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NATIONWIDE SUPPLIERS OF PEUGEOT (RECOMMENDED), FORD & VAUXHALL

# In this issue...



## Pupils rewarded for 'Making a Difference'

A pair of North Yorkshire school pupils have been rewarded for their charitable efforts over the summer with a special award.

Ruby Cartwright and Harry Read, who both attend Cundall Manor School, were awarded the 'Making A Difference' badge by Deputy Head, Stuart Bayne for their work.

Ruby, aged 10, cut off 9 inches of her hair and donated it to the Little Princess Trust, a charity that provides free real hair wigs to children and young people with hair loss, and helps fund vital research into childhood cancers. Meanwhile Harry, also aged 10, has been pedalling away raising money for World Bicycle Relief, a charity that delivers specially designed, locally assembled, bicycles for people in need in rural developing regions so they can access life-changing mobility.

Mr Bayne, said: "The Making a Difference award is a wonderful way to celebrate both Harry and Ruby's work and I was delighted to present them with their badges. We know that they will wear them with pride."

Ruby first heard about The Little Princess Trust through her hairdresser in Thirsk. Mum, Pippa said she looked at the website and saw what a fantastic charity it is and decided to grow her hair so that she could donate it.

Ruby added: "I didn't have my hair cut for over a year and it got even longer during lockdown! I was so pleased to have it cut and hope that whoever gets the hair really likes it."

Harry, who is a keen cyclist and loves competing in triathlons, has been on a sponsored cycle throughout the summer and has raised over £600 to date.

Pictured: Mr Bayne, with Ruby and Harry after the presentation of the Making A Difference award

## Cover background

## Major investment

Haberdashers' Aske's School for Girls, Hertfordshire, has invested £11 million in a new state-of-the-art STEM building to boost its IT and science provision. Full story page 34

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Is Your School Mentioned? See page 39 for an A-Z listing

## Teacher's 300-mile challenge

A teacher at King's Ely is using her pedal power to raise funds for a cause close to her heart.

Claire Gilbert, who is a Biology Teacher, French Teacher and Wellbeing Lead, is cycling 300 miles this autumn to raise as much money as she can for Cancer Research UK. She is taking on the challenge in memory of her aunt, Phyllis Broussard.

Claire, who lives in Cambridge, has raised more than £700 so far. She said: "I'm not a cyclist, so this is a challenge in the truest sense of the word! I've logged

255 miles so far this month, some on tiny country lanes, some on busy roads that I won't attempt again, a couple of miles through muddy fields. It is an exhilarating experience to see progress and to know I'm reaching my weekly goals by persevering at the end of a long teaching day, or when I need to squeeze in a few miles in early morning even though I've had boarding duty the night before. I want to raise money for life-saving research and help bring forward the day when all cancers are cured."

To sponsor Claire or for more information about her challenge, visit: <https://fundraise.cancerresearchuk.org/page/claaires-cycle-300-fundraising-page-50>



"Paying for expensive and ultimately unnecessary extra tuition is not the answer..."

# Pandemic Panic: The Rise in Private Tutoring

Schools have a duty to encourage parents to think very carefully before they opt for what might seem on the surface, the most obvious and easiest, (albeit expensive) route of hiring a tutor, suggests Ben Evans, Headmaster at Windlesham House School, Sussex.

Parents are understandably concerned about the impact that the prolonged period of remote learning has had on their child's educational progress (regardless of how good the remote offering was). Add to that the confusion and unpredictable future of exams and assessments and educating children has become something of a cocktail of worry for many. As a result, rising numbers of parents have been panicked into hiring private tutors for their children in a bid to 'catch up' and prepare for the 'inevitable' worst.

Not that schools can really blame parents for feeling a deep sense of unsettlement right now; after all, schools faced a long period of closure and in some cases, rather questionable remote learning (and we are not out of the woods yet). It's worth remembering though, that even in pre-Covid times, it didn't take much for parents to feel pressurised into seeking external tutoring for their children outside of school, whether that is just because everyone else seems to be doing it or a FOMO (Fear of Missing Out), or due to the competitive nature of entrance exams to senior schools and public examinations.

## Not just 'plugging gaps'

Yet as schools, we have a duty to encourage our parents to think very carefully before they opt for what might seem on the surface, the most obvious and easiest, (albeit expensive) route of hiring a tutor. Will that tutor really have the personal insight and breadth of knowledge to really understand where a child's educational gaps are and what support is needed to get them back on track? Have they approached the school directly to see what plans they have in place

to assess the child's own needs and for carefully structured intervention sessions?

After nearly six months of remote learning at home, schools are well aware that many children will require significant pastoral and emotional support to cope with return to school life and general routines. This goes far beyond plugging academic gaps and the pressure of additional tutor sessions at home and the possibility of mixed messages being given to children, will likely only hinder this process and ultimately could damage children's mental health and wellbeing.

If schools are to avoid the disjointed complexities of pupils engaging with external tutors, they must encourage parents to communicate their concerns more openly from the outset, and to seek their advice. Much of this is about trust: parents should be able to trust their school as a professional body and feel assured that they will have robust and well-thought through plans in place, which are based around the best interests of every single child.

## Engaging parent communities

Of course, if we are to build greater trust within the parent community following the impact of Covid, we have to put ourselves in their place. What actually drives parents to make knee-jerk decisions regarding their child's education? Anxiety is the big one; quite often with no real foundation, but it is still the most common reason that the route of extra tuition is pursued. Supporting and coaching parents during periods of anxiety has become a more central role for schools today and the more we

engage with parent communities the easier it is to identify worries early on.

Over the last ten years, the rise of private tutoring spawning from London and other major cities has been exponential and is now country wide. It is seen as an easy fix to many problems and together with the increasingly competitive nature of the independent school system, private tutors are in huge demand and can, in many cases, name their price. All of this, of course, does not mean that tutoring is necessary, productive or purposeful for the majority of children. Whilst one must assume that parents value the education for which they are paying schools, many do feel that the route to true progress and higher academic attainment is through one to one lessons at the weekends with their tutors.

It is the role of schools to ensure that parents are informed of their children's ongoing progress and the work they are completing each week, with teachers who know them well, understand their learning preferences and have an excellent knowledge of their personal strengths and areas for development. Schools also need to highlight, through parent workshops, how the curriculum is delivered and the importance of peer collaboration, the use of digital technology, specialist teacher input, different learning environments (inside and out) and the rich variety of experiences and opportunities that come from being at school.

## Over reliance could be damaging

Children on the other hand, need to be encouraged to be

independent and creative learners, able to work on their own with a good understanding of their personal targets and how to achieve them. These are essential life skills too. Over reliance on a tutor may lessen a child's ability to become an independent learner and may also damage their love of learning for learning's sake. After a full and busy day at school, few children will relish another hour's intensive one to one maths lesson late into the evening, possibly revisiting work already completed or worse, being taught something irrelevant and unrelated to their normal curriculum.

There are of course always exceptions to the rule. There are occasions, when in full consultation with the school, there may be justifiable reason for parents to engage the services of a specialist and well-recognised learning mentor for their children. A child may have diagnosed learning difficulties for which extra support outside of school is appropriate and actively encouraged by the child's school. In these instances, the additional support can be transformational.

The absolute key is for the additional support to be in consultation with the school and for there to be regular communication between the tutor and the child's normal teachers. Likewise, if a child has come from a different educational setting or culture, there may be significant gaps in the skills or knowledge which cannot be filled adequately in the normal school day. However, this support would be temporary and again, must be closely managed by the school.



# More pressure from parents after lockdown home-schooling?

Four out of five independent school teachers agree that teachers will face more pressure from parents for greater personalisation as a result of home-schooling during lockdown, according to new research.

## Talking and listening

If parents are set on engaging outside help, it is important for schools to have an open conversation with them and encourage them to listen to, and act on the advice of their school. The school may be able to advise on which tutors to engage and discuss when it would be best for the extra session to take place. Most importantly, they will be able to communicate with the tutor to ensure the work covered is appropriate, suited to the individual pupil and linked to the work being covered at school. This is essential if the additional support is to be productive and will actually ensure progress and improved outcomes.

Much of this need for parents to overcompensate, stems from the uncertainty we all face today. Understandably, after such a long period of absence from school, parents are concerned that their children have fallen behind academically and that these gaps may never be filled. This is, of course, not the case. The majority of children at independent schools received a very high quality of remote, online learning in which they covered the curriculum in all key subjects, received detailed and purposeful feedback and were able to demonstrate good progress by the end of the term.

Despite the hype of headlines, children will not have suffered unduly last term and schools will very quickly address any issues and provide the necessary support for all children to flourish. Paying for expensive and ultimately unnecessary extra tuition is not the answer.

A new report suggests teachers are worried that they will face more pressure from parents who now want greater input into their children's education after their lockdown home-schooling experience.

Research from specialist insurer Ecclesiastical has found that 69% of teachers believe they are going to face more pressure from parents for greater personalisation thanks to learning at home. Some 61% expect to see an increase in home-schooling and 68% are expecting a demand for other forms of alternative education.

Alternative education was already on the rise before the COVID-19 outbreak. According to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator (OSA), local authorities reported 60,544 children as being home educated on 29 March 2019, compared with 52,770 on the same date in 2018. New research from Oxford Home Schooling has found that more than a third (36%) of millennial parents (25–34 year olds) are now considering homeschooling as a permanent option for their children, in part due to positive experiences during lockdown.

Ecclesiastical's 2020 Education Barometer uncovered some concerns about the rise in alternative education, not least in the ways in which teachers feel it leads to a rise in higher expectations – without the necessary support and funding needed. The report found that parents' principal reasons for alternative education were the desire for a greater involvement in their children's education, looking for a more personalised approach, dissatisfaction with mainstream education, a need for greater flexibility and concern over class sizes.

Now, the main concern is, unsurprisingly, COVID-19 and the associated risks.

While more than a third of teachers (36%) actively want parents to be extremely involved in their children's education, the majority are worried about this increased pressure. Some 45% expect to see changes in alternative education provision as a result of COVID-19.

What will this mean for teachers?

In the earlier Ecclesiastical research, a quarter (25%) of respondents believed this increase is a positive one, saying that schools will adapt to a greater choice for children. However, 22% considered it a negative, with some believing that alternative education, "leads to an extraordinary and unnecessary rise in the expectations of students in the mainstream schools".

Parental expectation was still a key concern for the earlier respondents, along with the worry that alternative education doesn't give the opportunity for students to grow or results in a lack of motivation.

Faith Kitchen, Ecclesiastical's education director, says: "Perhaps with an inevitable rise in flexible working across all sectors thanks to COVID-19, there is a chance that more parents will opt for flexi-schooling around their working schedule as an alternative to the mainstream. Our latest research has found 69% of teachers believe they are going to face more pressure from parents for greater personalisation as a result of mass home-schooling during the coronavirus lockdown. The majority of teachers we surveyed also expect to see an increase in home-schooling and a greater demand for other forms of alternative education."

## Independent schools

(120 teachers out of the total 500 were from independent schools)

- 83% of independent school teachers expect to see an increase in home-schooling in the future after mass home-schooling during lockdown. (This was much higher for independent schools in comparison to other types of schools e.g. 49% maintained schools, 57% academies)
- 83% of independent school teachers expect to see an increase in demand for alternative education due to COVID-19 (similarly, this was higher than other types of schools e.g. 55% maintained schools, 70% academies)
- Lots of parents have been more involved in their children's schooling during lockdown. A third (30%) of independent school teachers would like parents to be extremely involved in their children's schooling after they return in September, while two thirds (67%) would like parents to be somewhat involved in their children's schooling
- During lockdown, children who have been home-schooled have been able to learn in their own time and in their own way. 79% of independent school teachers agree that teachers will face more pressure from parents for greater personalisation as a result of home-schooling during lockdown

# Assessing student performance & potential

Last summer's grading fiasco has once again brought into focus the concern that reliance on year-end exam grades is an unsatisfactory way to measure a student's performance and potential. Various options have been suggested for more sophisticated systems which combine several assessment methods. One idea is to have a three-part assessment, each worth a third of overall points – a new measure based on coursework including elements of online assessment; a new measure combining mock result with teacher assessment; and the year-end exam. Advocates argue that a system of this type would maintain the rigour of exams whilst ending over-reliance on one-day exam performance or on the opinion of teachers, who, according to Ofqual, "vary considerably in the generosity of their grading".

Does such a multi-part assessment have any merit? What is your preferred system?

**Gus Lock, Headmaster at Habs Boys School, Hertfordshire.**

The optimist in me believes there must be some positives to come out of last summer's exam grading fiasco, but in all honesty I have yet to uncover them. On face value, the initial plan to assess students didn't appear to be a bad one and admittedly, prior to the publication of results, I was fairly optimistic that this could be achieved reasonably and pragmatically, to provide fair outcomes for most pupils.

The reality is few came out of the fiasco well, or as well as they might have hoped; many schools over-exaggerated grades, the algorithm was a catastrophe and widespread panic ensued. Perhaps one positive to emerge from the wreckage was a reminder that, however flawed they may be, much like Churchill's view on democracy, end of year examinations may just be the worst system apart from all the others we have tried – the best of a bad bunch of options. But the sector relies far too heavily on these.

As schools, we aspire to teach a love of learning and a love of subject; we strive to foster curiosity, independence of thought, hard work, creativity and collaboration, and personal qualities of decency and kindness. The incredible emphasis that schools, teachers, parents and students put on public examinations can skew and obstruct the real education that is delivered. So, the issue is not exams, per se, but that the continued league table

culture invites schools and parents to obsess about exam outcomes, such that teachers and students come to believe that what they are teaching or studying is the History syllabus or the Physics syllabus, rather than actual History or actual Physics, or worse, that exam results define a child or a school.

