Succession planning
How to step down successfully

Feeling angry?
Ways to keep your cool

Unlocking potential
HOW LIGHTING BOOSTS LEARNING

Parental complaints
Make your digital policy foolproof

DO YOU HAVE 'INTENT'?
Be prepared for an Ofsted deep dive

A perfect day
Hold a great open event

Be energy efficient
Your guide to reducing costs

Very tasty
Brilliant food on a budget

From the editor

Ever felt that someone was looking at you the wrong way?

Well it appears they might be! According to the NAHT Ofsted's new curriculum-led inspections need to be reformed.

In a survey of their members the feedback was that Ofsted has adopted a secondary lens through which to judge the primary curriculum which is proving to be deeply problematic in primary schools. Also that the new framework tries to do too much; inspectors cannot hope to fulfil its demands. Too often judgements are formed on a scant evidence base. And Ofsted's curriculum methodology is driving new workload and demanding a model of curriculum management that schools do not have the capacity or resource to implement.

The NAHT believes the inspection methodology for evaluating the quality of a school's curriculum in the primary phase should be amended as a matter of urgency, to reflect the reality of the way in which curriculum subjects are delivered in the majority of primary schools in England.

The NAHT are pressing Ofsted and the DfE at the highest levels to listen to and work with the profession to make improvements to the framework. If you would like to take a look at the survey's findings then head to https://bit.ly/2HmIkdZ.

And speaking of Ofsted in this issue we are taking a look at a number of issues, including how to manage parents' expectations following an Ofsted report and bridging the gap between reality and perception. We also have a term guide to Ofsted inspection success - a strategy to help schools develop, implement and communicate their curriculum successfully.

Enjoy the issue,

Mark Hayhurst
mark.hayhurst@theteachco.com

Our experts this issue

Sue Birchall
Business manager at The Malling School, Kent

Phil Burton
Business manager, Hallbrook Primary School

Jill Berry
Leadership consultant and former headteacher

Naomi Hiscock
Director, Primary Science Education Consultancy

Mike Fairclough
Headteacher at West Rise Junior School

Hilary Goldsmith
School business leadership consultant

Alan Cameron
Education adviser with Soundtrap

Sonia Gill
Founder of the consultancy Heads Up

From the makers of *Teach Primary*

HIGHLIGHTS

GET AHEAD OF THE CURRICULUM CHANGE

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EMOTIONS

A FOCUS ON...
FEELINGS

FAMILY

SAME-SEX PARENTS

MENTAL HEALTH

Robin and the Rabbit
(A Book About Anxiety)

Place2Be

written by
Holly Duhig
illustrated by
Drue Rintoul

RELATIONSHIPS

RELATIONSHIPS & CONSENT

STOP
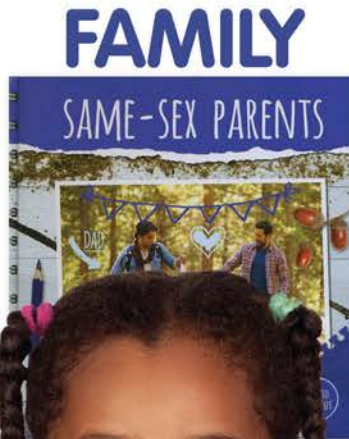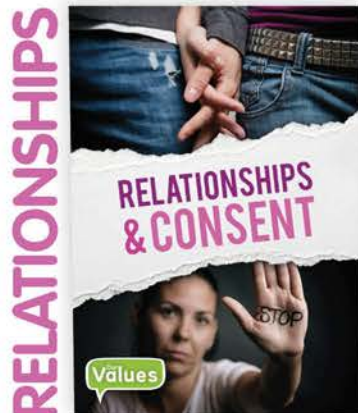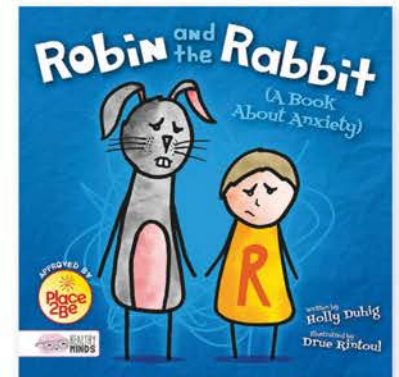
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The Wait for the Monster

The Mop and Dad at the Top

Chuck is on a Quest and Pat is Fed Up

You've Got to Be Calmer, Llama!

The Fixer

Sniff Sniff Hal is Big

Relationships and community should be at the heart of learning

Malcolm Groves and John West-Burnham argue that we should focus on not just what happens in school but outside the gates as well

What's the central message you wish to convey in your new book, Flipping Schools?
JWB: I think that our work together over the past few years has indicated that on the one hand, schools are working incredibly hard and teachers and school leaders are probably more effective now than they've ever been. But, for a variety of reasons, progress is not happening the way that it should given the amount of input.

MG: Part of the argument is that the focus has been on what happens inside the school and only what happens in the classroom affects educational outcomes. And while that is incredibly important, all of the evidence that we review in the book suggests that that actually accounts for only 20 or 30 per cent of the factors that influence educational achievements. Therefore, if you're going to break through that you have to do something differently and that involves finding a way to influence what happens beyond the school gate.

In the book, you talk of the need for more 'outward-facing' schools rooted in local communities. What are the hallmarks of such schools – what is it that they do differently?
MG: We pick out four features for schools to work on. The first is being a place of trust and mutual respect. And that applies at all levels, to partners, pupils, staff and parents. That sense of belonging, that sense of attachment is really important. Relationships, relationships, relationships is the way one Head put it to us. You get that right, then everything else follows. The second is a place of value and values. And that's, in a large part, to do with the curriculum. The purpose of the curriculum is to help people grow as individuals and as people who relate to other people. We explore the implications of that sense of personalised learning and paying attention to the individual.

The third building block of change is about the way schools engage with all of their stakeholders and encourage genuine partnership and participation. And the fourth feature of the outward facing school is acting as a hub of networks and support for learning that begins to reach beyond the school and says we're all involved in the education of our young people.

JWB: Where you have a strong community then schools tend to thrive. Our argument is that it isn't available to lots of schools and, therefore, simply doing more and more on the school side of things just isn't going to crack it. And therefore, there's a need to begin to explore different criteria, but also to be much more overt and interventionist in terms of actually working to build cultural capital and social capital. And one of our key arguments is that schools need to be micro communities, they need to work not so much as classic organisations but as communities which have all the characteristics that Malcolm has just listed, and then to begin to engage with the broader community. We know that when communities change, then often schools change as well.

What do you make of Ofsted's recent messaging around 'stuck schools' that have failed to attain Good or Outstanding since 2006? Have you seen anything in Ofsted's diagnosis and response that chimes with your own observations?

MG: We argue that we have an accountability system that is no longer fit for purpose. And is, therefore, driving unproductive outcomes. And so it's partly challenging the whole global education reform movement. It's because we're confused about who the users of that accountability system are because of the overemphasis on parental choice. We have different expectations of what we want from the system and yet we tried to measure it all in the same way. The statistics behind lots of the measurements, which produces the metrics by which schools are judged, we argue are not fit for purpose. We're measuring the wrong things in the wrong way. And we're using those measurements to draw wrong conclusions and using them to make judgements rather than to ask powerful questions.

You say schools must be in the business of attempting to build social capital within their local area. So what is social capital and what would schools' efforts at building that look like?

JWB: In the broad sense, it is the extent to which the quality of relationships, networks, interactions and, going back again to Malcolm's four points, components. Social capital is the quality of community life. Across the country, the range that we have, particularly in England, is huge. We have the range in terms of social class, the gap, the polarisation that we have as a society. Some schools are really blessed because

> "We know that when communities change, then often schools change as well" John West-Burnham

they serve rich communities high in social capital. Other schools are far more challenged because they are serving communities in which there is low trust, poor communication, low aspirations and expectations. We believe that those points have been deliberately ignored by policymakers over the past 20-30 years, simply because they're massive. It's the

same as the whole issue of economic poverty. We know there's a direct correlation between poverty and academic success. And yet we don't address the issue of child poverty. For us it says, you can't actually have an accountability system which does not take into account the fact that 25 or so per cent of children live in deep poverty.

Part of the image of flipping schools, or turning inside out, or being outward facing is that if a school builds the quality of relationships inside sufficiently, then it is in a position where it can turn inside out and reflect and radiate those relationships back outwards. And that begins over time to influence and shape, the quality of life around it and therefore the environment in which you can pursue educational achievements.

School Improvement

COULD YOU OUTSOURCE YOUR MUSIC TUITION?

Is offering externally provided music tuition a practical impossibility? Or is it actually more feasible than many have been led to believe?

Music is an entitlement for all children and is a foundation subject within the national curriculum for England. All children should experience a combination of classroom music teaching, singing and instrumental tuition. As funding becomes more stretched, it is important that we make the most of the resources available.

A feature of good and outstanding schools is that pupils from all backgrounds enjoy sustained musical opportunities through regular classroom work and music-making for all, complemented by additional tuition, partnerships and extra-curricular activities.

ESSENTIAL

The current emphasis on the importance of a 'broad and balanced' school curriculum has led many of the schools we work with to review their music provision. Ofsted inspections have included several music deep dives and the depth of questioning reflects how important a role music plays in schools. Offering music tuition beyond a first access programme should be seen as essential rather than desirable. In her review of the impact of musical activities on intellectual, social and personal development, The Power of Music (Hallam, 2014) brings together

several decades of research evidence that supports the case for music enhancing psychological well-being, school engagement, creativity, empathy, language and literacy, spatial awareness and numerous other skills and qualities.

GRANTS

Schools cannot be expected to do all that is required of music education alone which is why external provision is often a necessity depending on the skill set of school staff.

Every child must have the opportunity to learn a musical instrument at some point in Key Stage 2. Take advantage of the Music Education Grant that hubs receive to support the delivery of music tuition in your school, in addition to providing progression routes and ensembles out of school time.

FLEXIBILITY

Working with external providers for music tuition should complement your own school action plan for music and strong partnerships can ease the complexity of logistics e.g. fitting in sessions for small groups. For example simple changes such as rotating teaching group times so that pupils do not always miss the same part of a timetabled class session in other areas of the curriculum or flexible lunchtimes may ease the situation.

The majority of schools that we are working with in our locality do not charge families for music tuition due to economic circumstances and many of these schools offer excellent programmes of continuing music tuition after first access / whole class tuition. Several schools are skilled fundraisers for music, others use part of pupil premium funding to support gifted and talented students to make progress.

Offering externally provided music tuition within your school is possible – make it part of your vision, culture, music action plan and seek support from your local music hub. Every young person should be encouraged to begin their musical journey.

Lindsay Thomas, Head of Service for Music, One Education

MANAGING THE
LANGUAGE BARRIER

Elizabeth Monaghan suggests ways to support new pupils who have English as an additional language (EAL)

Picture a child in your classroom who is new to English, brimming with ideas, ready to learn and desperate to join in, yet lacking the words they need to fully engage with their learning.

This child, and many others like them may have joined your class halfway through the year, and now it's your job to unlock their potential and give them a flying start to their learning journey.

It's a challenging scenario, and one faced by schools up and down the country. So what can you do to make a positive difference to EAL pupils whether they stay for six months or six years?

LAY THE FOUNDATIONS

Our corner of Southampton is home to many eastern European families. Some decide to settle in the area, while others only stay a short time before moving to different parts of the country. And when the children arrive, the information we have about their education can be patchy. Some pupils might not have had early years provision, others may have been educated at home, and then there is the language barrier which makes it difficult for schools to communicate effectively with pupils and parents.

Tackling this challenge can mean going back to square one with a programme of targeted interventions that start on the child's entry to the school.

For one of our Year 2 pupils who was new to English, we had three teachers working on interventions at the same time to help

him secure an understanding of phonics, sounds and basic English vocabulary. We reinforced this with matching pictures and the opportunity to practice saying and using these words in a safe environment free of judgement.

He now takes part in lessons with his classmates and is rapidly closing the gap between himself and some of his native English speaker classmates.

ENCOURAGE INTERACTION

Seeing a child who is struggling socially due to a lack of language skills brings home how isolating those early days can be for a new joiner, especially when the term is in full swing.

Creating dual language displays of day-to-day items around the classroom can be a good ice-breaker as well as providing practical help for a child who is new to English. Visual support is key, we often use a system which provides pictorial representations of words and sentences to support them in their understanding of the vocabulary they are being expected to understand and use in their work.

Our school runs a nurture group for more vulnerable pupils which promotes wellbeing and builds resilience. Although not exclusively for EAL pupils, these children benefit from focussed time in a smaller group where it's easier to interact in a non-threatening and supportive environment.

Similarly, our forest school, which all pupils enjoy, gives EAL children the chance to communicate through outdoor play. Building dens, whittling wood and cooking on an open fire in our forest school area

"There's no one size fits all with EAL pupils, or with any pupils for that matter"

creates a language of its own and builds friendships with other children.

KEEP CLOSE TRACK OF PROGRESS

Evidence of EAL pupils' progress in maths can be easier to come by because two plus two is the same in any language. But reading poses more of a challenge. How do you identify an able reader in their home language who has joined the school with little or no English?

Having an unbiased way to assess children's reading ability can help. Once the foundations of reading in English are in place, we use a tool called Lexplore which tracks a child's eye movement to see how quickly they move forwards or backwards across a series of words.

This helps us identify which pupils find reading difficult regardless of their fluency in English. And importantly, we are now able to spot possible underlying reading issues which could be masked by a lack of language knowledge.

Assessments that are less reliant on fluency in English give us a more accurate picture of pupils' reading attainment which we can continue to measure during their time with us.

FOCUS ON THE INDIVIDUAL

Southampton has been welcoming settlers from around the world ever since the Huguenots sought refuge here in the 17th century, and this ethos is alive and well in our school today.

Getting to know each child as an individual helps them settle more quickly into a new country and a new school. By encouraging staff and pupils to find out what interests a child, and what makes them tick, you start to overcome the language barrier and smooth the path for learning.

A focus on the individual informs the way we monitor progress too, especially when the child has joined part of the way through the year. Some EAL children need more time to adjust, while others surprise us and hit the ground running.

That's where a teacher's professional judgement comes into play. There's no one size fits all with EAL pupils, or with any pupils for that matter. But with a combination of targeted interventions, close monitoring and an inclusive approach, new EAL pupils will quickly feel at home in the classroom at whatever point they join a school.

Elizabeth Monaghan is interventions teacher at Freemantle C of E Community Academy

A voyage of discovery

Mike Fairclough takes us on a trip to the research informed classroom

One of the things that I love about education is that it is immersed in discovery and the learning of new things. To capture a student's interest and imagination with fresh skills and knowledge is always incredibly rewarding. However, new learning is not just the domain of the students in our care. It is just as applicable and of value to the adults within our schools. To capture this broad concept, I will use the phrase "the research informed classroom" and will focus on three different ways of looking at this.

TEACHING AS A PRODUCT OF RESEARCH

One of the UK's most prolific and impactful researchers is Professor Bill Lucas. He has written numerous books and developed concepts which have influenced research informed learning within many schools. An example of this is his "Creative Habits of Mind" which was trialled with teachers in England by the Centre of Real-World Learning at the University of Winchester. The research found that when teachers understand what creativity is, they are more effective in cultivating it in their learners. Hundreds of schools, including my own, have drawn on the work of Professor Lucas and put his findings into action.

The list of educational thinkers who regularly inspire teachers through their research is extensive. Personally, I have found that the Twitter and Facebook community of educators, such as those linked to the hashtag "Edutwitter" and #primaryrocks, among others, have signposted me to easily digestible educational research, which I have then used within my school. If I am inspired by a particular approach, which I find on social media, I then explore Ted Talks and carry out internet searches for more information on the subject. Social media also offers the opportunity for discussion around ideas between peers.

ACTION RESEARCH

The research informed classroom can also take the form of action research. This is where the teaching and learning within a school explores a hypothesis, tries out new ideas and records the findings. Until the conclusion of the project, the impact of the action research will be largely unknown. Depending on the success of the initiative, the research will either be adopted by the teacher and their organisation, or not. This approach embraces an element of calculated risk, within which "failures" and challenges are accepted as being part of the process.

At my own school, we have engaged in several action research projects over the years. A significant one was our Positive Psychology action research project. This had a focus on Positive Psychology traits, such as resilience, kindness and gratitude and how we might integrate and promote these qualities throughout the school. We were particularly interested in the expression of gratitude and its effects on our students. There has been extensive research into the emotional, physical and mental impact that the expression of gratitude has on an individual. This has been tested out within various contexts, but little has been explored within the school environment.

Some of the positive effects that the regular expression of gratitude can have on a person include:

- Increased self-esteem
- Greater optimism
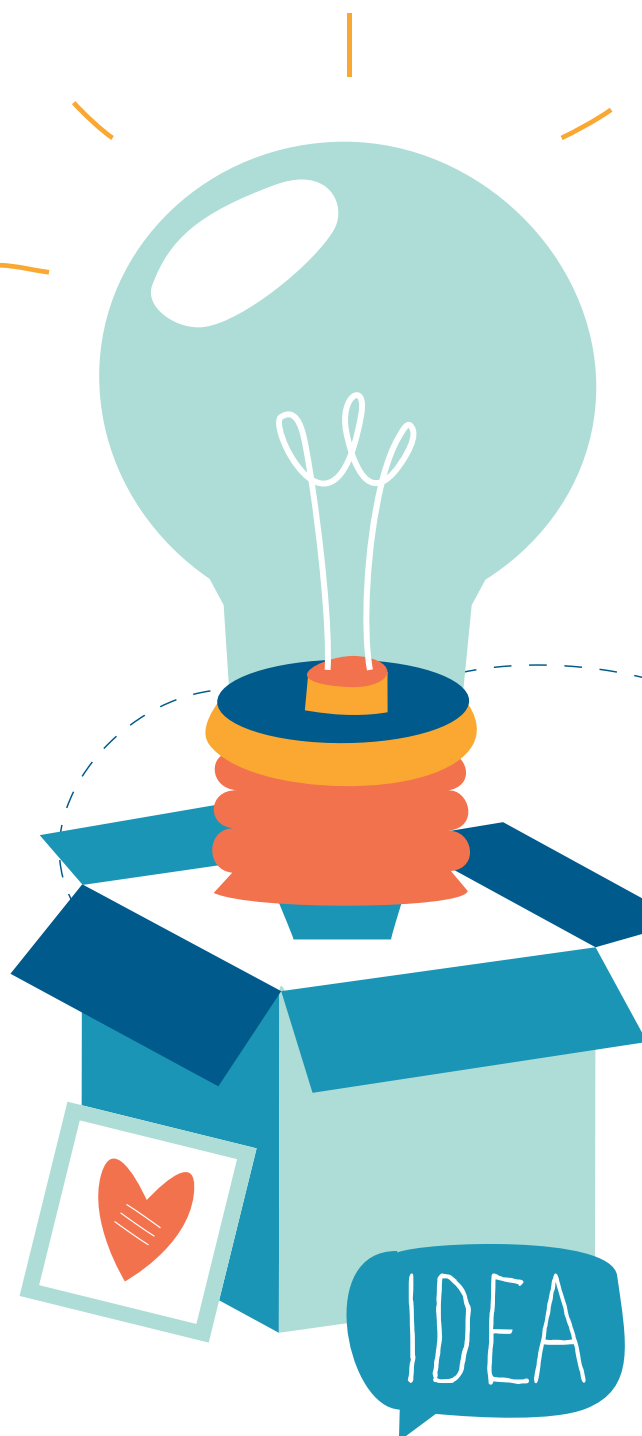
- Heightened energy levels
- Strengthened heart
- Stronger immune system
- A decrease in blood pressure
- Improved emotional intelligence
- Improved academic intelligence
- An expanded capacity for forgiveness
- A decrease in anxiety and depression

In light of these findings, I implemented a gratitude action research project at my school and worked closely with our Educational Psychologist to ensure that the research was conducted with rigour and in line with academic protocols. The study has now been rolled out to other schools, due to its huge success

INQUIRY BASED LEARNING

A different interpretation of the research informed classroom is when the curriculum itself is driven by inquiry.

"Teaching can be research-based in that sense that the curriculum is largely designed around inquiry-based activities, rather than on the acquisition of subject content; the experiences of staff in processes of inquiry are highly integrated into the student learning activities; the division of roles between teacher and student is minimised; the scope for two-way interactions between research and teaching is deliberately exploited." Jenkins and Healey (2005)

I believe that this is a particularly powerful way of engaging in research for the benefit of learners and teachers. For the past two years, my school has been involved in a project called "Spirals of Inquiry" created by Professor Judy Halbert and Professor Linda Kasar, based in British Columbia. Learners play a key role in the Spirals of Inquiry concept, with a focus on talking with students and listening to their thoughts about how they learn and what they want to learn. The teachers then focus on key questions inspired by the feedback from their students. The discussions then inform the direction of the curriculum. In light of the discussions between the teachers and their students, the teachers explore various ideas and ask themselves questions such as "Is this information genuinely coming from the children or is it being influenced by the adults within the school?" and "What would happen if we did X differently?" This process, which is rooted in fostering curiosity in the children and the adults, then moves into action and implementation of the idea being explored. As the name suggests, the Spiral of Inquiry then returns in a cyclical manner to further discussions between the teachers and their students

COLLABORATION ACROSS ALL THREE APPROACHES

At the root of the research informed classroom is collaboration. In his book "An Education Manifesto for Change", the author and speaker, Richard Gerver, encourages teachers to improve the education system from within. Gerver suggests a broad range of actions and personal qualities that he invites us to endorse. For example, a constant theme running throughout the book is Gerver's belief in the power of collaboration between individuals to effect change. He suggests that educators should be having

A STELLAR IMAGINATION

Carl Sagan (1934-1996) was an American astronomer, cosmologist, astrophysicist, astrobiologist and author. His research revealed much of what we now know about our solar system and he helped NASA with their space missions to Mars, Venus and Jupiter. Professor Sagan was also a teacher and taught a range of courses at Harvard University and Cornell. He particularly enjoyed teaching children and young people about the universe and inspired many individuals to become scientists within his field. He famously said: "Imagination will often carry us to worlds that never were. But without it, we go nowhere."

more conversations with one another, with business people and with scientists and artists. He says that this will broaden our perspectives and deepen our practice. The idea being that through connecting and collaborating with others, we can enhance our own craft as educators.

For me, the ideal research informed classroom and school involves all three of the approaches outlined above. Teaching informed by research, engaging in action research projects, and embedding the curriculum in inquiry. Woven into, and across, all of these approaches are interactions and discussions between teachers and learners, as well as connections between teachers and other professionals. These three approaches combined have the potential to create powerful learning environments. Places which delight in discovery, learning and new knowledge.

"Somewhere, something incredible is waiting to be known" Carl Sagan

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DO YOU HAVE 'INTENT'?

Naomi Hiscock asks if you are prepared for an Ofsted 'deep dive'

Do you have 'intent'? Do all your teachers know what it is and why it is appropriate for your school? Can it be seen in the teaching and learning taking place in your classrooms? If not, you're not ready for a 'deep dive' and you need to be soon, whether your subject is chosen or not.

Preparing for a 'deep dive' starts with having your 'intent' sorted. So, what is 'intent'? 'Intent' is setting out clearly what is distinct about the subject and why it is important for your children to learn it. This has to be understood by all levels in the school: senior leaders; subject leader; and teachers. To do this for science, look at the 'Purpose of study' and 'Aims' within the introduction to the science programmes of study in the National Curriculum and work with staff to define what this means for the children in your school and their future.

Just sorting the 'intent' is not enough to be well placed for a 'deep dive'. Next, you need to establish what you are teaching in each year, when and why. The National Curriculum sets out the content that must be delivered within each key stage. For the Foundation subjects, the school needs to make a decision about what specific content will be covered in each year, bearing in mind progression and level of conceptual understanding. For science, the National Curriculum has already been broken down by year group with progression embedded within it. Science content can be moved across year groups but, if so, there must be a clear rationale for why this has been done e.g. classes with mixed year groups.

