will inherit, can we really be sure that we're fulfilling our duties as 21st century educators by maintaining an approach to technology that is stuck firmly (at best) in the 1980s?

I know many of you will be reflecting on the complicated relationship we already share with technology as adults. I worried about this so much I wrote a book about it and more importantly about how we can overcome such concerns because as a technologist, and an optimist, I am absolutely convinced that our future success as individuals hinges on our ability to be able to use technology to help make whatever we do better. Regardless of the career they choose, our children's lives will be better, more successful, happier and more rewarding if they are confident in how they can use technology to help them achieve more at work, in leisure and in their relationships.

DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY IS A GIFT

Modern digital technology needs to be seen as a gift, not a distraction in education. It presents a world where our children are given equal access to almost every single fact (and opinion) that our society has ever generated and when utilised properly, our children can use this information to augment their real world experience and make it significantly better. As an aside, augmented (or even virtual) reality is not about putting CGI dinosaurs on your classroom desks and it's certainly not about expensive, whizzy, gadget headsets (although don't get me wrong, both such experiences are massively enjoyable). Instead, my version of augmented reality is simply the incredible potential on offer when we humans are confident and skilled enough to be able to combine the best of the digital world and real life to create the best possible outcome for ourselves and those around us.

Certainly I'm not advocating that we flip to the other end of the spectrum and only ever engage with technology, but I am arguing strongly that we can no longer allow ourselves to think that building a healthy relationship with technology that improves outcomes for the individual is something that needs to be left until secondary education (or even worse for anytime outside of school as is currently the case in over 95 per cent of primary and secondary schools in the UK (see <https://bbc.in/36fTqMm>)).

MISSING AN OPPORTUNITY

We are missing an opportunity in education and we are not helping our children acquire the basic human skills that will light up the

power and potential that this technology could bring to our society.

The world's leading mathematicians know this, they argue that 80 per cent of



“The world we inhabit requires different skills from those we have deemed important for hundreds of years”

the maths we teach our kids is irrelevant, they fear that we are teaching children to be human calculators in a world where they will always be surrounded by calculating machines that are quicker, more capable and more accurate than any human will ever be. Of course we need to be teaching the basics of arithmetic but once learnt we should be more focused on helping students know which buttons to press and how to harness the power of data rather than being able to do complicated long division sums in their heads.

RETHINK OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH TECHNOLOGY

Similarly with knowledge, we continue to teach

children in a world where knowledge is no longer a scarce resource, but is instead accessible to almost everyone through the small glowing rectangle that even the younger age primary students will already have access to at home if not in their pockets. Our kids don't need to be able to remember the facts about the events leading up to the Battle of Hastings, but they do need to be able to navigate the internet in order to find that information out for themselves and know where that information is true, false, biased or irrelevant.

We urgently need to realise that the world we inhabit already requires different skills from those we have deemed important for hundreds of years. Despite some obvious challenges, we cannot leave technology out of primary education but equally we can no longer continue by simply teaching “about” technology in ICT suites and off the back of laptop trolleys. Technology should be seen as a fundamental platform for our children's learning. It is something that is as natural for most adults (of all ages) now as reading or writing, so why should we think it would be any different for our children?

If we are to make this happen, we're going to have to think very differently about the potential of technology in our lives and the relationship we currently share with it. As teachers, parents and guardians, it will be down to us to help children establish a relationship with technology that is likely very different to the one we currently share. We owe it to them to help ensure they don't just learn to survive in the 21st century but instead we teach them how to thrive.

Technology is going to remain at the heart of all of our lives and will continue to offer such a powerful force for good if only we humans can adapt and evolve to using it in the right way. If we can get this right for our kids and for ourselves, we are going to get some amazing rewards as a result.



Dave Coplin is the former Chief Envisioning Officer for Microsoft UK, author of *Business Reimagined*

and *The Rise of the Humans: how to outsmart the digital deluge*. He has worked all over the world with organisations and governments - all with the goal of demystifying technology and championing it as a positive transformation in our society.

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EVENT DETAILS

WHERE: Bett is hosted at ExCeL London, Royal Victoria Dock.

WHEN: The show takes place between Wednesday 22nd and Saturday 25th January, and is open from 10am to 6pm every day, except for Saturday when the event ends at 3pm.

CONTACT: Registration for Bett is free of charge if you register in advance. Visit bettshow.com to register for your ticket.

The Bett Show is back again – this time bringing more technology, brand-new zones and content-driven programmes that will reshape innovation and interaction in the education sphere. Technology and education come together in a showcase of what the future has to offer, as innovators and educators focus on unlocking students' potential by presenting an educational space with limitless opportunities.

Building on the success of last year's event, the Bett Show 2020 has introduced six brand-new, targeted zones, enabling each visitor to easily curate a personally relevant and meaningful show experience. These zones offer the chance to plan your visit and enable easier accessibility to find

What's on at the Bett Show 2020?

Find out about the brand new zones set to entice visitors at London ExCeL



the right solutions and providers. The six zones will provide practical tips and sessions on how EdTech can be implemented in the classroom as well as the positive effect it can have for both students and teachers. Visitors will have better navigation than ever before.

For the first time, The Education Show will be included inside the Bett show in its own dedicated zone, giving visitors the opportunity to explore new classroom resources and methods to achieve school success. The collaboration between the Bett Show and the Education Show marks the unification of technology and education as tech developers and teachers come together to explore how technological advancements can change classrooms and schools, helpfully bringing together everything a school needs under one roof.

Another key feature of the Bett Show 2020 is the reinvigorated content programme, including an expanded CPD offering that encourages the opportunity to learn from peers and colleagues alike. Six themes have been incorporated within the show that represent the most important and current topics within the industry.

Inclusion, Social Mobility and SEND are just a few of the targeted sessions held throughout the show that concentrate on discussion and offer facilitated networking and learning opportunities for educators.

As a champion of international alliance, the Bett Show is proud to introduce the new Global Showcase Zone that welcomes representation from nearly 150 countries. The technology industry is always changing and adapting, with new concepts and ideas constantly emerging. The Global Showcase gives visitors the chance to discover the latest developments in education and education-focused global industry bodies from various parts of the world.

This year, Naace will host a series of seminars aimed towards primary management educators. These Professional Development talks will cover a wide range of topics, including how to use social media in the primary classroom and developing SEND awareness and strategies to aid learning. In addition, Bett have added a 'School Leaders' trail designed to help visitors interested in primary management navigate the show efficiently. The companies featured on this trail have been hand-selected by the Bett advisory board.



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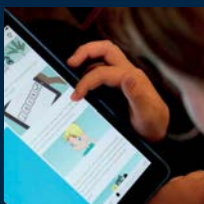
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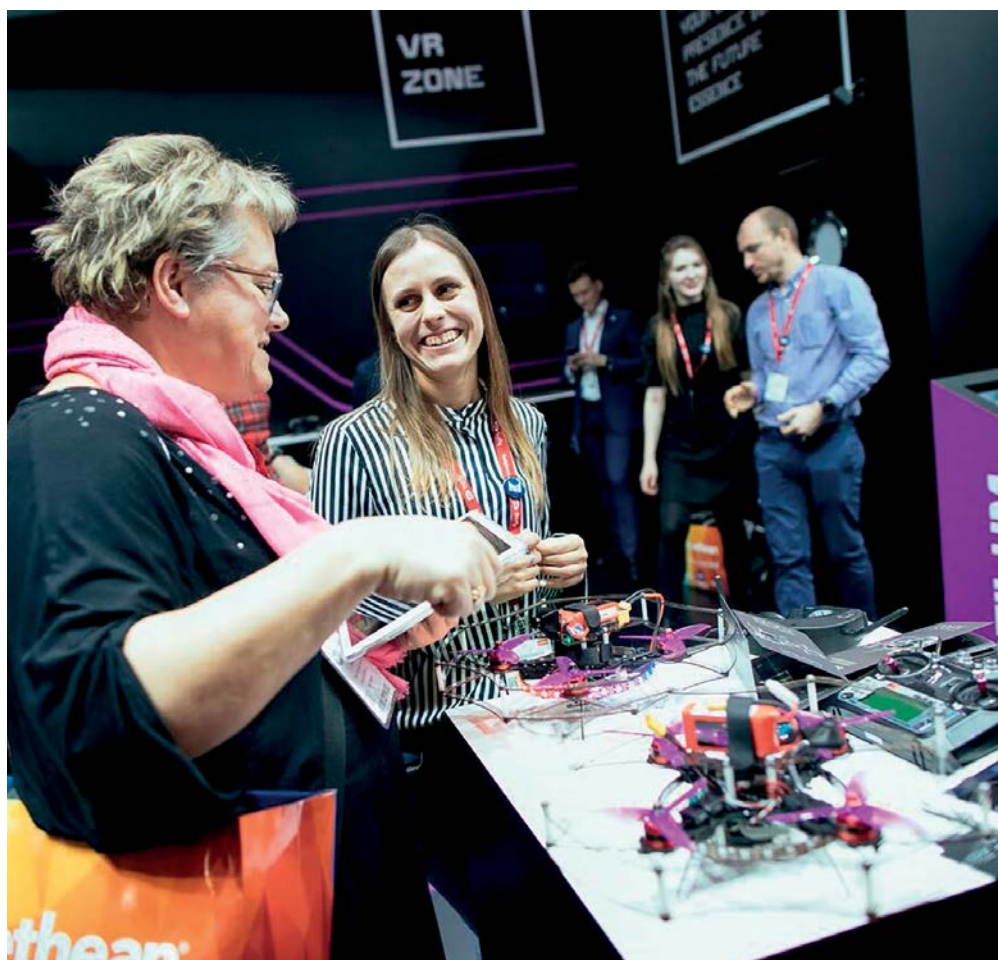
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Why you should attend the Bett Show

Terry Freedman outlines why you shouldn't miss out

This year, the Bett Show and the Education Show are running at the same time and in the same place. That means more seminars, and for this reason alone it's worth making the time to attend. At a quick glance, there are talks on the new(-ish) Ofsted requirements, how to teach programming in primary school, and how to address wellbeing for both staff and pupils.

What this means is that if you are able to attend, and plan your time wisely, you can tick quite a few items off your to-do list. For example, suppose you've been meaning to explore how to get even more out of using your interactive whiteboard. It's a great goal to have – but who has the time for that sort of exploration in a normal school day? But by attending a seminar on that subject, you can learn quite a bit in just 20 minutes or so.

If you're responsible for the use of education technology in your school, then Bett is the ideal place to find new products, talk to suppliers of the software

you already use, and see what's on the horizon, especially in the Bett Futures area, which features start-ups.

And let's not overlook the serendipity factor. Even if you're absolutely sure of what you need to look at, there's always the chance that you'll accidentally come across a stand which has something you'd never even thought of – and which you might not otherwise have found out about.

The same goes for random conversations. You could meet another teacher who has already solved a problem you're grappling with – and you might even be able to return the favour.

Finally, it can be pretty isolating working in school, especially if you're the only technology expert. Attending Bett can be a real energy and inspiration boost. Go there!

Terry Freedman publishes the ICT & Computing in Education website at www.ictineducation.org, and tweets as [@terryfreedman](https://twitter.com/terryfreedman).

Technology welcomed in the classroom

Teachers seek marking innovations as younger teachers show less confidence in new technologies

New research, by Bett, has revealed teachers' desire for technological innovations that ease their workload and cut time spent marking - so long as they have the training they need when it is introduced.

The research, conducted by Teacher Tapp, surveyed over 4,800 teachers to get their opinions on both where they would like to see innovation in education, and their reactions when it is introduced.

When asked which area they would most like to see investment in innovation in, perhaps unsurprisingly, platforms to reduce time spent marking scored most highly. Almost a quarter of respondents selected this option overall. When the results were split into primary and secondary there was a noticeable difference with about a third (32 per cent) of secondary school teachers picking this option compared to less than a fifth of primary teachers (17 per cent). The next most popular area for innovation for primary teachers was playground equipment that would help students stay healthy, with 14 per cent giving this their vote. Digital

curriculum resources (12 per cent) and rugged laptops/devices for pupils (nine per cent) also received a tenth of the vote each.

Despite this clear desire for innovation to help their workloads, teacher reactions to innovation are telling too. When asked what their immediate thoughts would be if their headteacher told them the school was adopting an innovative new software platform that they would be expected to use in all lessons, teachers gave some revealing answers.

With the majority (44 per cent) feeling they would be fine if they had a day of training it is interesting to note that language teachers are the most excited about innovation with over a third (36 per cent) stating they 'love it when they get to try new things'. This compares to only one in five (21 per cent) of humanities teachers feeling this excitement, whereas almost the same number of English teachers (18 per cent) say they will ignore it for as long as possible!

Perhaps surprisingly teachers in their 20s have the least faith in new tech working

with over a quarter (26 per cent) saying 'I bet it fails the first time I use it' compared to just a fifth of those in their 40s (20 per cent).

There are some interesting geographical comparisons to be made too with almost a quarter (23 per cent) of teachers in the North West most worried about new innovations taking too long to learn, compared to just one in ten (11 per cent) in the East of England and Yorkshire sharing this concern.

Eve Harper, Bett Show Director for the UK, said: "These findings provide useful insight for the EdTech community and it's important for those in the industry to both understand what innovations teachers would most like to see and what worries them when they are introduced."



Sessions you must attend at Bett 2020

There are some unmissable sessions lined up at Bett 2020, with so much new content for this year.

Here are some pointers to help you navigate the extensive seminar and speaker programme.

BE INSPIRED

Visit the Arena for stimulating, future-focused keynotes from speakers including Professor Brian Cox OBE, Sugata Mitra and Dr Sue Black and start 2020 with fresh ideas and thinking.

