

March 2019

The Independent Schools Magazine



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In this issue...



Razzle Dazzle with Chicago

Half term at Bancroft's School, Essex, started with a bang thanks to an energy fuelled senior production of Kander and Ebb's hit musical Chicago.

After a successful West End revival, which finished in January 2019, Chicago has only recently become available for performances by schools and youth groups. Bancroft's was excited to be amongst the first to stage the show which is known for its energetic jazz-age dance numbers, such as "All That Jazz".

The production, under the tight direction of Head of Drama Elie Middleton, was described as "professional" and "unique" by members of the audience.

Chicago Musical Director was Julia Whitbread, Bancroft's Director of Music.

Wellness Centre serves school & community

A pioneering wellness centre focusing on mental wellbeing in young people has been unveiled at a school in North Yorkshire.

The facility, thought to be one of the first of its kind in the country, has opened at Harrogate Ladies' College, offering a dedicated space to focus on students' mental and physical wellbeing.

The school is also keen that its benefits extend to staff members and the local community who can take part in talks promoting wellness, parent and baby activities and first aid and medical support.

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Prime Minister learns about student-led community initiative

Prime Minister Theresa May took time out of her busy schedule to visit Reading Blue Coat (RBC) last month (February) to learn about the Berkshire school's student-led outreach programme, the Aldworth Partnership.

Headmaster Jesse Elzinga; RBC chaplain Rev. James Stephenson, who helps run the partnership; four of the Senior Prefects leading the partnership; and teachers and pupils from three of the local primary schools with which RBC is partnered in the programme – Thameside Primary, Sonning Primary and Cranbury College – spent time talking about the transformational nature of the partnership.

Mr Elzinga said: 'It was heart-warming to hear the primary school pupils describe to the Prime Minister what they liked about their link with Blue Coat. They mentioned using our cross country course, swimming in our pool, and being taught languages, maths and sport by our pupils back at their own schools.'



Picture by Simon Jones of Bonjour Photography

The Aldworth Partnership is an umbrella term for the outreach work that RBC undertakes. It is a student-led initiative to get every student involved in some way in community service, and thereby leave a legacy of service for future RBC students to follow. The philosophy underpinning the partnership is that the work is transformational, i.e. that both parties grow in character because of the relationship. The school raises money to support the Aldworth Partnership but that is secondary to

the transformational work that the students and staff are engaged in.

Mr Elzinga, pictured with Mrs May, said: 'We are not trying to tick a political box or to satisfy the charities commission; we build these partnerships because we are a community school that wants to support education, not just of our own pupils but also of the pupils in the wider area.'

The Prime Minister held a surprise PM Question Time with the RBC Government and Politics students.



Translation competition winner

Woldingham School, Surrey, Sixth Former Natalia Glazman is the UK winner of *Juvenes Translatores*, an annual competition which rewards the best translators in the European Union. Natalia beat students from 73 UK schools and will travel to Brussels in early April to be presented with the award, along with a winner from each of the other EU countries.

Natalia won for a translation from Spanish into English – a feat that is even more remarkable because her first language is Russian. Natalia started learning English at the age of seven and describes her linguistic level at the time she joined Woldingham aged 11 as "okay". But her immersion into a British education at Woldingham quickly saw her become fluent, helped by her devotion to spending much of her spare time to reading and watching films in English. Woldingham's Head of Spanish, Mr Angel López, soon spotted her talent for his native language (Natalia achieved one of her eight A* GCSEs in Spanish) and encouraged her to continue with it at A Level alongside her other passion, science.

Headmistress, Mrs Alex Hutchinson, pictured with Natalia, commented: "I'm enormously proud of Natalia's achievement, and also of our language teachers who have nurtured and developed her undoubted talents. That Natalia is applying to study Biochemistry with Spanish is testament to the breadth of academic excellence at Woldingham and I have no doubt that Natalia's linguistic talents will open up many opportunities to her in the future, both professionally and personally."

Tributes to Bernice

Bernice McCabe OBE, Headmistress of North London Collegiate School between 1997 and 2017, died of cancer in the early hours of Monday 18th February 2019.

Bernice had been diagnosed with glioblastoma, a form of brain cancer, in February 2018 and her condition had worsened recently. She died peacefully at home.

Current head Sarah Clark said: "Bernice was an inspiring educationalist, whose interests and energies were manifold. Her passion for the provision of a scholarly, and academically challenging education, led her to introduce the International Baccalaureate Diploma alongside A levels and the Pre-U at North London Collegiate School. Her desire to enable future generations of teachers to be able to burnish and develop the love of their subjects was felt both at NLCS as

well as in sister schools in Jeju and Dubai, and also in her work with The Prince's Teaching Institute."

Dafydd James-Williams, Head of English, said: "In 2002, Bernice directed the first Prince of Wales Education Summer School, which offered state school teachers the opportunity to share and indulge in their love for their subjects, and hear from world-renowned experts in their respective fields. In 2006 the annual Summer Schools grew into The Prince's Teaching Institute, which Bernice co-directed. By 2016, 14% of all Secondary Schools in England and Wales had sent a teacher to a PTI course, empowering 5,000 teachers to challenge and inspire their pupils, with over 520,000 children benefitting from a richer educational experience as a result. She also served on national education committees in both the maintained and independent



sectors and had been a trustee of the British Skin Foundation".

After undergoing successful neurosurgery in February 2018, Bernice received the life-extending drug ipilimumab privately at University College London Hospital, with, initially, promising results. Thereafter, and up until her death, she was a powerful and public campaigner to make immunotherapy available for brain tumours on the NHS.

NLCS held a fundraising day in October 2018 to raise money for Brain Tumour Research, and anyone wishing to donate to this will find details here. (www.justgiving.com/campaigns/charity/tnba/immunotherapy#)

Confidence – but not Swagger

What is character education? Recent Secretaries of State for Education have espoused its importance and Damian Hines has unveiled a plan to establish 'five foundations' for building character across the state sector. Michael Windsor, head of Abingdon School, Oxfordshire, discusses what character education means, and why the recent headline in the Times – 'Public School Swagger' – was both unfortunate and inaccurate.

Independent schools have for a long time placed the development of character at the heart of their mission. Indeed, in 1862 the Head of Loretto listed his priorities in this order: 'First - Character. Second - Physique. Third - Intelligence. Fourth - Manners. Fifth - Information.' A quick trawl through school websites today confirms that personal development remains very important to our schools, with the enhancement of confidence particularly key.

It was certainly this aspect of character education that The Times picked up on in their report on Mr Hines' recent announcement, their headline proclaiming: 'All pupils will have the chance of gaining public school swagger'. I felt the choice of headline was both unfortunate and inaccurate.

That phrase 'public school swagger' grates because it draws on outdated representations and does not reflect what today's independent schools are all about. I hope we would all agree that confidence has nothing to do with 'swagger' or arrogance but rather comes from allowing young people to be at ease with themselves and simply to be the person they want to be.

In preparing pupils for the future, we need to help them grow the resilience to ride out tough times by fostering fundamental values such as integrity, resourcefulness and kindness, rather than nurturing an unwarranted and artificial sense of entitlement.

Abingdon is renowned for the 'Other Half', a term that reflects our commitment to the importance of extra-curricular activities. The Other Half plays a key part in the personal development of our pupils as it allows them to challenge themselves in a huge range of activities. An advantage of the relatively large size of Abingdon is the sheer range of extra-curricular opportunities that we can make available – over 120 at the last count. This means that the Other Half can accommodate every possible taste and interest and that pupils have a great chance of meeting like-minded friends in their various activities. There's no such thing as a typical Abingdon pupil as there are so many different pathways for them to follow, which we ensure are equally valid and respected.

We place a particular emphasis on taking pupils out of their familiar

context and opening their eyes to the world beyond the bubble of school life. This is why our students gain so much from our partnership activities with local maintained schools, be it mentoring younger pupils in English, Maths or Science, helping primary school children with DT or languages or producing short films with the Abingdon Film Academy. I love seeing our boarders helping out as Science Ambassadors at the family mornings we run with Science Oxford; students from all over the world engaging in learning and discovery with our local community.

The building of confidence is certainly not just about extra-curricular activities. At Abingdon, our approach to teaching and learning demands that teachers challenge pupils to think for themselves and to take risks. We help teachers develop questioning techniques that require pupils to challenge received thinking and to express their own ideas and opinions, in an atmosphere in which they will be listened to and taken seriously by their peers and their teachers.

Neither do we neglect the importance of ensuring that



pupils have strong foundations of knowledge upon which to draw. Great teaching stands at the heart of developing intellectual confidence. Pupils are able to cope with new ideas or indeed are happy to formulate their own if they have a really well-established foundation of knowledge in place.

Knowledge is also the true foundation for creativity. One of my great musical heroes, the saxophonist Sonny Rollins, famously spent two years practising his scales and technique on the Williamsburg bridge in New York (to avoid disturbing the neighbours) and in doing so developed a rich and new language for improvisation.

I'm all for developing confidence but the last thing that we should be imparting to future generations is a veneer of arrogance or 'public school swagger'. I hope rather that our pupils emerge from Abingdon with a sense of inner confidence that allows them to feel comfortable in their own skins, while also being happy to embrace change and challenge.

Library refurbished



St Mary's School, Essex, students are enjoying using their newly refurbished Library, at the Senior School.

Working alongside Miss Faith Pittock, a former St Mary's student and now Project Designer for Morgan Lovell, a UK office design and build company, and seeking input from Librarian, Mrs Valerie Cassell and the English Department, St Mary's embarked

on the challenge of updating and refurbishing the Senior School Library.

The Library was officially opened by award winning writer and film maker Matt Dickinson during a recent visit to St Mary's – he was impressed with the space and wished all the students many happy times indulging in a love of reading.

Pictured: St Mary's Library opening by Principal, Mrs Hilary Vipond, author Matt Dickinson and Librarian Mrs Valerie Cassell

“I’d like to make sending children to private school seem eccentric”

Head of Ipswich High School, Suffolk, Oona Carlin, responds to Michael Gove's newspaper article with disappointment, and suggests the reality is far from the image he presents...

“To say that I was disappointed to read the Evening Standard article from Michael Gove is an understatement. I realise that Mr Gove likes to court the press and is often outspoken to provoke a response but he appears to have lost touch with reality. I don’t disagree with the intent to improve the state school sector offer; I am sure that we all support this goal but to suggest that the decision to send children to private schools should be reserved for the ‘eccentric’ is, in my view, preposterous.

I just don’t see how the British state school system could cope if some parents didn’t choose to send their children to an independent school. On average the government pays a state school £4,900 per pupil in the primary phase and £6,300 per pupil in the senior phase. Doing a very simple calculation if all the pupils in my school were to choose to go to a state school then the government would need to find a further 500 school places and about 2.8 million pounds to fund these places.

You must remember that most parents in UK independent schools are tax payers and therefore they are currently paying for the state

education in their local area but not benefiting from it. Therefore if those parents choosing an independent education moved their children, there wouldn’t be more money to support state schools there would actually be less money per pupil.

There are many reasons why parents might choose to send their children to an independent school; sometimes it is because they feel that the state school locally is not what they want for their children but it is usually about much more than that.

More often, parents choose an independent education because of the added activities and support beyond the curriculum. The parents at an independent school will expect an excellent academic education but will value the additional activities on offer such as sports, performing arts, clubs and other extension and extra-curricular activities. It is often about the rounded education an independent school can offer and the broader curriculum which is not as restricted as in many state schools – often by government agendas.

The choice is frequently about the time and support teachers can offer to the pupils in an independent

school. With independent schools usually offering smaller classes and a more bespoke approach to education the way that they teach can be tailored to the individual pupils in each class. At Ipswich High School we offer a Diamond Model of education where the teachers are able to adapt their teaching to suit co-educational and single-sex classes, where this best suits and supports the pupils’ development and understanding.

Many independent schools also have invested more money in the learning support that they can offer to individuals which allows them to identify learning needs, to work with pupils in groups or as individuals to overcome learning difficulties more easily.

We have to remember that independent schools have been established in the UK for several hundred years and they have offered and continue to offer a lot to their local communities. Often an independent school will offer facilities, services and support to their local communities and to their local schools.

In the article Mr Gove has overlooked the positive impact



of independent schools on local communities and the UK economy. Independent schools are large employers in their local communities; they employ not only teaching staff but also employ support and services staff. The recent report by Oxford Economics, ‘The impact of independent schools on the UK economy’, shows that independent schools directly contribute £6.05bn to the UK GDP and they support over 147,000 jobs.

I don’t understand why there can’t be a truce. Why can’t politicians work with independent schools to see how we can actually work together to ensure that all pupils in all regions of the country get a great education. Many independent schools would be very happy to work with local authorities to take pupils into their schools to assist in areas with a shortage of places for pupils.

Would it not be better for us all to put the child first?”

Who is The Rt Hon Michael Gove MP?

Michael Gove was born in 1967 and educated at Robert Gordon’s College, Aberdeen and Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford University. He became a journalist after leaving university, working as a reporter for The Press and Journal in Aberdeen, a researcher and reporter at Scottish Television and a reporter for BBC Television. He was later Assistant Editor of The Times.

He was elected Conservative MP for Surrey Heath in 2005.

He was Shadow Minister for Housing from 2005 to 2007 and Shadow Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families from 2007 to 2010. He served as Secretary of State for Education from May 2010 until July 2014.

From July 2014 to May 2015, he served as Government Chief Whip and Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasury. Michael also served as Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice from May 2015 until 14 July 2016.

He was appointed Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on 11 June 2017.

He is married with two children.

A few Michael Gove quotable quotes about teaching and teachers:

“The single most important thing in a child’s performance is the quality of the teacher. Making sure a child spends the maximum amount of time with inspirational teachers is the most important thing.”

“I’m a decentralizer. I believe in trusting professionals”

“As long as there are people in education making excuses for failure, cursing future generations with a culture of low expectations, denying children access to the best that has been thought and written, because Nemo and the Mister Men are more relevant, the battle needs to be joined”

Should we scrap GCSEs and A-levels?

MP Robert Halfon recently suggested that GCSEs and A-levels should be scrapped in favour of a new qualification for 18-year olds, which encompasses academic and vocational subjects. The view seems to be that taking GCSEs at 16 is outdated, particularly since the law now requires that young people remain in education until 18. *Headmaster of West Buckland School, Devon, Phillip Stapleton discusses...*



I recognise the call for a broader curriculum, and I am pleased to see that Halfon is a proponent of a knowledge-engaged curriculum. I would always defend the concept of an education which does not end at the classroom door, as there would be much experience to be missed. While many teachers subscribe to the theory that remembering facts in exams is not essential in a world where we can so easily access information, we must not forget that the current workforce has evolved, diversified and even pioneered the future job market 'despite' having received a traditional education.

GCSEs taken in Year 11 are a mark of achievement at that point in a child's life. They don't recognise every aspect of learning, but nor should they try to – it is neither possible, nor desirable, for us to try and measure everything that matters in education, just as it isn't in life generally.

Any new exams (if not so extensive in number) would be just as high stakes as the present GCSE, but my concern is that the outcome would be a narrowed (not broadened) curriculum, as students would have to study more subjects to a later age, but many of these would be proscribed by the State and might be tailored to the political 'requirements' of the economy.

Breadth of knowledge is important, and so is the chance to combine this knowledge with the opportunity to be healthy, perform, be quiet and be different. A baccalaureate has much potential and is a real possibility now that students are in education until 18.

A well-constructed baccalaureate, with an emphasis on cognition,

project work and Extra-curricular activities (ECA) sitting alongside a slightly broader set of subjects (than A-levels) would be a world-class curriculum indeed and could provide parity for access to academic and vocational routes.

This baccalaureate idea, followed by a university foundation course, could bring about a new educational era. Perhaps one where schooling is compulsory until 17, with assessment at Year 12? This would have the benefit of releasing some funding to schools as there would be one less year in education.

Independent schools have been held up in the past as a gold standard because they offer a broad education through a wide ECA programme, project work, business partnerships and a varied sixth form selection of BTEC, AL, IB and PreU.

However, this may be achievable for the independent sector but would pose a number of serious concerns for the state sector. Schools struggle to provide specialist teachers at GCSE level and recruitment is tough: how will they teach to the higher specification and offer the additional activities that nurture the creative thinking required?

Whilst some schools would reduce their numbers to exclude Year 13, others would be increasing their numbers to accommodate the extra year group. To that extent, upskilling staff, increasing ECA expectation and therefore consequential pay reforms, with the inevitable closure of some FE institutions, are likely to require such enormous financial investment that it will leave this bold idea as a thought experiment.

To conclude, however exciting the prospect of a more wide-ranging assessment process, I don't believe that now is the time to introduce another round of changes. All aspects of education have been revamped in the last five years, and I would support the need for teachers to be left to get on with teaching instead of introducing yet another round of changes.

Halfon's determination to promote and prize partnership work with local businesses is very exciting and could happen independently of other reforms. It is something we have developed at West Buckland, providing

opportunities for students to understand more about themselves and become 'future ready'.

However, I reject the idea that education is just about preparing people for corporate life; its purpose is to enable children to be the author of their own lives and to embrace a world that includes creativity and colour. In a future that is going to become increasingly dominated by AI perhaps education needs to focus, equally, on living a life fulfilled: one that understands what it means to be fully human.

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Royal lecture on remarkable experiences

The Royal School, Surrey, enjoyed their fourth Royal Lecture this academic year when The Right Honourable The Lord Peter Lilley, PC, spoke to Senior School students about his life and work in the House of Commons and more recently in the House of Lords.

