

February 2024

The Independent Schools Magazine



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In this issue...



New Prep School

Yarm School, North Yorkshire, has officially opened its new Prep School facility with the help of British paralympic gold medallist, Baroness Grey-Thompson.

The opening of the Hazel Andrews building began with a ribbon cutting ceremony, involving both Baroness Grey-Thompson and one of Yarm's founding governors, Mrs Hazel Andrews. Hazel was a driving force behind the inception of the school back in 1978.

Following the ceremony, attendees were treated to performances from Prep pupils, which included a dance and choir recital.

Baroness Grey-Thompson shared her remarkable journey from childhood to becoming an 11-time paralympic champion, and subsequently an Independent Crossbench Peer in the House of Lords. Her words emphasised the importance of seizing opportunities and not giving up when facing a challenge.

The opening ceremony marked the end of a 17-month building project that, now complete, is home to a modern library and flexible hall, which can be turned into a space for performing arts.

The building, which has been equipped with air source heat pumps in order to provide a renewable heating system for years to come, is also intended to facilitate the expansion of the current partnerships programme with local schools.

Pictured: (l-r) Hazel Andrews (back centre), Head of Yarm Prep School, Bill Sawyer, and Dr Huw Williams, headmaster at Yarm School, pictured with Baroness Grey-Thompson (front right) and pupils from Yarm Prep School

Cover background

Reading for pleasure

Levels of reading enjoyment amongst children are down.

School libraries can play a key role in encouraging a love of reading. To find out more see our article on page 22.

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Is Your School Mentioned?

Schools featured in this issue include:

Aldenham School; Ampleforth College; Beech Lodge School; Bolton School Girls' Division; Bradfield College; Brentwood Preparatory School; Caterham School; Charterhouse School; Cheltenham Ladies' College; Christ College Brecon; Claires Court; Clifton College; Copthorne Prep School; Cottesmore School; Croydon High School; Dale House School; Downe House School; Durham Cathedral Schools Foundation; Durham High School for Girls; Ellesmere College; Eton College; Felsted School; Gordonstoun; Haileybury; Halcyon London International School; Harrow School; Heathfield School; Highgate School; The High School of Glasgow; Jersey College for Girls; King Edward's School Birmingham; King Edward VI High School for Girls; The King's School, Canterbury; Kingshott School; Lathallan School; The Leys School; Loughborough High School; Marlborough College; Monkton Combe School; New Hall School; Newcastle High Schools for Girls; Old Hall School; Radley College; Ravenscourt Park Prep School; Repton School; RGS Worcester; Rugby School; Sherborne Prep; Shrewsbury School; Sibford School; Solihull School; St Margaret's School for Girls, Aberdeen; St Martin's School, Bournemouth; Taunton Prep School; Tonbridge School; Truro School; Uppingham School; Wellington College; Westholme School; Winchester College; Workspop College; Yarm School

Learning to live with VAT

With VAT on school fees a cloud on the horizon, VAT specialist, Rupert Moyle, takes a look at some of the potential implications and outlines some of the things to consider when looking at ways to minimise exposure.



Rupert Moyle

Independent schools are currently exempt from charging VAT on school fees. They are “eligible bodies” in VAT legislation. Exemption also extends to all goods and services that are “closely related” to the provision of education, such as catering and boarding for pupils, educational school trips, sporting facilities and certain classroom items. In practice this means that most schools are not registered for VAT and are unable to reclaim VAT on expenditure.

There is a cloud on the horizon which bursars and governors will be well aware of. That is the potential for the addition of VAT to school fees should the Labour Party succeed at the next General Election and implement their intended policy.

This would ultimately result in a cost to schools, potentially affecting all independent education providers, including small, not-for-profit/charitable organisations, perhaps with a niche focus and even those that hire facilities from schools, such as English as a Foreign Language providers. Bursars will be thinking about the potential implications of such a change and what they can do to minimise their exposure.

We are not privy to any revised VAT legislation and there could be a long period of consultation and deliberation, including a period between any announcement and before new legislation receives royal assent. The government will need to consider inadvertent effects on certain bodies and tweak draft legislation to ensure its policy's aim is targeted.

We will need to await the draft legislation before confirming the precise effect of any change, but some of the things to consider are below.

Advanced fees

It is possible, in theory, to offer parents an ability to pay fees in advance of the forthcoming year/years. Whilst the ‘tax point’ of payment would be when it is made, and so exemption would apply at that time, HMRC may well introduce anti-forestalling legislation preventing such planning. They have done so before for other rate changes. Fees in advance of an announcement of a change should in theory not be caught by this, but it would also theoretically be possible, if unlikely, for legislation to be introduced with retrospective effect.

In summary, whilst advanced fees could potentially work, this cannot be guaranteed. Even with caveats in agreements with parents requiring VAT to be charged should it become due, there could be practical issues in enforcing such measures. For example, children may no longer be at the school, or their parents' circumstances may have changed. Pricing might also be difficult, especially if the period to which advanced fees relate is more than a year away.

Can other items supplied still be exempt or subject to an alternative relief?

Thoughts about moving an activity to a trading subsidiary (for charitable organisations, for example) would in theory be possible but would almost inevitably be challenged by HMRC as avoidance. The legality of such measures would be scrutinised, and directions could be given to group entities as though they were one taxable person. HMRC might also argue that planning is contrary to the principles of VAT legislation (i.e. abusive), possibly ending with penalties. Litigation would be very expensive, hence great care would be needed for any bullish planning structure.

The reality is that options may be limited. Some advisers may offer bold structures to mitigate this potential issue, but those that are cautious should think about normal management of VAT. In any event detailed provisions should be considered carefully once/if draft legislation and guidance is available.

Delving deeper, how will the VAT law change?

The expectation is that certain types of schools would be removed from being “eligible bodies”. This would presumably remove “closely related” items, such as transport, accommodation and sporting facilities from the education exemption, potentially allowing other reliefs to apply. But there is a further general VAT principle

which could mean that reliefs are unavailable. These require supplies to a person that are ancillary to a predominant supply (of education in this case) to follow the predominant supply, meaning that other items could also be subject to VAT. This could prevent any artificial ‘unbundling’ of supplies and would be difficult to overcome. Nevertheless, it would be advisable to consider if the provision of transport, accommodation and sporting facilities could fall within a different zero-rated or exempt relief.

Other things to watch out for

Whilst the addition of VAT to fees would allow for the majority of the VAT incurred on expenditure to be reclaimed, some independent schools may offer subsidised education. These could be regarded as non-business activities, adversely impacting VAT recovery.

Supplies of accommodation and facilities to other schools, such as hires to English as a Foreign Language (EFL) providers, may well be subject to VAT, whereas previously there may have been an exemption of services closely related to the education the EFL provides, under the ‘eligible body to eligible body’ exemption.

Are there advantages we should look for?

There is one area which may present a significant opportunity. That is VAT spent on capital building projects both anticipated and those within the ten years before any change in legislation. If there is more than £250,000 plus VAT of capital expenditure on certain building projects the law requires a VAT registered business to review the use of the property over a ten-year period and adjust VAT initially recovered for any change in taxable and exempt use. This is the Capital Goods Scheme. Should VAT be due on fees and perhaps on sporting services, there may be an ability to claw back some of the VAT incurred.

Merger news



Kingshott School

The Mill Hill Education Group has announced that Kingshott School, Hertfordshire, is to join its charitable foundation through a charity merger.

Kingshott's Head, David Weston said: “Our decision to join the Mill Hill Education Group is a future-facing decision taken

during a time of strength, when we have waiting lists across many year groups, both now and for the next academic year. We are excited to begin benefiting from all the enrichments, enhancements and efficiencies that being part of the Mill Hill Education Group offers.”

Rupert Moyle is the VAT Partner at Kreston Reeves LLP who provide accountancy, business advisory and financial services. If you need VAT advice on this or any other area please contact rupert.moyle@krestonreeves.com. Visit www.krestonreeves.com



Thoughts on the Labour policy – a Head's perspective

In a recent interview, the Head of Ampleforth College, North Yorkshire, Peter Roberts, was asked about VAT and how the school would respond to the potential Labour policy. In this article he outlines his response and considers the potential impacts the policy may bring.



Peter Roberts

With an election generally expected to be called later this year and most opinion polls anticipating a Labour victory, the independent education sector is bracing itself for challenging times ahead. Labour spokespeople are repeatedly confirming the Party's intention to implement its 2019 manifesto pledge to remove the exemption from VAT on independent school fees.

While being interviewed by the Telegraph about the resurgence of Ampleforth and the significance of its unique educational mission in today's transactional world, I was asked how we would respond to Labour's plans. A temporary headline in the digital version of the feature published on 3 January 2024, stated that I had committed not to pass on the VAT costs to our parents. Unfortunately, it is not as simple as that. What I did make clear was that, if VAT is imposed, we would do all we can not to simply pass it all on to our parents.

At this stage, without clarity on how any new legislation might work in practice, it is impossible to provide a more definitive answer. At Ampleforth, our priority is to ensure that our students have a first-rate education. We work hard to ensure we provide excellent value for money and are as efficient as possible. Our budgets are tightly set and expenditure is carefully controlled. As VAT is a tax on the consumer, we will

have no choice but to add it to the bills if imposed. However, we are committed to redoubling our efforts to find cost savings to absorb as much of this increase in fees as possible.

What is clear is that the VAT policy is misguided. Independent schools come in all shapes and sizes and the profile of their parents is diverse. Many parents are deeply committed to providing the best possible education for their children but have to work flat out to afford this. They are already facing economic challenges and will not be able to afford a significant increase in fees. This, in turn, is highly likely to force some schools to close. If their child's school cannot survive the imposition of VAT, where will they go? Supposedly the revenue raised through VAT will go towards bringing real improvements to state education – something which of course we would all like to see. But how much will be left once funding for additional places to accommodate those priced out of the independent sector is taken into account?

For me, the tragedy is that the most likely impact on schools like ours is that the cost savings will have to be found partly by reducing our programme of bursaries and our partnership work with maintained schools in our region. Ampleforth, like

many other independent schools, offers means-tested bursaries to talented and motivated students to promote social mobility, diversity, and the broad goal of providing an excellent education to all students, including those who would not have access without financial assistance. 20% of our students receive this sort of bursarial support. These families are going to need considerably more support if VAT is imposed.

For similar reasons, we invest in working collaboratively with schools in the maintained sector, sharing resources, facilities, opportunities, and training. For example, we invite local senior schools to join our annual Higher Education Conference and Careers Fair to meet and hear industry and university speakers from all over the UK; our facilities are made available to primary schools and community groups, and we run a programme of learning events across multiple disciplines for students in the local area.

This sort of collaboration is driven by a desire to enrich the educational experience for all students involved and contribute to the overall improvement of education in our region. It breaks down barriers, fosters a sense of unity and shared purpose, cultivates mutual understanding and respect, and benefits students across the board.

In other words, the impact of Labour's VAT policy, which is intended to reduce educational inequalities, will damage most the work of independent schools to promote social mobility and contribute to a more equitable educational landscape.

The more VAT is passed on to parents, it will serve as a financial barrier which limits access to independent schools primarily to families with higher income levels, exacerbating socio-economic divisions in education and removing the choice that many families have worked so hard for. The more independent schools try to reduce operating costs to protect parents from VAT, the more bursarial support and collaborative working with the maintained sector will be cut. This policy will further separate the educational divide. Keir Starmer says he is not against private education per se. It seems completely at odds with a party which strives to create opportunity for all that its policy on independent schools would make them affordable for fewer people.

We need to face this challenge with resilience, innovation, and an unwavering commitment to delivering excellence and value for our students and parents. Ampleforth has weathered some high-profile storms over recent years and remains a happy, successful school which is positive about the future.

Safe Space opening

A group of pupils from St Margaret's School for Girls, Aberdeen, met Her Majesty Queen Camilla at the official opening of a domestic abuse Safe Space at Aberdeen Art Gallery.

The group of Senior pupils represented Grampian Women's

Aid in their Youth Philanthropy Initiative presentations. As a result, Aileen Forbes, manager of Grampian Women's Aid invited the team to be with her at this event at which Queen Camilla spoke with each girl. The recently established Safe Space will be managed by

individuals who have undergone specialised training in mental health awareness and domestic abuse. This designated area serves as a place for those seeking assistance or for those who simply need it for contemplation and reflection.



Pupils meeting HM Queen Camilla

Preparing pupils for the modern world

Sibford School, Oxfordshire, has reconstructed its 4-11 curriculum with a special focus on stewardship and global citizenship. Head of the Junior School, Edward Rossiter, reflects how this has brought out school values, in this case Quaker values and made them a lived part of the student experience.

Curriculum content is the foundation of education: the “what we learn” allied with the “how we learn” shapes the pathways and choices of the pupils in our schools. With the increased autonomy Independent Schools have over their curriculum, comes a responsibility to build and provide something more meaningful, and with greater depth, than simple preparation for assessments and qualifications... even if they might be the yardstick by which we are too often crudely measured. Do our curricula reflect the needs of the modern world and prepare children for a world which will be significantly different when they become adults? At Sibford School, we have sought to reconstruct our 4-11 curriculum with a special focus on Stewardship and Global Citizenship.

Though a topic of academic discourse for decades, Global Citizenship was brought into broader debate as the focus of the UN’s “Global Education First Initiative” (2012). But properly embedded, Global Citizenship needs more than the awareness from the individual of the world around them: it requires an understanding of the responsibilities this awareness brings with it, as agents of change, to our and other communities and to the planet itself (Oxfam, 1997); UNESCO (2015) identified several means by which it could be introduced: as a school-wide issue, as a cross-curricular focus, as a component within different subjects and as a separate, stand-alone subject within the curriculum.

Complementing the principles of Global Citizenship is the notion of Stewardship, a key testimony of the Quaker faith at the heart of Sibford’s ethos. Stewardship can be described as living with simplicity and integrity, taking care of the things we own and use, and leaving the world in a better place.

Curriculum review is a constant process, a living thing that needs to evolve to meet needs, so for us to implement change was

both straightforward (we are used to evaluating) and challenging (working towards a fixed point of launch). With this in mind, we began by allowing ourselves a two year window in which to pick apart each subject and explore how we wanted them to look and, crucially, fit together with each other and with broader aims subsuming the curriculum. Affected by the pandemic, these two years became three, but on reflection, the greater time allowed us to go into greater depth and reflection. The next step was to ensure that we included the key stakeholders in the process – initially this was carried out with the teaching staff (we were clear it was to be their curriculum that they were delivering), and latterly with pupils and parents.

The final part of the creative process was to draw the curriculum subjects together and ensure that there was meaningful overlap which saw different disciplines complement each other, while at the same time having links to a broader context. To achieve this, each year group developed “Super-objectives” to sit across their whole curriculum and which linked to a distinct Stewardship and charity focus for them. Year 4, for instance, have become “Stewards to the Oceans”, which is at the crux of their geography, and carry out events to raise funds for the Marine Conservation Society, while Year 6 are “Stewards to Displaced People” which they explore through WW2 evacuation in history, but which also links to current affairs, most recently with the conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza.

The cross-curricular nature of the curriculum is brought to life with half-termly “Buzz Days” where the children in a year group come off-timetable and carry out multi-faceted activities. While the risk is a loss of core-teaching time, we have found this has resulted in an increased engagement in learning, particularly in literacy where class texts have been carefully chosen



Edward Rossiter

to tie in with the broader topic. Finishing off the jigsaw, was the inclusion of an overt emphasis on the embedding of social skills within the learning and teaching. It stands to reason that in instituting a curriculum that is outward-looking and change-focused, we also needed to consider how to help pupils develop their skills of communication, teamwork, risk-taking, negotiation and resilience among others.

Sukey, one of the Junior School teachers, highlighted the positive impact the new curriculum has had on learning and teaching: “I have found that developing Stewardship as integral to the curriculum has been powerful for helping contextualise the children’s learning. They are better able to understand the world around them and draw connections within it, and consequently they are more invested in their work and care passionately about the issues covered. Collaborative planning with my Junior School colleagues has also meant that there is a better flow of learning throughout the year groups.”

In launching the Global Citizenship and Stewardship aspects of the curriculum to parents, we have received a hugely positive response, with pupils more engaged and talkative about their learning at home, and also more curious about events in the world around them. This is not without some unforeseen outcomes – children who have found their voice have a tendency to use it! – and as well as seeking to have an impact in the broader world, they are also challenging us within school to be better, most recently with a focus on improving our recycling of food waste and reducing our dependency on plastic packaging. Learning has become a pupil-initiated process rather than a teacher-led goal.