BOOST YOUR CPD

Two brand new Professional Development Theatres will take your skills to the next level, with free certified sessions from LCLC, Microsoft, Tes Institute, and other education leaders – all experts in their field.

HARNESS EDTECH FOR INCLUSION

All the stages will feature SEND content every day, with a special focus on Friday, 24th January. Sessions will be led by CALL Scotland, Jisc and speakers such as Abi James and Carol Allen.

IMPROVE STUDENT OUTCOMES

Want to use tech for better student experience and results? Visit the HE/FE and Schools Theatres to hear case studies from St Andrews, Sheffield, Hallam, United Learning, School 21 to find out how to do it.

TIME SAVING TECH HACKS FOR TEACHERS

You'll discover how to easily increase engagement, build student confidence and affect better learning outcomes. This session is a must for any educator looking to save time without creating more work.

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Q+A

**JOHN AUDAIN**

Senior lecturer at the Institute of Education, University of Winchester, chair of the Technology, Pedagogy and Education Association (TPEA) and Bett advisory board member

Which EdTech developments do you predict as having the biggest impact on pupil outcomes over the next five years?

We've seen a considerable focus on computer science in recent years, but I'm currently looking at how in future we balance that by also paying attention to other aspects of ICT and digital education – at how technology might be used across curricula, for example, and how it could be

used to support personalised education in terms of pupils' learning journeys. There also continue to be interesting developments in augmented, mixed and virtual reality, and in the use of AI to ease pressure on teachers' workloads. The key here is achieving a broad, deep and balanced approach to young people's use of technology.

What role can you see technology playing within teacher training and CPD?

We've got to start from a position of building our research base, so that as a profession we can become more evidence-based. Technology moves quickly, which means everyone – companies, schools, organisations, researchers – ought to pool their resources so we can look at what works, what doesn't and what might work in different contexts. Otherwise, we're just going to be repeatedly replicating the same research and activities. Initiatives such as MESHGuides (see meshguides.org/guides) are at last demonstrating what is possible.

How would you recommend that school leaders visiting Bett make the best use of their time?

Over the years, I've learnt that it's best to explore any software demonstrations with a clear purpose in mind. Focus on why you'd want to use it, and how you're going to effectively implement it in your school. Will you have staff behind you? Will it lighten or add to you and your colleagues' workloads?

Even the most modest hardware and software tools take time to understand and implement. Start small, then grow and build on what you're doing – that's the approach that will really make a difference in terms of your children's outcomes.

Are there any specific areas at this year's show that you'd recommend?

TPEA (tpea.ac.uk) is holding research safaris at Bett for the first time this year, which consist of trails touching on certain key points around the exhibition, accompanied by expert-led discussions on how certain solutions can be implemented and currently research findings concerning particular tools. The Bett Show's own navigation trails around the show are especially good this year, in that they give visitors the option to focus on a specific subject or area of technology.

I'd also suggest to readers that they look carefully at their school before they come to identify what gaps they have within their provision. Know what it is you're trying to find a solution to, because it's very easy at Bett to look at the plethora of solutions surrounding you and lose sight of whether a given product or service will engage staff and can be implemented successfully.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For more information, follow @jonaudain or visit jonaudain.com



FREE RESOURCES

STAND D406

BBC Teach is home to all the BBC's free teaching resources, including video clips, Live Lessons, School Radio and year-round projects like Ten Pieces. Visit the website to find thousands of free curriculum-linked classroom resources to help you deliver lessons. Everything is arranged by subject and age group so it's easy to find what you're looking for. More than 20 subjects are covered, ranging from Early Years to GCSE/Nationals and Highers. Visit bbc.com/teach

HOPE EDUCATION

STAND SN34

Hope Education is the home of innovative resources for schools and nurseries. They've created an exclusive range of Developed by Hope resources across English, Maths and Computing as well as offering over 30,000 additional products. At Bett, they will also be showcasing a dynamic room concept from their partners, Waldner Education. Go and visit them on their stand where you can try these resources yourself. hope-education.co.uk



LOXIT

STAND SJ32

Loxit produce a range of electronic and fixed height lecterns with AV and IT integration. The range comprises of three products – two with electronic height control, Spotlight (individual lectern), Workspace (lecture theatre desk) and the third, a fixed height solution called Command (a desk with campus integrated technology and AV feeds). These options cover every type of working group, from solo to small groups and on to larger collaborative spaces. Everything is bespoke, there is a range of built-in control and digital faceplates, shapes, colours, branding options and more. These can be explored via the online configurator. lotxit.com

WHAT'S ON AT BETT

Make the most of every minute at the show and take with you meaningful and actionable insights

MICROSOFT HUB

They're back at Bett 2020 with their global network of partners and educators, to once again deliver inspiring content, innovative ideas and global insights into EdTech practices in the UK and around the world.

CPD OPPORTUNITIES

The Professional Development workshops offer practical advice and useful resources for teachers, leaders, technicians and business managers from across education.

NEW THEMES FOR 2020

For Bett 2020, they have six new themes which will structure the conference programme, to ensure that every learner and educator from the entire landscape can benefit from this year's content. They are Innovation, Wellbeing, Empowering Teaching and Learning, Inclusion, social mobility and SEND, Future tech and trends, and Skills.

NEW ZONES

Learning Tech Zone: Finding how technology and learning collide. Here's all you need to supply your classrooms with innovative learning materials.

Teaching Tech Zone: Providing you with all the products, services and advice for management, monitoring and assessment services.

Equipment & Hardware Zone: Finding all the physical tech you need, with the latest in laptops, tablets, AV, monitors and more.

Global Showcase Zone: Finding the very best and latest products and services and live-demos from the top global brands, such as Microsoft, HP, Adobe and more.

Management Solutions Zone: Finding everything you need for running your academies, institutions, campus and schools.

Education Show @ Bett: For the first time in 28 years, the Education Show will move to sit inside Bett in January 2020.



How to get the best out of Bett

Maximise your show experience

Without a bit of preparation, Bett can be overwhelming. To get the most out of your attendance, follow these simple tips.

Register in advance, at <https://www.bettshow.com>. You can register when you get there, but that will just use up valuable time.

Wear comfortable shoes. This sounds rather prosaic, but after an hour or two of

walking around on a thin carpet over concrete, you'll regret not doing so.

Look at the seminar programme on the Bett website. Some of the sessions are only 20 minutes long, so in theory you could fit in quite a few. However, there are two considerations to take into account.

First, if the first talk you wish to attend is at

one end of the hall, and the other one is at the opposite end, allow plenty of time to get from A to B. It can easily take 20 minutes or more.

Second, although planning is good, allow time for serendipity in the form of just coming across stands or products you didn't know about in advance.

Even if you attend for the whole four days, you won't see everything. Therefore, get into the habit of striking up conversations with people when you grab a coffee or sit down for a rest. A good question to ask is: Have you seen anything really exciting or interesting today?

If you're fortunate enough to be able to attend with a colleague, divide up the talks and the products to see between you. Then compare notes at lunchtime and at the end of the day.

There are several "zones" at the Bett Show, so it might be a challenge to visit them all. However, one to prioritise is the Bett Futures area. This is populated by start-ups. Some of the products and services being hawked are quite innovative, and you might even be able to join a beta trial for free.

Finally, if at all possible, try and arrange time to write up some notes and give a presentation to the SLT and the staff as a whole about what you learnt during your visit, and how that could help the school.



JUNIPER EDUCATION

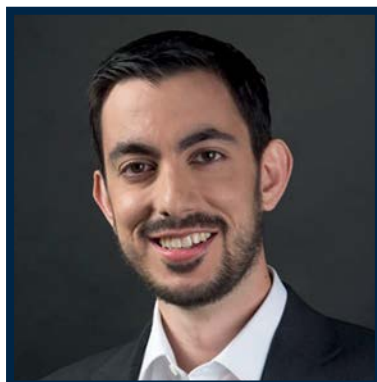
STAND NH41

Juniper Education is a leading provider of software, support services and professional services to the education sector. The focus of their work is to provide schools with the very best expertise and products available that enable teachers to teach and pupils to flourish. Their high quality products and services, currently used by over 6,000 primary and secondary schools, are responsive to the needs of schools and delivered by high experienced and specialist staff. junipereducation.org

**MATHS – NO PROBLEM!**

STAND EDB42

Grow your teaching practice with Maths — No Problem! Expert-led training. Proven resources. Ongoing support. Maths — No Problem! provides resources to set pupils up for success in maths – lesson after lesson, year after year. 2020 is an exciting time for education. Looking ahead to the next decade, it's clear that new technology has the potential to shape classrooms and make a lasting impact on future generations of learners. Find out what that means for you as a primary teacher on Thursday at 12.15 pm, when the founder of Maths — No Problem! Andy Psarianos explores how technology can transform the maths mastery classroom, ease teacher workload, and help children develop a deep understanding and love of maths — but only when underpinned by sound pedagogy and research.

mathsnoproblem.com**Q+A****DAVE WESTON**

CEO of the Teacher Development Trust
and chair of the DfE's CPD group

What presentations and discussions will you be leading at the show?

I'll be giving two presentations, both focusing on how school leaders can create the right policies, procedures and processes to ensure teachers are improving and staying in school and that newly recruited teachers are of a high standard.

Are there any sticking points in relation to recruitment and retention that you keep seeing regularly?

People are talking a lot more about workload, and the impact of the government's workload strategy in particular. Schools are trying lots of things to reduce the number of hours staff are having to spend on their tasks, but we know that workload isn't just about the number of hours being done – it's also about how engaged staff are in the hours they're working.

I think we're currently fixing half of the problem. How can you ensure that development sessions, team meetings and so on feel relevant to what teachers are focused on? I frequently meet teachers who have left the profession because of all the forms they had to fill in, the quantity of books they had to mark and relentless nature of it all, unconvinced that all that stuff was actually adding value to what they did.

Teacher development has to feel relevant to the job teachers will be doing in the short-term, but also related to the goals their teams and schools are engaged in. How will getting better in a specific area help their school move forward? It's only when people can

connect their day-to-day reality with the bigger picture that you get professional development that really works.

What factors behind falling retention rates are schools perhaps best placed to address?

One is how welcome teachers feel their colleagues are. Do they feel free to ask colleagues for help? Can they visit colleagues' classrooms? Do they feel invited to share ideas? It's fairly straightforward for schools to create spaces where teachers can get used to collaborating and develop structures whereby teachers can observe each others' practice.

Another area is the quality of communication. Are there systems through which people can raise concerns, express doubts and make their voices heard? This might involve helping middle and senior leaders and line managers to have good quality conversations in which people feel heard and any actions raised are followed through. Move beyond the idea of meetings simply consisting of people standing up and reading notices, and start seeing them as occasions where people come together to collaborate and reflect as a team.

What would you say is the best way for visitors to spend their time at the Bett Show?

Start with the end in mind. Only after you've defined that can you then identify what products or services may be suitable and the best people to talk to. This will enable you to have better conversations at the stands, where you won't just be asking about what a product will do and its impact, but how it can help you manage the change in your specific school. If you ultimately purchase the item, it'll then be more than a 'piece of kit' that just sits in a cupboard never being used.

FURTHER INFORMATION

David will be presenting on 'Teacher Recruitment, Retention and Development' (22nd Jan, 10:15 in the Schools Theatre) and 'Unleashing Great Teaching' (23rd Jan, 15:30 in the Education Theatre)



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01825 761 143 or contact@apac.org.uk

Community Engagement

SIX EFFECTIVE WAYS TO FUNDRAISE



Looking at ways to boost your school's coffers? Hannah Day tells you how

As a manager you are used to thinking strategically about school life, but what about fundraising? Is it a considered plan, linked to other aspects of the academic year, or an ad hoc affair? Here's how to ensure fundraising not only does just that, but enhances the student experience and parents' willingness to get involved.

REFLECT AND SELECT

What have you done over the past three years that has been constantly successful and what hasn't? One school might find a parent lottery brings in a much-needed boost where as for others it doesn't. Analyse the relationship between effort in and money out. This is also an opportunity to consider if the fundraising fits well with your school's values, for example many approaches rely on sugar or plastic-based treats, these should be phased out.

ENHANCE THEIR EDUCATION

How can fundraising be used to support the students learning? A good example are after school sessions on specific topics that parents would pay for, such as a six-week yoga or STEM club, with the profit split between the provider and the school. Children are offered short introductions to a range of topics and parents have an extra hour in the day while supporting fundraising efforts.

GET THE PARENTS INVOLVED, MEANINGFULLY

At my daughter's state primary parents include a boat designer, who represented

his country as a sailor, and an ex-marine, who has climbed Mont Blanc, trekked the Appalachian trail and is one of the UK's best kick boxers. Just think of the stories and experiences they could share. But there are also those who have a love of gardening, run their own business, are working as illustrators, fitness instructors or musicians. Some will be more than happy to meet with students after school, while others might be willing to talk one-to-one with parents and pupils as part of a careers-style open day, with donations to the school.

GET LOCAL CLUBS AND AMENITIES TO DO THE WORK

Sessions run by local clubs or facilities, such as sports centres or a museum, are planned and ready to go. They offer children's parties and workshops on a weekly basis. Can they put on an event for your school with the profit split? If your school is part of a MAT this could be a very attractive advertising opportunity for any number of child-friendly places and an event that is free from the PTA or teachers having to take on the bulk of organizing.

AND WHAT ABOUT BUSINESSES

Is there a bookshop who will donate 50p for every book sold by Cressida Cowell, or a sports shop who will give you £1 for each pair of Nike trainers? Talk to shops that are small, local and friendly. You get another income stream and they get to advertise their commitment to their local community and the free advertising that comes with the arrangement.