Entitled '35 years in British Politics... an interpretation of the political landscape', this was a

Pictured: Lilley with Principal, Mrs Anne Lynch and pupils

wonderful opportunity to hear of the remarkable experiences of Lord Lilley, whose roles have included Secretary of State for Trade and Industry under Margaret Thatcher, Secretary of State for Social Security under John Major, Shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer under William Hague, Deputy Leader of the Conservative Party and now Member of the House of Lords since May 2018.



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'ZERO plastics' makes a big impact

Students at Sevenoaks School, Kent set up a project to reduce the school's plastics footprint, and have so far prevented over 15,000 plastic bottles from being used.

In late 2017, ZERO plastics set up a campus-wide campaign to reduce the number of plastic bottles being provided with packed lunches to students attending sports fixtures. They met with the school's PE and Catering departments to put forward their proposals.

They suggested that each pupil should receive their own reusable aluminium bottle, so that the Catering department did not have to provide single-use bottles for every match or lunchtime training session.

They also proposed that new drinking water fountains be installed within the school's sports facility, The Sennocke Centre, and

drinking water taps across campus, to enable the filling of bottles, as the existing fountains were not equipped to do this.

When the proposals were accepted, the students liaised with the school's Estates department to choose the water stations with the appropriate design and functionality.

After the drinking water points were installed during August, the students began work on designing reusable bottles that will be provided to all Sevenoaks students. The Catering team have agreed that once students have been issued with their reusable bottle, they will stop the provision of plastic bottles.

Since the water stations have been in use the school has prevented the use and waste of 15,000 (300ml) plastic bottles.

School site sold

A historic independent school site has been sold for residential development in a multi-million pound transaction.

The 2.4 acre site of King's High School in Warwick has been sold by the Warwick Independent Schools Foundation to Wake Green (Warwick) Limited.

The site has been home to the school since 1879 and will be vacated once the school's new site on Myton Road is ready for occupation in September 2019.

Leading Midlands law firm Wright Hassall's expertise across a range of legal services for the education sector helped the Foundation access a £20 million development finance package from HSBC to create a new campus for King's High School on the Foundation's Myton Road site.

The firm subsequently acted for the Foundation on the sale of the historic King's High School site.

The ongoing development work on the Myton Road site, where Warwick School, Warwick Junior School and Warwick Preparatory School are already based, will bring together all schools within

the Foundation on a single campus, including a new shared sixth form centre.

It will also see improvements made to the Bridge Sports Centre, as well as provision of a new state of the art 3G rugby pitch, which is already in use.

Simon Jones, Foundation Secretary of the Warwick Independent Schools Foundation, said: "We are delighted to have completed the sale of the King's High School site and would like to thank all of those involved for making this happen."

"Our work to create a new campus is a real milestone in our history."



Pictured (l to r): Claire Waring (Wright Hassall lawyers) Richard Hardy (Bromwich Hardy surveyors) Alison Pearce (Wright Hassall) David Stevens (Warwick Independent Schools Foundation)



Sophia, Croydon High Collection.

A navy fitted jacket, with contrasting lime lining and pocket trims. Paired with V neck sweater with lime detailing and a bespoke navy, grey and lime kilt.

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Higher penalties loom in Employment Tribunal litigation

The removal of Employment Tribunal (ET) fees in July 2017 has had a significant impact on the number of employees pursuing claims. Ministry of Justice statistics for April to June 2018 revealed a massive 165% increase in claims compared with the same period in the previous year. In addition, as part of its 'Good Work Plan', the Government is planning a number of reforms aimed at making it easier for claimants to bring ET claims and enforce awards. Some of these reforms, such as a "name and shame" scheme to identify employers that fail to pay ET awards, have already taken effect. Others, such as an increase (from £5,000 to £20,000) in the maximum penalty an ET can impose upon employers for "aggravated" breaches of employment rights, are scheduled to be brought in with effect from 6 April 2019. In the light of these developments, it is sensible for Schools to assess the risks of ET litigation and wherever possible take steps to mitigate this.

Solicitor Louise Smyth provides her top tips...

Preparation

The importance of well drafted and up to date policies and contracts cannot be under-estimated. There are many factors that can lead to tribunal litigation, some within and some outside an employer's control. The key to reducing the risk of litigation is to deal with the matters which are within one's control and the obvious starting point for Schools is to ensure that their own employment documentation is up to date. This includes policies and contracts, but equally applies to offer letters, standard advertisement wording, sickness and holiday forms and any other documents relied upon by Schools on a day to day basis. Well drafted documents can help guide managers through the required processes, manage employee expectations and help demonstrate a commitment to compliance.

However, comprehensive policies will be of little use if the Senior Leadership Team do not follow them or do not have the skills or training to deal with issues when matters arise. Schools should ensure that anyone with line management responsibilities has sufficient training to:

- Understand the School's policies and procedures
- Have an ability to assess the risk in any given situation
- Understand when they need to seek advice (internal or external)
- Have a basic understanding of

key procedures and their role

- Understand the importance of compliance

Identifying Risks

As part of understanding when to seek advice, management should be aware of the most common trigger points for tribunal action, such as:

- Disciplinary/dismissal
- Change of terms/benefits – both by employer and employee (e.g. flexible working)
- Performance management
- Sale of business and insourcing/outourcing
- Sickness absence (including disability discrimination claims)
- Discrimination
- Redundancy
- Family friendly rights
- Bullying/harassment/breakdown in relations between employees

Understanding the personalities involved is also key to assessing risk; managers are likely to have a good sense of which employees are likely to pursue a claim.

Process

A large part of employment law is about applying the correct process and being seen to have applied the right process. Employment tribunals will of course look beyond the paperwork to determine the reality of the situation but if a process looks compliant, as and when it is initially reviewed by an employee's adviser, their initial advice may be that the employee's

prospects of success with a claim is low. Conversely, basic errors may well encourage an employee to take matters further or investigate the substance of the decision in greater detail.

Reasonableness

Whilst process is important, the cornerstone of UK employment law is the principle of reasonableness, i.e. whether or not an employer has ultimately acted reasonably. For example, a dismissal will be unfair, even if for a potentially fair reason, if the employer has acted unreasonably in treating it as a sufficient reason for dismissing the employee.

In dealing with any employment issue, Schools would be well advised to consider the following principles of natural justice:

- People have a right to be heard: they must have a fair opportunity to present their case whenever their interests might be adversely affected by a decision
- The decision should be made by someone free of bias and the appearance of bias
- The judgment must be based on evidence, not on speculation or suspicion
- The decision should reference the evidence used in making the decision
- Give sufficient and reasonable notice
- Consider sharing information, both positive and negative



Louise Smyth is an employment lawyer with Field Seymour Parkes LLP in Berkshire.
0118 951 6200 louise.smyth@fsp-law.com

- Right to be accompanied
- Right to present evidence
- Written communications
- Balance needs of individual against those of the organisation (consider personal circumstances)
- Confidentiality

Record keeping

It is important that a complete paper-trail of helpful documents is kept and any process is fully documented in writing. Notes of meetings and conversations should be kept and properly filed. Notes should be taken at the time, if possible, or be as contemporaneous as possible and any substantive decisions that are made should always be confirmed formally in writing at the end of any procedure. However, Schools should also be aware of their disclosure obligations and mindful of the fact that most, if not all, internal communications will find their way before the ET.

Settlement Agreements – The Last Line of Defence

Finally, it is of course open for Schools to agree commercial terms and enter into a settlement agreement that will serve to waive employees' employment claims and avoid litigation. Care needs to be taken to ensure that any discussions are truly off the record and Schools should seek legal advice to ensure that any resulting settlement agreement is binding and enforceable.

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Forty for the Future:

New scholarship initiative widens access

Marking its 40th anniversary, Lomond School, Argyll & Bute, has launched 40 new day and boarding scholarships to widen access to talented youngsters.

The means-tested scholarships will be offered to young people from across Scotland and beyond, who excel academically, musically, in the creative arts or in sport. Also available is a special 'all-rounder' award in memory of the school's founder and first Principal David Arthur who passed away in December.

Mr Arthur, who was Principal for almost ten years, successfully merged St. Bride's School for Girls and the boys' Larchfield Academy in 1977 and played an important role in the school's 40th anniversary celebrations of last year.

With a possible reduction of up to 50% of school fees, academic

scholarships will be awarded to candidates who perform strongly either in a specific subject or across all areas. The Creative Arts awards will celebrate young people with a gift for creative writing, art, photography or drama whilst the Music scholarship will be awarded to those with talent in one or more instruments.

Sporting candidates recognised for skills within one key field or across multiple disciplines will be encouraged to become involved in Lomond's thriving team sports. And with sailing, skiing, canoeing and climbing within easy reach and embedded into the school curriculum there are many opportunities to excel in new sports too.

As a tribute to Mr Arthur, who made such a significant impact on the school, local community and national charities, the 'all-rounder'



Principal Johanna Urquhart with a present day pupil and inset David Arthur

scholarship will be bestowed upon a candidate who will contribute to the life of the school in a range of ways.

Johanna Urquhart, Principal of Lomond School, said: 'As we celebrate the past 40 years of our school and look forward to the future, we are conscious of a desire

to offer places to many more young people who may not ordinarily have the opportunity to attend Lomond School. These forty new scholarships will do just that, and we are very excited to welcome talented young people from all backgrounds to our Lomond School family.

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About Password Tests

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Emily Allinson, International Registrar Royal Hospital School, Suffolk

"A representative from Strathallan School showed me their Password Pupil tests running. I saw how easy the platform was to use and how rapidly the results appeared. After a follow up demonstration by Caroline Browne, the founder of Password, we adopted both the English and Maths tests for our admissions purposes. I am just so glad to have come across it – we haven't looked back."

Jackie Fisher, Bursar Lime House School, Cumbria.

To find out more about Password tests, email: contact@englishlanguagetesting.co.uk

Opting for Phone-Free Fridays

Nine out of ten pupils at Christ College Brecon, have decided to leave their phones behind as part of a new voluntary programme called Phone-Free Fridays.

Research on society's increasing dependency on phones and their addictive nature, struck a chord with deputy head Simon Hill. Although mobile phones are prohibited during classes, he noted how much time pupils spent on their phones during lunchtime hours and in their spare time, seeing the impact this had on their social behaviour.

During assembly, the deputy head shone a light onto society's dependency on their mobile phones. He highlighted societal pressure for people to be available at all times and young people's desire to scroll through social media to see what their peers are up to rather than actively engaging in conversations.

As pupils became invested in the topic following the assembly, conversations continued after school, in house meetings and in tutor groups, which is why Christ College Brecon decided to introduce an opt-in programme. With Phone-Free Fridays pupils can voluntarily choose to hand in their phones to their houseparents each week.

He said: "At Christ College we encourage our pupils to make informed decisions and raise awareness of the issues we face as a society. The assembly was held to open pupils' eyes and make them actively think for themselves whether they rely too much on their phones.

"It was great to hear so many conversations between pupils about the topic, so we decided to hold this initiative. We didn't want to simply tighten our phone policies, that would have been a short-term solution. Instead, we



Simon Hill and pupils

wanted to place our trust in our pupils and offer this initiative, which they could buy into. To engage more pupils at the start, we did turn it into a House competition, which has really caught on with pupils from all years.

"As the deputy head of a boarding school, I cannot deny the positive aspects phones have nowadays. Pupils can speak to their parents abroad; day pupils can let parents know about any changes in their diaries and so much more. However, with the increasing use of phones, we started to notice changes in our pupils' behaviour. When youngsters do not have access to their devices, you notice an increase in irritability and restlessness, which show just how addictive adolescents' connection to their phone is.

"Our pupils are all very busy and dedicated to excelling in their academics as well as their sporting and creative activities. We understood their need for down-time, but what was down-time to some, caused extra pressure to others.

"The Phone-free Fridays initiative enables pupils to look critically at their own behaviour and has made pupils more conscious of their habits. More and more pupils leave their phones behind and many have commented on the initiative. Pupils have noticed an increase in productivity, ability

to focus better and generally note they enjoy simply chatting to their peers.

"However, pupils have also described the general anxiety they've felt by being away from their phones. Some even commented that they think their phones are vibrating, despite not having their phones on them. This shows how strong phone dependency can be, and I doubt pupils would have noticed the addiction themselves had they not chosen to leave their phones behind one day a week.

"I'm glad to see that this initiative has made our pupils more aware of their own phone usage. Our pupils don't want to waste time on phones and I think Phone-Free Fridays have increased the awareness of how much we, as a society, rely on our phones.

"Phone-free Friday has provided them with the structure and support to tackle this dependency in the company of their friends. The Sixth Form Centre has become much more sociable and you see groups of pupils grow closer as a community."

Each Friday up to 90% of students have chosen to hand their phones in to their houseparents. As a result, the school is thinking of extending the initiative. The priority is to help pupils get used to Phone-Free Fridays before extending the programme, so that it is sustainable in the long-run.

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Cyber Insurance – An effective way for independent schools to transfer risk?

According to the UK's National Police Reporting service Actionfraud, Cybercrime now accounts for over half of all recorded crimes in the UK.

Independent schools who traditionally hold vast amounts of personal sensitive data are understandably concerned about safety. Research by YouGov reported that 34% of educational establishments place data loss as their greatest cyber security concern* and a fifth have been hit by a cyber attack at some time over the last few years.

Andy Hall Head of Cyber Risk at BHIB Insurance Brokers has seen a huge increase in demand for Cyber insurance in the education sector over the last 2 years.

"Private school fee payment transactions are currently one of the top targets for cyber criminals who see poor cyber security at many schools an easy target for hackers. One common scam we are seeing recently is where a school email account is compromised and attackers will send parents a phishing email giving them payment details for the school fees which are then paid into a fraudulent account. We have seen a lot of head teachers and school staff being targeted because of the amount of sensitive information and data they handle".

"Most organizations we talk to have already been hacked, but they don't know it yet. Most commonly we are seeing the 'human error' factor which invites the majority of all criminal attacks. The recent Various Claimants v WM Morrison Supermarkets PLC (2018) case, notable as the UK's first successful class action for a data breach revealed the vulnerability of employers, after the judge found them vicariously liable for the rogue actions of an employee. He argued that Morrisons should have taken out insurance to mitigate such an event".

What are the costs when a school suffers a cyber attack or data breach or if fees are stolen and how can insurance help?

The main typical costs where Cyber insurance can assist your school are:

- Incident investigation costs and specialist forensics, PR and legal advice.
- IT costs of ensuring the systems are no longer vulnerable.
- Lost school fees.
- Accountancy costs of finding out what was stolen and when.
- Costs of disruption, manpower and management time needed for resolution.
- Loss of reputation amongst parents and others.
- Extortion & ransom costs.

A specialist policy will act as a first response service and will protect

your school from the moment a data breach occurs.

It provides insurance for your own financial losses such as legal, IT security and regulatory costs that may occur to contain a data breach and also the potential for 3rd Party "distress" claims made against you. It also provides protection to data subjects who have been involved in a breach caused by you, for example by providing Credit Monitoring Services.

The GDPR regulation provides a requirement that all organisations who store personal sensitive data have an incident response plan in place and must notify any data breach within 72 hours of becoming aware of the event. Cyber-insurance can be an important part of this process and has been actively endorsed by the ICO (Information Commissioner's Office) as an effective mitigation tool. It can help your school be prepared before, during and after a cyber-incident.

In addition to insurance, BHIB also recommend an effective cyber risk management strategy in order to reduce the risk impact. Actions for schools can include:

- Cyber security training for all staff. Ensure procedures are recorded, followed and refreshed regularly.
- Ensure two-step authentication is implemented on systems used by the school and use secure communications.



- Avoid using generic mailbox accounts for school administration.
- Use a recognised payment gateway for payments.
- Physical Network Controls/ Malware protection.
- Make sure data is regularly backed up.
- Keep software and security patches updated.
- Have a comprehensive Incident Management Plan.

BHIB are an independent insurance broker who specialise in the education sector and offer a range of insurance products and services that have been specifically designed for independent schools. If you would like to contact Andy Hall for further information or a free Cyber risk review you can contact him on 0116 2819152, or alternatively email: ahall@bhibinsurance.co.uk

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*Source: A Sophos independent survey conducted by YouGov.

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Brilliant Blockchain Solution

A team of Bedford School Sixth Formers were the talk of the recent Barclays Blockchain Hackathon in London when they scooped third prize amid the field of banks and high-profile tech companies.

Bedford School Sixth Formers Matthew Lewis, James Wallace, Alex Ward and Henry Shaw caused a stir in the Barclays Blockchain Hackathon last month (February) in London when they scooped third prize.

Awash with technical teams from banks and high-profile tech companies, the Bedford School boys were the only school team invited and had no prior blockchain technology experience up until two days before the event. Despite this, they managed to pitch their idea, set up blockchain networks, install software, develop a project and present it to not only the UK's big banks and tech companies but also journalists and writers

from The Financial Times and Ernst and Young.

During the competition, the boys, alongside all the other competitors, were challenged to come up with an idea for exchanging data and verifying transactions between two different blockchains using ION interoperability protocol. The Bedford School team identified a novel use-case for the technology; that of data exchange that enabled UCAS, exam-boards, awarding bodies, schools and students to all transfer and digitally sign contracts seamlessly in a currency that is very valuable to them – their exam results.

During the pitch process, carried out Dragons' Den style, the boys'

ideas immediately generated great excitement with the judges, mostly comprising of technical directors from banks, including Santander, HSBC and Barclays, who were overheard saying things like, "Do you realise that this could be applied to..." and "my god, this is brilliant!".

