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In this issue...



Science experiments during lockdown

Burgess Hill Girls, Sussex, has created a series of videos showing families how to conduct fun science experiments at home during the lockdown.

Make a 'Lava Lamp', a 'Sweetie Rainbow', 'Frankenstein's Hand' or create an 'Eruption' are the titles of four instruction videos. The experiments only require a few materials found in most households. Apart from the 'Eruption' experiment, which can get messy, all can be done inside.

The teacher behind these experiments is Mrs Shelley Allen, Head of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) at Burgess Hill Girls Junior School.

"I chose these experiments as they don't require many materials and they are very popular amongst the pupils at the Burgess Hill Girls. I hope everyone has as much fun doing them as we do."

In each video Mrs Allen is assisted by pupils at Burgess Hill Girls; Anaïs, Ellie, Annabel and Persephone.

You can watch the videos at:
<https://burgesshillgirls.com/news/four-fun-science-experiments-for-children>

Cover background

Sports development

A £21m sports complex has opened at King's College, Wimbledon, marking the completion of an ambitious 10-year infrastructure master plan.

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From the Editor:

It has not been possible to produce some of our usual content for this issue. However, thanks to the support of our contributors and advertisers we are pleased to bring you a magazine packed full of information which we hope will prove of interest and inspiration.

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Tales of the Atlantic: Return to Kitebrook

World record-holders and Gloucestershire siblings Anna, 25, and Cameron McLean, 32, visited the pupils from Kitebrook Preparatory School, after successfully completing the Talisker Whisky Atlantic rowing challenge, travelling over 3,000 nautical miles from La Gomera in the Canary Islands, across to Antigua and Barbuda.

The rowing pair, who are son and daughter of Kitebrook Headteacher Susan McLean (see picture) returned to the Cotswold school after visiting just prior to their Atlantic crossing. On their initial visit they brought in the two-person boat and kit they would need to take with them for their ocean crossing, giving the children the opportunity to gain an insight into the huge feat they were about to undertake. The industrious duo took on this extreme endurance challenge in support of UN Women UK, the UN organisation dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women, with the aim to break any gender stereotypes by putting to the test what it truly means to be in the #sameboat.

On their return to Kitebrook, after completing the mammoth journey, they were able to share stories and pictures from their 43 day, 15 hour



and 22 minute 'epic adventure'. Regaling the children with how they overcame rocky boat conditions, enormous waves, acute seasickness and being circled by a tiger shark; they even had willing volunteers to come and taste some of the packet food they survived on and feel the many blisters on their hands! After being entranced by their progress the whole time they were away, their amazing account was a huge inspiration to all the boys and girls.

When asked if they were able to sum up their experience, Anna said: "It was totally unpredictable. You have no idea what you're going to face out there. Never give up and follow your heart – we made it!". Cameron concluded: "It was an epic adventure that keeps you on the edge of your seat".

Gift to Art department

Diana Springall, the renowned textile artist and curator, was the special guest at a picnic lunch in the Art Department at The Leys School, Cambridgeshire.

Ms Jessica Hebden, Head of Art, invited her to join Art scholars in the Art studio. The event was a way of thanking her for generously giving her library of art books, acquired during her long career, to The Leys.

Diana Springall FDSC (Fellow of The Society of Designer Craftsmen) trained in Fine Art but made her name as the maker, designer and commissioner of many important works in textiles. These include panels for Chester Town Hall, hangings and panels for many

places of worship, and a carpet for the London HQ of an international bank. She lectured on fashion and textiles for many years and has appeared on television to talk about contemporary embroidery. She is former chairman and Life Member of The Embroiderers' Guild.

Art Scholar Tor Lovell (L6) presented Mrs Springall with a framed copy of an etched bookplate she designed to put inside the donated books.

Mrs Springall was shown around the Art department by Ms Hebden. Commenting on the pursuit of an artistic career, Mrs Springall said: "To be an artist you have to love what you are doing. You will never be bored!"

Minis receive new shirts

Glenalmond College, has presented Perthshire Rugby Minis with brand new rugby strips featuring the logo of the Perthshire school, which is the new Official Partner of the Mini Section.

Graham Smith, Director of Sport at Glenalmond College, presented the new shirts to Carol Ann Rose, Head of the Minis, joined by players and coaches at a training session last month (March).

The partnership takes the previous strong relationship and long-held rugby connections between club and school to a new level.

Mrs Rose said the club was proud to have the backing of

Glenalmond and the players were delighted to receive their new strips, which also feature The Treatment Room and Auchterarder Parents Supporting Parents on the sleeves.

Glenalmond College has a rich heritage in rugby with former Scotland Captains David Leslie, Rob Wainwright and 1990 Grand Slam Captain David Sole all former pupils (Old Glenalmonds). The school's 1st XV team also reached the Scottish Schools' Cup Final two seasons ago and Glenalmond is the official "School Partner" of London Scottish, the club which has fielded more Scotland international players than any other since they were founded in 1878.



Pictured: Graham Smith, Director of Sport, Glenalmond College pictured with Carol Ann Rose, Head of Perthshire Rugby Club's Mini Section, the young players and coaches

Was it Really Necessary to Cancel Exams?

...asks Lara Péchard, Head at St Margaret's School in Hertfordshire

Back in the year 2000, there was a definite shift towards a more modular curriculum over a linear one. Ever since that point, there has been much debate around the most effective type of exam to assess pupil ability and also around the impact those exams might have on adolescent mental health. Of course, GCSEs have also morphed from initially being heavy in coursework, to more controlled assessments and then back again towards focusing on a physical exam.

Now we find ourselves unexpectedly in the Covid-19 landscape, with the radical decision to cancel this summer's public exams. Ironically, for many years, teachers have worried about the impact these exams have on children's mental health and here we are once again, but this time the concern is around the negative impact of having no exams at all. Although most students would say they aren't fans of exams, they expected to complete them. They had been working hard, they were preparing and as a result there was immediate panic, confusion and upset at the announcement.

Shock came first that the exams, which had given the children their bearings for the last 18 months, could be so quickly removed. The shock then gave way to confusion as they questioned how, if at all, they would actually be assessed - and how they would earn their ticket to the next stage of their education. Educators everywhere will undoubtedly have trusted that their pupils will not be negatively impacted; that is, that they will ultimately get what they deserve.

Shock gave way to confusion

However, even this more positive interpretation of events leaves many of us with a barrage of questions. How will selective universities read the current year 11 or year 13 results? If children don't lose out, surely it means more will be in a position, equipped with higher grades, to get into their aspirational university course of choice?

For many pupils the prospect of the school using data on them from mocks or predicted grades is not an encouraging one. Teenagers

generally procrastinate and many will develop later and over the two-year course. For some it is only when the classes cease that it all 'clicks' into place and it is during exam leave that they actually consolidate their knowledge. For these pupils, the disappearance of public exams is not good news, as they would have made leaps in progress by the time they had reached the examination room.

Perhaps most damaging though, is the prospect of at least another three months in lock down with nothing to show at the end of it, at a time when they should be achieving their greatest tangible academic performance and results. How can we expect them to feel motivated during this time or indeed to look with positivity to the future?

We must bridge the gap

That said, the education sector has a duty of care to motivate these students and there is perhaps only a few purposeful options left to make this happen. One is to put on summative assessments that enable the school to have the latest evidence of their attainment - a mock style paper that provides the pupil with a similar experience to that of an official exam. This could be assessed in the family home, with the parents signing it off and the paper undertaken with the teacher watching via Google meet. This then could be dropped into the academic tracking for the child and show, hopefully, the value added, that the child has been working towards.

Secondly we need to help them to bridge the gap between where they are now and the next stage of their education. For the year 11's we need to be engaging them in the reading of pre-A Level material and personalising this time with online courses around their career or university aspirations. For the year 13s a similar bespoke pathway is needed, one that enables them to be university ready, using online resources like Unifrog and getting them excited and prepared for the jump to being an undergraduate.

Universities up and down the country must also be worried that their first-year students, come October, will not only have lost their rhythm over the last few

months, but will have missed a vital final piece of their schooling, which would have otherwise readied them. It is also possible, that more competitive university courses will offer some sort of test to help with their selection process, one only hopes that they are working on this possibility now, rather than at a later date. The last thing our pupils need is another 'surprise' come August.

Off the radar

It is a confusing time for us all and the speed with which exams were removed has surprised the entire educational world; we all saw schools closing as inevitable but the cancellation of exams was quite off most schools' radars.

At St Margaret's we have given our pupils the choice to complete another mock paper. The belief here is that the summative assessments will give them a fair test and one that they should feel confident and ready for. If teachers have done their jobs well (and the way they have risen stupendously to the challenge of remote learning suggests they have), then the pupils are ready for these 'tests'. Sitting these new mocks will enable pupils to complete the circle and will, in many cases support their mental health rather than damage it.

Schools in other parts of the world are trusted to provide assessment that enables children to matriculate. Most heads will have moaned about the exam boards at one time or another, for varying reasons. Covid-19 has offered us a chance to reconsider a new approach to how we assess pupils and it does seem a shame that we are relying on past performance, mock papers etc. that are geared towards exams that will not be sat. Let's hope that this period shows that we can trust schools and universities to assess young people, after all isn't that a major part of what we do?

Concerns are looming

There can be no doubt that all of this uncertainty impacts the child. Childline are reporting a rise in reports of mental health concerns in the young. Schools like St Margaret's are offering counselling sessions and pastoral support in the face of all the challenges around



remote learning. There is so much we still don't know, so perhaps making any decisions now could be deemed hasty, but giving no clear direction risks undoing the momentum that would have carried our pupils successfully through to the summer.

The impact of all of this is probably the most worrying. At least when a child doesn't get their aspirational grade in the summer sessions they had the wind behind them and they always knew that was the time and place they would be assessed in that way. The Government's decision to remove exams was definitely solution focused. In the face of such uncertainty and horrendous choices relating to every other aspect of society, who can blame the Government for wanting to remove the threat of exams hanging over our young people.

However, there are looming concerns. Will Covid-19, when we do come through it, give way to wrangles; wrangles between parents and schools for not predicting the right grade or for setting a 'too difficult' mock back in January? Schools are used to appealing to exam boards but what does an appeal look like when there was no final exam? For the year 13's there is also the possibility that they might not get into their university of choice and this would be hard to swallow if you were not given the chance to prove what you were worth in the first place.

Whenever we return to school there is still much that our year 11 and 13s, whatever exam system they are under, will need from their schools. There will be much to do in order to complete the academic year 19/20 in a meaningful and healthy way.



The Mount School York gave 85 sets of protector safety goggles from their laboratories and 100 sets of disposable gloves to St Leonard's Hospice for use by the charity's palliative care nurses.

In an appeal to York-area schools, the hospice was sourcing any stock of science safety goggles to cope with an expected increased caseload over the coming weeks. Their normal supply chain anticipated no additional stock for up to six weeks. The goggles, specifically, had proven effective

Pictured: The Mount School's Laboratory Technician, Mingju Hou, with the goggles and gloves which were donated to St Leonard's Hospice

in protecting front line nurses dealing with Covid-19 cases in Italy and France. Following donations from local schools, the hospice said they now expect to be better able to cope with demand for this personal protective equipment to safeguard their palliative care staff.

Adrienne Richmond, Principal of The Mount School said: "With schools' premises closed to prevent the spread of covid-19, it's better for this safety equipment to be used in

protecting the hospice's palliative care nurses than sitting unused in our laboratories. Front line staff are offering an invaluable service in these times and we all need to do our bit, whether that means staying home and teaching online or in other ways. As a Quaker school, The Mount's ethos encourages our pupils to contribute to our wider community. I am delighted to help in this way and I know the whole school will wholeheartedly agree."

Staff volunteers at Surrey's Cranleigh School spent their Easter break running a free multi-activity programme for the children of key workers on campus.

Pupils from twelve local schools, whose parents are front-line workers in the current pandemic, took part in craft, games and activities that can be managed at the required two-metre distance. The scheme ran until remote learning restarts for the Summer term.

Over 100 goggles and 850 pairs of much-needed disposable gloves have been donated to Cranleigh medical centre by the Biology and Chemistry departments. The centre will distribute them to local care homes and pharmacies for workers to use.

Cranleigh's Design Engineering team provided Perspex for the creation of visors for community NHS teams, and was delighted by this 'thank you' message from the team at Shere Surgery.



St Peter's School York is supporting the fight against coronavirus by donating over 6,500 pieces of personal protective equipment (PPE) to York Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust.

The donation (pictured right) includes four infection protection kits (complete with mask, visor, coverall, gloves, shoe covers, tape and a waste bag),

48 filtering facepieces, 626 surgical face masks, 150 pieces of eye protection (goggles and glasses), 5,500 latex free gloves, 350 disposable aprons and 25 disposable decorators coveralls.

The items of PPE have been sourced from St Peter's School's on-site medical centre, its science, design and technology departments, and donations from pupils.



Yorkshire's Ashville College has donated vital equipment to the town's frontline medical teams.

After hearing that many hospitals around the country are running short of personal protective equipment (PPE), the school has given Harrogate District Hospital 200 pairs of safety glasses normally used by pupils and staff during science lessons.

David Normanshire, Head of Science, said: "Each and every

one of us owes a huge debt of gratitude to all the NHS staff working around the clock doing amazing things, and in particular those caring for patients in Harrogate District Hospital".

Richard Marshall, Headmaster of Ashville College, said: "On hearing about a shortage of PPE in hospitals around the country, we contacted Harrogate District Hospital offering them all the protective glasses we have".

And suddenly, all we have is virtual schools...

Hot on the heels of having to fund a 7%+ increase in Teachers Pension employers' contributions, schools are now having to contend with coronavirus. They will need to act swiftly and think creatively to manage the added financial stresses, writes Alyson Howard, an education specialist at accountants MHA MacIntyre Hudson.

The events of recent weeks are unprecedented. Almost all businesses are in lockdown and either shut entirely or working on a virtual basis only. That includes all independent schools.

From our experience I can see independent school clients coping in several different ways. Many have set up an almost total virtual school operation, others are using websites to disseminate content with some online provision. One client, who runs an independent special school, had, by 23rd March, dropped off full work packs with laptops, textbooks and other materials to all students. From then onwards, they have provided taught lessons for three hours each morning, with supported home learning in the afternoons.

We have now come to the end of the spring term so, for most schools, the number of days lost since lockdown started is relatively small. But as we consider the summer term – one without any GCSE or A-Level examinations – it is far from clear how parents are going to respond to the invoices for fees landing on their door mats. And many who would want to pay, may not be able to at this time. They might be furloughed on much less pay, or even have been made redundant. Savings might tide

some over for a short while but choosing between school fees and having food on the family table might mean schools lose students unless they can find a way to help reduce fees.

There are some straightforward measures schools should consider to try to achieve this.

Check business interruption insurance as there may be support there, although this should only be viewed as a partial solution as it is unlikely to cover all costs. Claims are likely to take some time to process so the earlier you submit one, the sooner you will get some funds back.

If you have not been able to offer much in terms of a virtual offering prior to Easter what can you offer for the summer term? Consider furloughing less essential staff, and offering a virtual provision at lower cost to pass on that saving to parents. You need to be looking at financial models with varying sensitivities. What is the impact if half of parents pay nothing for example? How could you cut costs to manage in that situation?

Boarding schools, short of any small residual offerings for key workers' children, are not likely to be offering any boarding facilities at all, so realistically that cannot be charged for. What costs associated with that can

be eliminated for now – House mothers and fathers, cleaners and catering staff to go on furlough perhaps?

These are difficult decisions but there is government support here to cover 80% of wages up to £2500 per month, an annual equivalent of £30k per annum. This is outright support – not a grant – so looking carefully at how you might access it in preference to government-backed, or other loans is important.

One client who relies on international students has had to completely restructure what it will be offering in terms of curriculum, cutting costs and staff as much as possible. They also understand that, even once schools can reopen, their international market, particularly from the Far East, is going to take some time to recover. Instead, they are looking to Europe to see if they can build more market share there.

Clearly some schools have strong reserves and perhaps large historical endowments. The value of investments has been hit and dividend and income returns are not likely to be what they were for some time to come, but you will want to avoid having to sell investments at such low prices unless necessary. If your endowment is not expendable,



you may also need to ask for charity commission permission to realise any part of it to help you through this crisis.

If you have six months' running costs in liquid funds then you will have time to run your different scenario forecasts and look carefully at how you want to play this, but many schools may not have this sort of contingency to fall back on.

So, decide on what policies you are going to adopt. If you have modelled a cut down operation with some staff on furlough, what drop in fees can you pass on? Communicate that to parents as soon as you can. Are there optional add-ons you could offer to those parents who might be able to pay for them while leaving the pared-down version for those who cannot afford any more?

Those of you that are charities can ask parents to consider making income donations to enhance the basic fee level. Since you will not be delivering your usual services for the extra funding you could then claim gift aid for that part of the consideration.

Action is key, this is not a time to dither!

Alyson Howard FCCA DChA CF is Education and Not-for-Profit Partner at MHA MacIntyre Hudson. She can be contacted at alyson.howard@mhlp.co.uk

Design Technology teachers at a Stamford School manufactured 200 protective face masks a day for the NHS, as part of the national effort to increase the availability of PPE for frontline NHS staff.