This is far more acute at GCSE, admittedly, GCSE rewards and thus promotes certain excellent qualities: hard work, sustained study, careful preparation, memorisation of knowledge and the ability to perform under pressure, all of which have real merit. However, they do little to promote independence of thought, true love of subject or intellectual risk taking, rewarding instead constant repetition, rehearsal and regurgitation.

The real education that flourishes in Year 7-9 is thus interrupted by GCSEs before resuming in the Sixth Form where a strong performance at A-level still demonstrates an undeniably strong understanding and a genuine love of a subject, not to mention the ability to think independently and creatively. It remains the gold standard for education.

Some experts have debated the idea of having multi-part assessments in the future, which combine several methods or elements of online assessment. There are obvious attractions here, but we should be wary of 'promises' of better systems, which seldom live up to the hype.

Recent decades have seen us move

back and forth over issues such as modularity and coursework, without any obvious winners. Throughout these swings, end of year examinations have remained the central point of the system and there is something inherently valuable about them. Any system that relies on teacher predictions has its attractions but will create a raft of issues, from unconscious bias to parental pressure on individual teachers.

As a teacher I have largely been confident about which grade most of my students would secure in an examination, but ultimately they need to demonstrate what they can do. Reliance on mock examinations sounds attractive too, but is worth avoiding; if the mock actually counts, then it is no longer a mock, no longer a chance to make mistakes and learn from them. So, we would need a mock before the mock... cue descent into absurdity and endless, needless testing.

Coursework has more value. As a History teacher, I love coursework because it feels like the best preparation for the next step; a good GCSE coursework essay is the best possible introduction to serious A-level style learning, whilst a good A-level independent study foreshadows the university experience in a way that no other work does. These are thus worth preserving and promoting.

As we look to the future, GCSE and A-level examinations still have a great deal of positives and we should



be wary of the allure of shiny new systems when we have something that is, Covid aside, tried and tested. Year after year, it is the individual students who have mastered the subject that tend to be rewarded in examinations. It may not be perfect, but the system as a whole is fair and the shambles of the summer has shown the real risks and pitfalls in alternative systems.

What we need to do moving forward is find a way of reducing the emphasis on exams. They are only examinations and an education is so much more than this – an education is about enriching the mind, body and spirit, helping each child develop into a happy, rounded and confident young adult who is hard-working, engaging, an independent thinker, creative, resilient and kind. No form of assessment can truly measure this and we should actually be cautious of trying. In truth, perhaps the assessment system is not the issue here, but the weight we put on it might be?

**Shaun Fenton, headmaster at Reigate Grammar School, Surrey.**

We won't get a consensus around the purpose of education, but we can agree that we want our young people to be well educated – not just well qualified. Therefore the assessment and examination system should promote holistic, broad, purposeful education and not simply the pursuit of grades.

Everyone from the regulator, Ofqual to UCAS, from parents to school leaders, recognise tensions within the current model despite good people working hard to get the right outcomes for young people. This summer reminded us all how fragile confidence can be.

Would the proposal above improve things?

I support improvement through change and I like the broader scope of assessment. However, coursework does not come without huge problems. I like Teacher Assessment because it gives the right message about the trust that we should

have in our country's teachers. However, moderation of Teacher Assessment is very challenging and we need to remember that the difference between an A and B grade at A level is the difference between becoming a doctor / engineer / architect or not, through missing out on a university offer. And mocks are done so differently in different schools. Some do numerous mocks, some spread them out over a month, some do 'open-book' mocks and some use just part of the full specification for a mock. Mock exams could not, as they currently fit into a school year, be used to reliably inform grading decisions.

I think we are looking at the problem the wrong way. I don't think structural change is the place to start. I think we should change the culture and approach to exams and how the outcomes of exams are then used by universities and employers. Exam grades measure the wrong thing. The vast majority of universities do not have the resources to interview applicants

**Jesse Elzinga, Headmaster of Sevenoaks School, Kent.**

I reply in defence of examinations: last summer's grading fiasco demonstrated that any system of awarding grades that does not involve public exams is fraught with difficulties. Granted, year-end exams are only one measure of a student's performance and potential, and they do not measure all forms of intelligence or ability, but they are an objective measurement that is difficult to replace.

My own schooling took place in the USA, which does not have any sort of national exam for 16 year-olds. Some schools offer the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme or Advanced Placement courses, but these are both assessed at the end of senior school when candidates are 18 years-old. Without national exams earlier in their school careers, curriculum varies considerably, as does the progress of students. When I started teaching in the UK, I was so impressed by the rigour of the education system in the GCSE years: schools worked together with

students to ensure that the young people made tremendous progress across a range of core subjects. A botched assessment attempt amid a global pandemic is not a good reason to throw out the model of GCSEs, which are a globally recognised currency in education.

Any teacher assessment is bound to be subjective, and research has shown that predictions (and CAGs this summer) vary widely from school to school and teacher to teacher. It is also the case that teacher assessment draws battle lines: parents and students versus teachers and schools. Too many schools experienced this once the UK Government was forced to throw out its attempts at an algorithm this summer. How many Heads heard this line in August: 'You didn't predict my son/daughter an A\*, and you ruined his/her future.' I much prefer the model where schools work together with families against the external challenge of the examination board, rather than any model that leaves parents and students challenging schools on their internal assessments and predictions.

to their course, talk to their school or college, review the quality of their written work, to evaluate their contribution to a collaborative learning environment in order to understand their motivation. I think that we should decide that we want a system that offers a view of a student's suitability and aptitude for future academic progress and attainment, and that values the personal learner qualities that would support success for the candidate and those they work with. If we can agree that we are looking for a system that does more than simply test performance, we could develop an exam system fit for that new and better purpose. It would be rare to employ someone simply on the basis of an academic test – employers look for technical excellence, but they all look for much more.

I like the proposal because it challenges assumptions and it suggests a higher level of trust in teacher judgement. However, I don't think structural tweaks are enough. In a world of new

An element of coursework is no bad thing, and over the years many exam boards have included coursework. The IB Diploma Programme includes elements of coursework throughout all subjects, and has rigorous guidelines to ensure that students receive some guidance, yet the majority of the work is down to the individual candidates.

I have said very little about A levels, and this is because at Sevenoaks School we only offer the IB Diploma Programme in the Sixth Form. All IB candidates study six subjects, which is a more natural follow-on from GCSE, ensuring students continue to make progress in a range of subjects. The IB Organisation is an independent body, entirely separate from UK Government control, which means it is immune to any interference. It benefits from OFQUAL approval, without being subject to its algorithms.

The best route forward from my point of view is a 'free market' of approved GCSE and IGCSE qualifications, from a range

of different exam boards. This allows schools to choose the most inspiring courses available for their students, and OFQUAL can monitor centrally to ensure they are equivalent qualifications. I imagine that my colleagues at OFQUAL would much prefer this system, rather than another attempt to award grades in the absence of year-end examinations.



# The case for broader curriculum and multi-form assessments

Steven Green, Deputy Head (Academic) at Bryanston School, Dorset, reflects

In another role, in another school, in another country, I began working with Year 11 and Sixth Form pupils. I knew at the time: this was to be some of the most enjoyable work I would do in education. It was special – overseeing a pupil's final three years after a near lifetime in the school (they joined at age 3) and preparing them to leave, to make their way in the world. These pupils were highly academic, gifted individuals. Although, as I reflected in my first few weeks, they did everything we asked of them – they had conformed to our system of education, some assembling near-perfect academic profiles.

At the beginning of my tenure, we hosted a visit from the Head of Admissions of an Ivy League college. One of her questions to the pupils, 'What do you do, that

makes you stand out?' was to form the basis of a complete reshaping of our sixth form offering – to give them every opportunity to analyse, debate, problem solve, work in team situations, collaborate with other schools, make links with local businesses, write articles, perform plays, cook, landscape gardens, design and build play equipment for the early years', all alongside their A levels.

We underestimate our pupils if we think they can't cope with a demanding and broad curriculum. With a rich and varied offering of opportunities to develop skills that go alongside examined subjects, they can and will manage highly demanding schedules and with the right support, thrive. As will the school – the leadership qualities and creativity of its senior pupils

are key markers of the strength of that learning environment – and their presence and impact should be felt in the classrooms of the very youngest pupils.

'Will this be on the exam?' has now become, even more depressingly, 'will this be used as evidence?' We can't blame our pupils for shutting out creativity, even open-mindedness, if they think it will get in the way of revision, or exam question mastery. It simply isn't a priority.

I have seen first-hand that widening the curriculum, offering rich skills-based activities and courses, alongside traditional subject teaching can create an environment in which pupils truly become ready for their next steps in the world beyond school. Technological, multi-form assessments would



offer them the opportunities they need to be creative and develop skills and expertise over a period of time, without the current fear of under-performing in our narrow-windowed exam season. There is a growing consensus that our current model doesn't work – and we need change to help our pupils at least start to catch up with their peers in other countries, countries that have embraced educational reform and whose graduates are fully equipped to take their place in a multi-disciplined and diverse world.

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**Laura Trainer, Admissions Manager, Ipswich School**

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**Vera Ixer, Director of External Relations, Clayesmore School**

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Dangerous territory where cashflow holds up but the balance sheet does not.

# Going concern?

Accountant Henry Briggs comments on the concerns over the pitfalls of potentially insolvent trading at fee paying schools...



All schools have been facing difficult operating conditions in 2020, which have brought many new challenges and uncertainties. One of which may only just be coming to light with this round of annual audits; the whole issue of Going Concern. Accounts are all prepared on a 'Going Concern' basis, that is an assumption that the entity will continue to trade for the next twelve months. Otherwise, accounts have to be prepared on a 'Break up' basis – i.e. closure and fire sale.

Governors, directors and trustees will be asked by auditors to provide evidence to support the view that they consider their schools will still be running as viable entities at least a year after the date when the 2020 accounts are signed off.

This kind of talk will raise concerns amongst those responsible for the school's governance; the first of which might be how they would be held to account should the school fail.

Where schools are Limited companies (many charitable ones are, in the format of being 'limited by guarantee'), or have trading subsidiaries or arms that have limited liability, then one of their regulators is Companies House (or

the Companies Registration Office – 'CRO' – as it is now called). In return for shareholders having limited liability, CRO police compliance with their rules. One of these is that directors will be held to account if they are trading whilst knowingly insolvent. If they are held to be doing so, there are draconian penalties – such as the removal of their right to hold the office of a director – or even imprisonment; as well as public shame. All this for a voluntary unpaid role for Governors!

Ignorance is no excuse – either of the rules or of the entity's financial position. It is something which needs to be constantly under review for all the school's operations and may pass under the radar for trading subsidiaries. If, say, a school runs an events business for lettings in the holidays and it is suffering from trading difficulties, the likelihood is that the holding company – the school – may be supporting it throughout this time. If the trading company fails to meet its debts as they fall due, then a wrongful trading case could follow against its directors.

For a charitable school this can also threaten its charitable status. A charity may not provide support to

a commercial entity in the form of working capital. Although this may not be material in financial terms for the whole operation, it could well cause problems for the status of the school.

In reality, the important thing is that the directors of a limited company do not enter into contracts which they know they may be unable to fulfil, due to the lack of liquidity in a limited company, which then fails. It only takes an aggrieved creditor, such as a leasing company or a bank, to follow a bad debt with a claim and a notification to CRO.

Whilst there are a welcome plethora of grants and deferrals available to entities suffering from the effects of the pandemic, many of the liabilities (such as delayed VAT and PAYE) are only deferred. Cash flow might be holding up, but the balance sheet is not. This is dangerous territory.

Governors must protect themselves as well as the school; and they can do this by usual good practice, but with much tighter, more frequent reporting being demanded of the management. Financial resilience tests should be done showing how figures forecast vary on a band of assumptions. Cash flow, revenue

and forecast balance sheets should be prepared and regularly and frequently updated to monitor and control solvency. Key performance Indicators, such as Pupil numbers, teaching costs as a percentage of income and, of course, money in the bank should be provided more often than may have been needed in the past. Governors need to think and question forensically – are they being given all the financial information they need to know and is it accurate? The less financially literate should make sure that they understand that they are overseeing a viable entity and must not rely on others who are closer to the figures. Some school heads and governors do not like being the bearers of bad news.

Schools taking these precautions and such a management approach will find then that not only are they addressing the concerns of the Governors, parents and staff, but can report robustly to their auditors that there are no issues over the application of the Going Concern basis of preparing accounts.

Henry Briggs is a partner at the Birmingham office of chartered accountants Haines Watts and a former school governor with expertise in advising and supporting both independent and state schools.

## Taking to the High Seas

The Fourth Form at Dauntsey's School, Wiltshire, have recently completed their first adventure on Jolie Brise, the Tall Ship owned, maintained and sailed by the pupils. The trip provides an introduction to sailing and is a key part of the School's extensive Adventure Education programme.

The annual sail usually involves an overnight stay on Jolie Brise but, due to current Department of Education regulations, the trip was adapted to be just a full day of sailing with pupils remaining in their House 'bubbles', supported by a Skipper, First Mate and Bosun, all from the School's Sailing Staff.

On board, pupils took part in every aspect of sailing a Tall Ship. They also learnt about the incredible history of this world-famous boat.

Toby Marris, Head of Sailing, Dauntsey's said: "It was a great opportunity to take the pupils out to sea and we had a fantastic clear day. Few of them

had sailed before – and some may never wish to repeat the experience – but the important thing is that everyone had a go and went home with some great memories. Everyone remembers their first trip on Jolie Brise."