After their successful pitch, the boys set about the task of coding, from scratch, a working prototype of the solution. They created contracts that were digitally signed and passed through the block-chain ION framework, being filled out by awarding bodies and schools; passing around examination result-tokens like bitcoins in a financial market.

During the event, the boys also identified two significant bugs in the technology that they were using. The technical team at Clearmatics, the company who invented the ION framework, could not believe that boys from a school could find such important defects. Clearmatics posted: "Some bright and motivated A-Level students from

Bedford School were one of the teams, and they raised issues in our GitHub repository and even wrote a pull request."

Speaking on the boys' inventive solution, Dr Braine, Investment Bank CTO Office at Barclays, explained, "Their solution was the only one that was truly generalised and re-usable, and it opened our eyes to new use-cases that nobody has thought of before". He continued "Bedford's pitch was professional, clear and concise, and we actually saw the working prototype of contracts being automatically swapped between exam-boards and schools".

Computer Science Teacher, Dr Wild said: "I have never been more proud of boys in all my time at the school – they were the talk of the event. They were personally congratulated by the worldwide Chief Technology Officer of Barclays Bank, and Santander has already opened a dialogue about possible future careers. Quite some achievement!"



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Investing in boarding facilities

Ellesmere College, Shropshire, has announced it is opening a second Sixth Form Girls boarding house in September.

As the demand for Sixth Form places continues to grow at Ellesmere, the Governors and the Headmaster decided to repurpose one of the current buildings to allow for the expansion.

The new additional housing (pictured) will be called St Hilda's and its first occupants will take up residence from September.

Headmaster Brendan Wignall said: "There has always been an increase in demand for boarding places as

students progress through Ellesmere and the Sixth Form is a perfect time for many to take this step.

"Parents and pupils allude to the fact that this move towards a greater independence within a very safe, planned and secure environment allows for the personal and social development of the student, as well as the greater focus on academic success as everyone is working to the same outcomes."

This expansion will increase the capacity for girls into the Sixth Form by 26.

Historically there has always been just one senior girls' boarding house and two senior boys' boarding houses, but an increase in demand for girls' places has driven the need for additional space.

As well as further beds, the new boarding house will also provide further individual study areas for the day students, so that all Sixth Form pupils, day or boarding, can continue to have a personal study space, a feature not usually offered in most Sixth Forms.



Rendcomb College, Gloucestershire, has begun work on the extension and refurbishment of a new boarding house which will welcome boys and girls from September 2019.

The building, known as Godman House, is currently home to girls aged 11-14 (Year 7 to 9), but from September the school will open the extended 40-bed house to both boys and girls. This will continue the co-education enjoyed by pupils in the Junior School.

The house will have separate boys' and girls' wings with a modern atrium-style common room in the centre. Study rooms, changing rooms, a kitchen and a games room will also add the necessary break-out spaces for busy and active teenagers. A full team of pastoral staff will live on-site in the house's staff quarters and they will ensure that all of the children in the house are supported and feel at home.

Pictured (l-r): Head of College, Mr Rob Jones, with pupils

The new accommodation will also provide families with plenty of flexibility. Children can be full, weekly or flexi boarders or they can stay over on ad-hoc occasions depending on availability. Day pupils will also be able to stay until 8pm.

Head of College, Rob Jones said: "Opening a co-educational house has many benefits for our pupils, not least the further development of the family atmosphere for which Rendcomb is rightly proud. By bringing the Year 7 to 9 pupils into one purpose-built building, the pupils can enjoy excellent facilities in an environment that is similar to family life. This building is another example of our commitment to outstanding pastoral care for boarding and day pupils at Rendcomb College."

Once the boys move into the new house, their building will be converted into a new Sixth Form Centre to be opened in 2020.

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Picture: BHM's new Sixth Form Centre LRC at Kew House School. Our passion for education comes with over 60 years' practical experience in masterplanning, design and construction for independent schools.

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CHARTERED ARCHITECTS

Money Laundering – what is the independent school sector to do?

With approximately 10% of the more than 500,000 pupils in UK private education coming from overseas – many from countries with known associations with dirty money – independent schools have a major job on their hands to ensure fees are paid legitimately. The fact that it was as recently as September 2018 that the UK National Crime Agency (NCA) criticised 'elite schools' for not doing enough to report suspicious funds shows there is more work to be done, suggests accountant Alyson Howard as she provides practical advice on the issue...

Recent Anti-Money Laundering (AML) cases which have caught out unsuspecting independent schools have included a high-profile politician from Nigeria (a Politically Exposed Person, or PEP, in AML language) and schemes from Moldova and Azerbaijan paying fees via companies.

Independent schools are not currently monitored by a supervising authority under the AML regulations, but they are still bound by the legislation and the NCA has put the sector on notice that they expect more reports to be filed if suspicious activity is observed. As the sector is not regulated, schools may have neither the policies nor the understanding as to what is expected of them. Therefore, you should think about producing a policy which can be shared across the school and which your Senior Leadership Team fully understands.

Even though you are not legally required to appoint someone to oversee reporting any suspicions of money laundering, it makes sense to do so. The bursar or chief financial officer would likely become the Money Laundering Nominated Officer (MLNO) and you may want to source relevant AML training as part of this appointment. This should be communicated to all staff with an explanation of what the position entails.

Your focus should then be to identify those with whom you are doing business, where they come from, and assessing the risks involved in that relationship. Identifying does not just mean obtaining photo ID and proof of address but having an understanding of how they came about their wealth.

Clearly, any school should be suspicious of fees being paid

with cash, but what about fees paid by a company? That might be quite innocent, for example a multinational paying the school fees for one of its employees as part of a relocation or employment package. But is it a UK company or a foreign-registered one? All independent schools should be mindful of jurisdictions which raise a red flag from a money laundering perspective.

The countries below are currently considered high risk where one should perform extra checks (maybe using independent verification of identity by a commercial organisation) to establish exactly with whom you are transacting:

- The Bahamas • Ghana
- Syria • Botswana
- Pakistan • Trinidad and Tobago
- Cambodia • Serbia
- Tunisia • Ethiopia
- Sri Lanka • Yemen

There are also super high-risk countries such as North Korea and Iran, where the level of additional checks makes acceptance almost prohibitive.

However, there are also risks in transacting with a UK-based company. If school fees are paid by a private limited company and that expenditure is not properly accounted for, it could mean there is tax evasion, which could make the transaction proceeds of crime.

So, what would make you suspicious? If you feel that something is odd, then act on those feelings. Is someone trying to pay their fees to you in a convoluted way? Who is behind the company that is proposed as the payee? Are you able to find out anything about them from Companies House? Who owns the company, what role does your parent have therein? Whether your

parent is a Director, Beneficial Owner or employee, you are entitled to ask why the company is being used to pay fees. Depending upon your level of suspicion, you might ask for written confirmation from the board and/or the auditors that the transaction is being appropriately documented for tax purposes.

If you remain suspicious, you should discuss the circumstances with your MLNO and follow their instructions. If you are the MLNO, you may want to make a Suspicious Activity Report (SAR) to the NCA. You must be careful not to do anything that may draw the attention of the parties concerned to your suspicions, and possibly prejudice any investigation that follows –something that is called tipping off.

When reporting a SAR, the MLNO should consider whether it is necessary to request a 'defence to money laundering'. Such a defence enables the acceptance of a student and associated fees whilst the NCA investigates. Once you make your report the NCA has seven days to carry out initial investigations and decide whether to provide a defence. This may require delaying tactics with the parents as your hands would be tied whilst the NCA decides.


In summary you should always know with whom you are transacting. If it is an individual, you might ask for name, address and photo ID to prove that they are who they say they are, live where they say they live and work where they say they work. If anything suggests increased risk, do some Google research or obtain independent verification of what you have been told. More times than not, all will be well but having this paper trail proves you



are taking your responsibilities seriously.

If dealing with overseas parents, the process may be more difficult. If meeting them in person, you can ask them to bring photo ID and proof of address. If not, you may be working with notarised documents from a lawyer in another jurisdiction (these notaries will always include a registration number that can be independently verified.) You may also want to consider using additional verification services for overseas documents which can be completed at minimal cost through your chartered accountants or lawyers.

If someone is a PEP, which includes both UK and foreign politicians, it always means enhanced identity checks and you should take extra care to ensure you are happy there is nothing out of the ordinary in their sending a child to your school. And if fees are being paid via a company you will want to consider credit checks, company and internet searches, to make sure you know who they are. Your paper trail, policies and procedures are your protection should anything turn out not to have been as you had thought.



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Experts discuss building resilience through exercise and nutrition

With a lack of exercise and excessive portion sizes driving high levels of obesity among young people, it is more important than ever to ensure they are supported in leading active lives and making positive choices when it comes to health and wellbeing.

Last month, events in Scotland and England brought together experts to discuss the issue and share best practice and initiatives at two symposia focusing on the health and wellbeing of young people.

In Scotland at the Edinburgh Academy experts Robert Nesbitt from the Scottish Association for Mental Health (SAMH) and physiotherapist Stephen Martin focused on mental health being part of a whole school ethos. Discussions were had on the importance of openness of the subject within schools and the role physical exercise plays in overall student wellness and its appropriateness as an outlet for stress.

Then at Reed's School, Surrey, Michael Hill from charity Rackets Cubed, focused on the area of social impact and mobility. "Food is such an important part of the work we do with these students," explained Mr Hill. "Being able to provide them with a hot, nutritious meal is one of the things that make the programme so successful. Once a term we ask a chef to come and talk to the student about the food they are eating and how it fuels the body. Children are socially conditioned by 8 years old so this

programme helps to reinforce a positive attitude towards food, exercise and education."

The charity Rackets Cubed helps enhance long-term achievement for students at schools with high levels of socio-economic deprivation through integrated sports, education (STEM) and nutrition programmes.

Ben Haining, Sports and Conditioning Coach at Reed's School shared the school's approach to ensuring its students' physical competence is optimised. He told the gathered audience, "Young people have got a lot to deal with, from the challenges of academia to pressures from social media, and often feelings of fatigue and self-doubt. We focus on getting the training right, getting the mind right and being positive role models for the students.

"Focusing on self-awareness, the physical effects of poor habits and helping them develop a positive mental approach helps build their resilience. Getting their nutrition right is a key part of helping students develop their physical competence. Our relationship with the Sodexo catering team is fundamental to this to ensure the students have healthy meal options that they want to eat."

A common theme at both symposia was the need to understand the motivations and drivers of the Generation Z population so they can be guided into making the

right food and lifestyle choices which in turn will help reduce the current high levels of obesity among young people.

Generation Z are environmentally conscious and with plant-based diets becoming increasingly popular, it is this group that are more likely to follow a vegan, vegetarian, flexitarian or pescatarian diet. They are also socially-driven purchasers: 80% of children aged between 7 and 15 believe companies should try to make the world a better place.

Sean Boret, strength and conditioning coach at Eton College attended the event and commented: "This was a great chance to discuss with our peers the challenges that we are all facing and glean information on how others are addressing these challenges. The insight about Generation Z was fascinating. Young people often want an instant response or quick fix, so we have a responsibility to coach them to see nutrition and its role in optimising performance as a journey for life. This is something we work with Sodexo chefs on as part of meal development."

Jeremy Alderton, Managing Director for the event organisers Independents by Sodexo, commented, "Understanding our consumer is crucial in the development of our menus; we know that young people want variety but they also want food that has integrity. We pride ourselves

on the provenance of our food and our commitment to sustainable sourcing.

"Our chefs are continuously developing food choices that reflect the latest food trends, and for this digitally-savvy customer base we also recognise the need for technology which informs and engages students in the nutrition and provenance of their meals."

Independents by Sodexo plan to continue the discussions on improving the health and wellbeing of young people. The next one will again be hosted by the Edinburgh Academy later this year in conjunction with Scottish Council for Independent Schools, and further events are being planned in England and Ireland.

Michael Bryce, Deputy Rector at the Edinburgh Academy, concluded: "It was a genuine privilege to host this symposium. The speakers covered topics that are very current in education because they are simply fundamental in young lives. Good mental health, the relationship between fitness and mental health and how food trends within generation Z impact our school offer were informative and extremely relevant. As a school our relationship with Sodexo is extremely important to us. Events like this add real and lasting value to what we are trying to achieve with our pupils and go well beyond what we might expect from our partnership."

Pool launch



Jonathon Madden (Owner at Seriously FUN Swimming Schools), Terence Ayres (Head at Thorpe House School), Adrian Moorhouse MBE, Jo Potter (Bursar at Thorpe House School) with pupils

Thorpe House School, Buckinghamshire, has celebrated the launch of the school's newly covered and renovated 18 metre swimming pool with an official ceremony.

Guests included school governors, directors, staff and the senior Head Boy and a selection of the school's elite swimmers.

The star guest however was Olympic gold medal winner Adrian Moorhouse MBE, who performed

the ribbon cutting ceremony and talked about how the pool will benefit pupils at Thorpe House and the local community.

Seriously FUN approached Thorpe House in 2017 to fund the building of an enclosure to cover their existing outdoor school swimming pool. Seriously FUN offer weekly term time and school holiday lessons for children aged 3 to 12 years from beginners to advanced swimmers.

Healthy Schools Award

As a result of completing and meeting all the criteria on the Camden and Islington health and wellbeing review, The Gower School is now recognised as a Camden and Islington Healthy School, and has also been awarded the Healthy Schools London Bronze award.

A 'Healthy School' is one that demonstrates that an effective foundation to support pupils' health and wellbeing is provided. This recognition lasts for three years, until December 2021.

The quality assurance process checked the review against the criteria and identified the following examples of good practice at The Gower School:

- a wealth of opportunities for pupils to be physically active; both as part of the curriculum and after school hours

Learning about Fairtrade

Derby Grammar School's Year 6 pupils have been learning all about Fairtrade and have been trying out what they've learnt in Christian Aid's Chocolate Trade Game.

The school works closely with Tanya Noon, Central England Co-Op member and Community Relations Officer to deliver the programme. Initially Year 6 visited the local Co-Op store in Littleover to find out more about ethical sourcing of products, before taking part in the Chocolate Trade Game workshop back at school.

Fairtrade is all about better prices, decent working conditions, local sustainability and fair prices for workers and farmers. The Christian Aid Chocolate Trade Game looks at the experience of Ghanaian cocoa farmers in the cocoa trading chain.

By taking part in the game pupils can see for themselves the difficulties experienced by the workers in the chocolate trade and the benefits of fair trade. At the same time, they work together as teams, negotiating their deals.

Reverend Paul Taylor is Derby Grammar School's Chaplain and runs the workshops alongside Tanya. He said: "I've been running this workshop in one form or another for 10 years now, and always in partnership with the Co-Op. It really makes the children aware of their surroundings and think about who has produced their food."

- excellent engagement with parents shown in a variety of ways
- encouraging pupil voice and peer support with School Council, Eco-Committee, the buddy reading scheme, new starter buddies and the use of peace tables
- advice for parents and pupils on healthy food choices for special helper snacks and packed lunches
- menus are well balanced and drawn from a range of cultures

providing pupils with a wide range of tastes and flavours

Helen Cameron, Health and Wellbeing Manager at School Improvement Service for Children, Employment and Skills, Islington Council said: "Miss Haigh has done a great job in ensuring the school meets all the relevant criteria. The completed review clearly reflects the range of activities and practices you have in place to support pupils and your school community. It is a very useful source of evidence."



Principal Emma Gower with Head of Operations Joey Haigh

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For an informal discussion, contact Candice Finn at Independents by Sodexo on 07776 226074 or candice.finn@sodexo.com



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Learning Scores: 'Effort-less' Success?

Andrew Johnson – Deputy Head Academic, St Dunstan's College, London – discusses why his school no longer awards Efforts grades or sends termly reports to parents... preferring regular Learning and Attainment Scores.

We are all familiar with Effort and Attainment grades. Attainment grades are an unavoidable necessity and are here to stay. They are readily (if not always pleasantly) digestible to fee paying parents. They are compulsive fodder for market and league table sensitive leadership teams and governors. Effort grades, on the other hand, are inconsistent drivers of better learning. For teens compelled not to conform, the challenge is to secure maximum attainment with minimum effort, to be the A5, not the A1. For those driven by fear failure (or the limits of success), reflection is limited to the emotional response to the numbers or letters on a scale. For nervous teachers, or those focused on their own self-esteem, top Effort grades are given for pupil compliance or adulation, respectively. A pupil being passively conformist or a teacher's mini-me is equated to great learning. In this way, Effort grades are inconsistent and subjective. This inadequacy feeds our fixation with attainment, the 'hard data'. That promotes or justifies school cultures of endless assessment, of the ranking and judgement of children, and of intellectual creativity being subordinated to the pragmatic priorities of mark scheme mimicry.

St Dunstan's College no longer awards Effort grades. We are not alone in our rejection of the measure of 'effort', I am sure. We have also ceased to write termly reports (that either waste teacher time at pinch points in the term, or wear out the copy and paste functions on computers). Instead, pupils receive either a Learning Score or an Attainment Score every half term. They don't receive both at the same time to ensure that both are responded to equally. Learning Scores are our replacement for Effort grades.

They define and quantify what 'effort' looks like in practice, in a learning context. A Learning Score (of 20) in any given subject is made up of five component scores (of 4 each) in these categories – Engagement with the Subject, Response to Feedback, Collaboration, Strategies for Study, and Homework. The scores are linked to concise best fit descriptors of learning behaviours, and are applied across subjects and age ranges. The descriptors are calibrated across all categories to reflect approaches that are routinely poor (1), inconsistent and hence hold learning back (2), normally and consistently good (3), and regularly going above and beyond what is expected (4). These reflect the quality of a pupil's approach to learning over time since the previous Learning Score. The choices made by the pupil on a day to day and week by week basis shape their scores, and not their performance in an assessment at a fixed point in time. The pupils are in control (which they need to be actively taught is the case) and all scores are possible for all children irrespective of 'ability' or 'attainment'.