For all subjects, the sequence in which content is taught is not prescribed. For example, in science, the sequence in which the topics are presented in the National Curriculum is by subject (Biology, Chemistry, Physics) rather than progression of knowledge. Consequently, it is important that schools consider the sequence in which the science topics and their related statements are taught within each year. Schools should consider the following questions when planning the teaching of the science topics and statements within any particular year.

- Do some topics and statements require coverage throughout the year?
- How complex are the concepts involved?
- What is the relationship between topics and their related statements within a year i.e. does one topic need to be taught before another?
- Can a topic be revisited in different contexts?
- How long does each topic require? Should any be split?

To illustrate what this might mean for sequencing science in Year 3, for example, **see the panel opposite.**

Whether the sequence chosen is repeated on an annual basis and published as part of a long-term curriculum map or determined by the year-group teachers on an annual basis, it is critical that the rationale is clearly articulated and understood by all levels in the school.

This is still not sufficient to completely meet Ofsted's requirements. Schools also need to reflect on their particular pupils, bearing in mind their backgrounds and experience both in and outside

- prior experience and vocabulary, so that any potential gap in attainment can be addressed
- the context of the school and the community from which the children are drawn and using
- this to make learning relevant the interests of the children and how they can be used to engage them in learning

Last, but not least, there needs to be a clear set of principles for how teachers are expected to deliver the content in the curriculum e.g. an appropriate range of teaching strategies. If all of this is not in place before Ofsted call and the subject is selected for a 'deep dive', what follows will make little difference.
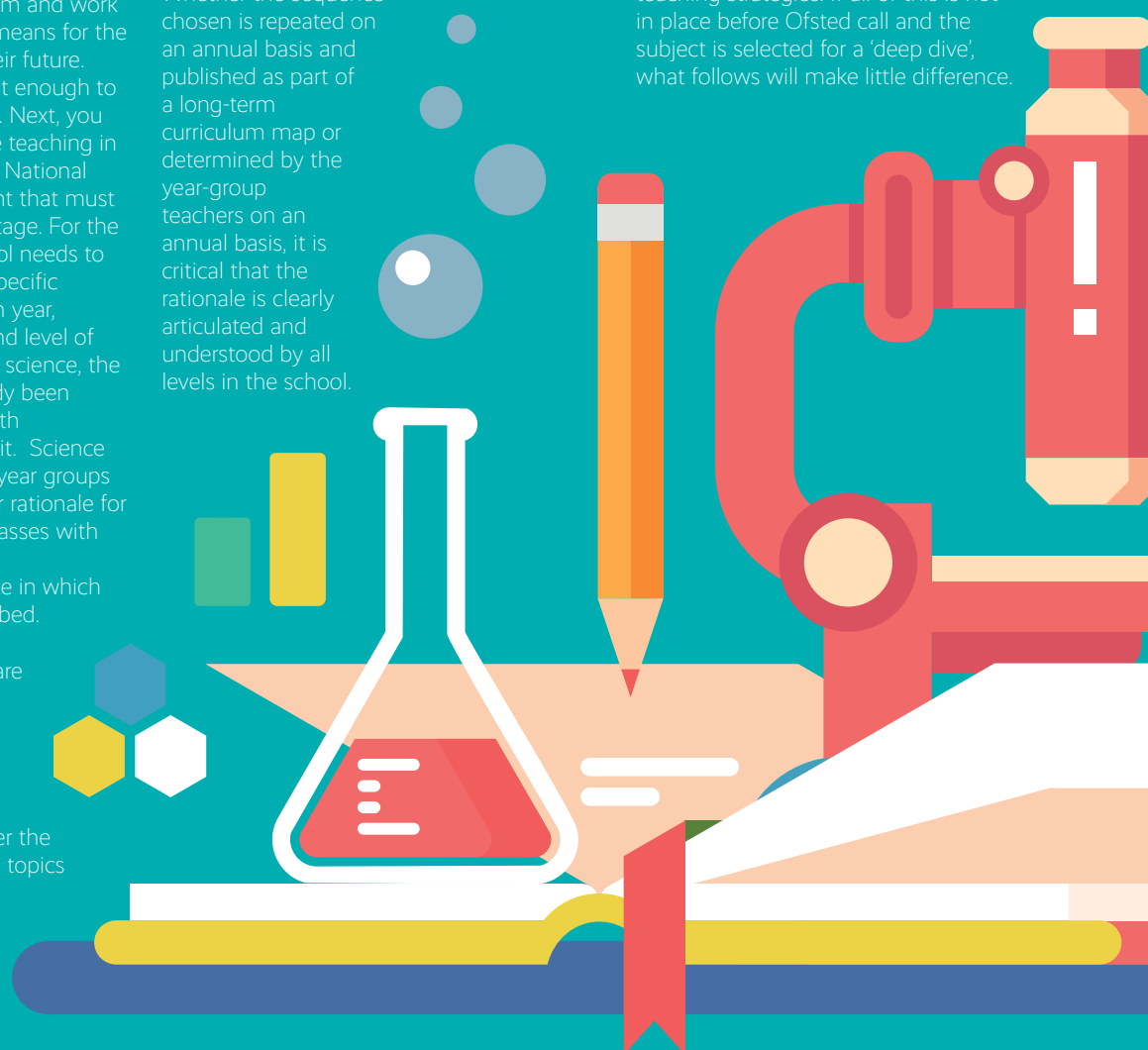
So, the inspectors are in and your subject has been chosen for a 'deep dive'. Why? The answer is probably that it is either an area of strength or an area that is currently a high priority on development plans. Whatever the reason, what follows will be the same.

The Ofsted inspector will meet with the subject leader and will want to hear about the school's 'intent', i.e. the rationale behind the school's curriculum for the subject (e.g. content and sequencing), and what they can expect to see when they visit the classroom, i.e. range of teaching strategies.

When the inspector visits a classroom, they will expect to see what they observe matching the description given them by the subject leader. They will look to see what learning

> "Just sorting the 'intent' is not enought to be well placed for a deep dive"

is taking place by talking to the pupils and looking at their work. They will expect the pupils to be able to explain what they are learning and put this in the context of their prior learning. Consequently, teachers need to embed the practice of reminding children of what they have learnt already and how the current lesson builds on that.

After the lesson, the inspectors will invite a number of children to share their work with them, so they can establish whether what they have observed in the lesson is normal practice. This is to enable the inspectors to establish whether the 'intent' of the curriculum is being implemented consistently.

The inspectors will also speak to the teachers whose lessons have been visited and they will need to be able to explain what they were teaching and why, whether the children acquired the relevant learning, and how it fits with their prior and future learning.

If what they observe and hear from the subject leader, teachers and pupils is not consistent or doesn't fit the stated 'intent' or learning strategies, they will be concerned.

Just because your subject isn't selected for a 'deep dive', doesn't mean that it won't be looked at by the inspectors. From the 'deep dives', the inspectors identify further areas to explore which may involve looking at the books of other subjects outside the 'deep dives'. For example, they might choose to look at how EAL and/or SEND pupils are supported across a range of subjects, or how more able pupils are challenged, or how learning is transferred between subjects.

So, my advice for subject leaders is to prepare as if you are definitely going to be the subject of a 'deep dive'. Get your 'intent' established, monitor its 'implementation' across the school, and gather evidence of its 'impact' to demonstrate that it is effective.

And my advice to senior leaders is to support your subject leaders to get this in place as soon as you can.

THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

- **Many plants have an annual cycle – having buds, flowers, seeds/berries at certain times in the year. Pupils should therefore visit the same plants throughout the year gathering evidence linked to their life cycle e.g. collecting seeds and taking photographs or making observational drawings for buds, flowers etc. This evidence can then be reviewed at the end of the year to exemplify a range of plants' life cycles.**

SEQUENCING
- **This topic is best taught in the summer term when there is sufficient light in the classroom to grow seedling and plants as part of enquiry work.**
- **Links can be made between the Plants, Rocks and Light topics. The ordering is not significant, but the links should be made explicit for the children by the teacher.**

ANIMALS, INCLUDING HUMANS
- **This topic can be split into two topics: nutrition; and movement**

ROCKS
- **Links can be made between the Plants and Rocks topics. The ordering is not significant, but the links should be made explicit for the children by the teacher.**

LIGHT
- **Links can be made between the Plants and Light topics. The ordering is not significant, but the links should be made explicit for the children by the teacher.**

**Naomi Hiscock
Director, Primary Science
Education Consultancy**

Q&A

Making mathematics meaningful

Rebecca Klemm PhD, owner of NumbersAlive!, discusses the benefits to learning of The Global Travelling Numbers Show

20 SECOND BRIEFING

NumbersAlive! inspires mathematical thinking through experiential learning. The Global Travelling Numbers Show, incorporates ten years of content creation and implementation with learners of all ages.

Can you describe The Global Travelling Numbers Show for us?

The Global Travelling Numbers Show brings high level film into engaged learning for all ages. Styled as a talk-show with Zero as host, each episode is separated into three segments with a game in the middle allowing learning through diverse modalities: comedic dialogue, games, jokes, graphical displays and simulated "ads" etc. Students aged ten to 15 are critical to each production. They are filmed during live-action segments, as appropriate. Each episode involves both a film and associated learning guide, scavenger hunt, physical and digital games, music and animation, as relevant.

What group of learners is the programme chiefly aimed at?

The show is considered family edutainment but students aged 10-14 are the preferred ages for film participants. The content responds to questions posed by students and of interest to adults. For example, numbers seven and eight could discuss a posed question: If an octopus loses a leg is it still an octopus? Implicitly through dialogue, actual mathematical concepts are demonstrated as meaningful to issues or topics of interest to the students. As far as possible we include stories of the historical development of mathematics from counting-based systems to the place-value system of today, and how geometry and measurement predated the current emphasis on algebraic expressions.

What does a Travelling Numbers Show session consist of?

Each episode will run approximately 15-24 minutes in length. Prototype

studio episodes as well as the initial episode, Cinco de Mayo, executed in collaboration with Youngblood Intermediate School in Houston, TX, are available on our website, www.numbersalive.org. Depending on the topic selected, an episode or series of episodes can be completed during one school year or during a concentrated summer session.

What series are you working on now?

We are talking with a few global locations for 2020-2021 episodes. We have begun filming a series on Botswana; episodes will investigate Botswana's history and issues of ecotourism and conservancy. Students will participate in game drives within national parks,

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Instagram: numbersalive
Youtube: numbersalive1

and both write questions and participate in interviews with scientists and environmentalists regarding conservancy and political issues affecting the survival of the tourism industry. Studio work will involve puppetry and dialogue written post-game drives regarding patterns and issues observed during the game drives where the students filmed animals and plants and were filmed by the professional crew in real time.

What is the thinking behind your focus on narrative and storytelling?

Humans have learned for centuries through engaged participation and communication. Rather than focus on creating human calculators, NumbersAlive! focuses on critical thinking, why mathematics is useful and life skills of teamwork, working with colleagues who learn in different manners, and addressing often-overlooked issues like "What is mathematics?" and "Where did it come from?"

Buildings & Facilities

BRING THE OUTSIDE IN

Provide valuable extra space and protection from the elements at your school

There are a lot of things that you should consider when looking at purchasing a canopy. What do you need it for? If it's for cycle storage then a cycle shelter, or cycle compound, is needed to store a large number of bikes. If you are looking at providing an outdoor classroom, or eating area, then you should aim for a free standing or wall-mounted canopy, as they can be larger and can have side fills for additional protection form the wind and driving rain. They can also have secure roller shutters to store tables and play equipment out of hours.

If you need protection from the rain, a polycarbonate or waterproof fabric roof would be needed. Also, if you wanted to create a free-flow from the inside to the outside, with full weather protection, then a wall-mounted canopy would achieve this perfectly.

If you want to protect your pupils from the sun, and would like to make a feature of your outside area, then a shade sail is perfect and offers high UV protection. For an outdoor play area then a free standing or wall-mounted canopy is ideal as they can cover large areas.

WILL I NEED PLANNING PERMISSION?

This depends entirely on your local authority, the majority of the time planning permission is not required. However, the location of your school and the age of the building are factors they take into consideration (Able Canopies offer free planning assistance and can submit the application for you).

WHAT SHOULD YOU TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION WHEN THE BUILD IS ONGOING?

Able Canopies can install canopies during the school day, we fence of the area to make it safe for when children are around and we ensure we cause minimum disruption to the regular school day. We can also install during schools holidays and weekends if required.

HOW EASY ARE THEY TO MAINTAIN?

Maintaining a canopy can be very cost effective as it is something that your caretaker can look after. We advise that the canopies are inspected and washed every three-to-six months with a solution of warm water, a mild detergent and a soft sponge or cloth. The gutters should also be checked regularly to ensure they are free from debris

ARE THERE ANY SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES?

Choose the quality and materials wisely. Our wall mounted canopies are constructed from aluminium, which can be recycled an unlimited amount of times making it a sustainable product that, if disposed of correctly, will never end up in landfill.

If a canopy is a higher quality and has a longer life expectancy, it will last longer, and you will not need to replace it as soon (our canopies have a 25 year life expectancy).

Our canopies are all made to order so there is not waste which helps the environment. Be sure to go for a company that hold environmental certifications such as ISO 14001 which ensures environmental management. Timber canopies are a sustainable choice, we source the timber for our timber canopies from PEFC accredited timber merchants, a steel beam takes six times the energy cost to produce than a timber one. We use Glulam timber which is lighter in weight than similar materials resulting in less transport emissions.

Christine Baines, Marketing Assistant Manager, Able Canopies Ltd

🐦 @AbleCanopies

💻 www.ablecanopies.co.uk

DESIGN YOUR SPACE WITH MOBILITY IN MIND

Six things you should consider when modifying school buildings

Bringing about an accessible environment that promotes a sense of belonging and goes beyond the thinking of 'one size fits all' is vital. The essential areas to consider when modifying or extending a building would be: Access, Space, Sensory Awareness, Enhancing Learning, Adaptability, Health and Safety and Sustainability.

ACCESS

This doesn't have to be in the form of r anks of classrooms joined by corridors! Think in terms of accessible circulation routes that can lead into open spaced areas where people with mobility concerns can easily access. Also, consider the toilet areas being in small clusters, placed to reduce travel distances. Footpaths leading to school entrances require thought. They should be broad and separated from the main access road.

SPACE

The University of Cambridge Primary School is a fantastic example of 21st century building design. Open planned classrooms lead onto "Learning Streets," where scheduled thematic topic work takes place. The classrooms do not have doors, making it easier for children to access without having to fiddle around with door handles. Classrooms are welcoming, open spaces without doors. This means that, as one staff member stated in a positive way, 'There is no hiding place.' Consequently, swift action is taken through coaching and expert interventions to address any relative weaknesses in teaching, learning, systems or procedures".

SENSORY AWARENESS

Good quality acoustics, appropriate glare free controllable lighting, as well as visual contrast and texture, that can be used for sensory wayfinding are essential upgrades. Along with the reduction of stimuli that may lead to sensory overload for a child with Autism. The use of sensory elements such as colour, light, texture and therapeutic aroma can provide comfort and a sense of safety to many children.

ADAPTABILITY

Allowing for flexibility and utilising spaces effectively in schools is just as important to making an activity interesting for a SEND child. So, having access to different locations/ spaces, and being able to adjust the local surroundings (usage of moveable partitions, variable lighting and acoustics) does make a positive difference. As well as minimising fixed furniture and equipment that permits the rearrangement for learning and changing needs.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

As cases of Mental Health rise within our schools. We need to be mindful of the impact the surroundings make for our most vulnerable pupils. Providing "Safe" areas for children to access without causing harm to their dignity and self-worth is critical. As is ensuring that children with mobility concerns, and ventilation issues are addressed appropriately

SUSTAINABILITY

A cost-effective renovation design that is economically viable. It needs to enhance the social cohesion of the school community to allow all stake holders to be able to access it. minimising any negative environmental impact, with efficient use of energy and resources, ensuring the needs of SEND children.

Talat Khan is an independent SEND consultant

🐦 @Talat1703

💻 advantagesend.com

Ignore premises maintenance at your peril

Jo Marchant explains why not taking care of your site is just storing up trouble for the future

They may not be the most exciting thing in the world but the Department for Education's suite of documents entitled "Good Estate Management for Schools" pack a punch.

When you really start to look into the documents, you'll see that actually they're really worth your time even if they don't sound that riveting. Estate or premises management always seems to come a poor second to finance these days (understandably so) but if you don't look after your premises, it can end up costing your school a lot of money. Trust me, I know!

Last year I was working as a consultant business manager in a large special school which was opened in September 2017. A brand new school, it looked (and still does look) really great – to an outsider. But I've spent three days a week for eight months sorting out all the premises issues at that school. In my first three weeks, I spent more time in the boiler room than I did in my office! I became a detective trying to work out why the gas supply kept shutting off in the kitchen and why one

of the boilers was burnt out after only 18 months. I know more about what happens when bacterial Pseudomonas gets into your water heating system than I ever thought possible.

I know what happens when your state of

> ## "The list of premises issues with this "brand new school" seemed endless"

the art Buildings Maintenance System isn't installed and set up properly. I know what type of dosing system should be installed in a hydrotherapy pool. I should do – I spent four months wrangling with the builders to get the wrong one they'd installed changed.

The list of premises issues with this

"brand new school" seemed endless. How did things get into this state? Because they didn't have a trained Site Manager when they took over the new school who was able to maintain the premises properly or who had enough knowledge to spot when things weren't working right. So ignore the maintenance of your premises at your peril!

Or give me a ring if you want to hear the rest of this tale of woe and the details as to why it's cost the local authority nearly £80,000 to get a "brand new" school into working order.

So I guess you can see why I'm so keen about taking a strategic approach to premises management. The DfE's suite of documents starts with a self-assessment tool. It's only two pages long but it'll give you an idea of where you need to focus your attention. The next document I'd recommend looking at is "Strategic estate management" which shows you how you can you use your premises effectively and get the best out of them for your students too.

Another interesting document is "The fundamentals of good estate management" which tells you the most effective way to manage your premises. Then you can drill down into the detail with "Tips to reduce energy and water use in schools". Finally, a good one for your trustees/governors is "Top 10 estate checks for boards".

So I say let's give premises management the recognition it needs so you know you're not storing up a whole lot of trouble for the future. My advice is, don't delay – check out this link https://bit.ly/2vqvOrq today!

Jo Marchant, Consultant Business Manager and Institute of School Business Leadership Fellow

HOW LIGHT CAN BOOST LEARNING

Professor Stephen Heppell launches a fascinating study on how lighting, acoustics and CO2 levels affect learning

What has a dramatic affect on learning and behaviour? Is it teachers? The curriculum? Interesting and engaging lessons? Or is it environment?

It may come as a surprise to some that the conditions in the classroom can have a huge impact on children's ability to learn. I was a schoolteacher for more than a decade, and have been a professor since 1989, working with schools and governments around the world to improve learning spaces. Myself and my colleagues recently met with Essex County Council, explained to them the link between CO2 levels, lighting and acoustics on learning, and we were subsequently invited into Fingringhoe Primary School, in Essex, to test our theories. We did that with the aid of a compact device we've developed called the Learnometer, which contains a series of internet-connected ambient sensors and onboard software to help us measure and analyse environmental data. Our hope is learners, and therefore schools, can ultimately perform better by optimising the physical environments they use for learning.

Research carried out by ourselves and others confirms that poor light levels, variable temperatures, inappropriate sound volumes, humidity, excessive amounts of CO2, and air pressure can all impair learning. The Learnometer is able to automatically sample a classroom environment and make suggestions via a unique algorithm as to what could be changed so that students to learn and perform at their best.

The focus throughout our research has been on the aggregation of marginal gains. Take light, for instance. In a classroom, you need good light for your brain to work well. Outdoor light often measures up to many thousands of lux; indoors, 1,000 lux would be a good taget, but 500 will do. Below that, however, learners' attention, level of engagement, powers of recall and more will start to decline. Their

All images © Jack Hobhouse

behaviour and performance will become noticeably worse.

We therefore took one classroom at the school, assigned it to a class and talked to the children about what we were doing. The pupils were surprised to be shown how children sat in a dark corner of the room were those at risk of losing concentration, while their peers in a lighter area by the window were still sharp by the end of the day. They'd previously thought that this was purely

SUPPLIERS AND CONTRIBUTORS:
Barnes Construction
Beardwell Construction
Essex County Council Infrastructure
Delivery and Education
Directorate Teams
Ecophon (Acoustic Walls and Ceilings)
Gratnells Educational Supplies
Learniture (for next generation learning spaces furniture)
Professor Heppell and Team
Thorlux Lighting

down to them personally.

Over the 2019 summer holidays, in collaboration with Essex County Council's key suppliers, we gave the room a makeover. An old floating ceiling was pulled down, the room was repainted, acoustic panels were installed and tiered seating and writeable surfaces were put in. We carried out acoustic modelling to examine the impact of bass resonance on the kids, particularly those struggling with attention issues. The room itself is a Victorian classroom, with a lovely high vaulted ceiling that turned out to have skylights. It's a great room which seems to have been spoiled over time by years of modification.

We'll now await the results of these changes, and see what improvements to the children's learning and behaviour they might make.

Professor Stephen Heppell is Felipe Segovia Chair in Learning Innovation at Universidad Camilo José Cela, Madrid

AN ACOUSTICALLY DEMANDING ENVIRONMENT

Schools are the most important and acoustically demanding environments that we design. The vast majority of teaching still depends on verbal communication in surprisingly difficult conditions. If we design a meeting room or lecture theatre for 30 adults it will have very carefully controlled acoustics, low background noise and probably a speech reinforcement system, but we still expect teachers to manage merely by raising their voices in often noisy rooms with the legal minimum of acoustic treatment. We know that better acoustic conditions improve children's understanding, concentration and ultimately academic results and reduce stress for pupils and teachers alike.

We also know that children with hearing impairments and other special communication needs, including ASD and ADHD, must be taught in rooms with shorter reverberation times, lower noise levels and smaller class sizes. That is acknowledged in the DfE's own standards and guidance, yet we persist in putting them into large, noisy, mainstream classrooms with the cheapest possible acoustic treatment. Essex County Council is one of the few authorities which have recognised and addressed this problem by designing all new classrooms to a better acoustic standard, and I sincerely hope that their work, supported by Ecophon's research, encourages other education authorities to start providing the acoustic conditions that pupils and teachers deserve.

Adrian James, Director Adrian James Acoustics

BRING YOUR OWN PLANT

Countless studies confirm that the right plants can have an active role in reducing CO2 and increasing oxygen particulalry in any closed space.. We have been encouraging schools to harness the power of plants through Bring Your Own Plant projects, which really do make things better during the school day. Better oxygen brings behaviour, engagement, wellbeing and other gains.

Firstly - which plants? Helpfully NASA has published their own research because colonising Mars et al will need some plants that do a great job making oxygen from exhaled CO2. James Clarke at learniture.co.uk then made some of that list congruent with a list of plants that do not cause irritation or worse in contact with children, and that gives a definitive list of these few ideal plants (super sensitive kids, leave out 3 and 4):

1: Dwarf Areca palm – (Dypsis lutescens)
2: Boston Fern (Nephrolepis exaltata)
3: Devil's Ivy (Epipremnum aureum)
4: Chinese Evergreen (Aglaonema commutatum)
5: Spider Plant Chlorophytum comosum)
6: Aloe Vera

Secondly, having given this list to the children, they buy and bring into school "their" plant, which they should name

affectionately. Naming seems to make this a very popular activity but keeps the plants, their welfare and their impact foremost in the students' minds. They often greet their plants in the morning for example and observe / monitor their moisture levels etc. Ideally, the plant needs to be in a white pot - normally the school provides these for uniformity and to make sure they fit the plantpot holders. Photosynthesis uses light absorbtion, white pots reflect light a little more to help balance this.

Thirdly, measuring the CO2 at perhaps three points during the day, before and after the plants were added will surprise you. It provides a good data visualisation and graphing task too, of course. Target CO2 is to keep below 1,000 parts per million (ppm) throughout the day, and you will all notice when levels are worse (above) than that.