In 2013 Jolie Brise celebrated the centenary anniversary of her construction by the Paumelle yard in Le Havre in 1913. The world famous, gaff-rigged pilot cutter was the last boat to carry the Royal Mail under sail and has won the Fastnet Race three times, including the inaugural race in 1925.

She was the overall winner of the International Sail Training Association's Tall Ships in 2000, 2002, 2011, 2015 and 2016.

All pupils at Dauntsey's enjoy a wide variety of sporting and adventurous pursuits and are encouraged to develop a strong spirit of adventure.



# What do teachers know about learning?

When I left university and started work in 1988, the workplace was a very different place from today. Telephones had rotary dials, we were still a couple of years away from the first incarnation of the World Wide Web, and it would be five years before the word 'email' entered the public lexicon. One might be forgiven for thinking that the impact of new technologies on the classroom must be the primary driving force for change in our approaches to teaching and learning, but the reality is that an even bigger impetus has come from developments in Cognitive Neuroscience – an interdisciplinary field of study concerned with the biological processes that underlie cognition and with describing how the brain creates the mind. Professor Daniel Willingham's book 'Why Don't Students Like School?'<sup>1</sup> provides an excellent insight into how this research can be applied in the context of the classroom, and I commend it to you as a very interesting read.

Of course, our understanding of how brains and memory function are not the only significant factors linked to how we approach educational

provision. Each generation of students differs in their expectations of themselves and how they will fit into the world around them. Their fears and the sources of their anxiety have changed too, and this also impacts how we go about facilitating learning: learning cannot take place effectively when more primitive needs (security or belonging, for example) have not been addressed. As a result, our emphasis on pastoral care is at the heart of our academic philosophy, rather than a thing apart.

According to blogger, author and English teacher David Didau, the purpose of education is to make children cleverer<sup>2</sup>: a subtle shift of emphasis from providing an education to equipping students to benefit from an education, and developing a basis for lifelong learning. Carol Dweck's work on Growth Mindset<sup>3</sup> raised awareness of the benefits in believing that intelligence is not fixed and can be developed, while classification of the components of intelligence suggested that though some aspects such as capacity of working memory and speed of processing may be fixed, other aspects that contribute

to intelligence (such as efficiency of recall and depth of knowledge) are malleable and can be developed. Previous ideas about a fixed IQ were over-simplistic, and with persistence, practice and the desire to do so, intelligence can be increased. To make this work, however, we have to overcome an all-too-common way of thinking: "Clever people don't have to work hard – they just 'get it' because they are clever. I have to work hard to succeed so I am not clever. Only stupid people have to work really hard. I don't want to appear to be stupid so I mustn't be seen to be working really hard." That is a fixed mindset at work. It can grow into a fear of failure that greatly outweighs the rewards of success, so that a student will not attempt any answers for themselves because of the possibility of getting them wrong. Instead, they will listen attentively, make notes diligently, and wait for every answer to be presented to them whilst avoiding thinking for themselves at all costs. This is less surprising than it might seem. Thinking is, for us, an inefficient and slow process at which we are not very good. The parts of our brains that allow us to think evolved much more recently than the large part of our brain associated with our senses, reflexes, motor skills and emotions. As a result we are very good at avoiding thinking. Many of the activities encountered in the classroom are planned with this in mind, and explicitly require individual and collective thinking. Ideally, teachers set up 'Goldilocks' problems – ones that are not too easy and not too hard, but 'just right'. The sense of reward from solving such problems is maximised because success is sufficiently frequent, but there is a meaningful sense of achievement because the problem was sufficiently challenging.

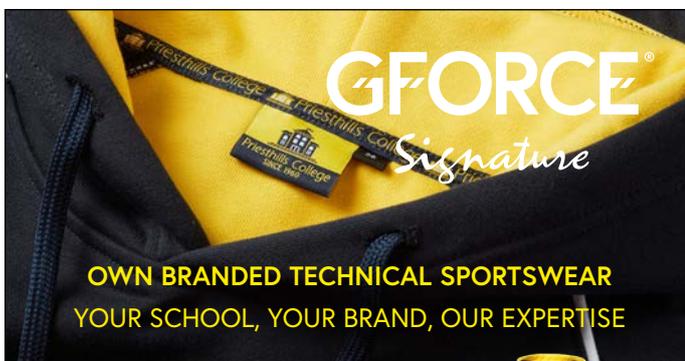
There has been a tendency to believe that in a world where everything we might need to know is available at a keystroke, the need for learned factual knowledge is diminished. Greg Ashman<sup>4</sup> writes of "the long tradition of educational progressivism with its disdain for mere facts, coupled with credulous and breathless rhetoric about how we can now look up any knowledge we need on our computers and phones." Such a line of thinking leads to a skills-rich rather than a knowledge-rich curriculum, but "... knowledge is actually what we think with and so the need for students to learn the most valuable, powerful knowledge human culture has



created is greater than ever. Teachers are beginning to realise this and so are coming to reject anti-knowledge ideology."

And so we come to the idea of expertise – the blend of subject knowledge with the skills, experience and ways of thinking that differentiates a novice from an expert. When I am teaching Chemistry, I am trying not only to explain the subject knowledge, but to train my students in what it means to be a Chemist. It has been shown that novice brains are different to expert brains. It is not just the absence of subject knowledge that makes this so, and understanding these differences gives us some insights into how to train brains towards expertise. Cognitive Load Theory plays a notable part in this<sup>5</sup>. Students often speak of knowing all the subject knowledge they have been taught but not being able to see what to do when they read the question. Teachers can struggle to see why this is the case, because the question seems completely obvious to them. The difference is that a teacher has seen and solved many similar examples before, whereas the whole of the question is new to the novice. As a result, the teacher only has to recall the previously-learned strategy for solving such problems, whereas the student has to work out a strategy from scratch; to think about the problem from first principles. Given that the question probably includes some specialist language, and may require a sequence of logical steps to formulate an answer, it is not hard to see how novices can experience cognitive overload, finding themselves unable to hold all the important aspects of the question and their answer in their working memory.

So how does a novice become an expert? The simple but challenging answer is practice. When we are practising something we have learnt, we are encoding its structure in our memory, thus strengthening the physical connections within the



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## ...asks Dr Andrew Crookell, Assistant Head - Teaching and Learning - at Stamford High School, Lincolnshire.

brain that make recall more efficient. Teachers create the opportunities for required knowledge to be revisited sufficiently often for these connections to be made, but it is students' independent study that strengthens the connections and improves the speed of recall. We facilitate this through frequent low-stakes testing, setting revision tasks for homework, and through training students in effective revision skills. It is an unfortunate fact that the way many students prefer to revise is at odds with effective revision methods and so many students take rather longer revising than they need to, or make inefficient use of their revision time. The reason for this has already been explained – we are predisposed to avoid thinking if we can, so revision methods such as reading notes or textbooks, copying out revision notes, or making flashcards are all actually ways of avoiding having to think while revising. They give the illusion of time well spent, but without the benefits. Another favourite trick our thinking-averse brains play on us is to encourage us to revise material we already know.

Revising a topic we are familiar with gives a sense of security in our knowledge of the material – but we learn nothing new. Students like to start by reviewing notes and work their way through progressively towards doing whole practice questions (past papers) as the last stage in revision. Fear of failure also encourages us to do things this way round to maximise our marks, but such a strategy is easy rather than efficient. The right approach is to start with the practice questions, in order to determine which parts of the material we know well and which parts are not yet secure. Then we can work on the bits we know least well. Approaching revision this way requires a lot more thinking up front, but ensures that the subsequent time is focused in the areas it is most needed.

There was a fashion a few years ago for problem-based learning. Rather than teaching students the material they were required to know, this approach started with a suitably-posed problem which required students to discover the knowledge for themselves in order

to reach a solution. Given what has been said about revision, it might appear that problem-based learning would be particularly effective, but there is a flaw. Without the knowledge already in place novices can't think in any meaningful way about the problem that has been set, while experts can because they already have the knowledge and context in place. Problem-based learning leads to cognitive overload unless the required knowledge is first provided through direct instruction. It is therefore normal to find direct instruction as the primary teaching method when learning new material and problem-based learning used occasionally to aid recall and to revise material that has already been covered.

There is also another reason why we place such importance on thinking and the development of thinking skills. What makes us remember one thing but not another? Much research has been carried out into why we remember certain things and whether it is possible to influence this process. We can have vivid memories of a

moment in time many years ago, while struggling to remember what someone said to us yesterday. The key is thought. We remember what we think about, and the more we think about it, the more able we are to recall it. Moreover, the way we think about things determines what we will remember about them. One of the arts of teaching is to facilitate students thinking about things in the same ways as they will need to when being examined. This is why demonstrations and practical work need to be carefully structured, otherwise the visual spectacle can be more memorable than the learning points that were intended. The conversation goes something like this:

Parent: "What did you do at school today?"

Child: "The teacher did this really cool demonstration where he put this metal thing in water and it fizzed and caught fire and we all screamed."

Parent: "Why did he do that?"

Child: "I don't know..."

References: 1 Why Don't Students Like School? Daniel T. Willingham, Pub. Jossey Bass, ISBN: 978-0470591963 2 Making Kids Cleverer, David Didau, Pub: Crown House, ISBN: 978-1785833663 3 Mindset, Carol Dweck, Pub: Robinson, ISBN: 978-1472139955 4 <https://gregashman.wordpress.com/2019/05/03/academics-dont-care-for-your-knowledge-rich-curriculum/> Accessed 21/12/19 5 see, for example, <https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/cognitive-load-theory.htm> Accessed 22/12/19

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# Shifting from STEM to STEAM

Over the past few years there has been a vigorous emphasis on STEM subjects to raise the bar and produce more successful maths and science students. But here, Jonathan Sanders, director of music at Bedford School, explains why he feels focusing solely on these subjects just doesn't add up and explains why the arts must be part of the equation...

In recent years, schools all over the country have been ploughing resources into science, technology, engineering and maths. It is a widely accepted belief that these subjects play a key role in the sustained growth and stability of the world economy, in which the UK aims to be a leading light.

There is no doubt whatsoever that those who excel in these core subjects will become a reliable part of the next generation of innovators.

But no one in the education sector, from teachers to governors, can deny the importance of another skill that can help such innovators truly make a difference in the world – the ability to think creatively.

It is for this reason that the educational dialogue has shifted from STEM to STEAM as advocates of creative competence seek to add arts into the mix.

## A rounded education

From an early stage in the education of our country's students, it is easy to understand the role that art and music play in education.

The colourful characters of Sesame Street have long demonstrated how music, art and drama not only entertain our children, but educate them too.

More robust evidence is found in the studies indicating that Nobel

Laureates, commended for their creative and ground-breaking work in the sciences, are 17 times likelier than the average scientist to be a painter and four times as likely to be a musician.

Although the concept of STEAM may have only entered the curricular discussion in recent times, it is in fact STEM that has had an artistic approach to learning that had been around for centuries.

Leonardo da Vinci combined arts and science in Renaissance Italy. His studies of biology and anatomy are expressed in legendary paintings such as Mona Lisa and Vitruvian Man which explores the flight of birds.

I would like to put forward the case for the subject of music entering the core curriculum, my area of expertise.

## Creativity and expression

As a universal art form, music is a force that stirs emotion, uncages creativity and educates students on freedom of expression.

Not only does music promote creative skills, it helps students develop excellent analytical skills that allows it to sit comfortably beside other theory-driven subjects such as maths and science.

It is imperative for students to express themselves musically in

order to fulfil their academic potential, as the skills they will have learned through music should help to elevate them from logistical thinkers to being creative thinkers, too.

According to research from the University of Zurich, regularly playing an instrument can increase IQ and can improve the likelihood that students will learn foreign languages. We believe that every child should have the opportunity to maximise their capacity to learn, and a STEAM curriculum is the way to provide this.

Music education is academically demanding, involves a synthesis of the practical, rational and emotional and has been at the heart of education in the Western world for centuries.

## Widen your horizons

Creativity can be developed in any discipline. However, a greater variety of its application results in the fostering of another key skill; adaptability.

The current Covid-19 pandemic has underlined the need for individuals who are willing to adapt to thrive. Schools should widen their perspective of the arts to see them as subjects that develop skills that have an impact far beyond the economy alone.



For years, schools have placed a vigorous emphasis on STEM – with little to show for their efforts.

This is because young people need variety in their education. A properly balanced timetable should incorporate music, art and drama to keep students happy and fully engaged.

Science and engineering aside, from a purely economic standpoint the UK's creative industries have been growing at almost twice the rate of the rest of economy.

As much as we hope that an emphasis on sciences will produce the next Einstein, they are more likely to be produced by a fair curriculum that caters to their, and our country's, need for artistic thinking.

It's vital that schools nurture their students' creative talents and work towards a STEAM curriculum, to have a hand in producing the next generation of music, art and drama professionals.

## Student now a well-read sci-fi author

Teenage author and Myddelton College, Denbighshire, student Oliver Lewis' sci-fi books are now being read by students across the world after they were picked up by a global reading programme.

Oliver's novels have been added to Accelerated Reader, a worldwide programme being used by Oliver's school as a reading management and

monitoring programme that motivates pupils to read.

Oliver (15) released his horror trilogy, Bloodcross, which was spotted by Renaissance on social media. Bloodcross tells the twisted tale of a mother and son who risk everything to test themselves against the rising omnipotence of the technological world.

The final book in Oliver's trilogy,

Venturous, is now out. But it doesn't signal the end of Oliver's writing career as he reveals he wrote a collection of short stories during lockdown.