School sale

Following the sale of buildings occupied by Dale House Independent School and Nursery, West Yorkshire, the school has now closed.

Dale House was established by Sarah and Andrew Fletcher in 1999.

A press release stated: ‘Having battled with a serious illness, Andrew and Sarah decided it was time for Andrew to step back from the bursar’s role and for Sarah to retire to help look after him... They did not have time to engage in a lengthy and public sale offering so approached [business property advisers] Christie & Co for assistance.’

A sale has been agreed with Polaris Community, a children’s services provider for an undisclosed price.

According to local press outlets the sale was agreed in June 2023 with news of the sale passed on to staff and then parents at the beginning of the new academic year, with the local council stepping in to work with Dale House to support parents in finding alternative school places.

Associate Director – Childcare & Education at Christie & Co, Vicky Marsland, said of the sale: “From the outset, the primary concern was to sell the school as a going concern but the highest level of interest came from specialist education and care providers.

Whilst there are a select number of large independent school providers in the UK that remain the subject of strong investment, unfortunately, we have seen those smaller schools struggling to compete when the time comes to sell and retire. As the SEND schools sector continues to thrive due to the growing demand for suitable settings that support the needs of children who are unable to access mainstream education, the demand for vacant possessions on independent schools has increased.”

Pictured: Dale House School

Forerunners of the Welfare State

In 1869 a lecture on the plight of the poor in London's slums given to the boys at Uppingham School, Rutland, led to the school founding a public school mission. Author, Malcolm Tozer, explores this and some of the other missions created during the Victorian Age.

The Welfare State – including the National Health Service – will be prominent in the political campaigning before the General Election. Sir Keir Starmer will see it as a vote-winner, not least because it was the creation of Clement Attlee's post-war Labour government. The alleviation of disease, ignorance, idleness, squalor and want were the targets in 1945 and will be again in 2024. Elements of the Welfare State date from the 1900s, when Herbert Asquith's Liberal government introduced old age pensions, labour exchanges and a minimum wage, but the contribution of Victorian public schools is only now fully appreciated. Attlee was exposed to the realities and problems of the poor when serving at his school's mission in London's East End, as were fellow social campaigners – Stafford Cripps, Richard Crossman, Hugh Gaitskell, Douglas Jay, Richard Tawney and William Temple – at their schools' missions.

John Foy, Travelling Secretary of the Additional Curates Society, delivered a lecture on the plight of the poor in London's slums to the boys of Uppingham School in April 1869. A few days later, a delegation came to their headmaster, Edward Thring, to ask if they might help. He charged the boys to produce a plan. The main point in their prospectus was the establishment of an Uppingham mission somewhere in the East End of London, and that they hoped to support its work through chapel collections and by subscriptions from their masters and former pupils. A sum to cover a curate's stipend was quickly assembled. The Bishop of London was asked to identify the parish most in need; a commission was dispatched to investigate, reporting back to the school; the bishop's proposal was

endorsed; and Uppingham settled on North Woolwich.

Wynford Alington, an Old Uppinghamian, began his mission in early 1870. North Woolwich was a moral and physical no man's land: not yet part of the London borderland, so without the modern civic amenities, but no longer truly rural. He worked in a school-room and a mission-room; the former also served as the parish church, while the latter housed meetings. Matins and evensong were held each Sunday; regular events included a mothers' meeting, a working men's club and evening classes. Work with children brought the quickest results. By the end of the year, Alington was able to report that a new school building was ready for use, and that the foundations of the mission church were soon to be laid. St John's North Woolwich was completed in 1872.

Clifton and Winchester swiftly followed Uppingham's example, both in 1876: the former in Bristol with an Old Uppinghamian, Hardwicke Rawnsley, as the missionary; the latter in the East End district of Plaistow. Winchester transferred its mission to Portsmouth in 1880 to be closer to the school. Cripps, Crossman, Gaitskell and Jay would have known of its work from the missionary's sermons in chapel and through visits to Portsmouth as sixth-formers.

Eton, Radley, Marlborough, Tonbridge, Harrow, Charterhouse, Wellington College, Dulwich, The Leys, Rugby and Cheltenham Ladies' College joined the movement in the 1880s; the last the sole girls' school to establish a mission, in Bethnal Green. Rugby had three missions: one in London's Notting Dale, one in Birmingham's Balsall Heath and, from 1920, one adjacent to the

school. There was much to inspire the future Archbishop Temple and his friend, the Christian socialist Tawney. The work of the London missions was acknowledged by the Bishop of London in 1885 and marked by a week of sermons by headmasters to encourage former pupils to support their schools and to invite more schools to boost the London provision.

More did in the years before the First World War: Haileybury, Bradfield, Repton, Highgate, Shrewsbury (in Liverpool), Durham (in Gateshead), Monkton Combe and King's, Canterbury. Haileybury opened its mission in Stepney in 1890. The four Attlee brothers were members of the guild that supported the Haileybury Boys'



Malcolm Tozer

Club; Clement joined the club on graduation from Oxford. He lived at Toynbee Hall, the university's nearby mission, and served as the Haileybury club's manager from 1907 to 1909, greatly increasing its role in social work. His politics swung to the left when he became the secretary of Toynbee Hall in 1909, leading him to join the Independent Labour Party. Life in Stepney educated Attlee about the social conditions of the poor and greatly influenced his time as Prime Minister.

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Four lessons for professional learning

Aldenham School, Hertfordshire, has developed its 'Teaching Partners' programme to help drive continual improvement in classroom practice. Assistant Head (Learning), Luke Harding, draws four lessons from Aldenham's experience of designing professional learning for teachers.



Luke Harding

“I once worked with a headteacher who gave great assemblies inspired by the poetry of Robert Frost. Every year, she'd find a new use for:

*Two roads diverged in a wood,
and I,*

I took the one less travelled by...

If teachers in the independent sector are travellers in a gloomy wood, cast over by shadows shaped like VAT on fees, a challenging recruitment situation and ever-increasing parental expectations, we might well imagine a choice between two diverging roads.

Road one takes you to a school with well-informed, research-engaged teachers, always striving for best practice in the classroom. Road two, on the other hand, heads in the opposite direction. It leads to a gingerbread common room, full of well-being and work-life balance, and which no-one would ever want to leave.

What a stark choice: teachers who are learning, or teachers who are happy. But I would suggest there's no such incompatibility. The best teachers are both committed to learning and in a good place emotionally and physically. Ask a teacher what gets in the way and the most common answer is 'workload'. So how can we make sure professional learning isn't just one more task on the to-do list of extremely busy people?

Teaching Partners

At Aldenham, we were determined to avoid the notorious beartraps of professional learning. We didn't want to launch an initiative that disappears a year later. We didn't want glitzy INSET day presentations, forgotten as soon as the first bell rings. And we certainly didn't want to impose

extra workload or rigid rules for teaching on a capable and diverse cohort of teachers.

Our solution was 'Teaching Partners'. Colleagues are paired up for a year of observing and discussing each other's lessons. Despite its apparent simplicity, our development of Teaching Partners offers some valuable lessons for the design of professional learning.

1. Start with trust

We thought about trust in two ways. First, the need to build teachers' trust that professional learning matters enough to be noticed and valued (see point 3, below). And second, the kind of trust which makes us feel secure in observing and discussing colleagues' lessons.

Our rhetoric around the launch of Teaching Partners emphasised confidentiality, including an explicit direction not to discuss observed lessons with any third party. It is key in peer-to-peer observation that the curiosity is about students' learning, not the performance of your colleague. Our recommended reading for this, Graham Nuttall's *The Hidden Lives of Learners*, gives a compelling warning to anyone tempted to make judgements about lesson quality.

2. Research is a compass, not a map

Teaching Partners was developed with ideas colleagues had encountered in formal study. However, research findings are often available in highly accessible summaries. (In our case, the OECD's *What makes a school a learning organisation?*)

We distilled our reading into simple guiding principles for good professional learning:

- Teachers should access new ideas
- and apply them in their day-to-day work
- over a sustained period of time,
- processing their learning through discourse
- in a trusting environment where they feel safe to make mistakes...
- and they will be motivated to make all this effort by seeing a positive impact on their students.

But the research didn't tell us what would work at Aldenham. Guided by these principles, we ran a trial to adapt the ideas until they fitted our context.

3. Duration matters

We ran the trial for a full year. During that time, we switched from 'trios' to 'partners', and we realised partnerships work best when teachers are paired up outside of their academic department. Once Teaching Partners went live, we quickly found new things to improve. But the emphasis is on continuity. Teaching Partners is here to stay: its extended lifespan makes an enormous contribution to the status of professional learning. Duration is persuasive. When we move on from one year's focus to the next (from questioning to, say, explaining), we continue to monitor and talk about the previous focus. The energy teachers put into their learning must be valued loudly and often.

4. Measure impact

The holy grail of teachers' professional learning is the measurement of impact on student outcomes – specifically, exam results. Yet much like the holy grail, a convincing story

of impact can be tricky to get your hands on. No school enjoys anything approaching controlled conditions, and to infer that improved results are down to any single factor is an insult to colleagues' intelligence.

But we knew that teachers truly commit to change only when they believe it will have a positive impact on students' learning. Through surveys and lesson observations we could see changed classroom practices, but that isn't proof of impact on students.

As we worked through this, we found it helpful to suggest a model of how students learn. The idea is, with a shared understanding of how learning happens, we are no longer so dependent on empirical data of impact. Instead, the model of learning helps explain why one classroom approach works better than another. We gave everyone a copy of *Sweller's Cognitive Load Theory in Action* by Oliver Lovell, chunked the reading, and built activities to help colleagues engage with the book.

We are only just starting to unpack the implications of cognitive load theory. It's going to need plenty of time and conversation. The best outcome will involve countless small, unpredicted changes in classroom practice. At Aldenham, we've found that a simple professional learning structure, involving everyone in enquiry and conversation, can allow teachers to make the changes most suitable to them and their students.



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New international school partnership

Marina Development Corporation (MDC) – a company active in urban regeneration related to marinas, wellness and leisure facilities – is partnering with education provider, and global schools family, Chatsworth Schools, who have been chosen to manage the Borgo del Forte Campus, a large, purpose-built international educational and sports campus in the 'Campasso di Nervia' area of Ventimiglia in Italy.

The Borgo Del Forte Campus will include:

- 42,000 square metres of regenerated urban space
- An international school for 800 students, surrounded by a public park
- Student boarding accommodation for 100 children

- Indoor and outdoor sports facilities with associated services

The international school at the Borgo del Forte Campus will open to its first pupils in September 2026, subject to City Council approval and a partnership with a property investment partner to enable the construction of one of the landmark elements within MDC's Ventimiglia waterfront transformation.

Chatsworth Schools' international school division, Blenheim Schools will be responsible for designing and implementing the educational programme and learning spaces for the international school, managing the activities of the entire Campus and facilitating the integration between the school and the local community, in agreement with the Ventimiglia Municipality.

Pictured: The proposed Borgo Del Forte Campus

Design Challenge winners!

A team of youngsters from Old Hall School, Shropshire, have won the finals of a competition aimed at promoting the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

The three youngsters, Nina, Sofia and Edyth, produced videos in Digital Technology as part of Design4SDGS, created to promote big thinking and innovative ideas on a large-scale.

Entries were co-ordinated and sent off by the teaching team at the school which is developing a new Innovation Lab this year helping to support 21st century skills.

The Year 5 and Year 6 pupils were divided into groups and picked Good Health and Well-Being, Sustainable Cities and Communities, Responsible Consumption and Production and Climate Action as the themes for their work.

They had to come up with various initiatives and make a

Pictured: The Old Hall team



three-minute video on their projects which they presented at BETT 2024 attended by more than 30,000 people at ExCeL in London.

"This is all about collaboration skills, critical thinking, problem-solving and communication skills which are paramount in the 21st century," said the school's head of Innovation and Technology, Mr Jérôme Nogues.

The final of the competition aimed at 9- to 14-year-olds took place at the end of January.

Advertorial Feature

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Underpinning academic success with student wellbeing

To achieve their full academic potential students need to have a sense of wellbeing. Director of Halcyon London International School, Barry Mansfield, considers how taking a human-centred approach to education can enable schools to become centres of both academic and wellbeing excellence.



Barry Mansfield

Every school is interested in academic excellence, however you might wish to measure or describe it. Whether you are independent or maintained, highly selective or open, operate in the mainstream or specialise – with students of different abilities, for example – academic outcomes matter. And, as a school leader, one should have a clear understanding of how academic achievement relates to school culture and values, and to the wellbeing of everyone in the community.

A recent study from Yale School of Medicine¹ of Social Emotional Learning (SEL) programmes worldwide reconfirmed the evidence that many of us have read before – and understood in our bones all along: “Students who participated in SEL programs do better in school, academically and socially.” This included improved attendance and engagement in learning.

It should be obvious that student wellbeing underpins academic success, and many of the tools teachers reach for – Seligman’s positive psychology², or Dweck’s growth mindset – will be familiar to school leaders. Also familiar will be mentor programmes and, maybe, mindfulness practice. It should be easy to say to parents that their child’s wellbeing is more important than their academic success. Yet many of us will know that examinations place intolerable stresses on certain students, and that school systems can be rigid and

unaccommodating of even the simplest of wellbeing needs.

To be academically successful one needs to have a sense of wellbeing: physically, emotionally and socially. To “be well” can be defined in so many ways that it can be easier to define it by what it is not, which accounts for the current focus on mental health issues. This is a mistake: schools should not, as the U.K. government is doing³, simply be focused on the consequences (though it might be argued that the government is so wrong-footed that they have little choice). Instead, we should address the causes, which can be that schools sometimes forget to be human-centred and instead are constantly bound-up in technical, bureaucratic, management or problem-solving. We spend too much time looking at the cogs and wheels of our systems, and not enough at the human beings. What does this mean in practice?

Firstly, your school does need a definition of wellbeing. At Halcyon, we use the Human Givens Institute’s Emotional Needs⁴. To select a few of these needs, to be well we all require physical security; a sense of autonomy and control; emotional intimacy (to be known for who we are); meaning and purpose; and a sense of belonging (to the school community). At Halcyon we think of this as beginning with agency; that student voice – being able to make real decisions and have an authentic say in how a school

functions – is a foundation on which individuals build a sense of self and belonging. We also understand that an individual’s sense of belonging requires us to be culturally responsive⁵; that inclusion means that everyone’s identity and culture is recognised in the classroom. And when we have belonging, and all the trust and respect and engagement and compassion that accompanies it, then we have a sense of wellbeing. No-one feels well when they are excluded or not recognised.

Secondly, programmes to foster social and emotional intelligence will not happen on the margins – in PSHE, or mentoring. They need to be in the centre, and as an International Baccalaureate school it is a part of our curriculum to teach effective skills to support self-regulation and self-awareness. We also invest in cognitive coaching⁶ training for all our staff. This provides the foundation for all discussions with students including a weekly conversation between mentor and mentee, when teachers listen in a process designed to reflect student concerns and to create new understandings. This is extraordinarily empowering for young people, and it both meets their wellbeing needs and provides them with the social and emotional skills that are a bedrock for better academic performance.

Cognitive coaching is expensive to implement schoolwide, but there are so many obvious benefits.

With better SEL competencies across the community, we reduce reliance on old fashioned discipline models. As the community is better able to regulate itself – because we focus on the people and not the systems – we no longer need hours of expensive teacher time spent on the administrative disciplinary treadmill. In fact, we no longer need those systems at all, and now function successfully with a restorative practice approach, which allows students and staff to mediate conflict with the goal of restoring our relationships. This process takes time, but the investment we make in young people signals that their needs are being recognised, and this is a place they can belong. Restorative practice supports everyone’s wellbeing; old fashioned crime-and-punishment systems do not.

Academic excellence can be achieved in many ways, and you will have your own ideas about what is best for your community. Our students attend competitive universities – Oxbridge, and Russell Group universities, and Ivy Leagues in the US – as I am sure your students do too. And my learning has been that a student can only fulfil their full academic and personal potential – to be the very best they can be – when they have a sense of wellbeing. I would advocate that we all consider what it means to have a human-centred approach to education and how we can make our schools centres of both academic and wellbeing excellence.