Teachers at the Stamford Endowed Schools originally trialled using the Schools' 3D printers to manufacture visors, but the process was too slow to meet demand. Staff worked to prototype and refine a design for creating the face masks using laser cutters. The first delivery of 100 masks, manufactured in just six hours, was sent to the ICU team at Peterborough City Hospital.

The Schools' solution involved laser cutting a polypropylene headband and attaching it to a PVC screen. With his team, Steve Newton, Head of Design Technology at the Stamford Endowed Schools, set up a

production line in their school workshop, with one team member laser cutting and assembling the headband, one person cutting, shaping and punching the screen, and a third on assembly, cleaning and quality control. This process allowed them to manufacture up to 200 masks per day.

Mr Newton said: "Alongside many other DT departments across the country we have approached the NHS PPE shortage as a design challenge. At SES we are extremely fortunate to have the equipment and skill set to make a real difference to members of our NHS. The design process

took approximately 14 hours from initial concept to final prototype and we are now able to manufacture 200 a day. We will keep manufacturing as long as we have materials and a demand for the product - we're just glad we are able to help our amazing NHS workers".



Design and Technology teachers at Suffolk's Royal Hospital School (RHS) joined the national effort to support the NHS staff by making protective face shields.

Beverly Maloney and her husband 3D printed elements of the shield from their home whilst Ollie Millington used a laser cutting a different design using polypropylene sheets and PVC. They intended to make over 200 by mid-April.

The shields were distributed within the Ipswich area to GP's surgeries, local pharmacies, care homes and community health care workers. Commenting on their production process, Beverly Maloney said: "We know that the NHS simply does not have access to the levels of PPE they need so some people are delighted to have additional protection. Some NHS and keyworker staff have been sharing or reusing equipment so any help is

appreciated, and our shields will be used in conjunction with paper masks. We shall carry on making them for as long as they are required. We have reiterated that these masks are not a replacement, nor medically tested but is something more than nothing in the interim"

The pair have also worn PPE themselves whilst making them, sanitised each shield once finished before boxing it up and letting it stand for three days.

Abingdon School, Oxfordshire, Design & Technology department have been busy producing much needed PPE visors for local GPs and healthcare workers.

Members of the department have joined D&T departments up and down the country using their design and manufacture knowledge and machinery to produce the visors, that local doctors, many of them parents, have been calling for.

The frames are laser cut from polypropylene and the replaceable visor is simply an acetate sheet, allowing the user to quickly

replace the screen as needed.

Michael Windsor, Headmaster, said: "In these challenging times, it has been uplifting for Abingdon School and Abingdon Prep staff to be able to help, even if only in a small way compared to the supreme effort from NHS staff and other key workers. We have supplied goggles from our science centre to the Haematology and Oncology Unit at the Cancer Centre at the Churchill Hospital, spare masks from the Health Centre have been sent to GPs running a fever clinic and our 3D printers in Design & Technology are being put to good use making face shields for NHS

workers. We have also offered our boarding accommodation for use by the NHS. Many of our staff who can offer their spare time have joined the hundreds of thousands

who have volunteered to help the NHS and we continued to keep Abingdon Prep open throughout the holidays for the children of key workers."



Remote Learning Challenges

Remote teaching is a completely new approach for schools and it will take time to evolve and develop as teachers, pupils and parents adapt to huge social challenges and a new way of learning. Admirably, the vast majority of teachers are embracing the opportunities surrounding remote learning and are enthused about delivering an exciting and high quality education to children in their homes. For many though, there has been a lot to learn and new technologies to get to grips with. The learning curve is steep with very little time for it to be mastered. *A report by Ben Evans, Headmaster at Edge Grove School, Hertfordshire...*



Schools are also supporting their staff well and ensuring they have the time and help to become proficient in delivering online learning. Whilst also being mindful of safeguarding issues and monitoring pupils' pastoral care and wellbeing needs alongside the demanding academic curriculum.

The most important aspect of remote teaching and learning is to ensure that pupils continue to feel supported and connected to their school, friends and teachers. Communication is key and the opportunity to see and speak to their friends regularly is essential. It is also important that the school's sense of community continues for parents too. Schools are all about atmosphere and relationships, both of which are difficult to maintain remotely, but not impossible.

One size doesn't fit all

It will be important for schools to ensure a clear structure in every child's day, which should start with a video-linked tutor time, just as it would if they were in school. During this time, teachers can set the expectations for the day, check that the children are well and coping with their new 'normal' and answer any questions or concerns they may have. These interactions will be vital in spotting any wellbeing issues or children who are suffering from mental health problems due to the isolation or general anxiety due to the coronavirus situation.

Live video lessons are only one aspect of a school's provision and are not suitable, nor should they be used, for every lesson or indeed for much younger children. It is far more likely that children will be taught in a virtual 'classroom' scenario with teachers present to answer questions, offer support, mark work and provide feedback.

The reassurance of knowing that the teachers are there to help will be invaluable to pupils' progress and self-esteem. It will also ensure that children understand that the work set must be completed in a timely fashion and to a high standard – just as would be the case if they were in school.

Likewise, the school's rewards and sanctions policy should be applied as normal – children will be motivated by being rewarded and recognised for working hard and producing good quality assignments. High quality pastoral care cannot be ignored and PSHE lessons, circle time sessions, celebrations and motivation etc. are all positive ways of engaging children, giving them opportunities to talk about how they feel, discuss issues with their peers and continue to follow the school's values and guiding principles.

Balancing home life

Following a school programme of remote learning as well as holding down a job, looking after young children and maintaining the family home can all be extremely demanding. It is important for the school to give families structure so that they can plan a schedule, which works best for them. First and foremost, a room set aside as a home classroom with limited distractions is important. If possible, this should be somewhere where the work can be left when finished, the door is shut at the end of the day and then work is picked up again the next day.

A clear demarcation of home and school is really important if a balance of home life is to be achieved. The weekday routine should be maintained; a proper wake up, breakfast etc. and then a prompt start to the day. Many

schools will be running a structured (if not normal timetable), which will allow for this, often starting with registration, which is compulsory. For younger children, this may not be possible but parents should remember that home learning and 1:1 interaction with their parents is far more intensive for a child than being one of 18 in a classroom. A full day of learning and lessons simply is not necessary and will only cause anxiety, tiredness and be completely counter-productive.

In order to achieve a balance, and to limit screen time, it is important that children continue to read from a book, take lots of exercise outside and are able to relax. This could include playing games, cooking, craft activities or watching a good family film. Weekends should also be just that. Parents must resist the temptation to squeeze school-work into every opportunity and children need to relax and know that weekdays are for school-work and weekends are family time. This is a marathon not a sprint and there may be many weeks ahead of home learning.

Being open to change

Undoubtedly, every school will face challenges with remote learning. The most important thing, for schools and parents, is to understand that this will happen and to be flexible, adaptable and open to change. There will be a tendency to try to do too much – both on the part of teachers in their online delivery and by parents in their enthusiasm to ensure children continue to learn. Schools will need to understand their pupils well, some will adapt quickly and remain motivated and engaged. Others will need greater support and will possibly take advantage of being at home.

Inevitably, some children are less independent and require more structure and scaffolding. All these issues will quickly become apparent requiring schools to differentiate the learning, hold remote booster group sessions and possibly 1:1 learning support lessons. Likewise the work, which is set, will evolve to suit the new learning arrangements. Parents with younger children will need clear signposting to resources, explicit learning objectives and a clear understanding of what their individual child is expected to achieve.

Feedback is critical

Teachers' expectations will need to be realistic and fair. For older children submitting work on Google Classroom, it will be easier but they will expect instant feedback and teachers will need to manage this expectation and their time, both when in the 'classroom' and out. Teachers should vary teaching methods and activities too. It will be essential to use as many different teaching and learning techniques as possible – a virtual whiteboard, pre-recorded videos, live lessons, Padlet, quizzes, small group sessions and so on. This would be normal practice in a classroom so there is no reason for remote learning to be any different.

Finally, all schools should be open to honest and constructive feedback from parents and they should also be seeking this regularly. This will help to ensure the process is working for all concerned and will help to identify children needing additional support or families who are not coping for various reasons. Schools must be proactive and keen to offer help and support wherever they are able to.

Epsom College, Surrey, is offering its boarding houses to NHS staff working on the frontline in the battle against coronavirus.

They are providing 117 single-bed rooms to critical workers. The accommodation comes with on-site parking and is being offered free of charge.

Epsom General Hospital – just two miles from the College – has been tasked with managing the most seriously-ill patients locally, and ramped up its critical care provision as the number of infections rose.

Headmaster, Mr Jay Piggot, said: “During this period of uncertainty, we wish to help members of our local community in any way we can. The NHS staff working tirelessly on the front-line are selfless, courageous, professional and vulnerable; we hope that this provision will ease the tremendous pressure they are under at this time.

“Epsom College began life as the Royal Medical Foundation of Epsom College, looking after the widows and orphans of medical practitioners. It is important that we continue to care for those who care for us during times of hardship.”

In three days, the DT department within Prior Park College, Bath, made 500 single use face visors (with cardboard head bands) and over 500 plastic framed face visors, which were being delivered to local GP surgeries, health centres and care homes.

The single use visors were made with the help of the Prior community after a plea for help with assembling the masks went out through the College Facebook pages. The response was phenomenal. Kits were dropped off at ‘out worker’ houses and then collected a few hours later so that completed visors were delivered the same day.

The plastic visors are made from polypropylene and the removable face shield is made using an A4 PVC binding cover. By using plastic based materials it is hoped that these can be cleaned and reused.

Head of DT at Prior Park, Mr R Faulkner commented: “We just want to do all we can to help during this crisis. The feedback has been overwhelming! I personally have taken phone calls for support from all around the country and have shared the cutting files and designs with companies in Kent, Manchester and even America!”



ACS International Schools has developed a new adapter to turn full face snorkel masks into emergency ventilators for hospitals struggling to find enough equipment to treat the influx of COVID-19 patients.

The process of converting snorkel masks into emergency ventilator masks has been initiated by Italian start-up, Isinnova, which has successfully designed 3D-printed parts to connect a Decathlon mask to a hospital ventilator, and this technology is now being used in hospitals across Europe. This particular mask, however, is quickly running out of stock. ACS has identified another brand of mask that is available in abundance, and has successfully created an adapter which allows the existing ventilator connector to fit with the alternative masks.

The project has been led by ACS's Partnerships Director, Graeme Lawrie, and Barnaby Sandow, Head of School, ACS International School Cobham, who have worked with a network of teachers from ACS and its partnership schools to design and develop the parts, from their own homes using 3D printers. Having successfully created the adapter, five prototype masks were sent to be tested by Dr David Southern, Consultant Intensivist and Equipment Lead, Critical Care at Wrexham Maelor Hospital. Once reviewed, the masks will be evaluated by the hospital's ethics committee, and, if approved, will be rolled out across the hospital and will open up possibilities for them to be used in hospitals across the UK too.

Graeme Lawrie explains: “The whole project so far has been a huge collaborative effort between ACS's own teachers, teachers from our network of partnership schools, as well as local industry, who

have come together to help design, print and test the parts. At ACS we're lucky to have access to a range of 3D printers, and some ACS teachers have been able to take these printers home with them and are now 3D printing parts for the masks. If everything gets approved, we've got a whole 'army of makers', including Design & Technology teachers and companies across the country, poised and ready to print the parts we need. It takes five and a half hours to print the components for just one mask, so help from anyone who has access to a 3D printer is incredibly valuable.

“Once printed, parts will be sent to me to assemble and I will ship them to the hospital. This is an extremely challenging time for everyone across the country, and the world, and we hope that ACS can make even a small contribution to supporting the incredible efforts of the NHS.”

Through its charitable partnerships fund, ACS currently has enough funding to create 200 ventilator masks, and is currently raising more funds to support the project via JustGiving: <https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/partnerships>. Funds from the JustGiving campaign will also go towards supporting families and children from ACS's group of partnership schools who have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Those with access to a 3D printer can find out more about supporting the initiative by contacting ACS International Schools via its Twitter and LinkedIn channels, or by emailing glawrie@acs-schools.com.

A demonstration of how the masks are created can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ohTHMcPxPUQ>

Schools asked for assessment grades

Ofqual has set out details about how GCSEs, AS and A levels will be awarded this summer and published further guidance for teachers, students, parents and carers. For this summer's awards, schools and colleges are being asked to provide centre assessment grades for their students. These should be 'fair, objective and carefully considered' judgements of the grades schools and colleges believe their students would have been most likely to achieve if they had sat their exams, and should take into account the full range of available evidence.

Exam boards will be contacting schools, colleges and other exam centres asking them to submit, by a deadline that will be no earlier than 29 May 2020, the following:

- a centre assessment grade for every student in each of their subjects: that is, the grade they would be most likely to have achieved if they had sat their exams and completed any non-exam assessment. Judgements should balance different sources of evidence such as:
 - classwork
 - bookwork
 - any participation in performances in subjects such as music, drama or PE
 - any non-exam assessment – whether or not complete
 - the results of any assignments or mock exams
 - previous examination

results – for example, for any re-sitting students or those with relevant AS qualifications

- any other records of student performance over the course of study
- the rank order of students within each grade for each subject – for example, for all those students with a centre assessment grade of 5 in GCSE maths, a rank order where 1 is the most secure/highest attaining student, and so on. This information will be used in the statistical standardisation of centres' judgements – allowing fine tuning of the standard applied across all schools and colleges
- a declaration from the Head of Centre making the submission

To make sure that grades are as fair as possible across schools

and colleges, exam boards will put all centre assessment grades through a process of standardisation using a model being developed with Ofqual. It will not change the rank order of students within each centre; nor will it assume that the distribution of grades in each subject or centre should be the same. The process will also recognise the past performance of schools and colleges. However, if grading judgements in some schools and colleges appear to be more severe or generous than others, exam boards will adjust the grades of some or all of those students upwards or downwards accordingly.

Schools and colleges have been told that they must not share their centre assessment grades with students, parents or carers, under any circumstances, until after final results are issued. This is to protect the integrity of centres' judgements, and to avoid

anyone feeling under pressure to submit a grade that is not supported by the evidence. Since the final grades for some or all students in a centre could be different from those submitted, it also helps to manage students' expectations.

Results will not be delayed after the dates they were expected in August and ideally will be released a little earlier, so students can have the certainty they need.

Students will also have the opportunity to sit exams at the earliest reasonable opportunity in the new academic year.

Many students will be taking other general and vocational or technical qualifications instead of or alongside GCSEs, AS and A levels. While this process does not apply to those qualifications, the same aims apply. Ofqual are working as quickly as possible to develop an approach and will provide further information soon.

Growing Flowers for Free in Lockdown

The Royal Hospital School (RHS) in Suffolk has been sending out packets of wildflower seeds to people throughout the UK since lockdown began.

The bee and butterfly-friendly seeds are part of the school's Grow with Us campaign which has an environmental and wellbeing focus.

As well as planting a tree for every new pupil joining the school, it also gives visitors to RHS wildflower seeds instead of more traditional branded merchandise.

RHS felt that giving people seeds to grow and nurture over the coming weeks, be it in a garden or a pot on a windowsill that are wildlife-

friendly, would provide a welcome distraction.

The offer was made on Facebook and within a day most of the seeds had been claimed with requests for them coming in ever since. RHS is now asking people to post pictures of their wildflower seeds as they begin to grow.



Embracing Online Education

Using technology to ensure that young people continue to get the education they need remotely is challenging but something that schools are fighting to deliver. Here, Felsted School, Essex, describes their approach...

Felsted School's community is embracing the new need for distance learning using both new and previously established online resources.

Felsted was already an active user of Google for education and is currently using Google Classroom to deliver online lessons on the same school timetable for all students, with live video talks and messaging between students and staff to keep active communication going.

Felsted Prep teachers are using Clickview, an educational video library for creating and sharing videos, to continue class reading and deliver learning exercises. Clickview is also being used across the school to deliver mindfulness sessions, assemblies, PSHE and drama, as well as videos of best practice to support parents.

The Music Department has been continuing to deliver individual lessons over video call (see picture) and have even managed

a virtual orchestra, with everyone recording their individual pieces to be put together as a final recording. They will also be aiming to use technology to continue the weekly Thursday brektime recital, showcasing the musical talents of individuals or groups.

The school chaplain, Nigel Little, is continuing to deliver remote Chapel services, posted on the website and through Twitter. Social media is playing a big part in distance learning, with different departments sharing their successes and providing guidance to help everyone stay connected. Many examples can be seen on the main school Twitter feed (FelstedSchool)

PE sessions have been getting creative, with pupils choosing their favourite way to exercise, from running, sporting activities in the garden, exercise videos, dog-walks, bike rides and gardening. Meanwhile for those in sports teams, remote practice has



continued as much as possible with coaches coming up with inventive ways of encouraging people to keep fit, including a 'hockey home challenge' with a number of simple workout routines to do daily, which have been shared on the Felsted Hockey Twitter account.

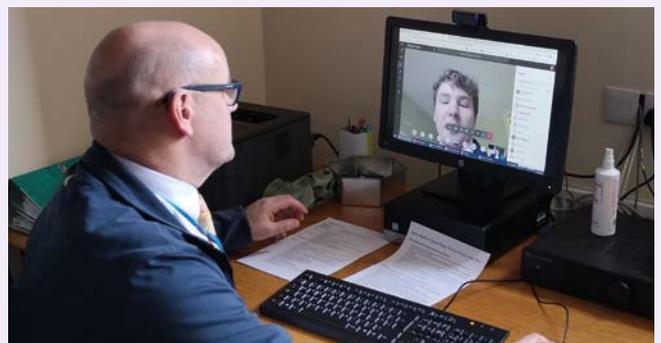
Felsted also recognises the importance of supporting positive mental wellbeing in these uncertain times. Their pioneering Wellbeing Centre is now open in cyberspace with wellbeing professionals available to support students and staff with any concerns they may have.