ACCEPT NOT ALL CAN HELP, BUT MANY WANT TO GIVE

And a final note, as a parent of a primary school child I can't always get involved but have gladly given via a bank transfer. A direct debit option or links to online systems such as Quid can be a no-hassle option for those wanting to help but with little time on their hands.

Remember, parents want to get involved. Make it easy and meaningful and you're away.

Hannah Day is head of visual arts, media and film at Ludlow College



IT'S GOOD TO TALK

Sarah West examines the best ways to digitally connect with parents

Effective communication between school and home is something that we know schools are always working on. As a result there are a wealth of apps and online tools that have been created to help out, all with their own individual features and benefits.

If your school is looking at digitising communications, then we would recommend researching the different features available on a variety of platforms that are on the market, and then consulting your parents and staff (perhaps through a survey) about what features are important to them, and what they would like to get out of using the new app. Here are the key features we think are important to consider for any school-based app.

DO YOU WANT A TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION TOOL

Often, the apps used within Primary Schools are great for schools to send information to parents, but they don't provide any facilities for parents to contact the school. Consider whether your staff would have the capacity if you introduced a platform that allowed parents to email directly in, use a forum and/or be able to easily set up one-to-one meetings with members of staff.

HAVE A PAYMENT OPTION

The days of carrying cash in envelopes and cheques are almost over, so providing an easy to use payment system online for your parents can have a positive impact on strengthening and streamlining processes.

A 'ONE-STOP-SHOP' FOR PARENTS

Your parents and staff are both really busy, so offering one place that parents can go to for all school-based information will save confusion and time for everyone. Have your timetables, objectives, and news etc., all on the same app or online platform and show parents how they can easily access all of these facilities.

THEY CAN HELP YOU COLLABORATE WITH YOUR PARENT BODIES

By introducing communication tools at your school, you can make other links between home and school easier, for example, promoting your PTA or Parent Council's activities. Many PTAs will already use online platforms to communicate with parents, such as PTA Events, but by using your own platform you can send out messages yourself about the events that are occurring and the activities of your PTA's fundraising efforts on a school level. By collaborating with your parent bodies, you are further able to streamline processes and make everything simpler for your staff and parents.

Whatever platform you decide to use, just remember that every school is different, take the time to find something that works for you and your parent community.

Sarah West is Marketing and Communications Manager at Parentkind

Taking care of business

Luke O'Dwyer reflects on why stepping down as an SBM to start a new business involved more overlap between the two roles than he'd been expecting...

At 17 years old, I walked into my new job as an administrative assistant at a school in north London. Over the next six years that I spent working in the school office we had five different headteachers and four different school business managers, including myself. To say we experienced many highs and lows while I was there would be an understatement. But then one day, a simple Google search changed the course of my life. In December 2014, I left my job to launch an online service called Medical Tracker, aimed helping schools manage student injuries and medical conditions.

My journey began when, during a performance appraisal, I suggested to headteacher number three that I wanted to follow in my mum's footsteps – a 30-year school office veteran – and be placed on the Certificate of School Business Management course at Anglia Ruskin University. Little did I know then that this step up in responsibility, along with the skills and expertise I'd learn on the course, would eventually gift me the knowledge and confidence to successfully run a service now used by over 11,000 school staff.

I've learnt two key lessons since that fateful December – that every SBM possesses the skills needed to run a business, and that running a business is very much like running a school. Looking

back, I see how I could have done many things better on the path to where I am now, but three in particular really stick out:

Synergy: Having launched Medical Tracker, I quickly realised that our sales, support staff and developers needed to work in synergy if our main objectives were to be reached. This maps directly on to how schools manage their staff and processes. Be sensitive to any issues your teaching staff might be struggling with, and consider asking them – perhaps via a survey – whether any improvements in your office processes might be able to help. Steps like this can start to address the gaps between teaching and support staff that I still see in some of the schools we work with.

Networking: What's amazing about the education sector is people's willingness to help each other. If someone's able to assist you with solving an issue, dispense some advice or check over something you're having trouble with, chances are they will. If there isn't an active SBM Group in your local area, you can start one of your own. Those new to the role of SBM can email some local schools to ask if, and how often they meet. Whether it's to leverage group buying power, discuss best practice or simply meet people who can provide useful advice, effective networking can save you much time and effort.

Time management: Governor meetings, forecasting, contracts, policies, grants, recruitment – an SBM's daily list of tasks can seem endless. Take time to step away and work smarter, rather than harder. It sounds like a cliché, but there really are tasks you'll do each week, or even each day, that can be automated, or else delegated to a colleague who'd relish the opportunity to take on a higher level responsibility – think bank reconciliation, payroll or creating invoices for school room rentals.

Given the ever-growing list of jobs now attached to the role, SBMs have had to adapt and become inventive. Liaising with SBMs in other schools and delegating certain tasks to junior office colleagues can give you the inspiration, space and time needed to really improve the processes in your school. Why not start this week? Ask your teaching staff, perhaps via a Google Forms or Survey Monkey questionnaire, what they're struggling with, and whether any changes to your office processes might help.

Luke O'Dwyer is the co-founder of Medical Tracker

 @medical_tracker

 medicaltracker.co.uk



THE REALITY OF EXCLUSIONS

Do you want to prevent exclusions? Invest in staff and pupils says Emma Tonny

Exclusions in primary schools have a marked impact on our children's futures. Students excluded in primary school have a far more challenging time transitioning into mainstream schools later on. Those excluded throughout their school experience have far lower rates of permanent employment and far higher rates of criminal convictions.

To begin with, let me clear up a common misconception. There are different kind of exclusions that students can be given. Too often, when you read about them, permanent exclusions are often made to sound like the only kind. Permanent exclusions are the most severe, where a child is taken off a school's roll and can no longer attend, but they are also the rarest kind. Given that they are the rarest, it is perhaps even more shocking that in 2017/18 there were 7,900 permanent exclusions from schools in England – a 70 per cent increase since 2012/13. So, what happens to these children once they are permanently excluded?

WHAT IT'S LIKE IN A PUPIL REFERRAL UNIT

Once children are permanently excluded they go to a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU). The main problem with a PRU is that it only has children who have behavioural challenges. Due to this, the staff's time is really only taken up with behaviour management – not with learning. I have spent a disproportionate amount of time doing arts and crafts with primary school children sent to a PRU. There's a point at which 'mindfulness' only goes so far, and you do actually need to learn something. Arts and crafts becomes the new norm, and English and maths lessons a distant memory.

I don't deny for a second that children in PRU's, of any age, can be absolute nightmares. There's no point dressing that up. They will threaten (or enact) violence, tell you they hate you, and absolutely refuse to do any work. But they're human. It's an obvious point but it has to be remembered. From the point

of exclusion in primary school onwards they're treated as an inconvenience. Those that work with these children must have the patience of a saint; however awful they may be to you it's crucial to ensure they are listened to and feel safe. They need the very best teachers to turn the situation around and yet students in PRUs are twice as likely to be supported by unqualified staff.

Many children referred to PRUs in primary school have serious problems around attachment. They will try everything possible to push you away because they're simply so used to being hurt or left that they don't want to let anyone close. That can be really hard to remember when you're exhausted and have been nothing but nice to them, but perseverance pays off. It can take months to build a bond with many of these children but I've seen first-hand how incredible it is when that's achieved. If a child has been excluded

then they often have an incredibly complex range of needs. It is worth noting that students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) are far more likely to be excluded than their peers. This is particularly the case for students with Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD) – 39 per cent of young people who have ADHD have fixed term exclusions.

THE OTHER SIDE OF EXCLUSIONS

However, the picture can often be painted to depict students as innocent victims of an unfair system. This is very far from always being the case. I have had students come at me with scissors, punch walls, attempt to climb through windows... the list goes on. Sometimes, students are such a risk to themselves and others that a mainstream school simply won't work for them. They need a smaller ratio of teaching staff to have the supervision they need for safeguarding reasons.

Aside from the needs of these individual students, there is the wider impact their behaviour has on learning of other students. A constant battle I face, is between knowing full well that keeping a child in mainstream school is the best thing for them – versus, acknowledging that they are making learning almost impossible for others. If you have a primary school child flipping tables and swearing at the teacher then others are not able to learn and, perhaps more importantly, are scarred by the experience.

The latest Department for Education figures reveal that 62 Year 1 children and 163 Year 2's were in PRUs in 2018, rising to 454 in Year 6. Those figures sound shocking, but the challenges that teachers (and fellow students!) are facing is very real.

SO, WHAT CAN PRIMARY SCHOOLS DO ABOUT THIS?

First and foremost, it comes down to investment. At the broadest scale this must

PARENTS HAVE RESPONSIBILITY

Teachers can only do so much to support children. Ultimately, much of the responsibility lies with families/carers to support their child's discipline and approach to learning. Parents can be taken to court if their child does not attend school for an extended period, but that is just the beginning. Parents have a responsibility to actively engage with school life and what teachers are telling them. This includes following through on sanctions that school may give so that there is consistency for children. Likewise, schools must try to reach out and support these families as it is often the whole unit around a child that needs to be engaged to prevent exclusion.

come from the government and I am very aware that I write at a time where there are cuts across the country. However, even on limited funds, there are choices that have to be made. A key priority must be investing in SEN specialist staff to support students learning and behaviour. Consider: not investing in new technology, but instead getting an SEN or SEMH (social, emotional, mental health lead). Recruiting specialist staff (or training staff you currently have!) to support children's needs can be the difference between keeping them in school and losing them to a downward spiral. As hard as the choices are, we have a responsibility to fight for every child's future.

This is closely interlinked with the need for early intervention. Spotting behavioural patterns early and attempting to remedy this with clear routines and expectation setting can make a big difference. As harsh as it may sound, don't let things slide because they're six and it's sort of endearing when they have a strop. It will not remain endearing. If we expect a lot of students from an early age, they will often meet or even exceed those expectations. By this, I do not necessarily mean academic targets – which great pressure is placed around. Rather, I mean expectations around students being well mannered, kind to one another and ready to try their hardest.

It's absolutely crucial to develop close working relationships between parents and, where needed, social services to achieve this. You can establish routines and values at school, but if this isn't mirrored at home then you're fighting a losing battle. In my experience, this can be the hardest part of the process. Building a relationship with families takes time which teachers often don't have. Again, having a specialist member of staff whose role includes this kind of work is invaluable.

Finally, please only use exclusions as an absolute last resort. It can feel as if they make everyone's lives easier – not least the lives of other children in the school, but the consequences for excluded children are severe. There are so many other things to try before it gets to the point where an exclusion should even be considered: behaviour contracts, sticker charts, clear sanctions, coming in to school for half days and building back up from there, one on one or small group interventions... The list goes on! All of this takes time but it is time invested in our children's futures and that is time very well worth spending.



Emma Tonny is a former member of staff at a pupil referral unit and currently works as an intervention and inclusion specialist



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WILL EXTRA TIME HELP?

How are you going to cope with the ITT Core Content Framework surprise?



The publication of the Initial Teacher Training (ITT) Core Content Framework on November 1 was a surprise to many. Perhaps not in terms of what it says, but because the Department for Education was planning a Spring 2020 release.

However, as a member of the Expert Advisory Group which supported the development of the framework, in consultation with a wide range of school leaders, teachers, academics and experts, my considered view is that the early

publication is only a good thing for the sector.

The obvious advantage is it gives ITT providers and their partner schools more time to adjust their programmes to meet the new requirements from September 2020. This additional three months allows greater opportunity for providers to be engaged in and to fully understand the framework, and think about its implementation.

UNDERSTAND YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

We have seen through our own discussions about the Early Career Framework (ECF), which the ITT Core Content Framework is designed to allow a smooth transition into, that while providers are familiar with it, many in the school sector remain unaware or vaguely aware of it. The ITT framework places a duty on ITT providers and partner schools to ensure all trainees receive their full entitlement to support, so there is an onus on school partnerships to understand their responsibilities within the new guidelines, and the early launch can only help.

The framework itself is designed to support trainee development in five core areas: behaviour management, pedagogy, curriculum, assessment and professional behaviours. It is presented in eight sections, so that it works alongside with the eight teachers' standards, and is intended to give trainee teachers an entitlement to intellectually robust teacher training that is flexible enough to be adapted to particular contexts.

FOCUS ON MENTORING

I am particularly pleased about the focus on mentoring, although

we recognise that successful implementation of the aims for mentors is going to be a longer process – what is presented by the framework has long been considered the ‘Holy Grail’ for ITT. In short, mentoring matters and is proven to impact on the workforce. For too long mentoring has been an add-on to existing roles in schools and, if this is handled correctly, it is an opportunity to raise the profile of the mentor role. There will be a cultural shift required in schools, though, and in response our own Teacher Educator Zone will highlight the latest research and professional development around mentoring.

Another key aspect is subject knowledge in the curriculum. This approach needed to be refreshed for the Education Inspection Framework as well as the ECF and ITT Core Content Framework, but also in the context of key themes such as metacognition and cognitive load, terms which trainers may not currently be talking about but will need to do so going forward. We are now rolling out a series of workshops to explore these themes in more depth – our job is not to tell providers the ‘correct’ way to implement the framework, but to share insight and examples amongst our communities of practice.

INVEST IN MENTOR TRAINING

My only remaining concern is that there is no new funding attached to the ITT Core Content Framework. The ECF funding will not be available for another year, yet ITT providers are expected to implement the ITT changes by September. Schools with limited budgets should invest in mentor training. If mentors are given time and space to develop, and they feel valued, then this is where a sustainable approach to recruitment and retention can come from. Invest in, value and look after your mentors – they could be key to transforming education.