Nobody would be surprised to hear us acknowledge the research of Carol Dweck on growth mindset, or of Guy Claxton on building learning power, but the key input has been from within our own community and context. The importance of staff and pupil discussion over the actual learning behaviour they would expect at each score is central to this not just being effort grades plus bureaucracy. It is hard to understate the value of teachers and children actively discussing what the key signifiers would be, over time, for a 4 for Engagement with Subject ('willingness to take academic risks') vs a 3 ('willingness to think about new

information') or a 2 ('preferring to be given answers than to think for yourself') vs a 1 ('reluctant to engage with new ideas or information'). High order learning approaches can then be actively taught, and not just reactively noticed.

It is early days, but we are excited in a variety of ways. It will take time for sufficient data to exist to evaluate robustly. However, our introduction of this system has coincided with significantly improved learning culture and results. The most able cannot coast on attainment alone, since their Learning Score calls them out, in detail, on not challenging themselves to think. The less able are valued on a level playing field to the others for their development as learners, not just attainers. We are actively supporting child and adolescent mental health by focusing reflection and dialogue on the actions and approaches children can choose to influence, rather than the attainment they feel judged on by others. Next year our Sixth Formers will be discussing and agreeing their own Learning Scores with staff, to support and emphasise their own agency and responsibility.

Commentators on education like to stereotype schools as either academically successful or pastorally sensitive, as if both cannot be true together. Learning Scores are a challenge to that casual and destructive polarity. We are building a school environment in which rising attainment is actively supported by keeping children and teachers focused on the attributes, actions and excitement of learning, rather than the relentlessness and pain of testing. Cultures take time to embed, but the potential is there to track the strengths and weaknesses of specific learning



characteristics and map them against other aspects of school life. Already, however, we have pupils in Key Stage 2 confidently reflecting on their approaches to study and how to develop them, referencing the language of Learning Scores. We also celebrated our best public exam results and value added for a decade in 2018 from pupils knowing that what underpins long term success is their ability to 'Engage' positively with work, to respond constructively to criticism and 'Feedback' from supervisors or employers, to 'Collaborate' in order to improve outcomes for themselves and those around them, to be confident in adapting 'Strategies' for work, and to be curious in private study or preparation.

A great education is not just about securing a place at the next institution. It is about empowering young people to thrive in future environments. Our pupils must know what to do when they don't know what to do (when they don't have teachers or parents nagging or instructing them). The replacement of Effort Grades with Learning Scores at St Dunstan's College is one way in which we actively encourage intellectual ambition, pupil wellbeing, and future employability. Who says success cannot be 'Effort-less'?



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Maths – No Problem! Annual Conference

Every year, Maths – No Problem! (MNP) brings forward-thinking experts and practitioners together for the world's premier maths teaching conference.

This year's conference Deep Learning in Education will take place at London's Gibson Hall on April 30th from 8.45am until 5pm.

Aimed at senior leadership – Heads and deputy heads (primary) – and Maths leads and teachers (primary), speakers will include:

- Marcus du Sautoy, Professor of Mathematics, Oxford University and host of the Netflix series: The Code
- Brian Butterworth, Professor of Cognitive Neuroscience, University College London and best-selling author of The Mathematical Brain
- Dr Yeap Ban Har, International Singapore Maths expert and maths mastery trainer

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- Plus, welcome address from MNP Founder and CEO Andy Psarianos.

Delegates can expect to learn:

- About the research around hidden structures that help children build mathematical fluency and deep understanding
- Why problem solving skills are essential to lasting mathematical success, and the role our brains play in active learning
- About effective differentiation techniques and the evidence behind them

Plus, the chance to network with a unique community of like-minded practitioners and world-experts.

What delegates will get out of the day:

Uncover the hidden structures of learning
Discover why traditional teaching methods only skim the intellectual surface, and how teaching for depth helps children find patterns, learn foundational properties and reveal hidden mathematical structures that build fluency.

Find out why deep learning is essential for lifelong growth
Semantic memorisation only gets pupils so far. Seeing problem solving as a positive, creative process helps children find the pleasure in working things out while making cognitive connections that last much longer than rote memorisation.

Say bye to busy work and start differentiating for depth
Should you differentiate by content? By outcome? Opinions vary, but research shows that teaching for mastery encourages deep thinking and benefits pupils in all subjects. Learn how experimenting within constraints leads to higher levels of understanding.

www.mathsnoproblem.com/conference



Economists emerge triumphant

Four Year 12 economics students from the Stamford Endowed Schools emerged triumphant in the first Inter-School Target 2.0 Economics Competition held at Uppingham School against Sixth Form economists from Oundle and Uppingham last month (February).

The Inter-School Target 2.0 Economics Competition, previously known as the Bank of England Target 2.0 schools competition, saw the three teams from Stamford, Uppingham and Oundle tasked with presenting their own detailed forecast of inflation in the UK over the next 18 months. The teams were then asked to make their recommendation for interest rates and monetary policy in order to achieve the target of 2.0% inflation (hence the competition's name: Target 2.0), just as the Bank of England does.

The four economics students from the Stamford Endowed Schools: Freddie Shaw, Elicia Miller, Calum Fryatt and Hugh Dalrymple excelled during their 15 minute presentation before being questioned by a panel

of judges drawn from academia and business.

Stamford Endowed Schools' team captain, Hugh Dalrymple said, 'We learned a lot from both the preparation and the presenting elements of the competition. Incorporating knowledge from our economics A level, whilst analysing the current economic situation has given us a much better understanding of the general economic climate. It was certainly an invaluable experience and we hope the competition will continue over the coming years.'

Mrs Eleanor Herdale, Head of Economics at Stamford Endowed Schools commented, 'I am delighted for the team. It was great to see them take on the role of real-life Bank of England economists with such enthusiasm and ability. Our students faced tough competition on the day against older teams with more experience, but they certainly rose to the occasion and made Stamford incredibly proud!'

Pictured: With the successful team are the judges from left to right: Mr Chris Ewbank, senior bursar of St John's College, Edward Cartwright, an Economics Professor from De Montfort University and Dr Richard Maloney, the Headmaster of Uppingham

First place in computational challenge

Student Christopher Brown from Holme Grange School, Berkshire, was invited to the Department of Computer Science at the University of Oxford last month (February) as a finalist in a UK-wide competition – The UK Bebras Computational

Thinking Challenge.

Reaching the final of the Intermediate age group is an impressive achievement, as 101,342 students entered the first round for the age group (12–14). Christopher achieved first place among the top 60 highest achieving students invited to the final round in his age group, and was presented with his finalist's certificate and medal at a prize-giving ceremony at Hertford College.

The UK Bebras Computational Thinking Challenge, supported by Google, is designed to get students excited about computing and computational thinking.



Pictured: Christopher receiving a finalist's certificate and medal from Peter Millican, Professor of Philosophy at Hertford College, University of Oxford

Mathsteasers: A welcome challenge for advanced learners

Mathsteasers are a series of booklets that encourage deep thinking and productive struggle in advanced learners. Created for Years 4–8, Mathsteasers questions follow the 2014 English national curriculum, so they easily fit into your practice as extension material.

Identifying struggling learners and supporting them is an important part of managing your classroom. But what about advanced learners? Just like struggling learners, it's essential to give advanced learners the support they need.

In most classrooms, children who excel at maths are praised and bumped ahead in the curriculum. This is a way of providing them with a greater challenge and keeping them interested. However, these well-intentioned classroom strategies can cause trouble in the future.

The Problem with Praise

When we tell advanced learners things like “you’re so talented”, and “you did that so quickly” we may actually be doing more harm than good. Advanced learners who’ve never had to struggle to overcome mathematical challenges and are accustomed to praise, start to believe that not struggling at maths is a fundamental part of who they are. So, when they inevitably run into trouble further down the road, it can be a devastating blow to their self-image.

This isn’t to say praise is out of the assessment picture, but we need to praise wisely by placing value on effort and perseverance rather than “smarts” or success. Praising tenacity and resilience goes a long way. When pupils are praised on their hard work, they gain a sense of optimism and an awareness that they can learn and grow as they meet new challenges.

Ready to take your advanced learners further?

Find out more at: www.mathsnoproblem.com/independent-schools



Embracing Struggle

Maths – No Problem! developed the Mathsteasers series as a classroom resource to address this problem. These booklets of challenging problems make it easier to focus on a pupil’s effort and on the process they engage in rather than their ability to achieve.

By taking the emphasis away from simply getting the right answer, Mathsteasers help pupils embrace struggle and develop what Stanford psychologist Carol Dweck calls a ‘growth mindset’.

According to Dweck, children who have a growth mindset see themselves as being able to grow and develop through learning, rather than running up against their natural limitations. They’ve learned that intelligence isn’t fixed. It’s built through hard work, deep focus and – most importantly – resilience. Children who embrace a growth mindset see talent as only a starting point, and aren’t afraid to push themselves further than they think they’re capable of.

When pupils shift their attitudes towards learning, they gain more confidence, start to take risks and reap bigger educational rewards.

Celebrate Failure

An essential part of this is letting pupils know that it’s okay to fail. Children should see failing as a positive opportunity and learn that the real failure is giving up, or not trying at all. Mathsteasers are designed to be extra challenging. They’re about giving pupils new walls to hit so that their attitudes toward struggle and failure become positive.

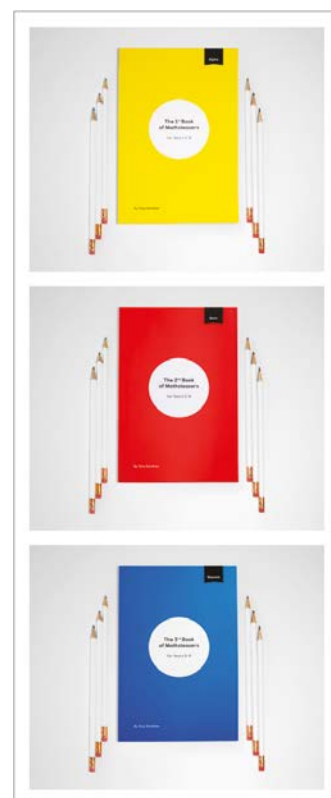
Seeing struggle in a positive light encourages children to go as far as they can with a maths problem, and explain their thinking. It shows them that failing isn’t the end of the world, because they have the opportunity to try again, and go further next time.

Mathsteasers are full of challenging questions and are designed to make learners struggle.

But solving the problem is only a small, less important part of it. Teaching with Mathsteasers helps pupils learn to persevere and stretches their conceptual abilities so they can grow as learners. They learn that struggling is all part of the process, it’s a productive exercise they can build on lesson after lesson.

Tools for Success

Perseverance can make or break a pupil’s self confidence and even advanced learners need to hone this essential skill. By continuing to challenge pupils you give them the tools to succeed. It may seem counterintuitive, but letting advanced learners struggle and praising them for their tenacity rather than their achievement will ensure they go beyond even their own expectations.





Profile

In conversation with Anna Tomlinson

Born: 1974

Schools and University Attended:
Hambleton County Primary School

St Aidan's Church
of England High School

The Blackpool Sixth Form College

First job:
Gledhill Water Storage, 1991

First management job:
St George's School for Girls, 2002

First job in education:
St George's School for Girls,
Edinburgh 1997

Appointed to current job:
2014

Favourite piece of music:
I have an eclectic taste in music
but never fail to be inspired by
William Walton's Crown Imperial:
Coronation March.

Favourite food:
Anything spicy –
I love a good curry!

Favourite drink:
Ice cold Provençal rose on holiday

Favourite holiday destination:
I have many, but it is currently the
South of France

Favourite leisure pastime:
Walking on a Scottish beach

**Favourite TV or radio
programme/series:**
'As Time Goes By'

Suggested epitaph:
She gave it her all...

Q Founded in 1846, St. Margaret's is the oldest all-through girls' school in Scotland, and the only all-girls' school in Aberdeen. You promote the school as a place where girls become 'socially aware and prepared to cope with the challenges of the competitive world beyond school'. In what way do you believe that being girls-only assists staff in helping pupils achieve these important goals?

A Quite simply, in a girls' school we can put all our energies into focusing on what girls need at their different developmental stages without having to worry about what the differing needs of boys might be. Pupils who move to St Margaret's from co-educational schools observe that there are fewer gender-weighted expectations around subject choice and relish the manifold opportunities for girls to take on leadership roles within school. In addition to elected positions of responsibility and membership of pupil councils and other committees, many clubs and societies at St Margaret's are student led. For example, there is a strong tradition of debating and public speaking with senior pupils coaching junior girls. Our teams compete and win against co-educational teams and are undoubtedly empowered to speak with confidence and conviction. The girls-only environment facilitates a lot of positive interaction between older and younger girls and this continues beyond school with former pupils regularly acting as careers mentors who provide current pupils with work experience and interview practice. Former pupils have also been inspiring speakers at the events which we host for girls across the region to promote greater understanding of careers such as engineering, architecture and construction. These activities and many more combine to create an environment where girls are both challenged and supported to develop their own strengths and make the most of opportunities.

Q After a childhood in Lancashire, you read Theology at the University of St Andrews before joining the teaching staff of St. George's in 1999. Within scarcely more than a decade you had risen through the ranks to be Deputy Head. Who or what inspired you to get into teaching? When did the ambition to get into management kick in?

A Throughout university I was very clear that I didn't want to be a teacher and from St Andrews I had a scholarship to go to Princeton to undertake a postgraduate degree in theology. Unfortunately, just days before I was due to leave, I was in a car accident which prevented me from taking up the place. To cut a long story short, I ended up working for two terms in a junior boarding house at St George's School for Girls in Edinburgh; it

was this experience which led to a complete change of heart, and I undertook a PGCE the following year. I was very fortunate to work with head teachers who took a personal interest in the development of my career and encouraged me to take on new roles. Their belief in me made me feel that I could step up to the challenges of a management role.

Q There is a shortage of senior teachers willing to move up to headship, possibly because of the pressures of responsibility which go with such promotion. How can competent staff be encouraged to follow your lead and take on the challenge?

A My own experience demonstrated to me how important it is to encourage colleagues to take up opportunities both in and out of school and to demonstrate trust in their competence and expertise. If someone has an idea or an initiative about which they are passionate, if at all possible I try to support them to carry it through. At St Margaret's, we are fortunate to have a generous professional development budget which enables colleagues to not only attend courses but to visit other schools, universities and industries. It has been wonderful to see developments in areas such as outdoor learning, mindfulness, foreign expeditions and digital learning to name but a few, all of which have come about because of the enthusiasm and drive of individuals. Our now regular 'Teachmeets' were the brain child of a colleague and they provide an informal but engaging forum for colleagues to present to their peers about areas of personal interest. The in-house experience of these events inspired our head of English to organise something similar for English teachers across Aberdeen city and shire and this will now be an annual event.

Q If you look back with the benefit of hindsight on your first four years as a head, is there anything you would have done differently or prioritised differently if you were starting out today?

A 2014 was an exciting time to join St Margaret's as very soon after I arrived we planned and then swiftly built a state-of-the-art science block which in turn freed up space for fantastic new studios for art and drama. These substantial improvements to the school facilities coincided with celebrations of the 170th anniversary of St Margaret's and a focused drive to reconnect with former pupils, parents and staff through a newly established development office. During the time in which I have been in Aberdeen, the region as a whole has suffered as a result of the downturn in the oil and gas industry; like all businesses we have worked hard to make sure that we are operating as effectively and efficiently as possible. Hindsight

Anna Tomlinson has been head of St. Margaret's School for Girls, Aberdeen, since 2014. She was previously a Deputy Head at St. George's School for Girls in Edinburgh.



is a wonderful thing and every day really is a school day in the sense that I am always reflecting on how to make the best use of the time and resources I have. I am fortunate to work with a tremendously dedicated and talented team of staff whose feedback is very valuable. After four years, I recognise the need to pace myself and to make time to explore more of the beautiful countryside, coastline and rich cultural life which this wonderful part of Scotland has to offer.

Q You still teach Religious, Moral, and Philosophical Studies. Is it important for heads to keep teaching if they are to stay informed and relevant? How much of your week is spent in the classroom?

A *I currently teach part of the Advanced Higher RMPS course and regularly cover classes when needed. I try very hard to know the names and something of the life and learning of every pupil at St Margaret's and for me it is important to have a regular teaching commitment. This gives me an opportunity to spend time in the classroom with a group of pupils, and enables them to see me in a different, less formal light. I experience first-hand simple things like how our IT system is developing or the impact of changes to the school calendar. Without a doubt, I pick up a lot about the life of the school in this way and I gain a fresh insight into what it is like to be a pupil or teacher in our school.*

Q Your subject, along with Psychology, appears to be getting more popular amongst sixth-form students. Could there be a connection between this trend and the increasing anxieties of a generation who apparently struggle to find contentment in a hectic, social-media-driven life?

A *I think we need to avoid generalising about any generation and I'm not convinced that there is a direct correlation between an uptake in the study of my subject and increasing anxiety in young people. I have always found young people to be interested in the 'big questions' of human existence and they undoubtedly enjoy the opportunity to explore ideas about what really matters to them. I actually asked my Advanced Higher students what they thought of this question and they observed that they enjoy studying the subject because everyone's experiences and views are relevant; they stressed how important they think it is that schools support their pupils to develop empathy and understanding of other people's points of view, as this in turn leads them to have more insight into their own particular situations. At St Margaret's the development of empathy*

is a key driver for many initiatives including our charities programme which involves every form class organising a charity event each year; more recently we have tried to strike a balance between fundraising and getting directly involved in the work of a charity through volunteering or other acts of service which help pupils to see life from someone else's perspective. For example, for our 3 Junior class this has involved a series of visits to a local social group at which they have played games and built up relationships with older members of the local community.