Continuing to deliver...

Although pupils may no longer physically be in situ, Wellington School, Somerset, has been delivering lessons via on-line platforms to ensure the continuous provision. Pupils log on in the morning to register, and fulfil their usual timetable online with live online chat and teleconferencing.

A comprehensive remote learning guide has been created and distributed to all parents and pupils, with clear guidance and expectations on how learning will continue to take place. Pupils will be expected to log-on and have a tutor meeting every

morning at 8.30am. Tasks will be set, teachers will be online and following their normal timetable alongside the students. This will enable them to respond in a timely manner to students' queries and maintain structure to the day.



Covid-19 and ISM



These stories about the contribution that independent schools are making to the NHS and how they are developing their online resources represent but a fraction of the nationwide effort.

We intend to publish more in our next issue; we already have a number to hand but please let us know your news for possible inclusion.

admin@independentschoolsmagazine.co.uk

Regards
Kimble Earl, Editor & Publisher

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Tomorrow's Women Conference

Sixth Formers at Burgess Hill Girls, Sussex, hosted their second Tomorrow's Women conference early last month (March).

The conference is unique in that it is created and organised by the students. They are involved in planning every aspect of the conference, from deciding on the format, to selecting speakers and how to market the event.

This year's conference celebrated outstanding and enterprising work by women from a range of backgrounds and industries.

Jo Shiner, Deputy Chief Constable of Sussex Police, gave a powerful message on overcoming barriers due to sex discrimination, and the importance of being assertive whilst also remaining yourself, authentic and proud.

Clare Griffiths, Business Development Manager and founder of the Thrive Effect, encouraged budding entrepreneurs to step out of their comfort zone and take up



opportunities when they arrive.

Naomi Muston, Eco System Manager at Barclays Eagle Labs in Brighton, fascinated the audience with the story of her own progression from the dramatic arts into business. She also emphasised the importance of mentoring and building connections in the workplace.

Danielle Brown MBE, double Paralympic Archery Gold medallist,

inspired everyone with her account of overcoming disability to achieve the ultimate success on the international stage.

Finally, Mims Davies, MP for Mid Sussex, spoke passionately and honestly about her pathway into politics. Her account of how her wish to improve a local park started her on the pathway to Parliament was a great example of how small beginnings can lead

to outstanding things.

A consistent theme raised at this year's conference was the experience of 'imposter syndrome' and how to combat it, advice summarised by the students themselves in the following words:

"Sometimes you need to meet the world with a confidence you do not yet feel, and both the world and you will respond and respect it."

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Improving emotional wellbeing & academic performance through neuroscience

Neuroscience for Teachers is a unique new free course to be piloted in 2020/21 – the brainchild of Julia Harrington, Head of Queen Anne's School, Berkshire, and founder of BrainCanDo.



Julia Harrington

Established six years ago, BrainCanDo is leading the way in harnessing psychology and neuroscience to enrich education.

Julia Harrington said: 'I founded BrainCanDo to carry out research into how the brain learns, especially during adolescence, and how those findings could – or should – be applied in the classroom. We used to think that the brain stopped developing at age 11 but we now know that it continues to adapt well into adolescence. It's obvious to me that both classroom teaching and pastoral care need to reflect this aspect of children's growth.

'At Queen Anne's we have pioneered the application of educational neuroscience and cognitive psychology across the school for several years and seen the results in improved emotional wellbeing and improved academic performance.

'I believe that learning to become a teacher is incomplete without some understanding of what's

happening in the teenage brain. So I asked Professor Patricia Riddell to design a completely new course to fill that gap in conventional teacher training.'

Up to 30 qualified teachers, from state and independent secondary schools – with experience of teaching for between 3 and 5 years – will be recruited over the spring and summer of 2020 to take part in the pilot which starts in September 2020 and finishes in June 2021.

Professor Riddell – contributing to this project as an independent consultant in the field of applied neuroscience – said: 'I am very excited to be given this opportunity by Julia and BrainCanDo to bring my expertise to the educational sector. There is so much that we now know about how children's brains develop that can help teachers, both by designing teaching and learning which works with our brains and increasing motivation in children to learn.'

The pilot will take place at Queen Anne's School in Caversham, near Reading. Participants will require the support of their school's head and will be expected to commit to six interactive days of workshops across the next academic year. BrainCanDo will sponsor the training costs so the course will be free of charge.

Workshop topics include Motivation and Engagement; Learning and Technology; Memory; Decision-making and Leadership; Mental Health and Wellbeing; and Action Research Project Planning.

The aim is for a continuous neuroscience programme with up to 30 teachers from a wide variety of schools joining every year.

BrainCanDo (BCD) was founded in 2013 by Julia Harrington, in the belief that neuroscience – focusing on the knowledge gained from research into how the brain learns, especially during adolescence – should be introduced into the education system. By understanding

the potential, and vulnerability, of the young brain, teachers and pastoral staff would find their jobs more fulfilling, and both teaching and learning would be greatly enhanced.

A number of research projects were commissioned from leading universities; the findings were tested and implemented in Queen Anne's School; and the results of BCD's classroom intervention methods and teaching practice have been shared (and continue to be) with other schools, both state and independent.

BrainCanDo is now an established hub of research and collaborative excellence, sharing best practice through research, training, publications and resources. One of the world's leading academic publishers, Routledge, will be publishing The BrainCanDo Handbook of Teaching and Learning in July 2020.

Head teachers interested in nominating a teacher to take part in the pilot course are asked to contact: info@braincando.com

New Personalised Learning Department

West Buckland School, Devon, has announced the opening of a new Personalised Learning and Development Hub, enabling more children to receive specialist one-to-one or group learning support.

"We should never lose sight of the human being in front of us." So says Carol Heath-Smith, Head of Personalised Learning at West Buckland School. The new Hub marks the latest phase in the on-going expansion of its campus facilities.

Carol is delighted with the new facilities and sees the new space as an integral part of a much wider programme offered by the school:

"The world of science is informing educational practice as it has never done before and underpins our need to be innovative. We have learnt that our brains are constantly changing, a state known as 'neuroplasticity', meaning that new pathways can always be developed and altered."

"Examples of innovation include the use of Lego therapy to help our students on the autistic spectrum or with SEMH; establishing movement programmes and sports schedules to suit those with Developmental Coordination Delay; and the use of Assistive Technology to support students to access the curriculum."

The new building includes small focus rooms, break out areas and social spaces where all children are welcome, whether to receive learning support or just to take

part in social activities such as the Lego club in their break times. The facility is manned by five staff, who specialise in different areas of development.



A Big Bang Win for Girls in Science

Encouraging more girls to study STEM subjects is high on the list of priorities at St George's School for Girls in Edinburgh, and running a range of science-related academic enrichment programmes encouraging girls to participate in STEM competitions is proving extremely successful.

Two S5 students, Sophie and Iman, entered the national Big Bang Fair engineering competition where their entry won the 'Runners Up' Award in the 'Intermediate Engineering' category.

Sophie and Iman (pictured) developed a design for a 'Water-Powered Flood Barrier' in response to the global issues caused by flooding each year. Their entry featured a versatile barrier using recycled materials, such as plastics, creating an eco-friendly solution.

Speaking on behalf of Iman, Sophie commented on their recent win: "The issue of global flooding has

elevated dramatically in recent years due to climate change and this prompted us to design an eco-friendly and locally sustainable solution. We wanted to mitigate the devastating impacts of flooding on surrounding areas and utilise the problem of flooding to power the solution. Taking part in the competition has been an amazing journey and has inspired us. I am now thinking of pursuing a career in Engineering."

The girls qualified for the Big Bang competition through submitting a video entry. You can see their video clip entry here: <https://bit.ly/2WW5Szn>. Their runners-up award has earned them a trophy and £250 to share.

Sophie and Iman's original concept is also being considered for the UK 'Water Prize', which will be decided over the coming months.

The Big Bang Fair is a national, annual competition which

recognises and rewards young peoples' achievements in all areas of science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM), whilst providing them with the opportunity to build their skills and confidence in project-based work.

Alex Hems, Head of St George's, commented: "We are absolutely delighted for the girls. It is a real achievement to see how their initial

idea has developed throughout the whole process and a great outcome after the many hours of hard work they put into their project. We are certainly seeing a national drive to engage more girls in STEM at school, and we are fortunate at St George's – an all girls' school – that we can avoid stereotypes, allowing girls to choose subjects that interest them and that they are good at".



Erasmus+ project

Students with a love for learning languages and experiencing different cultures are reaping the benefits of a new Erasmus+ project involving King's Ely, Cambridgeshire, and schools in Italy, France and Turkey.

King's Ely has recently hosted the first student exchange element of 'RISE the Life', an exciting new, two-year Erasmus+ funded programme involving three partner schools – Liceo Roiti in Ferrara, Italy; Lycée Saint Cricq in Pau, France; and Erbakir Fen Lisesi in Denizli, Turkey.

Thirty students and members of staff from the partner schools spent a week at King's Ely, enjoying a whole host of lessons and activities themed around renewable energy, including Science workshops to test and evaluate a range of wind turbines and a Geography project where pupils evaluated a variety of Geographic Information System (GIS) data to decide on the optimal location for a wind farm in the local area.

The busy schedule also involved King's Ely and partner school

pupils working together in teams to present their projects and findings to staff and students, a talk by Adam Fellows, an offshore wind energy expert, and the planting of a tree in the school grounds to commemorate RISE the Life.

The tree is a Liquidambar *Styraciflua* tree, also known as a Sweet Gum tree, which are regarded for their carbon dioxide absorbing abilities. The species can absorb up to 50kg of carbon dioxide in one year and they produce enough oxygen each day to support two adults.

Of course, no Erasmus+ exchange would be complete without

plenty of cultural experiences and sightseeing, so visiting students and staff also enjoyed tours of Ely Cathedral, excursions to Cambridge and London, and trips to several local amenities.

RISE the Life is running until 2021 and King's Ely students and staff will travel to Italy, France and Turkey for the next stages of the project, which will look at the roles of wave, solar and geothermal power in meeting future energy needs.

Jane Thomas, Vice Principal Academic at King's Ely, said: "This was the first stage of RISE the Life and what a

success it was! Whether it was collaborating together on research projects or enjoying a bowling evening with our newly made friends, it was a really fulfilling week and we are all thoroughly looking forward to the next stages of the project, investigating wave energy in France, geothermal power in Italy and solar power in Turkey. Thank you to everyone who made the first part of RISE the Life such a success, including all students and staff, and of course our host families, without whom the project would not be able to function."



Far right Marc Hawes and Jane Thomas, leading RISE the Life



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All expenses trip to Google HQ

A 16 year old from Hull Collegiate School beat more than 3,500 students in a coding competition to win a trip to Google's headquarters in California.

A total of 3,566 students from 76 countries took part in the Code-In competition, with 20,840 tasks being completed with 29 open source organisations.

Josh chose to participate with CircuitVerse, a product developed by students at the International Institute of Information

Technology, Bangalore.

Josh's entry has won him and a parent a trip to Google's headquarters at Mountain View, California, in June. Josh said, "The project I worked on involved 22 tasks in research and programming and I am excited to get the opportunity to visit Google HQ."

Mr G Carmichael, Head of Computing, said, "Once again, Josh has proven himself to be a world beater in the field of Computer Science."

Special day for tomorrow's scientists

Talented pupils from local junior schools in the Blandford Schools' Network and from prep schools further afield have taken part in a special event for aspiring young scientists held at Bryanston School, Dorset. The 2020 Science Day featured an eye-opening practical science session and a series of inspirational talks as well as a fun 'Whodunnit' investigation to enthuse inquisitive young minds. Science Day, a regular annual event at Bryanston, has continued to grow in popularity and, this year, was attended by a record number of Year 6 pupils.

"We're delighted with the success of the day and the wonderful responses from our young guests," says Nick Welford, Bryanston's Head of Science, who organised and hosted the event. "Our aim is to enthuse all the pupils about the wonders of science and give them the opportunity to experience the

'art' of discovery for themselves. It is always an enjoyable day for everyone involved and this year was no exception."

The hands-on practical sessions were held in the school's physics, chemistry and biology departments. These were followed by six biology teachers at Bryanston giving a series of short presentations on their favourite organism that culminated with a clapometer vote from pupils for their preferred choice. The 'Whodunnit' exercise then gave pupils the opportunity to analyse and assess evidence from the scene of a dastardly crime to try and identify the culprit from a list of four shady suspects.

For the first time, this year's Science Day also included a special In-Service training exercise for teaching staff from the participating schools. This focussed on the potential use of data

Embley Prep School, Hampshire, has been awarded the Primary Science Quality Mark (PSQM) GILT Award, a national accolade that celebrates a school's commitment to excellence in Science teaching and learning. PSQM is recognised by Ofsted, the Royal Society and the CBI as having a positive impact on pupils' performance, their engagement and enjoyment of the subject.

Embley's Prep School Science curriculum incorporates a wide range of initiatives to provide fun and engaging Science at every level – from Early Years to Key Stage 2 (Year 6). Science is linked to many other subjects including English, Maths and Learning Outside the Classroom and pupils use additional traditional and online resources to help spark their curiosity and encourage informed discussions and debates in the classroom.

From the Prep School's dedicated Science Week, Space Week, Science Fair, Lunch with a Scientist series and lectures from astrophysicists, geologists and sports scientists, to trips to IBM and the London Science Museum, Embley's pupils explore, learn and think critically about how

Science affects their everyday lives.

The Primary Science Quality Mark is led by the University of Hertfordshire, School of Education in collaboration with the Primary Science Teaching Trust.

Jane Turner, PSQM National Director, commented: "Gaining a Primary Science Quality Mark is a significant achievement for a school. The profile and quality of science teaching and learning in each awarded school is very high. Children are engaging with great science both in and outside the classroom, developing positive attitudes towards science as well as securing scientific understanding and skills. Science subject leaders, their colleagues, head teachers, children, parents and governors should be very proud."



loggers, the teaching of science skills and also included a session on managing pupil anxiety arising from the growing debate and concerns about climate change.

Schools that took pupils to the

Science Day at Bryanston included Sandroyd and Salisbury Cathedral School, Yarrells, Sunninghill in Dorchester, Port Regis, Hazlegrove Prep School, West Hill Park and Twyford The Prebendal School.

Pictured: Bryanston teacher, Simon Turrill, with some of the young pupils who attended the Bryanston Science Day

National robotics hub

Sheffield Girls' Junior School has been chosen as the first national robotics hub for primary school children.

The school has secured the accolade of UK WER (World Educational Robotics) Primary Hub following its work to incorporate robotics and robotic programming into their bespoke Fusion Curriculum and also to motivate other pupils from across the city to enjoy the topic.

The honour comes after the school secured £5000 worth of funding to purchase educational robotics kits to promote the subject following a bid to the Girls' Day School Trust (GDST) and HSBC Partnership Funding.

Junior school science teacher, Lucy Williams, who helped lead the bid, said: "Myself and fellow teacher Dawn Pooley wrote a WER Robotics curriculum and the school introduced it onto the Year 5 science and computing curriculum back in October 2019.

"We have also designed lessons, planning and resources for local

primary schools and so far we have delivered the lessons to Year 5 pupils at Ecclesall Primary School and after Easter, we will be working with Nether Green Junior School.

"Children can learn endless skills through robotics from problem solving and creativity, to resilience and communication. The robots are programmed using block coding and in C programming language and don't come with instructions so the pupils really have to experiment and use trial and error to get the robots to do the things they want them to do.

"As well as our own pupils, the 19 kits bought from the bid money have allowed us to go into local primary schools to teach robotics. We want to get children across Sheffield learning about robotics from a young age and also competing in the World Educational Robotics Challenge which takes place annually, with the final taking place in China."

Dr Melissa Butt (Chair of World



Educational Robotics UK) added: "Lucy and Dawn have embraced the challenges of teaching advanced educational robotics and incorporating it into the U.K. primary curriculum. Their hard work and dedication has enabled Sheffield Girls' to become the leading WER primary school in the U.K. The impact that the Sheffield Girls'

WER UK Primary hub has already had on local primary schools in a short period of time is incredible. Long term, collaborations between Sheffield Girls', WER U.K. and Twinkl will enable many other U.K. schools to incorporate educational robotics into their curriculum and up-skill their learners for the jobs of the future."

Countrywide competition for young engineers



Twenty-four Year 8 students attended the Faraday Challenge STEM Day organised by the Institute of Engineering and Technology and hosted at Kingswood School, Bath.

This is a nationwide competition that aims at promoting and encouraging budding young engineers and challenging them with real life scenarios.

Pupils were tasked with designing and modelling something that could help aid workers in the context of a natural disaster.

The teams had to plan, budget, develop, construct and present their ideas to the rest of the groups and the engineers. There was stiff competition from the competing schools; St Mark's and St Gregory's came up with some innovative and creative ideas.

However, the Kingswood team were victorious with their solar powered drone prototype and now wait to see if the score they achieved will put them in the national finals this Summer.

Champion engineers

Six Year 9 students at Kingswood School, Bath, entered the Jaguar Land Rover 4x4 in schools Regional finals held at Bristol Science Park.