Professor Stephen Heppell

A MASSIVE MAKEOVER

In our Year 6 classroom, carbon dioxide levels were high, lighting was poor, the false ceiling was brown and ladybird infested. Even the best lessons had pupils yawning! We were nervous about pulling down the brown, false, hessian ceiling to see what lay above, so, after checking things weren't too serious with a selfie stick and phone camera, we pulled down a small section. Fortunately, we weren't the ones standing underneath when it was pulled down… Years' worth of dust and insect skeletons rained down. The false ceiling and roof trusses were dismantled, along with anything else that appeared unnecessary. Disused, trailing cabling and trunking were removed. Next, the classroom was painted a bright white, from top to bottom, to reflect light around the space. Followed by lighting and acoustics.

Key Factors that we have changed included:

- air quality (oxygen/CO_2 levels)
- temperature
- light and brightness (colour of walls and ceiling can affect this)
- sound/acoustics
- Heppell benches
- writing walls

The room has also been fitted with a folding writable wall, and the Heppell tiered benches. There is even a special wall of plants – each one owned by individual pupils — to increase oxygen levels. The change from tables to tiered benches has enabled teachers to think more creatively in how they allow pupils to make appropriate choices about how they complete learning tasks.

Suzy Ryan, headteacher at Fingringhoe Primary School

A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH

Delivering projects collaboratively, through frameworks has many advantages, not least the ability to bring together all stakeholders on a frequent basis to share knowledge, learn from others and improve outcomes.

At one of those Best Practice sessions, Professor Stephen Heppell explained how small incremental changes can make such a difference to a classroom environment. By the end of his excellent and animated presentation, we had 70 people in the room extremely keen to make learning better! So Fingringhoe Primary School was approached, and with the amazing support from their headteacher, staff and children, a brief was developed with Stephen and the pupils. It concluded the need to improve the lighting, acoustics, CO2 levels, replace some furniture, introduce write on surfaces and make some decorative changes.

The aims of the project are to build a grounded set of improvements that are cost effective, attainable and proven which can be promoted and emulated by other schools, inform other work in our estate, help build reflective practice amongst colleagues and children, promote physical activity and make learning better today.

While this study is still at its early stages, the classroom teacher has already stated to me that she would not wish to revert to her previous classroom and, best of all, some children have written to me about their classroom to say "the white walls have helped us because they make us more awake" "the ceiling being replaced has stopped the echos", "we can concentrate as the noise levels have changed" and "It wakes us up and makes us want to learn". A report will be produced by Stephen Heppell after the end of the academic year.

Greg Keeling, Engineering & Technical Team Manager, Essex County Council

FIVE FUNDAMENTAL FACTORS

There are five fundamental factors for an optimal learning environment: natural and artificial lighting, acoustics, air temperature, air quality and ergonomics.

Stephen Heppell's vision for Fingringhoe meant opening up the classroom by removing the outdated false ceiling and letting the light back in. The result: a much improved lighter and airier space, but with a very high ceiling and increased acoustic challenge.

Bigger volumes, especially with hard surfaces, result in longer reverberation times (more echo) and therefore, poor speech intelligibility. Independently tested by Adrian James Acoustics, the new space at 1.2 seconds fell well outside design standards, BB93: Acoustic design of schools. Several notable research projects, not least the respected "Essex Study" by Essex County Council, show that pupils will find it difficult to focus and retain information, with teachers more likely to take days off sick with vocal strain and headaches.

The challenge lies in absorbing the lower bass frequencies that we sometimes experience coming from cars or noisy neighbours playing their music too loudly. The ability of these frequencies to resonate and pass the energy through masonry walls, for instance, means that they can also pass through traditional suspended ceilings and bounce back into the room. This high energy, low frequency sound is particularly disruptive to hearing impaired, ASD and ADHD students. Part of the solution lies in utilising a bass absorber at strategic points within the classroom. In this instance Ecophon's cost effective bass traps were placed behind Ecophon acoustic pin boards and rafts.

The result: not only does the classroom meet the required refurbishment standard of 0.8 seconds, but actually meets the 0.6 seconds for newly built schools, bringing this 100-year-old school into the 21st century. Increased attainment and improved pupil behaviour will undoubtedly follow.

Shane Cryer, Concept Developer – Education at Saint Gobain Ecophon

PROVIDE CHALLENGE AND SANCTUARY IN THE PLAYGROUND

The Association of Play Industries explains why it's important to challenge pupils during play

Once in Key Stage 2, it's likely that most children will have tested their physical skills and explored much of the outside space at school during the first few years in the school, so it's really important that the playground offers something that will continue to challenge older pupils.

LET'S GET PHYSICAL

As with other areas of the curriculum, it's important that pupils have the ability to stretch and test their physical skills. During KS2, children should be building on their fundamental movement skills by communicating and collaborating with their peers, combining different movements and playing competitive games as well as being more adventurous.

In addition, sport becomes more and more important in both curriculum and free play time. A Multi-Use Games area is a great way to give children space to play together in a safe space away from more informal activities – even better if you choose one that incorporates a number of different games, sports and physical skills that can be adapted for different age groups.

Another great way to provide additional challenge to existing equipment is to provide the ability to measure, evaluate and improve on performance – why not include a stop clock and scoreboard alongside the most challenging pieces of play equipment to enable children to time and record their personal best?

CONNECTING TO NATURE

In our previous article, we referred to the fact that children are using screens more, that local play facilities have been in decline, and that school outdoor spaces are critical to offset this trend.

This is just as true for the oldest primary pupils as the youngest and isn't just about

Images courtesy of Playforce – playforce.co.uk

physical activity – the current generation of primary children are more aware than ever of the natural world around them and the challenges faced by factors such as climate change. It is therefore important that they continue to feel they have the opportunity to connect with nature, and an appreciation for why the natural world is so important.

Why not give your KS2 pupils the opportunity to oversee and help to care for a natural space within your school grounds, giving them ownership of the environment, and allowing them to contribute to developing the space, perhaps bringing in renewable energy sources or simply planting trees and growing food?

GETTING READY FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL

The last few years of Primary School can be a bit of a whirlwind – there are more opportunities to try different sports and extracurricular activities, compete with other schools in sport, not to mention the extra academic focus which comes with SATS and getting ready to move up to secondary school.

Even the most mature children in the school will need spaces to relax, recharge or blow off a bit of steam, as well as to prepare for secondary school. If space allows, you could consider having a separate social space for Year 6 children for example, or provide opportunity for increased responsibility, such as being in charge of a rota for tending to a vegetable garden to help prepare them for the years ahead.

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.

A HUGE SUCCESS AND FULL STEAM AHEAD TO 2021

The Bett Show 2020 brought more technology, brand-new zones and content-driven programmes to enthrall the education community.

After a successful 2020 it's now time to look ahead to next year with 70 per cent of the 2021 floorspace already sold during the show. The Bett organisers are already in full planning mode and already have things in motion.

1 Even more leaders and decision-makers – through a wider content and networking offering for leaders across all education sectors, plus co-location with sister, global leadership-focused event Learnit

2 More targeted speaking opportunities – through introducing seminars and workshops specific to each show zone, including Hardware & Equipment, Learning & Teaching Tech, Management Solutions, Global Showcase and Bett Futures

3 1-2-1 meetings with UK budget holders – through a Hosted Leaders Programme, giving all Bett UK exhibitors facilitated access to buyers covering K-12, Higher and Further Education and reseller networks

4 365 engagement opportunities with the Bett community– from new digital content and marketing opportunities to year-round meet-ups

5 Bett 2021 will run Wednesday – Friday, January 20-21, giving everyone the value of a four-day event whilst helping you reduce your T&E costs.

Who were the big winners at the Bett Awards?

The Bett Awards, in association with BESA, are a celebration of inspiring creativity and innovation that can be found throughout technology for education.

The awards are an integral part of Bett each year. With 20 awards recognising everything from innovation to collaborations with schools to devices, the shortlist featured established players and breakthrough brands, ensuring an exciting evening of presentations.
The winners and highly commended entries were as follows:

- **Impact Award:** Northern Education Trust
- **Innovator of the Year:** MEL Science
- **Best Educational Resource for Parents or Home Learning:** Winner: Pearson – Power Maths Reception; Highly Commended: Yellow Door – Pre-coding Penguins App
- **Primary Content:** Maths Circle – Times Tables Rock Stars
- **Secondary Content:** Learning by Questions
- **Classroom Aids for Learning, Teaching and Assessment:** Fiction Express
- **Free Digital Content or Open Educational Resources:** Winner: Encounter Edu; Highly Commended: Mathigon

- **Educational Apps:** Sir Linkalot
- **International Digital Educational Resource:** Texthelp – Read&Write
- **Digital Devices:** TTS – Rugged Robot
- **Leadership and Management Solutions:** Winner: Assembly – Part of the Community Brands family; Highly Commended – SCR Tracker
- **Whole School Aids for Learning, Teaching and Assessment:** Winner: Learning Ladders; Highly Commended: imoves
- **Service and Support:** London Connected Learning Centre
- **Special Educational Needs Solutions:** Twin Science and Robotics – Twin Science Kits
- **Higher Education or Further Education Digital Services:** Arduino Engineering Kit
- **Collaboration with a School:** Royal Shakespeare Company and Samsung with Welcombe Hills School
- **Exporter of the Year:** Avantis Education
- **Company of the Year (Less than £3m Turnover):** Best Practice Network
- **Company of the Year (More than £3m Turnover):** Scanning Pens
- **Outstanding Achievement Award:** Tony Cann CBE

Julia Garvey, Operations Director, BESA, said: 'Every year we are amazed at the breadth and quality of entries, and this year was no different. All the entries were of a very high standard, from companies both big and small, showcasing the best of education technology in the UK. Ultimately the winners were those products that meet a genuine teaching need and help improve the educational outcomes for students.'

Gill Budgell, Director, Consultant Publisher, Frattempo Ltd, one of the judges, added: 'Each year the range of entries surprises us with applicants' energy, professionalism and levels of innovation. In turn our pool of judges is strengthened and replenished each year so that we are able to respond with matching energy, professionalism and skilled, informed responses. This year was another exhilarating array of products and resources with one common goal: to enable educators to improve educational outcomes for learners. What a privilege it is to represent the industry!'

Twin Science and Robotics, winners of the Special Educational Needs Solutions award, said: "It is such an honour to be selected as the Bett Awards 2020 Winner. Twin Science kits not only present the concepts of most advanced technologies to the kids but it also delivers it to those in the most disadvantaged echelons of society because we believe that the human knowledge grows by sharing. Our mission is to fill the knowledge gap in society and provide equal opportunities of scientific education for kids. I hope we can reach more children with science and make the world more accessible and equal for them."

Outstanding achievement is honoured

Tony Cann CBE, founder of Learning by Questions (LbQ) and Promethean won this year's prestigious Bett award for outstanding achievement in ICT education.

LbQ also won the award for Secondary Content and was a finalist in the Classroom Aids for Teaching & Learning award and the Impact award alongside Washacre Primary School of Bolton who credit LbQ in helping them to leap 41 places up the league table.

In the last three years, LbQ has been nominated 9 times for Bett awards, collecting Innovator of the Year in 2019.

Tony has a passion for harnessing technology that dates back to 1969 and the textile mills of Lancashire. Then Tony used Saturn rocket technology to create a system which would feedback performance information from the looms to the managers, allowing them to make critical decisions faster and with greater accuracy and effect. In 2018, Tony launched LbQ which offers a similar role in classrooms, reducing unnecessary workloads for teachers such as marking and increasing learner achievement.

In the week leading up to SATs, 1.6 million questions were answered on LbQ across the UK and LbQ teachers saved 40,000 hours.

Tony is also well-known as the founder of Promethean, revolutionising classrooms across the globe. The Bowland Charitable Trust, which he founded with his family in 1989 has donated over £40 million to education related projects including the Education Endowment Foundation which partnered alongside the Institute for Effective Education in money and effort to create the Research Schools Network.

Tony was presented with the award by Caroline Wright of the British Educational Suppliers Association.

Caroline said: "I tried to summarise Tony's achievements into two minutes to share with you, but it was no easy task. Without a doubt Tony has made a remarkable impact and improved the lives of teachers and students countless times."

Sir Kevan Collins, the new executive vice chair at Learning by Questions, said: "This is no more than Tony deserves for a lifetime of commitment and dedication to education, inspiring us all to do more."

Learning by Questions (LbQ) is a cloud-based educational classroom tool. The app ensures that teachers can support all their learners all the time whilst reducing the unnecessary aspects of their workload such as marking and resource finding.

A HANDS-ON APPROACH TO SCIENCE

Edd Stockwell, MEL Science head of partnerships

MEL Science had a great time at Bett securing the Innovator of the Year award and they believe that the best way to learn science is to combine theory with a hands-on approach.

They provide MEL Chemistry subscription boxes with safe experiments delivered to your door monthly. As well as MEL Chemistry VR Lessons which are chemistry lessons in virtual reality following a standard K-12 curriculum.

Edd Stockwell, MEL Science head of partnerships, said: "MEL Science started as a chemistry subscription kit for home use.

"One of the fascinating questions that came out of that, from parents, was 'we're loving doing the chemistry but our children actually want to understand the science behind it'. Chemistry all happens at the level of the electron so to explain that we had to build a virtual reality simulation, comes free with the product. Then teachers contacted us saying 'Kids really struggle to understand how the physical world is linked at the atomic level and what atoms are and we are loving this VR. Can we buy it for our schools?'.

"So we've got this virtual reality app, which we were very lucky to be recognised by BETT at the awards."

melscience.com/GB-en/

CLARO SOFTWARE TAKING THE STRESS OUT OF READING

Do you have trouble understanding? Let me read that for you.

Claro Software develops Assistive Technology, software for people with disabilities such as print and reading difficulties like dyslexia, to help them achieve all they can.

Claro Software wanted people to take notice of them at BETT and be aware of their products and how they can help people.

Mary Wilcox, from Claro Software, said: "That was the main aim at BETT this year. Especially for schools and people who are in the DSA market, that's our biggest market.

"We make software and apps for people with difficulty with writing - to take away the stress of having to read because the software and apps do it for you.

"It's a text to speak software so you have a toolbar on Windows and Mac machines and you just cursor in the text, press play and it reads to you. You can change the voices, do different languages as well, highlighting, there's a special spellchecker which is very visual. If there is a picture that goes with the word it will be there, you can hover over the definition, it will read that out to you. We've got word prediction as well.

"We can also tint the screen a different colour. We also have study tools like mind mapping. We aim to make our software very easy to use - if it's too complicated people won't bother and we don't want that.

"I used to be a schoolteacher and I think the best product we have is the scan pen. It's an app on a tablet. It's free on android and it's cheap on IOS as well. You just take a picture of the text and it reads it back to you straight away."

clarosoftware.com

Mary Wilcox, from Claro Software

Learn to code with Kubo

Kubo are engaging students with coding through a cute robot

Kubo is a multi-award winning classroom solution that breaks down barriers to teaching computer science and coding.

Their classroom solutions include curriculum standard lesson plans and teacher guides, to make coding easy and fun.

Kubo is screen free coding, from basic to advanced level, for children aged four to ten plus.

Jinny Christiansen, Kubo Head of Marketing, said: "Kubo is designed to really introduce coding and it's quite a pure product. We are introducing coding syntax but it's done in a very playful and creative way and we have a lot of activities that are cross curricula. We are very mindful of primary school teachers and how they approach education. We know that they want to embed the whole algorithmical, computational thinking, but in a playful and creative way. Kubo will only do what the kids tell it to do. So to begin with there are only three basic instructions to learn - go forward, go right and go forward or go left and go forward. So the first thing they do is to teach Kubo to follow their instructions.

"Kubo reads a little TagTile, with an RFID chip, and he does exactly what you tell him to do. Once they get to grips with the basic instructions, we introduce the idea of memorising. A robot needs to learn to remember. We teach Kubo to memorise with a function and then it becomes increasingly advanced. Once they have that first line of code and have understood a function, we introduce the concept of loops, which is a repeat. Then we gradually increase and introduce sub-routines and this is where it really becomes algorithmic thinking. So you have a set of instructions within a set of instructions. So that's the starter pack and it comes with 16 lessons, fully illustrated materials online for students and teachers, video tutorials and everything they need to get started.

"Then if they want to advance the coding and make it more creative and playful we have Kubo + and then if you want to take it to Key Stage 2 there is Kubo ++."

"Kids love the robot, it's cute, it's playful and it's fun. The teachers love it as well!"

kubo.education/kubo-coding

Prowise - so much more than touchscreens
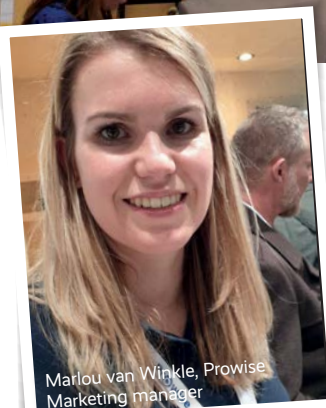
Prowise are renowned for their touchscreens but there is so much more to the digital learning company.

Prowise makes digital education accessible for everyone and aim at making learning and collaborating easier, more effective and more fun.

During the ten years Prowise has been active on the market it has become an actor on the world stage in the field of interactive digital learning solutions for primary and secondary education.

Marlou van Winkle, Prowise Marketing manager

Their touchscreens find their way to countries such as the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, the UK, the US and even Australia.

But there's more to them than touchscreens, as Marlou van Winkle, Prowise Marketing manager, explains: "We are not just about the hardware, like the touchscreens, but also software such as the free Prowise Presenter with which you can easily create interactive lessons and presentations. It's web based so you can use it on any device and it's completely free.

"The big thing I like, that we had at the show this year is the Prowise Move camera, which was a BETT Award finalist. It's included free with a touchscreen and allows you to control it without actually touching it. So you can play different games and pupils are stimulated to get in motion through games. This is not only a lot of fun, but also has a positive influence on the learning outcomes.

"I think, hopefully, we can show everyone the whole Prowise story. It's not just the touchscreens we have a complete solution for schools."

www.prowise.com

SCHOLARPACK - MIS DESIGNED FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS

ScholarPack had a message for those attending BETT this year – you have a real choice.

ScholarPack is challenging Primary Schools to take a look at their MIS product.

Richard Harley, CEO of ScholarPack, said: "We've launched a new campaign at BETT this year. It's all about getting schools to understand they have a choice with their MIS system. ScholarPack is one of the fastest growing cloud providers. We are the only MIS that is specifically focused at primary schools.

"We really know that marketplace, what primary Schools need on a day-to-day basis, from taking registers and how that process works. It's completely different to how secondary schools operate. We feel that we really understand that part of the market and the software is completely geared up to what they need.

"ScholarPack itself is the platform and customers use it to run the data in their school. That's everything from managing student data, behaviour, staff attendance and so on. That binds the platform and then we have a couple of option modules, such as an assessment package which is tracking children's progress and communicating with parents and again there are additional extras.

"We are always adding features that primary schools want. The big thing we have done this year is engage with the user base to understand what they need from a MIS system for 2020. We really want to understand what they want for the next five years to ten years. So we are collating all that feedback and we have a couple of product launches coming up later this year, but I'm not allowed to talk about that!"

scholarpack.com

BOOKING AND ADMINISTRATION SYSTEM

for Before & After School Clubs

- GDPR compliant
- Online booking
- Automated invoicing & reminders
- Up to date registers
- Free setup and trial period

Schools like yours are saving hours each week with Kids Club HQ. Find out how you could too, visit:

www.kidsclubhq.com/psm

HOW TO CUT THE ADMIN

for your After School or Breakfast Club

Running an after school or breakfast club is a great source of income for the school and provides an essential service for working parents. But it's easy to underestimate the amount of admin that's required to keep things running smoothly and to comply with Ofsted requirements.

There's a lot of information to be collected and stored about the children and when they will be attending. Double or triple keying information from paper forms or emails to produce registers then creating and sending invoices to parents is incredibly time consuming. That's before you start to deal with the inevitable last-minute changes.

Things could be much easier for everyone. Collecting the required information using online forms and a central database means parents don't need to submit repeated information and you have easy access to what you need all in one place.

When using Kids Club HQ, registers are automatically up to date

(including last-minute changes!) and can be viewed online in an instant or exported to Excel for offline use.

Instead of manually creating invoices for parents, these can be generated and sent by email automatically. Automated reminders for outstanding payments help to keep accounts up to date and reduce time spent chasing parents.

Kids Club HQ is an easy to use cloud-based platform built from the ground up for breakfast, after school and holiday clubs with an online booking system for parents and an administration system for you and the club staff.

Schools like yours rely on Kids Club HQ to keep on top of the admin for their clubs.

Kids Club HQ

To find out how we can help with your bookings and administration please get in touch at **hello@kidsclubhq.co.uk** or visit our website **www.kidsclubhq.com/psm**

Phone: 0118 3216671

Kids Club HQ

An online tool designed to lighten the administrative burden of running before and after school clubs

- An extremely efficient cloud-based club management system
- Streamlines and automates your daily admin tasks, bookings and customer records
- Enables parents to book and pay online
- Can automate billing, facilitate payments and chase up unpaid invoices
- Highly configurable, with no set-up or licence fees
- All data stored securely and GDPR-compliant

Reviewed by: John Dabell

I f you run any after-school or holiday clubs, you'll know that the admin side of things can be a nightmare. Managing and coordinating bookings, registers, invoices and chasing payments can soon get complicated and gobble up time, especially if you don't have a decent bookings system in place.

Kids Club HQ offers a slick and powerful administration system specifically designed for school clubs that can handle all your club booking, invoicing and communication needs. It has the potential to revolutionise your admin processes, putting all the functionality you need at your fingertips.

Its pages are intelligently laid out and accompanied by various filters and viewing options for seeing what's what and who's who. You can easily display bookings made and narrow the list down according to date and type of club, with emergency contact details, medical info, consents and special instructions all just a click away.

Kids Club HQ can be used to create bespoke online registration forms for collecting pupil and parent data; inform parents of upcoming dates; handle online bookings and payments; reconcile cash and childcare voucher payments; collate registers, generate reports, and much more besides.

The system is set up in a way that lets you use contract bookings, flexible ad-hoc bookings or both, with system-stored registers automatically updated whenever a booking is made. Those registers then can be printed out, or you can ask parents to sign their children in and out using a club tablet or computer.
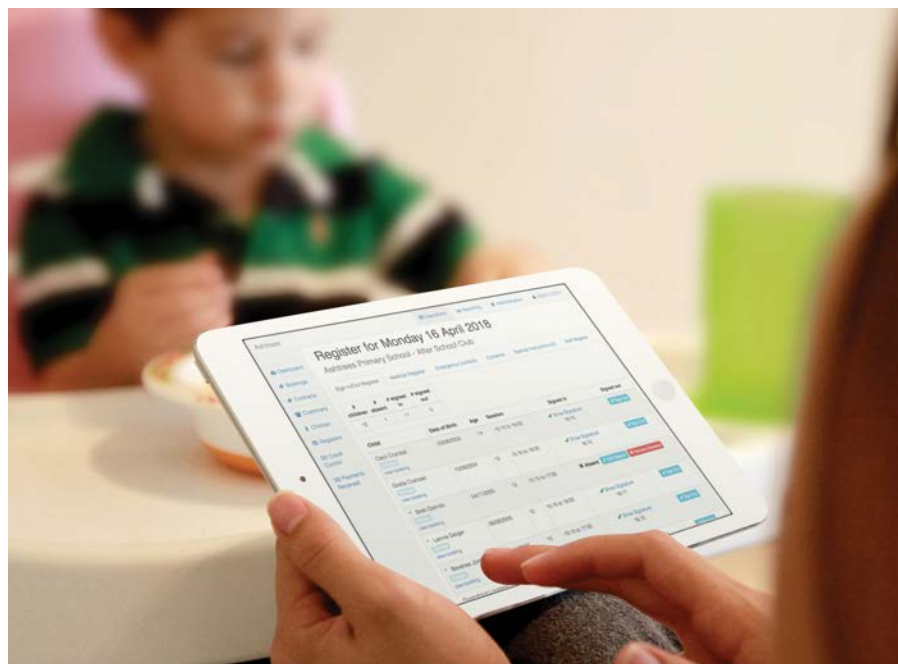
Parents get to benefit from a simple online booking process which does away with repeated form filling and assorted rigmarole. Once registered with an account, they can update their details with important information as and when, thus keeping you in the loop.