Head of English at Myddelton College Alan Biles-Liddell said: "Oliver has always been an avid reader, but he kept his talent for writing a secret at the beginning! All the teaching staff at Myddelton are really impressed

by what he has achieved as are his fellow pupils. We're all looking forward to reading his next book in the series."



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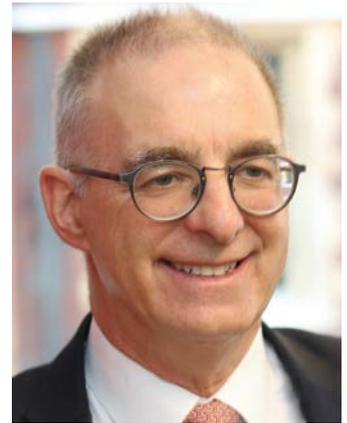
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# Protecting your school's reputation

Schools often face the threat of bad publicity. During the coronavirus, this threat has been considerably higher due to increasing scrutiny from parents, teachers, regulatory bodies, and the media into how schools are responding to and implementing the guidelines. It can sometimes only take one disgruntled individual to share their thoughts on social media to create a media storm. As a private business, how you deal with bad publicity is key to protecting the reputation of the school or its officials.

Solicitor Gerard Cukier looks at the law of defamation and outlines what a school or its officials can do to protect their reputation, especially if it is faced with allegations which could cause long-term damage...



## Can a school and its officials sue for defamation?

As a "body trading for profit", Independent schools can sue for defamation, but it will be necessary to show financial loss caused as a result of the defamatory publication. Individuals, whether governors, teachers, or anyone acting in an official capacity in the education sphere, are also able to sue for defamation for serious harm caused to their reputation if their conduct or actions are falsely and seriously impugned.

## How serious do the allegations need to be to pursue an action for defamation?

This test for defamation is a high one and strong evidence is required – the allegations need to be false, cause or are likely to cause serious damage to reputation and cause financial loss in the case of businesses. Individuals do not need to show financial loss, but they need to show evidence of "serious harm to reputation" as a result of the defamatory allegations. If there is no evidence of serious harm to reputation, a claim in defamation will fail.

## How can you defend the allegedly defamatory statements?

The most obvious defence is truth. If the allegation, however serious, can be proved to be true then that is a good defence to a defamation claim. If what is claimed and published is untrue or partially untrue, you may be able to make a claim for defamation. Another defence is "honest opinion". Everyone is entitled to express an 'honest opinion' on a given state of facts, even if the opinion is incorrect or unreasonable, provided that it is and can be shown to be honestly held. The important point is that the opinion needs to be recognised as an opinion – as opposed to a statement of fact.

Newspapers have certain defences where they can show (a) that the statement was a matter of public interest and (b) that, in all the circumstances, the newspaper reasonably believed that it was in the public interest to publish the statement complained about.

## Will the school be given notice that a media outlet will publishing allegations against the school?

All reputable broadcast media and newspapers operate under a code of conduct. This code of conduct requires them to give the party against whom the allegations

are made, a right of reply before publishing the serious allegations. The right of reply is very important as a broadcaster or publisher runs a severe risk if they do not provide this opportunity.

The right to reply and to seek clarification should be exercised to counter false or incorrect allegations. You may that way be able to stop the story being broadcast or published or limit the impact of the story. The media cannot ignore the response.

## How can you respond to defamation on social media?

Social media and the internet are not properly regulated, which makes it far more challenging to deal with seriously defamatory allegations. Most responsible ISPs and websites have appropriate takedown procedures, which can be used to remove defamatory comments published on their sites. For all claims for defamation, whether that is on a social media platform, internet or media outlet, the "serious harm to reputation" test will apply.

## What other action can be taken if the 'serious harm to reputation' test is not met?

Any untrue or misleading

allegations, whether they meet the 'serious harm to reputation' test or not, should be carefully considered, properly responded to and corrected. As many media publications have an online news website and social media channels, they often form part of the school's permanent record.

In the long-term, it may also be possible to reduce the impact of a harmful story appearing on a Google Search by populating more positive content on the Google page. Whilst this is not easy to achieve, over time the damaging posts may become less visible.

The most important piece of advice is keep calm. Your right of reply generally gives you the time and opportunity to consider the allegations carefully. If the allegations are serious, you should take advice on how to best respond, whether through your media advisers or, in very serious cases, your legal advisers. A well thought out and reasoned factual response may prevent a story going to press. At the very least, you may be able to ensure that what is published is far more balanced and less damaging to your school's reputation.

Gerard Cukier, defamation and commercial solicitor at Keystone Law T: 020 3319 3700 E: gerard.cukier@keystonelaw.co.uk

## Sharp shooting

16-year-old Darcy McBride, a Sixth Former at Bedford School, finished in first place in the U21 category of the British Open Sporting clay pigeon championship, held in the West Midlands. In the final, Darcy shot a 75 bird layout to tie for first place. This meant there was a shoot off in the afternoon, which again ended in a tie. This forced a sudden death for the title, and Darcy just took the top spot.

Darcy is the youngest person to win this national competition since 1948, when the competition was founded. This victory follows his recent win in the Junior category at The Churchill Cup.

Darcy is pictured with Edward King, MD of ASI (Anglo Spanish Imports) who presented the prize.





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# Innovative "drive-through" visits

Glenalmond College, Perthshire, which has 360 pupils aged 12 to 18, has launched an innovative new way of showcasing the school to families interested in a Glenalmond education for their children.

The safari-style tour will see visitors remain inside their own vehicles throughout the visit, during which they will be led through the school's 300 acres of grounds in convoy and provided with either pre-recorded information or a running commentary via mobile phone from a member of the school's admissions team on board the lead vehicle.

During the school holidays when pupils are not present, the drive-through experience may also include a unique opportunity to drive under Front Arch and through the school's beautiful Quad at the heart of its buildings.

According to Kitty Lindsay,

Director of Admissions at Glenalmond, the idea emerged after the school's recent successful Virtual Open Day.

"Families considering senior schools will spend a lot of time researching the best options for their children via websites and online visits. However, parents who register their pupils with Glenalmond often tell us that it was only when they actually visited us in person that they really got the 'feel' of the school and what sets it apart. So we were looking at what we could offer which would be COVID-safe and still allow families to see the school first-hand," said Mrs Lindsay.

"We have a stunning driveway - our Front Avenue - which leads up to the main school buildings and our drive-through visitors will still be able to experience the "wow factor" of the first glimpse of the buildings through the trees on the way in.

"They will also get a sense of the sheer scale of our grounds, including a nine-hole golf course and our new golf hub and a chance to view our superb facilities from their cars. We are confident that the new drive-through experience will allow them to leave with a keen sense of spirit of our school."

Visitors will remain inside their own vehicle throughout the tour which will also allow them to view the school's magnificent buildings, including the Quad with its Hogwarts-style Dining Hall and beautiful Library and Chapel. They will also have a chance to view the school's popular Outdoor Classroom where pupils learn bushcraft and other skills - and enjoy lots of hot chocolate in the winter months!

Throughout the visit, a running commentary will be provided by a member of staff who will also be able to answer any questions about the school, which was

recently named as one of the country's top independent schools.

One of the school's major selling points is its setting which provides a natural, unpolluted environment in which the pupils thrive. It also provides a home for a myriad of wildlife - including a thriving population of Red Squirrels, which visitors will also be able to enjoy on their drive-through tour of the school.



## Three tier tennis programme

The new Tennis Programme at West Buckland School, Devon, has been extremely successful since it launched this term under the leadership of Head Coach, Chris Gill. Aimed at all ages from Year 1 to Year 13, there are fifteen group sessions per week involving around 150 players.

The new programme offers 'tennis for all', so that everyone can benefit from playing tennis at a level that suits them. Recreational sessions are available for inexperienced players to develop the key skills, while Squad sessions are aimed at those players who play once or twice a week and want to hone their skill set. Performance sessions are for the top tennis players who play multiple times per week and regularly compete in the sport.

The emphasis on tennis at West Buckland increased this year with tennis camps for all ages throughout the summer, which not only allowed children to improve their skills and confidence in the sport, but provided a much-needed

and safe opportunity to mingle with their classmates and friends after a long period of separation.

Currently at West Buckland, there are 10 players attending Devon county training and 4 taking part in South West regional training. Two of the rising stars, Amelie Pye and Eric Lorimer, have been playing at national level for their age groups, with Eric (pictured) having reached the final of the LTA National Series at Repton last month (September).



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# Oldest girls' school in the country sponsors new Exeter Chiefs women's rugby team

A new and exciting chapter in the history of women's sport is about to take off with The Maynard School, Devon, the oldest girls' school in the country, collaborating with the newly formed Exeter Chiefs Women's rugby team.

Set to be part of the elite Premier 15s competition, the Chiefs side - who will come under the guidance of former England internationals Susie Appleby and Amy Garnett - are ready to break new ground and establish themselves as a growing force within the English Women's game, all with the backing of the region's premier independent school for girls.

Said Sarah Dunn, Headmistress at The Maynard School: "We pride ourselves on our reputation of being #MadeforGirls and, as soon as we heard that Exeter Chiefs would be

expanding into women's rugby, we knew that we wanted to be a part of such a pivotal moment in sport here in the West Country. As the oldest girls' school in the country and, indeed with our own excellent track record in the sports arena as well as the classroom, we knew forming a partnership with the Chiefs Women would be the perfect match".

"It is such a very proud moment to have one of the top teams in the country bearing The Maynard logo on their sleeves and we shall all be avidly supporting them in all of their matches.

"As a part of the partnership, we are thrilled that the Chiefs Women have agreed to act as our rugby coaches at the school with the aim being to create our own teams, providing our talented students



(Left) Matthew Loosemore, Assistant Head (Safeguarding and Welfare) at The Maynard; (Right) Sarah Dunn, Headmistress.

with the opportunity to become future Chiefs team members. Work is already underway with this and our girls have been extremely lucky already to have experienced superb coaching under the expert guidance of Susie and Amy with lots more to look forward to in the future. Most importantly, we know that this partnership will be inspirational to all of our students.

It goes without saying that we shall be backing the Chiefs Women every step of the way and we wish them the very best of luck for many successful seasons ahead."

This exciting new collaboration for the South West is indicative of women's solidarity at its best and

has all the ability to become history in the making with a wealth of West Country-based talent, as well as a host of international names, having already been signed up as the Chiefs look to make an instant impact.

"Women's sport has never been so popular and here at the Chiefs we are excited at what can be achieved by our team entering into the top tier of the women's game in this country. Setting up a squad like this, particularly during a pandemic like we are in currently, could not be done without the fantastic support we have been shown by our key sponsors," said Lisa Duncan, Sales & Marketing Director for the Exeter Chiefs.

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# Daily COVID-19 testing in schools ‘vital to save children’s education’

Daily COVID-19 testing in schools will keep children in full-time education, stop mass COVID-19 spread, and help keep the economy afloat, according to Professor Abderrahim Taamouti, an Economist at Durham University Business School.

Professor Taamouti previously developed an epidemic model to study the trade-off between Covid-19 control, lockdown and testing. The model shows that mass testing is the safest and cheapest way to reopen the economy and society. Professor Taamouti’s model suggests we would need to test 4–7% of the UK population each day to effectively control Covid-19 infection rates, without needing to enforce another lockdown.

This testing policy also applies to the education sector, to ensure children’s education is not a stop-start process. The education sector is a critical one in terms of covid-spread, given the difficulties in enforcing social distancing,

and the sheer volume of children and teachers from numerous households all interacting indoors.

Current measures in schools to limit the spread of COVID-19 include encouraging all to wash their hands, creating bubbles within the school years, wearing masks between classrooms and socially distanced seating. However, there are currently no mandatory testing procedures in place for teachers or pupils.

If anyone within school bubbles displays symptoms, all members are currently required to be tested or isolate, meaning children and teachers face missing out on vital education and classroom time over the next academic year. The Children’s Commissioner

has suggested around one in 20 children in England are currently out of school due to issues linked to the pandemic and lockdown.

Professor Taamouti said: “Schools must be equipped with testing to help them properly fight the spread of the virus and avoid the outbreaks that can lead to their closure. Daily testing for teachers and pupils could help run schools smoothly and reduce the anxiety of parents, ensuring children have no unnecessary breaks in their education, and can continue to learn without disruption”.

By employing his mass, daily testing strategy in all schools children will only have to self-isolate if they test positive themselves and not if someone

in their bubble does, meaning the number of children missing school will drastically reduce. In turn, the knock-on effect on the economy and public health will also decrease.

With the winter, and flu season, ahead many parents may mistakenly stop children from going into school by confusing suspected covid-19 symptoms with other ailments. Whilst, alternatively, other children with covid-19 may be sent to school as parents assume an alternative diagnosis. Professor Taamouti’s strategy would help to identify both the false alarms and the more worrying asymptomatic cases that can cause further outbreaks and subsequent school closures.

Advertorial Feature

## CONVERSATIONAL MARKING: a teaching strategy that’s ALSO covid-19 safe? We’re listening...

Teachers are wasting hours each week having to keep books in quarantine before and after marking, hindering the teaching and learning process. However one teacher-turned-app-developer has found a solution that is not only COVID safe, but saves teachers on average 10 hours of marking per week.

James Holmes, experienced teacher and creator of Mark Mate, has developed a strategy called “Conversational Marking” which uses verbal feedback to remove the number of touch-points in marking work, giving students more detailed and meaningful feedback all while saving teachers time - even meeting with success in BBC’s Dragon’s Den to get funding to scale Mark Mate.