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



TACKLE STAFF ABSENCE DIGITALLY!

Annie O’Kane explains how the cloud helped share the administration workload

Until recently one of the most challenging parts of my role as School Business Manager of a large primary school was managing staff absence. I was responsible for managing leave requests, sickness absence and return to work procedures for 89 staff members.

Our opportunity to tackle staff absence and reduce the time and cost of administration came when we withdrew our HR and payroll services from the local authority. When researching other options, we discovered absence management software Activ Absence, a cloud-based solution which provides absence tracking, staff holiday planning, tailored reports and analysis and a return to work process all in one place, accessible on any device.

We chose the software to streamline the absence management process and give the School Leadership Team (SLT) greater visibility of absence within their teams.

Key benefits

One of the key benefits is that the workload of staff absence is now shared as each leader takes responsibility for managing absence in their team. This change to management roles required approval from the SLT.

There are many benefits of using Activ Absence. Previously managing holiday leave had been complicated. Staff had to notify their line managers of any approved leave, however, this often didn’t happen. The line manager wouldn’t know their team member was due to be off, so they would have to find cover at short notice.

Now leave requests go directly to the line manager so they can plan cover in advance, they are also immediately notified of any sickness absence. Staff must complete return to work forms online and the system prompts team leaders to follow up with a face to face discussion.

Staff can access the system on their mobiles and this includes a calendar showing when colleagues have leave booked which is helpful when planning time off.

Complete transparency

The system is completely transparent, absences are monitored and recorded in an absence dashboard using a traffic light system. This makes everyone more accountable and we’ve noticed a significant reduction in sickness absence as a result. Now when someone’s sickness absence flags up as red in the system they are also more likely to come and have a conversation about it.

Managing staff absence was a huge task and used to take me four to five hours a week, but now I spend less than an hour on it.

I’ve set up monthly reports for payroll, insurance and Department of Education census data and while I still input this manually, it’s all at my fingertips and much quicker.

Targeted support

The best thing is we can now provide staff with more targeted support for their sickness and absence. Tracking absence allows us to spot any trends or patterns and identify when someone might be struggling. We can then talk to them and uncover any issues and advise them of the support available to get them back on track.



Annie O’Kane is school business manager at Chadwell Primary School, in Chadwell Heath, Essex

THE DO'S AND DON'TS OF PARENTAL LEAVE

Keep an open mind and let your staff take the lead

The official guidance concerning maternity and paternity rights might be fairly clear-cut, but when it comes to navigating those interpersonal grey areas, here's what a supportive leadership should do to make things better for the staff concerned, and what to avoid at all costs.

When it comes to supporting expectant parents on your staff team, it really is a case of approaching each person as an individual. The best starting place is an open and frank conversation with the person in question. It is easier said than done, but try to put aside any assumptions that you may have about their future and ask them how they feel about having a break from work, what their plans are and how regularly they would like to keep in touch throughout the time off. Be explicit that their parental leave is their time and the school will take its lead from them.

IT'S THEIR CHOICE

Remember, well meaning comments about a new parent's 'changing priorities', can make assumptions about a person's career choice that, when made incorrectly, may limit their ability to progress in their career. Similarly, while one person may consider the idea of hearing about school during leave incredible stressful, there are also many teachers who feel reluctant to leave that side of their identity to one side and may relish the chance to keep in touch. You need to make clear that that choice is up to them with no guilt or judgement either way from the school. The information you gather from this conversation should form the basis of your approach across their leave but also be revisited over time.

There is no obligation from either side to use Keeping In Touch (KIT) days but they can be an ideal way to ease teachers back in during a period of leave. Be creative and flexible around their use; they could be used in a wide range of ways including planning and preparation which could be completed either on site or from home. They could also be used for CPD -



especially in cases where policy and practice have changed significantly during the leave period. KIT days could also be used for teachers to ease back into the classroom before beginning longer teaching hours. Exactly how they are used, or if they are, should form part of your ongoing dialogue with the member of staff - how someone feels during leave may be very different to how they thought they would feel before it.

LISTEN CAREFULLY

If a member of staff is coming to site with a new baby, consider how to accommodate a new parent onsite - can they bring the baby to meetings, KIT days or events? Has that been made clear to them? If baby is coming along, have you considered how to support a potentially breastfeeding mother? As the end of their parental leave nears,

your staff member may well be anxious about the impact of their return to work. Listen carefully for signs of this without making assumptions about their career choices moving forward. Some schools put in place a mentor or coach to support the transition back into the workplace and ensure that returning teachers are guided through the process and kept up to date with any changes that have happened while they have been away. All in all, the key to successful management of staff on leave is to keep an open mind and take your lead from them.



Lucy Starbuck Braidley is a primary school teacher and subject leader for English

HOW ARE YOUR **NON-TEACHING STAFF** **PERFORMING?**

Good appraisals are important for teachers, but they're just as vital for ensuring your support and site staff are on track, says Sue Birchall...

Performance-related pay and appraisal processes have guided pay decisions in schools and academies for some time now. If done well, appraisals can be motivating, providing not just opportunities for reflection and evaluation, but also a spur for increased staff development that adds value to your workforce. Yet the appraisal process in schools is often perceived by staff as being something that's 'done to them', and tends to involve separate processes for those who are teachers and those providing administrative and site support.

The appraisal process for teachers is perhaps a little more defined, guided as it is by teachers pay and conditions guidance, and more often than not measured against student outcomes. Conversely, measuring performance based on outcomes isn't always as easy for the many and varied support roles found within education settings. Sadly, this can sometimes lead to an inadequate process, devaluing it in the eyes of said staff and leading them to see it as largely pointless. At worst, appraisals for support staff can be actively demotivating and stressful, impacting negatively on their wellbeing and your staff turnover.

So how can they be made into a valuable and useful process, without generating extra admin?

VALIDATE THE VALUE

Having been involved in implementing an appraisal system across different schools, and advised in a consultancy capacity for some time, one thing has become very clear to me. The basic principles underpinning an appraisal process should remain consistent across teaching and support staff, but how this works in each setting can differ – and the biggest influencing factor for its success will be the involvement of senior

management. For the system to work, its value has to be validated to ensure a positive impact for all staff. It could be argued that that's a given, but I'm aware that this statement could be seen as naive. Given the frantic nature of school life and perceived lack of spare time, the notion that this process is 'done at' people is perhaps understandable. However, there are some significant advantages to doing appraisals well for all staff, given the potential impacts on wellbeing, retention, staff absence

and school improvement, to name but a few. The financial impact of an appraisal is the hard outcome of the process for all appraisees, and one that's obviously important. However, if the appraisal can also offer opportunities to review job



descriptions, give praise for achieving or exceeding targets and identify potential training needs and areas for development, it will become a much more holistic process.

A SYSTEM THAT WORKS

Let's assume that your school's appraisal system for teachers is embedded and working well. How should a similarly effective appraisal system for support staff work in practice?

INTEGRATE YOUR PROCESSES OR SEPARATE THEM?

The answer to this question may depend on when you decide to review your support staff pay. Historically, this would be carried out for an April increment because of the tax year and the way schools used to budget. However, with academies now often running accounts from September to August, some settings have switched to carrying out reviews for all staff in September. This makes it easier to run an integrated system by bringing teaching and support staff appraisal systems together, creating parity. Doing both simultaneously will create a bit more work at the time, but it's a process that only has to be done once and can be linked to outcomes, particularly for classroom-based staff.

SHOULD THE SAME FORMS BE USED FOR ALL STAFF?

The many and varied nature of contracts within schools makes this a very subjective decision.

Using the same design will mean that appraisers use only one style, thus ensuring that some parity can be achieved across the process. However, due to the different impacts of each role in the operation of the school, setting the same targets as evaluation measures won't work.

Teachers' targets are straightforward, since they can be measured against Teachers' Standards and outcomes; support staff, not so much.

However, good practice dictates that there should be common evaluation measures for staff undertaking similar

"All roles have outcomes – it just sometimes takes a bit of thinking outside the box as to how they can be measured"

roles, such as classroom-based, admin and other support roles. Line managers are often at a loss when it comes to setting targets for support staff, particularly those who don't have a direct impact on whole school outcomes.

Devising a bank of suggested targets to support them will reduce time spent agonizing over what their appraisal should look like. I've often had staff say to me "I have no idea what my targets should be," and expecting guidance and ideas.

A pre-written bank of targets, regularly reviewed and updated, would stop this. All roles have outcomes – it just sometimes takes a bit of thinking outside the box as to how they can be measured.

For staff who only work a few hours and have very similar roles, such as lunchtime supervisors and cleaners, consider implementing a group appraisal process whereby they're all set the same aims and targets. This will ensure that the team are all working towards the same goals, and that their practice can be developed to improve outcomes in a specific area.

SHOULD STAFF HAVE ANY INPUT?

For the process to have any chance of real success, staff will need to have at least some input into the targets they're set. Sitting a member of staff down and saying 'Yes, you've done well – here are your targets for the next year,' isn't going to engage or inspire development in anyone. For the school to improve – and ergo the staff – our practice needs to improve too.

You may well have whole school targets that you want to give all staff, and these can and should be dictated, but consider setting at least one personal target per individual.

This can be anything from wanting to attain a qualification in their specialist

field to learning a new language.

The only caveat is that there must be some benefit in for the school, given that staff taking time off will cost the school money. Perhaps they could support a class that includes an element of their chosen skill, or help run a language club?

WHEN TO REVIEW?

Reviews are important for identifying when previously set targets become impractical or irrelevant. A six-month review will enable any necessary amendments and changes to be made.

The benefits of a praise and reward culture are clear when it comes to our students. Our staff deserve the same level of consideration, which school leaders can provide by being prepared to carry out appropriate and positive appraisals.

A SUCCESSFUL APPRAISAL PROCESS FOR ALL STAFF SHOULD BE SMART:

SPECIFIC

Well advertised and signposted, along with any suggested targets; having a bank of targets will help enable this

MEASURABLE

It must be possible to evaluate all targets and measure them against something tangible

ACHIEVABLE

There should be no targets set that aren't agreed at the outset; if, at six month review, it emerges that they aren't suitable, change them

RELATABLE

An appraisal should be relatable to both the specific role and its context within the whole school picture

TIME RELEVANT

Plenty of notice should be provided for each aspect of the process, including the six-month review



Sue Birchall is a consultant, speaker, writer, trainer and business manager at

The Malling School, Kent

ENOUGH ‘GETTING BY’ – LET’S TRY TO BE HAPPY

Tapping into the feelings and sensations we used to experience in childhood can help us better cope with the challenges of here and now, contends Mike Fairclough

It had begun to rain lightly on the playground, causing a double rainbow to arch across the school field. A length of string hung between two basketball posts. Bits of wood and other small objects had been fastened to it, swinging precariously in the wind. There were sounds of laughter, joyous shouting and whooping.

Nearby, two people were each playing with a large coloured disc. They’d been asked to communicate with each other from opposite ends of the playground using just their discs, body movements and imagination. One was pretending to be a gladiator, using their disc as a shield, while the other person chose to transform their disc into a flying vehicle. Somehow they were managing to respond to one another through the use of mime and signs.

Elsewhere, four figures were busy running around carrying long cardboard tubes that they’d turned into musical instruments. Objects and bodies filled the playground. Games were invented out of thin air. Theatrical characters were adopted and then swapped out in an instant. A world of imagination had been unleashed, for what felt like the first time in years.

A typical spectacle of children having fun in the playground, you might think. In actual fact, the individuals involved weren’t children at all – they were teachers and TAs at my school.

THE FREEDOM OF CHILDHOOD

“We don’t stop playing because we grow old; we grow old because we stop playing.”

– George Bernard Shaw

This was a training day held on our first day back at school. Working with two artists from nearby Brighton, we’d all been given a variety of different objects, ranging from bits of wood, to string and cardboard boxes, and were asked to ‘explore these items together’. How could we communicate with

each other using just the objects alone? What games could we make up? What other uses could we invent for them, beyond their primary purpose?

Within just a couple of minutes of being out on the playground, the ensuing scene and sounds were all but identical to the playtimes involving children we’d all supervised many times before.

Do you remember how adventurous life was when you were a child, and the freedom you experienced? Do you remember those times when there were no adults about, when no one was telling you what to do – when you climbed trees, built camps, became an adventurer and looked out on a world of unlimited possibilities?

Stepping into the shoes of your favourite characters from books and on TV shows you felt like the master of your own destiny, always on the verge of discovering pots of gold and treasure maps. Do you remember how it felt heading home once the day was done – that feeling of greatness inside you, your experiences and thoughts and a kind of fulfilment, all fizzing away inside? You felt free. You felt complete. How come it went away?

Most of us left this magical world behind during our teens or early 20s. We likely had it drummed out of us by a combination of parents,

“Do you remember how adventurous life was as a child, and the freedom you experienced?”



peers and school, before acquiring a more serious outlook on life, complete with a set of self-imposed limitations and rules. Those exciting characters we once imagined ourselves to be were soon replaced by 'sensible' reasons for not wanting to become them. The pots of gold and treasure maps gradually slipped out of sight and disappeared, as did our sense of freedom and limitlessness.

SPIRIT OF ADVENTURE

The issues of staff wellbeing and excessive workload have become increasingly central to conversations around managing school staff in recent years, yet how often do we ask whether our colleagues are actually happy at work, rather than simply getting by? Can we go further than this and encourage our staff to be actively positive – even carefree?

It's my belief that embracing the playfulness, spirit of adventure, breadth of imagination and risk-taking of our childhoods can make our adult lives – including the time we spend at work – happier and more successful.