This is a worldwide competition that offers apprenticeships at Jaguar Land Rover to those who reach the final stages.

The competition consists of creating a new shell for a Land Rover Remote control car, driving an extremely demanding assault course, an interview with a panel of judges from Jaguar Land

Rover and creating a team 'Pit' showcasing the work they have put in throughout the year.

The team produced a new shell made from bio degradable materials that really impressed the judges.

They worked well in their team roles, and clearly communicated their brand and ideas to the Land Rover representatives.

The team won the 'best engineered car' in their category, and became the Southwest Regional Champions!



Independent Schools and Business rates



Whilst the staff Furlough scheme has been a lifeline for most, including Independent schools, some other businesses have been given Business rates relief by way of a twelve month holiday in the hospitality and connected industries. This is in addition to the reliefs given earlier in the Budget to Small businesses in the retail sector to 'save the high street'. By contrast, the conversation in the Press continues about the tax breaks afforded to schools that are seen as bastions of privilege. One of these breaks, and probably the easiest to remove, is the charities business rates relief. *Henry Briggs reports...*

With effect from 1st September 2020, the Scottish Government has taken on the recommendations of the Barclay review and removed this relief for Independent Schools. It is estimated that this will cost 51 such schools in Scotland a total of £37m.

The situation in England and Wales remains that business rates relief is granted by local councils as a discretionary relief of between 80-100%, applied to Charities. Hard pressed local authorities, facing falling central Government grants, will be eyeing this relief as a source of enhanced income for them.

At a time when independent schools are facing a raft of challenges, any removal of the relief will have serious consequences for their finances. Against a background of pupil numbers flattening, it has yet to be seen what the after effects of the Corona virus will have on the sector. But, in the meantime, it is highly likely that there will be a rapid rise in corporate insolvencies and personal bankruptcies, as income streams dry up. Unemployment rates look set to rise, and stock market values and investment income to fall, and all of these will undoubtedly result in fee paying parents needing to reassess their own domestic budgets.

schools are in older, attractive, valuable properties already subject to listing or other restrictions.

A possible silver lining in all of this might be the effects of the falling Pound, which makes a British education even more affordable to those resident and earning overseas, in turn helping demand, in broader terms, for places from that part of the market that has been the most resilient in recent years.

The danger to the sector is twofold. Firstly, the growth in the public sector deficit is going to have to be repaid by increased taxes in the future. Private schools have taken a good deal of political buffeting recently, and the removal of the rates relief may be seen to be politically expedient. Whilst the imposition of business rates on schools may be affordable but costly to them, it will undoubtedly cause financial pain. Secondly, for some smaller schools on the financial edge, it may prove to be the tipping point, resulting in closures. Schools are already facing parents showing resistance to paying fees when school closures have been imposed as a result of the current crisis. Let us hope that a Conservative Government will not forsake their traditional base in looking to impose further costs on private schools.

Any imposition of business rates on charitable schools will vary according to the location, type and size of the school. Areas with higher property values will attract greater rateable values and these are mostly in the affluent inner city areas and suburbs, particularly London and the South East. As these areas traditionally have better catchment areas and more concentrated population, the demand for private school places is generally much higher than elsewhere; so this might mean that schools in rural or poorer areas are less adversely affected by any rates imposition than those where it is easier to fill school places. However, many

Henry Briggs is 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

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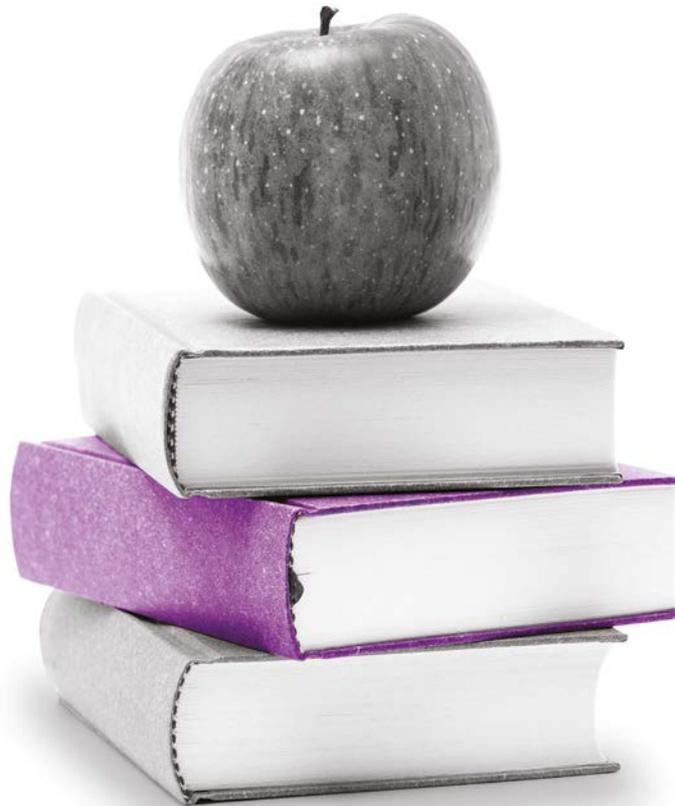
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Alumni donations help drive social mobility



A return to Assisted Places or a Direct Grant system, or even the introduction of Vouchers, seem to be remote possibilities. So how can access to an independent education be widened? Bolton School, Lancashire, heads Sue Hincks and Philip Brittan reflect...

When Lord Leverhulme re-founded Bolton School on the current site, we can only marvel at his vision and the faith he must have had in the future. In an industrial mill town, he built a School for people with high aspirations. For children who would be inspired by the towering Great Halls, the magnificent oak doors and the cloistered quads (even if these would not be completed at the schools' inception). For girls who wanted the same opportunities as boys. Social Mobility may not have been a term he would have used but it represents a concept he would have understood. Without Social Mobility, talents remain undeveloped and prosperity suffers; individuals' life satisfaction is diminished; social cohesion and democratic participation are reduced.

Some 100 years later, it is widely recognised that Education is a key driver of Social Mobility. However, the national picture seems bleak, both in terms of inter-generational mobility and mobility throughout the course of an individual's life (intra-generational mobility). The elevator is described as 'stuck'. In particular, there are 'sticky ceilings' and 'sticky floors'; in other words, the privileged and the poor remain where they are, both in terms of money and education. Indeed, the tendency of wealth to remain in certain hands and to evade others' has increased in most OECD countries since the late 1990s. At the same time, the relationship between wealth and educational attainment has intensified. A low degree of social mobility combined with income inequality is a potentially toxic mix. It is scarcely surprising, then, that all political parties have emphasised the importance of

nurseries, schools and universities in giving life chances to those from the least economically privileged backgrounds and the most deprived areas.

In April 2019 in the UK, the Social Mobility Commission published its 6th State of the Nation report, describing social mobility as having remained stagnant since 2014: Disadvantaged children start school years behind their peers in terms of attainment; there is a 14% point gap at 11 and this rises to a 22.5% point gap at 19. The Commission devoted much time and space to the role of independent schools in entrenching privilege. It described a 'stark divide between many schools within the independent sector and those in the state sector', noting the following:

- 'Independent schools are both better resourced and often socially exclusive in nature.'
- 'The gap in attainment in public exams between children who attend independent schools and those who attend state schools is significant.'
- 'Generally, a broader range of extra-curricular opportunities are available to children who attend independent schools.'
- 'On average, independent schools are three times better resourced than state funded schools.'
- In England, the pupil teacher ratio in the state sector was 17:1 in 2016 compared to 8.6:1 in the private sector. In practice this means children receive more individual attention, more pastoral support and smaller class sizes.'

The exclusivity of many independent schools was seen as presenting a number of risks to

society in general. For example, the Commission cited the risk that 'future leaders will be detached from the broader lived experience of the people their decisions may impact.' It concluded that there is a 'moral imperative' for independent schools 'to take meaningful and concrete steps to support education in their local, national and international communities.'

Both of us fully agree with the Commission's conclusions and we know that many parents and alumni feel the same way. We would welcome a (literal) revolution in thinking such as the return to Assisted Places or of a Direct Grant system which gave access to so many in the local community to what Bolton School had to offer. Given that such a move by government is unlikely, we act according to these three principles:

The first is that independent day schools must be real and relevant to their local context. Therefore, we must be affordable as well as worth affording. That means fees must be tightly controlled. At Bolton School, the Governors have ensured that fee increases have been no more than 2% for the last four years. Over time this makes the choice of a fee-paying place more accessible to more people, and makes Bolton School more a part of the society in which we operate.

The second principle is the importance of increased access and the availability of bursaries. It is a fundamental imperative that there is access to Bolton School for those families who will never be able to afford our fees, yet whose children would thrive here. 1 in 5 pupils receives financial support at Bolton School and 12% of pupils are on free places. The Governors are aiming at 1 in 3 pupils on a Bursary

by the end of the decade. This is a key factor in Bolton School being an engine of social mobility today, as it was in the past with direct grant pupils. We are strong believers in the multiplier effect. If we educate one boy or girl this will have a huge impact for good on his or her family, community and locality.

Finally, there is partnership. Not everyone will afford a full fee place or be awarded a bursary but a strong and thriving independent school can still have a significant impact on the educational journey of a young person in nearby schools. At Bolton School, our partnerships with other educational providers are purposeful, sustainable and focused on making us an important cog in the machinery of the local educational landscape for all.

In the words of the Girls' Division prayer, 'much is expected of those to whom much is given'. We are inheritors of a wonderful legacy at Bolton School and it is vital that we share our inheritance as widely as possible for the good of the whole community. Alumni gifts, whether in time or money, play a vital role in opening up the School to as many children as possible, regardless of social background. Financial donations allow us to extend our Bursary scheme; those who give back by sharing their time and expertise allow us to extend our partnerships. We are hugely grateful to all those who contribute to the diverse and vibrant communities which we see in both Divisions. Together, we share Lord Leverhulme's vision and faith in the future, believing that these buildings and the people in them can continue to inspire young people for generations to come.

Pitch perfect

ACS International School Cobham has invested £1.2 million in an impressive 91.36m x 65.5m all-weather sports surface, suitable for a range of activities including football, rugby and athletics. Replacing its former grass pitch, the new state-of-the-art FIFA-accredited, World Rugby-accredited AstroTurf will ensure that students can compete on the finest pitch surface throughout the changing seasons.

The ACS Cobham pitch also meets FA requirements for competitive games, which means it will be a huge draw for inter-school competition. Not only will ACS enjoy a range of matches as part of the Independent Schools Championships, but the facilities will also attract competition from a number of international and local schools, giving students the chance to hone their skills in a competitive environment.



Barnaby Sandow, Head of School at ACS Cobham said: "We are absolutely thrilled with the installation of the new multi-use sports surface and look forward to welcoming teams from other schools and nations to compete with our teams throughout the year. ACS Cobham is proud to offer students world-class facilities and this pitch is a wonderful asset to both the school and the local community."

The official launch of the AstroTurf took place at the Power of Four Cup last term, an under-18 varsity football tournament, where ACS Cobham players were competing with their colleagues from ACS Egham, ACS Hillingdon and ACS Doha, who had made the journey to Surrey from Qatar. The Cobham Cougars went on to win the cup.

The installation of this multi-use sports surface was part of a wider investment at ACS Cobham, where a fund of £1.1 million has been recently announced for the bursary scheme for the academic year 2020/21. All bursaries are awarded on a means-tested basis and, dependent on each student's individual circumstances, range from ten per cent to 100 per cent of the schools' fees.

Pictured: Head of School, Barny Sandow, with Chris Quinn (ACS Doha's coach) on the left and Jon Rawlinson, Assistant Principal, ACS Doha, on the right

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Cutting emissions... cutting costs

It's no secret that school budgets are getting tighter with all schools exploring every avenue to make limited budgets stretch. Gas and Electricity are an essential part of running day-to-day school life, but how can you reduce your emissions and costs, without affecting Staff and Student wellbeing? *Tamsin Whinton reports...*



The Cultural Shift

What if I told you that you could reduce your energy consumption by up to 10% right now without spending a penny?! Studies show that changing the mindset of staff and students can have a huge impact on energy consumption. It's really that simple!

- **Label your Lights:** Many schools have switch boards that control lighting in large areas. If people don't know which switch is for what, they are likely to turn them all on to save time.
- **Switch Off:** It sounds obvious, but the number of screens left on standby, plug sockets left on at the wall, and lights forever glowing is enough to bring you to boiling point. Switching off computers and screens overnight can save enough energy to make 30 teachers 6 cups of coffee every day!
- **Harness Pupil Power:** Create games and challenges and

introduce Climate Champions! Who knows, you might have the next Einstein or Edison on your hands.

- **Turn down the heat:** How many times have you walked into a classroom to find the windows open and the heating on? Set your thermostats correctly; if unsure, set it at halfway for a day or two and see if it's too hot/too cold.
- **Staff Awareness:** Holding regular training sessions, reminding staff of quick-tips in the morning meeting and reminding them they can use the same tips to help them save money at home, can all help instil a long-term energy saving legacy.

Out with the Old...

Updating your equipment regularly can reduce your energy usage and help your staff be more productive.

- **Lighting:** Converting to LED lighting is one of the most

affordable energy reduction technologies in existence but this also makes them a target for "too-good-to-be-true" offers. Do your calculations and comparisons to ensure you are getting a realistic ROI.

- Installing lighting sensors in areas that are used periodically such as corridors and storage cupboards is low-cost but effective.
- Updating boiler systems, AHU's and other equipment near the end of their life and replacing with energy efficient alternatives is very beneficial. Although the majority of these will incur a moderate upfront cost, they can work well in a long-term strategy.

If you can't Measure, you can't Manage!

Put the effort in to set up your monitoring services and you'll be surprised at how much energy, time and money you can save in the

short and long-term future. Some Energy Providers offer an online portal which automatically updates from AMR / Smart Meters. We recommend Stark data monitoring which provides real-time energy and cost reporting and allows you to set up alerts personal to your needs. This means any anomalies such as gas leaks or equipment left on, can be picked up and sorted straight away.

Procure Responsibly

It's important to find an Energy Partner that has your best interests at heart. Ask for open comparisons between suppliers, clear breakdowns of commission, and sustainably sourced (renewable) energy. Fixing contract prices long-term will protect you from unstable markets, and a good Energy Partner will be proactive in suggesting the right time to procure. Don't be afraid to look around to find the right fit for your business with someone you can put your trust in.

Tamsin Whinton is Operations Manager at Powerful Allies TamsinWhinton@powerfulallies.com

Seeing the light...

The argument for converting lighting to LED, particularly in high usage areas such as corridors, sports facilities and classrooms is well proven.

But what can schools do to limit the cost of lighting, where there are no immediate plans to change to LED?

- Limit the lighting to essential use, such as ensuring lighting in classrooms is only switched on prior to the start of a lesson and switched off immediately on vacating a room and during breaks times. Remember to avoid having the lights on with the blinds closed; natural light is better for us anyway.
- There is a common misbelief that it takes more energy to restart a light than it uses over say a 10-15-minute break; this is not true for most lighting types. Whilst it is the case that some lighting may need to cool down before it can be restarted and take a few minutes to reach full brightness, these will generally be found in sports halls and security lighting, and not generally in the classrooms or offices.
- If we take a typical classroom with 12 fluorescent square light fittings, each fitting rated at 144 Watts, with additional losses for ballasts and

drivers, equates to around 1.9 kWh. So, leaving a single classroom lit during the lunch break for 5 days per week over 35 weeks' term time would waste around 333 kWh of electricity per year. Add in the morning and afternoon breaks and multiply it by the number of classrooms potentially wasting energy and it all starts to add up!

- Corridors and other circulation areas can make considerable savings by installing sensors; these areas are generally switched on from "building opening until the building close" at the end of the day, yet may only really be in use between lessons with modest footfall in between.
- In order to ensure good energy efficiency in lighting, do ensure light switches are clearly accessible and labelled indicating which lights they switch. Sounds simple, but often when faced with a bank of light switches, we switch them all on, rather than just the one we wanted.

According to research by the Carbon Trust, staff awareness can reduce energy consumption by 10%. So, a school using 1 million kWh per year, with lighting consumption around 330,000 kWh, would save around 8.4 tonnes of Carbon-dioxide emissions and almost £5,000 cost per annum. For not a lot of effort really!

This is all about trying to save money

It would not surprise me if electricity and gas contracts are somewhere near the top of your pile of priorities, a necessary but unpleasant task best left to another day. But with rapidly rising costs, you would also be forgiven if you are anxious about future budgets. Help is on hand.

In recognition of our work to reduce independent school energy costs, Powerful Allies was invited to present at the recent ISBA Bursars' Conference. Apparently, we created quite a stir, as we do with the outstanding Associations shown below which recommend Powerful Allies as their preferred energy partner.

Transparency

Powerful Allies has created a unique Open Competition charter which defines and guarantees Best Practise energy procurement. In an unregulated sector, we alone have created a Code of Practise which exceeds all others and introduces transparency hitherto unknown in the tender process.

Trusted Partner

Just look at our client comments below and many more on our website. These are the very best organisations in their respective sectors and we work with them solely through recommendation. You will recognise many of the names. *Our clients trust us and we*

trust our clients. Grown up behaviour, honest discussion, mature and impartial advice.