Q You have been Scottish Chair of the Girls' Schools Association (GSA) for the last three years, and are on the Board of the Scottish Council of Independent Schools (SCIS). The independent school sector has received something of a media battering of late - headlines about arrogance, privilege, unfair advantage etc. - all of which fly in the face of a reality where the majority of parents make considerable sacrifices to put their children through an independent education. How can SCIS, GSA and others get the media and public to understand and accept the correct picture rather than a biased caricature?

A *I think we need to continue to be proactive about building authentic and mutually beneficial relationships with schools, universities and other community groups as this will, in turn, serve to break down the stereotypes which exist about independent schools. Sustained and genuine relationships between professionals undoubtedly contribute to a better understanding of the nature of our schools. Of course, when there is genuine partnership work going on, opportunities may arise to share this with the media. In my experience, our own pupils are the most powerful advocates for our sector. Recently, one of our girls joined a panel of women leaders in the oil and gas sector; as a future chemical engineer she had been asked to speak about how she would like the industry to develop over the coming years. Months later we are still hearing from members of the audience who were impressed by her!*

Q You are developing partnerships between St. Margaret's and universities to promote careers such as engineering, architecture, construction and business to your girls. Have you found any hint of bias amongst admissions officers against students from independent schools, as has been reported south of the border?

A *I am pleased to say that in my time here this has not been our experience with university applications from St Margaret's. Very occasionally, we have needed*

to provide further clarification about aspects of Scottish qualifications to English or international universities. Here in Aberdeen we have relished the opportunity to work closely with our local universities to promote the career paths you mention to girls in schools across Scotland. This work began with a one-day event at St Margaret's to which we invited girls from local schools to hear from academics and graduates of Aberdeen University about the opportunities available to women in engineering. This partnership has now developed into a three-day residential conference to which girls are invited to apply from across the UK. The inaugural conference in 2018 was sponsored by Chevron and the 2019 event will be sponsored by BP. This three-way collaboration between school, university and an oil company has resulted in a unique and very hands-on experience for the successful applicants. Our one-day events with Robert Gordon University to promote architecture, construction and business to girls have proved to be just as beneficial to the delegates and have facilitated greater understanding between our school and the universities. It is a privilege to be working with the university sector to break down some of the barriers which still exist for women in some industries.

Q You are a member of the Scottish Episcopal Church, within the worldwide Anglican Communion, whose membership is somewhat under 1% of the population of Scotland and therefore considerably smaller than the Church of Scotland. The SEC has faced controversy from traditionalists over the years, most recently with the appointment of a female supporter of same-sex marriage as bishop in your city of Aberdeen. What part does faith play in your life, and in how you run your school?

A *We were delighted to welcome Bishop Anne to speak at our St Margaret's Day Service this session as part of our ongoing commitment to introducing pupils to inspiring role models in all walks of life. Ours is a non-denominational school which welcomes pupils of all faiths and, if anything, my own theological studies have highlighted for me the importance of developing a community where diversity and difference are truly respected and celebrated: first and foremost I want our school to be a place where pupils and staff of all backgrounds feel valued. My own personal faith is a cornerstone of stillness within what can be the emotional rollercoaster of school life, and it underpins my commitment to working with pupils and staff to build a compassionate and socially-aware school community.*

Why every school should provide a blog for students

David Tuck, Head of Politics and Citizenship and Stamford Endowed Schools Blog Co-ordinator, introduced a digital blog where only students could post in September 2017 and it quickly became a runaway success with over 150 students contributing well over 350 blog posts in the last eighteen months. HMI eulogised about the opportunities for pupil voice when the school was inspected; 400 parents now follow the blog's twitter page and the blog itself has been viewed over 15,000 times. The blog is a safe digital space that encompasses the whole of the Stamford Endowed Schools community and manages to be simultaneously both exclusive and inclusive. So why should you set up a blog at your school? *Here are David's answers...*

It is a place where academic excellence can be celebrated and utilised

At its most cerebral the blog is a forum for unashamedly academic and creative endeavour. Our brightest students have blogged pieces on the Venezuelan political crisis -- entirely in Spanish; mused on Quantum Physics and written five thousand word essays on the 'Unloved American Presidents'. Art Scholars digitised copies of their A-level portfolios and an Economics student wrote on the drawbacks of a cashless society.

Students' blogging at this level are essentially building personalised digital portfolios. Matthew Renwick, has argued that digital portfolios are online collections of learning artefacts that intentionally curate a student's accomplishments over time. UCAS applications for competitive courses demand that students articulate their academic/creative interests. We are increasingly seeing older students utilising the blog to produce a bespoke body of work, which can be easily tagged as a digital link and then included in a personal statement for a university admissions tutor or in a letter of application for a job. The Principal of my school, Mr. Will Phelan, is passionate in the belief that we have to prepare students for an ever changing world. Digital portfolios may well be a niche concept in 2019 but they could well be the norm by 2029 and we are pleased that we are preparing students for tomorrow, today.

It is a place for students to find their voice

Blogging confidently and for public consumption is not always easy and the blog is a place where younger students can build self-confidence and find their voice. Moreover, it is a place where we can celebrate learning and record many different types of achievement.

Giving the students a blank canvas has meant that we are regularly surprised by the content of their blogs. We have had blogs on feminism, SXS Champion racing, art reviews; music reviews; dinosaurs, engineering, chemistry experiments; football reports, modern art; #Metoo; Donald Trump, Brexit and grasshoppers! My personal favourite was a student who announced that he was a stunt double on the Netflix show Free Rein (no-one at school knew this) and would we be interested in his blog about the experience?

What is crucial is the students see the blog as theirs. Only students (or alumni) can post and they tell me how they want it set out, which means that they do not want some slick corporate website. My job is to check content and post. As long as it is sensible it goes on, and it can be a Year 7 writing a blog cooking cupcakes or a 6th former's Vlog on Equality spoken entirely in Spanish: each blog has its worth. There are surprisingly few rules, although I advise anyone setting up a blog to talk to their GDPR Designated Officer to check that they are not contravening regulations or their school's privacy policy.



David Tuck with Kendal Mills, Deputy Head of Stamford School and students

It is a place to remember

So many things happen during a school year and perhaps the blog's most important job is to record as much as it can and not just the high-profile events. So we will cover the first XV but we also have those epic U13D Rugby match reports and photos; Year 8 students' proudly blogging their first published poems; the minority sports that perhaps are overlooked; the lower school play that lives in the shadow of the big school production: they all get their moment in the sun. Moreover, all of the school's community work; charity work; the CCF; Duke of Edinburgh; alumni experiences are included: there is always a student who will write a blog. When you first start you do have to encourage participation but once momentum gathers the majority of the blogs will be emailed directly to you by students. School magazines only have so much space, whilst the blog

has a limitless capacity. If you tag your events correctly the school has a living and breathing archive that is easily navigated.

It is not going to cost very much money

The IT team at my school set up the blog on edublogs platform which allows the school complete control over privacy and content. The version we are using is free of charge. If you couple it with a twitter account and share posts on the school's existing social media, you will soon have a hit on your hands. Schools are diverse and complicated places and the student blog celebrates achievement and facilitates the development of students in becoming self-directed learners. The Stamford Endowed Schools argue that they are independent schools for independent minds. The blog demonstrates that is a reality and not an empty slogan.

Science Centre opens in time for Mission Discovery

Tonbridge School, Kent, Barton Science Centre opened earlier this term.

Named after distinguished British organic chemist Sir Derek Barton, a former pupil of the school, and a Nobel Prize winner 50 years ago, the three-storey building places science and technology at the very heart of school life.

One of the most ambitious developments to happen at the school since its first science building was constructed in 1887, the Barton Science Centre blends new classrooms, laboratories and latest technology with many of the architectural features from the original Victorian building.

Designed to stimulate interest and curiosity about all the sciences – Physics, Chemistry and Biology – the centre includes an interactive periodic table, a TV wall, its own bee hive, a roof garden, a greenhouse and a library, to name just a few of its new features.

The school is also running an exciting programme of science activities, showcasing the potential

of the new building. Events include an international student science conference, an art show and an annual schools' competition for Year 9 pupils, which will test skills in Biology, Chemistry and Physics.

This month (March) Tonbridge becomes the first school in the UK to host 'Mission Discovery', a week-long course in which teams of pupils from a range of schools design an experiment to be flown to, and tested at, the International Space Station. This ground-breaking event will be led by two NASA astronauts, alongside rocket scientists and postgraduate students.

Designed to foster even greater curiosity about science, and to stimulate cross-curricular activity, the centre will also have a wider public benefit. It will enable the school to enhance its outreach programmes, such as the 'Science for Schools' days for local pupils, host public lectures, and become a regional hub for the whole community.

The Science for Schools programme



runs on Wednesday afternoons: many primary school children come to the Tonbridge labs, where they grow crystals, carry out mini-experiments, build parachutes, learn about maggots and generally have fun with science. Tonbridge boys also put on demonstrations for pupils and talk about what they are studying.

The school's Head of Science, Bill Burnett, described the Barton Science Centre as "striking, innovative and simply fun to be a part of". He added: "It's a world-

class environment for innovative teaching and learning, where we decided that no two rooms would be the same.

"Some classrooms, for instance, have a very flexible layout with chairs and desks, and so the teacher might sometimes be in the centre of the room, to encourage discussions. Other rooms are set up for independent study and experiments. Even the stairs and walls are adorned with scientific symbols and names, and they too are part of the learning experience."

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* Additional tools will be required to complete the powered gliders.



The CREST Awards scheme is the British Science Association's flagship programme for young people. CREST is a scheme that inspires young people to think and behave like scientists and engineers.

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HRH Ceremony

HRH The Prince of Wales, patron of the Prayer Book Society, praised Moreton Hall, Shropshire, students who were among the finalists at the Society's thirtieth annual Cranmer Awards Competition at Lambeth Palace in London last month (February).

In front of a distinguished panel of judges which included the composer Andrew Lloyd Webber, the actress Prunella Scales, the novelist PD James and the poet CH Sisson, the finalists in this prestigious competition recited

memorised passages from Thomas Cranmer's 1662 Book of Common Prayer.

Addressing the finalists at the prize-giving, HRH Prince of Wales said, "I believe the Prayer Book is a glorious part of every English speaker's heritage."

It's a sentiment shared by the Moreton Hall school finalists Zoe Tse (pictured with the Prince of Wales), Florence Tyne, Aghoghomena Akpoteni and Isabella Harpin.



Don't lose your minibuses through ignorance or confusion on compliance

It was reported in Route One on 25th February that the Deputy Traffic Commissioner John Baker has refused to return four impounded minibuses to Claremont School of Ebdon's Hill, St Leonards on Sea, when it was discovered they were being used for reward or hire without an Operator's Licence.

Schools can operate minibuses in one of two ways:

1. Under a Section 19 Permit, if they are not operating their minibuses for reward or hire, this includes independent schools with charitable status. Schools can charge pupils a reasonable sum for the use of the minibus that covers the costs of use, including paying a driver, but cannot be making a profit from them.
2. If schools do, or wish to, make a profit from their minibuses, they must do so under an O licence, an operator's licence, which requires an appointed transport manager and fully trained drivers with a D1 licence and CPC training.

The article doesn't give much detail but reports school management had not realised that all transport activities must stop until compliance was achieved, following a warning. The school has since applied for the return of the buses on the grounds that it did not know that they were being used in contravention of the law, but were refused.

Confusion over minibus compliance

School minibus management continues to be a complex grey area, and most schools seem to be managing on the most basic of information without appointing a specific person to understand and be responsible for the compliance and safety issues of managing their

minibuses and drivers, whether it is one minibus or an entire fleet.

Castle Minibus identified this in 2017 when it launched its Greater Than 8 campaign, with an online petition, to raise awareness of minibus licensing and encourage best practise of getting all drivers trained with a full D1 if they're driving more than 8 passengers. This would bring the UK in line with Europe, avoid any safety and over-weight concerns with 'light-weight' minibuses and ensure that all drivers had taken a medical and eyesight test as well as passing the theory and practical element of the test.

70% of schools didn't know about Section 19 Permits or 10-week safety inspections

Following calls to over 300 schools to inform them of a change in guidance from DVSA from 17-week to 10-week safety inspections, it was apparent to Castle that 70% of schools had a very poor understanding of minibus compliance and so, with the support of the ISBA, Castle Minibus wrote a Minibus Compliance Course.

With initial input from a former traffic police officer and Castle's ADI trainers and then approved by RoSPA, ISBA and Beverley Bell, Former Senior Traffic Commissioner for the UK the course was launched in September 2018.

Beverley Bell comments "*The law in this area is complex and not always easily understood*

by schools and their teaching staff with severe penalties for non-compliance – as well as the risk to the safety of your pupils. It is therefore vital that your school gets it right".

Whilst there are still grey areas that have not been tested by law the course is able to give clear guidance on compliance and safety best practise that will enable schools to decide on their minibus policies, and document and record all that is needed to keep them compliant and running as safely as possible.

Castle Minibus has identified six pillars of compliance for schools to consider, all of which are covered in the Minibus Compliance Course:

1. Responsibility and documentation
2. 10-week safety inspections
3. Daily walk around checks
4. Permits
5. Licensing
6. Vehicle weights

For many delegates who have attended the MCC they've come away with clear action points for compliance, such as completing 10-week safety inspections and daily minibus walk around checks. The course also gives them food for thought on elements of best practise, where the law may be unclear, to ensure that their school is doing everything they can to stay on the right side of the law and keep their precious cargo safe.

*Source: route-one.net/articles/news/DTC_refuses_to_return_four_impounded_minibuses

For more information on dates and venues for the Minibus Compliance Course please visit castleminibus.co.uk/driver-training/mcc or call Castle's compliance team on 01869 253744.



A LOT HAS CHANGED

How long has it been since you updated your minibus management, training and policies?
70% of schools* surveyed did not understand their obligations under a Section 19 Permit

*survey completed in 2018 by Castle Minibus of 300 UK schools

MINIBUS COMPLIANCE COURSE (MCC)

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'The law in this area is complex and not always easily understood by schools and their teaching staff with severe penalties for non-compliance – as well as the risk to the safety of your pupils. It is therefore vital that your school gets it right'

Beverley Bell, Former Senior Traffic Commissioner for Great Britain

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"I wish I could speak every language and play every musical instrument."

In this one sentence Brendan Rodgers, Manager of Celtic F.C., captures a very important truth, says Tricia Kelleher, Principal of the Stephen Perse Foundation, a family of seven schools in Cambridgeshire and Essex.

A proficiency in languages and music offers a social and cultural glue which brings people together in truly meaningful ways, touching both the head and the heart. Living as we do in a petulant age of unreason and dark suspicion, where populists delight in poisoning the well of tolerance and understanding of difference, we need to ensure that we continue to value learning languages and offer musical opportunities to all as an antidote to ignorance and hatred.

Indeed a former student of mine Sasha Dugdale, now a published poet and Russianist, makes a strong moral case for studying languages:

"Languages give an insight into different and other social and cultural psychologies and challenge our own 'psychologies', our conventions, our philosophies and our given truths. People with that sense of the conditional nature of our own structures are better at finding points of contact with others, understanding them and enjoying the richness of difference rather than finding it worrying or a cause for defensiveness."

Lisa Batiashvili is equally passionate about the power of music to bring people together. A concert violinist, she was born in Georgia but grew up in Germany because of the political difficulties in the country of her birth. When interviewed about performing with an orchestra comprising young musicians from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Poland, and Ukraine, neighbouring countries but with distinctive cultures, Ms Batiashvili observed:

"I think music IS the language that brings peoples and nations together more than any other language."

Unfortunately, despite their transformational agency, the educational landscape in schools across the country is regressing in both language learning and music making. The British Council's 2018 survey on Language Trends found that language learning is being negatively impacted in just over a third of state secondary schools "either through student motivation and/or parental attitudes towards the subject". It is a moot point whether the many language teachers who are citizens of other EU countries decide to continue to work in the UK post Brexit. Given European Commission data from 2016 found that only 34% of British people can communicate in a language other than English, the negative direction of travel in terms of language learning does not bode well for the future.

And what of the health of music in our schools? A survey undertaken by the University of Sussex last October reported that just 47.5% of schools make music compulsory in Year 9 compared to 84% six years ago. It also found that of almost 500 schools, some do not even offer music as a curriculum subject in Year 7, while over a third had fewer staff in music than two years previously. The EBacc was perceived as a key driver in this narrowing of the curriculum by the majority of schools.

What's more, the free peripatetic teaching I received during my schooling is being lost through financial exigency across the UK.

The Economist published a report about this last year focusing on Rhostyllen in Wales. For the men of this Welsh town, the three pillars of life in the past were God, coal and the organ.

With that world now long gone, the local council voted to cut the budget for its music service (which gave free music lessons to children who wanted to learn an instrument) by 72%. This is just illustrative of a national trend which is pushing music and music making to the margins.

In both the case of language learning and music, because their value is about our common humanity and not immediately measurable, our young people are in very real danger of being diminished as individuals through no fault of their own.

It is critical that our national education system prepares young people for the world they will live in. Although Brexit may take us out of the EU, it won't take us out of being part of a globalised, multi ethnic, multinational and interrelated world. Together language learning and music serve to break down populist barriers and build global bridges.