The field of positive psychology, as promoted and advanced by

the American psychologist Martin Seligman, posits that simply focussing on our problems, anxieties and other life challenges won't make them go away. In fact if anything, actively shining a spotlight on them causes them to become even worse. Positive psychology asks us to instead focus on our strengths and positive qualities – managing our anxiety by, for example, building up our resilience.

Mental ill-health is currently being written about in newspapers, covered on TV and discussed on the internet every day. Ofsted has said it now expects schools to ensure their staff are able to maintain a good work-life balance, while through it all, the number of children reporting mental health problems continues to rise. How can education professionals be expected to help one another and the children in their care in this climate of gloom and doom when we already have so many anxieties and problems of our own?

It's easy to pay lip service to staff wellbeing – to state that 'We're addressing this important issue by offering support,' but the effect of such support is often quite limited. Being more imaginative and carefree, and more willing to take risks, can enhance the relationships of our working and personal lives. Adopting a more generally adventurous and playful attitude to life can lead us towards a more stress-free existence, and help us access a deeper sense of wellbeing. At the same time, those same 'lost' childhood traits can be a big help when it comes to problem solving and coping with life's inevitable ups and downs.

Which is why I've chosen to celebrate those traits with the adults working at my school.

A HAPPIER EXISTENCE

The jubilant scene described at the start was the first day in an experiment we ran at West Rise Junior School involving adults and play. We have access to 120 acres of marshland directly opposite our main school site that we lease from the LA, which includes two large lakes. This is where we deliver our Forest School for the

POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

Positive psychology is the scientific study of the strengths that enable people to thrive, and involves exploring how to create positive experiences, positive individual traits and positive institutions.

Its founder, Dr Martin Seligman, has written numerous books on the subject, notably *Learned Optimism: How to Change Your Mind and Your Life*, *Flourish: A Visionary New Understanding of Happiness and The Optimistic Child*. Interested readers can find further information and resources online via The Positive Psychology Centre – see ppc.sas.upenn.edu for more details.

children, look after various farm animals (including a herd of water buffalo), engage in beekeeping and stand-up-paddle-boarding, among other activities. Our latest use for this rich environment is to start exploring it through the arts and play, by 'playing' with found objects and natural materials, making sculptures and inventing outdoor games.

After the imaginative experience we organised on the school playground, all the adults taking part reported experiencing heightened states of happiness, and in some cases, even a sense of euphoria. Using our imaginations and giving ourselves permission to play had a powerful and lasting affect on our collective sense of wellbeing. We felt more of a bond between us as a staff.

As adults, our feelings of anxiety and challenges in life will come and go. This is inevitable. However, embracing the childhood traits of play, imagination, the spirit of adventure and risk-taking, can help us to cope with them, and can lead to a happier existence. In turn, this will help us when supporting our colleagues and pupils.



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KEEP HOLD OF YOUR STAFF

Do you want a robust staff retention policy?
Laura Williams shows you how...



- Reward
- Recognition
- Development and progression
- Security
- Management support
- Flexibility and work/life balance
- Autonomy
- Fair treatment
- Trust

The management of the psychological contract is key to positive employment relationships and the facilitation of employee choice in order to improve both recruitment and retention.

Though the psychological contract may be intangible, it is similar to the employment contract in that it can be 'breached'. From the employee perspective, the most serious form of breach is through organisational and management behaviours which compromise one or more of the above areas. Examples include: over promising and under-delivering, a 'do as I say not as I do' culture, a lack of follow through, not meeting deadlines, mismatched processes and practice and moving the goalposts.

For an employee these types of breach, if unresolved, often result in disengagement. This might start out with feelings of dissatisfaction, progressing to working to rule and doing as little as they can. If this continues for a period of time, it could impact their wellbeing and even result in prolonged periods of absence or resignation.

As employers, what we have to wrestle with and be alert for are instances where the employee perceives that there has been a breach. This could be due to a lack of communication or information or simply staffs' own interpretation of management behaviour. Real or perceived, these breaches can be avoided and addressed – thus mitigating the impact on turnover and staff engagement.

If your staff are determined to leave, there's ultimately little that any headteacher can do to stop them.

You can, however, take steps to reduce the likelihood of staff wanting to move on due to professional misgivings. Here's how to go about identifying staff concerns ahead of time and assemble a robust retention strategy.

When it comes to recruitment and retention, it's easy to get lost in short-term activities instead of focusing on long-term strategy. The truth is, there are many touch-points and milestones that can create 'deal-breakers' for your employees resulting in resignation. Some are beyond

your control but many are within it.

Before we look at what you can do to create a robust retention strategy, let's first look to our employees and what they want from us as employers. These factors, as a whole, constitute what is known as the 'psychological contract'.

The psychological contract is the 'silent partner' of the employment contract but it is different in that it is unwritten and subjective. For the employee, the psychological contract is focused around their expectations of the employer and how they hold up their end of the 'employment deal'. These expectations relate to areas such as:

How you do business defines both your culture and your identity and how you do something is just as important as what you do. Policies and processes must be designed and actively managed with your people in mind; not only to hold them accountable or to measure them but to recognise them, reward them, bring out the best in them, engage them and value them. By doing this, the right people will not only want to work for you, they will stay working for you.



Whatever the truth or reality is, how your staff perceive you as an employer will impact their psychological contract with the organisation. From the moment that staff join your organisation, they are constantly yet often unconsciously assessing whether leaders do what they say they will, honour the promises they make, lead by example and apply policy fairly and consistently.

When you start looking at the employment relationship through the lens of the psychological contract, the levers you can pull to maintain a healthy psychological contract with your staff become much clearer.

From your perspective as an employer, the psychological contract lives in what we know more commonly as 'how things are done around here'. In relation to the list of what our employees want from us, these 'things' include:

- The creation and management of staffing structures and restructures
- Recruitment processes
- Leadership and line manager behaviour
- Policies and implementation
- Appraisal and Performance Management
- CPD, career progression and succession planning

All of these things will currently exist and/or take place within your organisation but how well your organisation does these things has a significant impact on how staff view you as an employer and whether they want to continue working for you. In essence, employer behaviour in these areas determines whether an employee feels supported, treated fairly, valued, recognised, developed, allowed autonomy and trusted.

Here are some areas to focus on that will help you to both shape and maintain a healthy organisational psychological contract and improve retention:

1. Job Design & Recruitment

Turnover can create the perfect opportunity to affect organisational change with minimal disruption. If you have your finger on the pulse and your eye on the future, you can reduce the likelihood of wholesale restructures down the road. Also, take the chance to really think about not only the vacancy that needs to be filled but what type of person the role would suit. Make it an attractive role and be clear what it will be like to do this job on a daily basis; for all its quirks, make sure you highlight its perks. If you've nailed job design, then attracting the right candidate for your role shouldn't be an issue. However, the 'psychological contract' starts here – everything that is written, spoken and communicated from the start to the end of the recruitment process sets the tone for the future working relationship. Be consistent, don't make promises you can't keep and deliver on everything you say you will. This rolls right through into induction and probation periods. Don't leave them adrift, wandering around your corridors. Take charge, set expectations and set your stall out in terms of what your staff can expect to receive from you as a member of your team.

2. Line Management and Workload

How your line managers look after their staff is a critical part of maintaining the psychological contract. How managers treat people has a direct impact on how staff feel about coming to work in the morning. They are the 'face' of the organisation and the decisions that are made so how they communicate to staff matters. The value that you place on the quality of line management directly indicates how much you value your staff.

How well you listen to you staff is also crucial in maintaining the psychological contract; workload being a good example of this. If a task is seen as 'worth it', staff will be more likely to engage with it in a positive way. If they see it as a 'waste of time', this will affect their view of their role and how they feel about working for you. As I said before, their perception of what's worth it and what's not may be skewed but the sooner you address these discrepancies, the better.

3. Performance Management, CPD & Succession Planning

If job design and recruitment form the beginning of the psychological contract and line management establishes it, performance management, CPD and succession planning cement it. These processes are about identifying those who need support, supporting those who are ambitious and ready to progress, identifying specific organisational and individually beneficial CPD and having a meaningful dialogue with staff. They alone embody and facilitate several of those employee 'wants' we covered: reward, recognition, development, progression, support, fair treatment, autonomy and trust so it's essential that you get them right.



Laura Williams is a former MAT chief operations officer and school business manager, and the founder of LJ Business Consultancy

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A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Discover the practicalities of implementing 30 hours free childcare

The rationale for increasing funded childcare provision to working families, from 15 hours to 30 hours, was welcome news to many families across the country when it was introduced in 2017.

It meant that some

families, if they met the criteria of both parents working and not earning more than £100,000 each per year, could access full-time nursery provision for their child.

There is an argument that free childcare provision for three and four-year-olds should be available to all families because the benefits for the child in terms of early learning and social interaction are well evidenced. But for families who are not employed the government will only fund nursery provision for 15 hours per week.

FEASIBILITY STUDY

The change was rolled out to authorities across the country between 2017 and 2019. Working in a maintained primary school with nursery provision the

impact of the change was felt significantly. The nursery had always offered full-time funded provision only and was full with a long waiting list. In 2019 the school learned that it would no longer receive that funding and had to conduct a lengthy feasibility study to determine if the nursery could continue to operate and, if so, how it could be managed.

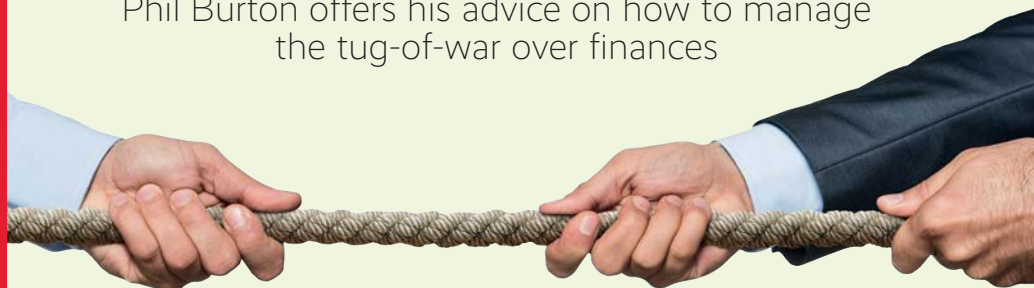
School business managers are best-placed to lead on any similar feasibility studies with support from the nursery teacher. In the feasibility study, the business manager will need to consider actual staffing costs for both full-time provision and part-time provision. The costs of potential redundancies resulting from closure or reduced operating hours would then need to be taken into account alongside predicted pay increments.

Once the applications are in and the enrolment has been agreed the school business manager can review how much funding each child would bring in, based on their IDACI band and the hourly rate that the local authority has confirmed it will pay.



MANAGING COMPETING NEEDS

Phil Burton offers his advice on how to manage the tug-of-war over finances



Using this formula for each pupil will allow the business manager to report to governors in terms of financial sustainability. It can also be used to determine a fee for any parent wishing to access full-time provision if they are not eligible for the free 30-hour provision.

COMMUNICATION IS CRUCIAL

Communication with parents is crucial for managing the implementation. Parents need to understand how to access the 30 hour code and what its implications are and they need to understand why their child might only be eligible for part-time nursery. Parents' open days are a great arena for sharing this information. Take time out of the SBM day and attend the open day armed with leaflets outlining the steps to take to apply for the 30 hour code and take questions from the parents about how they can apply and what you, as a school, might be able to do to support them.

KEEP TRACK OF CODES

If your school is able to continue to provide nursery provision make sure you keep a track of the codes. You will need to revise your nursery admissions policy to stipulate that no child can receive full-time provision unless you are provided with the code or agreement to pay appropriate fees.

It is a change in culture but, with organisation skills and an understanding of IDACI bands and hourly rates, you will be able to lead and support the school as it moves into a new way of working.

Caroline Collins is head of school business strategy and resources at Miles Coverdale Primary School

 @caroline_261

Every school has to manage a host of competing financial needs - you have to focus on them at the same time to balance them effectively - sometimes that can feel like it is making us cross-eyed! It's a lot easier to focus on one or the other. So how can we manage the competing needs?

As a leader it is important that you take a step back and try to view the wider perspective. This is the "bird's eye view". It is very tempting to just plough on with things and go with who shouts loudest, however, this will often lead to problems later down the line.

You have listened to the case put forward for why each department needs the finances and they are all compelling, so how does a SBL manage this? Firstly, the decision is not just for the SBL, it is a school decision which the SLT and Governors should be involved with. By having a number of people making the decision ensures that a number of views can be obtained and there is a consensus on what can be achieved.

Then it is all about risk-based decision making. There are plenty of examples of how you can do this but here are a few things that I feel you should be considering.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I DON'T DO THIS?

In lots of cases it might be nothing, but in some cases the impact of doing nothing could be so serious it carries a prison sentence. I'm thinking Health and Safety-based needs.

IS IT PART OF THE WHOLE SCHOOL STRATEGIC PLAN?

Every school has a plan of where they want to be in the future. Spending should be aligned to the plan as that is the ultimate goal.

WHAT IS THE FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THIS?

So we need to be clear, if it is an H&S risk it must be actioned and finance is not going to be a justifiable reason in court. However, when considering a request for a new trim trail the financial cost would play a part. Can we simply afford it?

HOW WILL THIS EFFECT OUTCOMES?


The impact that the spending is going to make on outcomes should be considered. If the business case demonstrates that a rapid and sustained positive impact on outcome will be achieved then this should be considered.

IS IT ACHIEVABLE?

Departments will all put forward a business case for what they want, or think, will make a great improvement to their areas. But, ask the question 'is it really achievable?'. The PE department might provide the greatest business case for a new swimming pool to improve swimming outcomes but is that really realistic and are there any other alternatives?