Cost Reduction

At the end of the day, we are retained by superb clients because we reduce energy costs. That is the bottom line. And our clients know how we do this, and what we earn and they have complete confidence that our contracts really do provide Best Value. Demonstrable Best Value.

To illustrate why so many reputable independent schools have appointed Powerful Allies in preference to the other 2500 energy brokers out there (possibly bombarding you with calls right now?), *we would like to undertake a full and free energy procurement review for you, with no obligation and absolutely no charge.* I am confident you will be impressed with the results.

Please have a look at www.powerfulallies.com/clients and then either call 01380 860196 or email me, jamesrobson@powerfulallies.com.

The review will be completed quickly and efficiently, with the very minimum input required by you. Relatively painless by all accounts!

James Robson

James Robson, Chairman



“ One of the first things I did when I joined my current employer 3 years ago was to look at our Electricity contracts, about 46 separate supply contracts in all. Fortuitously Powerful Allies made contact, just at the right time, and I was able to invite them to test the market for me. This gave amazing results. Our existing incumbent broker was recommending we stayed with our existing supplier with a cost increase of circa 18%. Powerful Allies were able to offer a new two year fully fixed contract with an

increase of just 1.67%. I can therefore fully recommend James and his team at Powerful Allies, who offer a dedicated personal service and will negotiate very competitive offers for Gas and Electricity, HH and NHH contracts with transparency. They let you know what their charges are, so have full visibility. Give them a go you won't be disappointed.

Brian Rollason
(Building Services Engineering Manager)



“ Powerful Allies provide a highly professional service, clearly explaining the complex energy market and how it works to a layman, breaking down the tariffs and fees and ultimately they gave me the confidence to make an informed decision. Renewing energy contracts is a minefield and can be badly done through lack of understanding and lack of time to

scrutinise the options. Powerful Allies have a straightforward and honest approach, work with you to find the right solution for you rather than pushing a service and I have absolutely no hesitation in recommending them.

Alexandra D'Arcy-Irvine
(School Business Manager)

RECOMMENDED BY





New sports complex completes master plan

A £21m sports complex has opened at King's College Wimbledon in south west London.

David Morley Architects (DMA), whose former projects include The London 2012 Water Polo Arena, Lee Valley Athletics Club and The Nursery Pavilion at Lord's Cricket Club, has designed the new sports complex. The project comprised a mix of new buildings and the remodelling of existing facilities on the school's 20-acre site.

The complex comprises three linked pavilions, with a six-court sports hall and a six-lane, 25m swimming pool flanking a two-storey central pavilion housing the reception, changing rooms, viewing galleries, a strength and conditioning suite, gym and an exercise studio that can function as two workout areas via a bi-folding partition. The project included the building of six new tennis courts and three cricket nets.

"Our vision for the design was to create a new building that had excellent visual connections between indoors and outdoors to encourage physical activity among pupils, while seamlessly connecting the old facilities with the new," says partner David Morley.

As such, the swimming pool has glazing on three sides, large windows in the gym give views over the grounds and users can see into both the sports hall and swimming pool from the reception.

The sports complex was designed to be sensitive to its setting with a

sculptured green roof helping it to blend in with the surroundings.

A new colonnaded lobby links the new building to the existing squash courts and sports hall to create a single sports complex.

The complex adopts the principles of the London Plan, 'Be Lean, Be clean, Be green'. It generates 15 per cent of its energy use on site from a Combined Heat and Power (CHP) engine and photovoltaic panels on the sports hall roof. CHP is used throughout the year to heat the pool water.

"We have invested more than £50m over 10 years to enhance our teaching and learning facilities and the new sports complex is the final piece in the jigsaw. Sport is a very important part of King's offering. The school has grown exponentially over the years and with over 1,400 students our existing facilities needed to be refreshed and extended," says Anna Maria Clarke, Bursar at King's.

The King's Club, which operates the sports complex for the public outside of school hours, has seen an increase in new memberships following the launch of the new facilities. With all surplus generated gift aided to the school's bursary fund, the King's Club is on track to increase its contributions to assist those pupils who require fee assistance to attend King's.

The new sports complex is the final project in King's master plan, with former projects including a new music school and classroom block.



Dining Room project

Taunton School, Somerset, now has a state-of-the-art dining hall with a large modern kitchen to accommodate their whole school community. The light and spacious facility will provide a welcoming environment for pupils to enjoy their meals and will act as a central hub for dining in the heart of the school.

The current kitchens and dining halls within the listed main building were designed for fewer students than the number now on campus. The existing dining hall and kitchen areas are to be reconfigured to provide a new Sixth Form Centre and teaching facilities.

The new dining hall will cater for 1600 covers and seat up to 400 people at any one time. Sustainable materials have been used together

with the latest technology in lighting, acoustic materials and audio visual equipment. The building enjoys a view over a green central space, bringing all aspects of the school together, while maintaining and improving the integrity of the Grade II listed main school and incorporating the architecture into the design and build.

Headmaster, Lee Glaser, said of the project, "We believe that what happens at mealtimes impacts powerfully on the rest of the day. We are creating a facility that will welcome our students and staff in one beautifully designed space. This project has taken several years of planning and consultation and we are delighted that it has now come to fruition."



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Creating a robust safety system for your school minibuses before a return to normal

Now that schools are closed, except for key workers' children, it might be the perfect opportunity to look at your minibuses and spend some time updating or creating a robust safety system.

Chris Maynard, Managing Director of Castle Minibus gives us his recommendations...

A responsible person

If you make a profit from your school transportation you will need to hold an Operator's licence that requires a transport manager to be appointed. If you are a charity or operate not-for-profit, running your vehicles at cost, then schools can operate under a Section 19 Permit. Regardless of the profit factor every school needs to appoint someone responsible for their minibuses. This person needs to be aware of their responsibilities under the Section 19 Permit and have a job description and contract in writing. If you don't know much about the legal responsibilities in having a minibus, then use this time to check if you are compliant and can prove that you operate your minibuses safely because effective and continuous fleet management is required more than ever.

Suggested Action:

Draft a job description for a school transport manager (STM).

Policies and procedures

Under a Section 19 Permit there are a range of requirements including 'drivers are suitably trained and correctly licensed, drivers take appropriate breaks and your vehicles satisfy the appropriate construction and use requirements e.g. Fire extinguisher/first aid kit etc. and are maintained in a safe and roadworthy condition'. www.gov.uk/government/publications/section-19-and-22-permits-not-for-profit-passenger-transport/section-19-and-22-permits-not-for-profit-passenger-transport

Management and administration of vehicles and drivers is the main responsibility of the STM but it requires the understanding and cooperation of other members of staff such as heads, governors, teachers and drivers. Therefore, agreed policies and procedures need to be in place and signed by the relevant staff.

Advice on several of the issues required under the Section 19 Permit such as driver fatigue, mobile phones and safer journey planning are available from RoSPA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents). www.rospa.com/Road-Safety/Resources/Free#employers/

Suggested Actions:

Write procedures for the STM, drivers, journeys and minibus operation and use. Prepare the relevant policies for staff who drive the minibuses.

Documentation and evidence

The Section 19 Permit requires the demonstration of several factors. If there is an incident it is not only the parents, heads and governors who'll be interested but possibly the police, your insurance company, the DVSA and/or the traffic commissioner (they issue the Section 19 Permits). Therefore, it is important that you are evidencing and documenting your minibus activities as part of a safety system. In this way you can prove you did everything you could to run a safe and legal fleet.

Driver training and vehicle checks are the most obvious areas of ongoing evidence that the STM needs to manage.

For the drivers: Annual eye checks (from 20m), termly licence checks to remain aware of penalty points, driver risk assessments and driver training

For the vehicles: Daily, weekly and 10-week vehicle inspections as well as regular services and MOTs.

Regular vehicle checks are just as important now, when vehicles may not be being used regularly, to identify problems of inactivity such as rodent damage or rust.

There are several tools available to help STMs manage checks which could be researched and put into place if necessary.

E: enquiries@castleminibus.co.uk T: 01869 253744 www.castleminibus.co.uk

- The Licence Bureau (www.licencebureau.co.uk) provides a number of Driver Licence Checking services
- STRIDA is a free app that allows STMs to manage a dashboard of weekly and daily checks on all their vehicles by all their drivers.
- Records should be kept of professional inspections such as 10-week safety inspections, services and MOTs.

Suggested Actions:

Complete a calendar plan of vehicle services, MOTs and 10-week inspections – this is a specific requirement under a Section 19 Permit. You could also add annual eye checks, weekly inspections and termly licence checks.

Training Requirements

It is the opinion of Castle Minibus, several county councils and the NASWUT that teachers should not be driving any minibuses (regardless of weight) on a standard B car licence. 'The NASWUT strongly asserts that, particularly but not exclusively due to the ambiguity around the hire/reward status, the full D1 licence is the minimum requirement, and a car licence is insufficient in all circumstances'

Having the correct driver's licence and continual training is imperative to safe minibus operation even for those with D1 (101) entitlement.

- MiDAS or minibus assessment training is recommended to be completed every 4 years.
- For more frequent risks assessments there are online driver assessments like CODA an online platform that enables schools to risk assess their drivers and offer training modules.

The combination of physical and online driver assessments and ongoing driver training will greatly enhance the safety of a school's minibus operation.

Suggested Action:

Document and diarise your past driver training and schedule/book trainings and assessments for the future – add to your calendar of vehicle checks and inspections (see above).

Fundamentals of a robust minibus safety system

In normal circumstances Castle Minibus deliver a day long minibus compliance course (MCC), and while we are working to get this valuable resource online, we want to encourage schools to be utilising any down time to really get to grips with what's required to run the safest minibus fleet possible.

1. Appointing a school transport manager
2. Policies and procedures for minibus use and management
3. Evidencing and documentation
4. Training

Many of the schools we've worked with through the MCC are unwittingly placing their pupils, staff and reputations at risk, should the worst happen, because they do not have the basics required by a Section 19 Permit. A RoSPA inspector told us 'the most dangerous thing a school can do is take children out on the public highway' so we want to make sure you'll be ready and able to do so safely and fully compliant when your minibus fleet is up and running again.

For more information on Castle Minibus and its services that support safety and compliance including their free app for daily and weekly minibus checks please visit www.castleminibus.co.uk



Introducing STRIDA

A free app to help schools record and manage minibus checks from
CASTLE MINIBUS



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TRANSPORT MANAGERS:

A 40-point weekly minibus checklist and a dashboard to manage all drivers and checks

DRIVERS:

A 12-point daily minibus checklist with the option of adding images and comments

GET STARTED IN 4 EASY STEPS

-  School transport managers visit safety.castleminibus.co.uk and register their school
-  They invite their drivers via the dashboard
-  Drivers receive an email and register a password
-  Drivers and transport managers download the app and **GET STARTED**

FOR MORE INFORMATION GO TO

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Time to embrace peer mentoring

Unless you have been living under a rock, you will appreciate the importance of wellbeing at your school. Pupil wellbeing has rocketed to the top of the priority list with good reason, writes *Miff Martinek*...

The State of a Generation report released by the Mental Health Foundation in 2019 revealed that adolescents have the poorest wellbeing ever recorded, with isolation and loneliness cited as more common in adolescents than any other age group.

The current Coronavirus crisis is testing each of us, throwing a spotlight on how vital a proactive approach to individual wellbeing really is. Staying connected has never been more valued. The quality and depth of social interactions is now more important than ever to protect against feelings of isolation. For school leaders, this is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to pause and consider how best to develop these skills in young people.

Many schools that struggled to fit wellbeing activities into busy school life will now be considering how best to prioritise them. When schools reopen and pupils return, teachers will be faced with new or intensified challenges: friendship tensions after months apart, family pressures and even bereavements. One-off, 'feel-good' approaches such as 'wellbeing days' and occasional mindfulness opportunities will now need to evolve to meet the daily demands of wellbeing, but with a staff that is time-poor this challenge is not easily overcome.

There is a time-efficient and impactful way to improve wellbeing at your school. This approach complements your timetable and offers a catalogue of benefits for your pupils without increasing the workload of your staff. The pupils you seek to care for are in fact the best placed resource to improve one another's wellbeing through peer mentoring.

Mentoring is not a new concept in most schools. However, its purpose has often been to improve academic or sporting achievement and it is usually structured around staff mentoring pupils or a 'buddy' system. Mentoring often has mixed results, with some pupils naturally taking to the role of mentor and others struggling with how to help. It isn't uncommon for mentoring programmes to fizzle out over time as pupils lose the initial feeling of purpose.

The traditional approach to mentoring only scratches the surface of what could be achieved through empowering pupils to support one another.

For the individual:

- Mentoring develops empathy, a skill that acts as a gateway to meaningful connections
- It allows pupils to experience true

accountability and to develop and hone problem-solving techniques, helping them to develop a growth mindset

- Mentoring demands the refinement of listening skills, builds confidence in 1-2-1 face-to-face interactions and develops resilience in peer interactions

For the school:

- Mentoring builds the school's community by helping to retain pupils in sixth form and attracting prospective parents who increasingly value pastoral provision
- Mentoring inherently fits into the structure of your school's community and takes advantage of your pupils' natural desire to speak to one another
- It scales easily without significantly increasing the demand on your staff

There are many more benefits to fully developing mentoring, but creating a programme that delivers sustainable results, rather than a 'feel good' initiative that rapidly diminishes, requires forward planning.

Have a clear objective to get staff, pupils and parents on board

The goals set out for mentoring must align with the overall goals of the school. For each of the main stakeholders this goal might be interpreted differently, but it must be clear and engaging nonetheless. Peer mentoring does not replace the pastoral provision that already exists, rather it acts as a gentle introduction and outreach allowing pupils a no-pressure conversation that, if the need arises, can be brought to the staff pastoral team for additional support.

Engaging staff in this purpose early and sharing plans with parents allows the school community to unify its approach.

A support structure for pupil mentors

The most common reason for the failure of mentoring programmes reported to This-Is-Me. is that pupil mentors felt they weren't achieving much and lost confidence as a result. Creating a team of staff that checks in with mentors on a regular basis offers pupils the opportunity to offload any concerns, feel supported and receive some much-needed encouragement. This also provides a clear path for safeguarding concerns to be raised, should they occur.

Actively using the support structure to monitor effectiveness will protect against the fizzle that is so often reported in failed mentoring programmes. This-Is-Me. use short surveys to monitor the impact of programmes. These also gather superb wellbeing testimonials for schools to reference.

The opportunity to practice regularly

Mentoring will not work through simply training pupils with mentoring skills and hoping they use them. Creating a structure that allows pupils to mentor regularly builds confidence in using the skills they have learnt. This could be through 1-2-1 pairings, designated time during prep or tutor time, or within a scholarship programme.

Robust training

Developing pupils to take on the role of mentor must consider the wellbeing of both the mentee and mentor. The training provided must build the confidence of pupils, whilst preparing them for more serious topics which might arise. This-Is-Me. training consists of five core training hours, spread over half a term, with follow up coaching provided once mentoring is underway. This approach drip feeds the training and allows pupils the time to practice their skills in a safe environment. Hurried training will result in pupils that have not developed confidence in their abilities and will negatively impact both their experience and that of the pupils they mentor.

With the current closure of schools, the resilience of pupils and your school wellbeing provision will be tested in ways we cannot yet fully understand. When schools reopen, your pastoral team will be stretched by challenges faced during pupil's time at home and the likelihood of your school community having lost loved ones. Pupils will need the support of one another and they will need confidence in those interactions. Now more than ever, developing the skills needed to build strong social connections, self-awareness and emotional resilience is vital for your pupils. These skills are not only the foundation for success for young people while they are pupils at your school, but they will be of paramount importance in preparing for a rapidly evolving, exciting and volatile world of work.

Case Study

Assistant Head of Pupil Development, Nicola Rogers, is passionate about empowering the pupils of Warminster School to support one another. Having tried numerous avenues to launch a Peer Mentoring Programme for pupils, she engaged with This-Is-Me. to create and deliver a programme that has been highly praised by pupils, parents and staff.

'I had been on several courses as a Head of department that looked at coaching and mentoring within the staff team, and it was something that I thought could be of real benefit to our pupils. They have tutors, teachers and various other people that they can go to with a problem, but it seemed that there was a level of support missing – sometimes they need to talk to somebody who is on their level or who has been through something similar more recently. It occurred to me that there were challenges with organising their workload and timetable, friendships and things going on at home that pupils didn't want to discuss with a staff member but would be happier talking to a fellow student about.

When we first decided to offer a mentoring programme we arranged for a life coach to come in and do a short training session with the mentors. Whilst the training covered much of what we needed, it didn't really resonate with the pupils and when it came to mentoring, they were not as well prepared as I had hoped. The other challenge we faced was that teachers couldn't really see the benefit of the programme, didn't view it as important and complained about missed tutor time.

I knew it had to change this year, and for that to happen the training needed to be much more bespoke and to prepare them

better – they needed ongoing support and an allocated slot in the timetable to do this. I also wanted to be able to measure the impact that the programme was having on students.

We arranged for This-Is-Me. to come in and train Year 11, 12 and 13 mentors. The approach was completely different, Miff consulted on every element, from the selection of mentors, liaison with parents and putting a support team in place for mentors. The training was spread over half a term and the mentors clearly enjoyed it and grew in confidence. The extra support is something that the mentors have commented on as being particularly helpful.

Now we have the mentoring network running, we have already noticed huge improvements. Parents have thanked me and said it's having a positive impact, and the teaching staff are noticing changes in overall positivity and development in the students involved.