Kids Club HQ stands out from the rest of the pack for its superior functionality, while still remaining user-friendly. It's robust, reliable and puts you in complete control – to the extent that it makes Excel-assisted club admin look decidedly primitive by comparison.

All told, this is a hugely impressive, yet affordable tool for rationalising and managing the various tasks involved in organising school clubs and wraparound care provision. Kids Club HQ is perfect for anyone keen to stay on top of their club admin and exceed parental expectations when it comes to booking places online. See for yourself by requesting a demo – chance are you'll find it to be quite the life-saver...

PSM
PRIMARY SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

VERDICT

- ✔ Makes school club management and admin a breeze
- ✔ Suitable for different club types (breakfast, sport, extracurricular, etc.)
- ✔ Easy to use and navigate – no training needed
- ✔ Can save schools and parents considerable time
- ✔ Excellent value for money

UPGRADE IF...

You're looking for an intuitive and flexible pre- or after-school club management system that can streamline your administration and professionalise your extra-curricular provision. Kids Club HQ is a class act. Prices start at £49 + VAT per month.

To learn more, visit kidsclubhq. co.uk or follow @KidsClubHQ

+Pay
By IRIS

Reliable, streamlined online payment management for schools

Take control of cashless payments with a dynamic, flexible payments platform, designed to simplify admin, save time and provide total security for schools and parents.

For schools:

✔ Advance bookings to simplify clubs and dinnertimes

✔ Automated reminders and scheduling assistant

✔ Multiple registers and built-in accounting codes

✔ MIS, catering and reporting integration

For parents:

✔ Free mobile app and desktop portal

✔ Flexible payment options (including instalments)

✔ Free low-balance reminders

✔ Cash, cheque and voucher payments facilitated

Competitive transaction costs

+Pay and ParentMail – Stronger, together

Combine parent payments and communications with ParentMail.

+Pay sits seamlessly alongside ParentMail, enabling powerful parent engagement with a single user-friendly platform.

.IRIS | Education

parentmail.co.uk/onlinepayments

CHOOSING PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT TECHNOLOGY

What should schools think about when selecting a parental communications tool? And how can they avoid falling prey to common mistakes? Winston Poyton shares his top tips.

T echnology should make it easier for schools to keep in touch with parents. But if you have one system to announce details of the school summer fayre, another system for school dinner payments, and yet another for managing parents' evening appointments, could your communications be taking up more time than they should?

And what happens when you want to message a group of parents about the after-school art club or the football team? You're back to keying in names and contact details all over again. If this sounds familiar, it could be time to streamline your parental communications.

Having one system for all your communication needs can save time and avoid duplication of effort. But if you decide to take the route of choosing a single supplier, what's the best way to guarantee a smooth journey?

1. FIND THE RIGHT FIT

Investing in parental engagement technology is a key business decision so you need a system that ties into your school's wider strategy.

Draw up a road map for your school's communications and decide your priorities. Do you need to get information out to parents more quickly, encourage greater interaction with families or communicate with parents about their payments?

It's important to think about the long term too. Multi-academy trusts (MATs) taking on new schools will need to ensure they have a system which will scale up with them as they grow.

Parents increasingly prefer to receive school news via social media, messaging apps or text. But will your system allow you to do this? It's important to adopt a system with the flexibility to future-proof your school's communications.

2. AVOID THE HIDDEN EXTRAS

It's all too easy to be attracted by the headline price of a piece of technology, without considering whether there are additional costs to factor in.

Ask your prospective suppliers if you will need to pay extra for any of the features you need, and work closely with them to ensure you come away with a

package which gives you the right tools for the right price.

In choosing a fully integrated communications system, some schools find themselves sacrificing educational functionality. It's all very well being able to send out bulk emails to parents, but does it enable you to you get a quick message out to remind a parent about a school trip instalment?

Make sure your system can handle all the nuances of home/school interactions without needing to buy in additional tools.

3. SELECT A SUPPORTIVE PARTNER

Signing up for a new system is only the start. To get the most from any technology, schools need their supplier to become a trusted partner.

With a strong supplier partnership, you will have the support you need to move to a new communications solution without disrupting your school's daily routine. It can sometimes be difficult to persuade parents to switch to a new system and make full use of it. Your provider should encourage parents to engage with it as quickly as possible.

As your school or MAT evolves, you may want to add new functionality to your system. Talk to your supplier about the possibility of switching on new features, and what would be involved in rolling these out to parents. And make sure you receive full product training for your staff and regular health checks of your system.

By consolidating your parental engagement activity into a system which evolves with your school, you will have the time, tools and expertise to develop stronger and more effective home-school connections.

Winston Poyton is education, charities and commercial product director at IRIS Software Group. Find out how your school or academy can look forward with certainty at https://bit.ly/39lkU4M

5 TOP TIPS TO MAKE YOUR SYSTEMS WORK FOR YOU

Are your systems and workflows configured in such a way that you're actually able to make full use of what those solutions offer?

Now it may be that you are a Computer Programmer and a School Leader - I'm sure you've already found a way to automate your workflows and hack the staff room coffee machine!

But for us mere mortal school leaders who use technology as and when needed, do advanced features in everyday productivity suites offer us benefits? Most schools have long settled into using Microsoft, Google or Apple-provided solutions for their everyday productivity tasks. But have you as a school leader ever questioned if you are making full use of what those solutions offer? Here are my top tips for making your systems and workflows configured in such a way that you're actually able to make full use of what those solutions offer?

1. Focus on the problem
It's easy with productivity suites from the likes of Microsoft, Google or Apple, to become focused on the latest upgrades and/or the range of features. The truth is though, before you seek to explore how to use these systems better you need a clear idea of the problem you are seeking to solve using technology. If the problem you can solve is best solved effectively with basic features then don't even enter into the world of 'advanced features'.

2. Get Connected
If you've identified that the problem you are seeking to solve needs more advanced features and workflows, then it's time to get connected. Microsoft, Google and Apple all have online communities of people who love to connect, share and collaborate to solve problems. These communities are a great place to find out what other people are doing and get an

insight into how your problem could be solved. Many forums will link to online help videos, resources and tutorials - all will help grow your knowledge, skills and understanding.

3. Ask Questions
It seems simple to say but in reality sometimes people hold back with their questions when collaborating with people. Don't be afraid to ask that 'silly question' - it's how we all learn and how we all move forward.

4. Attend Events
When you reach out to people (both physically and virtually) answers will soon start to form and new ideas can prosper. Microsoft, Google and Apple all have regular events where communities of people who love to connect, share and collaborate to solve problems come together. More and more of these events tend to have an 'education' focus, I'd recommend reaching out to your local sales reps to see when the next events will be taking place in your area.

5. Keep Asking Questions
Finally, don't settle... keep asking questions!

The truth is, everything you do at work could be done better. Every task you complete on a computer could be done more efficiently than it is being done at the moment. We just need to keep asking the questions to find out how!

Gary Spracklen is Headteacher at The Prince of Wales School: Dorchester, Former Digital Educator of the Year and a member of UK Government's - Department for Education 'ETAG' (Educational Technology Action Group).

App rollouts that work

Michael Oakes explains how to make sure your app strategy is a success

So, your school has decided it wants to make the move into the cloud and introduce an app-based learning environment. But what does that involve, what challenges or benefits do apps provide, and how can you ensure that stakeholders – from governors and teachers to parents – are onboard with that change?

Why rollout apps?

Over the past decade, the influence of technology on learning in the classroom has exploded and apps are at the forefront of the change. Apps facilitate great educational experiences for children by improving accessibility and students' overall interaction with learning materials.

While there are a lot of applications available in online stores, choosing the right ones – from assessment tools, to online homework and classroom activities – is imperative. Whether they're designed to give pupils an interactive syllabus, or simply a way for teachers to better track results, apps are reinventing how schools operate.

But what about security?

Of course, as with any digital service, security is a concern – particularly when your school is handling personal and sensitive information about its pupils. In a cloud environment, everything can be accessed remotely, and this can raise difficulties if, or when, a student loses their password.

Thankfully, there's a solution which easily remedies this: two-factor authentication. This secures applications by restricting access to users who either own the device such as a phone, laptop or tablet – or it's at least registered to them – or know the password. This means that provided a student has one of these two credentials they will be able to access their apps with minimal disruption to their classes.

How to rollout apps

• Identify the right apps – Speak with your teachers to understand where and how apps can benefit them both in the classroom and with time-consuming administration. Only select and implement apps with a clear benefit and ensure that the IT department and staff are aware of how to find and download them.

• Bring stakeholders on board – It's crucial that teachers, governors and parents are all bought in on applications being rolled out. From helping alleviate teachers with their time-consuming tasks to showing parents how these apps can give them a better understanding of their child's education, making them your biggest supporters will ensure any change comes easily.

• Don't forget to support users – Our latest research found that despite the potential of technology to improve classroom learning and school processes, just over a quarter (27%) of teachers admit they're confident in using the existing technology provided by their school, emphasising how important this is. Remember it will take users – teachers, students and pupils – some time to learn how to use new apps and making sure they have access to training and support is an important part of the process.

These steps will ensure teachers become your biggest advocates for the change, and can effectively convince pupils, governors and parents of the benefits they provide. Ultimately, if your teachers, governors and students aren't bought into any change, then it will likely be doomed from the start.

Michael Oakes, Change Strategy Manager, RM Education Education Ltd

WHAT IS
CLOUD
TECHNOLOGY?

Anthony David explores the exciting world of cloud-based resources and assesses their impact on school life

O nly a handful of years ago the concept of cloud-based technology would have seemed like a dream. We were familiar with cloud storage (which will be discussed in this article) but the offer of shared documents, multiple authors and untethered access seemed something for the distant future. Yet, here we are. These technologies are, typically, driven by need and, certainly, I find that it is very convenient to be able to move from location to location and still be able to access my documents (much like you can with emails from your phone). But, equally there is sometimes a bit of hype with technology which needs to be addressed. So, what is cloud technology, how can we get the best from it and does it meet the hype?

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

First, there is a difference between cloud storage and cloud technology. If you are unfamiliar with the term, cloud storage is used to describe virtual storage of documents. In much the same way you would save a document on your PC, you can save online via your storage. There are any number of offers out there with big players being DropBox, Amazon (which comes part of any Prime account), Apple and Google. In many cases, these companies are vying for personal accounts. Amazon is a good example of this as it is linked directly to Alexa AI, which is paired to your account. As a result, this is not a good tool for your school. If storage is all that you are looking for then there are certain features that you should consider. Firstly, how much storage are you likely to use and does your agreement cover that? If your school is used to taking lots of photographs or creating films, which you need to store online, you would be surprised by how quickly you can use up your allocated storage space. Also, if you have limited broadband you may find that it takes longer than you would be comfortable with to up/down load documents.

PERMISSIONS

Secondly, what levels of permissions are you able to apply? It may be that some documents you would choose to be 'view only' (such as policies) in order to avoid unplanned change, unintentionally or otherwise. Bottom line, you do not have the time to be checking documents or following up accusations of change. Finally, you should check to see how the programme is backed up. We have all made the mistake of deleting a document by mistake and you should know if there is access to some-sort of 'history' tab in order to retrieve a lost document. As with any virtual office (and your 'staff shared' folder is not immune to this) there is a risk of intentional vandalism. While rare, it is within the capability of any employee to delete any documentation. The worst case scenario is a disgruntled employee deleting the entire contents (which can be done surprisingly quickly and with little effort). While rare, this can happen and is a risk. As a result, you should consider how this is addressed in your policy.

NEXT LEVEL

Cloud technology takes cloud storage to the next, logical, level. It allows the user to interact directly with a document without ever having to power up a Word or PowerPoint programme on a PC. Both the programme and document are housed in a virtual world that can be accessed anywhere that has access to WiFi, much as you would with email on a smart phone or tablet. While Microsoft have the capacity for this (within Office365) it is, arguably, Google and Apple that have the upper hand on this type of technology as it is present in all of their mobile devices which now outnumber static computers which Microsoft is traditionally reliant upon. The advantage of these programmes is that multiple authors can interact on one document at any time. For example, you may design a CPD timetable that you wish colleagues to complete in order to discuss any clashes or gaps at your next meeting, rather than spending time populating it. It is, in truth, quite exciting to see colleagues adding text/comments at the same time as you.

POLICY

So, while exciting, there is a clear need for policy. Any policy should consider the following:
• Data protection (and by default, GDPR)

"If storage is all that you are looking for then there are certain features that you should consider"
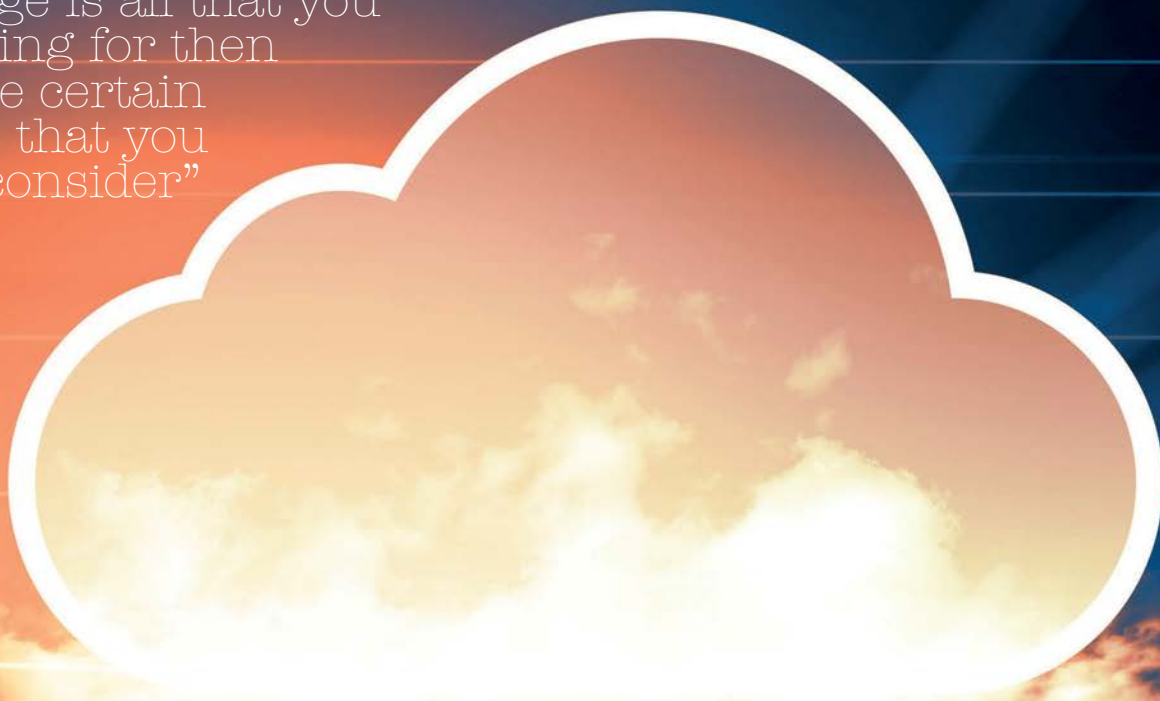
- Acceptable use
- Roles, responsibilities and permissions
- Disciplinary action

It is important to note that intentional change or deleting of documents could compromise the day-to-day running of the school and, as such, is subject to disciplinary action. Ultimately it is part of professional conduct.

Finally, there is a reality checker required when beginning to use these virtual tools. I remember distinctly the first time I enthusiastically sent out a shared document only to find, a week later, that nobody had completed it. This led to the key question: why? In one case it was that they were nervous of using it, another couldn't access the document and a third preferred to work on a paper document. I

underestimated both the training required and psychological change needed to move to this new approach. Colleagues were, in truth, reluctant to move to a cloud-based technology when the school was also still operating a traditional, Microsoft hard-drive. Equally, any change is reliant upon a champion and if that champion leaves mid-change then there is a risk of collapse or stagnation.

CHALLENGE

And this is the challenge. If education was wholly reliant on cloud-based technology, like many larger organisations, then making the move would be easier as it would be the common currency that we would all be using. But it is not. Documents shared between schools are rarely anything other

than Word documents and this is perpetuated by teacher resource centres such as TES or Twinkl, who produce word-based resources, not Google or Apple versions. It seems, that while the infrastructure exists for a 'third way', Microsoft will dominate for the immediate future and that converting to cloud based technology is currently still likely to remain the exception rather than the rule for schools.

Anthony David,
Executive Head Teacher,
North London

DISCOVER THE POSSIBILITIES OF PODCASTING

Alan Cameron explains how producing a school podcast can equip your pupils with a range of useful skills and help forge valuable links with your local community

For your students, writing and producing podcasts can be an extremely effective learning activity. It allows them to develop skills in team working and collaboration, develop their ideas around enterprise, spark their imagination and improve their digital literacy skills. It can also simply be a chance to work in a medium that's fun, stimulating and new.

Schools can also benefit as institutions by using podcasts both in and out of school. They can be shared via the school website as a tool for promoting the school and its activities in the local community, or even further afield, as part of efforts at forging international links with schools in other countries.

Producing a school podcast provides the perfect opportunity for involving members of your local community. You could arrange interviews between local specialists and your pupils, for example, in which the former can share their local awareness and expertise, thus contributing to the latter's overall levels of knowledge and experience.

SET THE BRIEF
When embarking on a podcast project, the first thing will be for the school to decide why they want to do it. It shouldn't be done to simply tick a 'digital learning' box of some kind – it's much better all round if the school is actively seeking to provide new learning opportunities.

More specifically, schools need to ask themselves whether there is indeed a need for them to provide more opportunities for creativity and collaboration and to develop their pupils' communication and critical thinking skills. If the answer is 'yes', then your school will be more than halfway down the path to getting a podcast project underway. Only once you're clear as to the reasons for doing it can you then start to actually plan and deliver the project.

While there's no single 'right way' of delivering a podcast project, for me, the first thing is to ensure that the teachers involved are familiar with the podcasting process and recording facilities that you'll be using. It will be helpful if you can provide pupils with general training in how to use the recording space before work on the project gets properly underway. This can be done in a fun, relaxed and civil way, so that they're given time and space to discover the possibilities of podcasting recording for themselves. They'll need to know the mechanics of how everything works ahead of time, but it should be imparted to them in an engaging way.

BE CREATIVE
Your learning intentions should then be shared with the students, alongside details of what the podcast brief is going to be. You might wish to specify a time limit on how long the podcast length should be – maybe try recording a trailer of 60 seconds or while you're getting started.

As with all curricular and extra-curricular work involving young people, whatever you do will need to be carefully planned. Assess how much time investment will be required and formulate a clear outcome for the project so that it evolves into something of

value. Topics that work well will likely be ones that the pupils themselves will find engaging, but which may also find a wider audience, such as plastic pollution. If you give your young people the freedom to be creative and feel their way through the early stages via trial and error, they'll often surprise themselves – and you – with how capable and imaginative they can be. for staff.

ASSIGN ROLES

Some general tips would include using good quality USB microphones and setting aside quiet space, if possible, that the kids can to go to when making their podcast. As with any education project, producing a podcast will require a high level of classroom management by the teacher, who will need to be completely organised with respect to what each podcast production session will involve. You'll also need to decide on who's doing what – be it voicing the intro, devising the running order, doing interviews and so on – and either allocate the various roles yourself or have the pupils self-assign.

It's likely that the pupils will need training in how to capture a good quality recording (though it's possible that they might end up helping the teacher). General tips include talking close to microphones, making sure that the microphones are picking up a good signal before the recording starts and not talking over each other once recording has commenced.

Depending on the type of project you're doing, it may be possible for pupils and teachers to record themselves in a quiet space at home. Tools like Soundtrap (see 'Recording made easy') make it easy to record podcast contributions separately and share them with the rest of the group.

Once the podcast has been recorded and edited, distributing it is a fairly straightforward process. Soundtrap includes a one-click Spotify distribution function that teachers can use, if you're interested in uploading your podcast there, and of course there are a number of major podcast hosting platforms where your project can go, notably Apple Podcasts. That said, the easiest way of sharing a school podcast with interested parents will be to post links to the relevant MP3 files on your school's website.

GET INSPIRED

A couple of podcasts I'd recommend myself include Book Club for Kids, which is available via Google Podcasts and involves children from around the world talking about books they've recently read – young people can send in pitches.

There are also several podcasts on BBC Sounds, which are mainly aimed at 9 to 12-year-olds and serve as a good example of the podcasts' storytelling potential. A particular highlight is a series called Once Upon a Time in Zombieville.

I myself am currently working on a project for Scotland's National Centre for Children's Literature and Storytelling (see peterpanmoatbrae.org), for which we'll be recording podcasts at schools and putting together a showcase of their work.

RECORDING MADE EASY

Stefan Larsson, EDU business development and partnerships at Soundtrap, explains how schools can use the platform to simplify the process of producing a podcast

Soundtrap is an extremely easy to use online recording studio that can be used on virtually any device for recording music and producing podcasts. Recording with a couple of external microphones will improve your podcast's sound quality and might make the experience more exciting for pupils, but it's possible to get good results using built-in computer microphones and standard headsets.

Soundtrap is accessed via a web browser and entirely cloud-based, enabling pupils to work on podcast projects in a safe online environment. It's effectively 'walled garden' closed to anyone outside the school; pupils at the school can use Soundtrap to contact and collaborate with each other, but only with each other.

Our Soundtrap for Education solution includes virtually all the features from our consumer packages, with support for remote collaboration and unlimited space for storing project files. Podcasters can use its voice recognition technology to transcribe themselves while recording, and then edit the podcast audio by altering the text transcript.

Soundtrap for Education is available as a yearly subscription for education professionals, starting at £4 per student per year; for more details, visit soundtrap.com/edu

Alan Cameron is a music teacher, former manager of music services in Glasgow and Dumfries and Galloway and presently an education adviser with Soundtrap; follow him at @alanhcameron1

Community Engagement

PUT A POLICY IN PLACE AND PUBLICISE IT

The Key's Kaley Foran offers advice on how to handle parental complaints made online

Dealing with complaints from parents is time-consuming. In a recent poll of 1,000 of our school leader members, 84 per cent said they are distracted by complaints from parents about their school's approach.

Striking a balance between listening to parents' concerns, encouraging them to follow the school's complaints process, and enforcing a zero-tolerance approach to aggressive or inappropriate behaviour, is crucial - but easier said than done.

Indeed, social media has increased the complexity, with schools now handling criticisms both on-site and online. Here's what you can do to prevent complaints from escalating online and deal with inappropriate behaviour if it does occur.

CREATE AN INTERNET ACCEPTABLE USE AGREEMENT
You can use this to set clear guidelines and expectations on how parents should use social media (or other forums) when they communicate with or about your school.

You can't require parents to sign an acceptable use agreement, but using one can help you explain what kinds of behaviour you won't tolerate.

INCLUDE SOCIAL MEDIA USE IN A PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT
Some schools do this as well as, or instead of, having an internet acceptable use agreement.

Parent codes of conduct aren't legally binding, but you can use one to set out things like:
• The school's expectations of parents
• How the school will respond to inappropriate behaviour
• The headteacher's right to ban parents from the school premises

PUBLICISE YOUR POLICIES
so parents follow the right procedures

Parents may turn to social media if they don't know how to raise a complaint or handle an incident in the right way. Make sure parents know about your policies and procedures on things like complaints and behaviour.
To do this:
• Make sure your policies are easy to find on your school website
• Regularly remind parents about key policies in newsletters or other updates
• Make copies of policies available at parents' evenings, or set aside time to talk about them to parents

IT'S TIME TO MAKE SOME UNIFORM DECISIONS

Hannah Day looks at the thorny issue of schoolwear policy

I'll start with a confession, I've got a bit of a thing about uniform. Don't worry, its not that sort of article but I should say that at university I wrote my dissertation on the roll of uniform in society and my first teaching job in a state secondary had abandon the idea of formal uniform in favour of a Clean, Covered and Considerate policy for dress. But now as a parent of a school aged child I understand the ease for all of having a uniform and sticking to it.

The arguments are well know, that uniform instils respect, encourages good behaviour, removes the pressure to dress in fashionable clothing and suggests equality across the whole student body. Perhaps, though, it's time to review your uniform policy and consider these points.