As Principal of a group of independent schools in and around Cambridge, a city with an international reputation as a centre of excellence with a truly cosmopolitan character, I foster a culture in which we look beyond our school walls and see the world. Students consider themselves global citizens and have a wide range of languages available to them, from Arabic and Mandarin Chinese to French and German. We know that this



only scratches the surface of our community, where we estimate at least 30 different languages are spoken.

The musical life of our schools is equally rich and vibrant. Whether it be a sixth former performing a solo concerto at the University Concert Hall, a young learner taking part in a musical assembly for parents, or a budding rock star participating in the hotly contested Battle of the Bands, we endeavour through an inclusive approach to offer something for every learner.

Given the Brexit cacophony of sound, it is apposite to reflect on the inspirational opportunity offered by the union of music and language, epitomised in 1972 when the European Union adopted Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 as its anthem.

Composed in 1823, the music is set to "An die Freude", Friedrich von Schiller's lyrical verse from 1785. The poem expresses Schiller's idealistic vision of the human race becoming brothers, a vision shared by Beethoven. No one can listen to this anthem without being moved – it speaks to our heads and hearts. And that is the power of languages and music.

Orchestral Day 2019



Musicians from 12 Gloucestershire and Wiltshire primary and secondary schools took part in an Orchestral Day at Rendcomb College on Wednesday, 13 February.

Led by Rendcomb College's music department, around 60 musicians playing 10 different instruments spent the day learning three pieces of music which they performed in a finale concert in front of parents and staff at the end of the day.

Pupils in Year 5 to Year 7 from Northleach, Sherbourne, Siddington, Powell's,

Pictured: Mrs Caron de Burgh taking a rehearsal

Minchinhampton, St. Sampson's, Stratton, Ampney Crucis, Andoversford and Yorkley Primary Schools, The Richard Pate School and Five Acres High School, joined Rendcomb College Junior and Senior School pupils to form an orchestra in the state-of-the-art Griffin Theatre.

The sessions were led by Rendcomb's Director of Music, Dr Tom Edwards and specialist music teachers Mrs Caron de Burgh and Mrs Tonia Price. They played Grieg's In the Hall of the Mountain King, Bernstein's Mambo and the theme to Mission Impossible.

Dr Tom Edwards, said: "The first Rendcomb Orchestral Day was a great success and a wonderful occasion. It was striking to see a 60-piece orchestra made up of such young and talented players. The orchestra made a wonderful sound and it was a great pleasure to see so many young players taking such an obvious delight in the experience."

Headteacher of St. Sampson's C of E Primary School in Cricklade, Mrs Jennifer Bayne, said: "Thank you for the experience you offered our pupils; they had a super time."

Choral spectacular

Budding singers from Derby High School's Primary Department performed at one of the largest school choir concerts in the world.

More than 30 pupils from Years 5 and 6 sang at the Resorts World Arena in Birmingham at the Young Voices concert.

Schools from across the country took part in the event, which involved more than 6,000 students singing a range of songs in front of school staff, parents and family members. Derby High School students were asked to learn 13 songs with actions in school before

taking part in a rehearsal at the Resorts World Arena during the day and performing in the evening.

Pop star Tony Hadley performed with students along with dancers Urban Strides led by Andy Instone, who has run street dance workshops at Derby High School.

Sara Evans-Bolger, Year 5 class teacher at Derby High School, said that it was an amazing experience to hear so many children singing together.

She said: "It was lovely because when we arrived we were all

different schools wearing our own uniforms but we became one choir during the concert and all the children were wearing their Young Voices t-shirts. It was amazing and very powerful to hear that many children singing together."

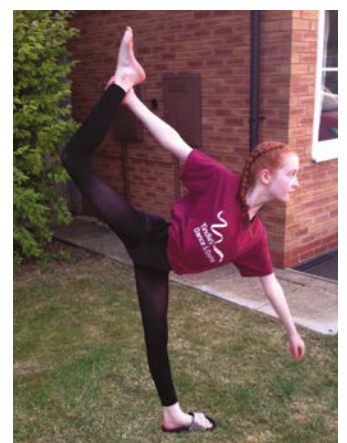
There was also a special treat for teaching assistant Carol Hitchcock who met Mr Hadley during an autograph signing session.

For the past 20 years, Young Voices has staged the largest children's choir concerts in the world. Over 2 million children have taken part in a Young Voices concert and the organisation believes passionately in inspiring the next generation to find their love for music.

During a tour, each night between 5,000-8,000 children perform as a single choir to a sold-out audience of family and friends.



Ballet role



A Derby High School student is celebrating after winning a role in an English Youth Ballet production.

Clara Lomax, 13, performed in the EYB production of Giselle in Stoke-on-Trent this month (March).

She said: "I've been dancing since I was four and I do ballet, modern and I perform with a group too".



On with a roar

Young thespians from Bromsgrove Preparatory School staged two spellbinding performances of *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* to a packed Cobham Theatre at the School last month (February).

The calibre of acting, together with the staging and sets, exceeded any expectations of a preparatory school production. The hours of rehearsals, including a fight workshop by Stagefight had certainly developed well-trained, battle-ready, proficient actors.

Full of suspense and atmosphere, complete with *Turkish Delight* for an appreciative audience, the Year 7 and 8 pupils demonstrated outstanding skill, and their enjoyment of the production was evident for all to see.

Congratulations to Mr Woollhead, Head of Drama at Bromsgrove Prep School and his team, including the very professional pupil technical team backstage, who worked so hard and supported the pupils in this ambitious and thoroughly enjoyable piece of theatre.

Cabaret evening raises £600



A cabaret evening hosted by Ely Cathedral Girls' Choir has raised £600 for charity.

People of all ages packed into King's Ely's Hayward Theatre for 'Etheldreda Entertains' – a fun-filled evening featuring some of the girls' favourites songs, including many hits from musicals such as *Oliver*, *Mamma Mia* and *The Wizard of Oz*.

Entry to the cabaret evening was by donations on the door and, thanks to the generosity of the audience, £600 was raised for King's Ely's school charities this year – Cancer Research UK and the Tsavo Conservation Group. Ely Cathedral Girls' Choir

(ECGC) sang for the first time in September 2006 and was founded to complement the boys' choir, which has been part of the English Choral tradition since the mid-16th century.

Since 2010, ECGC has been under the direction of Sarah MacDonald, who is also Director of Music at Selwyn College, Cambridge. Historically, Ely's girl choristers have been educated at King's Ely Senior (Years 9 to 13), and have boarded together in Canonry House, beside the south entrance of the cathedral. However, since September 2018, the choir has been accepting girls in Years 7 and 8 at King's Ely Junior.

Performing Arts Careers Event

Staff from Dauntsey's School, Wiltshire, Careers and Drama Departments have teamed up to stage a two-day careers event to give pupils an understanding of not only the skill, commitment and opportunities they will need if they wish to become a performer themselves, but also how many other career options there are in the world of Performing Arts.

Sixteen professionals from many different aspects of the Performing Arts delivered presentations, ran workshops, a career carousel and networking events. One highlight was a visit from the BAFTA-winning actor, Tony Gardner, who led a question and answer session with pupils, talking about his transition from doctor to actor and the highs and lows of the acting industry.

James O'Hanlon, Head of Careers, Dauntsey's, said; "Many of the pupils would not consider themselves naturally drawn to the Performing Arts in terms of being

an artist themselves. However, through this Careers Event, they started to see that there are many opportunities in business, IT, design, technology, budgeting, marketing, events, art, personnel, planning, teaching and more. They now realise that they have many transferable skills that can fit well with a range of fascinating jobs within an environment they might have not previously considered."



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Musicians hit the high notes

Kirkham Grammar School, Lancashire, continues to produce musicians of the very highest calibre, who are not only achieving great things within school, but also at national and international level. Their passion for music, determination and hard-working ethic have paid dividends, both in their time at Kirkham Grammar School and also when they have made the transition into the professional music arena.

The musical heritage of Kirkham Grammar continues to be perpetuated by the current generation and the staff of the Music Department, Miss Crook (Director of Music) and Mr Dalton, are rightly very proud of all their continued successes. "Pupils have certainly taken the school motto, 'Ingredere Ut Proficias', to heart!" Recent achievements continue a line of successes from Kirkham Grammar School's musicians.

Florence Bunday (Voice) is currently studying for her A-levels and is causing waves vocally, both in and out of school. She was the vocal winner at the District heat of the Rotary Young Musician Competition. Florence progressed to the semi-finals in the same competition last year.

Charlotte Cross (Voice) who is currently studying for her GCSEs was highly commended in the vocal section of the aforementioned competition.

Pictured: Charlotte, Alex and Florence

Alexandra Clarke (Flute) is also currently studying for her A-levels at Kirkham Grammar School and is already an accomplished flautist with many solo concerts under her belt, as well as being a student of the Junior Department at the Royal Northern College of Music.

Alumni include:

James Nash (Trumpet) who reached the finals of the BBC Radio 2 Young Brass Musician in 2017, was Principal trumpet in the NYO and is currently in his first year at the Royal Academy of Music, London.

Kezia Taylor (Flute) who reached the semi-finals of the Rotary Young Musician Competition in 2015, performs extensively with professional ensembles and is currently in her third year at the Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester.

Elliott Gaston-Ross (Percussion) was BBC Young Musician percussion winner and subsequent finalist in 2014. He is currently studying at the Anton Bruckner Private University for Music, Dance and Drama in Linz, Austria. Elliott was recently a finalist and finished third in the TROMP Eindhoven Percussion Competition. He was the youngest contestant of the year, and the first competitor from Great Britain to be invited, since the competition began.

Les Misérables performed to sell-out audiences



With a cast of almost 50 pupils on stage, professional and student musicians in the orchestra and numerous crew backstage, Les Misérables was a tour de force at St Benedict's School, London.

Performed to sell-out audiences over three nights, and with a matinee for local junior school children, it was a show which will live on in the memories of everyone lucky enough to see it. The St Benedict's cast captivated the audience with the brilliance

of their singing and acting from start to finish, from the chain gang of the opening scene to the triumphant finale. The lead roles were played with considerable professionalism and talent, demonstrating total command of the show's emotional range.

All in all, Les Misérables was deemed a triumph, and a credit to the talents of everyone involved, directed by St Benedict's Head of Music, Christopher Eastwood and Head of Drama Katie Ravenscroft.

Chamber Choir perform at dedication



The Royal Hospital School, Suffolk, Chamber Choir travelled to Leros Barracks in Canterbury, Kent, to sing at the dedication, blessing and unveiling of a new memorial wall.

The invitation came from Capt Daniel Launder, a former pupil of the School, who is the adjutant of the 3rd Battalion, The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment (PWRR) based at Leros Barracks. The wall was built to commemorate

29 soldiers who have died in service since the formation of the regiment in 1992.

The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment (PWRR) is the line-infantry regiment for the Home Counties that traces its origins to the Trained Bands of London in the 17th Century. It is the senior English Regiment of the Line and also the most decorated; having received a total of 57 Victoria Crosses across its history.

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Active foundations: the importance of physical activity for early years

- Ali Oliver, Chief Executive, Youth Sport Trust
- Helen Battelley, Company Director, Music + Movement

Using insight to deliver digital strategies that truly engage

- Nick Richardson, Chief Executive, The Insights People

How to deliver successful active interventions in schools

- Dr Lauren Sherar, Reader in Physical Activity and Public Health, Loughborough University

- Martine Verweij, Founding CEO, Kids Run Free
- Dan Gooding, Executive Producer, BBC Super Movers
- Speaker from the Premier League

Technology: a friend not foe for getting kids active

- Dr Victoria Goodyear, Lecturer in Pedagogy of Sport, Physical Activity and Health, University of Birmingham
- Steven Day, Head of Participation, The Football Association

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Trial of career mentoring app goes national

A careers mentoring app piloted by Sheffield High School for Girls has been rolled out to 70,000 women to encourage pupils to interact with and quiz like-minded professionals.

The school was chosen by the Girls' Day School Trust (GDST) to trial the pioneering Rungway digital mentoring app last year which helps sixth form pupils access a network of contacts for careers advice.

The trial was so successful the platform, which was developed by international workplace culture brand Rungway, is now being rolled out to 24 schools and academies in the GDST network allowing access to its alumnae – the largest all-female networking group in the UK.

The school's Head of External Relations Alison Gardner said: "Rungway is all about connections. We started the pilot project in Sheffield and soon realised the exceptional pool of contacts, advice and expertise we were sitting on.

"We have created an inclusive and connected careers tool and a safe place where pupils can gain work and life advice from alumnae easily. It's more than just an advice platform and engagement tool, it is providing pupils with real voices on the topics most important to them.

"The aim of the app is to allow pupils to ask questions about

possible course and career options and gain responses from people in the know, those actually working in the careers they are interested in and who can provide tips and practical guidance on those jobs and the best routes into them, exam pressures and work experience opportunities."

Sheffield Girls' year 13 pupil Agatha Stephenson Meech, who is now connected with alumna midwife Becky Weston through Rungway, said: "I registered with the Rungway app and posted a question asking for advice on how to get into midwifery.

"Sheffield Girls' alumna Becky Weston, who is now a midwife and community team leader in Sheffield, responded to my question and we got chatting on the app.

"We met up in school, and Becky also invited a colleague who is a lecturer on the midwifery course at Sheffield Hallam University, and we discussed the positives and challenges of a midwifery career and she also gave me lots of tips for my application and the interview process.

"I was offered four interviews at different universities and so am currently preparing for those as they all take place in the next few weeks. The confidence I gained, by having easy access to support from alumnae who were once in the exact same position, was unparalleled.

"Rungway has opened up new ways for us to ask for careers advice and get help from people in the workplace. I asked a question and people shared their experiences with me.

"It was really easy to use, and there was no need to feel nervous about asking a question."

Becky Weston said: "I left Sheffield High School for Girls in 2009 and went on to study Midwifery. I now lead a team of community midwives in Sheffield and know that in my career, as well as so many others, it is invaluable to be able to get advice from people further along the career path than you.

I'm very keen to be able to give back and love that by using the Rungway app I can do this in my own time. I get a notification when a question is posted that is relevant to my career and my skill set and I can go open the app and send a reply.

"I was able to give Agatha a real insight into different aspects of the job; we discussed the incredibly rewarding parts of the job, specialist areas and a range of opportunities a career within midwifery can offer. I also had a look around the school which brought back some lovely memories and bumped into a few old teachers!"

Head of Careers at Sheffield Girls' and GDST Consultant for Progress to Higher Education Carole Hall

said: "This tool is a staple for Sixth Form pupils seeking advice about their next steps after leaving school.

"The girls can access the GDST Alumnae Network, made up of women from all sectors across the schools.

"The contacts, mentoring and job opportunities thanks to more than 70,000 successful women in all walks of life, are now right at the fingertips of pupils about to carve their own path in a tough employment market, giving them an invaluable advantage when finding a truly fulfilling career path.

"It's fantastic for the girls to have as many sources of help as they can. Many users have had very quick and helpful responses from alumnae, and the instant access means they can send questions anywhere when they need to.

"As it expands to more GDST schools, pupils will increasingly realise its value, while alumnae continue to enjoy the opportunity to give something back to younger girls in a similar position to themselves."

Advice offered to pupils included a response to a question on mathematics careers answered by founder of expert network Chime Advisors and Sheffield Girls' alumna Angela Bradbury who offered her own experience in starting her business and using her maths skills.

Pictured (l to r): Agatha Stephenson Meech and Becky Weston

Helping schools with pension challenges

Cost increases in the Teachers' Pension Scheme are a challenge to many schools

Recent surveys show that hundreds of independent schools are thinking of leaving the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS) as a result of the increase in employer contributions from 16.48% of salary to 23.68% from 1 September 2019. The cost increase for a typical school is between £150,000 and £300,000 per annum.

The TPS is a highly valuable benefit for staff and any alternative scheme will need to be high quality with the business case for change robust. First Actuarial are working with schools to help them assess the options and decide upon the best way forward. The typical process we follow is:

- **Strategy advice:** Analysis of costs, risks, available schemes, benefit outcomes and options
- **Implementation support:** Helping schools consult with staff on potential pension changes
- **Monitoring and governance:** Regular reports and updates for the finance committee

We also advise schools on their participation in other schemes such as the **Independent Schools' Pension Scheme, the Growth Plan and the Local Government Pension Scheme.**



"We enjoy working with First Actuarial. Their team are professional and knowledgeable. Advice is always clear and appropriate to our needs, and I would have no qualms about recommending their services."

John Moran, Bursar, Manchester High School for Girls

Why First Actuarial

First Actuarial helps independent schools understand the costs and risks of their workplace pensions, and assess the options available to their institution and its staff. We are an independent partnership with a specialist not-for-profit team. Our advice is clear and free of jargon, and we work hard to find viable solutions to pension problems.

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Disposing of Charity Land

With independent schools facing a toughening financial environment – not least the hike in employer contributions to the Teachers' Pension Scheme – governing bodies might be tempted to raise money by selling off surplus land. But this can be a very complex process and getting it wrong could mean that a contract, transfer, lease or other "disposition" of land is void, landing the trustees in hot water with the Charity Commission, the disappointed acquirer and the charity itself. They could even be personally liable. *A report by Andrew Harbourne...*



Unlike further education corporations, Academy proprietors, foundation, voluntary or foundation special schools and sixth form college corporations (which are classified as "exempt" charities), most private schools with charitable status are "non-exempt" and are required to register with the Charity Commission.

They are subject to all the relevant provisions of the Charities Act 2011 (the Act) and there can be a great deal to think about when disposing of land, with the process varying depending on the designation of the land.