When speaking to individual mentors they can see the positive impact they have just by listening and talking things through. It's so rewarding for them, both for personal development and for knowing that younger pupils have somebody to talk to when they need them.

Difficult conversations are happening in our schools, and they need to happen. If we can prepare the students to deal with them in a way that's beneficial for the pupil concerned and for the mentors, then it's the right thing to do. We are equipping the mentors to deal with these difficult topics and conversations in a better and more comfortable way, which will hopefully create human beings that are happy and confident and able to talk about things, so that we can reduce their anxiety.'

Importance of friendship

Haberdashers' Aske's School for Girls (Habs), Hertfordshire, welcomed an award-winning author of young adult fiction, through its school gates for a passionate and inspirational talk on the power of friendship.

Taking inspiration from her books (which are mainly platonic love stories about friendships), Sara Barnard, whose novel *Goodbye, Perfect* won the YA Book Prize in 2019, spoke about how important her own friends were to her at school and how these friendships shape your life.

The visit itself was timely for the school's Year 8 students, who have been discussing relationships at school during their form time this term. The moving talk reiterated that friendships are the most important relationships a child has at this stage of their life and Barnard spoke about how they are the first 'free choices' you make as a child – you choose your friends and they choose you. She highlighted to the students that those choices impact how you interact and the boundaries you set for the future. Barnard also revealed she's had the same best friend for 20 years.

Rose Hardy, Headmistress commented: "We were very fortunate to have the opportunity to hear about Sara's journey as an author and how her books are inspired by her own friendships and



experiences. Our Year 8 students heard that friendships are mutual and that they help you to learn about yourself and the life you will have. Sara's thought provoking words and success as an author from a young age, has given the students real food for thought as they saw first hand how courage, hard work and determination really does pay off."

Barnard who is also known for her novel *Beautiful Broken Things*, spoke about the launch of her fifth book, due out in June 2020, which is about a girl who is badly bullied at school. The author also highlighted that no one's life is defined by one relationship, she explained to the students that a real friendship is both good and bad and that arguments are completely normal. She did however, touch on the more sensitive topic of toxic friendships, how to spot them and how to extricate yourself from them safely. She concluded by suggesting that online friends can be real friends too, but that they are not a replacement for real life friendships.

Anti-Bullying Ambassador School

The Diana Award named Suffolk's Royal Hospital School (RHS) as the UK Anti-Bullying Ambassador School of the Month for March.

It was a poignant moment for the school given the timing which, like many schools throughout the UK, shut its doors the very same day.

The Diana Award, a charity set up in memory of Princess Diana to foster, develop and inspire positive change in the lives of young people, chose RHS from over 1000 UK schools and colleges throughout the UK. The school was given the honour because of "all of the incredible work that RHS has been doing with the Diana Award over the last months and years."

Added to this, the school was one of only 25 to receive a wellbeing badge from the charity to recognise

the work it does to ensure its pupils maintain strong mental wellbeing and support for each other. Commenting on the awards, Leigh Corbould, a teacher at RHS and co-ordinator of the anti-bullying programme, said:

"The positive approach and enthusiasm our young people show in working with and supporting each other encapsulates the ethos of the school. The imagination and creativity evident in the work of the twenty members of our Peer Mentor and Wellbeing Committee is rewarded by a hugely positive response from the pupils as a whole. We were delighted to have been awarded the title of Ambassador School of the Month and I am sure this will raise the profile of the work our pupils do even more."

Miff Martinek, Health and Wellbeing Coach & Founder of This Is Me.
W: this-is-me.uk
Twitter: [@ThisIsMeWbeing](https://twitter.com/ThisIsMeWbeing)



Sixth Formers get their hands dirty

Community-spirited King's Ely Sixth Form students have used some of their spare time to help with the creation of a new eco-garden at Isle of Ely Primary School.

Thirteen Sixth Formers were part of a green-fingered team from King's Ely who removed a huge area of weeds and prepared the soil ready for Isle of Ely Primary School pupils and staff to start planting their new garden.

The Sixth Form students were accompanied by Chris Youngs and Will Temple, who are members of the King's Ely Garden and Grounds Team; Jane Halls, Sixth Form Supervisor at King's Ely; and Celia Etchegoyen, King's Ely's Director of Outreach.

Annie Hunter, Outdoor Education

Pictured: With four of the team are Chris Youngs and Celia Etchegoyen

and Science Lead at Isle of Ely Primary School, said: "We have put a big push into revamping our environmental garden here at Isle of Ely Primary School recently. It had run a bit wild so taming it has been a big challenge for our little hands! When we were told about volunteers from King's Ely offering to help, we were delighted that other members of our community could also join in making our school more eco-friendly. They cleared a huge area of well-established weeds, which will make way for tyre beds filled with berry bushes for autumnal harvests. Thank you so much to the volunteering team at King's Ely, we would love you to come back and try our berry jams next year!"

A meeting of local minds

The mayor, other elected representatives from the local community, local retailers and senior staff from neighbouring schools recently attended a special community evening at Bryanston School, Dorset. With an attendance well in excess of 100, the event aimed to highlight the importance and celebrate the success of collaborative initiatives such as the well-established Blandford Schools' Network and new programmes like Bryanston's loyalty card scheme for local High Street shops.

Hosted by Bryanston's Headmaster, Mark Mortimer, the evening presented the perfect opportunity to share thoughts and ideas on future collaborative ventures for the benefit of all areas of the local community and featured musical interludes provided by a number of Bryanston's music scholars.

Said Mr Mortimer. "Everyone who attended is, in effect, one of today's custodians of the local area with a responsibility to

nurture and improve the spirit of our community – and that was very much in evidence throughout the evening.

"For our part, all of us at Bryanston cherish and value our own place in the community and we are very keen to strengthen our links and extend our engagement throughout this wonderful corner of Dorset. We're delighted with the enthusiastic response to our loyalty card scheme from so many local retailers. Naturally, they are very supportive of any initiative that provides direct encouragement for people to shop locally and boost customer footfall, and I am pleased more and more local stores are continuing to join the programme. It's also very clear just how beneficial the Blandford Schools' Network continues to be for younger members of the community. These two examples just go to show what can be achieved through effective collaboration and mutually beneficial partnerships."

Help for Childline

Pupils, parents and staff at the Froebelian School, Yorkshire, spent 2019 raising money for Childline. And now they have presented a cheque for £3500.

With activities from bake sales, non-uniform days, The Froebelian Parent Association's events and a whole host of other activities, the entire school community has come together to raise the incredible amount.

Headteacher, Catherine Dodds, said: "I am extremely proud of what we achieved for our designated charity last year and would like to thank everyone for their

generous contributions. £3500 is enough money to train two Childline Volunteer Counsellors and, with each counsellor helping around 200 children per year, this means the money we have raised will help at least 400 children."

Founded in 1986 by Esther Rantzen, Childline is there to help anyone under 19 in the UK with any issue they're facing. Contacting Childline by phone on 0800 1111 or online by email through a 1-2-1 counsellor chat is free and doesn't show up on the phone bill.



Life-Changing Coffee Project

Felsted School, Essex, is working to make a difference through the sales of coffee to the local community. Safi Coffee is a special pupil-led initiative that imports Ugandan coffee to sell across the UK, in partnership with Hull Collegiate School and Highgate School.

Through links with Teach Uganda, one of Felsted's core charities, it was discovered that the coffee grown in the South West Region of the country has a great flavour. Felstedians visit Uganda every two years, teaching in schools and working in the community where they tend to their coffee plantations.

Safi Coffee raises vital funds to help change lives in the Kanungu region, aiming to break the cycle of poverty for many young people. It costs just £180 to fund a child to attend school for a full year including accommodation, food, water and healthcare.

The Felsted Environment & Service Group are supporting this initiative, alongside International Baccalaureate Diploma students

who are involved as part of their enterprise project. They will be working to redesign the Felsted Coffee Shop and work with parents and local businesses to promote and sell Safi Coffee, with all profits going directly to pay for Ugandan children to attend school.

It is also important to Felsted pupils to make sure the project is environmentally friendly and they have been working hard alongside pupils from Hull Collegiate School (HCS) on new ideas to make it as sustainable as possible. HCS, the original founders of the project, recently travelled to support Felsted with a special coffee tasting event ahead of the official launch this month (April).

Pupils from each school will continue to work closely together, holding regular video calls. They have set themselves the ambitious target to fill a 20-tonne container with coffee beans in five years' time generating around 150K profit.

Nigel Little, Chaplain, Felsted School & Trustee of Teach Uganda, said:



"As a Trustee of Teach Uganda, I am delighted that Felsted School has embraced the opportunity to promote Safi Coffee amongst its community. The coffee beans are grown in Uganda, shipped directly to the UK for roasting and packaging and then distributed direct to Felsted. As a result, we are able to ensure that the funds raised from our sales are sent directly back to help the children of Uganda. It is wonderful for our students to be in an entrepreneurial partnership with other young people in Hull, Highgate and Uganda."

Tom Brown, Director of Safi Coffee CIC, has a clear vision of how to take Safi to the next level. He said: "Raising awareness of the project is our number one aim; ultimately,

the more people that are drinking Safi Coffee, the more children we can put through school in Uganda. Fuelling offices and workspaces with Safi Coffee has allowed us to increase the number of children we sponsor up to 50; this is a real testament to the success of the initiative, demonstrating how far the project has come in such a short space of time."



If you are interested in providing Safi Coffee in your school please get in touch with Nigel Little at Felsted School on chaplain@felsted.org. Further information can be found on www.felsted.org/saficoffee

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Building Community Spirit across generations



In a society where screen time is increasingly competing with face to face interaction, children are spending less time socialising, yet interaction across generations is proven to be mutually beneficial to both young people and the elderly.

As Age UK Mobility says: "Intergenerational care has great benefits for reducing depression and isolation in the older generation. It can also help with greater mobility and physical skills. For the children it helps them develop empathy and their language and communication skills."

At Mickelfield School, Surrey, the Nursery children visit Abbeyfield, their local independent sheltered housing for the elderly, one afternoon a week to spend time with the residents. They take part in a number of fun activities such as crafts and board games, which support fine motor skill development and memory. The

residents also enjoy telling the children stories and singing songs with them.

In the Summer term, Mickelfield also hosts special events at Abbeyfield with parachute activities, bubbles, role play and balloon making. Abbeyfield is also making plans to build a larger conservatory and a Summer House in their grounds so that the outdoor/indoor learning can take place all the year round.

Marie, House Manager at Abbeyfield adds: "The Nursery children from Mickelfield are so entertaining and bring much excitement to our nursing home! Our residents look forward to the visits and get a lot of pleasure out of helping the children with all the fun activities. They really enjoy their company and reminiscing about what they did as a child. It is also a great way of encouraging them to be more active."

Over 3,880km walked for Kenya



The whole of Holme Grange School, Berkshire, was involved in a sponsored walk around the grounds and across nearby Wokingham to raise funds for Our Lady of Nazareth School in Kenya.

Youngest pupils walked approx 4km while the older students walked

distances of approximately 8 and 9km. Some of the teachers and older pupils decided to run the course – much fun was had by all and they were rewarded with the promise of delicious cakes as each of the houses organised a cake sale.

The amount of money raised was just under £6000.



Air Ambulance honours school

Giggleswick School has won the Yorkshire Air Ambulance's Schools Fundraising Award for North Yorkshire after raising around £13,000 for the charity.

The award was presented during the helicopter rescue charity's regional awards afternoon which recognised the hard work and efforts of all volunteers, fundraisers, corporate sponsors and local organisations who have worked to raise awareness and money to keep the air ambulance flying.

Pictured: Dan Cook with Yorkshire Air Ambulance regional fundraiser, Linda Stead

Giggleswick School's director of sport, Dan Cook, received the award on behalf of the school. He said: "We have raised thousands of pounds for the Yorkshire Air Ambulance mainly through sports dinners and other sporting events held at the school.

"In our location lots of people depend on a service such as this and will never know when they may need to use it. Giggleswick School is very proud to receive this award and will continue to support this worthwhile cause."

Variety Show raises £1,250



Talented students at Abbey Gate College, Cheshire, raised £1,250 for Crossroads Together, a registered charity dedicated to providing information, advice and practical support to unpaid carers of all ages and the people they care for.

The annual variety show, organised by the students and hosted at the Senior School in Saighton, featured comedy, singers, dancers and instrumentalists who gave passionate performances to an audience of family and friends.

The show is about inclusivity, so everyone who was interested got to join in, whether that involved performing on stage or working behind the scenes.

During the evening of entertainment, acts included a performance of 'The Flower Duet' by Izzy Downs and Sophie Lewis-Jones, gymnastics by Kiri Kilgannon, a comedy sketch by Alex Garcia and even a song from teaching staff! Many of the performers amazed the crowd with their hidden talent.

Earlier, students did some additional fundraising by holding a non-uniform day, dressing up instead in 80's clothing, organising games at lunchtime and showing a classic 80's film in the theatre.



Glenalmond College has welcomed Dr Michael Alderson, who has joined the leading Perthshire school as its new Warden.

Dr Alderson, who was most recently Deputy Head at Durham School, has taken over the leadership from Hugh Ouston, who stepped down this month after a

15 month interim role at the helm. Dr Alderson began his teaching career in 2000, after reading Modern Languages at the University of Durham and completing a PGCE at Homerton College, Cambridge. He also has a Master's degree in historical narratives and a doctorate from Durham University in Church History of the Reformation.



The next Head of Wellington Prep School, Somerset, will be Mrs Victoria Richardson.

Mrs Richardson, who is currently Head of the Lower School, Years 7 and 8, at Wellington School will take up her new post from 1st September 2020.

After obtaining a degree in Statistics from the University of St Andrews and a PGCE from

Homerton College, Cambridge, Mrs Richardson started her teaching career in the Mathematics Department at Wellington in 1998. Alongside Mrs Richardson's outstanding pastoral experience, which has included time in the School's boarding community, her co-curricular commitment is clear with her current involvement in the Gold Duke of Edinburgh programme and the Combined Cadet Force.



Lathallan School, Angus, has appointed Pamela Hossick as its Head of Junior School, as it celebrates its 90th year.

Mrs Hossick's appointment follows the retirement of Jackie Collins and James Ferrier from Lathallan senior leadership.

Having worked at Lathallan for 11 years, including a year as Acting Assistant Head of the Junior School, Mrs Hossick will assume the post in August 2020.

"The world is rapidly changing and, while we must not lose

sight of fundamental literacy and numeracy skills that all young people require to succeed in life, we have to encourage creativity in our pupils."

A talented musician, Mrs Hossick worked previously as a secondary music teacher and visiting music specialist in primary schools across Aberdeenshire.

She joined Lathallan in 2009, initially as a music teacher, but diversified into primary school teaching after completing a PG Cert in Learning and Development through Aberdeen University nine years ago.



Woldingham School, Surrey, has appointed Dr James Whitehead as its new Head from

September 2020. Dr Whitehead replaces Mrs Alex Hutchinson, who has been Headmistress of Woldingham since 2016 and is leaving to become Head of JAGS.

Dr Whitehead joins Woldingham from Rugby School. Before this he

was Head Master at Downside, a Catholic day and boarding school in Somerset. Dr Whitehead was educated at Stonyhurst College and Hertford College, Oxford, before completing further degrees at Stirling and Manchester universities. He started his school career teaching English at Radley College. He was Second Master at Worth School before becoming Downside's Head Master.

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

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Sonja Mueller, Head of Pastoral Care & Boarding at Kilgraston School, Perthshire, provides some top tips on making them work...



Sonja Mueller, Kilgraston School

Conclusive, UK-wide, statistics on the 'visit-to-application' ratio are unavailable. However, combining my own school's data with a small straw-pole of industry colleagues demonstrates that nearly every taster day leads to a pupil committing to that school. An important shop window therefore.

For many prospective pupils – often having travelled a great distance – this can be their first exposure to the campus.

Previous generations were 'sent away to boarding school' (usually to 'Pa's' alma mater) with little discussion on the matter. Nowadays, increasingly, it's the children who make the decision, with mum and dad falling into line.

"Taster days," said a colleague, "can be elephant trap of the whole process." A little dramatic, but recently I did hear the story of a teenage girl who went to a boarding school for a two-day taster and left without her House Mistress having even spoken to her. Perhaps then, not purely a myth. So, how to get it right?

The key, I've always found, is great groundwork. Before the visit,

discuss, at length, with parents or guardians: get a real handle on the child. Matching them with the all-important 'buddy' is critical; if the new pupil lives for sport, it makes no sense to match them with someone who spends every waking hour in the orchestra pit.

Staff briefing is also crucial: ensure everyone in the supply chain knows that there is a visitor. Children move schools for myriad reasons and background is vital to ensure a smooth and positive experience. Of course, data protection is paramount, but a sensible approach among colleagues ensures there are many more experienced eyes monitoring progress.

At my school, we make a point of having check points – valves – throughout the visit; be it for a day in our Junior Years or a full-on boarding two-night taster in the senior school.

Timing is everything; what's going on at school? Easy to overlook, but if an event like World Book Day is taking place, the visiting pupil can feel automatically ostracised. The same can be said for all-school activities like cross country races or

sports days. Conversely, I've often found that the collegiate effect of assemblies can help the visitor feel part of the school 'family'.

A minefield indeed. Seasons also play their part. Exam time is tricky; very possibly too much personal anxiety for pupils to feel altruistic. So too the lead-up to Christmas or summer prize-giving; both 'finishing lines' guaranteed to preoccupy incumbents.