Once you have considered these factors, and you may wish to add your own, you can demonstrate a clear rationale behind the decisions you have made when managing competing needs. This information should then be fed back to the team so they can understand your rationale behind where you have prioritised the need.

Phil Burton is school business manager at Hallbrook Primary School

 @runningsbm

All hail the SBL

What's the value of a primary school business leader?

The school business leadership profession is pretty inclusive on the whole, with a shared understanding of the pressures and stresses of managing the operations of a complex school acting as a common glue which binds practitioners together. Wherever you find two or more business leaders together, there will be an instant connection, a never ending stream of things to talk about and mutual to-do list as long as your arm. But the context and phase of a school can make a huge difference to the perception of the skills, experience and indeed salary expectations of the role itself. On occasion, the role of the primary school business leader has been viewed as somehow being lesser to that of a colleague working in a secondary school, or a MAT-wide setting. Indeed, if a comparison were made between the pay scales, budgetary value and line management responsibility of the Primary vs Secondary SBL, then yes, there are very different requirements, but that in no way means that the skills of the primary business leader are any less vital. It's all a matter of perspective.

Bonsai Budgeting

Of course the numbers are bigger in secondary schools and MATs, but that extra zero means it's far easier to absorb,

overspends and unplanned expenditure. In a primary setting, every single transaction needs the closest scrutiny, and every line in the budget relates to an actual cost, rather than a global allocation. Managing a small budget takes the financial skills of a bonsai gardener, and requires rigour and persistence to manage.

The primary SBL does not have a team of premises, catering, admin and finance staff to get on with managing the day-to-day operations of the school, and so they find themselves spinning a huge amount of plates single-handedly. In addition, they also need to be able to step back and carry out the strategic aspects of school leadership that are required in every school, regardless of size. It's an extraordinary balancing act and skill set.

The Whole Caboodle

Every governance, financial, compliance and administrative function that happens in a secondary school also happens in a primary, but there are far less resources and people available to deliver those same services. Which is where the multi-tasking primary SBL comes into their own. Often based in a busy main office with continual interruption and calls on their time, primary SBLs are in the thick of things at all times, dealing,

delegating, deflecting, designing and delivering everything, all of the time, the whole caboodle. It's a continual barrage which would test the agility and fitness of many of their secondary and MAT specialist colleagues - it's no surprise that the SBL steps challenge is usually won by a Primary Business Leader, they never sit down!

Primary Celebration

We are seeing specialist school business roles emerging in our educational landscape, and the school business profession is expanding and regenerating into new forms all of the time. But while our primary schools retain their unique flavours and the local character that is the essence of their local community, there will always still be a need for the skilled generalist genius of the primary SBL.

So don't ever be tempted into thinking that working in a primary school is an easy option, it takes the dedication of a marathon runner, the patience of a saint, the skills of a surgeon and the organisation of a circus ringmaster. Let's celebrate and value all that they do.

Hilary Goldsmith is a school business leadership consultant

 @sbl365

 sbl365.co.uk



An illustration of a man in a dark suit and white shirt, holding a large, stylized clock. The clock has a white face with black hands and a red second hand, and a blue cylindrical base. The man is standing on a light blue oval shadow.

WHAT SHOULD YOUR SBL BE TAKING HOME?

Hayley Dunn examines the factors at work when education employers set pay and conditions for their school business leadership roles

The increasing number of academies and other autonomous structures in education has afforded greater flexibility in how remuneration for SBLs and SBMs is assessed. The pay, benefits and conditions for business leadership roles vary greatly, because the breadth and depth of roles is now extremely diverse. Below are three examples of roles being advertised at the time of writing, in October 2019:

1. School business manager at a primary school (c. 600 pupils) in Leeds

The remuneration package included pay of £32,029 to £40,760 pro rata for a full-time, permanent position during term time, plus ten days. The successful candidate would have 'leadership and management across a federation', leading on the provision, development and operation of all school support functions, including finance, personnel, business administration and buildings.

2. Finance director at a college (c. 12,000 learners) in Liverpool

The remuneration package included pay of

approximately £65,000 for 35 hours/week, with 25 days' holiday, pension and flexible working hours. The successful candidate would have responsibility for all aspects of financial budgeting and reporting processes, compliance with external and internal reporting and audit requirements, strategic leadership and management of the IT services functions, including oversight of the IT infrastructure.

3. Administration and HR Manager at a secondary school (c.240 students) in Greater London

The remuneration package included pay of £45,726 to £47,652 for a full-time, full-year position. The successful candidate would oversee and manage the admin base, and ensure all aspects of HR and admin are robust.

All three were school business leadership roles, but each had different requirements and responsibilities, illustrating the diversity of roles available. They also highlight the extent to which the remuneration packages and conditions of service offered by employers to SBPs can vary significantly. As a potential candidate, it's important to read every recruitment pack carefully and ask questions to appraise whether the package

(pay, benefits and conditions) being offered is fair and equitable against the expectations of the role, and where the role sits within the school leadership structure.

DESCRIPTIONS AND SPECIFICATIONS

It's essential that school leaders give due consideration to the job description and person specification for their SBL post, since it's these two documents that will inform most decisions regarding pay. Where will the business leader post fit in the context of other leadership roles within the existing or proposed structure? Is the role equivalent in status to that of other senior leadership positions, such as deputy or assistant headteacher?

When determining the appropriate remuneration level for each post in your staffing structure, a useful starting point is to analyse the responsibilities of every role to ensure that the amount of pay is fair and equitable.

This analysis should cover the balance between leadership and management responsibilities, the challenges specific to each role, the level of strategic responsibility involved and all other relevant

considerations. The process should be one similar to that now required when setting leadership pay, as set out under the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (see tinyurl.com/psm-stpcd).

For business leadership roles, the process should also examine the size of the budget the post holder will be expected to manage, any financial challenges affecting the organisation that they'll have to contend with, and the percentage of whole school responsibility that they'll be taking on.

When reviewing or determining a remuneration package, carefully assess the conditions element. Areas to bear in mind here might include diversity and equality, the staff member's conditions of employment (such as pension contributions, holiday entitlements and working hours in term time versus the full year), annualised hours and other options. Flexible working opportunities might also come up – will it be possible to vary the post holder's start and finish times? Will there be any remote working opportunities?

PROFESSIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

The conditions of a business leadership role extend far beyond immediate considerations of the hours needing to be worked and when. If, for example, the HR position cited above required the post holder to be a qualified and current member of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, would that organisation's annual fee be paid for by the employer?

Matters relating to professional development and training – including how course fees, travel costs and other expenses will be covered – should be a significant consideration for both employers and employees. Will you be prepared to offer the mentoring, coaching and release time involved when individuals undertake professional qualifications?

Be aware that many professional institutions require their members to undertake a certain number of CPD hours each year. The Association of Chartered Certified Accountants, for example, requires its members to complete 40 units of CPD annually, made up of 21 verifiable CPD units and 19 non-verifiable. Those belonging to the Institute of School Business Leadership are required to complete 21 hours of CPD annually.

Other benefits attached to specific roles

can include the provision of mobile phones for business use and initiatives around employees' lifestyle and wellbeing, such as flu vaccinations.

This isn't an exhaustive list, but it does set out some guiding principles regarding the more common indicators at play when evaluating the level of pay and conditions that will help you recruit and retain the right business leader(s) to your organisation. It's important to evaluate those factors which are specific to your organisation and relate them to your particular circumstances, because every school and college is different.

CHANGING STRUCTURES

Returning to those three example adverts at the start, I found that other than pay, working weeks and holiday, they contained little information for potential candidates about what was actually on offer to them, and no mention of the many different types of benefits now routinely offered by employers to their business leadership staff.

Alongside the indicators discussed above, schools also need to consider the ways in which business leadership roles can change when schools become MATs and when MATs take on more schools. When that happens, it's often the case that business leaders' responsibilities will change and grow – indeed, of all senior staff within a school, it's typically the business leader's role that will change the most over time.

It's therefore vital that any re-evaluation or re-structuring processes are carried out in full consultation with the post holder(s), and that due consideration is given to the impact that any changes may have. If the role requires working across multiple sites, for example, then any time spent travelling between sites must be accounted for within the individual's paid working hours and appropriate travel expenses paid.



Hayley Dunn is school business leadership specialist for the Association of School and

College Leaders and author of *The School Business Manager's Handbook*, published by John Catt

KNOWLEDGE BUILDING

Further information can be found in the Green Book, which any staff who enjoy Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) (TUPE) Regulations protection will be covered by. I'd advise employers to consult their HR providers for assistance with this process, and school business professionals to seek advice from their professional association(s) and/or union.

A number of organisations, including the Institute of School Business Leadership and the Association of School and College Leaders, publish guidance for SBPs, headteachers and governors to support SBP recruitment and retention efforts. ISBL recently published a document titled 'ISBL Professional Standards – Headteacher and governance guidance' (see tinyurl.com/isbl-head-gov), which contains advice on recruitment, training and development, performance management and pay.



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

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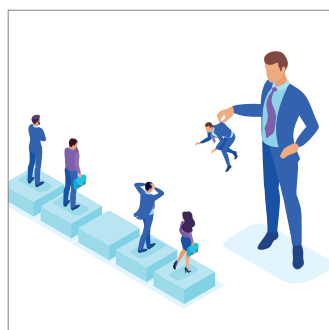


Weekly briefings

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

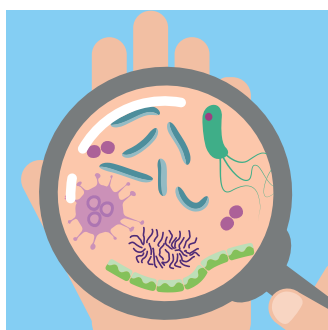


Staff Management



You're Fired – How to Manage the After-Effects of a Staff Sacking
primaryleaders.com/fired

Health & Safety



How to Contain Viral Outbreaks
primaryleaders.com/outbreaks

Safeguarding



Child Abuse – What Are the Signs and When Should Schools Act on Them? primaryleaders.com/

Attainment & Assessment



Ross Morrison McGill – “Reward Schools for Collaborating, Not Competing” primaryleaders.com/

WHAT'S TRENDING

1

10 ways to improve your PE facilities
tinyurl.com/psm10pe

2

What paired literacy outcomes can do for your literacy outcomes
tinyurl.com/

3

How to persuade parents to pick your school
tinyurl.com/psmpickschool

4

When you should call an ambulance for a student
tinyurl.com/

5

The attributes every great headteacher needs
tinyurl.com/

It's a balancing act

When buying office furniture it's a mix of the inspiring with the practical

With so many pressures facing schools, for most, creating Instagram worthy spaces outside of the classroom is pretty far down the priority list. But there is more to buying office furniture than at first it would appear. Putting some time in to balancing the practicalities in order to create an inspiring environment is time well spent.

Getting workspaces right can make a difference to performance while improving staff motivation and health. Consideration should be given to ensuring the best use of space, the ergonomic suitability, the functionality, the aesthetics, the removal of redundant furniture and aftersales care. So, however big your requirement, whether it's a tiny reception, a large open plan office, or a completely new building, the below questions must be considered:

WHAT IS YOUR BUDGET?

How important are brand and aesthetics? Often areas such as reception areas and similar public spaces will be where aesthetics are more significant. Budget spent on the aesthetics in these areas can help to create the right impression and may be worth investing more in. There will always be trade-offs and so, this may mean looking for lesser known brands and brand alternatives such as ESPO's smartbuy range for areas out of the public eye.

MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR SPACE?

Office space is always at a premium, but are you making the best use of your floors and walls? Many office furniture suppliers offer free space planning and design solutions to ensure effective and efficient workspaces. Taking the additional time to work with a

supplier so that spaces are planned can bring about very tangible benefits.

ERGONOMIC REQUIREMENTS?

We spend a large chunk of our time at work and therefore it is essential that the furniture we use is not having a negative impact on our health. Consideration needs to be given to how long people will be sitting in chairs, height and weight variations and positioning. The cheapest chair may not always provide the best long-term solution. However, a top-of-the-range chair may not be required if the user is only in the chair for a short amount of time.

FIT FOR THE FUTURE?

The work place is evolving quickly! Updated technology, new generations entering the workplace with fresh attitudes and beliefs, an increasing emphasis on a balanced home/work life, and lack of office space are all contributing to a flexible approach to office life. Office furniture projects should acknowledge this reality and build in as much flexibility as possible.

WHAT SERVICE WILL BE ON OFFER?

The service received when buying office furniture is of significant importance and cannot be underestimated. This includes, space planning, advice, delivery, installation, removal/recycling of redundant furniture and continued aftersales support from snagging to repeat/replacement orders.

The ESPO Office Furniture (282) framework has a wide choice of suppliers covering ranges from over 40 manufacturers; showcasing an unparalleled choice, all covered with OJEU compliance and pre-agreed terms and conditions. All of the suppliers offer exceptional service benefits from start to finish and can ensure your office is inspiring yet practical, providing full project management, space planning and bespoke solutions at excellent quality and value.



Anna Ellis is a category manager for ESPO, a public sector owned professional buying organisation (PBO)

WHY DECIDE TO GROW?

Adam Wainwright examines the pressures on academy trusts to get bigger

Growing is hard. I hated it. You get weird pains in your body, you look like Bambi on ice adjusting to your new gangly body... but I digress. This isn't about my adolescence, it's about multi-academy trusts (MATs) and the challenges they face to achieve the 'right' size.

To set this in some context, academisation is still relatively young. And those who have taken this path have had to - mostly by themselves with a laissez faire approach from the top - formalise collaboration and create a sustainable way to exist outside of the local authority.