The following provides a brief overview of some of the legal issues and terminology that schools in this position need to grapple with:

- What is a "disposition"? That word includes not just transfers or leases of land but also mortgages and even the grant or release of an easement, such as a right of way.
- What are the trusts on which the property is held? Depending

on their wording, the relevant property might be "permanent endowment", "special trust property", "designated land", "specie land", "functional property" or "functional endowment" – or a number of these at the same time. It might be none.

- Permanent endowment. The Act defines this as "property subject to a restriction on its being expended for the purposes of the charity". In the case of land, the trusts restrict its disposal. Charity Commission Guidance Note Permanent endowment: rules for charities (the Guidance Note) says that their consent is needed to dispose of permanent endowment, subject to limited exceptions. Technically, that may not always be correct but each case depends on its facts and expert interpretation.
- Special trust property. This is land held for special purposes of the charity on separate trusts relating only to that property. The Act says that special trust

property can't, except in very limited circumstances, be disposed of without the Commission's consent.

- Designated land. The Act defines this as land held on trusts that stipulate that it is to be used "for the purposes, or any particular purposes, of the charity". If you have designated land, subject to certain exceptions, no agreement for disposal of any of it should be entered into before public notice is given, to draw the attention of interested members of the public and those involved in the charity to the proposed disposal. The trustees then have to take into consideration any representations received.

If a charity wants to sell designated land without replacing it, the Guidance Note says the Commission's consent is needed. In reality, this may not always be the case, so specialist advice is essential.

- Specie Land. There are conflicting views on what constitutes specie land and no statutory definition. Charity Commission guidance says specie land is sometimes called designated land but, in fact, it can be different. Alternative sources suggest it is land where, if it was sold, the purpose of the charity would effectively cease because the purpose was to maintain that property in the form it is in (eg as a historical monument). The Commission's consent to its sale may well be needed.
- Functional endowment/land. The Guidance Note says this is property given to a charity on condition that it is used to meet its purposes and states that it is usually called designated land. However, there is no statutory definition of functional endowment, so the term is

probably of limited use, whatever it means.

- Do you need consent anyway? Even if your school's land is not permanent endowment, special trust land, designated land or specie land (and therefore the Commission's consent to the disposal is not required on any of those grounds) its consent (or that of the Court) is still required prior to a disposal unless one of a limited number of exceptions in section 117 of the Act applies (or in the case of mortgages section 124).

The most common s117 exception is where, before a contract is entered into, the charity obtains a report from a qualified surveyor which complies with The Charities (Qualified Surveyors' Reports) Regulations 1992. Also, unless the surveyor's report advises otherwise, the proposed disposition must be advertised to the market, so the trustees are confident of getting the best offers. Having considered the report, the trustees can proceed if they are confident they are getting the best terms that can reasonably be obtained.

- Less onerous procedures apply where the disposal is to be of a lease for no more than seven years and slightly different procedures apply to mortgages.

Taking into account the Act, Charity Commission Guidance, the possibility that the land may qualify as permanent endowment, special trust land and/or designated land or specie land and the fact that some charities have their own Acts of Parliament and/or Charity Commission Schemes, there could be a number of legal hoops to jump through before any disposition. It is not simple and specialist advice is essential.

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Honoured with Award

A teacher, who has served at Loughborough Grammar School for more than forty years, has been rewarded for his dedication at the TES Independent School Awards 2019.

John Weitzel, who has worked in a number of roles at the school including as a teacher, deputy headmaster and archivist, was recognised with the special services to independent education award, at a black-tie event at the Grosvenor House Hotel, London.

Judges for the award highlighted John's inspirational work as a maths teacher after he joined the School in 1978 making the subject exciting to learn and inspiring many of his pupils personally.



The awards were hosted by award-winning musical comedian, actor, improviser and presenter Rachel Parris, herself an Old Girl from Loughborough High School, where more than 400 attendees, including three LGS headmasters who John worked with, celebrated all that is outstanding in independent schools across the UK.

CHANGING FACES... CHANGING PLACES...



Dr Michael Alderson, Deputy Head at Durham School, has been appointed Warden at

Glenalmond College. He will take over leadership of the Perthshire independent boarding and day school from interim Warden Hugh Ouston in April 2020.

Dr Alderson began his teaching career in 2000, after reading Modern Languages at the

University of Durham and completing a PGCE at Homerton College, Cambridge. He also has a master's degree on historical narratives, and a doctorate on Church History of the Reformation from Durham University.

Dr Alderson will be joined at Glenalmond by his wife, Emma, and their two-year old working black Labrador, Angus. A former master in charge of cross country, he enjoys running, skiing and walking.



Mrs Jasmin Sanders has been appointed as the new Head of Nursery at Bolton School. Jasmin

is an early years professional with a varied background in Childcare and Education, having previously

been an Early Years and Childcare Area Manager at St Bede Childcare as well as working closely with relevant inspecting authorities.

Jasmin is also the Network Chair of the National Day Nursery Association's Bury, Bolton and Wigan Network.



Surrey's Micklefield School has announced the appointment of Mr. Ryan Ardé

as the school's first Headmaster, since it was founded in 1910.

Last December, Mrs Lyn Rose announced she would be retiring

after 13 years as Headmistress at the end of the Summer Term 2019. Mr. Ardé brings with him 20 years of educational experience, most recently as a Trust Headteacher of two South London primary schools and Safeguarding Lead for fourteen academies within the STEP Academy Trust.

Heads Hunted

Among the upcoming head and principal appointments:

Bishop's Stortford College

Hertfordshire

Pinewood School

Wiltshire

Thorpe House School

Buckinghamshire

If you would like mention made of your upcoming head or principal appointment for which applications are sought please let us know – there is no charge for a listing.

News items, contributions, comments and suggestions are always welcomed by the editor.

Please email to:
mail@independentschoolsmagazine.co.uk

Gold mark for outdoor learning

Cundall Manor, Yorkshire, pupils have achieved a gold award for their commitment to the environment from the Woodland Trust.

The school has been participating in the Woodland Trust Green Tree Schools Award; an educational initiative, designed to encourage outdoor learning and help teachers inspire their pupils about woods, trees and wildlife.

The gold award marks the latest stage in the school's commitment to the sustainability award. The Green Tree Schools initiative has seen more than 12,000 schools sign up since it was launched in 2008. Schools gain points by completing environmental activities and progressing through stages until reaching the platinum title.

Director of Outdoor Activities at Cundall Manor School, Stuart Jackson, said: "This is a fantastic achievement for our pupils. Since we launched the Wild Wood we have had an amazing response to our outdoor and environmental activities."

"The award from the Woodland Trust requires the school to complete activities that benefit the environment and widen our pupil's knowledge about sustainability. They are a superb way to identify activities in which we can engage with our native woodland areas."

The school is also contributing to the Queen's Commonwealth Canopy, a landmark initiative across scores of commonwealth nations aimed at developing a range of sustainable forest conservation initiatives for future generations. The school will grow five UK-sourced and native broadleaf trees – two silver birch, two rowan, and a hazel tree to add to the school grounds.

The Woodland Trust's vision is to see a UK rich in native woods and trees for people and wildlife. The charity is dedicated to creating new woodland with help from communities and schools, and protecting and restoring ancient woodland for future generations to cherish.

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Pioneering Wellness Centre focusses

A pioneering wellness centre has opened at Harrogate Ladies' College, offering a dedicated space to focus on students' mental and physical wellbeing. Targeted activities include mindfulness training, meditation, yoga, massage and reflexology, stress prevention and management and nutritional advice for its students. The school is also keen that its benefits extend to staff members and the local community who can take part in talks promoting wellness, parent and baby activities and first aid and medical support.

The development of the Wellness Centre – completely rebuilt from a former classroom block – comes amid a deepening crisis in young people's mental health. Last year marked the UK's highest number of suicides among girls aged 15 to 19 since records began in 1981.

The ambitious project is the result of a vision by college Principal Sylvia Brett, who said: "Children do struggle with life. The wellness centre is here because we want to help our children to cope. The pressures of university entrance, debt and so forth are always going to be there but we want to help our pupils to have strategies in place and have enough of a sense of who they are to make the right choices.

"It is so important that we can support each other in a way which is honest and real and with integrity. We feel very passionate about our aims that we want our

children to be able to be honest about who they are.

"It's about spreading that message that wellness is a good thing and an important thing and it's not a gimmick."

"Our commitment to wellness and our investment in a new centre reflects our aim to provide opportunities for the whole school community to develop physical, mental and social wellbeing. We are developing our Wellness Strategy in consultation with parents, staff and pupils and this will develop as the centre evolves and demands of the world change."

The centre was officially opened with a launch day involving talks from visiting speakers on topics including the importance of sleep, exam anxiety and LGBT-related issues, as well as activities including mindfulness yoga, mindfulness sewing and 'dough dancing', which improves children's dexterity.



Laura Brookes, the college's Assistant Director of Wellness, Head of PSHE and also the head of one

of the boarding houses at the school, said the day had been an emotional culmination of months of effort.

"To walk around and see all of that and to know this will help them in the future was really quite emotional," she said. "That same afternoon a girl approached me and said, 'thank you so much for putting that together because it has given me the confidence to go to my friends and tell them I'm bisexual.' In that sense it was showing instant results."



Along with activities and talks, the Wellness Centre provides access to counselling and also serves as a health centre complete with a clinic staffed by full-time nurses, examination room, three bedrooms and a consulting room.

As well as subsidised yoga and pilates sessions for staff, the centre is also benefiting the wider community with baby yoga and NCT (National Childbirth Trust) groups and hosting meeting of The Lighthouse, a local support group for carers of people with mental health problems.

Alongside mental health, the centre also aims to help pupils with financial, social, spiritual, occupational, intellectual and environmental wellness and the Wellness Team works with the PE, Food Technology and Business departments to help the girls gain 'real world experience'.



Richard Farnam, Director of Wellness, said: "The wellness centre is for everybody.

It shouldn't just be a first aid measure for people who are suffering from problems with mental health."

He said the team is equipped to deal with issues as they arise, but for him, wellness is about working actively to prevent that in the first place.

"We need to make sure that young people have their own coping strategies they can use before problems escalate, whether they're practising yoga or mindfulness or simple things like teaching them about exam anxiety so that they can go and practice their cognitive strategies before exam anxiety actually comes around.

"The idea behind the centre is that we're trying to be as preventative as possible rather than just fighting fires."



For Sylvia Brett, the Wellness Centre is part of an ongoing drive to help young people deal with the stresses

they are likely to face throughout their lives.

"The problem with education is it becomes a political football which changes every five years and for children you need a consistent long-reaching plan which is going to place wellbeing and wellness at the heart of the next ten, fifty or one hundred years of policy," she added.

"But we are already seeing the outcomes of this not happening, like the rise in suicide rates and self-harming amongst children and young people. My personal theory is that it is possibly connected to children pushed through an education system that purely focuses on exam results and doesn't put enough focus on developing skills for actually living."

So what are the Principal's hopes for the future?

"I would love us to be a hub for experts locally, even regionally, even nationally," she said. "I would love the centre to stand for the importance of wellbeing and wellness for children, and young people particularly. People often say 'it takes a village to bring up a child' and I think it's that sense of working together to improve all round wellness that will move us into a hopefully better future."

on pupils' mental and physical health

Exclusive Q&A with Principal Sylvia Brett



Q: You mention widening out use of the facility to the community at large. How do you charge

this out? Are there insurance/safeguarding/charity issues relating to this which need to be overcome?

A: We are not charging community groups such as The Lighthouse mental health support group to use the Wellness Centre facilities and all of the necessary safeguarding and insurance checks are in place.

Q: How does the initiative dovetail in with the traditional school Nurse/Sister? Who decides who goes where?

A: Our medical staff are very much an integral part of the Wellness Centre and the Wellness Strategy. The fundamental shift is away from somewhere you only go when you're

ill, to a place you go to help you stay well.

Q: How will you measure success/results?

A: At the end of the academic year we plan to conduct a measurement of wellbeing of staff and pupils, using a trusted and trialled inventory. This will then be monitored on an annual basis to objectively measure the success of the strategy.

We'll also be documenting and celebrating other, less non-quantifiable successes of the strategy such as the improved confidence of a student or a new friendship between members of staff.

Q: Some heads worrying that the more of such support pupils can get the more they feel they need it. Put another way, if some pupils get stressed out and seek help

then their peers will feel they must need support too or it will appear they aren't taking things seriously enough.

A: This is something that we have been keen to address from the outset. The aim of our Wellness Strategy is to be proactive and to encourage our school community to recognise we can all do things to improve our own wellbeing. The Wellness Centre isn't just designed for students who are struggling, but is a place for all students to use to help them become the best that they can be. We hope to encourage all students to become proactive and robust in terms of improving their wellbeing, developing good routines and a self-awareness about what makes them feel good and what helps them to achieve their goals.

This is a topic that is addressed within the PSHE curriculum where students differentiate between

normal stress and mental health. It is a question that we have also openly discussed and considered in assemblies, chapel services and on our Wellness Centre Opening day in October 2018.

Q: What are the key lessons you have picked up on the journey so far, and what advice could you give top fellow-heads thinking of taking a similar step?

A: I've learnt that 'wellness' has a unique meaning to everyone within our community and a 'one-size-fits-all' brief simply wouldn't work in a diverse school community. There are lots of things that schools can do to improve wellbeing and it's often the small things that make a big difference. Learning about how caffeine affects sleep for example, could make a big difference to someone's overall wellbeing. Wellness is a lifetime's journey, but one that needs to start now.

Case Study: Mollie Wilson, Wellness Prefect at Harrogate Ladies' College



As someone who has faced her own struggles with anxiety for several years, boarder and Year 13 student Mollie Wilson is a natural fit for the role of Wellbeing Prefect at the new centre.

She is now studying A-levels in Arts, Maths and Photography and aspires to be a landscape architect after completing a degree at Sheffield University.

But this path has been an extremely challenging one for the 17-year-old from Huddersfield who is now speaking out about her issues in the hope it empowers others to also come forward and seek the support they need.

Mollie said: "You get so trapped in your head. Imagine you're on a rollercoaster and you've got to the top and suddenly there's that feeling of going down...that feeling, your heart beats up in your throat, you can't breathe, you're so consumed by it. It's terrifying. Then you get to the panic attack or anxiety attack.

"The first time I was in Year 8. I was on a school trip and I got really bad heat stroke, so I wasn't with my family and that really freaked me out. I couldn't breathe, and then I couldn't see. I passed out, I was hyperventilating and I was really really sick. And that was

my first ever panic attack. That was the first time I went to the doctors, and they were like, 'you're fine, there's nothing wrong with you'.

"I think my biggest one was in Year 10 and I don't even know why I got so upset but I did and I couldn't get out of the house. I couldn't see people, I just wanted to be alone in my room and the thought of going outside would make me physically sick. My mum ended up putting me on Complan because I just wouldn't eat, I couldn't eat at all. You're constantly tense and your heart's being squeezed and you can't breathe and you can't sleep properly. Your thoughts take over. I somehow sorted myself out and put it to the side and the doctors were still, like, 'no there's nothing wrong, you're fine'.

As a "bit of a perfectionist", Mollie admits she finds exam times particularly difficult.

"You put a lot of pressure on yourself to do amazingly," she says. "I find it really hard to learn so I've got to put a lot of effort in, I've got to keep going over it because my memory's not that brilliant. And sometimes that can be a bit too much, especially when you've put all that effort in and it just seems to go nowhere. You start thinking, 'what if I disappoint my family?', what if I

do this? What if that?' and you keep going in circles. Eventually you just self-implode."

For Mollie, starting at Harrogate Ladies' College marked a turning point, as she felt she was given support to help deal with her anxiety.

"I only had help when I came to this school. At school before I'd not been able to go because I would be trapped in my room, inside my head. It got to the point where I got really quite ill from it. But the doctors were like, 'no, you're fine'. So I didn't really get any help from school, they just wanted to get me back into school they didn't really care how.

"When I came here it was a big move from GCSE to A-level. I was not doing very well in maths and I was finding it so hard to keep up with my work and then I just broke down. I was in my study, my friends all around me. I was just in tears, you can't describe what it is, it's like you're being squeezed, like someone is constricting everything. And your mind's going – you can't stop it. And you get quite dizzy because you're not breathing properly. So I went down to the health centre and they started to calm me down. And then I started counselling and that was just amazing. She taught me to recognise it first because I

go straight from nothing to panic, that's how my brain has learned. But if I learn to recognise it early and then go, 'well, why am I worrying, how can I change that?, how can I control my breathing?', and there's all the support so I know I can go there if I get a bit stressed or if I'm going to break down."

Mollie welcomes the addition of the Wellness Centre as a physical place where people can go to seek help during difficult times.

"I'm proud of it, I'm proud to say that we've got it because people can go there or they can come and talk to me or go to the counsellor. They know how to get there now. So before, especially for me, I was like 'I don't know what to do, how am I supposed to do this? But now it's there and even if you're just worried a little bit there's somebody there that you can go and talk to'.

"I've had quite a few people say, 'well, I've got this place to go now where I can relax, I can feel I've got somewhere to go when I get stressed' – an actual physical thing they can see. I think every school should have one – at my old school we didn't even have a counsellor and just to have a counsellor there in every school would be amazing."

National Language Conference shares best practice

The 26th Independent Schools' Modern Languages Association (ISMLA) annual conference saw modern language teachers from independent schools around the UK come together to share best practice and explore the future of language learning.

Over 130 delegates from 65 secondaries took part in debates and hands-on workshops and listened to talks from top schools and universities.