Visit [www.markmate.co.uk/try](http://www.markmate.co.uk/try) for more information

“It all started with a conversation I had in the staffroom after a particularly long day while marking books,” explains James. “I felt there must be a better way to give feedback that would really resonate with children, while also helping to make the process less labour intensive. It occurred to me that the writing on feedback was what took such a long time- if we could give feedback verbally, it would halve the amount of time it took to mark. I just needed to find a way of recording those verbal communications effectively. And so Mark Mate was born!”

He developed Mark Mate not only as a way of reducing the amount of time marking books, but to enhance the feedback he was giving his students so that they

got more constructive feedback, to support their learning.

The concept of verbal delivery of feedback is not new- however what James has done is turned this simple idea into an easily applied formula that improves teaching and learning, saves time, and minimizes the risk of contamination by minimising touch points.

Conversational marking helps schools by:

1. Reducing the number of touchpoints in the marking process
2. Utilising the power of the voice to prevent feedback getting lost in translation
3. Enabling meaningful feedback to boost wellbeing with

personalised detailed comments to encourage and motivate students

4. Allowing instant access to assessment data with Mark Mate, all marking recorded on MIS marksheets, educators can access individual student data without the need to physically check each individual book or paper.

James concludes: “Teachers have been giving feedback to students verbally since day one. But technology has empowered us to bring the intimacy of verbal communications through conversational marking into a blended learning environment, which allows us to transform teaching practices, even under exceptional circumstances.”

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# Profile

In conversation with Jon Perriss

**Born:** 1972

**Married:** to Charlotte who is a nurse. I have two daughters, Ella (17) and Imogen (15)

**Schools and University Attended:** Exeter School. Then Swansea University for my Geography degree; Southampton University for my PGCE. I have also done an MEd with Buckingham University

**First job:** Wanganui Collegiate School, New Zealand. 1995. Geography teacher and boarding house tutor

**First management job:** 2000 – Head of Hockey at Tonbridge

**First job in education:** See first job

**Appointed to current job:** 2019

**Favourite piece of music:** I lurch between Stevie Wonder and Rachmaninov

**Favourite food:** It's hard to go far from a burger; locally sourced ingredients of course

**Favourite drink:** Strong black coffee – Strangers in Norwich is a favourite

**Favourite holiday destination:** The South Hams

**Favourite leisure pastime:** Walking a coastal path

**Favourite TV or radio programme/series:** Friends has extraordinary longevity to it, and currently enjoying Brooklyn 99

**Suggested epitaph:** I'll leave that to those more qualified and wise than I

**Q** The last few months have been unusual ones in education, with Covid-19 and the grading fiasco challenging staff and young people alike. Have you noticed any mental health or well-being problems developing as a result? What steps have you taken to monitor for future difficulties?

**A** *Our view of home as a sanctuary has been shattered and thus our local and world view has changed. Lockdown has emphasised our personality traits, often making us more extreme versions, for better or worse, of what we were before. This has inevitably led to pressures and stresses across the sector. The return to school routine has been a blessed relief and although there are restrictions and frustrations, seeing the children back in school has given all teachers, pupils and students a real lift. Plenty of conversation and giving time to listen is important as we navigate our way through these turbulent waters.*

**Q** After attending Exeter School you read Geography at Swansea and have taught the subject ever since. Is it important that heads still teach? What do you think it adds to headship?

**A** *Yes, I think it is. We all got into the profession because we loved our subjects and we wanted to play a small part in shaping the lives of those whom you saw in the classroom and beyond. I think it gives credibility and a level of kinship in the staff room – you are doing what the teaching staff are doing, reports and all – and the pupils know a different side to your character.*

**Q** Early in your career you spent time teaching at Wanganui Collegiate School in New Zealand. What opinion did you form about the educational system there and how it compared to the UK? Why did you decide to return?

**A** *I would encourage anyone to teach abroad for some of their career. Back in the mid-90s, going to NZ was like living in an episode of Last of the Summer Wine; it was wonderful! It was a fantastic experience, but I felt that I needed to come back to reality.*

**Q** You taught at Tonbridge School, Kent, for 16 years, moving up the ranks to become Head of Lower School and a Boarding Housemaster. Tonbridge is all-boys, whereas Langley has been co-ed since 1990. Have you

had to adjust your style of management or your approach to marketing, as a consequence of moving away from a single-sex establishment?

**A** *It is too simplistic to espouse a clear educational dichotomy between a single-sex school and a co-ed one. Children are children and, although there are of course differences, the main focus must be to ensure that there is an environment that nurtures the individual so they can flourish. I have been fortunate that the schools that I have worked in have all created this self-affirming truth.*

**Q** Langley is an all-through school, serving young people between 2 and 18 in two historic country houses set within many acres of grounds. If prospective parents ask you for an opinion on the key benefits and potential disadvantages of their child remaining in such an environment for their entire school life, how would you respond?

**A** *The congruence that you get in a through school is a huge advantage. Educational facets developed in the Prep environment can be built on and nourished in the senior setting. Pastoral and wellbeing support is, as we all know, at its best when you know the child; this is strengthened in a 2-18 school. We are fortunate at Langley that there is a spatial distance between our two sites; this gives a sense of moving into a new and exciting phase on a different campus, whilst keeping the underpinned values of the school.*

**Q** Langley offers day, weekly and flexi boarding, and full-time boarding. Are the weekly and flexi boarding options something you would advocate for most pupils as offering the 'best of both worlds'? How is the uptake on these options going?

**A** *We are able to offer these different boarding options and this allows the child and family to choose what suits them as an individual and a family. A late kayaking session or band rehearsal could mean a flexi board night to change the time on the road into time to do work, or relax with friends. All options are popular at the moment, with our girls' boarding currently full.*

**Q** You are known as an advocate of 'non-prescriptive' education which instils world-ready skills. What do you mean by that, and how does it show itself in the classroom?

Jon Perriss has been Head of Langley School, Norfolk, since 2019. He was previously Deputy Head at Christ's Hospital, Sussex.



**A** *We are preparing our pupils for an unknown world – jobs not invented yet, 9 to 5 routines out of the window, offices changing the patterns that are, like many of our schools, products of the Victorian era. Skills need a knowledge base, but I talk about the attributes of creativity, adaptability and resilience. I want Langley pupils to have these so they can contribute to, and lead our societies in the future.*

**Q** *Programmes for reducing staff stress levels are higher on the agenda than they were. Is the job getting harder, or are staff less prepared to 'get on and cope' than they were? Do you detect that fewer talented people are now prepared to take on the rigours of headship?*

**A** *As the world for our young people is getting more complex, similar increases are also true for our teachers. The encroaching of zoom into our homes last term, and thus each lesson observed and scrutinised*

*by numerous households, as well as the proliferation of the dreaded trial by WhatsApp, has meant that the job isn't necessarily getting harder, but the measures by which we are judged have become more intrusive.*

**Q** *Hockey has been a long-standing interest, and you have coached school teams and captained outside ones. Langley offers a wide variety of sports and has developed innovative partnerships with some big-name clubs. What has participation in sport meant to you personally, and how do you encourage those less-talented in competitive physical exercise to keep active and not feel 'out of it'.*

**A** *It hasn't been the sport per se, but the friendships made that have been the most valuable part of my own sporting experiences, despite an inability to walk the day following a hockey match now! Creating opportunity means that everyone can find a niche and interest that may, if*

*they are encouraged and get a chance, be a lifelong passion.*

**Q** *Who, or what, inspired you to get into teaching?*

**A** *I had some brilliant teachers in school, particularly Martin Rodgers, Helen Sail, and John Davidson, and they certainly inspired me to get into the profession. Almost as important have been those role models who have kept me always wanting to improve and progress: Colin Dowdeswell (Norwich), Randall Stevens and David Robbins (Tonbridge) and Marlene Fleming (Christ's Hospital).*

**Q** *If a deputy head asked you for one top tip as he or she considered moving into headship, what would you say?*

**A** *Go for it! Separate the operational from the strategic, compartmentalize and laugh as often as you can. Be yourself... but with more skill!*



# Mind your head! How do you stop your minibus drivers from damaging vehicle roofs, tyres and wing mirrors?



It is time to take minibus safety more seriously says Chris Maynard, Managing Director of Castle Minibus, and the key to avoiding these common accidents is training, awareness and support.

We have spoken to over 500 schools in the past 18 months on the Minibus Compliance Course and the most common accidents their vehicles are involved in are roof collisions and lost wing mirrors; both of which are caused by drivers misjudging the size of the vehicle they are driving. Luckily none of the schools we spoke to had had any injuries but one school's insurance company had refused to insure anything above window height because of the number of claims they'd made. Another school had a cupboard full of spare wing mirrors as replacing them had become almost a weekly occurrence.

## Have your drivers had any additional minibus training?

If you operate under a Section 19 Permit, your drivers won't necessarily have had any additional minibus training. If they passed their car test before January 1st, 1997 they will have D1 (101) entitlement. If you have a minibus that is under 3.5 tonnes your drivers may be driving with only a standard B car licence. Depending on your school's training schedule your drivers may have had any minibus awareness or driver training such as MIDAS, and so may not be fully aware that a minibus is not necessarily 'just a big car' or that the height and width warning traffic signs apply to them.



The lack of this kind of training, and the awareness it's needed, is why Castle invested in writing the Minibus Compliance Course and making it available online in a bid to help plug any knowledge gaps.

## Even professional drivers hit bridges (a lot)

You may have seen images of the double-decker bus, carrying pupils aged 11-16, that crashed into a bridge in Winchester recently. Three children were badly hurt and taken to hospital and fourteen more suffered minor injuries. Unfortunately, these kind of misjudged height accidents, known as bridge strikes, are also common for professional drivers.

Network Rail, which is campaigning to reduce the number of bridge strikes that put rail and road users at risk claim 'On an average day, the drivers of at least five heavy goods vehicles and/or buses, put themselves, road users and the public travelling on the trains at risk. Research by Network Rail has found that 32% of drivers admitted to setting off whilst not being aware of the height of their vehicle with 56% not considering low bridges when planning their journey'

Although the above refers to professional drivers of larger vehicles the same problems exist for 'volunteer' drivers in minibuses. Knowing a vehicle's size and planning your journey accordingly are universal requirements when it comes to preventing accidents and damage to vehicles.

## What can you do as a school to help prevent accidents?

Richard Turfitt, Senior Traffic Commissioner, updated the Statutory Guidance on 28th September 2020 as part of his quest to reduce the number of bridge strikes, estimated to be 5 a day. This follows earlier advice to operators that they are expected to have systems in place to prevent bridge strikes.

## The key is having a system in place

When we work with schools on the Minibus Compliance Course we look at what systems they could put in place to help teachers/drivers understand the size of the vehicle they're driving and effectively plan routes, parking and access. Too often schools are operating a system of 'jump in and go' and that's when incidents occur.

Having a system in place that supports your drivers with route planning and encourages them to check the vehicle pre-journey will dramatically reduce the likelihood of an accident.

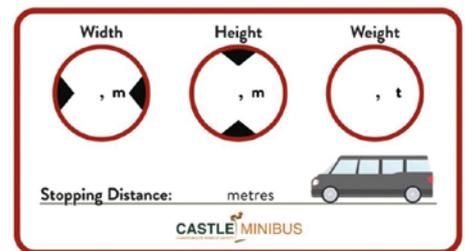
## What's in place to help them when they're driving?

Even if your drivers have taken the full D1 licence and learnt to drive a minibus this is no guarantee they'll remember the height and width of the vehicle when they are driving 16 pupils. A visual reminder on the dash or in the cab is just one of the things schools can do to help their drivers remain aware of the size of

the vehicle and anticipate any problems with access to car parks or garages.

## Sometimes it is a case of back to basics

On the Minibus Compliance Course we go back to basics in our vehicles section; the difference between red circles and triangles, stopping distances and a visual realisation of the difference in height and width compared to a car.



When discussing the responsibility for the minibus and the journey it quickly becomes apparent that a 'jump in and go' policy dramatically increases the risk of damage to the vehicle, disruption to the journey and the safety of the passengers.

## Additional online training

Castle Minibus wrote the UK's only Minibus Compliance Course to help schools tackling issues like height collisions and improve minibus safety. Available online, the course covers the vehicle, the journey, licences and permits and the drivers. It is relevant for anyone involved in the management or operation of minibuses operating under a Section 19 Permit. Schools that complete the online course will not only have evidence that they have trained their staff in minibus compliance but will have the tools they need to create a robust minibus safety system.

## Safe enough to save on your insurance

James Brown and Sons (Somerset) Ltd recognise that a Castle Minibus client is less likely to have an incident because of Castle Minibus' high safety standards, especially if they have completed the Minibus Compliance Course. James Brown and Sons Ltd have negotiated insurance rates that reflect the reduced risk that holders of the Minibus Compliance Course certificate represent and even allow a further 10% discount for Castle customers.

1 Source: [www.networkrail.co.uk/running-the-railway/looking-after-the-railway/bridges-tunnels-and-viaducts/the-risk-of-bridge-strikes/](http://www.networkrail.co.uk/running-the-railway/looking-after-the-railway/bridges-tunnels-and-viaducts/the-risk-of-bridge-strikes/)

If you would like to achieve certification for your school and help prevent avoidable damage to your vehicles find out more at [www.castleminibus.co.uk](http://www.castleminibus.co.uk) or call 01869 253744 for more information.



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\*logins must share the same email domain i.e. @exampleschool.org

# Sixth Form: Preparing mentally & physically for exams & careers

No one can argue that sixth form students across the country are facing an extraordinary situation right now as the count down begins for A-level exams in 2021, says Lara Péchard, Head at St Margaret's School in Hertfordshire.