The DfE didn't mandate MATs at the outset - it recognised academy chains forming, and expected stronger schools to support weaker schools, but ultimately supported a range of models. We had 'umbrella' trusts and 'collaborative partnerships', but they haven't really lasted (read more on the history of 'chains' in a report from the LSE (see bit.ly/2LLUslf)).

MATs emerged somewhat organically, a dual response to the greater operational responsibilities of increased autonomy and the recognised educational benefits of formal collaboration. Out of the infancy of the academisation policy, they've become the model for academy groups. But increasingly MATs are finding that, to remain sustainable, they're having to get bigger.

THE PRESSURES TO GROW

In research earlier this year (see bit.ly/38wrR3v), we found that over half of trusts are planning to grow, whether through schools joining or by merging with another trust. But why grow at all? There are plenty of small trusts in the country, many of whom are doing great things for their pupils. But they feel a pressure to grow, and that pressure arises internally and externally.

Internally, growth is seen as a necessity for sustainability. The trusts we spoke to were mostly chasing the next size bracket for the

'ideal' number of schools. Over half of the trusts with one to five schools saw six to ten as the ideal size. And over a third in the six to ten bracket saw 11 to 15 schools as ideal (and a further quarter were seeking to grow to 16 to 20).

"Any future budget planning you do will have to be heavily caveated with all manner of assumptions"

No one has proven a definitive perfect size for a trust, though research to date does indicate a minimum viability of sorts. The school/pupil numbers vary, but fundamentally it's a question of having enough income to support the functions not being provided by the local authority, with the eventual opportunity to do so at scale and achieve greater efficiency. In a climate of tight budgets, everyone is chasing financial viability. It's not a stretch to assume that trust leaders are looking at their budgets and seeing growth as an operational necessity to increasing income and achieving economies of scale in purchasing and delivering services from the 'centre'.

But the call isn't just coming from inside the house, so to speak. The core tenet of academisation is, as acknowledged earlier, that it's a self-improving system. The DfE needs trusts to take on underperforming schools. Academy orders are still mandatory for maintained schools judged 'inadequate'; new trusts need to be found for academies that are rebrokered from failing trusts. And even schools that convert voluntarily are not always deemed high performing enough to become a single academy trust.

When we asked how trust leaders decide which schools to add to their trust, 19 per

cent said their regional schools commissioner approaches them with a school. In July, the DfE announced £17 million of new funding for academy trusts of different sizes and performance levels to grow. The DfE needs trusts that can support schools at the rate needed, for the system as it is to work.

A HEALTHY RESTRAINT

So, if we accept that pressures to grow exist, why isn't the country overrun with 100-school trusts, expanding into every city, opening new free schools on every corner like educational Pret a Mangers? Why is a trust's ideal size typically only slightly bigger than it is now?

There's certainly no reluctance to work with each other. Trusts are collaborative - and not just within their own group of schools. A consequence of greater autonomy is a system of leaders who have learned from each other, with trusts supporting their peers through networks of leaders and practitioners. Only five per cent of the trusts we surveyed don't collaborate with other trusts. Instead, I think the gradual



approach we're seeing shows an understandable caution – with two factors in particular standing out. When we asked about growth plans, many trusts were open to growth, even though they weren't in the process. 28 per cent would grow "if the right schools came along" and 12 per cent would like to grow "in the future, but we're not ready".

The first of those reflects the nature of compatibility. Trust leaders recognise the importance of only taking on schools with a compatible vision and ethos. This is critical to a self-improving system; if we accept that there is no one correct vision for education, and that context matters, then it's clear that you can't put any school into any trust and expect the same success.

The second of those responses speaks to capacity. Successful growth hinges not just on due diligence on the joining school, but also on an understanding of the trusts' own capacity to support that school. This might be financial resource, school improvement expertise, or having the self-sufficiency in enough of the other schools that leaders can focus attention on improving the new school. The potential negative consequences of growth extend beyond failing to turn around a new school; there's the risk of a detrimental effect on the existing schools in the trust too.

THIS IS NOT BAD NEWS

If talk of pressure and cautiousness sounds a bit negative, it should be said that the picture doesn't have to be one of doom and gloom. It's clear that

trusts don't see growth as some quick fix to paper over financial cracks; the people leading them care about growing at the right speed and sustainably and, above all, sharing their vision with like-minded schools to help pupils as best they can. There's no denying there are systemic pressures on all schools (not just academy trusts) and it's always affirming to remember that the people facing them haven't, in the face of these pressures, lost sight of what's important. We have the right people in place, we just have to continue improving the environment they're working in.



Adam Wainwright is a Lead Content Editor at The Key, a provider of up-to-the-minute sector intelligence and

resources that empower education leaders with the knowledge to act. The data quoted in this release is taken from 'Trust expansion: overcoming growing pains' – a new piece of research conducted by The Key in partnership with Forum Strategy. The full research report is available to download here: www.resourcesthekey.support.com/trust-report-2019



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WHY OFSTED CAN IMPROVE TEACHERS' WELLBEING

The jury's out on whether Ofsted's new inspection framework is causing more or less stress, but it's helping teacher wellbeing in at least one respect, says Steve Waters...

Ask teachers about the state of their wellbeing, and most will speak of excessive workloads, stress, anxiety, an unhealthy work-life balance and even burnout.

Ask them about causes of that pressure, and Ofsted will often feature high on their list.

For the first time, however, the regulator's latest School Inspection Handbook (see tinyurl.com/ofsted-sih-19) specifically addresses issues relating to teachers' wellbeing in its 'Leadership and

management' section. According to the Handbook, in Outstanding schools, "Leaders ensure that highly effective and meaningful engagement takes place with staff at all levels and that issues are identified. When issues are identified, in particular about workload, they are consistently dealt with appropriately and quickly."

Staff also "...consistently report high levels of support for wellbeing issues ... Leaders engage with their staff and are aware and take account of the main pressures on them. They are realistic and constructive in the way they manage staff, including their workload." In Good schools, "Leaders protect staff from bullying and harassment." What does this mean in practice? I believe that senior leaders should ask themselves the following series of questions:

1. ENGAGEMENT

How do we 'engage' with staff – that is, all staff, not just teachers? Is there a channel for staff to raise concerns? Are there feedback mechanisms in place, such as anonymous surveys or focus groups? Do supportive line management meetings take place, and does the school leader operate a 'My door is always open' policy?

2. DRIVERS

How can we take account of the main pressures on staff? How much pressure is caused by the way we lead the school, and what can we do to reduce it?



3. INTERVENTIONS

Are we being 'realistic and constructive' in how we manage staff workload? How many hours are staff working per week? Are we doing enough to encourage a healthy work-life balance? How should we implement our duty of care for staff?

4. PROTECTIONS

How do we ensure that staff are protected from bullying and harassment? What should the incident reporting process look like? What should happen to those identified as being bullies?

NET POSITIVE

Under Ofsted's revised inspection framework, schools are required to deal with workload 'consistently,' but also 'appropriately and quickly'. The issue to consider is how your staff might evaluate the level of wellbeing support that's available to them. What does wellbeing and mental health actually *mean* in your school? Is there a 'We're all in this together' ethos at play, or are your teachers leaving and citing their mental ill-health as the cause?

If you fail to take sufficient care of your teachers' mental health and wellbeing, you can't realistically expect them to teach effectively – or, indeed, be as sensitive to the mental health and wellbeing of the children as they ought to be.

The changes introduced by Ofsted should ultimately be a net positive for teachers' mental health, but that will only occur if schools commit to building a wider culture of staff wellbeing – one that permeates the whole school and works to foster a mutually supportive, open community at all levels. Anything less, and it won't be long before your school Requires Improvement.

Steve Waters is the founder of the Teach Well Alliance and a Founding Fellow of the Chartered College of Teaching; the views expressed in this article are his own

 @stevewaters17

 teachwellalliance.com



FIND YOUR FIT

Sometimes a career wrong-turn can necessitate departing from a role earlier than expected. Jill Berry looks at how to step down while minimising the fallout

Whenver I'm asked to advise someone considering a move into a new role, I emphasise the importance of 'finding your fit'. Weigh up whether this is the right time, post and school for you, and how your skills, temperament, vision and values align with this particular position and organisation. You won't be able to fulfil the role perfectly from day one, since you'll inevitably learn how to do the job from actually doing the job itself. However, you do need to feel that there's a synergy between what the role and school appear to need and what you have to offer.

Carefully research whether this appears to be a good match, and use what you find to shape a compelling written application and prepare for the interview. If, at any stage of the appointment process, you start to feel that this may in fact not be a good dynamic – perhaps owing to reservations over whether you and the headteacher or governors will work well together – then have the courage to step away.

This isn't an exact science. It can happen that you accept a new role, believing the fit to be right, but over time come to realise that this isn't the case after all. You may feel frustrated that the role isn't enabling you to develop into the professional you hope to be. Perhaps it's simply the wrong post for you, or will require you to work alongside leaders with whom you aren't in alignment.

If that applies, then change things. Work forms too large a part of our lives for it to make us feel unfulfilled and miserable. Recognising you've made a career misstep doesn't have to denote the end of your career completely, but you will need to navigate the process carefully.

1. GIVE THE REQUIRED NOTICE

Don't leave an employer in the lurch; make sure they have adequate time to replace you.

2. BE HONEST

Be forthright with your employer as to why this particular role hasn't worked out, but beware of blaming others. Explain how, over time, you've come to realise the role's requirements don't match what you're able to contribute and conclude by stating that it's better for you and your employer to part ways.

3. DO YOUR RESEARCH

Search carefully for your next post, and don't accept something quickly out of fear for how temporary unemployment and a career gap might look on your CV. It's more important that your next role is a good fit, rather than one to which you're ill-suited. Consecutive missteps will be harder to explain and justify than one isolated example.

4. KEEP THE FAITH

We're all fallible, and all get things wrong sometimes. One mistake doesn't equate to total failure. You need to settle on a narrative that shows what went awry on this occasion – both to help you learn from the experience yourself, and to help you communicate what happened to others. The right job for you is out there – you just need to be determined to find it.

Jill Berry is a leadership consultant, author and former headteacher

Choose the right CPD provider

How can you ensure that your school gets a good return on its investment when buying in your CPD from an external provider?

For as long as I've been a school leader, staffing has always been both my most significant expense and my most valuable asset. Consequently, I've always felt that we need to get the best possible value and biggest impact we can from everyone who works for us. And the most obvious way of doing that is via training – or as we tend to say these days, continuous professional development.

A school may decide to pay an external provider to deliver said training for a number of reasons. For me, a principle one is that the model of sending someone 'on a course' and expecting them to 'cascade' what they've learnt down what to others is unrealistic and, at least in my experience, rarely effective (unless we're talking a custom course specifically tailored to their needs).

CPD can do a great deal to support teachers at any stage in their career, but is particularly effective for those still in their first few years. A major benefit of

adopting a group or whole school approach by bringing the trainer to you is that this allows you to move everyone forward together and encourage a sense of everyone being on the same page. The unfortunate reality can also sometimes be – as I've seen first-hand – that colleagues simply need to receive guidance and instruction 'from someone else'!

Clarity of purpose

The first step in getting a good deal on your CPD investment is to ensure that you're clear about precisely what it is you're seeking to achieve. Change? Increased knowledge? Productive discussion? Once you've settled on this, you can then go about trying to find the right provider. Of course, we don't know what we don't know, which is why it's crucial to formulate a realistic sense of the current context via self-evaluation.

There's also much to be said for getting the timing right, in terms of where the CPD session falls in the school year and the time of day it's scheduled for, along with the location. There's no point in trying to win hearts and minds and embracing a different way of doing things if your colleagues are going to be constantly worrying about the drawers they need to label or displays they need to finish.

I actually feel the beginning and end of term aren't always the best points for delivery, since there's either so much going on or a momentum-slowng holiday to contend with. Having the space to discuss, follow up and implement the training provided is as important as the event itself.

What sets the best providers apart for me is their expertise, integrity and ability to understand the needs of the school. As an associate consultant who also happens to be a serving headteacher, I'm especially keen to understand the context of the school I'll be working with. I'm keen that training always be presented to colleagues as *'for their consideration'*, rather than a suggestion of how something *'should'* be done.

Real change in schools ultimately comes from staff themselves, which is why this visitor to their school shouldn't presume to fully understand their context and setting. Thus, when 'buying in' CPD I'll always look for experts who seek to understand our needs, offer exactly what I want and suggest next steps.

Matt O'Grady is headteacher of West Horndon Primary School, near Brentwood in Essex; he also works as an associate consultant for Chris Quigley Education and is a director at MJO Education Ltd

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DON'T TOUCH ME!

Anthony David considers what it actually means when we say that schools are entitled to use 'restraint' and 'reasonable force'

What do we mean by the word 'force'? In a school context, it typically refers to occasions when a teacher has had to make assertive physical contact with another child. In 2013 the government published guidance on the use of reasonable force (see tinyurl.com/dfe-rforce), which observed that "Force is usually used either to control or restrain." The key word cited within the document, however, is 'reasonable', as it goes on to describe how "'Reasonable in the circumstances' means using no more force than is needed."

It's entirely reasonable for staff to use passive force – such as standing between two pupils who are fighting – or active force, such as leading a pupil by the arm out of a classroom, if doing so will reduce the overall risk of greater harm. The main message to stress here is that such uses of force should be rare events, and that if they do arise, they shouldn't lead to further injury.

GOOD PRACTICE

So when can force be used? Bearing in mind that any use of force should be a rare occurrence, the frequency with which reasonable force is applied in schools appears to be far greater than outward impressions suggest. Children ultimately shouldn't require regular restraint in class – in cases where it happens, investigations should be carried out and strategies implemented to manage such behaviour and monitor the response from staff.