Among an expert panel of speakers were Rachel Tattersall, head of languages and assistant head, QEGS, Blackburn, who shared practical techniques for increasing spontaneous speaking and fluency among sixth-form students.

Anna Hemsworth, head of modern foreign languages, Manchester Grammar School, spoke about how to raise the profile of languages within a school and Nick Mair, director of languages, Dulwich College, introduced delegates to new exams endorsed by the Institute

of Linguists called Real Lives and touched on specialist language exams for medics which will soon be introduced.

The keynote speaker was Gianfranco Conti, founder of the Language Gym and co-author of award-winning book *The Language Teacher Toolkit*, who put forward a persuasive case for challenging the way grammar is often taught in schools.

The event was held at Cheadle Hulme School, Greater Manchester, at the invitation of their head of modern languages, John Wilson, who is also the outgoing vice chair of the membership organisation.

At John's initiative, modern languages teachers from local state

schools and PGCE (teacher training) students were offered complimentary places to the conference for the first time and six took up the offer.

John said: "The conference was a real success, with language teachers finding plenty of time to share experiences and to reflect on their practice.

"Students benefit enormously from this kind of event as teachers leave reinvigorated, having immersed themselves not only in current best practice, but also having explored future innovations and advances in language learning.

"We left acknowledging the need to work more closely with Classics and English to develop linguistic



competences and awareness across learning."

Jessica Houghton, head of German, The King's School, Macclesfield, was amongst the delegates. She said: "I really enjoyed the day; it was a fabulous event. The speakers were excellent, and I loved the chance to 'talk shop' with so many like-minded colleagues from the language departments of other independent schools."

The next ISMLA conference will be held in February 2020 at Highgate School in north London.

About ISMLA

The Independent Schools' Modern Languages Association, affectionately known as 'ISMLA', is one of the most active subject-specific teachers' associations, and is one of very few that represents teachers in the independent sector. Sara Davidson Chair of ISMLA and Head of Modern Languages at Oundle School, introduces the organisation...

The ISMLA committee consists of twenty highly motivated linguists who are either Head of Department, members of their school's senior leadership team or an enthusiastic current or retired modern language teacher. There are schools represented as far and wide as Cornwall to remote Scotland. There is a vast wealth of experience on the committee and each member has a specific role, be it a specific language, the newsletter, our popular SLT mentoring scheme etc. In the last two years the committee has created some new roles to support some of the lesser taught languages of Russian and Mandarin Chinese, highlighting their relevance in today's global world as well as in our independent schools.

The association was set up back in the early 90s and was borne out of the desire to network, promote language learning and support language teachers in the independent sector. Increasingly, independent schools were providing the nation's linguists, and that, unfortunately remains true; over 60% of university single language undergraduates come from "public" schools. Today, ISMLA is keen to network more with our colleagues in the maintained sector, recognising that there is expertise that can be tapped into there and that we are stronger together in what can be considered testing times for modern languages teaching.

The association now has a national profile and is consulted

by government bodies. Its patrons include well-known Heads who are linguists (Adam Pettit, Simon Corns, Duncan Byrne, Peter Hamilton) and also Helen Myers MBE. It has developed strong relationships with the British Council, Ofqual, exam boards, and the DfE and the Chair is invited to attend the meetings of the APPG for MFL. This all means that ISMLA is able to represent members' views to government and on occasion influence policy. Nick Mair, the former Chair, made great headway highlighting the severe grading issues at A-level and Sara Davidson, the current Chair is heavily involved in the National Modern Languages SCITT which addresses the recruitment crisis surrounding MFL teachers.

ISMLA holds a successful annual conference in February, organised by the Vice-Chair, and publishes a termly newsletter. Conferences have taken place at The Perse School, Cambridge, Haberdasher's Aske's Boys' School in London and the last one at Cheadle Hulme School. It has a presence on Facebook and Twitter and connections with many of the subjects' leading practitioners and researchers. It runs conferences dedicated to individual language areas too and offers schools support to run language-themed events, like the successful MFL debating competitions and the Hispanic Theatre Festival. It is growing every year and currently has 170 member schools.

Why are senior school leaders so stressed and how can they be helped?

A cold radiator can't warm people: translated, if a senior leader is not receiving sufficient human warmth, empathy and help to psychologically reflect, they will almost certainly be ill-equipped to be 'emotionally available' for staff and pupils suggests Dr Margot Sunderland...



Why are senior leaders so stressed?

As we know, many head teachers feel they are constantly measured on academic outcomes whilst having to repeatedly navigate a treacherous path through the current regime of testing and assessment, paperwork and budgets, as well as supporting the wellbeing of staff, pupils and parents and dealing with endless emotional demands. Understandably, despite appropriate delegation, senior leaders are often not in the state of calm required to provide grounded and empathetic support.

The Education Support Partnership survey – the Teacher Wellbeing Index 2018 – found that 80% of senior leaders suffer from work-related stress, 40% from symptoms of depression and 63% are considering leaving the profession.

What needs to happen?

In order to survive the demands of this important job, without getting physically or mentally ill, it's vital that senior leaders receive top quality psychological support. One recommendation is twice weekly counseling or therapy where they can off-load to a trained professional with "pro-active listening" skills who really does understand the situation: helping them to understand from a psychological perspective the difficult and painful events at school and, on a personal level, highlighting key emotional themes, childhood triggers and moments of negative self-deprecation. This psychologically trained mentor can be an advocate, available to support Heads through inevitable lonely times.

Research shows that psychological support brings down toxic stress. Toxic stress – unrelieved and unprocessed stress – markedly weakens the immune system and can trigger mental health problems.

Regrettably, a cup of tea or watching TV at the end of a hard

day is not enough to bring down toxic stress to a tolerable level that does not pose a danger to mental or physical health.

Stoicism and stiff upper lips are dangerous for heads

Resistance to psychological support can leave senior leaders vulnerable to serious long-term mental and physical health problems (Niles and O'Donovan 2019).

Toxic stress blocks the release of insulin (risk of diabetes), causes inflammation around the heart (risk of heart attacks) and even switches off cancer suppressant genes.

It's not enough and not okay to offload on your partner every night

Such an approach is insufficient to shift toxic stress, and it's unfair to use a partner as a quasi-therapist who will usually fail at the task anyway. As The School of Life states, "most people in our lives [don't listen too well]. They are bored, keen to prove a point or distracted by their own lives... [in contrast] the therapist brings a focused generous attention. They strive to enter into our experience."

Evidence-based ways to trigger calming neurochemicals include regular mindfulness, meditation, aerobic exercise, enriched environments (novel activities which engage you emotionally, socially, cognitively and sensorially). However, whilst these are great at calming the body, without the aforementioned psychological input they are unlikely to bring about that enduring and profound positive impact on the brain.

Being more emotionally nourished themselves, senior leaders will find they have the mental capacity to undertake health-healing acts such as:

- Being supportive of their staff by undertaking health checks into 'psychological hazards' such as shame and blame.

- Starting and ending the school week with small talking circles for staff at which they can discuss their feelings and the support they require
- Ensuring staff feel valued and respected with frequent praise for what they do well, not just in relation to test results, but in their interactions with pupils, being emotionally supportive to colleagues or managing a challenging class well. Such commendations should be made to senior staff and overseeing bodies.
- Helping staff who feel emotional and overwhelmed to step away from challenging situations without fear of criticism or shame.
- Providing opportunities for staff to take breaks in a soothing environment, supporting them with emotional regulation, empathy and validation so they don't suffer toxic stress leading to illness or exodus from the profession.
- In short, once senior leads are receiving top quality psychological care themselves they can emotionally support their staff and so aid staff retention

In conclusion, if we want to see more schools becoming sanctuaries for vulnerable children and mentally healthy places for all, psychological support for senior leads is no longer an option, it's a necessity.

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"We are always searching for innovative ways to improve and this is brilliant feedback, confirming that everything we have put in place is working and being appreciated by our valued team. As Richard Branson put it "If you look after your staff well, they will look after your customers. Simple."

Celebrating coming first in the Sunday Times Best Company to Work for list will be a team effort as the company comes together at their next conference.

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Innovative ceiling impresses



An activity centre in Cheshire had Hunter Douglas Architectural's innovative felt ceiling installed in the second development phase after the architect was so impressed with its performance in the first building.

John Piercy Holroyd, Associate Director of Walker Simpson Architects, had specified Heartfelt® in the first building at Pettypool, which was commissioned by Girlguiding Cheshire Forest.

When the second phase was under construction, Heartfelt® was specified again for the common areas of the bedroom block, instead of gypsum plank, which had been

originally earmarked, because of its superior acoustic performance and aesthetic qualities.

"It helped us to transform the idea of what is basically a circulation space to somewhere that feels quite special. It raised the profile of how that area would feel," said John.

The architect developed new graphics and colourways on the flooring to complement the 35m2 of Heartfelt ceiling in 'Off-white' (7595), 'Light Grey' (7596), 'Middle Grey' (7597), and also adapted the lighting system so that it better complemented the first phase.

Tel: 01604 648229
www.hunterdouglas.co.uk



Gerflor continues to 'perform'

In the spring of 1977, when the Ford Fiesta was first launched, and Fleetwood Mac's album Rumours hit the charts, Bill and Dick Laslett purchased an overgrown orchard at Polo Farm, Canterbury, Kent, igniting a sporting dream which turned into a flourishing reality. Today, their facilities have expanded to become a premier sporting venue and centre of excellence and are regularly used by the local community including; Canterbury Hockey, Tennis, Cricket and Croquet Clubs, together with Canterbury Christ Church University, and a host of local schools, local businesses and members of the public.

Their vision of a long-term facility sharing partnership has also enabled them to build a brand new multi-sport indoor centre with thriving junior sections in all their sports, with numbers almost reaching 1000 children. They currently have almost 2000 members across their 6 clubs. The age range of members is spread between 3 and 90. In truth, there's something for everyone.

Ensuring that the club would have a sports surface that could provide both performance and versatility for a host of activities would be top of their agenda. They would also require a sports surface that could provide both bright colours

and wood effects, whilst also delivering a future proof solution. This stringent set of, 'only the best will do' specifications would ultimately lead the Polo Farm Sports Club to choose Taraflex® Performance from international flooring specialist Gerflor.

Taraflex® vinyl sports flooring has been used in many international and local sporting events and is available in 17 colours and three wood-effect designs.

The Performance product offers a P2 category shock absorbency 35% to 45%. Taraflex® is recognised for providing durability, safety and comfort without impairing performance. The range also offers greater than 45% force reduction, making it unrivalled in the marketplace in terms of offering comfort for users. Taraflex® meets the EN Standard of 22196 for anti-bacterial activity (E. coli - S. aureus - MRSA) (3) returning >99% levels of growth inhibition. The product is also treated with ProtecSol®, which renders polish redundant and is triple action meaning no polish is ever required, it contributes to easy maintenance and is anti-friction burn and slide/grip. Taraflex® has a double density foam backing and with another bonus, it's environmentally friendly.

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School event publicity – free

Independent schools up and down the country are finding they can attract new interest from a wider public by promoting their events on the family and community events website www.WhereCanWeGo.com. There is no charge.

Schools are entering details of a wide variety of events – fairs and fetes; open days; revision courses; community clubs and so on.

WhereCanWeGo.com is a useful service by any standard. Over 900,000 events have been posted to date by thousands of organisers, and up to 220,000 visitors a day use it to search for things to do. Events may be searched by venue, date, and interest – and the system auto-deletes anything out of date.



Entering school events open to the public is easy and free. Simply go to Add Events tab off the home page, register your email address and a password, and you're away!

www.WhereCanWeGo.com

National Tennis Academy launch

Dollar Academy, Clackmannanshire, has been selected as a partner for the launch of Tennis Scotland's new Great Britain National Tennis Academy, due to open this August at the University of Stirling.

The tennis academy, which is one of only two in the UK, will offer eight of Britain's top young tennis players aged between 12-18 the opportunity to practice their skills while studying and boarding at Dollar Academy.

The future athletes will train with leading tennis coach, Leonardo Azevedo. Azevedo will be supported in Scotland by Colin Fleming,

Esteban Carril and Leon Smith in developing the next generation of British tennis talent. Due to time out for tennis training and competitions, National Academy players will have the option to study fewer subjects, although as a guide they will be required to study five National 5s, equivalent to six GCSEs, and 3 Highers.

David Knapman, Rector at Dollar Academy, said: "The school has an impressive history of supporting and nurturing young athletes across various sporting activities, with many of our pupils going on to compete successfully at both regional and national levels."

Football Tournament remembers Matty

Winterfold School, Worcestershire, hosted its annual U11 Matty Thacker Shield football tournament.

This is a very special tournament for Winterfold, as it is named in honour of Matty, who was in Year 6 when he so tragically died. He loved his sport and to see thirteen U11 teams playing with smiles on their faces and loving their sport, is a wonderful way of remembering him. His Mother, Susie, watched the afternoon of football.

There were a lot of very close matches in the two pools. Three of the six Semi-Finals in the Shield, Cup and Plate competitions went to golden goal and then penalty shoot outs. Winterfold played some good football but went out in the Semi-Final of the Plate competition, which was won by Hereford Cathedral School. The Cup was won by Wolverhampton Grammar Junior School, whilst the main Shield was won by King's Hawford, who beat Warwick in an excellent Final.

CONFERENCE CALL!

Running a conference of interest to independent school staff or students?

Then make sure they know about it by advertising in Independent Schools Magazine, the professional journal for the sector.



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WOMEN IN ENGINEERING CONFERENCE

MONDAY 29TH JULY -
WEDNESDAY 31ST JULY 2019



Girls aged 15-17 from schools across the UK are invited to apply for a fully funded place at this unique residential conference hosted by the University of Aberdeen

The conference is being run in partnership with St Margaret's School for Girls and generously sponsored by BP and supported by Skills Development Scotland. The conference will provide a wonderful opportunity to explore engineering both in a university setting and in the workplace.

Staying in halls of residence supervised by experienced teachers, successful applicants will benefit from a travel bursary and a highly interactive programme rich with hands-on activities and face to face time with female engineers.

During a visit to BP's North Sea headquarters, participants will have the opportunity to hear from industry professionals working on and offshore.

The organisers of the conference have a long standing commitment to Widening Access to Higher Education and encourage students from all backgrounds to apply.

The detailed programme of events is to be confirmed but a draft of the general outline of the conference is as follows:

MONDAY 29TH JULY

AM Participants arrive and register at the University of Aberdeen.

PM Ice breaker, engineering team challenge and choice of activities at Aberdeen Hillhead accommodation.

TUESDAY 30TH JULY

AM Visit to BP North Sea headquarters to meet industry professionals.

PM Engineering team challenge with academics from University of Aberdeen, keynote speech and formal dinner.

WEDNESDAY 31ST JULY

AM Engineering career talks from female engineers, postgraduate and undergraduate students and academics.

Some comments from delegates after attending last year's Women in Engineering Conference.

"I have gained confidence in pursuing engineering in higher education and as a career choice and learnt more about different routes and opportunities studying engineering at University."

"I have realised just how integrated all fields of engineering are with each other and with the wider working community. I've realised that this is absolutely a career which I want to pursue in the future."

Applications now open

- Only 45 places available
- Candidates selected on basis of application and school reference
- Apply before Friday 29 March 2019



Supported by Skills Development Scotland



Visit www.abdn.ac.uk/engineering/events/14407 to apply

Sixteen-year-old designs trophy for £1m engineering prizewinners

A 16-year-old pupil at The Leys, Cambridge, Jack Jiang, has won an international competition to design the trophy for the £1million Queen Elizabeth Prize for Engineering, regarded as the world's most prestigious engineering accolade.

The trophy made to his design will be presented later this year to Dr Bradford Parkinson, Professor James Spilker, Hugo Freuhauf and Richard Schwartz for their work creating the first truly global, satellite-based positioning system – GPS. Jack will receive a 3-D replica of his trophy design and



a high-end laptop computer. He has also been invited to see the trophy made to his design being presented to the prize winners in a ceremony at Buckingham Palace later this year.

Jack's design was selected from more than 50 international entries to the competition, which was open to young people aged 14–24. He created it using the QE Prize 3D Design Studio app

Ian Blatchford, Director of the Science Museum Group and chairman of the judging panel, said: "What strikes me about the winning trophy is how well it manages to demonstrate its two main inspirations. It is both an elegant design that acknowledges the traditional trophy form, but its resemblance to wind turbines shows Jack's strong passion for engineering and its role in solving future global problems.

"We also chose Jack's design for its sheer exuberance – it will require a great amount of concentration and imagination to

make. That quality appeals to the judges, and we will work closely with Jack to realise the final trophy."

Jack, from Hong Kong, is in Year 11 at The Leys, where he is studying Chemistry, Physics, Biology, English, Maths, and Art. He is interested in architectural engineering and believes that engineers are key to solving the world's future challenges: "There are countless environmental problems around the world, and right now they are only getting worse. However, I know that it will be engineers that provide solutions to them," he said.

When asked about winning the competition, Jack said: "It's an absolute pleasure to be able to design the trophy for the Queen Elizabeth Prize for Engineering. It was an incredible opportunity and I am extremely honoured to be part of this prestigious prize. Being one of the youngest entrants selected for the top 10, it shows that creativity and the



ability to design is not limited by age. I hope this inspires more young people to enter into the world of engineering."

Alex Annett and Nicola Perkins, STEM co-ordinators at The Leys, said: "We are so proud of Jack who has used his design, engineering and architectural skills to design the winning trophy for this year's QE Prize. Jack's outstanding trophy was inspired by sustainable engineering, featuring a 3-bladed design reminiscent of wind turbines.

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