Questions and worries stemming from the fallout of this summer around whether exams will actually take place next year and what the method of assessment might be, whether we'll face a nationwide lockdown again? For the longer term, students are also anxious about what will university look like for them come next October, the impact on the economy and what careers opportunities will be at the end of this whole crisis?

In truth, we've had to hit the fast-forward button on so many areas of academic life and pastoral wellbeing over the last six months and all with an ongoing backdrop of constant uncertainty. Life has not been easy for sixth form students in this country and this next academic year is no different (except we have great insight into what could go wrong again) and now we have the added pressure of reports suggesting that young people will be the biggest hit by the growing unemployment rise, it's no wonder that mental health and general wellbeing is suffering right now.

## Fears of the unknown

Often the pressures surrounding A-level exams are already mounting for sixth form pupils as the year progresses and this happened even prior to Covid. In the past schools have often voiced concerns around the impact that this level of pressure can have on a young person's mental health and ability to perform. Yet in the coming year, it's not only revision pressures that students

face, they now have the added fear of the unknown. The reality of not knowing how they will be assessed will undoubtedly be a concern for many and no amount of reassurance from teachers will be able to remove those particular doubts.

However, what schools can do is start looking to next year (and beyond) to ensure that we create a robust evidence trail of all assessments and A-level grades in a way that is understood by everyone. There will be questions from our students of course and we should be prepared to answer these to offer some form of clarity and instil confidence in our young people at a time when they need it most. We have to be focused in our approach, be on hand to reassure students on which pieces of work count towards that assessment etc. As schools we must also support the theory that 'your best is good enough' and that any future assessment of the work completed will need to take a holistic approach over the duration of study.

Many schools are also questioning whether or not they should be allowed to offer their sixth form students the chance to re-submit pieces of work on occasion, taking into account the climate and unpredictability of assessments. This may well go some way to helping the young overcome anxieties surrounding the quality of the work they submit – as they will certainly place greater pressure on themselves to do over and above what is required.

## Open communication

Clear and open communication with children and parents will be required in order to best allay concerns but also to avoid any tension. Being very clear about how different grades might work will be key if we do end up without exams and using Centre Assessed Grades (CAG) again. For parents the language around half term grades, mock grades, predicted grades and UCAS grades are already confusing.

Interestingly, universities and UCAS are operating on the usual deadlines and it has been reassuring to hear this and relay to students that, contrary to media reports, there are plentiful 2021 places available.

Schools will also need to be prepared for Year 13 students to over-worry about whether their teachers have adequate evidence of their potential and how they are collecting that evidence; there is so much to contend with. Schools like mine have responded by offering wellbeing sessions, tips on how to deal with anxiety, support with university applications (as well as discussion around the changes they might expect), careers advice, video sessions on mindfulness or yoga and more. Anything we can do to promote a sense of calm, wellness and positivity is vital.

## New pathways

Sharing stories of how recent leavers are finding different pathways during this time should excite students. Whilst plenty



of recent leavers have headed off to university in the last few weeks, there are also plenty of great gap year opportunities taking place. I have been impressed by those in my school who have been resourceful and amongst other plans, have secured apprenticeships for TK Maxx or places on the Level 3 Harris Pilot Course, to name a few.

Schools don't have a crystal ball, we cannot see into the future and so discussion around the economy and careers advice for the future is a learning curve for all, but we have to have these conversations openly and honestly, talk to students about how they are feeling and how this pandemic is impacting them right now. They will have questions about their future and we should be prepared to jump on board that potential 'rollercoaster' with them.

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# CHANGING FACES... CHANGING PLACES...



Karen Gracie-Langrick is the new Headteacher of Colchester High School.

Ms Gracie-Langrick had been at Leighton Park School, Berkshire, since 1997, taking on the role of Deputy Head in 2014. She gained a degree in Archaeology at Reading

and a Masters in Archaeological Heritage Management. She is also a keen musician and sportswoman.

Mr David Young stepped down at the end of August, after 10 years as Head, to take up a new role in the Education Team in Cognita, working with a number of schools within the Cognita group as a Mathematics Adviser.



Nick Waite is the new Headmaster of Beechwood Sacred Heart School, Kent.

Nick was previously the Principal of Bellerbys College, Cambridge where he moved after being Deputy Head at Woldingham School for five years. Following an education at Nottingham High School and Bristol University, Nick joined the RAF where he served as a Pilot Officer after which he became an actuarial consultant. He began his teaching career in the state

sector and then spent two years overseas in Kenya before moving to Tonbridge School where he was Head of Physics and Housemaster of Welldon House.

Nick is a keen sportsman, having coached football, hockey, rugby, cricket and swimming, and is an ardent supporter of the co-curricular life of a school. He is learning to play the drums but admits to needing more practice before contributing to the music scene at Beechwood.



Emma Gray is the new head of junior school at St. Margaret's School, Hertfordshire.

Prior to joining St Margaret's this term, Emma Gray was Assistant Head and Head of Pre-Prep at

York House in Croxley Green, Hertfordshire for eight years and prior to that, Director of Studies at Knightsbridge School in London. She is a Fellow of the Chartered College of Teaching with a Masters in Teaching from The University of Notre Dame in Australia.



Mrs Jo Hayward is the new Head at Plymouth College, Devon.

After attending Ashville College in Harrogate and a gap year working at a boarding school in Zimbabwe, Jo studied Geography at Downing College, Cambridge. After working as a transport consultant in London for two years, she then undertook a

PGCE at the University of Leeds.

Her first teaching job was as a teacher of Geography and Games at Pocklington School, before moving to Trent College as Head of Geography.

Jo then moved to The Mount School in York, firstly as a Head of Sixth Form and ultimately as Deputy Principal before moving to Plymouth College as its Senior Deputy Head.



Helena Grant is new Head of Wycliffe Prep in Gloucestershire, before which she was

at Monkton Prep School in Bath as Deputy Head.

knowledge of Asia and a personal experience of boarding school in the UK from the age of 13.

Awarded a BEd (Hons) from Plymouth, she worked initially in a Primary School in Devon and then spent nearly 20 years working within the international sector in Greece, Tanzania and Kenya.

Brought up in Hong Kong until the age of 17, Helena brings a

## Top job for Deborah



ISM Editorial Advisory Board member Deborah Leek-Bailey has been appointed to the senior

leadership team role, Head of UK Independent Schools, by Education Development Trust.

Deborah is a former headteacher and government advisor, and has advised ministers on multi stakeholder partnership

engagement, which focused on raising aspirations, attainment, and social mobility, across sectors.

Deborah chaired the ministerial Independent State School Partnership Forum (ISSP) from 2013-2017 and was previously a National College of Teaching and Leadership (NCTL) National Associate, Chairman and Vice President of the Independent Schools Association (ISA) and a Trustee of Child Bereavement UK.

Deborah is Education Advisor for Child Bereavement UK and Director of DLB Leadership, providing strategic advice to Governing Bodies, Schools, Businesses and Senior leaders within the Ministry of Defence. She also adjudicates teaching awards, writes extensively on leadership issues, bereavement and social mobility for national media and is frequently a keynote speaker.

Education Development Trust is a global education improvement

organisation of over 50 years' standing. The company combines global research and in-depth sector expertise with regional knowledge to inform education policy and practice. The organisation is a trusted partner of governments, academics and multi-lateral organisations across the globe. Its schools have access to research, training and knowledge including of international inspections standards, and an extensive global network.

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# Holroyd Howe Innovate and Grow During Lockdown



The pandemic has been extremely challenging for everyone, including the Independent School sector. We have watched in admiration as Schools quickly adapted to the lockdown, moved swiftly to on-line teaching and opened their doors to key workers' children and supported the NHS.

As a leading caterer, specialising solely in the Independent School market, Holroyd Howe has also adapted nimbly to the new world we all live in.

We have worked closely with our Schools throughout the outbreak of COVID-19 and helped them with furloughing their teams, reducing costs, and feeding key workers' pupils. We took an early decision to reduce our management fees from April for the remainder of the academic year and freeze our fees for this academic year to help our clients. Our teams stepped up to help the NHS and provided food boxes and essentials for the key workers during the initial food shortages.

Our health and safety team created new enhanced processes, cleaning regimes and detailed mobilisation packs for our teams

and clients, and on-line training to prepare our team to return to work safely.

Despite being in lockdown our Food Innovation and Nutrition teams continued to inspire and created on-line learning tools for pupils called 'Home School Bistro' including fun activity packs for parents and teachers, with videos of cookery classes, nutrition talks, and quizzes. Our Chefs created new innovative menus and concepts such as Wholesome One-Pot Meals and Shaker Salads.

We embraced Zoom and Microsoft Teams to communicate as a team, with our employees and clients. Technology will continue to help us deliver interactive training for our chefs and service teams and add value for our schools with on-line nutrition and sustainability sessions for pupils.

We took time over lockdown to strengthen our team and Amy Roberts was appointed MD for Operations. We were delighted to welcome eight new schools into our portfolio during these turbulent times. We stand ready to support our schools in the year ahead, whatever that may bring.



## First prize in Natural Sciences competition

An Exeter School, Devon, pupil has taken first prize in a competition organized by the University of Cambridge.

Upper Sixth Former Adam Wajed won the Gonville and Caius College Schools' Prize Competition in Natural Sciences for his presentation on Physics and Physiology.

This year's Gonville & Caius Natural Sciences Challenge asked Year 12 pupils to research and present a scientific topic on an area of science from the Cambridge Natural Sciences course

that is not taught at A Level.

Adam chose to produce a presentation exploring core Physics principles and relating them to the functioning of different parts of the human body.

He is currently in his second year of A Levels, studying Further Maths, Maths, Physics and Chemistry and intends on applying to Cambridge to study Natural Sciences, while applying to study Physics elsewhere.

As well as the achievement itself, Adam has won £300 for himself and £300 for the school.



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# Educating tomorrow's consumers about food, farming & the planet

LEAF Education works across the education, farming and food sectors to inspire and engage teachers and young people about farming and food production.

It manages a number of leading industry and educational initiatives, including Farmer Time, CEVAS (Countryside Educational Visits Accreditation Scheme), Countryside Classroom, Chef on the Farm and LEAF Open Farm School Days. LEAF Education also provides teachers with curriculum focused training, tools and resources to help them deliver high-quality learning experiences about farming.

Carl Edwards, Director of LEAF Education, explains: "At LEAF Education, our work centres around connecting young people with farming, food production and the natural world. We work with farmers, teachers and students to provide inspirational experiences highlighting opportunities available to them, both academic and skill-based, opening their eyes to future career routes and promoting issues around climate change, sustainability and health and wellbeing. We are seeing a growing number of young people becoming disconnected from the story behind their food, yet at the same time, there is an increase

in young people becoming more aware of food issues via social media and social groups. Today's teenagers are the consumers and decision makers of tomorrow. They need to be given a voice in defining how their food and farming industry can become more relevant to them – whether that be through addressing sustainability issues, concerns around health and wellbeing, protecting the environment or future career opportunities."

One of LEAF Education's initiatives, delivered in partnership with Coleg Cambria Llysfasi, is the annual National Food, Farming and Environment Competition. Now in its third

year, the competition, which is open to all secondary schools across the UK offers students the chance to spend a weekend on a real working farm. They take part in a broad range of activities designed to give them hands-on experience and an insight into the science and technology used in farming including milking cows, tractor driving and auto-steer, sheep weighing, genetics, electronic identification, drones and precision farming. Students also look at how farmers are producing food sustainably through a range of environmental protection measures including woodland management, and wildlife conservation.

Carl Edwards continues: "There has never been a more critical time to harness the strength of feelings our young people have for the future of their planet. This competition addresses issues they care most about – sustainability, environmental protection, health, nutrition and climate change. By providing young people with first-hand experience of farming, food production and opportunities for deeper level, critical analysis around current farming issues, our aim is to raise their awareness of the importance of farming in their everyday lives and its role in addressing the climate and ecosystem emergency."

## Case Study

### Enthusing students

Report by Emma Harvey, Head of Food, at Loughborough High School:

"I passionately believe that students should know where their food comes from, especially during these uncertain times. It is only going to become more important for younger people to understand and engage with UK agriculture and food production.

"One of the ways I chose to introduce my students at Loughborough High School to the world of farming is through the National Food, Farming and

Environment Competition, which is organised by LEAF Education and Coleg Cambria. We were lucky enough to get to the final stage of the competition, in which we competed against several other schools in a variety of events, culminating in the delivery of a presentation entitled – 'Drones – the future of farming?'

"Competing has had a lasting impact on my students,

including a new-found appreciation for the time and effort that goes into food production, as well as stronger teamwork and presentation skills.

"We need to ensure that there is not only understanding, but the capability in the UK in order to ensure that we can be more self-sufficient in food production, improving our own food security in the future. I want to enthuse

my students so that they too become passionate about food, farming and technology, and then go on to use their expertise in these sectors in the future. This issue is only going to become more relevant to life in the UK and therefore as teachers, we should be embedding it in all subjects and ensuring that students are aware of food provenance from a young age."



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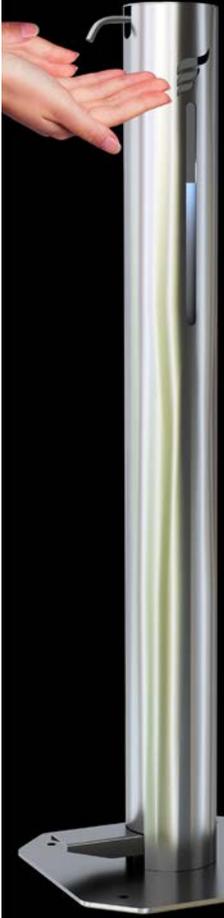


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P Vanninen, Burser, Arnold House School.