WHAT'S YOUR PURPOSE FOR UNIFORM?
If it's to instil respect and status then the uniform needs to be very easy to identify and be consistent across each student. If it's for ease and durability, then cost and quality becomes the focus.

WHERE DO YOU GET YOUR UNIFORM?
If you are more focused on consistency then you need a consistent supplier. This is best achieved by using just one. However, this often causes an increase in cost and in 2015 the Competitions and Markets Authority wrote an open letter to the DofE after a raft of complaints about single supplier policies advising schools that under completion rules several suppliers should be available to parents. A preferred supplier can be named but you must allow parents to shop around. Keeping items that must be purchased, such as a blazer with the school emblem, to a minimum will offer parents flexibility.

HOW MANY ITEMS OF UNIFORM DO YOU HAVE?
The more items you have the more items parents will have to pay for. What community do you serve and what might be their general financial situation? Will the cost of your uniform cause concern for some parents? How do you support parents with the cost if and when issues arise?

EASE AND CHOICE
Flexible policies allow parents to consider what is important to them. They may want to focus on durability or be keen to choose natural materials.

THE ENVIRONMENT
Many manufactures are now making uniforms from plastic waste. This can not only be great for the environment but a demonstration of a reflective and engaged school, considering issues beyond the classroom.

THE SECOND-HAND MARKET AND SAVING TIPS
Uniform can help to raise you funds as well. Donations of old but still wearable uniforms can be purchased from your school at a fraction of the original cost. This was done once each year at my school.
   Additionally let parents know that buying the size up works for you too. We all know how quickly students grow so if an oversized sweatshirt doesn't worry you then let them know.

Hannah Day is Head of Visual Arts, Media and Film at Ludlow College

Bridge the gap between perception and reality

How to manage parents' expectations following an Ofsted report

It was a Thursday afternoon. The school's Ofsted report had just been published and we had printed copies for the parents to take home. We had been judged RI. I was in my office and watched a parent read it as they walked through the playground. He flicked through it and said 'Well, I guess we won't be putting the house on the market just yet'.

I must admit, that as much as I was anxious about the ramifications of the report (in less than six months of being there, I'd managed to get the school from 'good' to 'RI', impressive, eh?) I had not considered that preventing families from moving home was something that was in my power.

I have gone through four Ofsted inspections across two schools since becoming a Head. And, in my experience, the parental response has been similar… they haven't really seemed that bothered.

Actually, that's not strictly true. They do care. But often, only insofar as the report supports or challenges their own preconceived perception of the school. In my personal experience, no inspection report has changed how a parent has felt about their child's school. Even when my first school went from Good to RI, I had comments from parents who said that they didn't believe it because they knew that the school was great (very kind if a little

misguided: the school did require improvement.) That said, I also had parents whose response was 'finally, the school has got what it deserved'. I didn't, however, have any parents come to me to say that they were concerned because they had thought 'something' but that this report

> "The most important thing about managing an Ofsted report is not letting it define you"

had caused them to question it.

Either way, it is a good idea to help frame the report for the parent community – particularly when there is a change of category. If a school has 'dropped down' a judgement then it is a good idea to reach out to the parents to explain why and what steps are being taken to improve the school. I personally prefer to do this in person and en masse. It is good for parents to hear you talk about the school and for you to share your plans and answer any questions they may have. It is even more important to ensure that when you do so,

you go beyond the Ofsted report. Parents want to know that you are making plans to benefit their children and not just get you through the next inspection.

I would recommend that Heads don't conduct such meetings on their own. I have found it incredibly supportive to have governors and other staff members at these meetings. It shows solidarity and allows other leaders to be heard.

I would, however, suggest that schools avoid contradicting or actively damning the Ofsted report – although there may be some areas where you wish to add some additional context – as parents need to get on board with your future rather than dwell on whether you've got the chops to suck it up and get on with the job.

Even when the school has been judged 'good' I'd still vouch for meeting with the parents if only to let them know that you are still planning on working hard and not about to rest on your laurels.

The most important thing about managing an Ofsted report is not letting it define you. Parents will ultimately think what they do based on real experiences. An Ofsted report is a momentary distraction, don't let it get it in the way of getting the job done.

Tim Browse is headteacher at Air Balloon Hill Primary School, Bristol

PUT YOUR BEST FOOT **FORWARD**

Phil Burton examines what you need to think about
to have a great open event

Imagine the scene – you have an important interview or meeting coming up and you want to make sure you are giving all the right messages across to those around you. You go and have your hair done, choose your best outfit and polish your shoes. You are on show for that period of time. You are the greatest showman!

This is nothing different to holding your School Open Event. The whole experience is an opportunity to sell your team and to showcase just how amazing your school is.

PRE EVENT CHECKLIST

You need to first consider what you unique selling points are for your school. What is the message you want to get across to the prospective students and their parents. Once you have these you need to work on you marketing outputs. To coin a phrase from the retail world, you want to "Maximise your Footfall". You want as many people to attend as possible. Holding the event during the school day excludes many working families so they need to be late afternoon into the evening or, maybe, consider a weekend. Consider how you are going to get the message to the wider public to let them know what is happening.

Are you going to place adverts in local papers. If this is one of your chosen methods consider the following points: Colour will stand out from the black and white text; the size of the advert is also key – you don't need a full page (they are expensive). Also carefully consider the placement of your advert – always place them on the right hand page as this is the first page you see and always go for the front or rear of the publication as people don't tend to read the middle parts.

Have you consider placing school prospectuses in the showrooms of all the building developments in your area. Having a good school by new housing will be a big drive to those developers selling their homes.

Can you use your in-house communication system to promote the event? We have used this mainly to target current families who have then shared this with their friends. Usually this is in the form of an email or pop up notification which directs people to the school website which you will have already put your information onto.

Are you going to use social media to put the message across?

If you are using social media consider a video advert as they are proven to attract more views. Your school photographer may be able to support this with an amazing walk through of your school and even include drone footage.

Most towns have a "spotted" page which are free to use and you can post there. They have a huge audience range but be ready for any potential negativity, so monitor it carefully and hide those negative comments. You may also want to consider asking the local pre-schools, the Parish or Town Council to publish your advert on their pages for you.

Another scope of marketing to think about is targeting new geographic areas. Parents are demanding more choice so the "pupil recruitment" area is becoming increasingly more competitive. Make sure you target those key catchment areas you know you will get success from and also target those areas you want to tap into. Don't be afraid to step into newer areas.

Are you going to book families onto the event or is it going to be an open forum? If you book them in think about how you could potentially use email addresses to target marketing in the future, subject to current legislation of course.

Inside the school you want to make sure that you are demonstrating the best that you have to offer. Each area knows what has the wow factor so make sure it is in use. Make sure that the school has been cleaned thoroughly in advance of the open event. Remember the toilets, there are numerous bits of research that suggests parents look at the condition of the toilets as a representation of how well you look after the whole school.

You have thought about all the subjects and how they are showcasing their work but what about the other areas? Are the kitchens going to provide food samples for parents? Could the wrap around club be open so younger siblings can stay in the setting while parents go on the tour? Is your uniform supplier going to attend? Could the school photographer attend to do a photo booth to add variety? Is the school nurse or mental health team available to speak to parents? Lots of parents will be looking for more than just the subjects, they will want to be looking for all round support.

DURING THE EVENT

Keep this simple, all the hard work has been done - it is time to network. Talk to as many people as you can, have a presence and be the show person. If they like you and you staff that is over half the challenge complete.

To make this even easier have a number of other key leaders and pupils who can support you. Your prospective parents and children will want to see everything and will ask lots of questions so make sure you have children helping that represent the diversity of your school. I feel it is important that you have a mixture of children both boys and girls, high achievers and those who find learning a challenge. The key is that all of these children need to be confident and talking positively about the school.

Another great activity to undertake is a snap feedback survey or poll. You may want to find out something specific about the setting and how it comes across to new pupils or maybe you want to find out how they find your website. A simple survey handed out when they arrive and asked for when they leave can provide a wealth of information especially from new pupils and parents.

POST EVENT

The main thing is to thank all of the team for the hard work they have put into promoting the school. Remember to include those who may no be there on the night but may have done lots of work in advance.

Then it is time to review that feedback survey – what can you learn from it and what steps are you going to take to improve based on the results.

Finally, remember that now is the time to send out a survey asking what they thought of the school and, more importantly, will they be the first choice.

Holding an open event is all in the pre planning. If this is done well the rest will just happen. Never forget, however, that an open day is a marketing event. You should always want to show the school off to its very best and be proud of everything that has been achieved.

Phil Burton, business manager, Hallbrook Primary School

THE OPEN EVENT CHECKLIST

PRE EVENT
- USP Agreed
- Advert Created
- Marketing Agreed
- Booking System in Place
- Showcasing Agreed
- Extra-Curricular in place

DURING EVENT
- Staff in place
- Children in place
- Survey in place
- Site Security in place

POST EVENT
- Thank everyone
- Analyse survey
- Follow up emails sent

EVENT SURVEY QUESTIONS
1 What are your first impressions of the school?
2 What do you like and dislike about our website?
3 Did you get everything you needed from our open event?
4 Are you likely to use our extended services facility?
5 Will you be likely to choose our school as your first choice option?
6 Is there anything you would like us to follow up on?
7 How did you hear about our event?

SITE SECURITY CHECKLIST / CONSIDERATION
- Is there a single entry/exit point for visitors?
- Have they signed in (for open events during the school day)?
- Has perimeter fencing been locked (if applicable)?
- Have appropriate parking arrangements been made?
- Are suitable plans in place in the event of an evacuation?
- Are premises staff circulating the school targeting specific areas?
- Has your lighting been switched on outside for the evening (off timers)?
- Are rooms with specific information in locked (GDPR)?

IMPROVE YOUR SCHOOL'S SECURITY

Karen Trigg gives her top ten tips to avoid potential security threats by investing in integrated technologies, educating staff and implementing strategies

1 RISK ASSESMENT

Conduct a thorough risk assessment of the buildings design and layout. You will need to have a full evaluation of existing security and hardware systems such as the school's physical characteristics, security technology, and safety and security-related policies. You will need to consider three levels of security: perimeter, front entrance and reception areas and the core.

2 PERIMETER

Regarding the perimeter, facility managers need to consider the amount of exit and entry points, which will be dependent on the size and layout of the school grounds. Incorporating some level of electronic access control should be a consideration, whether that is a combination of electronic and mechanical door hardware, or a complete electronic solution.

3 ACCESS

Front entrance and reception areas should restrict visitors from freely accessing the school. Latches on access-controlled egress doors can be electronically controlled. Exit or entry doors can be opened by a push from the inside and, if the entry area is also an emergency exit, electronically powered panic bars can also be provided.

4 CORE

The core consists of the areas that should foster the safest environments for pupils (think classrooms or corridors), while also providing protection as they often contain confidential information, expensive equipment or chemicals. Both electronic and mechanical solutions can be utilised and integrated to provide simplified yet improved security levels.

5 SECURITY SYSTEMS

As schools are 'open environments' integrated security systems are needed and, because of the Internet of Things, this is now a more achievable and viable option. With cloud-based access control, facility managers can simply issue and retract access credentials, meaning entry can be allowed or denied based on person, access point or time of day.

6 LOCKDOWN

Have an effective lockdown procedure in the event of unauthorised access. Regarding layers, every school is made of the exterior (such as the parking area) and interior (like classrooms). The procedure must cover this. There must also be trained people on site to make sure protocols are followed in the event of an emergency.

7 EDUCATE

It is also important for teachers and administrators to be aware of and educated on security systems. This means knowing how a certain security system works and how to spot a faulty product. Adequate training also means all staff will know how to support an effective lockdown procedure and how to facilitate a safe escape.

8 PUPILS

Aside from staff, you will need to implement strategies for pupils to follow too. Encouraging pupils to keep fire doors closed, for example, will help suppress the fire in an emergency situation. It is also critical that school children know what to do and where to go during a lockdown.

9 ASSESSMENT

To reduce risk and liability, schedule monthly risk assessments of your security implementation. It will also ensure all systems are up to date. As part of the assessments, schedule mock security checks and debriefs afterwards.

10 IDEAS

For more ideas on how to guarantee the safety of students, download guides and resources, some of which can be found at https://www. allegion.co.uk/.

ARE YOU PREPARED FOR AN INTRUDER?

How to implement an effective lockdown procedure

Not only is safety a basic duty of care, but it is also essential for productive learning. Although your school may be secure – it may not always be safe. In the event of an intruder, for example, a school should have an effective lockdown safety plan, including staff protocol and the introduction of secure door hardware that enables a faster lockdown.

Facility managers should install the appropriate hardware based on specific performance. In addition, implementing adequate staff training on how to use it correctly is also extremely necessary in emergency lockdown plans.

TRAINING

When it comes to maximising classroom security, staff and teachers should have the protection of students and themselves high on the agenda. Safety plans must be clear to all so that in the event of a natural disaster, for example, lockdown can be carried out as quickly and smoothly as possible. For a quicker lockdown, the plan should also include staff protocol and specific places to hide.

To ensure that the procedure is effective, facility managers could hold regular mock drills and make sure everyone on the site is aware of the school map, escape routes and how to secure classrooms or communal areas.

Staff and teachers should also be able to identify faulty or damaged fire doors and security systems. On top of this, using accredited installers (such as MLA Locksmiths) who have been qualified and trained for the job is also important to ensure hardware has been fitted correctly.

SUITABILITY

Every school building is different and is made of many components. Therefore, hardware and systems that have been selected based on each building and performance requirements of the school ought to be installed. When refurbishing or undertaking new build extensions, facility managers should also look closely at how

> "During a lockdown, staff should immediately lock all doors and windows and turn off all lights"

people use and move around the building.

Certain hardware, such as panic hardware and exit devices are designed to aid exit in an emergency. Hardware that connects to the fire alarm – such as electromagnetic door closers – also eliminates the practice of propping doors open and aids free passage in high traffic areas, maximising safety.

KEEPING CALM

During a lockdown, staff should immediately lock all doors and windows

and turn off all lights. Account for all school children by doing a register and keeping them inside the room. While keeping the children calm, quiet and alert, make sure

Karen Trigg of Allegion UK
www.allegion.co.uk

5 REASONS TO TRY... ReallySchool

An intuitive app and desktop portal for teachers who want to carry out better quality observations and assessments in less time…

30 SECOND BRIEFING

ReallySchool is a cloud-based assessment solution for primary school teachers and teaching assistants. It allows you to capture, record and apply assessments to each stage of skills acquisition for every pupil in your EYFS, KS1 or KS2 classroom as you go – helping you reclaim your time for teaching.

1 SIMPLE AND ACCESSIBLE

Designed in the style of regular social media apps, ReallySchool is intuitive and easy to use with no training required. This makes it accessible for everyone – even for teachers who are less confident with technology. You can take photos of observations and apply assessments in just a couple of clicks from its in-built current UK-wide assessment criteria. You can even add existing photos from your device, if appropriate, and enhance your observations with video and audio notes.

2 SAVE TIME, DO MORE!

You can apply assessments quickly and easily via ReallySchool's comprehensive in-built UK-wide criteria. With a corresponding online desktop area providing a variety of reports and journals, ReallySchool allows teachers and senior leaders to quickly gain valuable insights into their students' learning and progress, even down to how much support they had for a particular activity. With so many features readily available in a matter of clicks, teachers tell us that ReallySchool saves around two hours each day!

3 SEE LEARNING GAPS

ReallySchool creates a handy online log of observation data that can show you a timeline of each pupil's progress. Together with the student progress reports, you can see how each individual has progressed over time and, most importantly, where their learning gaps are. This eliminates the task of having to look back over historic observations to work it out for yourself – allowing you to focus on the task of filling those gaps and moving forward.

4 LEADERSHIP REPORTS AND STUDENT JOURNALS

You can quickly and easily generate journals of pupils' progress directly from ReallySchool to show to parents at parents' evenings – or, alternatively, enhanced ones for staff that will show which statements have been achieved and how many are left to do. For additional insights, senior leaders can also create and download a range of reports that cover class and student progress, baseline assessments, end of KS1/2 assessments, whole school attainment and SOAP reports.

5 PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT

Schools will have various approaches for encouraging parents to engage with their children's education – and ReallySchool offers them one more option! You can share individual achievements with parents directly to their own dedicated version of the ReallySchool app, including images, video and audio clips – as well as leave comments for them to read and respond to. This is great to keep parents updated at their convenience, as they can check the app as easily as checking their emails.

To find out more about how ReallySchool **can save you time** in the classroom, try it for **free** with a special **three-month trial** at **www.reallyschool.com/offer**
Any questions? Email us at **contact@reallyschool.com**

KEY POINTS

Encourage achievement with a range of student badges for good effort, behaviour, teamwork – and more! Apply these to pupils' records and even share with parents.

Use audio and video to include children in their own learning and provide first-hand evidence of achievement. Record your own audio comments to support observations.

Realistically priced for schools, ReallySchool offers a multi-tasking solution with time-saving, efficiency and wellbeing benefits at a budget-friendly cost.

Industry-recognised ReallySchool was a Bett Awards finalist in 2019 and 2020 – and a Gold Award winner in the Nursery World Technology and Equipment Awards 2019.

Hand on Heart
Saving children's lives with defibrillators

Providing defibrillators and life saving training packages to schools and communities across the UK.

Did you know **12 young people die each week** from sudden cardiac arrest? Make your school heart safe and increase survival rates from **6%** to **74%**

If you're a school or community group interested in expanding your first aid kit with a life saving Defib, contact the Hand on Heart team for some great advice or free fundraising ideas to **ensure your site becomes heart safe** in the future.

Defibrillators and CPR training help to **save lives!**

Legal & HR

USE TECH TO MONITOR WARNING SIGNS

Adrian Lewis looks at solutions to to ease the absence management burden

were signed off on long-term sick leave because of pressure of work, anxiety and mental illness. One in 83 teachers spent more than a month off work in 2016-17. Mental health issues are a growing concern in the teaching profession, and stress-related absences are rising. The Health and Safety Executive reported that 12.8 million working days are lost due to work-related stress, depression or anxiety. In 2018/19 stress, depression or anxiety accounted for 44 per cent of all work-related ill health cases and 54 per cent of all working days lost due to ill health.

WARNING SIGNS

However, the impact of stress doesn't happen overnight. Usually there are early warning signs. Maybe some teachers have taken a few days off here and there or they are suffering from more colds than usual. These could all be signals they are feeling stressed. If employers can then offer interventions and support at this stage, they could potentially nip problems in the bud.

One issue is that stress can still be a taboo subject. Staff won't necessarily reveal they are suffering or lie about what's wrong with them.

A 2019 surveyi by Slater and Gordon

The Department of Education has reported that 2.03 million days were lost due to teacher sickness absence in 2017/18. The CIPD estimates the cost of absence for primary schools is £797 per employee per year.

Schools often see a spike in teacher absences during the winter months, which can be costly as supply teachers are recruited to cover classes, as well as disruptive for pupils. All schools want to

reduce their absences but the first step to reduce absence is for them to track and monitor absences to get more insight into the root causes.

For example, research tells us that it's not just winter bugs causing absences, stress could be also be having a major impact on teachers.

EPIDEMIC

In 2018, Teaching unions warned of an "epidemic of stress" in teaching, as research revealed that 3,750 teachers

found that 55 per cent told their employer they were physically ill when they were suffering from stress, and less than a third (32 per cent) admitted they had mental health issues. Most weren't honest because they didn't think they would be supported, or they were embarrassed and didn't want their colleagues to know.

TECHNOLOGY

One solution is for schools to use absence management technology to record and track absence. Such technology can provide complete visibility of who is in or off, highlight people taking regular days off and help to uncover the roots of issues. The system will prompt return to work interviews too which provide employees with a safe and confidential environment to discuss health concerns such as stress or anxiety.

Chadwell Primary School has benefitted from using our system Activ Absence – they are now managing all their holiday leave and sickness absence through the system and it is helping to reduce absence. Another client is Bootham School and the HR manager has told us that our user-friendly and cost-effective system has given HR complete data transparency. Individuals are managing their own leave, they can see their own records and log absence and leave requests, this is reducing administration, which was their key goal.

MANAGE

With absence management data and insight, schools can better manage sickness and mental health. They can take prompt action to support staff and tackle issues like stress head on, demonstrating the school is caring and focused on the wellbeing of their teachers.

The overall benefit to the school is that teachers feel happier, motivated and more productive at work and less likely to have time off.

Adrian Lewis, Director, Activ Absence

💻 **www.activabsence.co.uk**

REDUCE YOUR STRESS LEVELS

A strategy guide to manage your workload and keep you on an even keel

Work overload is the most common reason for teacher stress. Here are three ways for managing it from teachers who have completed our surveys on wellbeing and mental health.

The Five-Minute Rule

Apply the Five-minute rule when you stay behind at school to work and again when you take your work home. Reduce the amount of time you spend on your work by five minutes each day. Do this for a total of five school days and five evenings at home. This will accumulate so that you reduce the amount of time in total by 50 minutes.

Catch your breath

Teachers often have no time for proper breaks. Catching your breath is a way of calming the mind and body so that you are not working at full tilt, fuelled by stress. This is the NHS method:
• Sitting or standing, place both feet flat on the ground, hip-width apart.
• Let your breath flow deep down into your stomach, without forcing it. Try breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth.
• Breathe in gently and regularly. You might find it helps to count steadily from 1 to 5.
• Without pausing or holding your breath, let it flow out gently. Count from 1 to 5 again.
• Repeat. Even 2-3 cycles of breathing in and out have a calming effect.

Say 'No'

This is not easy, especially in a micromanaged school with high stakes accountability. But, constantly saying 'Yes' can lead to burnout. If not addressed, excessive demands make your job impossible. How to say 'No':
• Set out your concern in bullet points. Write no more than one side of A4.
• Say: 'I am worried about the amount of work that I have to do for X. I thought it might be helpful if I put my concerns in writing'.
• First bulleted paragraph: Describe what you have been asked to do.
• Second bulleted paragraph: Explain why you find this task difficult or impossible.
• Third bulleted paragraph: Say how not being able to complete the task is affecting you physically/emotionally.
• Fourth bulleted paragraph: End with: 'I would be grateful if I could discuss this issue in order to find a solution. One possible solutions is...'
• Send your document in an email attachment or provide a hard copy.
• Go to the meeting with two copies of your document - one spare in case the person you're meeting hasn't brought theirs. Focus on the statements in your document to reduce the likelihood of the meeting becoming personal.
• Whatever the outcome, write a note of appreciation that the person met with you. Include a summary of what was agreed and the steps that you will take next.
• The advantage of this approach is that the discussion is more likely to be objective. But, if it doesn't go well, you have written evidence of the meeting and its outcome. This is important if you continue to feel under unacceptable pressure and further meetings are needed.

The paediatrician Winnicott said that mothers don't have to be perfect, they just have to be 'good-enough'. As a teacher, you don't have to be perfect. You owe it to yourself, your family, your partner and friends to be a 'good-enough' teacher so that you have time for them too.