1 Yale School of Medicine, Academic Performance, Well-being, and Perceptions of Safety All Improved, <https://medicine.yale.edu/news-article/new-research-published-in-child-development-confirms-social-and-emotional-learning-significantly-improves-student-academic-performance-well-being-and-perceptions-of-school-safety>

2 Seligman’s PERMA+ Model Explained: A Theory of Wellbeing, <https://positivepsychology.com/perma-model>

3 Department of Health and Social Care – How we are supporting mental health services in England, <https://healthmedia.blog.gov.uk/2023/06/09/how-we-are-supporting-mental-health-services-in-england>

4 Human Givens Institute, What are the ‘human givens’, <https://www.hgi.org.uk/human-givens/introduction/what-are-human-givens>

5 Northeastern University Graduate Programs, 5 Culturally Responsive Teaching Strategies, <https://graduate.northeastern.edu/resources/culturally-responsive-teaching-strategies>

6 Thinking Collaborative, <https://www.thinkingcollaborative.com/cc-resources>



Astronomical recognition

Head of Physics at Croydon High School, Surrey, Mrs Arabi Karteepan, has been awarded the Royal Astronomical Society 2024 Secondary and Further Education Award for her contributions to promoting Astronomy and Space Science within the educational community.

A teacher at the school for three years, Mrs Karteepan's achievements include leading one of the first successful launches from a UK school of high-altitude meteorological balloons, reaching an altitude of over 32,000 metres.

Under Mrs Karteepan's leadership, the Astrogazers club at her school has also flourished, becoming oversubscribed and inspiring pupils to pursue interests in science and astronomy. Her creativity has extended to leveraging digital platforms, such as YouTube, to broadcast live action, ensuring that the wonders of science and astronomy reach a wider audience.



Mrs Arabi Karteepan

Mrs Karteepan has also actively collaborated with other agencies to engage pupils in exciting scientific projects. Notable among these collaborations is her partnership with Open Weather, hosting a workshop on National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration images using amateur radio. Mrs Karteepan's commitment extends to ongoing weather balloon projects and potential satellite initiatives, showcasing her dedication to pushing the boundaries of space and science education.

Chemistry magic

Loughborough High School, Leicestershire, finished as the highest independent school team in the county at the Royal Society of Chemistry's Top of the Bench Competition

Five teams of Year 9, 10 and 11 girls from the school took part in the competition.

The annual competition, which has been running for over 20 years, is designed to inspire excitement about chemistry, and fuel students' curiosity around the subject.

Loughborough High School finished as the highest independent school team in Leicestershire narrowly losing out by one point to competing in the Regional Finals at Derby University.

Head of Chemistry at Loughborough High School, Anna Williamson said: "The RSC

Pictured: LHS students in the chemistry lab



Top of the Bench competition challenges the students to work in a team and it tests their theoretical knowledge, practical ability and problem-solving skills.

"Competitions like these are so valuable as they enable the students to see the exciting career options available to those with a background in Chemistry/ Science including fundamental research with international companies which may have a major impact in the future."

Editorial Feature

Schoolblazer celebrates 20 years

In 2024, Schoolblazer celebrates 20 years as a retailer of high-quality uniform to the independent schools sector. The company has experienced great success since its inception in 2004 and is looking forward to another positive year.

Schoolblazer was originally founded to make parents' lives easier when shopping for school uniform. Time-poor parents needed an easier solution than fitting appointments in the school shop, and help with onerous tasks such as name-taping. Since launching their first online school shop in 2004, Schoolblazer has also launched a sportswear brand (Limitless), its own sports bra (The Limitless Bra) and today is the market leader, providing uniform and sportswear to more than 200 UK independent schools. There has always been an ethical and sustainable focus at Schoolblazer and the company was proud to be the first schoolwear retailer to become a member of the Ethical Trading Initiative in 2021.

Customer satisfaction continues to be highly rated for Schoolblazer, with a 4.7 rating on Trustpilot

(the average for a uniform shop is 2.8). The team pride themselves on customer service excellence, dispatching 100% of orders within 48 hours.

Originally named Squadkit, sportswear brand Limitless has become a powerhouse in independent schools, focusing on providing solutions that keep young people active and inspired by sports. Limitless is now a major partner to the Rosslyn Park National School Sevens rugby tournament, as well as partnering with Independent Coach Education. Limitless continues to research barriers to participation in sport, to support their goal of keeping young people active, confident and healthy.

This year, the company will also be celebrating continued and

consistent growth in the sector.

The full warehousing operation is relocating to a new, 80,000 square foot warehouse, creating enough capacity for anticipated future expansion. The move will be completed by the end of May 2024.

The team continues to move from strength to strength and none of

Schoolblazer's achievements would have been possible without their amazing hard work; the 2023 customer satisfaction figures attest to the outstanding achievements of the whole company. With strong company growth over the last few years, together the team are looking forward to the future.



Bridging the gap:

Education Research and Classroom Teaching

How can evidence-based research feed into day-to-day teaching? Director of Learning and Research at Downe House School, Berkshire, Dr Andrew Atherton, discusses why it's important, how it impacts learning outcomes for pupils, the benefits of teacher and pupil feedback, and provides some thoughts on how to marry up what is taught in class with what works from an evidenced perspective.

The last decade has witnessed huge advances in the related fields of neuroscience and cognitive science, with profound implications for pedagogy. From developments in our understanding of, for instance, working memory, to effective recall strategies to metacognition, becoming conversant with the science of learning provides tremendous opportunity to enhance what takes place in the classroom.

These far-reaching scientific breakthroughs have been accompanied by renewed and vigorous research-informed debate surrounding topics more directly related to education from formative assessment to curriculum design and dialogic discussion. Further, research has a lot to tell us about areas that underpin and frame our educational practices such as discussions surrounding student resilience and motivation or AI (Artificial Intelligence).

It is for very good reason that over the last six years a whole host of schools have committed themselves to becoming what Tim Cain describes as a 'research-informed school'. There is then a whole host of school partnerships and networks, underpinned by a shared commitment to research, such as, the Research Schools Network, the Institute for Effective Education, and ResearchEd. Indeed, even as far back as 2015 the Carter Review of Initial Teacher Training stated that all teachers should understand 'how to access interpret and use research to inform classroom practice'.

Further, in 2018 the British Educational Research Association concluded that 'teachers across the UK should be supported to become research literate' and that 'every pupil is entitled to lessons which are informed by the latest evidence'.

The difficulty for any and every school is that these debates are constantly developing and shifting, and as such they must be attended to with care and precision.

At Downe House we take these challenges seriously, recognising the important and indeed exciting opportunities they provide for our students and our colleagues. Research sits at the heart of our teaching and learning. It is for this reason we have developed our very own Centre for Learning and Research, as an intellectual space within which to grapple with these ideas so that they feed into, and shape what happens in our classrooms.

From Learning Lunches where colleagues informally share ideas and strategies amongst each other to research-driven CPD (Continuing Professional Development) cycles, there are many ways in which this ambition is lived out every day. As a school we have also created our own research journal in which colleagues write articles about their own engagement with educational research and the role it plays in their own practice. Whether that is a chemistry teacher exploring the role of AI or an English teacher discussing latest developments in feedback, these insights are hugely

beneficial. What matters more though, are the conversations these articles generate between colleagues.

Recognising the crucial importance of pupil voice, we also invite our students to contribute to each issue of the journal. We usually ask them questions such as: 'what is one thing about your learning that you enjoy?' We offer no other advice or guidance, but the results are always insightful and fascinating in equal measure. With this simple prompt, and not necessarily always having the vocabulary in which to label it, students have organically explored the importance of retrieval practice, dual coding, spaced learning and metacognition.

Another primary way in which engagement in research is organised at our school is across two Learning and Research Councils, one for pupils and one for colleagues. In each instance, the aim of the council is to complete a short Practitioner Research Project. Colleagues focus on an area of their practice they wish to improve, whilst pupils focus on an area of their learning they would like to know more about or to change.

The Staff Learning and Research Council covers the entire academic year, ensuring it is sustained, focused and as meaningful as possible for those involved. Those involved, first conduct relevant research into their chosen area before devising and implementing targeted strategies to use in the classroom



Dr Andrew Atherton

based on the available research. At the end of the year, teachers evaluate the efficacy of these strategies as well as sharing their findings with colleagues.

In a recent cycle, for instance, our head of biology, investigated whether retrieval practice lesson starters work in a content-heavy subject such as biology. What is the trade off, she considered, between 'losing' ten minutes at the start of lesson versus the learning gains afforded by retrieval practice? Not only did she discover it was worth the apparent trade-off, but her students enjoyed the strategy so much they used it outside of lessons and in their own revision.

The great benefit to our councils is that they allow both colleagues and pupils to ask those key questions that really matter to them. They produce as well as consume educational research. As Pollard (2016) has argued, CPD is most effective when it is 'school-led, school-owned, focused on teaching and learning and improving classroom practice'. This is something we try to live out as a school every single day.

Being conversant with the rich and nuanced conversations generated by cutting-edge research is the direction of travel for education globally. Our Centre for Learning and Research exists to ensure we remain, always, at the forefront of these debates so that we can help our teachers to teach better and our pupils to learn more.



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Are minibus safety inspections a legal requirement?

Emeline Thompson, Compliance Coordinator at Rivervale, the new home for Castle Minibus, is often asked if minibus safety inspections are mandatory or a legal requirement. She explains what is legally required and reasons why Rivervale recommend safety inspections every 10 weeks to their clients.



Emeline Thompson

In my role as Compliance Coordinator, we have completed extensive research on what is required to run a legally compliant minibus. Rivervale is the only company to offer a Minibus Management Course, written in consultation with a former Senior Traffic Commissioner, to help schools navigate this minefield of information. We are not giving legal advice, only best practice recommendations.

That said, Rivervale considers minibus safety inspections to be a requirement of 'maintaining a roadworthy vehicle', which is a legal requirement. We have consulted many sources including the CTA (Community Transport Association) and ROSPA (Royal Society on the Prevention of Accidents) on safety inspections, but we base our advice on the Department of Transport and DVSA's guidance coupled with the lived experiences of our customers.

The DVSA's definition of roadworthiness is:

'complying with the appropriate vehicle construction, road safety, environmental and operating standards required by the law in the UK. For a driver and operator, it is a criminal offence to use an unroadworthy vehicle on the road.'

Section 4 of the DVSA Guide to Maintaining Roadworthiness describes 'why intermediate safety checks are essential to an effective roadworthiness maintenance system'

'Safety inspections form part of the overall maintenance plan of a vehicle, their purpose is to assess the safety critical items and other items affecting roadworthiness and the environment. Safety inspections should be undertaken independently from routine servicing and repair.'

Furthermore, the application for a Section 19 Permit requires evidence that the applicant has a contract/agreement to complete safety inspections at regular intervals. The DVSA's guide also states that:

'Operators must comply with the declaration they give to the relevant traffic commissioner that they will ensure that their vehicles are operated in a fit and serviceable condition.'

Completing safety inspections at least every 10 weeks is evidence that an organisation has the makings of a robust maintenance system as required by the DVSA.

Why every 10 weeks?

The DVSA's guide to roadworthiness gives a time frame

of every 10-13 weeks for lightly loaded vehicles with easy operating conditions (their smallest time frame) and every 6 weeks for vehicles aged 12 years and over. Rivervale recommend every 10 weeks as we have seen Section 19 Permit applications denied to organisations who had inspections completed at intervals greater than 10 weeks. If we recommended safety inspections every 3 months, we would put organisations at significant risk of either not being granted their Section 19 Permit or having them revoked should they come under scrutiny.

If you are denied a Section 19 Permit, or your application is delayed because you have not submitted the relevant safety inspection documentation, you will not be able to operate your minibuses until you have a valid permit.

There is more information on the Department for Transport's 'Recommended Maintenance Arrangements for Section 19 Permit'. It confirms within its summary of the DVSA's Guide to Maintaining Roadworthiness that:

Daily walkaround checks [and] vehicle safety inspection and routine maintenance inspections to be carried out at set intervals

on items which affect vehicle safety, followed by the repair of any faults. These are in addition to the servicing of the vehicle and the MOT test.²

Following the government's guidance Rivervale considers minibus inspections to be a vital part of an operator's legal obligation to maintain roadworthy vehicles, along with daily vehicle checks, default reporting and keeping records of checks, inspections, and repairs for at least 15 months. We recommend every 10 weeks for safety inspections in line with the DVSA and CTAs recommendations, as best practice, and to avoid issues with Section 19 Permits.

If you have any further questions about minibus safety inspections Rivervale completed over 12000 last year, and has a dedicated compliance team you can call including myself, and my colleague Marianne Woodwell, on 01869 253744 email minibus@rivervale.co.uk or visit Rivervale.co.uk/minibus.



Department of Transport Section 19 Permits



DVSA Guide to Maintaining roadworthiness

1 <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/643ebdb16dda69000d11e008/guide-to-maintaining-roadworthiness-commercial-goods-and-public-service-vehicles.pdf>
2 www.gov.uk/government/publications/section-19-and-22-permits-not-for-profit-passenger-transport



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You do you and I'll do me

Guitar in hand, Head of Cottesmore School, West Sussex, Tom Rogerson opened the recent AMCIS-IAPS Prep School Marketing Seminar with a self-penned song written specially for the event. The song was a plea for school marketers to "fall in love with" their school and find their own point of difference. He sang:

*"You do you
You do you and I'll do me - it's all
that we've got,
you'll come to see
Just make sure
You do you and I'll do me - it's all
that we came with
And all that we'll leave*

*"If you try to be someone else,
we'll never find the spark.
Nothing comes of nothing, and
you'll always miss the mark.
Learn to love the way you are,
you're the only one you've got
Stop thinking about all the things
you're not."*

Rogerson - who recorded quirky videos of himself racing through Cottesmore grounds and jumping in the lake to celebrate the end of

term - exhorted delegates to "search for and find the you-ness" when marketing their prep schools. He said: "Fall in love with your school. Not everyone wants to jump in a lake. Some people are good at maths - they should use that [in their marketing] instead. Magnify your assets. You have your own beautiful assets, make the most of them. The words when you go to a school website are all sounding a bit samey - for example, 'We educate the whole child' - don't 'tell' people - show them through your marketing and keep showing them."

Rogerson pointed out marketers should "...never underestimate people's disinterest. We live in a funny little echo chamber where we believe ourselves to be the centre of the universe, but you should always assume people don't know what or who you are. If you stop talking, posting and story writing, people will think that you don't exist. Keep on going and triple-down on your efforts - there is no other way."

To demonstrate his point, he asked how many people in the audience

were aware that Cottesmore has an AI chatbot on its senior leadership team; the initiative gained extensive UK and international coverage in 2023. Fewer than ten of the 140+ audience raised their hand.

Tom Rogerson ended by reminding school marketers to find the joy in school life and to not be afraid to embrace fun. He said: "I'm very keen on juxtaposition so at Cottesmore we do a lot of AI but we're also a very traditional school; I'm a great fan of the art of 'and' - you can be more than one thing. So, in the morning you can have fun with your social media marketing and in the afternoon, you can be serious in a meeting with the Head. Find the way to do this in your own setting."

Other topics at the seminar included:

- A branding case study on how St Michael's Prep School delivered a new prospectus (Director of Admissions & Marketing Jane Thornton & Marketing & Media Manager Taz Usher).



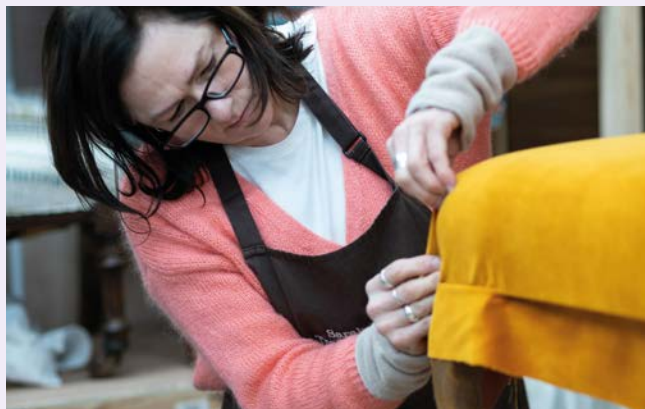
- A look at the implications of the current political landscape (Sarah Cunnane, ISC).
- Dr Andy Kemp, Principal of the National Mathematics and Science College, took a granular look at how AI tools can help school marketers do more in less time to promote their school and help shepherd parents through the admissions journey.
- How to champion your place in the fast moving and competitive early years market (Carolyn Reed & Katie Cardona, Reed Brand Communications).
- Trends and actionable insights to help you optimise your Prep School's digital presence (Kerwyn Salmons, 15th Media).