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# Entire school library moves to an online 'Hub' with 'Click and Collect' Service

Bickley Park School, Kent, has moved its entire library to an online 'Hub' so that the pupils can browse the books safely. The school librarian then provides a 'Click and Collect' service so that the children can order their books on the 'Hub' and they are then delivered to their classrooms in named paper bags, much to the boys' delight.

Mrs. Sarah Copley, librarian, (pictured), explained, "We want all our pupils here to read for pleasure and I needed to find a way to overcome the challenges of COVID-19. I think in Lockdown we all made many advances in the ways we use technology

to enhance our lives, and the learning environment has been no different. The 'Bickley Park School Reading Hub', which I set up a while ago, but enhanced over the Summer, enables the boys online access to our wide variety of books and reading resources, library news, recommendations and competitions, as well as now the 'Click and Collect' service."

In addition to physical books, Bickley Park uses online reading sources and support including Oxford Reading Buddy™ and Accelerated Reader™. During lockdown the children at Bickley Park read over 15% more books compared to the same time the previous year and throughout the whole year they read over 18, 000 books between them.

Mr. Patrick Wenham, Headmaster said, "Mrs. Copley is providing

an outstanding service to the boys. They are so excited by the 'Click and Collect' service and love browsing the wide variety of library books available on the reading 'Hub'. The statistics and numbers that we are able to provide the children with, in terms of the number of books and words read, also really motivates them.

"Whilst both nationally and internationally reading is declining amongst boys, out-of-the-box, boy-friendly approaches to promoting books at Bickley Park, that utilises technology effectively, has resulted in books read and reading ages sky-rocketing.

"I'm also sure that Mrs. Copley has read almost every book in the library, so her knowledge and enthusiasm really hit home.



"The beauty of this system is that should there be any further lockdowns or isolation for the children, they will be able to continue to read and access the library books using this service, COVID rules permitting".



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## Harriet stays one jump ahead to win national title



A Shropshire student has her eyes firmly set on a showjumping career after taking first place in a national schools championship.

Harriet Otter, 16, a Year 11 student at Ellesmere College, raced to her biggest win to date when she and her 14-year-old mare Annie jumped clear to win the Just For Schools

1.10m Individual Final held at Bolesworth Castle in Cheshire.

The teenager is a member of the Ellesmere College Equestrian team and other notable achievements include an appearance with Annie at Hickstead, the Mecca of showjumping, last year.

## Pupils raise awareness of period poverty

Two pupils from Shebbear College, Devon, have launched a campaign aimed at raising awareness of period poverty in the UK, an issue which they feel is often overlooked in society.

Lily Down and Savanah (Sav) Whitechurch, both aged 13, have started up their own business, 'Naturally Individual', with the aim to sell monthly period subscription boxes, donating a box to a girl or woman suffering from period poverty for every box sold. The girls were inspired to take action after researching more about the issue for a 'Dragon's Den' project in their English class last year, for which they were asked to come up with a new business idea.

"We were trying to think of an idea that wasn't necessarily about making money but could help people too." said Sav, "We had both recently seen the news about period poverty and felt passionate about this issue so we thought, let's make this our business idea."

As part of the project the girls

had to give a presentation to their fellow students. "We were so nervous about speaking in front of the class" said Lily, when asked about how she thought her classmates would react to the topic. "We were in Year 7 at the time and we just thought everyone would find the topic awkward and laugh at us – but we thought, no, this is a serious issue – we just need to go for it!"

"The reaction we got was not what we were expecting." she added, "When we actually stood up in front of everyone, people took it seriously. They didn't laugh, we didn't laugh – this really highlighted to us that this is serious and we need to take it further."

Their gofundme.com page and the film they made about their cause can be viewed here: <https://uk.gofundme.com/f/21rytm8iuo>.

Their speech won the Inter-House speech competition during lockdown. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XIRenSlnBF1>

## Improve pupil concentration and productivity with circadian lighting

We are all governed by our circadian rhythm (or internal body clock) and light is the biggest synchronizer of it. Humans are programmed to live in tune with the natural lighting cycle. However, spending a large amount of time indoors under static artificial light can be harmful, causing our circadian rhythm to get out of sync. This disrupts our sleep-wake-cycle, mood, productivity, and ability to learn effectively. Circadian lighting aims to replicate natural light as closely as possible in terms of colour, direction and intensity. Starting with a warmer amber tone, moving to a brighter white light before gradually changing to a warm amber tone again at the end of the day. This supports both staff and students

allowing them to feel alert and productive during the day but then winding down before the end of the day so that everyone has a better night's sleep.

Sensors can also be easily integrated as well as other systems and devices creating a cohesive, smart solution that responds to our needs.

Light-scenes can be easily created for different tasks e.g. exam or creativity mode. The education sector is perfectly positioned to experience the huge benefits of this revolutionary lighting. Research has proven that the right lighting can promote calmness, reduce feelings of lethargy, improve attention rates and boost productivity – motivating students to learn.

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# Unique agreement between charitable school trust and investor

Wychwood School, Oxfordshire, is set on a trajectory of expansion thanks to a new strategic partnership...

As a smaller school, Wychwood has survived many challenges over the years but has remained true to its mission and absolutely committed to the benefits of single-sex education for girls.

The school now has a new partner in a like-minded British entrepreneur with the same passionate belief that girls flourish best in single-sex teaching environments. There is a shared vision now to grow the school and what it is able to offer to girls from both the UK and overseas; but the core catchment of the school has always been, and will remain, girls in Oxfordshire, the immediately surrounding counties and West London.

This new strategic partnership between Wychwood and Albion Schools Partnership is described as “an unprecedented and

unique agreement between a charitable trust and a for-profit organisation” that allows strategic decisions to remain with the trustees while forming the foundation for an extensive growth programme that will encompass the expansion and upgrading of the school’s existing buildings and facilities, and the development of a cutting-edge approach to delivering education, using technological innovation to access specialist teaching relevant in the world today.

Albion Schools Partnership is a wholly owned subsidiary of E3 Capital, a private property company owned by Simon Tyrrell and his wife, who have over 20 years’ experience in owning and managing schools in Asia. Unlike some investors in the education sector, they realise the need to invest for the long-term with

patience and vision. Mr. Tyrrell explained: “It is clear to me that there remains a strong market for smaller, pastorally excellent schools, where individual students aren’t lost in the crowd and where extraordinary academic and co-curricular results are achieved through close attention and a nurturing, positive learning environment. Given recent concerns about health and wellbeing in our children, schools like Wychwood will thrive, becoming the exception that proves the rule”.

Commenting on this announcement, Wychwood’s Headmistress Andrea Johnson (pictured) said: “In Simon, we have found a partner who shares our vision for the future of the school and our passionate commitment to educate girls with a can-do attitude, enabling



them to exceed their expectations both academically and in extra-curricular activities in a safe and encouraging environment. Our leavers have the drive and empowerment to enter the world ready to lead and inspire, whether it be in the boardroom of a global business, as an engineer, or a professional musician or artist, and the confidence and resilience to lead happy and fulfilled lives.”

Simon Tyrrell was born in the UK and moved to Hong Kong in 2001 working for several global companies in the consulting and investment space before founding E3 Capital in 2010.

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## Pupil offered place in Rodolfus Foundation Choir

An Exeter School Sixth Former has been offered a place in the prestigious Rodolfus Foundation Choir.

Lower Sixth Former Ciara Morris is one of 300 members of the youth choir that performs a variety of events from evensong to BBC and Philharmonia orchestra concerts.

She auditioned for the choir by sending in a video of herself singing So In Love from Kiss Me Kate, accompanied by Mr Daldorph on the piano. She then took part in a virtual sight-reading test with the choir leader, Ralph Allwood MBE.

Ciara is currently studying English Literature, History, Music and Chemistry at A Level.

“When I leave school, I’d love to pursue a choral scholarship at university, which might open up options for a potential musical career,” said Ciara. “I would say that one of the highlights of last year’s music calendar for me was the choral society concert held in Exeter Cathedral, in which I sang a solo in



‘Rejoice in the Lamb’ by Benjamin Britten. Similarly, the school musical ‘Company’, in which I played Joanna, was an unforgettable experience.”

Director of Music Peter Tamblyn said: “We are very proud that Ciara has been offered a place in the prestigious Rodolfus Foundation Choir which has established itself firmly over a period of thirty years as one of the leading young choirs in the United Kingdom.”

## School awarded Trinity Champion Status

Warwick School is delighted to have been recognised by Trinity College London as one of 56 Trinity Champion Centres across the UK. The Champion Centres are recognised for their successful delivery of the Arts Award qualifications.

The well-known qualification inspires young people to grow their arts and leadership talents by undertaking the award, which can be achieved at five levels and undertaken in any area of the arts, from fashion to poetry, rapping to dancing, sculpture to film.

The arts play a significant role in the learning values of the school. There are a myriad of opportunities to perform and develop skills for all age groups, alongside a busy programme of community and professional visiting artists at the Bridge House Theatre and Warwick

Hall. The Arts Award is offered to pupils at both Warwick School and King’s High School, both part of the Warwick Independent Schools Foundation, and is delivered through the Friday Afternoon Activities programme.

Trinity Champion Centres are recognised for their successful delivery of the Arts Award, demonstrated through strong exam results, an exciting programme of performance events and through innovation in the performing arts.

Mike Perry, Director of Drama at Warwick School commented, “We are delighted to have been selected this year as a Champion Centre. Arts Award offers Warwick School students the chance to develop as creative and versatile young people, knowledgeable about the value of the arts for all members of the community”.

## Amber wins gold

A Solihull School pupil has won Gold in the Anne Frank Trust Creative Writing Awards.

Amber Huckfield, who is in the Lower Fifth, entered the Poetry (aged 13 – 15) category of the competition which invited young people across the country to take Anne Frank as their inspiration and create a piece of writing that called for a world free from prejudice.

Out of 937 entrants from across the UK, Amber was selected as a Gold Award winner for her emotive and original poem - ‘Just One Voice’.

Tim Robertson, CEO of The Anne Frank Trust said: “The Anne Frank Creative Writing Awards took place during an especially turbulent period in our society and I congratulate all who rose to the challenge and submitted an entry.

“We have been overwhelmed by both the quality of writing displayed by young people and by their obvious commitment to



challenging prejudice. We and the judges really had our work cut out in shortlisting and then selecting winners from the hundreds of entries.

“Congratulations to Amber from Solihull School for being among them. Her Gold Award for her work ‘Just One Voice’ is very well deserved.”

Amber won two books including ‘The Promise’ signed by Holocaust Survivor Eva Schloss, as well as a £20 book voucher.



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# £11m on-campus STEM facility

Haberdashers' Aske's School for Girls, Hertfordshire, has invested £11 million in a new state-of-the-art STEM building to boost its IT and science provision. Having seen a steady increase in the number of girls choosing science A-levels, the school celebrated the opening of its new purpose-built facility last month (September) with a special virtual event attended by the whole school, alongside headline speaker, Dr Maggie Aderin-Pocock MBE (presenter of BBC4's *The Sky at Night*) who is passionate about diversity in science and delivered an inspiring lecture entitled: 'Reaching for the stars – when will we make it out there?'

"There is no time like the present to show the vital role that science plays in all our lives. But historically many girls have been discouraged from engaging in these subjects. I hope that my talk will emphasise the importance of diversity in science and how we should all be thinking big to achieve more", said Dr Aderin-Pocock.

With a sleek and contemporary style, the building contains 15 labs and a large multi-purpose space for housing lectures and experimental demonstrations. The enhanced facilities have also increased the school's capacity to host longer-term STEM projects in Artificial Intelligence (AI) such as the creation and development of robots.

Nicola Percy, Director of STEM at Habs' Girls School explained, "We have invested in additional robotics kits to increase the number of students that are able to participate in these projects. We have also purchased extra science equipment so that one of our labs can now be used for community outreach work with our partnership primary schools, which is something we are very passionate about."

The layout and interior of the building has been carefully designed, allowing plenty of natural light to provide an exceptional workspace environment and to give students the space to fully explore their ideas.



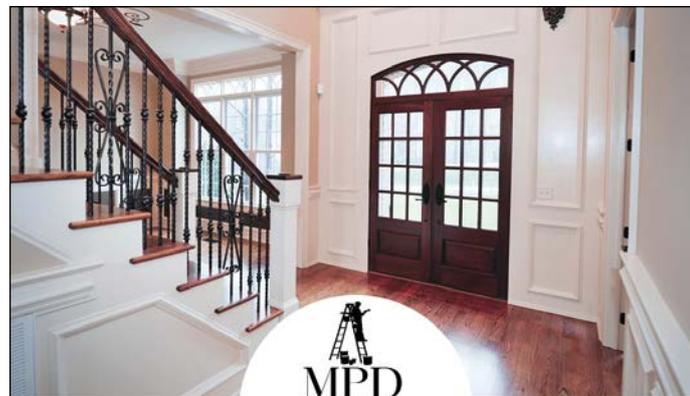
Ms Percy added: "Real-world problems are complex and inherently multidisciplinary. The new STEM space provides an area where students can explore creative problem solving in a collaborative environment and also work on long term projects such as VEX Robotics, F1 in Schools and GoForSET.

Habs Girls School gives special thanks to Dr Luena Hatcher who left the school in 1944: the new STEM building would not have been possible without her generous



bequest. Dr Hatcher has devoted her life to medicine and to helping people in need of special care.

Rose Hardy, Headmistress at Habs Girls School said: "It is fantastic to see more girls choosing to study sciences at a higher level and our new STEM building will give them and future generations the scope and the facilities they need to excel in their endeavours."