Taster days really do need to involve the whole community. As a boarding school, we tell boarders about the guests spending time in their term-time home. Often there will be pre-existing connections and we use these to make the visitor feel even more welcome.

A taster day can be a bewildering experience. Anxious to let the pupil see as much as possible, the tendency – and I have personally fallen foul of this practice – is to make the schedule too busy.

Visitors can become overwhelmed if there's little time to decompress and process their experience. They have a busy school day, then an activity, prep, perhaps a concert or play, supper, shower, bed...

It's all a bit 'full on', especially without a subliminal running mate.

You might understand the intricacies of the classroom numbering system, but a young visitor will not. With the best will in the world, 'buddies' can become distracted, so it's vital for the visitor to know where a friendly face can always be found.

Make sure the adult who brings the child is also shown the point of contact. With technology so sophisticated, sometimes an unsettled child will email mum. If the parent can say, "Oh, go and see Mrs such-and-such in the little room at the end of the blue corridor," that can be all it takes.

If they're boarding, we make sure that the visiting pupil's room and personal belongings are set-up by the end of their school day. Perhaps at this potentially 'low' touch-point, finding a home-from-home can be the only panacea needed. It's amazing how persuasive a hot chocolate and a chat can be.

At the end of the day, like most things in life, really it's all about the feeling of being welcome and part of the new team.

TEDx day

The King Alfred School (KAS), London, hosted a day-long TEDx event featuring inspirational short talks by students, staff and parents.

The event which took place in the school's Phoenix Theatre, presented 19 talks and one musical performance. With 10 of the talks being delivered by students, some as young as 13, it was a showcase for the school.

The school is proud of the

confidence and creativity of all their students and this event gave them a platform to talk about a diverse range of subjects. Student talks ranged from outsourcing, OCD and the impact of online bullying to antibiotic resistance, project-based learning and the healing power of pets. As well as the spoken talks, Sixth Formers Elvis and Max took the audience on a musical journey telling the story of the Blues.



New Revision Tool for Pupils

Lomond School, Argyll & Bute, has launched 'Take Your Marks' with pupils from Senior 4 to Senior 6 last month (March), providing them with access to a huge range of tools all aimed at enhancing brain power.

Creator of the resource, Alan Clark said: "There are lots of papers written on the benefit of exercise but, as a teacher, the aspect that really interested me was the correlation between health and academic success. Our mantra at Take Your Marks has always been, "Once you get Health and Wellbeing right, everything else is easy!"

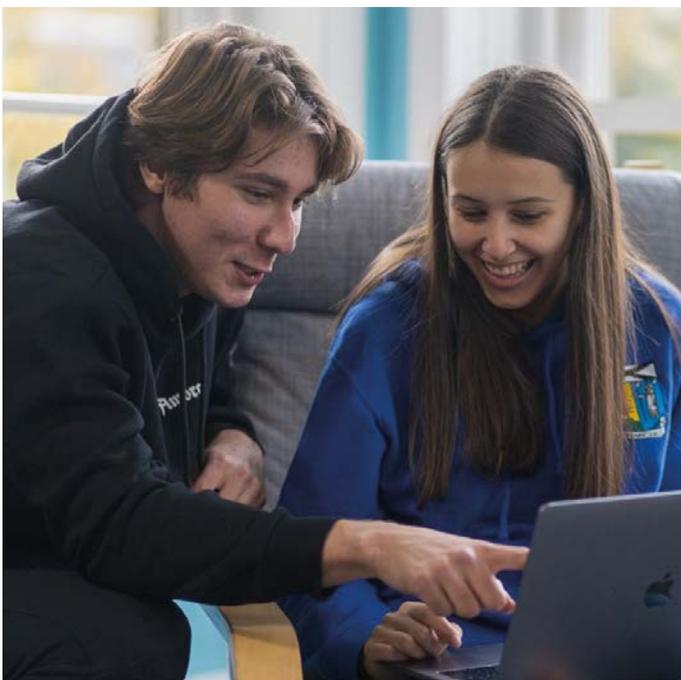
Take Your Marks, which originally launched as a corporate resource to help businesses get the best from their employees, is an online hub which hosts a wide range of resources to aid productivity and performance. Resources for schools fall under four headings: connectors, mindful moments, stabilisers and zappers and offer a wide range of videos, sound bites and cues which cover anything from short HIIT workouts to suggestions for conversation starters and desk exercises, all aimed at activating the brain.

Lomond School Academic Depute, Claire Chisholm said: "There has

been much research undertaken to prove that a healthy body and mind can improve academic results and we already do a lot in school to promote this with early morning fitness classes three mornings a week and a significant emphasis on health and wellbeing throughout the curriculum and co-curriculum. However, by adopting the Take Your Marks programme, we are empowering our pupils to be the best they can be with helpful tips, tools and tutorials that they can use wherever they are."

Take Your Marks overlaps three fundamentals which help pupils to get into what Clark refers to as the Optimum Learning Zone (OLZ). By working on social, physical and mental wellbeing, the programme helps young people consider how a wide range of factors can affect their overall wellbeing in preparation for study and exams.

Principal, Johanna Urquhart said: "As part of our school values we aim to prepare our pupils for success in all aspects of life and I feel confident that using the Take Your Marks resource will help prepare our young people to take on information during study leave, as well as keeping them alert and energised during a time which requires a lot of self-motivation and discipline."



Spanish film win

A group of 5th Form (Year 11) GCSE Spanish pupils from Bancroft's School, Essex, accompanied by head of Spanish, Mr Urreage Gorostidi, and Spanish language Assistant, Mr Hernandez, competed in the Spanish Short Film Contest held at North London Collegiate School.

Several other London schools took part, including Dulwich College, Latymer Upper School and Haberdashers' Aske's, amongst others. The Bancroft's pupils had worked very hard to create a short film on their given topic of "the environment".

Their film, Las Aventuras de Juanita, concerned veteran documentarian Juanita who embarks on a worldwide journey to track down rare animals which have not been

seen for some time. A world-famous explorer with thirty years' experience, she travels to a diverse range of locations, from forests to the sea to the Arctic. She is shocked to realise the harsh reality of the status of the environment which looks bleaker than ever.

The Bancroft's team was awarded the prize for the best short film. Pupils were delighted as they have won a Spanish course in Salamanca. Maha Dannawi also won the prize for the female actor with the best spoken Spanish – a week long Spanish course in Málaga. The judges were very impressed by the short film and at the end they came to talk to the Bancroft's team and complimented them all on their Spanish, which they said clearly stood out.





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United Kingdom

Pupils enter the Dragons' Den

Pupils at an independent school in Teesside have enjoyed a visit from a well-known local Dragon to judge one of their projects.

Dragons' Den star Sara Davies MBE, founder of Newton Aycliffe-based Crafter's Companion, recently visited Norton's Red House School to judge the design ideas of a group of Year 7 pupils.

As part of an English module on science fiction, the children worked in pairs to invent a futuristic gadget, produce a design specification and present it to the class in a Dragons' Den style bid to sell their product.

The school's Head of English, Collette Fryer, was behind the idea. She said: "I was extremely impressed with the children's work and the time and effort that each group had put into the task was truly amazing."



"I wanted to recognise the children's hard work and so I approached Sara to give them her expert opinion and choose a winner and two runners up."

"I was delighted that she was able to support Red House School by giving up her time and providing the children with fantastic feedback. The children were over the moon when she came into school to talk about their futuristic gadgets."

The TV star and entrepreneur visited the school last month to review the entries from the pupils. She also awarded them with their certificates and prizes – all of the children involved received a certificate and some sweets, while the winning pair also received a £10 gift card each.

She said: "I was absolutely blown away with what the kids had come up with and how well everything was thought through!"

It was hard to pick a winning team, but in the end I chose MD1 Experience.

"I loved that they had made a prototype, but most impressive was their comprehensive costing spreadsheet. Their pitch was very dynamic and entertaining – I could imagine them in the Den blowing away the other Dragons with their amazing invention and thorough grasp of the numbers."

Spotlight on languages

Some 130 pupils from the Third Form to Upper Sixth at Daunstey's School, Wiltshire, have taken part in a Global Careers Festival of Modern Languages, organised by the Languages and Careers departments.

The day-long event was made up of presentations and workshops led by leaders from business and the media who have studied languages at some point in their lives and used languages to progress their careers. The objective of the Festival was to provide an insight into the numerous possible careers that had an element of modern languages linked to them.

Highlights of the programme included; a presentation from a BBC Panorama editor who studied Portuguese; a networking session with representatives from Retail, Marketing, Human Resources and IT, all of whom studied

languages at degree level; and an evening showcase led by a classicist who is an ex-editor of Tatler, a multi-lingual lawyer with experience of working at the UN and EU and a Director of a specialist hospitality training organisation from Switzerland.

The school also welcomed back some Old Daunteseians to talk about their experiences after school, having taken languages at A level or at University, including one ex-pupil who studied Portuguese and joined the event from Brazil via Skype.

Demelza Hills, Head of Spanish, Daunstey's said: "Whilst studying languages is experiencing a sharp decline nationally, Daunstey's is really bucking the trend with almost all pupils taking at least one language at GCSE and close to a third taking a language at A level".

Oracy culture award

South Hampstead High School is the winner of this year's English Speaking Union Oracy Culture Award.

Since September 2018 the School has doubled the provision of debating clubs each week and tripled the number of students involved. It has also more than doubled the number of external speaking and debating competitions it takes part in (to 15) and has put significant effort into outreach activities working with a total of 14 other schools – most of them state schools – to encourage wider participation in debating in the local community.

'As we are a single-sex school for girls, we felt it was particularly important to encourage our students to become confident in expressing their views,' says Kate Etheridge, Director of Debating and Public Speaking at the school. 'Our engagement with the ESU has been a key catalyst for our promotion of debating and oracy. We have hosted regional rounds of the ESU's Mace and Public Speaking Competitions which have been a brilliant way for

us to make further links with local schools. This has been invaluable both for our students, who have appreciated the opportunity to get to know children from other places, and for our partner schools.'

Chair of judges, Gavin Illsley, ESU Head of Programmes, said, 'We commend South Hampstead High School for the way it has fostered a sense of community around debating and public speaking, and how they have created an impressive culture of inter-year collaboration. Its inclusive approach, both in school and in its outreach work, has allowed many students who may not otherwise have had the opportunity, to gain the confidence and skill to speak in public and to broaden their understanding of the world.'

The judges would like to commend all entrants for the fantastic work they are doing to create a sustainable culture of oracy across their curricula and in the wider community. As winner, South Hampstead High School receives a trophy and a free Discover Your Voice session for up to 24 students.

The Great Outdoors

New forest school

Pupils, staff, parents and governors of Winterfold School, Worcestershire, assembled for the opening ceremony of their newly created outdoor learning environment, Forest School.

The ribbon was cut by TV's Michael Collie, known from BBC Midlands Today and Countryfile, in particular. Michael is also a parent of four girls who went to Winterfold School, before going on to Bromsgrove School.

Speaking with his hands covered in mud, Michael said "It's brilliant to see the children at Winterfold just enjoying nature and the environment – they've been showing me what they can do simply with mud and there's a lot of it about!

"I love the fact that an old bomb crater, which has been covered in undergrowth for years, has now been re-discovered and turned into a fantastic natural water environment, for plants, animals and pupils to enjoy.

As he cut the ribbon with Reception pupil Grace McNaughton – picked because she was wearing the dirtiest wellies, Michael Collie joked with the children that he thought the

hide that had been built, was for children to hide from the teachers. "They soon corrected me," he said, "and told me it was to go birdwatching – thank goodness for that!"

Michael talked about his time on Countryfile, when he filmed all over the UK and abroad, going to places that were "wet, windy, muddy, sunny, snowy, blizzarding and wonderful". He urged the pupils to enjoy and care for the environment, noting that perhaps we hadn't always done that well so far.

After visiting the new shelter, which will be an outdoor classroom, Michael Collie, together with the Chair of Governors Paul West, Governor Geoff Strong, guests and the Friends of Winterfold committee were treated to a tour of the new site which has been put back to nature. The Friends of Winterfold have funded a bird hide, tool shed and the new Forest School suits for the children. There will be sections for each year group, from Nursery, through to Year 8, with plans to plant a herb garden, vegetable patch and an orchard.

Arctic adventure

A group of Second Form pupils from Dauntsey's School, Wiltshire, visited the north of Sweden on an 'Arctic Adventure' of a lifetime.

Their base was the city of Skellefteå which was blanketed in thick snow throughout their stay, with temperatures rarely above freezing and as low as -16°C. The pupils tackled a number of challenges including an alpine luge competition, ice fishing, cross country ski-ing, igloo building, snow shoeing, building campfires and husky sledding. In between

challenges, the pupils perfected their snowballing skills, warming up with an endless supply of hot chocolate.

The group also spent some time in a Swedish school, learning about life as a teenager in Sweden and comparing notes about the differences, and similarities, between their schools.

Throughout the trip, the pupils had to shop for their own food at a local supermarket, transporting it back to their cabin on sledges and then cooking all their meals.



The pond is already well established, with flora and fauna in abundance. There are plans

to build a jetty, so that the children can enjoy lessons in pond dipping.

Pictured: Red House School's Head of English, Collette Fryer and Sara Davies MBE with Year 7 pupils

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Iconic West End show

Pupils from Loughborough Schools Foundation wowed more than 1,400 spectators in a week of sold out performances of the West End classic, *Les Misérables*.

More than 100 pupils from across the Foundation joined together to perform the iconic musical in Loughborough Grammar School's Hodson Hall, as part of the School's 525th anniversary celebrations.

The Grammar School has a close history with the musical after they made what is believed to be the biggest block-booking for a West End show in 1995 during the school's 500th anniversary celebrations. Occupying all 1,500 seats of the Palace Theatre, they made a big impression on the cast, especially when antagonist Inspector Javert was loudly booed by the boys at the curtain call.

As the School's anniversary year of celebrations commenced, it was thought to be quite fitting to pay homage to the show.

Commenting on staging the production Sally Bruton, Head of Drama, at Loughborough Grammar School, said *Les Mis* was a fitting choice of production. She said: "*Les Misérables* is a

huge show. With the anniversary, performance space and a cast, crew and orchestra of over 100 students from three schools performing to an audience of 1400 people, it was quite a daunting prospect. That being said, the popularity of *Les Mis* meant that many of the cast were already familiar with the production, plot and all of the intricacies of its themes before the first rehearsal. The amazing technicians, estates, compliance, networking and catering departments worked hard to make the logistics happen whilst the hours of practice by the orchestra of Loughborough Schools Music and the team of technical students and staff backstage, all added to this amazing production.

2020 marks the 525th anniversary of Loughborough Grammar School following its founding in 1495 by Thomas Burton, a local wool merchant who left endowments for the teaching of boys in his will. George Davys, a tutor to Queen Victoria, Johnnie Johnson, RAF flying ace, and Sir Thomas Abney, the first Governor of the Bank of England are listed amongst its alumni.

Hip Hop performer brings poetry alive

As part of its annual Arts Week the students at Bruton School for Girls, Somerset, enjoyed a visit from Karl Nova a hip hop artist, author and poet who inspired everyone with his poetry performances.

Karl was born and raised in London and Lagos and shared work from his award winning collection 'Rhythm and Poetry' which reflects on his journey of growth from childhood to adulthood through the lens of hip hop culture. Karl spent the day working with groups of pupils from Year 5 through to Sixth Form, seeking to inspire them with a fresh approach to poetry.

Librarian and Arts Week Co-ordinator, Nikki Bance, said: "Karl provided a great finale to a marvellous Arts Week, and his enthusiasm for the spoken word

opened our eyes to a completely different style of poetry. The girls thoroughly enjoyed working with Karl and exploring some hip hop for themselves; it was great for breaking down inhibitions and increasing confidence."

The theme of Arts Week was 'Our Planet' and other activities included workshops on sculpture, animation and drama, a theatre trip, beach clean art and dance/choreography sessions. All the work created during Arts Week will be used in the school's Art Walk show at the end of the Summer Term.

Karl Nova's debut book "Rhythm and Poetry" was declared winner of the CLPE, CLIPPA 2018 Poetry award (CLPE – Centre for Literacy in Primary Education).



Pictured: Karl Nova with Sixth Form students at Bruton School for Girls



Spirited 'Creative Arts Day'

The sky really was the limit for Edge Grove School, Hertfordshire, as it staged a fully inclusive, whole school 'Creative Arts Day' as part of a House team competition.

Supported by House staff leaders, the children aged 3-13 years, across all year groups were given the challenge of creating a four-minute group performance, which had to include the singing of the Mary Poppins classic, 'Let's Go Fly a Kite', as well as incorporating a drama and art element.

Each group performance was assessed for its 'House spirit' and the level of energy and involvement of pupils and staff. Groups were also judged on creativity of artwork and dance and also the dramatic performance, clarity and accuracy of singing.

As Ben Evans, Headmaster, awarded a trophy to the winning team, he commented: "It was wonderful to move around the school during the day and watch the children in their House groups totally engaged in learning the famous song, practicing their dance moves and creating their colourful and

innovative works of art."

The children delivered a number of imaginative performances to the judging panel showcasing a high level of acting talent and musicianship, before the winning House was awarded a trophy by Mr Evans for the most outstanding performance.