Pictured: Tom Rogerson, Head of Cottesmore School singing to delegates at the AMCIS-IAPS Prep School Marketing Seminar

Chorus and Verse 1 of You Do You © Tom Rogerson

Advertorial Feature

Upholstery workshop for schools



Everyone's saying it... but getting young people off their screens and using their hands and creative brain is truly beneficial. Teenagers need complementary activities that will ultimately benefit their academic success.

Our footstool workshop gets them using hand tools, natural materials and fun fabrics to create a tangible, and a proper piece of furniture to keep.

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The package has real longevity for schools. Once the package which includes a video, images, written instructions, tools, beech wood frames and materials, has been purchased there is minimum future outlay.

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Getting more out of your library

With over £25,000 invested in a school library, are you getting the right outcomes?

The library is a place for your students to explore new topics and new worlds as they become independent readers and researchers. With new focuses on literacy from the DfE's Reading Framework, it's time to look at how your library is already and can further help improve literacy outcomes for your students.

Being home to thousands of books and learning resources, the library can easily be worth over £25,000, that's before you add in the online subscriptions (Accelerated Reader, EBSCO, Wheelers ePlatform etc.), and the learning resources your school has added to its asset register.

Your school needs to keep track of these resources – where they are going, where they have been, and which ones are actually being used. Accessit Library has been developing its cloud-based library management system for 30 years, and we're here to share features that help get the most out of your school's library investment.

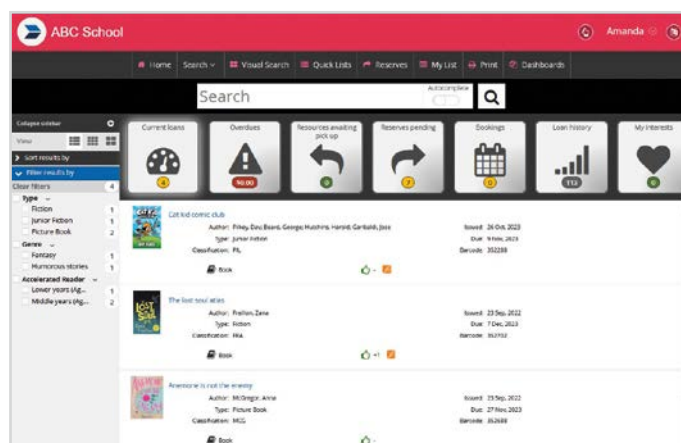
Guiding your library's investment decisions

Accessit Library allows library staff to run extensive reports on what books and resources are being used and where, providing invaluable insight into what students are engaging with most. This can help guide future purchasing, ensuring that students have a library that reflects their needs and encourages higher levels of engagement.

Going beyond books, Accessit can be used to track assets such as cameras, Chromebooks, school sports uniforms, instruments, and other resources. Being able to have all your assets and resources in one system where they can be tracked, accessed, depreciated, and reported on is proving hugely beneficial to schools as they are getting more from their library system investment.

Empowering students to read

Our real passion here at Accessit Library is supporting student literacy. In Accessit each student has their own account – empowering them to browse, reserve and create lists of resources that interest them.



Being cloud-based students can access the library from anywhere to view and easily self-renew books they have on loan, view resources they have borrowed previously, and even explore new resources that match their interests.

A view for your board

ISI and OFSTED reporting along with the DfE Reading Framework

come with a focus on literacy, despite this the library is often overlooked – but library data can be used to prove the foundation of a strong and sustained reading culture.

The ability to encourage reading is one thing, but being able to clearly demonstrate that passion for reading is another. Clear and

Category	Value	Percentage
Fiction	£10,000	40%
Non-Fiction	£15,000	60%
Picture Books	£5,000	20%
Total	£30,000	100%

concise reporting features allow you to illustrate the value of your investment to not only your board but to third parties and prospective parents as well.

We know that the library is the heart of literacy within a school, and to get the most out of it in today's world you need to prove the value of your investment in literacy. The best way you can do that in 2024 is to check how your library system helps you examine your school's reading habits and helps ensure that the resources you are investing in are being used.

Is your library management software working for you in 2024?

If it isn't, have a chat with our team to explore the benefits Accessit Library could bring to your library, your students, and your school.



Your library system should find the answers your school leaders needs...

ABC School

10 Most Popular Resources by Year Group

Year Group	Title	Author	Number Issued
Year 4	My best book of dinosaurs	Maynard, Christopher	12
	How do dinosaurs learn colours and numbers?	Yolen, Jane; Teague, Mark	12
	How do dinosaurs go to school?	Yolen, Jane; Teague, Mark	11
	Harry and the dinosaurs and the bucketful of stories	Whybrow, Ian; Reynolds, Adrian	11

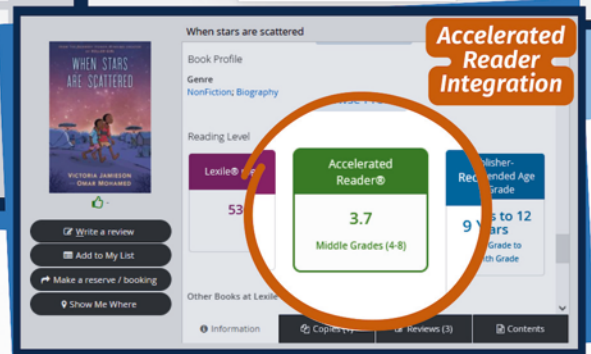
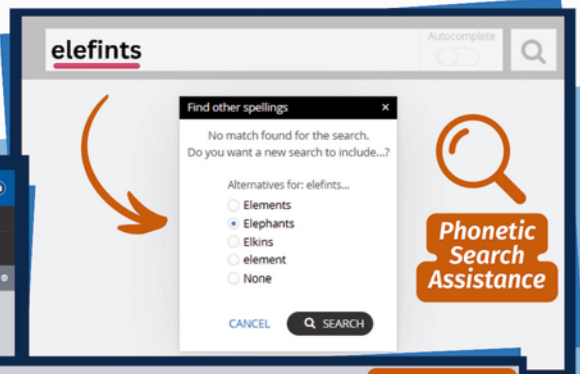
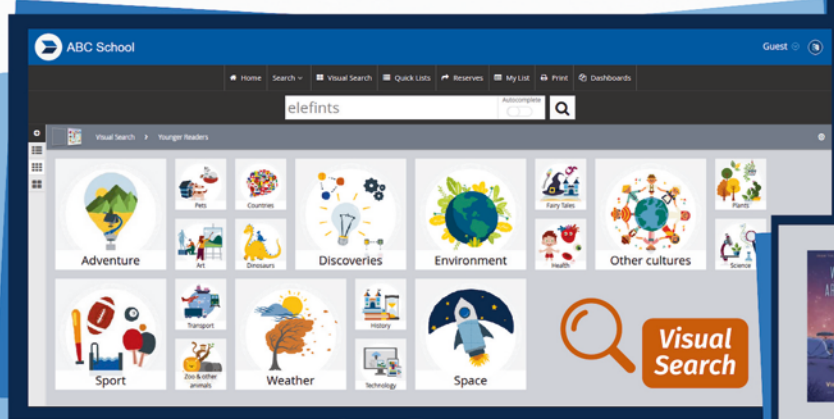
ABC School

Cohort Comparison

Reporting on: Year 07, Year 08, Year 09, Year 10, Year 11

Year	Academic year 2021/2022			Academic year 2022/2023		
	Issue Count	Active	Inactive	Issue Count	Active	Inactive
Sept	50	37	82	69	46	73
Oct	45	36	83	50	39	80
Nov	46	40	79	49	34	85
Dec	44	38	81	59	43	76
Jan	42	37	82	19	15	104
Feb	64	48	71	9	9	110
Mar	51	41	78	13	12	107
Apr	69	54	65	9	9	110
May	49	41	78	180	60	59
Jun	57	42	77	0	0	119
Jul	39	33	86	0	0	119
Aug	46	41	78	0	0	119
Annual Total	604	113	6	457	107	12
Average issues per borrower		5.08			3.84	

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Reading for pleasure

Levels of reading enjoyment amongst children are at all time low according to 2023 National Literacy Trust statistics. Librarian at Ravenscourt Park Preparatory School, London, Jenny Griffiths, discusses the importance of school libraries and shares some of the ways she has found to spark a love of reading.



The Library at Ravenscourt Park Prep is at the heart of the school. A prospective parent recently commented “now this is what a library should be like!” It is bright, colourful and appealing, with comfortable seating and new books on display. I can hear pupils shouting “the library is open” when they run across the playground at the start of break, eager to read and borrow.

Reading for Pleasure is a top priority and was a major theme in my successful entry to The School Library Association’s 2022 Primary School Librarian of the Year Award. I love reading children’s books. I love sharing recommendations with pupils and receiving them in return. Within a regularly updated “new books” display, a poster tells pupils what I have just read; what I am currently reading; and what is coming up next. Teachers and SLT display these posters too, so they know we love books too.

I have visited many other schools in the six years that I

have managed my own library, and when asked what can be improved, I advise weeding stock. It is impossible for your pupils to find that beautiful new book about coding which you recently purchased, if it is wedged between a book from the late 1970s about television in the future (this is a genuine example and was pretty accurate, except we are not wearing space suits), and a geography book from 1983. Once weeded, the shelves will be attractive and appealing, with new books easily discovered.

Reading for Pleasure requires books children want to read. I am grateful that my school has been able to support a gradual growth in my budget, trusting my vision for the library, which has seen huge rise in borrowing. I work closely with other departments which has enabled the development of subject specific and themed collections. I am a passionate book reviewer, and a judge for a major children’s book award, with the added bonus that they also introduce new books to

the library. Passion for books and dedicated reading time is vital for these responsibilities.

New books are frequently added to our collection and are displayed front facing so that they are easily found. Quality and variety of stock are vital. Pupils want to read books which open them up to new worlds, and which they will enjoy. The huge growth of graphic novels and the new genre of “boomies” (part book, part comic) entice all readers, reluctant or otherwise. They are a great way to introduce “classic” texts to pupils (alongside abridged and dyslexia friendly editions) and spark enthusiastic peer to peer recommendations.

Author and illustrator visits are key to Reading for Pleasure, and highly significant in providing representation to pupils. The variety and quality that we have welcomed to RPPS has been particularly high, and when pupils feel a connection with these visitors and their books, they want to read. Two particular pupils last year met authors who made them feel represented

through shared disabilities, both personal and within their families. These amazing experiences will stay with them for the rest of their lives. Their families and the authors have all shared with me how special these experiences were.

The most significant change I made to the library was to persuade SLT to timetable library lessons for every class. Now, every child, every week, comes to the library. When there are no lessons timetabled, the library is open to those on break or at lunch and is always busy. The library reaches everyone.

Reading for Pleasure is encouraged by the wider reading culture within our school. Year 5 pupils regularly race down from English when they want to read the whole book which featured an extract they have just studied; or when they have loved the class reader that I recommended to their teacher and want to read the next book in the series; or if they are enjoying the current class topic and want to explore that topic in our fiction collection. Delving into fiction to read deeper into a topic encourages empathy, and our collection has a strong focus for Equality, Inclusive and Diverse texts.

Reading for Pleasure starts as soon as pupils join RPPS with a story read to them by me at the end of every library lesson and goes all the way through to Year 6 with the position of Library Prefect being a highly sought after role. The prefects are currently helping me to develop our new book review project where pupil-authored reviews can be accessed via QR codes on book covers.

The library is a safe space where children come to read, relax, find peace, and borrow books which they can take home to continue Reading for Pleasure.”

Twitter/X: @RPPS_Library





900 celebrations

The High School of Glasgow, is celebrating its 900th anniversary this year.

Founded around 1124, the High School started out as a 'Sang School' or choir school for boys at Glasgow Cathedral. To mark its 900th anniversary, the school is running a year-long programme of events during 2024 and is launching a fundraising appeal, the 900 Campaign, to increase the school's Bursary Fund and to develop an educational initiative called START promoting new skills for youngsters.

The 900 celebrations commenced with a dinner at Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum. The programme of anniversary events will include a Gala Musical Concert at the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall in June, a 900km sponsored cycle across the UK in September, a major art exhibition and a sporting showcase involving current and

Pictured: School Captains, Thom and Anya, in the cloisters of Glasgow Cathedral

former pupils. There will be a special 900 Commemorative and Thanksgiving Service in September at Glasgow Cathedral.

The 900 Campaign will raise funds to further develop START, which is currently being piloted at the school, to promote new initiatives in education, developing skills and opportunities for young people, not just at the High School but across Glasgow and further afield.

Rector of The High School of Glasgow, John O'Neill, said: "With the 900 Campaign appeal our aim is to increase our Bursary Fund by £4 million to allow us to widen access and ensure a higher number of children can benefit from learning at the school. It will also allow us to fund START, an exciting new venture which we believe will make a real difference to young people across the west of Scotland, including our own pupils".

Photo archive surprise



A teaching assistant at St Martin's School, Bournemouth, has made an unexpected discovery of some old school photos of her own children in the attic of the school, which is celebrating its 110th anniversary this year.

Heather Davis, who has worked at St Martin's for five years, was sorting through some archival photos which had been tucked away in the attic for decades when she came across some class photos of her own children.

Heather's three children were St Martin's pupils between 1987 and 2009. The photos were a nostalgic reminder of their time there, and include photos of Heather's eldest Sean, now 40, with his classmates at the age of five, her daughter Stephanie, now 38, aged four and 24-year-old Matt, when he was six.

Pictured: Heather Davis and pupils from the school

Heather said: "These photos took me right back to when my children were small – it was so lovely to discover them and share them with my colleagues and some of the children I work with now. It helped bring the history of the school to life for them."

St Martin's, has been educating children at the same purpose-built school since 1914, maintaining many of its traditions, including ringing the old school bell, dating from 1942, at break times and at the end of the school day.

The school has been in the hands of the same family since 1976, when it was purchased by former headmaster Townley Shenton. His three children, Tim, Jane and Nicky, now share the proprietorship.

225th Anniversary Mass

New Hall School, Essex, has celebrated Mass to mark the exact anniversary of the first Mass celebrated at New Hall following the arrival of the founding Religious Community, the Canonesses of the Holy Sepulchre, in 1799.

The Canonesses' journey had been one of excitement, radical education, and secrecy. At a time when girls were denied a Catholic education in England, they were sent to Liège to board with the Religious Community, founded in 1642. However, the French Revolutionary wars forced them back to England, where they moved into the Tudor Palace of Beaulieu, intent on moving their school and providing a

Catholic education to girls from around Europe and the UK.

"It was not a simple task, as students now had to be smuggled into the country. The sisters used the code name 'fishes' to cover up the real contents of the boats arriving on the English shores. This secret led to students across the decades being referred to as 'Fishes', with alumni becoming 'Old Fishes' as they left the School," explained Deputy Principal of New Hall School, Mr Andrew Fardell. In honour of this at the 225th Anniversary Mass, it was announced that the School will be returning to this tradition, renaming its alumni association the Old Fishes Association.



Pictured: The anniversary mass at New Hall



Profile

In conversation with Dan Gillespie

Born: 1981

Married:
Indeed to the very patient Steph!

Children:
My three girls Freya, Nora & Effie

Schools and Universities attended:
Claire's Court Boys,
Reading University

First Job:
At 14, I was an accomplished
compost carrier at
Toad Hall Garden Centre

**First job in independent
education:** Sports Coach & PE
Teacher at Claire's Court

Appointed to current job:
September 2019

Favourite piece of music:
I Giorni by Ludovico Einaudi

Favourite food:
Rib Eye Medium rare please!

Favourite drink: Too much Black
filter coffee in the day time.
Followed by relaxing Two Flints Big
Bella in the evening or a good old
vine Zinfandel!

Favourite holiday destination:
Basque Country, Highlands
of Scotland or anywhere with
my family

Favourite leisure pastime:
Anything involving water (frozen or
otherwise) or a mountain

**Favourite TV or radio programme/
series:** Favourite Movie has to be
Top Gun (both) (I can quote both of
them verbatim) and for light relief,
a good series like Schitt's Creek or
Succession

Suggested epitaph:
I said no suits!

Q You started your career in secondary teaching and then left the sector to launch a sport and education consultancy based around sport for social change. What did this initiative seek to achieve, and did it do so?