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## Lockdown concrete poetry competition

At the end of the Summer Term, Bloxham School, Oxfordshire, launched an English and Art competition to local primary and prep schools. Year 4 and 5 students submitted their entries in the hope of winning a prize for themselves and their school by means of book and art supplies. The competition required students to tackle the question "What has lockdown meant to you?" in the form of Concrete Poetry.

The two judges of the competition were Bloxham School's Mr Matthew, Director of Art, and Mr Saunders, Head of English. Together they chose one winner, two runners up and highly commended eight other entries. The winner of the competition was Jacob from Deddington Primary School with his piece 'The New Normal'; both judges were impressed by his sense of design and ideas in this original

piece. Not only will he receive £40 worth of book and art supplies for himself, he has also won a further £100 in supplies for his school.

Congratulations also go to runners up Caleb (Deddington Primary) and Issac (Bloxham Primary). Caleb's 'Hands' had strong imagery, language and sentiment. Isaac's 'I Hate This Lockdown' wowed judges with his ability to explore the darker emotions of feeling bored and trapped.

Highly commended certificates were sent to Amy, Harry and Joe (Bloxham Primary), Mazey (Deddington), Isabel (Dr Radcliffe's), Meredith, Evelyn & William (Great Tew).

Mr Matthew said "It's amazing how lockdown boredom has unleashed such a wave of creativity and how confident, honest and expressive the pupils have been with their poems."

# Why schools & parents are investing in clean air

Many schools have been searching for solutions beyond the government's "hands, face and space" advice. And, as our knowledge of the virus and how it spreads has been developing, our understanding of the airborne nature of SARS-CoV-2 is changing views on how to best tackle it. Report by Jayson Cook...



Partly with the help of parents, L'École de Battersea and L'École des Petits – bilingual international pre-prep and prep schools based in South West London – raised more than £100,000 to install air filtration systems throughout their buildings. The last machines were fitted ahead of the autumn term.

Owner Nick Otten initially began researching ways to actively manage air quality by removing general airborne contamination, such as traffic pollution, pollen and mould spores, which many studies show are particularly harmful to children, before realising their effectiveness in filtering viruses and thus helping to control the spread of the coronavirus too.

Mr Otten said the schools' air purification systems – which remove 99.95% of particulate contamination from the ambient air – have also played a crucial role in reassuring parents the school is doing all it can to make the environment as safe as possible.

He added: "Air filtration is now an essential part of providing the

best learning environment for our pupils. Parents are obviously still anxious but we've had so many letters from parents saying thank you – for the attention that is being paid to their children's wellbeing, including the physical condition of the building. Half our machines were fitted ahead of last winter and some parents told us their children had fewer colds and coughs."

## Airborne transmission risk

Last month, senior scientists critiqued the insufficient attention given to aerosol transmission and raised the importance of ventilation and filtration in controlling the pandemic. The WHO has also acknowledged the evidence that it can be spread through the airborne route.

That means effective ventilation of indoor spaces, alongside current measures such as staggered entry, temperature checks, handwashing, mask wearing and social distancing. However, as temperatures fall heading into winter, having windows wide open becomes a problem.

Among public health bodies, there has been some reluctance in officially recommending air filtration as a solution. This hesitation, in my opinion, is justified. The market for air filtration is currently unregulated and there are many ineffective air purifiers being sold based on questionable and often misleading claims.

But numerous studies show that high-quality HEPA air purifiers are very effective in keeping us safe. And the latest, a study by

a European-accredited research laboratory in Ireland, found that an air purifier – in this case the IQAir HealthPro system – can reduce airborne viruses (the same size as the coronavirus) by 99.95% in less than 10 minutes in a room of nearly 30m<sup>3</sup>. The answer lies in sorting the products that work, from those that do not.

How to make sure you're getting high-quality air filtration:

- Look for a device that provides actual HEPA filtration, meaning it has a whole system filtration efficiency of 99.95% of particles at 0.3 microns. The label HEPA alone won't suffice, as it's not a standardised term and even low-quality inefficient air purifiers can use it.
- Look for air purifiers that are certified, tested and guaranteed for their actual filtration efficiency.
- The very best air purifiers will capture all particulate pollution, even the smallest particles known to humans at a very high filtration efficiency, and can be classified according to the world's most stringent HEPA filter test – EN1822 – to prove it.



Nick Otten

Jayson Cook is operations manager at Commercial Air Filtration, specialists in airborne infection control, air pollution, air filtration and air quality measuring. [info@allergycosmos.co.uk](mailto:info@allergycosmos.co.uk) Tel: 020 3603 5703

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# 18,000 mile 'Around the World' challenge

Following an idea put forward at the start of lockdown by Year 6 pupil Jack Davis, Leweston Prep School, Dorset, embarked on a challenge to virtually circumnavigate the globe, a total of 18,000 miles.

Jack wanted to get all of the pupils and staff at Leweston working together towards a common goal through exercise and decided on a virtual 'Around the World' Challenge. The pupils "started" from the school and travelled east aiming to 'arrive back at school' in time for the start of the new academic year. Before settling down for bed each night, everyone recorded the miles completed by walking, running, cycling, swimming, scooting, or any man-powered way of moving, on a shared spreadsheet.

Jack dedicated time to contact various inspirational sports figures to tell them about the Challenge and was thrilled to receive messages of good luck and congratulations

from Harry Redknapp, British triathlete Alistair Brownlee and Jonny Wilkinson!

To top everything off perfectly the school's achievement was also mentioned on the BBC Tailenders Podcast, hosted by Radio One DJ Greg James and professional cricketer James Anderson – England's greatest ever bowler! Mrs Steph Smith, Head of Prep Physical Education at Leweston said "I'm so glad that Jack contacted me about bringing this wonderful idea to life. It was incredible to see the whole Prep School community filling in their miles every week throughout lockdown and over the summer holidays. The challenge brought everyone together at a difficult time when we couldn't all be in school."

The Prep School accomplished their target distance of 18,000 miles, completing the final mile together during the first full week back at school last month (September).



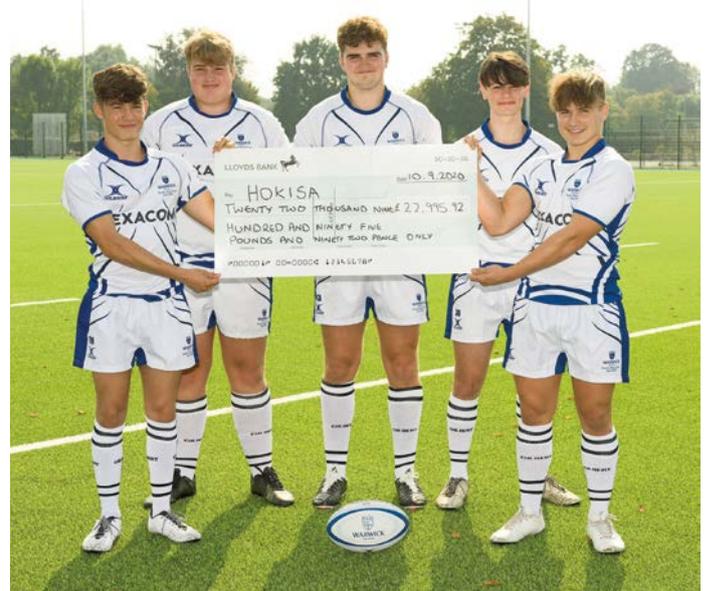
# Home still benefits despite cancelled tour

Warwick School's rugby club is very proud to have raised nearly £23,000 for the South African charity HOKISA (Homes for Kids in South Africa). HOKISA was founded in Cape Town in 2001, as a South African non-profit NGO (non-governmental organisation). It was set up to contribute in the fight against AIDS by creating examples of care especially for those who are most vulnerable –

the children. It is the aim of HOKISA to empower members of poor communities where HIV/AIDS is most devastating. No money is spent for office buildings or costly administration. Donations go directly to the HOKISA Children's Home and the care of the children. All childcare workers are residents in the same township community and have had the

opportunity to grow and develop their skills. The senior rugby players at Warwick School were due to travel to South Africa in July 2020 for a 17-night tour of Johannesburg, Cape Town and Port Elizabeth, but unfortunately due to the Covid-19 pandemic this was not possible. There has been much disappointment from the pupils not being able to tour, not being

able to enjoy the culture and hospitality of South Africa and not to have the opportunity to play some competitive rugby in a country renowned for the sport. Despite the disappointment of a cancelled tour, the boys, their parents and staff raised the money through Warwick 7s, their annual rugby 7s competition, and a Burns Night charity event.





## Visually-impaired 5-year-old climbs for the community

Bishop's Stortford College Pre-Prep pupil, Ben Hardy, who is registered legally blind, has raised over £1,000 for local charities by embarking upon a sponsored climb.

5-year-old Ben was diagnosed with Nance-Horan Syndrome, an extremely rare genetic disease, at just 2 weeks old. As a blue badge holder and formally registered as severely visually impaired in both eyes, Ben has undergone multiple eye operations in his lifetime at Addenbrookes Hospital, Cambridge. Ben and his parents are incredibly grateful for all the medical care they have received from many specialists over the last 5 years at not only Addenbrooke's but Moorfields, Hertfordshire, Lister and Great Ormond Street Hospitals.

Ben wears special contact lenses to give him a focus range of approximately 70cm; without them he can only see light. Having received specialist care and support throughout his lifetime, Ben's older sisters, 8 year-old Alice and 10 year-old Jessica who attend Bishop's Stortford College Prep School, are dedicated to helping their brother and have supported him every step of the way.

At the start of each new academic year, Pre-Prep pupils were given the opportunity to choose a charity to support for the year as part of their School Voice initiative. Pupils were keen to show their support for the local

community, especially the Bishop's Stortford Food Bank and think of ways in which they could help. Inspired by his sisters, Ben decided to take on a climbing challenge in aid of the Bishop's Stortford Food Bank to kickstart the Pre-Prep fundraising. Over the weekend Ben visited Clip'n'Climb, Cambridge, and completed his sponsored climb with his sisters; the first climb he has ever done. Encouraged by his sisters and family, Ben climbed to the top of 10 different walls a total of 30 times. Ben's visual impairment means that a lot of this was done through touch alone.

To date Ben has raised over £1,000 with the support of his family, neighbours and friends. Miss Callow, Head of Pre-Prep, commented, "Ben has been an inspiration for us this term in completing the climbing challenge and has made a significant start towards our fundraising for this year. He responded so quickly to the plight of others that we had been talking about, and gave himself a real challenge to show his support and raise money. We are extremely proud of his achievements and look forward to an important year of raising money to support our chosen charities."

For anyone wishing to donate to Ben's fundraising efforts, the link to his JustGiving page can be found here, <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/liz-hardy3>.

## 'Question of Sport' Q&A specials

Rising stars from the world of cricket, hockey, netball and rugby have been taking part in a series of online question and answer sessions with pupils, parents and staff from Yorkshire's Ashville College.

Director of Sport, Dominic Bradburne, organised the live video specials where the audience not only gets a front row seat in these highly popular sessions, but more importantly has the opportunity to quiz the sportsmen and sportswomen about their careers, training regimes, inspirations and aspirations.

The first event kicked off with Worcestershire County Cricket Club players Ed Barnard and Pat Brown, which was followed by an audience with Bath Rugby Union players Joe Cokanasiga and Zach Mercer, son of Gary Mercer, the College's Head of Rugby.

These were followed by live sessions featuring hockey players Ollie Payne and Nick Park, who both play for England, Kerry-Anne Hastings, who is a Senior Scottish international, and Sarah Bertram, who has a wealth of experience coaching within the Player Pathways, as well as being a lead coach at Durham University

From the world of netball, Anna Carter, a former England international who is now Director of Netball at Leeds Rhinos, and Jessica Shaw, who plays for Loughborough Lightning in the Vitality Super League, have both taken part.

Following on their heels were Yorkshire County Cricket Club players Jordan Thompson, Ben Coad and Harry Brook, all of whom have links with local league cricket clubs within 30 miles of Ashville.

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# Heads Hunted

Among the upcoming head and principal appointments:

Bickley Park School	Kent
Bilton Grange School	Warwickshire
St. Andrew's School	Berkshire
St. Leonard's School	Wife
Terra Nova School	Cheshire
Thorpe Hall School	Essex
Tudor Hall School	Oxfordshire

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.

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## 'Woodland Walks' replace traditional Assemblies



Pupils at St Margaret's Junior School, Hertfordshire, have been enjoying more outdoor exploration as whole school assemblies are now banned under the current guidance.

Having implemented a new 'Enrichment Timetable' during what previously would have been assembly time, the Junior School has focused on easing the transition of 'back to school' for younger children by engaging them in a range of new enrichment activities from 'woodland walks' to natural history exploration, outdoor music lessons and creative nature themed tasks.

Emma Gray, Head of the Junior School, explained: "During this period of change it's really important that we broaden our children's

experiences throughout the school day. Exploring the environment around us while benefiting from the great outdoors is a great place to start. Our woodland walks are designed to inspire discovery and nurture independence but they have also encouraged some much-needed fun and laughter amongst the children, which is wonderful to see."

Helping young children to come to terms with the changes happening around them and to make the transition into school life that bit easier for local families, St Margaret's Junior School also held a one-off "Transition Playtime" event for its Pre-reception and Reception starters prior to the official return, where children were able to run and play in the sunshine and meet their class teachers.

## The Digest

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| Bickley Park School           | Exeter School        | Maynard School           | Warwick School          |
| Bishop's Stortford College    | Glenalmond College   | Myddelton College        | West Buckland School    |
| Pre-Prep School               | Habs Boys            | Plymouth College         | Windlesham House School |
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