Evans said: "One of the greatest joys of days like this, when the children are working in vertical groups, is seeing the older pupils take the younger ones under their wings, treating them with tremendous kindness and understanding and supporting them to achieve their common goals. Likewise, observing how much our younger children admire those in the upper years and absolutely love learning from them and being in their company. It is very humbling to witness and makes me feel very proud of them all. Events like these are designed to give the children the freedom to build their confidence and self-esteem while working collaboratively with others to achieve success".

National Youth Music Theatre selection

King's Ely Sixth Form student, Billy Pinto, has been called-up by the prestigious National Youth Music Theatre (NYMT).

Billy, 16, will be starring in (subject to the COVID-19 situation) 'Imagination', by Timothy Knapman and Stuart Matthew Price. Directed by Richard Fitch, the production will be presented at CURVE Theatre, Leicester and for the International Youth Arts Festival, Kingston in June and July.



As a member of the NYMT 2020 Company, Billy will also be invited to participate in other events and performances, including the ever-popular NYMT Christmas Concert at St John's, Smith Square.

Billy, who is from Ely, has been a student at King's Ely since 2006, when he joined King's Ely Acremont Nursery.



Drama Workshop Productions

It was a creative few weeks for pupils at Leicester Grammar Junior School, who enjoyed the success of their latest 'Drama Workshop' productions during early March.

Years 3-6 engaged in a variety of dramatic techniques, such as conscience alley, role play, hot seating, soundscape and thought tapping, to tell various tales that reflect their recent studies in the classroom, embracing new methods of exciting visual language and learning songs to interpret well-known texts and

entertain their audiences.

Themes varied from classic, contemporary novels to dark and brooding interpretations of Shakespeare, to capture collective imaginations.

Headteacher, Caroline Rigby, said: "We are extremely proud of the creativity shown by our pupils and how they displayed their talent to our audiences. Each production is a testament to the hard work and commitment of each and every pupil and the passion of our staff".



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All-Steinway School

The Mount School, Yorkshire, became an All-Steinway School as the all-girl Quaker school took delivery of ten new pianos which students and staff had selected earlier in the year at Steinway Hall in London.

This partnership between The Mount and Steinway and Sons gives Mount girls daily access to the highest quality pianos to practice, compose, perform and realise their artistic talents on world-class quality instruments. The Mount is now the first all-girls' school in the North of England to receive the internationally recognised designation as an All-Steinway School. Only twenty schools in the UK currently have this accreditation, along with three conservatories and six universities.

Rachel Derbyshire, The Mount's Head of Music, said, "We are delighted with the opportunities

this investment creates for our girls. Not only will they play on the highest quality instruments, but they can look forward to working with visiting Steinway artists in addition to our wonderful specialist peripatetic teaching staff. I am proud of how our All-Steinway status reinforces our belief in the importance of creativity in girls' education."

The school's Music scholars from Year 6 to College II (Upper Sixth Form) gave a special recital to unveil the new pianos, with the performance culminating in a unique ensemble using all ten pianos, before the pianos were moved to their permanent homes within the school.

As part of the All-Steinway status, girls at The Mount will also enjoy future Masterclasses with Steinway artists and opportunities to perform in the recital space at Steinway Hall.



Concert initiative

More than 60 children from local primary schools performed at Leicester's De Montfort Hall last month (March) as part of an exciting initiative to improve access to music education in Leicestershire.

As part of the Sing2020 initiative, pupils from Rothley CofE Primary School, Grace Dieu Manor School, Fairfield Prep School, and Loughborough Amherst School took to the stage ahead of Loughborough Schools Foundation's annual Spring Concert, performing a range of classical and newly commissioned songs.

Loughborough Schools Foundation introduced its Sing2020 scheme to support musical teaching at local primary schools, with nine schools taking part over the course of the project.

Nether Hall Special School, Grace Dieu Manor School, Booth Wood Primary School, Normanton on Soar Primary School, Rendell Primary School, Rothley Church

of England Primary School, Loughborough Church of England Primary School, Fairfield Prep and Amherst School were all involved in a range of teacher training and interactive lessons to deliver music lessons in a more dynamic way.

Sarah Marsh, Head of Prep Music at Loughborough School Foundation, led the Sing2020 scheme and discussed the impact of the concert. She said: "It has been a great pleasure to work with so many local schools to offer on-the-ground support for music and provide an opportunity for more dynamic music teaching. Once the children start singing you can see their faces light up and it's really exciting to teach them more challenging songs than they might be used to.

"At Loughborough Schools Foundation we are really lucky to have access to outstanding music facilities and it is fantastic to be able to offer these resources and support music teaching in other schools".

Full House every night

Kent College drama department delighted their audiences with a musical interpretation of *The Secret Garden* performed by girls at the school and boys from The Skinners School, a fellow member of the West Kent Independent State School Partnership (WKISSP).

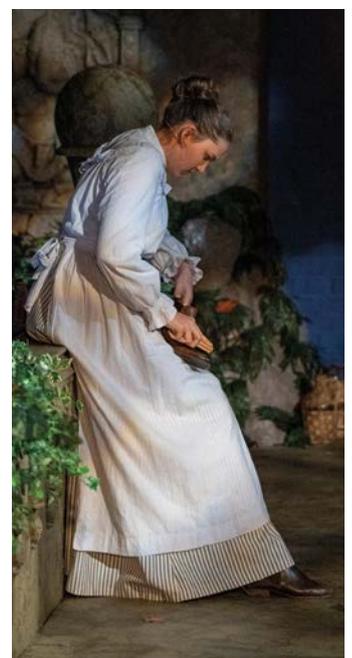
The classic Victorian story was directed and designed by Head of Drama Nigel Ashton who first saw the musical version of *The Secret Garden* at the RSC in 2000, and determined to stage it one day. The Countess of Wessex theatre (named after the Kent College old girl) provided the venue for the beautiful, hand-built sets on

which the cast brought the novel to life.

Many will be familiar with the story of a young girl orphaned in India and sent to the vast and lonely house of her hunchback uncle, but the genius of the musical is that it subtly refocuses the plot. So instead of it being a child's story; the character of Archibald Craven, the reclusive uncle of Mary Lennox, takes centre stage. Along with all the famous elements of the original story we are shown the anguish that Archibald Craven feels for the loss of his young wife Lily, who is a constant presence in the production.

The whole school production, led by Gilly Cable and Nigel Ashton, brought together creatives from the Senior School and Kent College Preparatory School. Behind the scenes Year 10 girls studying textiles helped create Edwardian costumes with intricate lace detailing and on stage actors, dancers, singers and musicians reimagined the Gothic tale of healing and forgiveness.

The musical theatre adaptation of *The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett is especially close to Kent College's heart because the book itself was inspired by the gardens of nearby Great Maytham Hall in Rolvenden.



GB Call Up

Becca Scott, Year 9 at Bedford Modern School, has been invited to join the GB Para Athletics Programme. The programme is the first of three tiers of the Paralympic Development Academy, which aims to prepare athletes for the 2024 Paralympic Games in Paris.

Becca, who has an arm deficiency, was spotted at the National Junior Disability games and has been selected for the long jump. She will also be expected to compete in other disciplines, such as 100m and 200m, as well as developing her overall athletic capability. The programme focuses on supporting athletes through specific technical development, learning from some of the best athletes in the country. There is a tough selection process, prioritising those who have potential to win medals at future Paralympic games.



Becca commented: "It came as a surprise but I am so pleased to have been selected. It has been a great experience to work with the GB long jump coach, Roger Kellar, and I am looking forward to continuing the programme. The BMS Sports Department have been really supportive, helping with strength and conditioning work, as well as training me in athletics and other sports."

Girl fencers reign supreme

The Stamford Endowed Schools' U13 Girls fencing team have been crowned British Schools Fencing Champions 2020 at the British Schools Team Fencing Championships, which were held early last month (March). The Schools entered a Boys and Girls team for both the Under 11 (Years 5 and 6) and the Under 13 (Year 7 and 8) age categories.

The British Schools Team Championships is a long-standing fixture in the annual fencing calendar. On average, the Championship hosts 160 teams from schools around the UK,

showcasing some top-level fencing, and is regarded as the pinnacle of team fencing for youngsters and future stars.

Chris Howser, Stamford Endowed Schools' Head fencing coach commented: 'An excellent performance from all of our school fencers with all four Stamford Endowed School teams ranked in the top 6 in the country on a day that had some of our fencers at the venue for over 10 hours. What an amazing achievement for our U13 Girls! All teams should be proud of their performances, well done!'



Netball champs

Congratulations to the Bromsgrove School, Worcestershire, 1st Netball team who were crowned National Independent Schools' Cup Champions in a thrilling final last month (March) at the Sports Village at the University of Hertfordshire.

Bromsgrove faced Alveley School, who had defeated Millfield in the Semi-Final. Both teams started well and after the first quarter

Bromsgrove were leading 17-12. With great encouragement from the vocal Bromsgrove supporters, the team capitalised on their lead and went from strength to strength. Bromsgrove achieved a 64-47 victory enabling them to retain the trophy from last year and to be crowned National Champions once again. Kitty Luscombe was awarded the prestigious player of the competition award.



Cricket Tour to South Africa



During Lent half term, the 1st XI New Hall School, Essex, Cricket Team travelled to Cape Town to play several fixtures against some of the most prestigious and highly accomplished schools in South Africa, such as St Augustine's and Rondebosch High School. The experience provided the New Hall Cricket Team with the opportunity to take part in a horizon-expanding adventure. New Hall's students competed with players from different personal and educational backgrounds from their own, whilst

also gaining experience of another country's culture and traditions.

The trip was a great success, with New Hall Cricket Team winning four out of their five fixtures. During their trip, the students also had the opportunity to visit the famous Table Mountain, Green Street Market and saw lions and other animals in their natural environment. New Hall appreciates and is acutely aware of the importance of making memories and opening the minds of their students.

National Championship Trophy

The Bishop's Stortford College U13 boys' football team have become U13 IAPS National Football Champions for the first time in the history of the College.

With their first four matches resulting in two wins, one draw and one loss, the boys needed to win their final group game against St Neot's Preparatory School to progress into the quarter finals. Fortunately, the boys were not ready to concede defeat and won their final group match convincingly.

In their quarter final the College boys faced Twyford. The victory from their previous game spurred the team on and they won the match 2-0, making it into the semi-finals.

However, this match was the toughest of them all. Up against Hall Grove a combination of brilliant goalkeeping and outstanding defensive work kept

the game level at 0-0, resulting in a penalty shootout. With a final score of 3-2, the College team was through to the final.

Despite feeling the fatigue of playing 7 matches, the boys were determined to give it their all in the final against Cranleigh. The team dominated the early stages of the match with a goal that opened up the chance to win the tournament. The team defended tremendously well, resolute in holding onto their 1-0 lead. After what felt like an incredibly long match, the final whistle blew and the boys were crowned the U13 IAPS National Football Champions.

David Herd, who coaches the team commented, "The team's training and hard work paid off and they went from strength to strength throughout the tournament. The character, composure and sportsmanship shown by the boys was phenomenal."



Cricketing Stars

The Wellington School, Somerset, cricket programme continues to go from strength to strength, with significant success at national level.

Sixth Former Liam Naylor has just returned from the experience of a lifetime at the U19 Cricket World Cup in South Africa. Liam took several wickets for Scotland, had a spell in hospital and suffered an injury in a tournament that taught him a lot about himself and his

cricketing ability. The seam bowler was thrilled that his team finished 12th in the competition.

Congratulations also to Year 9 Mila Joseph, who has successfully trialed for the Welsh Under 15 girl cricket team. She is now a part of the team and will start playing for them later in the year. Mila is a superb cricketer whose position in the team is well deserved.



Pictured: Mila Joseph – Welsh U15 team and Liam Naylor – Cricket World Cup

Sports Coach signed for Severn Stars Netball

Following a successful round of trials and two months playing netball in Australia in 2019, Ellie Gibbons, a member of the sports coaching team at New Hall School, Essex, has been signed for Severn Stars Netball. Ellie will now play matches across the country as part of the team in the netball Super League.

This brings the total number of netball Super League players working as part of New Hall coaching team to three; including Michelle Drayne, who plays for

London Pulse and represented Northern Ireland at the 2019 World Cup, Sophie Hankin who plays for Surrey Storm and now Ellie Gibbons, who has joined Severn Stars. This is an incredible opportunity for the girls at New Hall to learn from some fantastic role models. This is already evident with five of the School's students involved in sports pathways including the Essex County Academy, the Basildon Saracens Mavericks Hub and the Hertfordshire County Academy.



Inspiration from Football Legends

Year group football teams and elite athletes at Bolton School were joined by pupils from nearby Gaskell Primary School as they enjoyed an engrossing lunchtime with Manchester United football legend, Ryan Giggs and Joe Thompson, former Rochdale, Tranmere, Bury and Carlisle player, who has twice fought off cancer.

The two players were interviewed 'on stage' about their life and career by PE Teacher Mr Ian Hughes. Ryan Giggs, who is the current Welsh coach, spoke about his early life and how his family moved to North Manchester from Cardiff when he was 7 years old. He told how he met his first friends through playing football on the street. His father played rugby league for Swinton (and Wales) so the young Ryan was exposed to professional sport from an early age, watching training sessions and games. He told how he played for Salford Boys and was initially on the books with Manchester City. However, after Sir Alex Ferguson and Brian Kidd had been to watch him, he switched his allegiances to United on his fourteenth birthday. He quickly progressed from the youth team to training with the first team and by the age of 17 – just one year out of school – he was in the starting eleven.

Joe Thompson told how he moved to Greater Manchester at the age

of 9 and initially found it tough to integrate into primary school but, again, football allowed him to make friends. He went to secondary school at St Cuthbert's in Oldham and joined Man Utd aged 9 – Ryan Giggs was his hero! He was released just before he sat his GCSEs. However, he worked hard for his exams and stressed to the young audience that it is important to work hard and to have a back-up plan.

The two former players answered a wide variety of questions. Asked whether young children are under too much pressure these days, Ryan said he is 'old school' and remembers running home from school and banging a ball against a wall and training as much as he could. He also recommended playing other sports and recalled how he enjoyed rugby, basketball and athletics; he felt you can learn different skillsets in other fields. To a degree, he said, it is good to take people out of their comfort zone.

Both players talked about the importance of resilience and having good support around you when things don't go your way. Ryan also spoke of stacking the odds in his favour by taking care with his diet, practising yoga, seeing an osteopath and even changing his bed and car to better suit his body.

Hockey dream goal

A Year 11 Ellesmere College, Shropshire, student has been selected to train with the England Hockey Under-17s side.

At 15 years old, Harry Lloyd-Brown has been chosen to continue his goalkeeping training with the national team. Harry, who currently plays first and second team hockey at his club in Chester, will now train in the established U17 Performance Centre in Manchester.

As part of England Hockey's Player Pathway programme, Harry will enter an environment that gives young players the chance to realise their potential through a vigorous programme of intense training and competition, coupled with the highest level of coaching for U17 players.

Last year, the U17 team was unbeaten in all games, and



conquered many other national teams of a higher age – a true testament to the Performance Centre's quality of training and competition.

Harry now aims to be selected for the Futures Cup squad for this summer, a competition which would place him against the best young players in the country, and would allow him to compete for a place in the U18 England Team at the end of the year.



Double triumph

Bromsgrove Preparatory School, Worcestershire, U11 boys and girls are celebrating after their double win at the Foremarke Hall Invitational Tournament. The U11A Boys' Hockey team is the first Bromsgrove team ever to have won the Foremarke tournament. The boys were worthy winners and swept all before them, culminating in a 3-1 win in the Final v Beeston Hockey Club, Nottingham. In the group stages, the team drew 1-1 with Belper Hockey Club, before winning their matches 3-0 v Sutton Coldfield Hockey Club and 1-0 v Altrincham Prep, which meant they topped their group.

Mr Gareth Jones, Head of Boy's PE and Games at the School said "These boys are having another exceptionally successful year, following on from their successes with their rugby at U9, U10 and U11 level and being the only team from the Preparatory School to achieve a medal at last year's IAPS National Swimming Finals. They are a great group of boys who are superb role models for the School both on and off the pitch and have

illustrated their strength in a range of sports".

The U11A Girls Netball team also won the Tournament, drawing with Foremarke Hall 'A' 3-3, beating The Elms 10-0, Foremarke Hall 'B' 12-0 and Warwick Prep 'A' 3-0. The result placed Bromsgrove at the top of their group, taking them through to the Semi-Final v Radcliffe College. The girls played superbly to win 9-2 placing them in the Final against Warwick Prep. This was a much closer game in comparison to the group stage match and by the end of the final whistle, the two schools were drawing 4-4. Bromsgrove upped their game in extra time, to win 8-4.

Mrs Jenny Danks, Head of Girls' PE and Games, said "We are extremely proud of the standard of netball at the Preparatory School and our U11As have demonstrated their strength by winning this prestigious tournament at the weekend. We look forward to following this team's progress in the next few years, as they have fantastic potential".





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www.ivyhouse.co.uk/award

Virtual content – the new school marketing opportunity

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Vires per Verum – Strength through Truth

The Independent Schools Magazine is read by decision-makers – Governors, Heads, Bursars, Departmental Managers – and reflects news, ideas, influences, and opinions in the independent education sector. A personal copy is mailed to heads and other key personnel in fee-paying independent schools plus opinion formers in governments, political parties and educational associations. It is also available on the internet.

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