A RPD Sports was created to work and support pupils across London who were excluded or at risk of exclusion. The idea was that sport could be a vehicle to re-engage them with the learning process but also to try and teach them important life and social skills. We were motivated by the idea of providing a supportive and innovative learning journey to promote a life long interest in learning, but also to give our children an increased sense of self-worth, a "can do" attitude and to instil in them a sense of pride in both individual and joint achievements.

The initiative was hugely successful and we delivered programs for a large number of local authorities which also culminated into working with some big businesses to support corporate social responsibility programmes. One of our programs that we ran with Deutsche bank was even featured on sky sports as a case study in social change.

It was a really interesting period of time in terms of professional development and helped steer me towards my current position in terms of raising awareness of SEN across different socio-economic climates.

Q You subsequently returned to teaching, specialising in inclusion and provision for children with additional needs. Who or what inspired you to get into teaching originally and more recently your move into Special Education?

A I was very fortunate to have some amazing teachers when I was in my teenage years who spotted some potential and inspired and encouraged me. PE teaching, and playing to my strengths, enabled me to create a difference especially for children with learning difficulties, which made me want to do even more. I was really fortunate to have a group of supportive people at Claire's Court, such as James Wilding, Dave Course and Justin Spanswick, who then nudged me to take these skills and move into Special education. The role of SENCO, provided

me with a fantastic wealth of experiences in both a classroom setting and as Assistant Head at Claire's Court Junior Boys.

Q Beech Lodge School is a special school for children aged 7-18 with emotional and social difficulties primarily due to trauma and adverse childhood experiences. It was co-founded by adoptive Daniela Shanly, whose personal experiences led her to the view that an alternative approach to learning to maximise potential, wellbeing and increase self-esteem of young people was needed. What do schools need to do to fulfil the needs of such children successfully?

A Luckily the face of education is changing and the understanding and knowledge of the importance of nurture and instilling a sense of belonging has become more commonplace. Indeed, Pastoral care has become much more at the forefront of education across the board.

However, the challenge is real and the demands in education are huge. Of course, with the right training, resources and time, it is possible for all schools to fulfil the needs of such children. However the challenge is greater, especially in mainstream schools as they have less resource, time and much larger class sizes.

The unique nature and size of Beech Lodge ensures that every single child has their own personal pathway tailored to their individual needs. A huge amount of time and resource is designated to ensure that they get everything they need to reach their full potential. We have a high teacher/pupil ratio and small class sizes. We also offer specialist teaching for specific learning difficulties, as well as access to therapeutic interventions such as Speech and Language, Occupational and Play Therapy. It is important to remember that education cannot sit on its own in silos to successfully meet the needs of the most complex students.

Q The approach Beech Lodge School takes is described as being underpinned by child development and attachment theory. What does this mean in practice?

A In practice, this means that everything we do as a school and a community has the child at its heart and at the

Dan Gillespie has been head at Beech Lodge School, Berkshire since September 2019. Beech Lodge School is specifically designed to support children who require a more nurturing approach to education. Dan was previously Assistant Head and SENCO at Claires Court Junior Boys School, also in Berkshire.



centre of the process. We are aware that many of our children have had difficult starts in life and interruptions with their emotional and social development. This affects their ability to build successful relationships and results in a lack of communication and coping skills, affecting their self confidence and self worth. We are aware that learning to trust others and feel safe is a huge challenge for many of our children.

Everything at Beech Lodge is designed to bridge that gap and create secure emotional attachments to their caregivers and teachers. Our school is a close community and our children are held at the centre of that community, behaviour is modelled by all our staff to ensure that they learn by association and we help our pupils develop trust and confidence in themselves as well as the people around them. This assurance provides an established base for them to practice independence and exploration appropriate to their own needs.

Q The school developed an educational resource that provides a system to identify, monitor and support children's emotional and social development. What are the key elements of this? Is it available to other schools?

A We created Fagus (which is the Latin for Beech tree – the tree of learning) many years ago to underpin the curriculum at Beech Lodge. The key aims of Fagus are; to improve knowledge of social and emotional development; help teaching staff apply this understanding to identify a pupil's individual social & emotional functioning and set developmentally appropriate goals; and provide a framework to monitor social & emotional development and measure the impact of interventions and strategies over time. We use Fagus with all our pupils to monitor their progress, create developmental profiles and set goals under 13 domains of development including Awareness and Understanding of Others, Moral Development, Coping and Self-Esteem. All the Fagus materials have now gone online and we hope to re-launch it to other schools sometime in the future.

Q The school environment can play a vital role in supporting the wellbeing of the whole school community.

As a school you have some creative spaces such as a '50s style American diner and a library that looks like a Granny's living room. What inspired these and what demonstrable difference have they made?

A I don't think the importance of environmental factors to support children in their learning can be underestimated. We are less formal in our environment and our community than a mainstream school. The school has been specifically designed to be friendly and welcoming, and to promote a sense of belonging and a sense of safety. It is homely but not home, we are friendly but not friends. And this is all part of the plan to imbue pride and confidence in our children in their environment as well as to reduce any additional stress caused by previous experiences.

Creative touches like the library looking like a Granny's living room and a hat stand full of crazy head pieces all add to the inner workings of the school. This creative interpretation and decoration makes our school a happy, creative place to be.

The school walls are drenched with children's art and spectacles reflecting the ethos of the school, celebrating our children as well as ensuring a bright and immersive environment that promotes a sense of belonging and supports a level of ownership over the environment for the student body.

Q Your approach is supported by a focus on the importance of relationships and embedding emotional wellbeing throughout the whole school community. How do you make sure outcomes and wellbeing are improved for parents and carers as well as for their children?

A We use the principles of unconditional positive regard and our belief that "every day is a new day" assumes that everyone makes mistakes but we learn and move on from them. Acceptance, empathy and good humour is embedded throughout our

whole school approach. This combined with appropriate use of therapeutic interventions and understanding, encourage children to develop confidence and boost self efficacy and their sense of self worth.

Parents and carers are an important part of our community so we work closely with our families to improve outcomes and ensure wellbeing for them as well as for their children. A huge amount of time is put into working collaboratively with them and we have constant dialogue with anyone that is significant in the lives of our children and their families.

Alongside the usual reports, parents evenings, weekly newsletters and individual discourse, we work hard to keep parents and carers informed about learning and personal development and show our families and support network that they are valued. We run workshops and therapeutic based courses for parents/carers to develop their own skills to help them be strong positive role models for their children. We have regular parent/carers social events and they know that they have the leadership team on hand to discuss any concerns they have about their children or even themselves.

Q As part of preparing pupils for the next stage of their lives Beech Lodge has a careers initiative which aims to offer young people pathways into employment. One of the ways you are doing this is through a charity pop-up shop 'Apprenticeship'. What does this involve? And how do you measure success – success being different for every child?

A Originally launched in November 2021, the Apprenticeshop was created to underpin the clear vision of Beech Lodge School by developing student's social skills, self-esteem and self-confidence and giving them important life skills as they graduate.

Set up as a subsidiary of the school, The Apprenticeshop is a learning and working space that offers meaningful work experience to our pupils in a real-life retail setting. The shop sells second hand homewares whilst simultaneously raising much needed funds for local charities. **Continued >**

Profile

In conversation with Dan Gillespie (continued)

Many of our pupils have completed vital work experience in the shop, enabling them to foster independence and develop key life skills before they transition to the wider world. They have learned a great deal about the retail industry from stocktaking, pricing up items, cleaning, advertising, point of sale, taking cash and card payments to dealing with customers.

This is hugely successful, teaching our children real life skills and boosting their confidence in a work setting before they leave school and preparing them for the larger world.

Q The school celebrated its tenth year in 2023. On reflection what would you pick out as the key achievement of that decade?

A I think we have created a unique educational model tailored to the needs of children who have experienced profound early life trauma, loss and adversity. Most of our pupils are adopted or have been in the care system at some time in their young lives and we are recognised for the pioneering work we do with them. Our relationships-based model is reflected not only in the approach we take but in the buildings and the surroundings our children interact with every day.

The fact that the school has been here for 10 years is a testament to how much it is needed. We have progressed from a small converted barn with just 5 children to a purpose built site on 10 acres with over 80 children and a large team of talented teachers and practitioners that has and continues to enrich the lives of children

and their care giver's lives.

Q You have enjoyed playing rugby and tennis, and now relish an outdoor lifestyle, even having walked and paddle-boarded the Thames from its source to Windsor with your wife. You've lived most of your life in Berkshire, where in the royal county is your favourite outdoor spot, and why?

A That's a big question! My girls would definitely say the enormous new playground at Savill Garden. We are very lucky to be in the part of the world that we are in and there are so many beautiful spots. There is something very calming about the depths of the Windsor Great Park and yet at the same time the single track at the back of Swinley Forest holds equal appeal depending on the time and frame of mind.

In memory

Brendan Wignall, the Headmaster of Ellesmere College, Shropshire, for the past 27 years has died aged 63, having lost his battle with cancer. He leaves his wife Anne and two children Catherine and Hugh.

Mr Wignall took up his role as Headmaster of Ellesmere College at the age of 35. He set himself the goal of being Ellesmere's longest serving Head, which he achieved.

Acting Head of Ellesmere College, Mrs Vicky Pritt-Roberts, said: "It is an understatement to say that we are going to miss his presence, his guidance and especially his sense of humour.

"He was a man of philosophy, and it was clear to everyone how that influenced his life. He had a strong moral compass and urged us all to be kind to each other – a favourite theme of his for assemblies, and when dealing with wayward students. 'Be kind' is a message that will continue to ring down the corridors of Ellesmere for years to come. He has left his legacy in our hearts and minds and Ellesmere College will never forget him."

Richard Morse, Chairman of Woodard Schools and John Inge, Bishop John of Worcester, President of Woodard Schools, of which Ellesmere College is a

member said: "Brendan stood apart as a fine exponent of what it means to be a Woodard Head.

Nathaniel Woodard's mission was no less than the transforming of society through the gift of an education rooted in the catholic tradition of the Church of England. Brendan saw himself as inheritor of that mission, with a clear vocation to realise it in his day and in his beautiful corner of rural Shropshire.

Brendan's commitment to recognising the unique strengths and challenges of everyone was reflected not only in his words but also in his actions, leaving an enduring mark on the hearts of those who had the privilege of knowing him."

Ellesmere College Chair of Governors Mr Charles Lillis, said: "His death is a great loss, not only to his colleagues and students – past and present – at the school, but also to the wider community. Brendan has been an inspiring leader of Ellesmere over his 27 years of dedicated service. He brought great passion, clarity of purpose and personal humanity to the role. His love of films, stories and anecdotes, and passion for Liverpool Football Club endeared him to all who knew him."



Closely involved with local charities, Brendan Wignall was also the Chairman of dyslexia charity CReSTeD, the North West Academies Trust (NWAT), and the Treasurer of HMC.

In 2012, Mr Wignall spoke to ISM and described how his work with the CReSTeD also led him to become involved with an All-Party Parliamentary Group on Dyslexia.

CReSTeD paid tribute saying "We have lost a dedicated, considerate, humble, exceptional Chair. Our thoughts are with his family whom he adored."

Stephen Docking OBE, and CEO of NWAT, said: "The loss of Brendan

is devastating to an enormous number of people, and that illustrates what a wonderful man he was. He was a huge support as we formed and then grew NWAT; his wisdom and experience were a consistent and priceless influence over many years. Fundamentally, he was a truly great guy who was always ready to devote his time and expertise to help other people in a massive variety of ways."

A special service for students and staff has been held and will be followed by a period of reflection and support. Support is being offered to students through in-house trained counsellors and through the school's Chaplain.

Pictured: Brendan Wignall

Creating remarkable from impossible

King Edward's School and King Edward's VI High School are set to take on a musical performance that has historically been deemed one of the most difficult in the orchestral repertoire. Director of Music at King Edward's School, Birmingham, Dr Martin Leigh, discusses how by taking on the challenge it is showing young people, both within the schools and in the wider community that nothing in life is impossible.

There's a great deal of talk about high expectations in education. But what happens when schools expect the impossible?

The first performance of Igor Stravinsky's ballet *The Rite of Spring* caused a riot. Audiences in 1913 were not prepared for music of such power, energy, and complexity, and reacted viscerally and loudly. Stravinsky's piece takes innocuous little folk-songs and transforms them into things elemental, dangerous, revolutionary. It's one of the most difficult pieces in the orchestral repertoire, making huge demands on huge forces.

An impossibly-high expectation, then, that any school orchestra could perform it. Perform it four times, once in one of the world's great concert halls.

It's what KES/KEHS Symphony Orchestra, the orchestra drawn from pupils of King Edward's and King Edward VI High School for Girls, is doing this term. And it's impossible.

Well actually, no. Quite possible, and something from the example of which every school could learn.

How then? First culture, then time and space. There's little children can't do. As we get older, the watershed of impossibility is something which surrounds us, coming ever closer. Tell a child that they can, and very often they do. If you build a culture which supports and promotes this, then all things are possible. The *Rite* ends with a 'Sacrificial Dance,' fiendish in its rhythmic complexity. Break it down, however, into its component parts, then practise each; then slowly assemble them, one-by-one; and the orchestra

could play it by the end of the first rehearsal. It's a perfect model of teaching and learning. Balance this with feedback (the right kind) and encouragement (not-too-much) and there's much we can all learn from music teachers.

The time and space continuum matters, too. Work like this needs a space, chairs, music stands, and instruments. We could not be more fortunate in our Ruddock Performing Arts Centre, but for 54 years rehearsed in our schools' halls. Time, too. Give staff time to prepare, and pupils time to rehearse. Our orchestra rehearses together for 90 minutes each week; in sections for a total of about three hours. There's also a music residential trip, a three-day long rehearsal. Our co-curricular time is respected by the whole school – particularly by the brilliant Directors of Sport and Drama, our Deputy Head, and their counterparts at KEHS. We work together every day to make it possible for every pupil to do most everything – look to their wellbeing and academic success, too. Time matters, and rehearsals are planned to the second. If there is a section of the orchestra not required in a rehearsal, or needed only briefly, then they are not required to be there, or do their work and are quickly sent away. In this we treat them as professionals. Expectations again.

There are resources beyond spaces and chairs. It's too easy to overlook the potential of people around you, people you see every day. We have an excellent team of visiting teachers here. They knew about the project before anyone, have been there every step of the way. There's only so much any of us know, and to call on

their experience, enthusiasm, and encouragement is a tremendous resource. They know the endpoint, are fully invested in its success, and are marvelling at what their pupils are now doing because of them. There are under-used people in every school. Perhaps our expectations should extend to them, too.

It's wonderful to share, too, an education when you do it. The English and art department of both schools are busily creating away to the stimulus of the music, to the modernist aesthetic it represents, too. Eliot and Pound and Joyce are part of the work in English; cubism and abstract expressionism in art. We share beyond our gates, too. Six state primary schools are working with us. We're training non-music-specialists in them to help their pupils to learn instrumental composition – composition based on the music of the *Rite*. 180 of their pupils will come to us next month, perform their own *Arrival of Spring* to our orchestra; which will reciprocate with the Stravinsky.

An illustrator, James Mayhew, is going to be on stage with us, dancing brushes illustrating live the events of the ballet. We do this because we are lucky and we know how much we learn by sharing.

And whose impossible idea was all of this? This credit is due to Ben in year 13. He suggested it, told us how it might just be possible. The final lesson is this: listen to our pupils, they often have better ideas than do we.

So, because of our culture, time, and space; because we make the most of our people; because we share generously; and because of our impossibly-high expectations, something truly remarkable is happening here. If you find yourself in Birmingham in March, come to Symphony Hall, hear our concert. Hear the truth that nothing is impossible for our pupils when the teachers get it *Rite*.

KES/KEHS Symphony Orchestra will perform Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* at Birmingham Symphony Hall on Monday 18 March 2024.



Pictured: KES/KEHS Symphony Orchestra with Dr Martin Leigh

Credit: David Ash

Buzzing auditions



Sherborne Prep, Dorset, has welcomed a BBC Casting Director to the school to hold auditions for an upcoming TV series, *Lord of the Flies*.

Casting Director, Rose Patrick, with Sherborne Prep Head of Drama, Siobhan Cheadle, met with almost 30 boys from Years 5 to 8. The boys were asked to learn one of Ralph's scenes where he notices Piggy has fallen behind and comes down the mountainside.

Pictured: Pupils auditioning for *Lord of the Flies*

Each boy was given a five-minute time slot to perform Ralph's scene. 'You need to keep up!' and 'I picked you for the mission' could be heard repeated throughout the hallways all morning.