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**

WELLBEING NOW!
OR PAY LATER

Schools need to put teacher welfare at the heart of everything they do now, or deal with the consequences down the line
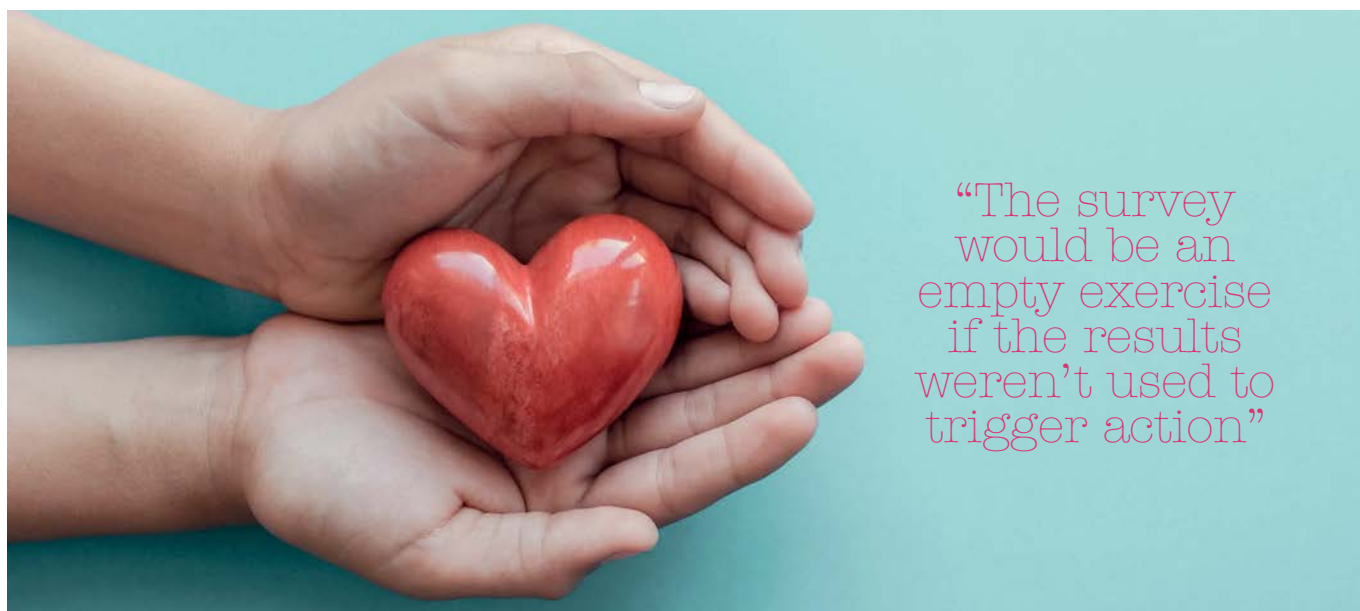
"The survey would be an empty exercise if the results weren't used to trigger action"

Teaching is a hugely rewarding profession, but it also has its pressures, and these can seriously affect wellbeing.

At our trust of six primary schools in Warrington and the surrounding area, we have placed the wellbeing of our staff at the centre of everything that we do.

We've taken a multi-stranded approach to protecting and promoting wellbeing.

Firstly, we are constantly scanning for signs of stress and poor wellbeing through our regular staff surveys. The approach, which is based on the Better Place to Work programme, has been part of trust life since we launched in 2016.

The programme consists of an anonymous staff survey that allows colleagues to say how they are feeling in a range of measures, including motivation, making a difference, conflict and feedback.

Our aim is to have all areas with a score of five or above. That leads to a green on the grid, indicating a high degree of staff wellbeing. Ambers and red, as you would expect, are indicators of low or poor levels of wellbeing.

The results can be analysed on an individual school basis as well as for different cross-trust teams, such as the senior leadership team, teaching assistants and teachers.

The wellbeing survey is carried out every three months. It works because it gives everyone an opportunity to say exactly how they are feeling and be confident that their views will be anonymous.

The survey would be an empty exercise if the results weren't used to trigger action. We noticed in one response that the 'feeling valued' measure had not moved on from the previous survey and that our leadership team had scored that area the lowest. That prompted us to hold an activity in which each SLT member was invited to write short, supportive comments that expressed their thanks to each of their colleagues so that at the end of the activity each had an envelope containing a collection of six messages. It was a simple, quick activity but it gave everyone an opportunity to tell colleagues how much they valued them. And it helped: at the next survey that stagnant results had improved noticeably.

The Better Place to Work survey was set up with support from a coach called Chris Whitely, who pointed out that while we were good at making sure that our parents were happy, we rarely asked staff how they felt about their jobs. We were conscious about giving our staff another paper exercise, so we decided to do the survey online and make sure that it took just three to four minutes to complete. And because the survey is online, it makes it easy to interpret the data in various ways so that we can work out which teams might need more support, either in individual schools or across the trust.

As well as alerting you to where wellbeing issues might be developing, it also means that we can work out which teams are happiest. We can then pair those teams up so they can learn from and support each other. We also provide mental health training for every staff member so they can recognise when things are getting on top of them or their colleagues – and where they can go for help. Our mental health first aiders – members of staff trained to support colleagues and signpost extra help and support if they need it – are often the first port of call for anyone wanting confidential support.

Louise Smith is CEO of Warrington Primary Academy Trust, a MAT consisting of six primary schools in the Warrington area

LET'S TALK ABOUT
PAY

Sonia Gill gives her top tips on how to make pay conversations easier

The introduction of performance related pay has resulted in a plethora of methods for determining pay increases. However you determine a pay increase, talking about money can feel awkward; even conversations where someone is getting a pay rise can feel hard if the rise doesn't match what they believe they deserve.

With school budgets becoming increasingly tight, staff pay has suffered greatly in the last few years and performance related pay conversations can be that much harder.

Whatever conversation you're having about pay one thing remains fundamental: be clear in the rationale.

THE FACTS

Be it an annual review or a restructure, when talking about pay you must be clear about the logic behind the decision – this is key to reducing the emotive nature of these conversations. Make sure you have the information that allows you to do this, which includes:

1 Your pay structure, pay bands and the process.
2 What is needed for pay progression – the evidence required and what it needs to show e.g. what performance and skills need to be seen and to what level in order for pay to increase.
3 Any whole school budget issues that affect pay decisions.

The aim is to empower people to know what their pay should be in a clear and explicit way. If some people are being paid at a higher level than their performance warrants, while there are some who are not being paid enough, by providing clear information they should be able to accurately determine where their own pay should be. This is crucial to making conversations about pay more transparent, simpler and less emotional.

EMOTIONS

Pay conversations can feel emotional because pay is crucial to people's quality of life. Use of the facts will help reduce the emotion ahead of the meeting, but if a pay conversation does get emotional here are some tips for managing it in the moment:

- **Let them talk** – if they are ranting let them get it out (but the rant should be within reason).
- **Present evidence** – e.g. if this had been done to this standard/for this duration then I would agree you had shown 'x'.
- **They mention someone else's pay** – remind them people's pay is confidential and you're not able to discuss anyone's but their own.

When talking about pay people can get upset in a range of ways. Here are a few ways to handle the most common reactions.

WHAT IF THEY CRY?

I get asked this a lot. My preference is not to end the meeting but sit patiently and wait for them to be ready to speak or, if staying feels awkward or inappropriate, offer to go and get them a glass of water a this gives you both a bit of a breather.

When they are ready to talk a nice lead in is to ask, 'Would you be willing to share with me what upset you?'.

I realise you might not want to know, that's your choice, but if you're willing to listen it can help clear the air. The key is to listen and keep listening, don't feel you need to answer every issue or fix it – get an overview of the issues and then decide how to approach them.

WHAT IF THEY GET ANGRY?

Keeping your balance when the other person reacts emotionally can be hard. So here's a handy sentence structure that can help move them on from the emotion:
When you...I feel...And I would like to feel...

For example: When you shout at me, I feel like we can't discuss your pay properly and I would like to feel that we can discuss it to see if we can agree or if one of us might change our view if we have more information.

WHAT IF THEY SAY HOW IT AFFECTS THEIR HOME LIFE?

This is hard; being told their child can't have something, that they are the main earner and are struggling to meet costs, or that they will have to take a second job. This rightly pulls at the heart strings and although it might feel like there is little you can do there are some ways to help:

Listen – it might not seem like much but for some this will be a rare moment of sharing what's going on for them and good listener can really help them process it.

Are there ways they can increase their pay through additional responsibilities or improving performance? You might not be able to raise their pay now but help them see how they could in future and what this might look like financially.

> "If they are ranting let them get it out (but the rant should be within reason)"

Is there some short-term support you could put in place that might help the situation they are in at the moment, e.g. a later start time a few days a week? Be clear about how long you can do this for, so it doesn't become the normal way of working.

I CAN'T PAY WHAT THEY DESERVE!

I get it, budgets are tight. But there are few things you can do here:

1 Acknowledging what their pay should be, that it's not and why it can't be at this stage (e.g. whole school deficit) can help someone see that you would if you could.

2 Could you ask your team what their choice or ideas are to free up the amount that would be needed to give the pay that is deserved? For example, as a team we cannot have this resource which would give us 'x' to put into pay. Of course there are considerations: are you allowed to reallocate that spend? Would the lack of resource hinder the school in other ways e.g. pupil progress? But it makes this an issue that you could try to solve together and who knows what collective thinking might bring.

3 Reward in non-financial ways – there are other ways to show people you value them and help them feel rewarded, for example some people would really value a day off during term time more than a pay rise because time is something you can't often buy.

CHECKLIST FOR PAY CONVERSATIONS

Do your team know:

1. **Your pay bands and what is expected in each band.**

2. **Pay review process including key dates.**

3. **What is needed for pay progression – the evidence required and what it needs to show.**

4. **Any whole school budget issues that affect pay decisions that the team should be made aware of.**

For each person:

5. **Why are you/aren't you recommending a pay increase?**

6. **What do they need to do to get a pay rise next time?**

7. **Is this person expecting a pay rise?**

8. **Are they likely to react emotionally and if so how? How will you manage this?**

9. **Are there external issues that are likely to come into the conversation?**

Decisions about pay can really affect how valued someone feels and their ongoing performance and commitment to the school. Whilst is might not be possible or right to give everyone what they want, a clear understanding of why it is the way it is should make discussions easier. Then it's down to explaining why you are giving your pay recommendation and managing the emotions.

Sonia Gill is founder of the consultancy Heads Up. She is the author of Successful Difficult Conversations in School and Journey to Outstanding; for further tips on how to structure a difficult conversation, sign up to the Heads Up free e-course where in just five short videos, Sonia will show you how to structure any difficult conversation for success! Sign up here: https://ukheadsup.com/storm/

Procurement and Budgeting

5 WAYS TO SAVE ENERGY AT SCHOOL

Actionable tips for SBLs and headteachers to cut costs

A school can use up a lot of energy during the day. From heating the building to inefficient lighting fixtures; a school that is running eight to ten hours a day can prove to be a huge consumer of energy and therefore a high utility overhead to maintain.

Here are five practical tips and ways that you can start saving energy in schools and become a greener, environment friendly and more sustainable school overall.

1. REPLACE INEFFICIENT LIGHTING FIXTURES WITH LED

In school facilities we most commonly find tube lighting being used in the hallways, classrooms, and really anywhere with lower ceilings that are flat.

This technology is, more often than not, fluorescent.

Believe it or not, this actually isn't the most energy efficient lighting technology out there. LED technology is by far the most efficient luminaire on the market today. By switching from fluorescent to LED, you will be able to realize a 30 per cent reduction in electric energy consumption associated with your tube lights.

Car parks, exterior walls and sports fields can make the switch away from technologies like metal halide, high pressure sodium and fluorescent lighting to LED and realise greater energy savings by up to 75 per cent.

2. INSTALL OCCUPANCY SENSORS

Some areas of your building may not be in use at all times where the lights would be on otherwise (such as hallways). By installing occupancy sensors which turn on when there is movement, you will be able to have lights on only when the area is needed.

3. BETTER INSULATION IN YOUR BUILDINGS

A lot of heat in your building can be lost through poorly insulated walls and ceilings. By upgrading your insulation you will realise a hefty reduction in energy waste related to heating (or cooling) your building. Although this can seem like a big investment for a

school (just like some of these other things), you need to look at the long term savings that it will bring your facility. More likely than not, it will almost always produce a positive ROI all while promoting school sustainability.

4. UPGRADE THOSE BATHROOMS

There are much better ways to save electricity at school in the bathroom than replacing hand driers with paper towel dispensers. All that does is create another issue, the ongoing cost and waste produced from the paper towels! Instead, upgrading hand dryers that are energy efficient is a surefire way to reduce energy usage in your school's bathroom. On top of that, installing sinks and toilets that use less hot water (and water in general) can be a great addition while you are at it.

5. PROMOTE USAGE OF NATURAL LIGHT

Face it, a lot of classes happen during broad daylight and by not using up that free light from outside is a pure waste. By opening blinds to their fullest (when appropriate) you can reduce the amount of lights you need on by nearly half, depending on the day and time of year. Make sure to remind everyone to do this. Otherwise, you'll never win with this tactic. Remember: you need to get the school on board or else you can only do so much. Alternatively, opening the blinds and windows or installing skylights into virtually any area of the building can be an even more effective way of getting the most natural light into your building. This is probably most beneficial for areas that would otherwise have no natural light whatsoever, such as hallways or interior rooms.

Dwayne Kula, President, My LED Lighting Guide/The Lighting Centre
www.myledlightingguide.com
www.thelightingcenter.com

GET THE BALANCE RIGHT

Myth has it that ICFP cannot be delivered within the primary sector when, in reality, it can!

Integrated Curriculum Financial Planning, or ICFP as it is more commonly known, is not something new. Schools have been using this approach to curriculum financial planning for years within the secondary sector to deliver an optimum, cost-effective curriculum for its pupils.

PRINCIPLES OF ICFP

In order to understand how to implement ICFP within a primary setting we must recognise the principles behind ICFP and what it means to your organisation, first of which begins with understanding what data to review and how to interpret said data to reduce inefficiency, allowing the delivery of a cost-effective affordable curriculum. Fundamentally the approach is integrated between balancing the curriculum, staffing, and finances to have the maximum impact.

"If you are spending more in one area for a specific reason, remember something else has to give"

WHAT DATA SHOULD WE REVIEW?

Both the Institute of School Business Leaders (ISBL) and Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) refer to metrical data in terms of key performance indicators (KPIs). The types of data to measure include:
• the amount of teaching time required to deliver the curriculum
• the proportion of time teachers teach, known as contact ratio
• the ratio between pupils and teachers
• the ratio between pupils and adults
• the average class sizes
• the cost of delivering a lesson or session

• the cost of a schools staffing structure broken down into categories including teachers, senior leaders, management, curriculum support staff, and non-curriculum support staff

The key performance indicators show the school potential areas where efficiency savings can be made.

The first step is to understand the primary timetable cycle and determine how much time teachers are teaching. Teaching time can be measured in hours and minutes; however, the primary structure lends itself to working on morning and afternoon sessions, which equates to ten sessions per week. Some primary settings choose to split the week into hours of teaching per week, similar to a secondary model, however, either model is suitable.

Once the timetable cycle has been determined, all key metrics can be calculated with ease and the use of the schools three-year budget planning.

So, let's look at some examples of this.

While undertaking budget planning last year, in the three-form entry primary school where I worked, in Blackpool, we wanted to take an integrated curriculum financial planning approach to our planning. Initially we started by reviewing each class structure alongside the commitment that each teacher taught within the school compared to the maximum teaching time available.

When scrutinising the teaching time available and the amount of time teachers taught, we instantly noticed that some part-time members of staff were being given a full session of PPA. This came to light due to applying an integrated financial planning approach by analysing each teachers'

teaching commitment individually. This type of analysis had not previously been reviewed as the primary approach had always been one teacher per class with a PPA session allocated, or two if the member of staff was a newly qualified teacher. When the school calculated the cost of the additional PPA that the member of staff had been given, the inefficiency was quantified as £6,000. The impact for this school was that less hours were required for PPA so there was a financial saving to be gained.

Other areas of inefficiency that were instantly discovered were that the contact ratio was lower than a suggested 0.78 – 0.80. As a senior leadership team, we looked to reduce this by reviewing the amount of non-contact time and allocating additional teaching to teachers with available capacity. Deploying our resources effectively again was a financial saving as fewer hours were needed for PPA. It's all about finding the right balance and what works for your setting.

PROPORTIONED EXPENDITURE

In the main, approximately 75-78 per cent of a school's income is usually attributed to staffing costs, therefore if a school is spending 90 per cent of its income on staffing then that leaves little funds available to resource the curriculum, maintain the premises and its running costs.

Ultimately, knowing your organisations data is key. Schools need to understand how

much of their income is being spent on teaching staff in proportion to support staff. Is the balance right? How much of income is spent on non-staffing costs? How do these costs fit into the priorities of the school? If you are spending more in one area for a specific reason, remember something else has to give.

Within primary settings, the most common theme is that schools have a high number of teaching assistants to support pupils. This is where ICFP works at its best and allows the school to calculate this type of staffing cost and measure it against both revenue income and expenditure, with further analysis against national comparators. The metrics calculated will then allow senior leaders and Trustees to discuss how the school are allocating its resources, for instance if the analysis suggests that the school is spending 25 per cent of its income on teachings assistants, another aspect of the school's expenditure may be being limited. It's ultimately about getting the balance right to have the greatest impact.

Another area which is often scrutinised in primary settings is leadership and management costs. If an acceptable national threshold is between 7-9% then higher than average costs allow thought provoking questions to materialise. Is the senior leadership team too big? Are there too many teachers with teaching and learning responsibilities (TLRs)? Is the management structure expensive, if so, is

it sustainable and what is the impact?

If we then triangulate other key metric data, for example contact ratio, with those high management costs, other questions come to mind. Are teachers teaching too little? Is PPA too generous? Is the curriculum planning inefficient? Is management time given in addition to TLR payments? All valid questions.

By adopting an integrated curriculum financial planning approach, schools can link their curriculum and financial planning to achieve educational success, financial sustainability whilst meeting the educational needs of their pupils.

WHAT TO DO NEXT?

If you want to learn more, the DfE have funded free training on ICFP for school leaders till the end of March 2020. To book a place visit the ISBL website: www.isbl.org.uk

In addition to the free DfE training there are many tools available for schools to utilise in order to undertake a curriculum financial planning approach which can be found on the gov.uk website.

Sheryl Cardwell, Business and Financial Consultant, Shard Business Services & School Resource Management Advisor

KEY PRINCIPLES OF ICFP

- **Diagnostic tool that uses numerical measures to identify key issues within your organisation's resource use**

- **Seeks to maximise efficiencies through effective resource management**

- **Looks to ensure reductions in inefficiency**

- **Use of key diagnostic metrics to analyse organisation**

- **Generates starting points for discussion**

- **It's about getting the balance of resource use right!**

LET THE WEB WORK FOR YOU

Lindsey Marsh explains how you can boost school funds via the internet

Across the UK, thousands of schools are fundraising to subsidize core costs. They are organising events, applying for grants, appealing to sponsors and even campaigning for donations, to fund new resources, building refurbs, school libraries, clubs, trips and more.

But beyond these methods of active fundraising, online commission schemes are also helping schools bring in funds, but from pots of money that advertisers have. From internet search engines to price comparison websites, here are some additional ways your school can raise money:

AFFILIATE SCHEMES

Schools can generate income, by signing up to affiliate schemes (also known as associate programs or affiliate marketing). In short, these schemes allow you to earn money off your school website, simply by promoting another business and earning referral fees. There are thousands of e-retailers offering their own affiliate schemes, including big companies like Argos, Amazon and eBay. To find an affiliate scheme, schools can either contact businesses direct (and enquire about any schemes they have), or see what schemes are available on an affiliate network like Anwin (www.anwin.com) or Web Gains (www.webgains.com).

How affiliate schemes work: simply search online for schemes and check and compare what is on offer. If there is a scheme you like, carry out due diligence and if you are happy, sign-up. You will then be sent a unique weblink (or HTML code) to paste a link or banner into your website (and even on social media). When people visit your website and click on the link, they will then be diverted to the merchant's website, where they can shop as normal. If they place an order, your school will then earn a commission (usually based on the amount they have brought). Different merchants offer different commission rates so shop around for ones you like and always read the fine print before signing up. Most schemes pay around three-four per cent commission, however Amazon pays up to 12 per cent through their associates programme (https://affiliate-program.amazon.co.uk) and school clothing label suppliers Stamptastic pay 30 per cent commission and a free £22 voucher to schools that sign up at www.stamptastic.co.uk.

As well as raising money, affiliate schemes can help you raise awareness of products or businesses of key value to your school community. If, for example, there is a particular book that teachers recommend or a school uniform company you work with, then you could use affiliate schemes to help parents buy the items they need and fundraise in the process. Or if students need key ingredients for cooking club, or a kit list of items for a school trip, then you could post the list online and direct them to affiliate stores where they can buy these items from. Obviously, you would need to see what schemes are available and make thoughtful decisions about what products you promote and who you partner with, but these schemes present additional ways for your school to raise money.

SHOPPING FUNDRAISING SITES

Schools can also enjoy commission by signing up to a shopping fundraising site that works with multiple retailers. EasyFundraising (www.easyfundraising.org.uk) for example, is the UK's largest shopping fundraising site; launched in 2005, they have already raised over £29 million to help good causes. Give as you Live (www.giveasyoulive.com) is another platform, and to date, they have helped raise over £11 million for thousands of causes. If schools register, with either of these platforms, supporters can shop with over 4,000 retailers, including big name retailers, travel companies, insurance companies, hotels, mobile phone companies and more. Unlike individual affiliate schemes, supporters themselves choose who they shop with, so your school cannot be seen as endorsing a particular brand. With even more choice of retailers, your school can potentially raise more donations too. The commission schools earn, depends on the retailers your supporters shop with, but in general they usually receive between 0.5 per cent and ten per cent donation of the purchases made. Bleasby School Friends Association, for example, have raised over £12,500 on Easyfundraising and they only have 150 students! Thousands of schools, PTAs and other good causes are signed up, but many are still unaware of the commission that these sites can help contribute to your school.

SPECIALIST SHOPPING WEBSITES

Easyfundraising is a general shopping platform and beyond these, there are specialist ones too. Charitable Bookings for example, is a travel website that gives back.

> "Affiliate schemes can help you raise awareness of products or businesses of key value to your school community"

BENEFITS OF COMMISSION SCHEMES:

- **Supporters can enjoy the joy of shopping as well as fundraising– they can 'buy' and 'give' at the same time.**
- **Supporters don't have to go out their way to help – they can fundraise by simply going about their everyday things.**
- **They don't cost your school or supporters anything.**
- **Retailers pay affiliates a commission, as a "thank you" for bringing them business.**
- **Money can add up over time – "every little helps".**
- **Once set-up they can help generate money for years.**
- **You can fundraise with zero efforts– some websites refer to them as "set and forget" schemes.**
- **It's a form of passive fundraising.**
- **They can provide unrestricted income.**
- **The funds can make a real difference to your school.**

The organisers donate 30 per cent of their net commission to help good causes, when people book hotels using their website. Over half a million charities are signed up and according to one charity Best Beginnings, this site helped them raise over £5,000 in less than three minutes.

FUNDRAISING SEARCH ENGINES

As well as earning commission through affiliate schemes and shopping platforms, schools can also fundraise through search engines like EasySearch (www.easysearch. org.uk) or Everyclick (www.everyclick.com). Every time your supporters search the internet using Easysearch for example (and click on a search result), they can raise 0.05p for your school. According to EasySearch, the average searcher raises £25 a year using their platform – if an individual can raise this amount, imagine how much students, parents, teachers and the rest of

your school community can help you generate! Millions of pounds are being raised through these search engines and thousands of schools are signed up. If your school is not yet one of them, then check them out as they are basically paying your school, every time your supporters search the web.

To set this up, register your school or cause with a fundraising search engine you like. Your school will then be given a unique fundraising page. Share this page with your supporters and invite them to search the web and save it as their homepage (or bookmark it).

FUNDRAISING PRICE COMPARISON WEBSITES

Schools can also raise money through price comparison websites. As well as offering general shopping platforms, sites like Easyfundraising and Give as you Live also

help supporters compare prices and switch their contracts for insurance, energy and broadband. In addition to this, schools can also create fundraising pages on price comparison websites like SwitchAid (www.switchaid.org). This not for profit website, allows buyers to compare offers for energy and telecoms contracts and to see where savings could be made. Every time someone switches suppliers and nominates your school or cause, SwitchAid then passes commission (paid by advertisers) to you. It's quick and simple for schools to register and you can share your fundraising page with parents, staff, governors and even local businesses too.

Lindsey Marsh, author of The School Fundraising Handbook

SO YOU'RE IN A NEW SCHOOL

Preparation is key but remember to listen as well when you start a new postion

So you've made the choice to either move schools or join the profession of school business management, something that will always bring an element of apprehension.

Not because it is a scary role, more because each school setting is different and how your skills will be used effectively will vary. It is this difference that keeps the old hands such as myself in the profession.