That said, examples that might warrant the use of reasonable force include removing a child from a classroom, or possibly preventing them from leaving, where failing to do so would risk harm to other pupils. Similarly, preventing a pupil from attacking a member of staff or fellow pupil, or from harming themselves, may justify the use of force.

Staff may also have cause to use force outside of school during a local or residential visit. Situations arising there

arguably fall more into the realm of 'common sense', but regardless, the staff in question will be required to use their professional judgement, ideally having previously received training that supports good practice.

After force has been used, it's good practice to inform the pupil's parents/carers. In my own experience, situations requiring the use of force will often result in further sanctions, possibly up to an exclusion, depending on the child's age. Your discussion with parents about the incident will naturally be informed by a report outlining the nature of the force used by the relevant member of staff, and for what reason.

When reporting to parents, remember to include the following:

- **The pupil's behaviour and the level of risk presented at the time of the incident**
- **The degree of force used**
- **The subsequent effect on the pupil or member of staff concerned**

The latter point is especially important, since this is the first step in establishing empathy and ultimately respect between both parties.

Schools are also able to use force in order to search for prohibited items, including knives, illegal drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, pornography, stolen goods, fireworks or any other item that could potentially be used to cause harm or offence. These are all items that are prohibited as standard in accordance with the 1996 Education Act, but this list of prohibited items can't be extended to other specific items the school might wish to prohibit as a matter of course, such as smartphones.



POOR PRACTICE

It has to be recognised that poor practice can and does happen. Indeed, it's been known for some schools to adopt habits they consider 'reasonable', but which actually go far beyond the type of practices outlined in government guidance.

In the heat of the moment, what starts as 'reasonable force' can quickly escalate – and it's because of situations such as these that one-time

whistleblowing policies have since become statutory

documents. If you witness or learn of a colleague using force that you consider to be beyond 'reasonable', what should you do?

There should always be a culture of mutual respect in your school. If a member of staff is uncomfortable with the actions of a colleague, they speak to their line manager. If the actions in question have in fact come from their line manager, another senior member or even the headteacher, that member of staff ought to speak to the LA or the school's chair of governors. Allowing unreasonable force to become standard practice will jeopardise a school's reputation and the very integrity of the education profession itself.

A final point to note on where things can go wrong is regarding the use of isolation rooms. Schools that operate an isolation room policy can only do so if appropriate training has been provided, and even then, only in secondary schools – primary schools cannot operate isolation rooms.

Children should never be forced into an isolation room, and certainly shouldn't be confined in one against their own will (which could include a member of staff holding the door shut). Actions of this kind are classed as false imprisonment and are illegal. If your school operates any type of 'control' room, it's strongly advised that there be regular training for attending staff, including appropriate risk assessments.

PROFESSIONAL DUTY

It's this uncertainty within schools of not knowing what they can and can't do that's fuelled a rise in restraint training companies in recent years.

Ironically, good restraint training shouldn't be about restraint techniques, but rather how to avoid the need for any type of restraint in the first instance.

Private training companies certainly shouldn't be advertising the teaching of such techniques over de-escalation strategies.

During any training of this type, the core messages you should receive are:

- Restraint should be rare
- Restraint should be reasonable

Equally, you should be looking for a clear articulation of existing government guidance, which hasn't changed in principle since the Education and Inspections Act

IN BRIEF

We've come a long way since the corporal punishment traditions of canes, rulers and slippers were used as tools of discipline. No longer do children sit in fear of the teacher who grabs them by the ear, like a naughty Billy Bunter.

However, it seems things may have since swung to the opposite extreme where physical restraint is concerned, to the extent that myths around what is and isn't acceptable have started to mingle with staff fears of losing their jobs following difficult exchanges with pupils. Here, I'll look to bust some persistent myths, examine what constitutes inappropriate practice and explain what staff can do to challenge it.

of 2006 (the aforementioned 2013 guidance sought to explain the measures of said Act more clearly). It's unlikely that official government guidance in this area will change in any substantial way. It's certainly good practice to provide regular training in the area of restraint, but schools aren't required to do so.

A final point. Schools are socially dynamic environments, and it's been well publicised how regularly teachers are assaulted or hurt in their place of work. This, though, is no excuse to use excessive force. We are professionals, and even in the heat of the moment must continue to act professionally. We need to understand that aggressive behaviour isn't typical, and that it often reflects a child in distress. Our professional duty is to uphold that child's dignity – even if they're spitting in your face.



Anthony David is an executive headteacher

YOU ARE NOT ALONE!

Support groups can be excellent for school leaders' mental wellbeing

A problem shared isn't necessarily a problem halved, but meeting up with other school leaders as part of an organised group can give you some much needed perspective and motivation. Here's how to go about exploring what professional heads' groupings might be in your local area, along with some suggestions for starting one of your own.

It is often said that headship is a lonely job, and for those of us in it, it can certainly feel like this sometimes. The unique pressures of the role and the numerous people one comes into contact with, each with their own demands on your time, mean that confidential discussions and difficult decisions rest with you – and often there is nowhere to turn for your own personal debrief or sounding board.

Mental health is rightly being talked about much more openly in society and in the workplace – in schools the headteacher is always looking out for their team. But again, when it comes to your own mental health, who can you turn to?

More and more headteachers are recognising that the lonely aspects of the job are unhealthy. Decisions are always better taken in consultation, and mental health can only thrive in an open and supportive environment. To this end, headteachers can find solutions by discussing the principles behind conversations and decisions without breaking confidences, and can help one another talk about the role so as to relieve the pressure, recognise the truth in the old

adage of "you're not alone" and maintain good mental health – all through group support structures for heads.

PARTNERSHIP WITH EMPLOYERS

Where I work in the Isle of Man, headteachers have teamed up with their employers – Isle of Man Government – to stage regular workshops and forums where school leaders can get together and listen to presentations and take advice on a range of subject matters linked to the role and to general wellbeing for headteachers. These sessions are very supportive and give headteachers the chance to take time out from running their busy schools and come together for group discussion. We've had a range of topics as the theme for our support sessions with key note speakers addressing headteachers about the importance of sleep for senior leaders and how to improve sleep quality; HR officers on avenues of support for school leaders who need time out for bereavement, stress or medical reasons; and personal stories of overcoming mental health issues which have encouraged heads to talk more openly about mental health and to remove the stigma from the subject matter – one speaker asked heads to place a tin of baked beans on their desk so that curious colleagues would enquire as to its purpose thus serving to open a dialogue about mental health.



RESOURCES AND DISCUSSION PROMPTS

Through these support sessions, the employers on the Isle of Man have produced various resources for headteachers which further contribute to the support group ethos. A simple pocket guide which signposts which support is available to headteachers, together with contact details and information, doubles up as a great stimulus for discussion in group sessions. We can also enjoy a cup of tea from our mugs which are emblazoned with handy reminders that headteachers should – and can – seek out support if required. The resources don't have to be anything more technical than a prompt for conversation and a reminder that it is OK to seek out help from other heads.

RANT AND RAVE

Alongside a dedicated support forum for workshops and presentations, headteachers can meet informally – and should definitely seek to do so in order to offer one another support. In the Isle of

“Sometimes an agenda of nothing more but a “rant and a rave” can be all it takes to help headteachers feel better about themselves and the work they do”



support can be built. LinkedIn and, in particular, Twitter, offer this ready-made leadership community to engage with.

Some colleagues have an open account, some anonymous – the choice around that remains with each individual – but the size, experience and support on offer from this huge e-community can augment and enhance the more traditional support group formats available to headteachers. It's easy to start making use of the social media community and the range of conversations is exceptional; there is always something for everyone. Becoming an active contributor to Twitter chats is a great way to begin and lends itself well to discussion on an agreed topic or general support. #UKEdChat from @ukedchat on a Thursday evening is a great place to start and there is also the wonderful #PrimaryRocks chat on a Monday evening.

So the next time you find yourself saying that "its lonely in headship" stop, reflect and pick up the phone or log into social media. Or send an email inviting colleagues from nearby to join up for a coffee and a chat... you'll be surprised how many other feel the same way and are equally glad of the support.



Maxim Kelly is Executive Headteacher of two schools in the Isle of Man (Dhoon School and Laxey School) which form the Laxey/Dhoon Federation.

 @amaximjkelly

Man regional cluster meetings for heads is one way in which this is achieved. Sometimes an agenda of nothing more but a "rant and a rave" can be all it takes to help headteachers feel better about themselves and the work they do.

By "raving" about what we do well, headteachers can share ideas and ways of working that will benefit each other.

By "ranting" about our frustrations, headteachers will realise that although we all have our own ways and means of doing the job, we have common issues – and common solutions.

These sorts of support sessions can help re-motivate headteachers and offer that inner assurance that they're not alone in the difficulties faced.

SUPERVISION

Another strand of support offered to headteachers in the Isle of Man is a version of supervision which is based on a model used by the Manx Police Force: annual vulnerability checks and debriefs for officers who work in challenging roles has become an annual "well-being" check for headteachers. These are confidential sessions led by counsellors from the Isle

of Man Staff Welfare Service – while the content of these meetings is private to the individual, key themes emerging across the headteacher workforce are compiled and shared so that headteachers know what the collective issues are and can seek signposting to further help, support and guidance in identified areas.

SOCIAL MEDIA

While there are obvious benefits to support groups taking place in the physical realm – such as meeting over coffee and cake, one shouldn't underestimate the power of the telephone! Voice to voice support is very comforting – and I'd encourage all headteachers to develop a network of colleagues with whom they feel able to pick up the phone and talk away to a friendly confidante.

It's certainly true that at its very best the #EduTwitter community can be informative, supportive, positive and can help shape thinking and challenge ideas. Social media is awash with headteachers and other colleagues with whom a wide and diverse network of

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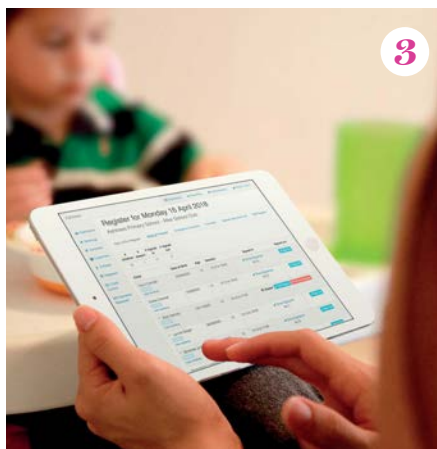
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THE DANGERS OF DIVING

Ofsted's new 'Deep Dives' might be well-intentioned, but they risk putting inexperienced teachers in the firing line, argues Matthew Murray

Over the past year there's been much talk in education circles about Ofsted's new assessment framework – the criteria against which schools will henceforth be judged during inspections. Ahead of the 2019/20 academic year it was given a significant overhaul, with Chief Inspector Amanda Spielman citing concerns that some schools had begun to behave like 'exam factories', narrowing their curriculums to maximise their exam results.

Ofsted has thus added a new 'Quality of Education' focus to the framework, which seeks to ensure that schools are delivering a 'broad and balanced curriculum', and plans to hold schools accountable for this via a practice known as 'Deep Dives.' Under the new policy, a select group of subjects will be chosen and inspected rigorously. In theory, this will involve inspecting children's work in books, a series of lesson observations and interviews with subject leaders.

In practice, however, these Deep Dives have the potential to cause more harm than good. Maths and English subject leaders in primary schools will typically be senior members of teaching staff, with many years of classroom experience under their belt and the wherewithal to cope with the stresses of Ofsted inspection. Yet foundation subject leaders – for art, D&T, music and

MFL, for instance – frequently won't possess such experience. Many will even be new to their roles. Regardless, these teachers now face the prospect of being put front and centre during an Ofsted visit in a way that could make or break their school and its reputation.

What message does this send out when the profession continues to be mired in a recruitment crisis? 'Come and train to be a teacher, where in little under two years you could be the focus of a high-stakes inspection.' This is especially disheartening, given that the percentage of teachers leaving the profession within five years of qualifying remains as high as 40 per cent.


ADDITIONAL PAY?

Moreover, teachers of foundation subjects often aren't compensated for the extra responsibility they take on. Primary maths and English subject leads can expect to receive teaching and learning responsibility payments on top of their salaries, therefore compensating them for the extra scrutiny they'll face. Right now, an NQT leading D&T in a one-form entry

primary is unlikely to be extended the same courtesy. If we're going to put foundation leads at the frontline of Ofsted inspections, should these roles not start to come with additional pay?

A key criticism of Ofsted's outgoing framework was that its judgements focused too heavily on results, placing undue stress on pupils that stemmed from teachers' and senior leaders' desperation to avoid 'Requires Improvement', or 'Inadequate' ratings. But instead of removing this needless pressure from the system, Ofsted has simply moved it elsewhere. At a time when pupil wellbeing is a top priority for the government and Ofsted, it seems remarkable that they've failed to appreciate how teacher wellbeing matters too.

Schools should absolutely face scrutiny. We all want to ensure that every child receives the very best start in life, but the brunt of inspections should be faced by schools' most experienced staff. Yet again, Ofsted seems to be turning an opportunity into an own goal. Rather than supporting schools in establishing a rich curriculum, the regulator has instead sought to up the ante with Deep Dives. Over time, these will inevitably generate an additional layer of paperwork for already stretched teachers, as senior leaders seek to ensure foundation leads have a folder for every conceivable question an HMI might wish to ask.



"Under the new policy, a select group of subjects will be chosen and inspected rigorously"

Matthew Murray is a primary teacher in Manchester and co-creator of the site 2 Stars and a Wish, where he regularly posts ideas for using songs, videos and poetry to teach literacy and guided reading

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