If successful at this stage, boys would be called back and asked to go to London to have a second audition. Out of the many boys who auditioned four senior boys; Eddie, Digby, Luke, and Herbie were called back for a second interview.

Legally Blonde



A cast of 83 students from Newcastle High Schools for Girls (NHSG), Tyne and Wear, have taken to the stage to perform *Legally Blonde*, attracting audiences of 1300 across a four-show run.

Legally Blonde tells the story of sorority girl turned law student Elle Woods. Head of Drama and Musical Director at NHSG, Anna Dobson, said: "Legally Blonde explores the power of determination, friendship and embracing your true self – and our cast took the audience on an unforgettable journey filled with laughter, catchy tunes and

some seriously impressive dance moves."

Jess Grayson, Year 11, (age 15) was one of the two NHSG pupils who shared the star role. Jess said: "Elle is such an inspiring character to play. She challenges the stereotypes and shows everyone how intelligent she is while still being true to herself. Even when you leave the stage, a little bit of Elle stays with you."

17-year-old Minnie took up the lead part for the second cast. Now in Year 13 and preparing for her A levels, she has taken part in every show since she started at the school seven years ago.

Pictured: NHSG performances of *Legally Blonde*



Love of music

Workshop College, Nottinghamshire, was abuzz with music as Year 4 pupils from six local primary schools joined vocal group, Apollo 5, in a day of fun-filled workshops. This outreach programme, delivered by Apollo 5, a part of the VOCES8 Foundation, aimed to enrich the musical experiences of young learners and foster a love for singing and collaboration.

The workshops provided an immersive vocal training experience, filling the school's chapel with children's voices. The day's activities extended beyond singing, incorporating brain, body, and voice warm-ups, as well as engaging games and activities. These activities not

only enhanced the participants' vocal skills but also encouraged them to explore aspects of leadership, teamwork, and various elements of music, irrespective of their singing ability or musical background.

The event rounded off with a final performance at the end of the afternoon where pupils proudly showcased the skills they had learnt throughout the day to an audience of family and friends.

The outreach programme serves as a bridge connecting young talents with the world of music, inspiring them to explore a love for music.

Pictured: Families and friends coming together to watch the grand finale

New music hub



Truro School, Cornwall, has announced the launch of the Truro School Music Project. This will see the creation of a new multi-million-pound music centre and a refurbished multi-use Hall, which aims to foster musical participation, excellence, and inclusion within the school and the broader community.

Scheduled for completion at the start of 2026, the project will

create a hub for musical education and aspiration in Cornwall, offering facilities for pupils, the Truro community, and beyond. This project also paves the way for improved facilities to support pupil wellbeing too.

Beyond Truro School, the Music Project aims to widen musical access and musical aspiration, providing a musical hub for Truro and Cornwall.

Pictured: The Truro School Music Project plan drawing

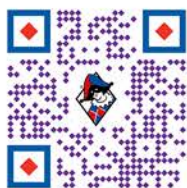
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Pitching for Choir of the Year



Singers from Taunton Prep School, Somerset, have made it to the finals of a national choral competition, where they will compete against choirs from 21 other schools in a bid to clinch the title of Barnardo's Choir of the Year.

Next month, they will take part in the UK's largest school choir competition, held annually in Birmingham. The winners of the junior and senior sections will go on to perform at the Barnardo's 2024 Young Supporters Concert at the Royal Albert Hall.

Director of Music and Performing Arts at Taunton Prep School, Philippa Simmonds said: "We are delighted to have been selected to compete in the final."

The group submitted recordings of two pieces to the judging

Pictured: The TPS Singers

panel – 'In Flanders Field' by Sharon Durant and 'Whisper!' by Greg Gilpin. Adjudicators commented on the balance between vocal parts and also intonation and expression.

Some 34 pupils from Years 5 to 8 make up The TPS Singers – an auditioned choir which rehearses twice a week.

The latest success comes on the back of a tour by The TPS Singers to Barcelona, where they performed to an audience at the Basilica in Montserrat.

The Barnardo's national choir competition has been running for more than 14 years, raising vital funds for Barnardo's work with disadvantaged children and young people.

National Operatic and Dramatic Association Awards

It was encore, encore, encore for Westholme School, Lancashire, at the NODA Awards, with the school scooping three awards.

Westholme received the ReAct Academy Megan Lees Award for Best Youth Ensemble for their 2023 production of Fame and

the North West District 3 winner for Best Youth Musical for the same production. Director of Performing Arts at the school, Amy Holland, was also presented with North West District 3 for Best Director of a Youth Musical for Matilda The Musical.

NODA was formed in 1899 and has enjoyed well over 100 years of service to the amateur theatre, recognising its members' performances through a series of regional awards each year, across the UK with the North West ceremony taking place each January.

Westholme's next production will be Les Misérables.



Pictured: Westholme at the NODA Awards



Musical training

Two musicians from Durham High School for Girls are set to spend their Sundays at the Glasshouse Centre for Advanced Training (CAT), a music training programme for young people with exceptional potential and passion for music.

Flautist Isabel Sheen, 14, and French Horn player Rosalind Cockling, 15, are both Year 10 music scholars. Isabel, who was a chorister at Durham Cathedral for three years and was awarded a 13+ music scholarship to join Durham High School last year, is preparing to take Grade 8 exams in flute and

singing, as well as Grade 8 piano later in the summer.

Rosalind, who is preparing to take a Grade 7 French Horn exam, is in her second year on the CAT programme and is a member of the Young Sinfonia, a youth orchestra linked to Gateshead's Royal Northern Sinfonia.

The teen, who was awarded a music scholarship when she joined the Durham High School in Year 7, also plays in the Houghton Area Youth Band and is a member of the school's Senior Orchestra and Senior Choir.

Pictured: (L-R) Durham High School Music Scholars Rosalind and Isabel_Stride PR

Musical castings: When I Grow Up I want to be Part of the Band

Harriet Rogers, 11, and Emerald Finbow, 10, who both attend New Hall School, Essex, have been cast in two musicals that feature large children's casts, and are set to perform in London's West End and beyond.

Harriet, who has won awards and titles at national dance competitions, including the Judges Choice Awards for Musical Theatre, Tap and Lyrical, has been cast in Matilda The Musical, which is now in its 12th year in London's West End. She will be playing the role of Alice until March 2024.

And it was also recently announced that Emerald, current Head Girl in New Hall Preparatory Division, will be joining the cast of School of Rock for their South Korea tour in 2024, performing in the Seoul Arts Center, home to the Korean National Ballet.

Pictured: (top) Harriet R – 'Gotta Dance' Prep Dance Show and (bottom) Emerald in the School of Rock Asia tour



Low carbon education hub

HRH The Princess Royal has visited Gordonstoun, Moray to officially open one of the 'greenest' classroom buildings in the UK.

The Princess Royal unveiled a plaque naming the classroom hub, 'The Queen Elizabeth II Rooms', in honour of Queen Elizabeth II and with approval from The King, a former Gordonstoun student.

HRH The Princess Royal – who holds the role of 'Warden' at Gordonstoun – met students

and was given a guided tour of the new classrooms including demonstrations of how students at Gordonstoun are using AI in the classroom and from the school's robotics club who will be competing at the National Championships later in the year.

The Queen Elizabeth II Rooms, clad with Siberian Larch timber, boasts advanced environmental credentials such as solar PV panels, ground source heating and hi-tech CO2 monitoring. The solar panels generate enough



Pictured: The Queen Elizabeth II Rooms

free energy for four months of the year, while the overall bill for the building has been substantially cut.

The building has also been installed with the latest technology, including control systems for removing and adding walls to change the size of the existing rooms, and interactive teaching walls.

The Queen Elizabeth II Rooms at Gordonstoun, is the first phase of the school's masterplan to create a new 'classroom village' to upgrade its facilities for students and the local community, while

reducing energy and the school's carbon footprint.

Gordonstoun Principal Lisa Kerr said: "The low carbon design is a signpost to how we want to develop the rest of the school estate as part of our bold masterplan leading up to the school's 100th anniversary."

The building opened to students and staff in April 2023 following 14 months of construction. The Gordonstoun masterplan also includes a new boarding house, Sixth Form centre, new outdoor spaces and increased access to Gordonstoun's heritage buildings.



Pictured: HRH The Princess Royal with Principal Lisa Kerr



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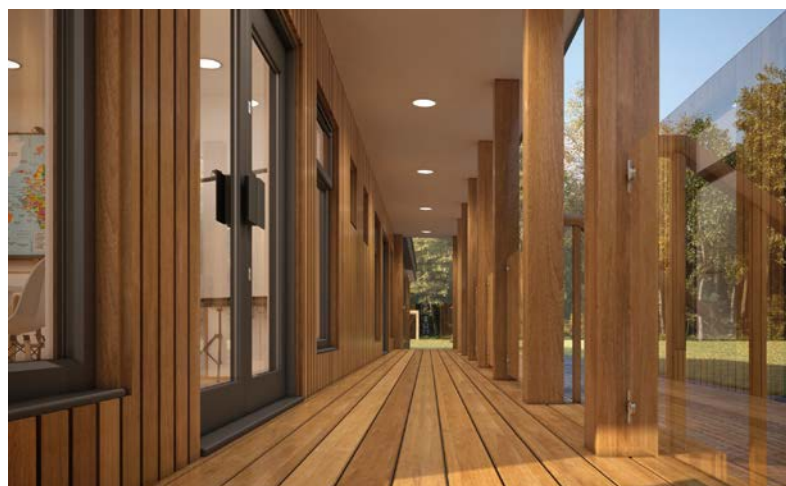
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Art collaboration – exploring creativity beyond the conventional boundaries

Durham High School for Girls, has recruited skilled embroiderer and former pupil, Emma Hardy, as its second Artist in Residence. Head of Art and fellow alumna, Jenni Sneddon-Brown, explains how the placement helps push the boundaries of art education.

The North-East is home to some exceptional artistic talent. It's a resource that I'd long wanted to tap into on a deeper level – to bridge the gap between the wealth of creative individuals in our local community and the enthusiastic art students at Durham High School. Aware of the high quality of art graduates emerging from universities and colleges, it became evident to me that establishing a dedicated placement for budding artists within our dynamic art department would offer mutual advantages.

Fast forward 18 months since the inception of this role, and the process of integrating an Artist in Residence into our all-girls school has proven to be a transformative journey for all. The initiative has not only unlocked opportunities for emerging talents but has also injected fresh perspectives into our academic space at Durham High. While artists find their initial foothold in the industry and a platform to showcase their work, the contributions we receive from them are invaluable.

Our first Artist in Residence, Rebecca Robson, from Durham, joined us in 2022 after a brief hiatus in her career. Having studied for a Fine Art degree in York, she brought her unique fusion of painting and sculpture to our department and proved instrumental in defining the position – contributing as a technician, conducting skill sessions, and offering one-on-one support. With an extra pair of hands, we could do more interactive sessions, incorporate more difficult skills and utilise her expertise to expand what we were teaching. Her presence freed up our teaching staff to experiment with new techniques, making the classroom a hub of interactive and engaging art education. Rebecca's work, from being featured in the USA's DollyWeird exhibition to influencing our sixth form Art History group's exploration of Francis Bacon, set the bar high for subsequent Artists in Residence!

While the placement is open to all, we were fortunate to have welcomed back an alumna, Emma Hardy, as our second Artist in Residence.



Emma Hardy and Jenni Sneddon-Brown

Having completed her studies here in 2019, Emma went on to gain a BA Textiles at the University of Huddersfield, specialising in embroidery. Her return as Artist in Residence gives Emma studio space and time to deepen her knowledge of traditional embroidery techniques, while she in turn supports pupils in art lessons and co-curricular activities, including Textiles Club and Photography Club. The two-way partnership works well, and pupils are really benefitting from her expertise and support.

Our commitment to supporting recent art graduates stems from the understanding that the initial step into the industry can be daunting. By providing a studio space, materials, and a collaborative environment, we want to help empower artists to explore new directions and experiences.

A crucial aspect of the role is the ongoing dialogue between the artist and our teaching staff. This exchange is not just about supporting the artist's professional development; it also enriches our curriculum with a continuous flow of fresh ideas and approaches. Witnessing Rebecca's work unfold throughout her year with us was a testament to the benefits of this collaboration. The students, in particular, formed a unique bond with her, gaining confidence to explore creativity beyond the conventional boundaries of school art.

The key benefits to our pupils are manifold. The Artist in

Residence programme allows our students to immerse themselves in a professional artistic context, transcending traditional school art setups. The exposure to an artist's skills, enthusiasm, and willingness to take risks pushes the boundaries of what art education can achieve. This, in turn, challenges outdated notions about the employability of arts graduates, demonstrating that a career in the creative industries is not only viable but also fulfilling.

While the role is a permanent fixture in our department, we opt for one-year contracts to ensure a diversity of experiences for both students and artists. With each passing year, we anticipate welcoming a varied array of practitioners, each with a unique skill set that enriches the broad spectrum of artistic practices taught within our curriculum. The selection process is rigorous, focusing on an individual's ability to engage with students, dedication to artistic endeavours, and compatibility with our team's exuberance and passion.

This initiative is an extension of our commitment to the local arts community and, ultimately, our exceptional students. We hope, moving forward, that the bond formed with each Artist in Residence does not conclude with their tenure and, instead, continues to thrive in future projects and collaborations. As I tell my students... Once a Durham High Artist, always a Durham High Artist!



Emma Hardy with DHS students



Cricket pavillion for University of Reading

TG Escapes Modular Eco-Buildings for Education's Sports and Leisure Needs

In the world of education, fostering a love for learning extends far beyond the classroom walls. Physical activity and leisure play crucial roles in a young person's development and the spaces that cater to these needs deserve the same level of thought and care as academic buildings. This is where TG Escapes enters the scene, revolutionising the educational landscape with their modular eco-buildings.

Speed and Flexibility

Traditional bricks-and-mortar projects are often lengthy and can cause budget woes for schools. Sectional modular buildings constructed offsite in controlled environments, then rapidly assembled onsite, minimise disruption, time and cost. This empowers schools to respond to rapidly evolving needs, be it a sudden surge in enrolment or a desire for a new sports program.

Bespoke Designs for Diverse Needs

From expansive sports halls to cosy studios, TG Escapes offer a diverse range of solutions, each a bespoke design, to create the perfect sports and leisure facilities for any school. Whether it's a sports pavilion with changing facilities or a serene dance studio with ample natural light, their in-house architects and designers translate a school's vision into reality, ensuring that each space is not only functional but also inspiring.

Sustainable Champion

Education plays a vital role in shaping environmentally conscious citizens. TG Escapes' buildings, constructed with sustainably

sourced timber and employing energy-efficient technologies, boast minimal carbon footprints.

Financial Savvy

Budgetary constraints are a reality for many schools. TG Escapes' panelised modular buildings offer significant cost advantages compared to traditional construction. Offsite construction minimises labour costs, and prefabricated components reduce material waste. Additionally, the energy-efficient features reduce long-term operational costs, freeing up valuable resources for other educational needs.

Wellbeing in Focus

TG Escapes buildings incorporate biophilic design principles, bringing the outdoors in through ample natural light, excellent acoustics and ventilation, and even living walls. This connection to nature fosters improved well-being, reduces stress, and enhances cognitive performance, creating a space where students can thrive both physically and mentally.

A Legacy of Learning and Leisure

TG Escapes' buildings are testaments to a forward-thinking



Sports pavillion at Holy Cross School

approach to education. By prioritizing speed, flexibility, sustainability, and student well-being, these buildings create inspiring spaces that nurture a lifelong love for learning and physical activity. As independent schools strive to meet the needs of tomorrow's students, TG Escapes' innovative solutions offer a blueprint for the future of sports and leisure in education to the benefit of a school's students and staff, now and for years to come.

Strong track record

Award winners at the Educations Estates and Modern Methods of Construction Awards, TG Escapes have completed nearly 300 education buildings UK wide and



customers rate them 4.9 out of 5 based on 187 reviews.

"Working with TG Escapes was a very positive experience."

David Lean, Bursar
Holy Cross Prep School

"Excellent, would recommend them to any school."

David Edwards, Headmaster
Collegiate School

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Overcoming adversity

The issue of building pupil resilience is ever present. Head of Brentwood Preparatory School, Essex, Jason Whiskerd draws thoughts on some of the lessons that can be learned from writer and social commentator Matthew Syed and from popular children's book 'We're Going on a Bear Hunt'.