RESEARCH

You will have carried out some research before you applied and hopefully paid a visit. This and your experience at interview is a good measure of the expectation of the school or academy for your role. There is sometimes a handover from the previous incumbent which may help with your integration into the school community and to see how the school performs operationally. However, if this is not offered or possible there are ways of measuring these operations even before you start. As part of your research on application a read of the Ofsted report is a must. While it won't tell you much operational detail for the business side, you can get a feel of the direction of the school and its priorities, especially if it is an RI or is in a category. The new Ofsted framework which includes some measure of financial propriety will of course be more useful. Along with this, if the new school is an academy you can check the last accounts and see what position it is in which gives you a head start.

Using DfE benchmarking data will show you historical spend and the budget pressures along with a comparison with similar schools. All you need is the schools URN number which can be found at https://www.gov.uk/guidance/get-information-about-schools which replaced the previous Edubase service. Another mine of information is the local authority schools' website, whether you are an academy or maintained school there will be lots of

gems here. These with an in-depth look at their own website will offer you an insight into your chosen school and enable you to start work with some background knowledge.

If you are an inexperienced SBM or new to the profession, the ISBL website has a wealth of information including the SBM competency framework. This will give you advice and guidance on the expectations of the Business Manager role and a starting point or path for development if you are moving to a different phase or bigger school. Being aware of the level of responsibility that you will face and what the expectation is will put you on the correct path from the outset. As a Headteacher employing an SBM for either the first time or for a bigger role, this website will give you all of the information

that you need to make an appropriate appointment for your school or academy.

MAKE YOURSELF KNOWN

So you have carried out your research, filled your bank of knowledge for the school, academy or trust for whom you will work and it's your first day, what now? I have changed schools a few times in my career and have always found that making myself known to the stakeholders in the school is particularly important. Not only does it make you feel like you belong (the role of an SBM can be quite isolated) you are an integral part of school life and putting a face to a name is vital to enable you to carry out your responsibilities. Making sure you are listed on the website, included in all e-mail groups, are on the staff list and have all of your e-mail addresses and permissions set up from the outset means you can hit the ground running.

I have found that being in staff meetings, morning briefings and also being seen around school means that staff and students are aware that there is someone new. I like to start producing newsletters for the areas that I am responsible for straight away thus letting staff know that it is business as usual and reminding them of deadlines and responsibilities. This allows me to share my contact details and be instantly available for queries, new and outstanding. Make sure that the business continuity plan, finance risk assessment, all policies and any key documents are updated with your details and that bank signatories and any cheque/credit cards are applied for as well.

Having the previous Business Manager or Finance Officer's e-mail redirected to you will mean that you will have an instant list of all or the contacts for the business operations. Rather than contacting everyone this allows you to rationalise them as you are likely to have your own preferred suppliers etc.

KEY POINTS TO CONSIDER WHEN STARTING IN A NEW SCHOOL

● Do your research both before you start and after

● Make yourself known to all stakeholders of the school

● Familiarise yourself with the local authority and/or your trust

● Manage change well

● Above all else enjoy it – each school is different and has its own challenges, this is part of what keeps us coming back for more!

LISTEN AND LEARN

There are several trains of thought about whether or not you move to a new position and listen and learn and then make changes or whether you go in with your own ideas and alter things straight away. Which approach you take will depend on you as a leader but should also be informed by your recently attained knowledge of your new school. The make-up of your team, their attitude to change and your position within the school structure will affect the ability you have to make change. I am a change advocate and like to make an instant impact by bringing with me tried and trusted methods but have learnt in each move the need to listen and be prepared to temper my plans.

Probably the most important relationship that you will have in your school or academy is with your Headteacher or Principal. Establishing this early on will allow you to achieve some parity in working practises and ideas. Regular meetings are a must so that expectations and concerns can be shared on both sides for all areas of the school operation. You should also push to be on the senior leadership team, I have learnt so much from just attending, often with little input from me. Having a working relationship with your governors

is also important and can be achieved by attending monitoring and governors metings early on.

As someone who has been in the profession a while and worked across the phases, if asked my advice would always be to start prepared and spend lots of time listening, using what you hear to guide change and make your new role work for you.

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

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Brilliant food on a budget

If you think delicious and nutritious school food will break the bank, Naomi Duncan says think again

Pan-fried hake with fennel, potato and chickpea stew. Sumac and harissa grilled chicken with cumin rice, cabbage slaw and tzatziki. Beetroot Wellington with watercress, stilton and pear salad. These might sound like expensive restaurant dishes but these meals are being served up in UK state schools.

What's more, everything on the plate is made from scratch. And rather than breaking the bank, the schools are breaking even. Our charity - Chefs in Schools - is helping schools to transform their kitchens and serve up food like this. We've found one magic ingredient that's the key to success – staffing.

INDUSTRY TECHNIQUES
We help schools find and train highly-skilled chefs who will run the kitchen like a restaurant. As well as making incredible food, the chefs use industry techniques to reduce food waste and to ensure the produce pays its way. They also train, inspire and mentor the kitchen brigade. It makes all of the difference.

Getting good brain food is not brain science – far from it. All you need is to mix together that skilled Head Chef, some staff training, a heap of fresh produce and a sprinkling of creativity. Your school will be serving up nutritious, delicious food at no extra cost.e local authority has confirmed it will pay.

SUGAR AND SALT
If your kitchen team cooks from scratch, you can make a real difference to diets. We don't have sugar in main meals, there's limited use of refined sugar in desserts and salt is used sparingly. The chefs source incredible produce – sustainable fish from our seas, meat from British farmers and fresh veg from local suppliers. We suggest going meat-free two days a week and serving fresh fish once a week as well. Education is key too. The Head Chefs we recruit run cookery lessons, teaching children to love and understand what real food is and how to cook it.

Sounds like extra work which you could do without? I'll be honest with you. Initially it does require effort and teething problems are not unheard of. But that initial effort more than pays off. You'll know what the children are eating and you'll have a happy kitchen team. What's more, research has shown that when school food improves, children are more attentive and do better in class.

For us, this is all about improving the health of children through better food and food education. School meals should never be bland, boring or bad for you. They have to be nutritious and delicious.

OBESITY
Child obesity rates are rising, one in three are obese by the time they leave school. In deprived areas, it can be one in five. The impact to their health and to society is significant. By 2050, obesity will cost the NHS £9.7 billion (see bit. ly/31wKDEx) a year. Serving up the right kind of food won't just benefit your school - it benefits the pupils and all of us.

There's a misconception that good produce and fresh food costs more. In reality, it's the pre-made meals and packet sauces that come with a higher price tag. Make food from scratch and you can make savings. Make savings and you can keep investing in upskilling your kitchen team. Better is possible when it comes to school food and better is possible on a budget too.
To find out more about our work, please visit our website: chefsinschools.org.uk

Naomi Duncan, CEO at food charity Chefs in Schools

PSM
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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.

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

FREE *digital copy*

Missed an issue? On the website you can download a free electronic version of the previous edition of *Primary School Management.*

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.

Editor's Picks

If The DfE Is Going To Set Standards Through Inspections, Don't Prevent Schools From Meeting Them

TESTS

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

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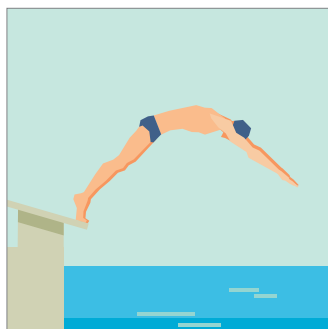
Staff Management	**Pupils & Parents**	**Security**	**Mental Health**
Teachers in the firing line	Implementing 30 hours free childcare	How secure is your school?	Support groups can be essential
primaryleaders/firingline	**primaryleaders/childcare**	**primaryleaders/security**	**primaryleaders/support**

WHAT'S TRENDING

1
Career opportunities after headship
tinyurl.com/ psmcareer

2
Can we change our education system?
tinyurl.com/ psmschool improvement

3
How to Set Up a Successful School Recycling Scheme
tinyurl.com/vdxs5xy

4
When the DFE needs to send help
tinyurl.com/ psmgovernance

5
From special measures to good
tinyurl.com/ psmspecialmeasures

PREPARING YOUR SUCCESSOR

Jill Berry gives her advice on how to step down from your role

As you prepare to step down and let your successor take the reins, there's a whole school community, numerous parents and a larger community beyond that who'll need the reassurance of an orderly transition. Here's what you should be planning for, the things most likely to go wrong, and where you want to be once the process has concluded.

When a head decides they are ready to step down – either because they reach retirement, or wish to pursue a new professional opportunity – they inevitably find themselves giving thought to their legacy. Have they left the school in a stronger position than they found it? Will the next head be able to build on prior achievements and make the school stronger still? Arguably a great leader ensures the team they leave continue to develop and improve; if a team is overly reliant on a leader who has, in effect, encouraged a culture of dependence, this is short-sighted and unsustainable. Committed leaders hope that those they led go on to even greater heights in the future.

How can those involved manage the process of communication and transition positively, so that the school is energised, rather than overly disrupted, by the change at the top? A new head can be refreshing for the whole-school community, but the outgoing head, the governing body and the new incumbent need to navigate this process thoughtfully.

The head who is leaving should see that helping their successor to make the most positive beginning is, in fact, the last service they will perform for the school. If they lose sight of this, perhaps because they are focussing too much on their own feelings about stepping down, this can be damaging for the school. All need to remember that this is not about the outgoing head, or about the incoming head. It is about the school and its continuing success. If the departing head, or their successor, are not managing the situation well - perhaps because there is tension between them – the governing body needs to be aware and to take steps to resolve the conflict.

• Give careful thought to the release of the news about the head's departure and, in due course, about who has been appointed to succeed them. This may also involve close liaison with the release of

information at the incoming head's current school. Ideally, pupils and staff, current parents and the wider community within which the school sits need to receive the information from the Chair of Governors, or the overarching Trust, on the same day to reduce the likelihood of anyone who is invested in the school hearing the news second-hand.

• At an early stage, arrange a meeting of the Chair of Governors with the departing and incoming heads to consider a transition plan. How much involvement in the school is appropriate, helpful and reasonable for the new head (who will, of course be carrying out a demanding job in their current school)? What does the next head need from the current head and the governors? What do they need from him/her? Plan ahead and reach agreement.

• At every opportunity, the departing head and governors should be constructive, supportive and committed to doing all they can to make the process smooth and to calm any anxieties about the change. The successor also needs to be sensitive and empathetic about the perspective of the head who is leaving. Mutual respect and understanding are key, here.

Manage the situation well, and the school should thrive, the new head should make a successful transition into the role, and the outgoing head should move on knowing that they have left the most positive legacy they could.

Jill Berry is a leadership consultant, author and former headteacher

CRAFT THE PERFECT PUBLIC STATEMENT

Linda Tanner aims to help you make sure you're ready for an emergency event

Take Back Control, the slogan that gained much political traction last year, is an appropriate one for school leaders to bear in mind when they find themselves at the eye of the storm.

Catastrophes large and small can strike any school community at any time. Unexpected bad news will knock us all sideways but staff, children and families will look to the headteacher to take charge.

This will obviously be difficult when you are upset yourself but you can make it easier by preparing your own mental 'crisis communications kit'. The rules of response are pretty much the same whether you are dealing with a minor or major emergency and no matter whether it is of your own making or not.

They are:
• Be clear and consistent
• Stick to what you know
• Update when appropriate
• Check, check, check!

Giving your initial response in a public statement is a sensible first step, which will buy you time to investigate and/or to liaise with other parties while also fulfilling your duty of care to your distressed staff and students.

The wording must be absolutely unambiguous. Share the facts you know so far in plain English, avoiding officialese, and conveying warmth and empathy.

Comment only on the areas that are the school's responsibility. Leave the rest to other authorities, such as the police, Health and Safety Executive, or local council as appropriate.

Once you have a statement, get a trusted person such as a governor to check it. You can then share it with your school community through your usual channels and post it on your website.

For a developing situation, state when you expect to provide an update. If a tragedy has occurred, such as an accident or death in school or on a trip, there is likely to be press interest. Reporters glean information from websites and social media in the first instance. They are then likely to email or telephone the school for further information.

This is where Taking Back Control comes in. You have been thrust into this horrible situation and you can judge the best way to respond. You don't have to speak to any journalists; you can just refer them to your statement. However, it might be to your advantage to talk to the wider community via the press on your own terms.

In one recent example, a new head faced calls from the media following the death of a student from a meningitis-related illness. We advised her to agree to read her statement out in front of local TV cameras. We informed the journalists that she would not answer any questions and would not address any of the medical issues, for which they should contact Public Health England.

The reporters were delighted to have footage for their bulletins while the school was able successfully to reassure parents and people in the area that it was doing all it could to support students and staff at a difficult time.

Linda Tanner is a communications consultant with Local Voice Media. She has been a regional journalist since 1977 and has been involved in school governance since 1997.

🐦 **@BristolEdu**

🖥 **www.localvoicemedia.co.uk**

Keeping your cool

Matt O'Grady looks at some of the strategies and approaches you can adopt so that you're prepared for (virtually) everything

I t's been one of those days and you've just about had it up to here... Any headteacher will be well acquainted with the temperament necessary to get on in a school setting, but the status and demands of the role can test and vex you more than any teaching or SLT job before it.

I love my job! No two days are ever the same! Ask any head and they will tell you that is one of the attractions of this unique role. It's a unique position and privilege in many ways and different in every educational setting. Time and experience have taught me that there are some basic principles that can help you 'keep you cool' – well mostly!

We all get those days, weeks or even terms where everything seems sent to try us! How can we better cope with those moments when it just drives you up the wall!

Acceptance

Let's start with acceptance – there are some clichés here but it's true. Accept the fact that you can't please all the people all of the time – and occasionally the role and difficult decisions it can involve demands that you can't please any of them! There will always be parents and staff members who love to complain – so accepting that it will happen is a big step.

Next accept that lots of people will think that they can do your job (and better) but that its only you who is actually doing it! So let them critique from afar (or not so far) and

"Accept the fact you can't please all of the people all of the time"

accept that they won't really 'get it' until they are doing it.

Finally accept that the job is never done! There is no end to the to do list and the constant churn and change – so once you accept you are a change manager the easier it is not to be too hard on yourself that the job is not complete!

Look after yourself

The next thing I have learnt to help deal with the unexpected is to (try) and look after myself. It's much harder to deal with challenges and stress if you've not slept, eaten etc. All work and no play

also makes it harder to gain a sense of perspective on school-based issues. Don't get me wrong – there are times when you have to 'burn the midnight oil' but in general terms I try my best to leave the aspects of the job at school, that I can, and to have a proper evening and weekend. There will always be those safeguarding concerns and other issues that play on your mind, but other stuff can wait!

Perspective

Perspective is a crucial strategy for me. I do my best reflection about school from a distance. I also find that talking to a trusted circle of fellow heads either in person or in a WhatsApp group often makes you realise that you are 'not the only one' whatever the issue is.

Another strategy I try to employ is to ask myself if the issue is something that will still be there in a months or even a years' time. I try not to worry about the things I can't change and to focus on those which I can.

When it comes to moments in school that make you go "arrrgghhhh!" Firstly, go "arrrgghhh" in private and make sure no one can hear! Never lose your temper (but if you ever need to pretend to plan it so that you are in control!) I share as much as I can with my SLT and staff as we are all in it together.

Matt O'Grady is an Essex-based Headteacher, Educationalist, Consultant and Collaborator.

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GET ON WITH YOUR GOVERNORS

Richard Hover looks at how to strengthen the bonds between governors and their schools

The conduct of a maintained school shall be under the direction of the school's governing body' (Section 21(2) of the Education Act 2002). Such a vitally important responsibility, yet it is in the hands of unpaid volunteers.

I have been a Governor since September 2014 and when I started, my school was going through a difficult journey, having been rated 'Requires Improvement' with Leadership and Management a particular area for improvement.

How do you successfully work with governors, who have their own competing personal priorities and commitments, to improve the quality of education and raise standards in schools? So, what's the recipe?

Firstly, get to know your governors. I feel this is the hardest one to get right, but it is the most important. I needed to understand the culture within my school, particularly governance and this proved to be one of the most complex and important concepts in education for me to comprehend. What I have learnt is that some governors develop strong allegiances with other governors due to friendships outside of school/governor commitments or from being a long-standing member of the Governing Body.

Different groups (teachers, parents, governors and the wider community) have a different reality or mindset of school life. Six years ago, governance was 'old-school', talking to staff, attending Christmas performances, and a fairly laid-back approach. Some governors came with their own personal agendas which meant

addressing key issues around school performance or improvement strategy was at times 'difficult'.

My background isn't in the education sector but within the Civil Service; where I have a proven track record of realising change through building continuous improvement.

Initially I found it difficult to persuade long standing governors to make radical changes. Little by little, I persisted with the introduction of smarter working and collaboration concepts. This included:

1 A toolkit to administer governors' School Improvement Plan (SIP) monitoring progress and impact.

2 Introducing Governor Day's in order to focus on bigger strategic issues and make meetings more purposeful with positive outcomes.

Of course, some negativity was received from certain parties but when they appeared to be in the minority, they changed their tune. When introducing changes or suggesting improvements you can quickly become seen as a threat to certain individuals. In order to overcome this, you need to develop good relationships with these individuals but still maintain a clear leadership role and always

TRUST

RELIANCE SINCERITY COMPETENCE CREDENCE ASSURANCE COMMITMENT INTEGRITY

excellent education for our children.

Having built an effective team, which in itself is a challenge that requires systematic self-evaluation and effective recruitment, you then need to strike a balance between 'friend' and 'critical friend'. This is particularly difficult when these unpaid volunteers are responsible for the performance management and salary of senior leaders! These individuals have, however, been picked because they possess a wide range of skills and expertise from their professional lives. Use this to your advantage!

Secondly, know and communicate boundaries. This means understanding where professional boundaries lie and ensuring governors respectfully operate within them. The most significant relationship though is between the Headteacher and the Chair of Governors. This relationship must be based on mutual trust, respect, openness and a shared understanding that governors are responsible for governance. I encourage governors to focus their energy and attention on being strategic and having the maximum impact using the precious time that they give up. Our school benefits from this because governors know what they need to know about the school, are respected and are therefore determined to be productive and ultimately successful. But it also works both ways!

Lastly, have a vision for your school that everyone is signed up to. From the top all the way down (Governors, Executive Headteacher, Head Teacher, Senior Leaders, SENCO, FLO, Teachers, Teaching Assistants, Caretaker, School Crossing Patrol, you name it!). It is part of my schools' daily school routine and everyone knows that whatever they are doing it is for the same common goal. Our vision is linked to our Appraisals and Continuing Professional Development (CPD), it is linked to our School Improvement Plan (SIP) and it is in turn linked to our Governor monitoring plan. The vision was devised with input from across our school community, but it is ultimately owned by the Governing Body. At our Governing Body meetings and when I'm in school I

ADVICE

- **Make meetings purposeful with positive outcomes.**
- **Ensure agenda material is sent out well in advance.**
- **Publish a monitoring plan early in Term 1 so that each governor knows what is expected throughout the year and can plan effectively.**
- **Agree the purpose and content of Headteacher Reports with Governors.**
- **Governors are unpaid volunteers who give up their own time to provide independent oversight of the management and operation of a school. Use their time wisely and give them as much notice as possible.**

gauge the impact the vision is having and discuss areas for improvement with Senior Leaders.

Combining these elements together, I believe I have developed a successful relationship with my Exec-Head. We meet regularly and work effectively to ensure skills and expertise are appropriately applied. We have a common sense of purpose which all governors understand; it gives clarity about their role and the impact they have. Together we strive to ensure that governors are empowered to develop themselves, share responsibility, and accountability. But also, so they are not afraid to challenge, challenge, challenge!

maintain good communication. Understand the reasons why people become governors as this will help you to appreciate what motivates them.

The impact of this was that other governors became more engaged and more motivated. These governors approached their role with a positive attitude; governors' awareness and knowledge increased.

When I became Chair of Governors, a little over 15 months ago, I set myself a personal goal to nurture my Governing Body and develop a committed group of governors who were all working towards the same common goal - to provide

Richard Hover
Chair of Governors
Chartham Primary School

INCREASE YOUR KNOWLEDGE WITH A **SCHOOL VISIT**

A fact-finding mission can provide a wealth of information but make the most of your valuable time

Funding cuts have been felt throughout our schools in recent years, and CPD budgets have been some of the biggest casualties. Schools can no longer afford to send senior staff to expensive conferences, with overnight stays and travel costs, and networking opportunities have dwindled as a result. Conference content is useful, but for many, the opportunity to sit and spend time with colleagues from other settings is by far the most useful part of external CPD events.
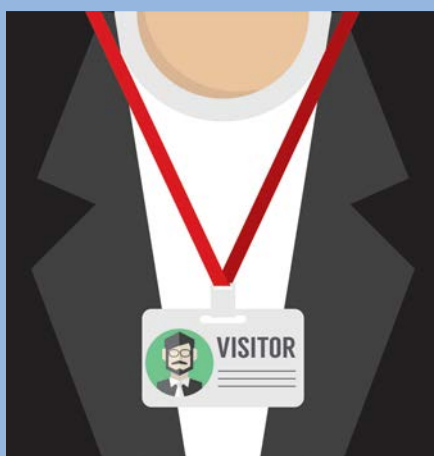
Just getting out of the office can be difficult enough for many busy school leaders, so getting out of school completely can be a huge challenge. So how should school leaders ensure that they keep abreast of the best practice, that they stay alert and receptive to new ideas and that they nurture relationships with peers in other schools? The easy answer is, to go visit them.

GET REAL

We all spend time on social media, probably too much time for many. It's quick, easy, constantly available and provides a great way of keeping in touch with people and their news. We can read about the latest ideas and successes that other educators have implemented in their schools, and we can read all about the stories behind their success. But you can never really know a school until you've seen it, felt it, tasted it and absorbed the very spirit of it. And you can only do that by being there.

Visiting another school is a great idea for so many reasons, not least of which is that it's free and can be arranged whenever it is mutually convenient. But don't just turn up for a natter and gossip, a school leader's time is valuable, so here's how to make the most of the opportunity:

- Think about your top two school improvement priorities, or your personal targets, and do some research to find out the the best examples of what you're trying to achieve. That could mean checking some schools out online, or asking around for recommendations of local expertise from colleagues, or your LA advisor.

- When you make contact, try and do so at a time when your counterpart is likely to be available. Don't phone in the middle of a busy day and expect an immediate invite. If they have a PA, speak to them and explain why you're making contact. An email might be another softer method of getting in contact, but be sure you're emailing them directly and not a generic info@ email address which might be filtered by the admin team.

- Remember to explain why you have contacted them rather than any other school - flattery will get you a long way, so be sure to mention how you're looking for excellence and that you would love to see how they are delivering it. Education is what we do, so the vast majority of senior leaders will be very happy to support a colleague who is looking to improve their practice.

- Be as clear as you can about the purpose of your visit, and give some suggestions if there are specific things or people you'd like to see. A general tour of the school might be nice, but if there's limited time you might want to skip it. Unless your visit is specifically to see facilities and classrooms, you might not gain much. Remember one set of toilets and desks are pretty much like another!

- If you are invited to visit, make sure you keep the date. We all know how packed our diaries can get, but don't be tempted to reschedule or cancel if things are busy. CPD is an essential part of our own self-improvement, and if we invest time in our personal learning aims, our schools will benefit as a result. Others will have given up their time to meet you, so be sure to make the most of what's been offered. As you approach the day, make a list of things to ask about, things to see and ideas you may have. It's not just about what another school is currently doing, but also a way to sound ideas out with another local expert who might know your catchment and your community as well as you do.

It's instinctive in most education leaders to promote the very best that

their school has to offer, so don't be surprised to be shown the trophy cabinet, the best teacher and a glowing set of statistics. And while that's lovely to see, what you need to know is how they managed it, if they can maintain it and how much it costs to fund. Focus on the differences between your two schools, rather than the positives. If they are doing something differently to you, ask about the risks of their method, how long it took to bed in and if they experienced any problems along the way. Similarly, ask if they tried other methods that didn't work out so well. If not, why not, what are the pitfalls that they experienced and what would they do differently if they could.