I may be wrong, but I suspect that there aren't many people of a certain age who haven't read (or are at least aware of) the brilliant and timeless children's book 'We're Going on a Bear Hunt' by Michael Rosen. A family decides to go looking for a bear, and declares – 'we're not scared', but they then face a series of obstacles, including a river, a snowstorm and a muddy swamp. Suddenly they do seem a little more scared. Millions of people remember it for a multitude of personal reasons including the wonderful illustrations, the relentless repetition, the rose-tinted reminder of our own childhoods and the sheer joy of empathising with a family who are bonded by adversity. This clever story shows that even very young children can engage with the idea that it is not always possible to avoid something that is difficult. This is particularly relevant for a range of situations, including changes at home, and struggles at school.

Primarily, I remember it for the following lines, 'You can't go under it, you can't go over it. You've got to go through it'. For me, these iconic and often repeated lines are a wonderful metaphor for life itself and the many ups and downs of the journey we all take in a

life well lived. The perennial, and well documented, issue of actively building pupil resilience is never too far away in schools, and I was struck by this theme in a recent article by the wonderful writer and social commentator, Matthew Syed.

In the article, Syed used the metaphor of lifting free weights in the gym to the point of pain as being the same as allowing children to make mistakes. However, standing back and allowing this to occur can prove to be extremely challenging and especially for parents who perhaps feel the need to make things right in the confusion of the post-Covid landscape. Syed argues that lifting weights to the extent that it causes pain actually produces the best long-term fitness and physique. This is almost literally the very embodiment of the 'no pain, no gain' mantra. The body's stress response is to fix the pain and, almost against all odds, it almost always manages to achieve this result.

What has this got to do with the broader issue of parenting and day-to-day life within our schools? Well, protecting the body from stress can also undermine its ability to perform the self-repair required for greater resilience,

robustness and progress. If we compare this to the parent or school that does not allow (or indeed even plan for) a child to be placed in a stressful or challenging situation, then they too will never gain the resilience and toughness that will allow them not only to cope, but actually get stronger through lived experiences that they (and probably their parents) would not necessarily have chosen for them.

On a very serious and alarming note, according to the Office for National Statistics, suicide rates amongst children under 15 years of age have grown exponentially, and Matthew Syed argues that parents' wish to protect and possibly be 'overly kind' has, in effect, resulted in more harm than good, even though it might be totally understandable. This is a very difficult concept for any parent or educator to contemplate, as it makes us question our trusted methods and beliefs, whether that be in the realms of parenting, pedagogy or pastoral care. Such a bitter pill to swallow rarely tastes good but, on this occasion, the alternative is a great deal worse.

I may be imagining this but when I was a child, you often heard the phrase 'You have to be cruel to be

kind'. In my view, it is a particularly unpleasant and unfortunate phrase which was originally penned by Shakespeare in 'Hamlet' and became embedded into common parlance during the Victorian era, where such references and idioms often became a maxim for how people should live their lives. Despite my dislike for the phrase, I can see why it came to be so popular, and I can understand the thinking behind the perceived benefits of using cruelty or being unsupportive in the short term for supposed great benefits in the longer term.

To be absolutely clear, I would never choose to be cruel, and would undoubtedly always choose kindness over almost any other human attribute. I would suspect that every school leader and those who work in our institutions would feel the same way. However, Matthew Syed's view should not be ignored; as he states, '...those trying to help are often hurting us the most'.

Perhaps people, like muscles, flourish as a consequence of self-repair and overcoming true adversity. Perhaps only by being pushed beyond our comfort zone can we truly gain growth, robustness and resilience.

Learning outside the classroom

Lathallan School, Angus, has received national recognition after being awarded the Gold Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) quality mark by the Council for Learning Outside the Classroom (CLOtC).

Headmaster at Lathallan School, Richard Toley, said: "Learning outside the classroom has been a feature of the educational provision at Lathallan for several decades and its value is widely recognised. It is not just about learning outside in the

fresh air or outdoor education; it encompasses the valuable learning experiences that occur in any setting outside of the classroom across the whole curriculum."

The LOtC Mark is awarded by the CLOtC, the UK-wide charity that champions all learning that happens beyond the classroom. Its work supports educators, schools and organisations dedicated to ensuring more children and young people have opportunities for life-changing



learning experiences beyond the classroom, whether these happen indoors or outdoors, close to home or far away.

Many benefits of LOtC include improving academic attainment, physical health, emotional well-being, self-esteem, and resilience.

Pupil assessments, examinations and grade predictions

Time for a change?

Is the system overdue a radical overhaul? Educationalist, Andrew McEwen, suggests that the current approach needs modification. Here he outlines why...



The objectives for assessment, examination and grade prediction are to establish a method to

evaluate the effectiveness of the teaching process and a means to best guide a pupil when deciding on post-school choices, whether this be further study or employment. For the school the feedback from 'testing' helps determine teaching strategies and for parents and the pupils themselves the testing serves as a guide towards aspiration, motivation and future expectations. Exams such as the 11 plus, GCSE's and A levels provide filters for identifying specific study opportunities – entry to grammar schools and universities for example. For testing of any kind to be meaningful the assessments and examinations undertaken must clearly be robust, rigorous, comprehensive, and impartially applied and moderated. There is increasing evidence to suggest that these criteria are not being adequately met. The recent Covid-19 pandemic, with its impact on education provision, especially during lockdown, has demonstrated that there are numerous anomalies in the

current systems, calling into question their ability to meet their underlying objectives.

Looking back to 2019, the last year when A level exams were administered prior to the pandemic, UCAS reported that for the Year 13 cohort sitting three A' levels, only 13% of grade predictions were 100% accurate. 79% of pupils did not achieve their predicted grades! This clearly demonstrates that teachers are overestimating their pupils likely results in almost four fifths of cases. Given that we have dispensed with AS level exams, the predicted grades will form a main element in universities decision making on offers of places. As a consequence of the pandemic and the decision not to administer formal exams, teacher assessment formed the basis for the pupils' specific A level grades in 2020, 2021 and 2022. There is substantial evidence to indicate significant grade inflation during these years, with the grades awarded in 2021 being the high point in said grade inflation. The 2023 results have shown a return to pre-pandemic results, especially for A and A* grades. This drop in numbers of pupils receiving A and A* was particularly marked in Independent Schools, when comparing numbers for 2021 –

when 70% obtained A or A*, to 2023 – when 47% received A or A*, a fall of 37%!

One has to question why there was such a marked rise in A and A* grades during the pandemic, especially in independent schools. Considerable research has been undertaken to explain these anomalies. In the case of independent schools, where on average there was an increase of 40% in A and A*s being awarded, a number of factors have been identified. Initially, an algorithm was created which determined a predicted set of results for each class based upon historical school data and then applied this to the teacher assessed grades. This tended to bring down the teacher assessed grades. However, where class size was under 15 pupils, the algorithm result was averaged with the teacher assessed grades, and where numbers for the group were 5 pupils or less then no algorithm was applied. Given the smaller class sizes in independent schools this method led to pupils receiving higher grades as teacher assessed grades were almost universally higher. I would add a further explanation, one which is less mentioned – the typical independent school is smaller than the typical comprehensive school. Inevitably there are fewer

teachers of the same subject in Year 13. This means there is less opportunity for peer review which helps to moderate assessed scores. These factors contributed to higher numbers of top grades in independent schools.

Across the spectrum of all types of school, it is evident that any exam system, which relies on teacher assessment and predicted grades as determinants for what could ultimately decide a pupil's future, will likely fail to meet the requirements for robustness and impartiality. The evidence demonstrates that predicted grades do not come close to providing reliable grades. Whilst we have a system where university places are offered before exams results are known, we will continue to fail our pupils. I believe that it is necessary to modify the current approach, perhaps by undertaking some sort of Attainment Testing earlier, say in February. These tests could be graded immediately and would provide an objective element for universities to consider when offering places, thus complementing the exam grades which would be issued later. Any such objective measure would appear preferable to the current predicted grades, which have a 79% error rate.

Andrew McEwen MA, FRSA, has been Director and Chairman of IES (International Education Systems Limited) responsible for the development of schools in new markets, and Trustee and Director of three independent schools in the UK and two in South Africa, and is a member of BELMAS (British Educational Leadership, Management and Administration Society). He has also served on the Board of ISA (The International Schools Association) and the Advisory Board for the MA programme in International Education at NHLStenden University in the Netherlands. For nearly 20 years he has worked as a partner with National School Transfer where he helps buyers and sellers achieve their goals in the schools acquisition market.

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Moving forward, the building warrant application is submitted, followed by clarification evaluations and considerations for factory work commencement. The subsequent stages involve manufacturing building modules in the factory, fitting doors, windows, plumbing,

and various systems. Concurrently, service applications for water, electricity, and other necessities are addressed. Pre-mobilisation conditions, including approvals and permissions, are met before the mobilisation stage, which involves site preparation and community engagement.

Groundworks follow suit, preparing foundations, services, drainage, and access. The installation phase sees the introduction of building modules and on-site fit-out, ensuring seamless integration. Services such as power, water, and data connections are established, leading to the commissioning, snagging, and finishing stage, where thorough testing of various aspects is conducted. The final steps involve handover, including client training for building operations, key exchange, and the sharing of certificates, manuals, and reports.

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Slaloming to victory

Competing against skiers from eight other UK schools in the Parallel Slalom, Slalom, and Giant Slalom events, Felsted School, Essex, participants have won 15 prizes in both the individual and team awards at the Independent Schools Ski Championships 2023.

Felsted pupils Zach H, aged 11, and Seraphina H, aged 12, both won their age categories in all events.



Pictured: Felsted Ski Team, ready for the slopes

Unfortunately, in the team slalom events, the two participating Felsted teams drew each other in the first round. Felsted Team 2 went on to reach the quarter finals of the shield competition, while Felsted Team 1 only narrowly missed out on winning the championship cup in the final against a team of much older competitors.

"This championship is a great opportunity for Felsted skiers to show their skills on the slopes and meet pupils from other schools who share a passion for this great winter sport," said Rob Holt, teacher at Felsted in charge of the school's skiing activities.

Felsted's ski team participates in various competitions during the season and 16-year-old Felsted pupil Charlie C will be part of the Team GB squad to compete at the Winter Youth Olympic Games (YOG) 2024.

Netting a nomination



Petra Critchley, a Year 7 pupil at Bolton School Girls' Division, Lancashire, has been nominated for the ENG Junior and Netball Player of the Year Awards 2023. Petra plays Goal Attack or Goal Shooter for Kingsway Power Netball Club, Manchester Thunder, Lancashire County Netball and Bolton School.

Last year she helped the U11 Kingsway Power Netball Club become national champions at a tournament in Essex. She was awarded 'Player of the Tournament' for her team and then overall

Pictured: Petra Critchley

'Player of the Tournament', having scored 48 goals.

Petra first started playing netball in 2017 at age 6, inspired by her elder sister Pippa's passion for the sport. Her long-term goal is to someday represent the England netball team, hopefully by the time netball joins the Olympic line-up!

Petra's fellow nominees play for Leeds Athletic, Sutton Town and Shan Netball Club.

ENG Sports UK was created in November 2018 to help encourage more competition in sports.

Hockey partners



Christ College Brecon, Powys, has announced a partnership with the national governing body for hockey in Wales.

Hockey Wales, established in 1996, is responsible for the administration of all aspects of the game in Wales, including development, performance, schools, umpiring and universities.

This partnership aims to improve provision for hockey within mid Wales by supporting Hockey Wales in identifying and growing talent through its new county hockey pathway. The partnership will look to boost the number of competitive opportunities for all players through competitions and initiatives within the region.

The school will host Powys hockey training as well as tournaments and competitions for all counties across Wales. Christ College Brecon's hockey coach, Mark Ziegler, will also take

Pictured: Hockey team at Christ College Brecon

up the role of Head Coach for Powys County Hockey.

Director of Hockey and Head of Girls sport at Christ College Brecon, Sarah Hardman, said: "This partnership demonstrates our commitment to supporting the game across Wales, by growing numbers and developing talent within the region. We look forward to welcoming players over the years to our campus and supporting their development."

Joe Gage, Director of Development and Participation at Hockey Wales, said: "We aspire to ignite a passion for hockey and empower individuals of all ages and backgrounds to engage with this sport. We are excited about the potential this collaboration holds and look forward to the positive impact it will have on the growth and accessibility of hockey in mid Wales. This is a testament to our shared vision of 'Hockey for everyone, everywhere.'"

Red Roses call up

RGS Worcester Upper Sixth student, Haineala (Ala) Lutui, has received a call up to the Red Roses 2024 Elite Player Squad for the upcoming Under 18 Women's Six Nations Festival.

Ala's inclusion in the squad follows her performance in two rounds of England Rugby Centre of Excellence fixtures earlier in the season.

In preparation for the Festival, Ala, alongside her teammates, will initially face Ireland Under 18 Women's team in a training match.

Pictured: Haineala (Ala) Lutui



This marks Ala's second call-up for England Rugby.

Digital Literacy project

In 2021, Jersey College for Girls, Channel Islands, embarked on a journey regarding their use of technology. Assistant Headteacher for Digital Learning at the College, Miss Ruth Lea, discusses how the Digital Literacy project has resulted in improved learning for all students involved as well as reduced paper consumption.



Miss Ruth Lea

Inspired by how the College had turned to technology during the covid lockdown to provide learning to its students, the Digital Literacy project has propelled the College into a new era of how we teach and learn and helped refine our operational and environmental efficiency.

Whilst we had previously tried to engage students with digital tools to make learning more accessible, student engagement had only been limited due to the absence of a dedicated one-to-one device. We also required a 'Tech Partnership' between teachers and students to make the most of using technology to enhance learning.

We launched the project by asking all Year 7 Students to come to College with an iPad with Logitech combo-trackpad keyboard and Apple Pencil, which we had identified as the most robust and suitable combination.

We expanded the project to include students in Years 10 and 12 in September 2022 and now, all Year groups have a one-to-one digital device.

To embed the change within the classroom, we initially had a strong focus on writing and typing all notes on the device. Now that digital technology has become part of our everyday practice, we have adopted a blended approach, where there is a mix of paper and digital based written tasks. This is to ensure students do not lose the skill and muscle memory of writing quickly, neatly and for long periods of time as, currently, they will complete their GCSE / A level exams on paper.

We believe our existing Digital Infrastructure contributed to the success of the project. This included providing staff with tablet laptop and digital pens instead of desktop machines, installing Smartboards in each classroom and

upgrading our Internet Router and Access Points to meet the needs of an increased number of users.

We also pre-populate all MS Teams and Class Notebooks before the start of term and use Apple School Manager to setup devices and distribute apps, thereby removing the need for younger students to have a personal AppleID.

Before the launch, we also provided Professional Learning (INSET) dedicated to using technology for learning via a carousel of workshops led by teachers for teachers, as the majority of staff were unfamiliar with using Office365 and Class Notebook.

We also run a digital literacy programme for Year 7 students. It is planned and delivered by a digital literacy team, which includes IT technicians who are on hand in every lesson to support student learning.

This programme aims to teach students how to use their device for learning and prevents technology from being a barrier to learning in lessons, enabling teachers and students to focus on learning and not the technology.

Year 9 students also receive a weekly Digital Literacy lesson in the second half of the summer term to support them as they transition to studying their GCSE Options, whilst in Year 12 students receive four Digital literacy lessons at the beginning of the Autumn term.

The planning of the Digital Literacy lessons has to be dynamic – what we are teaching now is wildly different to what we did in the first year. The Digital Literacy team meets on a weekly basis to ensure lessons meet the needs of students and subject requirements.

Overall, the project has delivered many benefits for the College including a substantial reduction

of the paper consumption (we forecast a 54.9% reduction in the number of trees required).

Feedback from students and teachers alike is that the project has helped them be more efficient. For the former, they no longer waste time copying into an exercise book, they do not lose work and they are overall, better organised and prepared for revision. For the latter, the workload has been reduced and technology has helped provide more detailed and personalised feedback to students. Teachers have also reported students' learning was faster and more focused.

Looking to the future, we are keen to see how technology, especially artificial intelligence can provide personalised learning and real time

feedback across the curriculum.

We also want to investigate how best to use ChatGPT and similar A.I. software for both teaching and learning, as well as how adaptive learning technology can help adjust the content and pace of learning to the needs and abilities of individual students.

We will be using Learning Analytics to provide teachers with insights into student learning and behaviour, allowing teachers to personalise learning /implement intervention strategies for individual students.

Until we started using technology to enhance learning, we couldn't imagine what could be possible. In our journey to date, we have only scratched the surface and we are excited about what lies ahead.



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Transformation journey

Solihull School, West Midlands, has been confirmed as a Microsoft Showcase School for 2023–2024. Assistant Head (Digital Learning and ICT Strategy), Matthew van Alderwegen, shares some best practice from Solihull's Showcase School journey and looks ahead to what comes next as part of their continued digital transformation.

One of the few positives arising from the Covid pandemic was staff and pupils developing their digital skills apace. Once more necessity proved to be the mother of invention. Like so many other colleagues across the country, we cut our teeth delivering lessons via Microsoft Teams (live from our kitchen tables). We shared our screens and invariably our PowerPoints, and we got to grips with OneNote. We became more inventive and adept with each passing week.

Despite some collective screen weariness by the time of our ultimate return to the classroom in April 2021, it was apparent that technology had already changed and was set to continue to transform the educational landscape. Whilst there was no universal desire to suddenly dispense with exercise books, pen and paper to reach instead for our laptops we did feel that we needed to seize upon the moment. Rather than allowing the digital skills of our school community to roll backwards now the storm had passed, we wanted to build on the progress recently made; to retain and develop the best practice from

our online provision and integrate this within traditional classroom learning. We wanted the ability to use digital tools whenever they were the best tools for the job.

We were clear that technology should not be mandated or viewed as the goal, but embraced as a versatile tool which can assist staff and pupils in achieving educational goals. We wanted our teaching staff to be digitally literate and for pupils to feel empowered by technology which actively supports their learning needs, equipping them with the skills they will need to thrive in both their ongoing education and the workplace.

There is no shortage of excellent advice available to schools looking to undertake their own digital transformations. What we found to be most critical was not so much which approach to follow but setting our own principles first; to have a clear vision of what we ultimately hoped to achieve. Secondly, it was vital for the plan to have support from our Executive Headmaster and active endorsement from our Senior Leadership team. We were fortunate to have both this and a strong infrastructure and an adept

technical support team already in place.

We chose the Microsoft Showcase School programme as the vehicle through which to pursue transformation. This article is not an unwavering endorsement of the programme. There were some areas of focus and content, which we found more helpful than others. However, overall, it offered a clear structure, framework, had common educational values and shared priorities. Crucially there was flexibility over our destination: digital transformation, but transformation on our own terms.

In September 2022, we joined the Incubator path which enables schools to achieve Showcase School Status in one year, provided they can evidence that they are 'Advancing' against five criteria. These are: demonstrating a commitment to transform, developing staff's digital teaching and learning skills, harnessing MS tools to increase accessibility and inclusion, developing students' 'future ready skills' and utilising data effectively to inform interventions. During 2022–23 we focused on:

- All teachers delivering a proportion of content to one year group using OneNote.
- Using a combination of in-house training and the Microsoft Learn site to develop staff's digital skills.
- Establishing essential digital skills that all Senior School teachers have. More in depth programmes for most advanced staff.
- Establishing internal and external communities focused on digital transformation.
- Embedding Reflect application in Wellbeing AND Personal Development lessons and broader 21st Century Learning skills in the Computing curriculum.
- Developing PowerBi dashboard utilising data to drive decisions.

We learned a great deal in the process of our Incubator year.



Three tips

1. One to one schemes work best with a uniform yet versatile device, one which maximises teaching and learning possibilities. We opted for 2-in-1 touchscreen laptops with 360-degree hinge enabling the device to be used conventionally (with keyboard), as a tablet and allows digital inking (stylus built into the frame of the laptop).
2. Set up a group of 'Digital Champions' with one representative from each department. They are useful in helping to promote and train colleagues ensuring digital skills develop across the curriculum.
3. Planning and moderation are key. Technology is best utilised when staff feel equipped, when goals are clear (yet flexible and achievable) and finally when technology enhances a learning activity. Devices are often best used when they form part of the lesson not all of it.

What next?

Our commitment to digital transformation continues. We certainly have not reached our final destination. Gaining recognition as a Showcase School is an annual endeavour and we strive to move from 'Advancing' to 'Leading' on all fronts. Our focus this year is on exploring the potential and pitfalls posed by the growing use of AI in education. We have developed a 'working group' tasked with advising staff, pupils and parents on this topic. We look forward to hosting an AI event to share our findings with other schools in the Autumn.

Embarking on a digital transformation journey can seem a little daunting at first, but it need not be. I hope that this article provides some helpful advice and encouragement for any school looking to find their own way forward.

Prep School to join family of schools

Copthorne Prep School, West Sussex, has confirmed it is to join the Caterham family of schools with immediate effect. The move cements a long-standing relationship between the schools.

Caterham School Headmaster, Ceri Jones, said: "This relationship will enable us to build on a shared educational vision and

a culture of excellence for our young people, underpinned by wellbeing and innovation. All schools' trustees and governors have given their full support to the new partnership, which will retain the unique character of CPS whilst allowing the school to grow and evolve with confidence over the coming years."

Copthorne Prep School Headmaster Nathan Close will continue to lead the school.

The Caterham Family of Schools encompasses Caterham senior school, led by Headmaster Mr Ceri Jones and Caterham Prep led by Headmaster Ben Purkiss, and now Copthorne Prep School.



Pictured: Copthorne Prep School pupils

Learning tools – how to choose

Selecting the right digital tools to meet the needs of students in the digital age can sometimes feel like a challenge. Digital Resources expert, Howard Lewis, outlines five things schools should consider when evaluating which digital curricular resources are best for them.



Howard Lewis

Today's School Business Managers (SBM) have a growing remit when it comes to IT. From managing infrastructure and connectivity, to maintaining hardware and cybersecurity, SBMs play a pivotal role in keeping students and teachers connected and engaged.

An often overlooked part of the SBM role is providing guidance on the digital curricular resources that schools use every day. These tools are used on school devices and across wired and wireless networks. And because they utilise student information and data for learning, assessments, and reporting, SBM input is vital.

So how can SBMs ensure that they're choosing the right digital learning tools? Here are 5 factors to consider when evaluating digital curricular resources.

1. Data security

Does the provider protect personal information?

While most schools don't have a specific budget for cybersecurity, this is still a critical consideration when choosing a new provider. SBMs should consider if prospective partners

hold key security standards and certifications. Furthermore, edtech providers should have industry best practices and protocols in place, covering everything from intrusion detection and end-to-end encryption to training, auditing and more.

2. Compatibility

Will the digital resource work with existing software and apps?

Providing a seamless user experience, across multiple different platforms, is vital in busy learning environments. SBMs should consider if students and teachers are able to easily use an SSO to access the new digital resource. And to ensure smooth integration, they should also consider involving a systems integration leader in the early stages of the review process. This will prevent delays during implementation that can often derail the use of quality digital resources.

3. Accessibility

Can every student access the resource?

In today's classrooms, accessibility is non-negotiable and all schools

must check that their digital content is designed with this in mind. When choosing a new digital resource, SBMs should look for features such as Text-to-Speech (TTS), line readers, EAL support, magnifiers, and the ability to be used across multiple devices. They should also consider if the proposed resources are accessible to ALL students, no matter where they are and what device they are using.

4. Educational Purpose

Does the content meet teaching & learning goals?

SBMs should work closely with Curriculum Leaders and teachers to ensure that any new digital resources are curriculum-matched, pedagogically sound and can meet learners' needs. Educator input is crucial here and SBMs should gauge teacher's views at the very start of the process. Will the new learning tool help students to meet particular goals? Will it help with the delivery of core course content?

Edtech works best when used with purpose. And when the SBM and teaching and team work closely

together, the winners are always the students.

5. Trusted Partner

Is the vendor a true partner?

The most successful edtech partnerships are exactly that – a partnership. And when choosing a new vendor, SBMs should consider if this feels like a sound working relationship. Does the vendor understand the needs of their school? Are they aligned to the school's mission, vision and strategic plan? Are they actively listening to ensure this alignment?

A true edtech partner will also be easy to contact, and provide on-demand support to help teachers get the most from their new resources. SBMs should research this during the evaluation process, and ideally ask other schools about their user experiences. If a vendor is averse to efforts to build close relationships, this might not be the right relationship for a school.

Today's School Business Managers have more responsibility than ever. Keeping these considerations top of mind can help them to make great digital learning selections that work for everyone.

Howard Lewis is Discovery Education's UK and International Managing Director. www.discoveryeducation.co.uk

Advertorial Feature

Kenilworth School benefits from fermacell® for major relocation project

Following on from its relocation and merger into one all-purpose facility at the start of the academic year, Kenilworth School and Sixth Form is benefitting from the decision by Glancy Nicholls Architects and contractor Morgan Sindall to specify specialist boarding for the ceilings and walls in its new sports hall.

Part of a range of products by James Hardie, one of the world's leading manufacturers of building materials, fermacell® is a fibre gypsum board which provides superior fire resistance, acoustic performance and impact strength. This high-density board simplified the design of the sports hall and

created more space by narrowing the width of the walls. This not only helped with the speed of the build but also had a positive impact on carbon reduction as fermacell® is manufactured from recycled gypsum, water and wood fibres.

The new sports hall is a major part of the new Kenilworth School & Sixth Form which is one of the largest schools constructed in the UK, with a three-story campus with 2,200 places on offer, a 25% increase, helping Kenilworth to cater for its growing population.

Chris Winwood, Commercial Sales Manager at James Hardie

commented: "As well as impact resistance and fire performance the exceptional acoustic ratings of fermacell® means the sports hall can be used with complete confidence, and without disturbing other areas of the

school. It has been extensively used in the Education sector, as it offers the robustness of blockwork with the speed and install of drywall, saving time, money and space making it ideal for modern school environments."



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Boarding review – taking stock

Heathfield School, Berkshire, has recently undertaken a review of their boarding provision. Deputy Head Pastoral and Boarding, Ms Lou Scott, shares insights into implementing a review that's effective and how the outcomes are being used to improve the boarding environment and experience for everyone.

The rationale behind our boarding review was to take a fresh-look at the structures and provision in place, and plan for the future. As a relatively new member of the Heathfield family, I had the advantage of viewing our boarding provision through a fresh pair of eyes. What struck me, was that in some ways we were still operating solely as a full boarding school, and therefore we needed to adapt some of our scheduling and logistics to incorporate and reflect the needs of our changing school population.

The review is designed to highlight areas of best

practice – what makes our boarding community unique and exceptional, and to ensure our offer reflects the needs of students, parents and families. This year, Heathfield celebrates its 125th anniversary, so historically speaking, the move from full boarding school, to admitting day students alongside part time and weekly boarders, is relatively recent. What began with a handful of day students, has grown and become the majority in Form 1/Year 7.

The majority of our Upper Sixth are boarders, they require a greater level of autonomy with a

focus on independent study. In the lower school, we have fewer boarders, with very different needs – more personal enrichment activities and a greater level of support. The review allows us to consider how to provide the best possible environment for all our boarders, whether full or part time, alongside our day students.

For some staff, a 'review' can come with that element of fear – 'how will it affect me?' It's very important to be open and transparent, and make sure staff understand the rationale and are on board with the process. All staff need to feel involved. Before



we began, I sent out a clear outline of the review, focused on positives – identifying great practice, highlighting what was working well and providing a model for others to replicate.

First a team of consultants visited. They toured the boarding facilities, talked with staff, had a taste of boarding life joining us for meals, conducted focus groups with students, and gave their initial feedback.



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To ensure we have a 360 degree perspective on where we are and where we want to go, the best people to ask are obviously the students, parents and staff. We created a survey loosely based on an inspection format.

We asked students and parents about: quality and provision; pastoral care – feeling safe and secure; and practicalities – communication, transport, meals, activities, etc.

Boarding staff and resident staff with a boarding role, were asked about: their accommodation and suggestions for improvements; their role and input on rotas and if they considered this the best use of their skillsets.

Any credible survey creates huge amounts of raw data, so choosing the right platform to analyse all the feedback is incredibly important. Our software used a combination of Likert scale questions – strongly agree, agree, etc. which provided filtered numerical data presented

pictorially, and open questions requiring individual written responses – ‘The best thing about boarding at Heathfield is...’, ‘If I could change anything about boarding at Heathfield it would be...’. Although these questions take more time to process, they offer a wealth of information, and provide a mix of qualitative and quantitative data.

Analysing the data is also about controlling variables, and managing expectations – some suggestions may not be viable. If any concerns are raised, that student’s view should be respected and we need to address it. For instance, if the majority of students respond with ‘strongly agree’ to ‘the quality of the accommodation is great’, but others ‘strongly disagree’, those responses need to be followed up and explored.

The data has already identified some strong themes – students love spending time with their friends, and also recognise



members of staff who go ‘above and beyond’, which is wonderful to see. One area I have already started to focus on, is increasing student voice, and we have launched a new student food forum, organised by two Heads of Year. Other suggestions from the younger students have included additional equipment in the outdoor recreational area, which is now being planned. We are also

restructuring our boarding staff, so we can fully utilise the wealth of skills and talents they have, to the best advantage for our boarders.

The review process is about improving and providing the best possible environment and experience for everyone, whether that’s a student, parent or member of staff. Giving everyone a voice is key.

Pictured: Boarders at Heathfield School

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CHANGING FACES... CHANGING PLACES...



Ed Burnett, Senior Deputy Head at Taunton School, Somerset, has been appointed

Headmaster of Taunton Prep School.

Mr Burnett joined Taunton School in 2015. As Deputy Head Pastoral and Designated Safeguarding Lead he was responsible for the pastoral care of 1200 pupils from the Nursery through to Year 13.

In recent years, he served as Senior Deputy Head responsible for much

of the day-to-day management of the Senior School.

In his new role, Mr Burnett will have oversight of more than 500 children across the Prep, Pre-Prep and Nursery sections of Taunton's family of schools.

Before joining Taunton School, Mr Burnett worked at Cranleigh School in Surrey for 14 years. There he was the Head of Rugby, Head of Department, and a Housemaster. He also taught at an International School in Hong Kong.



Radnor House Sevenoaks, Kent, has welcomed Philippa Lang as Head of the Prep School.

Philippa completed a four-year teaching degree in Physical Education at Chelsea School, University of Brighton. Over her

career she has worked as Head of PE at Montgomery School, Kent, Assistant Head of St Aubyn's School, Essex, where she took on the role of SEN Coordinator, and was Deputy Head of Rose Hill School, Kent. Philippa began work towards her National Professional Qualification for Headteachers (NPQH) in 2023.



Lomond School, Argyll and Bute, has appointed Claire Chisholm as Principal.

Claire has been Academic Deputy Head at Lomond since August 2015 and was instrumental in the implementation of the school's International Baccalaureate (IB)

Diploma and Career-related programmes, meaning Lomond is able to offer access to both IB and SQA education qualifications.

She will take over from Mrs Johanna Urquhart who recently took up her new role as Principal of The International School of Monza, in Italy.



Mrs Amanda Hardie has been appointed by the Trustees of the Girls' Day School Trust (GDST) as the new Head of Newcastle High School for Girls, Tyne and Wear.

Mrs Hardie has been at Newcastle High School for Girls since its formation in 2014, and prior to that at Church High School since

1997. She has been a long-standing member of the Senior Leadership Team, most recently in the combined role of Head of Junior School and Senior School Deputy Head Academic. Amanda Hardie has been Acting Head of NHSG since September 2023 and after a rigorous recruitment process has been appointed as Head with immediate effect.

Heads Hunted

Among the upcoming head and principal appointments:

Belmont Grosvenor School

North Yorkshire

Oundle School

Northamptonshire

Kimbolton Prep School

Cambridgeshire

Wycliffe College

Gloucestershire

Bishop's Stortford College Prep

Hertfordshire

Rookwood School

Hampshire

DLD College London

London

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

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

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A photograph of three students in school uniforms. On the left, a young woman with dark curly hair tied back, wearing a light blue button-down shirt and a dark blue plaid skirt, is smiling and looking towards the right. In the center, a young man with dark hair, wearing a light blue shirt, a dark blue V-neck sweater, and a yellow and purple striped tie, is smiling and looking towards the right. On the right, another young man with dark hair, wearing a light blue shirt, a dark blue V-neck sweater, and a yellow and purple striped tie, is smiling broadly and looking towards the left. The background is a bright, slightly blurred outdoor setting.

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