FUNDING

Ask about their financial situation too. Excellence is generally expensive, so find out how they fund it. If you've carried out an ICFP (Integrated Curriculum and Financial Planning) exercise at your school, take along your findings and compare your financial KPIs to theirs. Compare staffing ratios, contact times, average teacher cost and their TLR

structure. A leaner or cheaper model doesn't necessarily make a more effective school. Sometimes it's about choosing the most effective areas on which to focus your limited financial resources. If the school you are visiting aren't already in your benchmarking set, check out their financial profile before you go and ask about any areas where your expenditure or income and significantly different.

No two schools are alike, so ask about their staffing structures, both teaching and business support. Many office and technical functions have evolved over time, so it's always useful to review how others do it. Governance is another key area to ask about - are there any differences in how their governing body operate, and if so, is it working?

WELLBEING

However long you have for your visit, remember to save time to talk about wellbeing. Yours and theirs. Ask how they are finding the pressure of the role and what they do to cope with the

difficult times. There can't be many school leaders who haven't experienced stressful and difficult times, so this could be a useful time to let off a bit of steam and share some support in return.

And finally, remember to give something back. If you're asking probing questions, be sure to share your own information freely too. Offer a reciprocal visit in return, or consider how some of your other leadership colleagues or middle leaders might benefit from meeting up. Whatever differences we face in our school settings we all share a common aim - to serve and support the children and families in our local community and to provide the very best education that we can. Why wouldn't we share our very best practice and success to allow every child to experience the best we have to offer.

Hilary Goldsmith is a school business leadership consultant

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A TERM GUIDE TO OFSTED INSPECTION SUCCESS

Pearson's Danny Cuttell has developed a strategy to help schools develop, implement and communicate their curriculum successfully

The transition period for the implementation of Ofsted's Education Inspection Framework (EIF) is set to finish this year. The revised EIF marks a significant shift from the outgoing framework and puts renewed focus on the quality of a school's curriculum with a view to putting a 'single conversation about education at the centre of inspection'.

With significant changes in the key judgment areas it is crucial that schools across the country know the ins and outs of the EIF to ensure Ofsted Inspection success. There is a wealth of information available to support schools but it can be a challenge to differentiate opinion from fact.

APRIL
Take stock of how you support NQTs and pupils through the Ofsted process: Use the Easter holidays to think about your NQTs. Do they have a clear understanding of the school's approach to behaviour management, curriculum design and safeguarding, for example? Do you have a training plan to support them? Ofsted inspectors could interview NQT's as part of an inspection.

Pupils and their work will be much more in the spotlight as well. Conversations with pupils will explore what they have retained, and pupils may be asked to show their books and talk through what they have learnt.

It is likely that inspectors will review a minimum of six pieces of pupil work from

> "Embrace the Deep Dives and the opportunity to 'see the school in action'."

each lesson and an in-depth review with teachers and subject leaders will take place across at least two year groups. Be aware that Ofsted will no longer check on homework policies or ask parents and carers for their views about this!.

MAY
Consider carefully how you use assessment data: Ofsted has moved away from a reliance on internal data as a means of assessing the impact of a school's curriculum, and schools will need a clear rationale for any data collected. Is an appropriate balance being struck between gathering useful assessment information that informs the teaching of the curriculum and over-burdening teachers?

Ofsted supports the view of the Teacher Workload Advisory Group, which recommends no more than two to three data drops per year. If schools choose to have more, a clear rationale will be needed on how this is manageable for staff.

JUNE
Deep Dive into subjects: Embrace the Deep Dives and the opportunity to 'see the school in action'. A number of subjects will be chosen as the focus but remember that reading will always be included and mathematics will often be chosen too.

Make sure you are ready for the Deep Dive to explore:
- Senior leaders' intent for the curriculum in that particular subject
- Curriculum leaders' thinking and planning in a subject
- How lessons connect and build on each other
- Teachers' understanding of a lesson's purpose, how it fits into the broader sequence of learning and what they know about pupils' knowledge and understanding

Does your curriculum model fully deliver the national curriculum or offer a course of similar breadth and ambition? Ofsted are interested in seeing that all subjects are given sufficient time and emphasis and not squeezed out by literacy and numeracy.

JULY
Evaluate your curriculum progress: With term almost over, why not take some time as a senior team to audit your existing curriculum, identify areas of strength and development and create an action plan for strengthening your 2020/2021 curriculum? As you build a better picture of your current position, consider the pros and cons of your approach. For example, if decisions about content are driven by what you feel students will find most interesting, are you confident that you are providing sufficient stretch and challenge?

AUGUST

Think about the balance of your school's curriculum - skills versus knowledge?
While pupils are away enjoying their break, consider how balanced your curriculum is. Is it underpinned by deep knowledge and cultural capital? Are subject-specific skills and concepts being systematically developed in foundation subjects? How schools promote a broad range of knowledge and skills is an important focus for the EIF. Be prepared to discuss your rationale as a school with Ofsted.

SEPTEMBER

Kick off the new academic year with a strong and cohesive vision for your curriculum: The new Ofsted inspections are focusing more on subject leads and teachers than ever before. Make sure ALL members of staff have a shared

understanding of the planning and delivery of the curriculum and the choices the school has made in terms of what is taught and when.

Highlight any areas that you need to look at in more detail and use these as the basis for the ongoing review of your curriculum. How willing are you to adapt your curriculum and what drives these changes?

OCTOBER

Remove the fear from the initial Ofsted call: It might be a spooky month but don't let the Ofsted call scare you! The 90-minute phone call will explore the progress the school has made since their last inspection and the headteacher's own view of what the school's strengths and areas for development are - particularly in relation to the curriculum.

This same call will also include the discussion around which specific subjects

and year groups will be the focus of the inspection. There is sometimes scope for school leaders to negotiate and influence the choice of subjects, although be aware this may vary on a case-by-case basis.

NOVEMBER

Shine a light on wellbeing within your school: Teaching staff report the highest rates of work-related stress, depression and anxiety in Britain. Staff wellbeing forms will now be reviewed by Ofsted. Make sure you familiarise yourself with the Department for Education's guidance on reducing workload in the areas of marking, administrative tasks and lesson data.

If you want to explore this area in more detail, Pearson have developed a Pupil and Staff Wellbeing Measurement tool in partnership with the Evidence Based Practice Unit (a collaboration between The Anna Freud Centre and UCL). It provides a whole-school view of student and staff health and wellbeing.

DECEMBER

Mark the end of the year with festive cheer: As the year comes to a close, stuff your stockings full of the successes of your teachers, senior leadership and support staff; and all the pupils, parents and volunteers.

2021 will no doubt bring its own challenges but with a year of consistent and comprehensive planning, you'll be ready to continue driving your curriculum forward.

Curriculum is at the heart of Pearson's work with schools, creating the very best resources and tools to help them understand, design and deliver an effective curriculum. Pearson's curriculum offer encompasses 'off-the-shelf" courses, bespoke curriculum development using intelligent planning tools and free resources and strategies.

Download the Handy Guide to Ofsted's Inspection Framework series and find out more about Pearson's curriculum work, here: go.pearson.com/curriculum

Danny Cuttell is Head of Curriculum Services at Pearson UK
**Follow Pearson on Twitter** @PearsonSchools #curriculumdesign #curriculummatters

Pupil Asset

A smart, cloud-based tracking and MIS system for schools

- An industry-leading management information and tracking system
- Easy-to-use reporting and analysis for attendance, behaviour, attainment and more
- Puts data, routines and reports at your fingertips
- Powerful search facility and finely-tuned filters with nifty navigation
- A creative and innovative solution to data analysis to support teaching, learning and assessment

Reviewed by: John Dabell
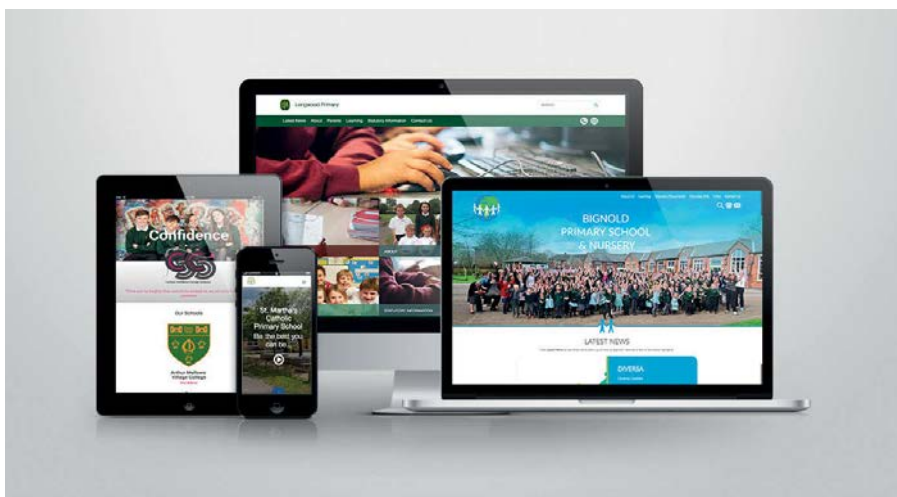
The educational landscape is flooded with systems that promise to help schools comprehend the volumes of data they gather, but only a few deliver. One that certainly does that is Pupil Asset, which aims to put schools at ease with the process of using data to improve pupil achievement, and support them in running their schools more efficiently.

This is a super-sophisticated and fully customisable system developed by teachers, for teachers. Its functions range from helping SLT track the effectiveness of their Pupil Premium spend, to supporting office staff in the managing of attendance registers, school meals and DfE returns. Everything is accessed via a top-notch and highly intuitive dashboard with various widgets that can be easily switched on and off.

The Pupil Asset MIS comes with an enormous number of features designed to help your systems run more smoothly. These include the 'Teacher' mobile app, result tracking for summative assessment, achievement tracking for formative purposes, behaviour tracking, progress reports, attainment reports and advanced data analysis.

Out of the box, users receive an SMS text allowance and unlimited emails, and can start using Pupil Assets in relation to attendance registers, school meals, extra-curricular activities, staff and pupil census returns, office reports and the requesting and receiving of electronic payments. There's also a 'Parent' app for those important home/school communications, event sign-ups and online payments.

One particularly superb feature is 'Live School', which renders your school onscreen as a 3D model. Hovering over the different buildings and parts of the school site, it can tell you who's taken their attendance register and highlight any areas of repeated behavioural incidents. The key benefit here is what it can do to help spot patterns and trends, and identify what might be going on and where.

Data doesn't typically jump off the page and make itself available as easily digestible and useful information – but it does if you have a system like Pupil Asset to hand that does all the work for you. It can synthesise and organise data in a host of different ways to stimulate reflection, while ensuring the reliability, validity and integrity of the data in question.

It's the perfect tool for SLTs that frequently find themselves delving into school improvement minutiae. It makes data management less of a dark art and more of a science, while helping to streamline your daily processes and making it easier to keep your finger on the pulse. Its creators seem to have thought of everything, and delivered a system that's very impressive.

PSM
PRIMARY SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

VERDICT

✔ A sophisticated education data system for informing professional judgments

✔ Interprets data in a way that lets schools use it wisely and effectively

✔ Identifies areas of strength and those in need of improvement

✔ Provides practical targets, goals, forms of assessment and meaningful evaluation

✔ Can reduce administration and teaching time while saving you money

UPGRADE IF...

You're looking to realise the potential of every pupil by harnessing the power of crucial and critical data, getting underneath it and using it to make intelligent and informed decisions.

To learn more, visit pupilasset.com, follow @PupilAsset, call 01603 631436 or email sales@pupilasset.com

+Pay by IRIS

Simplified cashless payments for schools and parents

- A secure web and app-based school payment system that accepts a variety of payment types
- Exceptional functionality, reporting and integration with MIS and cashless catering systems
- Seamless integration with market-leading parent engagement platforms
- Paper-free onboarding, comprehensive training and support

Reviewed by: Adam Riches

+Pay by IRIS is an online payments platform designed to make payments easy for parents, so schools receive a great response.

Intuitive and flexible, +Pay facilitates a huge variety of school payments; from trips and events to lunches, uniform and clubs – you name it, parents can pay for it with +Pay.

Designed with busy parents in mind, +Pay utilises a free mobile app and desktop portal. At work, on the go or from the comfort of home, parents can top up dinner money and make last minute payments in moments.

For schools, such flexible functionality supports truly strategic monetary management. Parents are encouraged to prepay for lunches, clubs and events; automated low-balance reminders and alerts let parents know when it's time to pay, effectively reducing dinner debt and parent arrears.

Parents can pay by debit and credit card, PayPoint and PayPal, as well as cash and cheque. The system also facilitates Free School Meals and Pupil Premium and enables parents to manage student spending, meal choices and payment history. +Pay offers a variety of customisation options, including payment windows and instalments to support parents with larger payments.

With payments incoming on time and to the right bank account, +Pay empowers schools to protect budgets, manage expenditure and make smarter business decisions. With weekly and monthly settlement reports at their fingertips, teams can manage stock levels (think uniform, books, stationery, etc.), avoiding unnecessary expense or over-ordering. In the kitchen, staff are well placed to monitor menus and meal popularity, reducing waste and driving more students to the canteen.

With any new platform, there is often unease around the onboarding process. In the case of +Pay, however, such fears are unfounded. Whereas most systems rely on pupil-post and paper letters (to be circulated to parents and returned to the school), +Pay's onboarding process is online-based. The system merges with the school MIS and automatically provides parents with a link to sign up – no admin or chasing required from the school.

This simple approach to parent onboarding has proven a huge success for many schools, showcased by a 90% parent registration rate – a significant margin on competitor platforms.

One particular element unique to +Pay is integration with ParentMail and PS Connect engagement platforms. Bringing parent payments and communications under a single platform simplifies processes for parents, making it the smart choice for schools looking to improve efficiency and reduce supplier costs.

PSM
PRIMARY SCHOOL MANAGEMENT
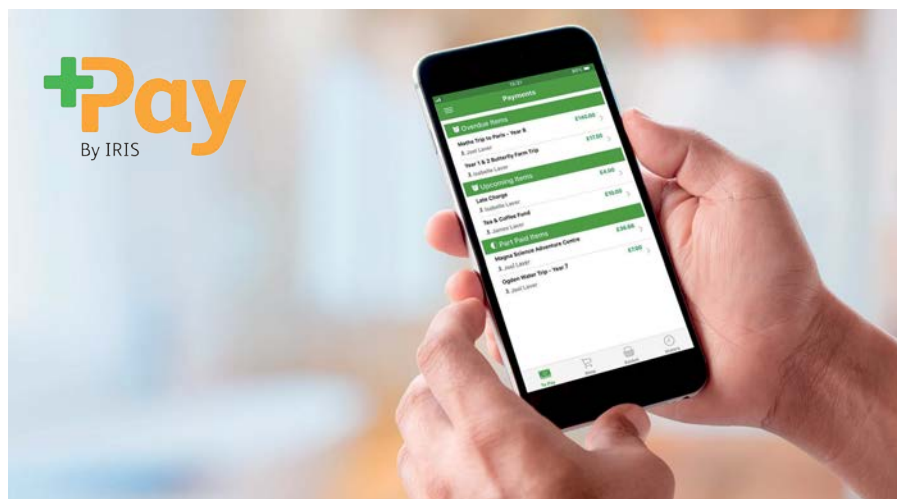
VERDICT

✔ Flexible functionality including multiple registers, advance bookings, in-built accounting codes and MIS and cashless catering integration enables efficient and strategic payment management

✔ Integration with ParentMail and PS Connect engagement platforms reduces supplier costs and supports busy parents

✔ Desktop portal and free mobile app provides parents with the tools they need to pay quickly and easily; automated low-balance reminders reduce admin and parent arrearss

✔ Paperless onboarding delivers highest uptake for an online payment system
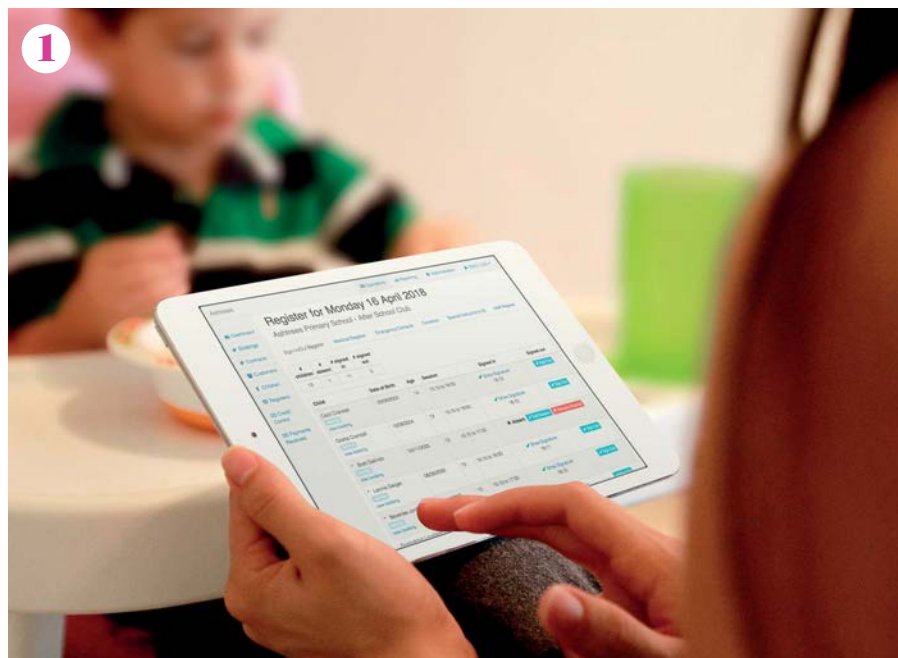
SWITCH IF...

You are looking for a system that offers flexible functionality to drive down parent arrears and provides parents with a user-friendly, convenient system to pay on-the-go in moments.

To learn more, visit Pluspay.co.uk or call 01733 595959

NEW FOR SCHOOLS

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

CUT THE ADMIN

Efficiently managing your pre- and after-school clubs can often prove to be a bigger job than initially expected. Kids Club HQ is a cloud-based system built to solve this problem, featuring an online booking system for parents and numerous administration functions for school and club staff.

Automatic invoicing and payment reminders, along with up to date registers, mean that schools like yours can save lots of time previously spent on various administrative tasks. For more details, contact hello@kidsclubhq.co.uk.
kidsclubhq.co.uk

② APPLY TO HELP

The National Autistic Society Radlett Lodge School places students at the centre of all that we do, tailoring all of our teaching, therapy programmes and care to their personal needs to ensure that our provision is as individual as they are. The team at Radlett Lodge are committed to ensuring our pupils are continually progressing and developing, both with their academic education and their social skills understanding. Help every student realise their potential, join the team and apply today.
www.autism.org.uk/services/nas-schools/radlett-lodge/aboutus/jobs

③ FALSE POSITIVES

Disruptions to vital teaching, interference with crucial tests, unnecessary evacuations – false fire alarms can present huge issues within the education sector. Following a recent revision to British Standard '5839-1:2017 Fire detection and fire alarm systems for buildings', the British Standards Institute now recommends in section 20.2b that: "All manual call points should be fitted with a protective cover, which is moved to gain access to the frangible elements." Safety Technology International supplies a range of protective covers, ranging from integral covers to sounder models, in variations to suit all applications. These covers are specifically designed to prevent false alarms, be they accidental or malicious.
sti-emea.com

IN CASE OF FIRE-LIFT COVER
BREAK GLASS

↑LIFT HERE↑

④ INCREASE YOUR 'FIVE-A-DAY'

Healthy tuck shops deliver far reaching benefits from increasing confidence and team work to developing maths skills. It's a great way to focus on how to be healthier and allows children to promote the benefits of their healthy schoolyard enterprise as a fun, dynamic and effective way help everyone have more of their five-a-day.

Pupils Profit offers schools high-quality training toolkits for KS2, as well as a healthy range of snacks which are all within the government guidelines, and very popular with the children.
pupilsprofit.com

5

BE PREPARED

Parents' evening is just around the corner – are you prepared?

Thousands of primary schools are enjoying organised, successful parents' evenings with a little help from Parents' Evening Manager. Parents' evening plans – as easy as 1, 2, 3:

1. Plan – Set time slots, dates and circulate invitations by class and year group with their user-friendly platform

2. Appointments – Parents book appointments in moments, online or with their free mobile app

3. Reporting – Quickly gain an overview of your evening, print timetables and plan accordingly

Before pressing print on paper appointment slips, book a free demo of Parents' Evening Manager.

parentmail.co.uk/parents-evening-manager

6

SERVICES FOR EDUCATION

Multi-award-winning company, Services For Education, provides a comprehensive programme of training, professional development and school improvement for teaching and support staff, school leaders and governors.

We work with schools and educational settings to improve practice, policy and ethos in all areas of teaching and school leadership.

Our Music Service is the go-to place for music provision in Birmingham where we work with 95 per cent of schools.

As a not-for-profit company, all profit is re-invested into a range of charitable projects that support vulnerable adults and children in Birmingham.

www.servicesforeducation.co.uk

7 TIME FOR CHANGE

More Than A Score is a coalition of heads, teachers, education experts and parents campaigning to change the current system of high-stakes assessment in primary schools.

The group believes that schools should be measured on the overall quality of education they provide, not the results of a narrow set of standardised tests. They point out that current government policy is focused on accountability to the detriment of children's education, and that the time is right to debate alternatives which would better serve schools – and most importantly, pupils.

morethanascore.org.uk
campaign@morethana score.org.uk

8 SHINE A LIGHT

StageSuperstore.co.uk offer new stage lighting and audio equipment for sale at competitive prices from many of the leading industry manufacturers.

Contact them for all your professional lighting, audio, stage and theatrical needs. They are your one-stop-shop for lighting, sound, stage effects, scenic products, staging and rigging, consumables and make-up. Bespoke quotes and installations are available.

www.stagesuperstore.co.uk

DITCH THE OBSERVATION

Louis Walker argues why it is time to end this much loathed practice

When speaking of Ofsted, the most frequent complaint I hear is that they make a judgement following a snapshot observation that does not fairly reflect the broad range of lessons and activities at the school. Yet schools continue to make these same snap judgements internally through the process of formal observations for teachers.

For years, teachers have been assessed through formal observations, where one member of the leadership team (often the Head) sits, watches and makes a judgement on them that can have an impact on their pay, progression and sense of self-worth. There is an inevitable fear and build-up of stress that comes with this, that ensures the observer will see something that bears little resemblance to the teacher's usual practise. Moreover, children do not behave in the same way in their presence. This disregards the build-up of a relationship between teacher and students; the fine balance of trust that allows things to get done; as well as the great work achieved throughout the year. Instead, it limits a teacher's performance to a snap judgement, often followed by feedback that is both insulting and impractical to implement: insulting in that the observer, in one hour, can provide insights that trump the days, weeks and months that a teacher puts in with their class and impractical for the same reasons.

As far back as 2014, the Sutton Trust report, What Makes Teaching Great, stated that classroom observation was successful in judging the impact on student learning around 60 per cent of the time: that is, mildly more effective than simply tossing a coin! Yet, observations have played a critical part of mine, and my colleagues, performance management since I qualified as a teacher (incidentally, also in 2014).

This is not to say that the Head and

> "It limits a teacher's performance to a snap judgement, often followed by feedback that is insulting "

leadership team should not be a regular feature of every classroom: they should. Only this way can they start to build an idea of what the school experience is like for teachers and children. However, it should not require a formal one hour test of the teacher for the Head to say, with confidence, that they are happy with their performance. They should know this because they are regularly an active part of these lessons, of interventions, of clubs, play rehearsals, assemblies, parent meetings, subject leadership etc. Rather than providing feedback, they can be seen to lead by example, building respect and camaraderie with the teachers. This, over time, removes the stigma and stress of appearances in the classroom from the leadership team, normalising it and allowing them insights in to what real lessons and learning look like.

Where an observation can have a genuine impact on teaching practice, is where they are conducted between equals. Teachers who trust each other are more likely to show each other real lessons (not observation ready ones) and give each other genuinely useable feedback without fear of any career (or pay) threatening judgements at the end.

To do this, teachers need to be encouraged to visit each others classes. Leaders can facilitate this by covering their classes during the time they might themselves be sat in a lesson observing. teachers can inspire each other through mutual respect in shared practice; the leadership team (particularly in a formal setting) are more likely to inspire fear.

Louis Walker is a primary school teacher

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Schools