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In this issue...



Award-winning food

Edinburgh Academy Junior School is celebrating recognition of the ethically and environmentally sourced food it serves its pupils.

The school has become the only independent school in Scotland to achieve the Silver standard from the Soil Association's Food for Life Served Here (Scotland) programme.

The Silver accreditation recognises the school's continued commitment to making good food the easy choice and championing environmentally sustainable, ethical food options sourced by local suppliers.

Caron Longden, development lead for Food for Life, praised the school's ethos around serving high quality food and said: "The relationship built between the headteacher and the caterer are particularly strong, and they work closely together to provide the best experience they can for pupils. Some vegetables are grown on site, all waste is composted, and work has been done to ensure the ingredients used in the service meet good animal welfare standards, including organic milk from a local dairy."

Gavin Calder, headteacher, said: "It is a testament to the time and efforts of catering manager Shona McGregor-Brown and her amazing team from Independents by Sodexo that we are at the vanguard in terms of food quality in Scotland's schools."

A catering team of eight serves 550 meals a day to pupils from nursery age through to 11-year-olds. Healthy food options are available daily, with a salad bar and fresh vegetables served every meal. There is also a selection of vegetarian meals.

Pictured: Head teacher Gavin Calder, catering manager Shona McGregor-Brown and head chef Karen Purves

Cover background

Design Centre

A new £3m Design Centre is under construction at King Edward VI High School for Girls in Birmingham over the coming months. The new facility will support the school's delivery of GCSE DT and GCSE Computing, and also includes enhanced space for art.

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Is Your School Mentioned?

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Abingdon School; ACS Schools; Aldenham School; Alderley Edge School for Girls; Ashville College; Ballard School; Bolton School; Bournemouth Collegiate School; Bradford Grammar School; Brentwood Preparatory School; Bromsgrove School; Bruton School for Girls; Cheltenham Ladies' College; Cleve House School; Colston's School; Crosfield School; Dame Allen's School; DLD College; Durham School; Dwight School; Edinburgh Academy; Elstree School; Eltham College; Emmanuel School; Exeter School; Felsted School; Frewen College; Gordonstoun Junior School; Gresham's School; Halliford School; Heathcote Prep. School; Heathfield School; Hereford Cathedral School; Highfield School; Holme Grange School; Hornsby House School; Kilgraston School; King Edward VI High School for Girls; King Edward VI School; King's High School; King's School; Kirkham Grammar School; Leighton Park School; Leys School; Loughborough Grammar School; Maltman's Green School; Malvern St. James Girls' School; Mill Hill Schools; Moon Hall School; Moreton Hall School; Myddelton College; Old Hall School; Pocklington Prep. School; Rochester Independent School; Rugby School; Sarum Hall School; Shebbear College; South Hampstead High School; St. Benedict's School; St. Margaret's School; St. Mary's School; St. Peter's School; Stroud School; Sutton Valence Preparatory School; Yarm Prep. School; York House School

Helping light overcome darkness in 2022

The Pandemic has taken a terrible toll on lives around the globe. Added to concerns about climate change and the troubles of society, it is understandable that so many people, young and old, are experiencing mental health difficulties. As we enter a New Year, Chaplain at Mill Hill schools, London, Rev Antony Wilson, reflects on the words of author Robert Gibbings*, now largely forgotten but with a particular relevance for 2022: *'There is cruelty and illness and poverty, but there is also an abundance of kindness, good health, and richness of spirit.'*

While most of us do not have deep experiences of cruelty, illness and poverty, one thing that has become a universal experience irrespective of wealth or health is uncertainty. I'm writing this just before Christmas and like many people my family is having to make daily changes to our Christmas plans – for us in response to which of my young adult children has tested positive for COVID!

Faced with all this uncertainty, and with a few days clear after Christmas, I decided to volunteer for the vaccination clinic at our local hospital. It gave me something really positive to focus on in the midst of the uncertainty – I was helping others over the shifts that I worked.

'It was the best of times it was the worst of times' – Charles Dickens' words from the 1859 novel *A Tale of Two Cities* reminds

us that having to live in a world where there is such a mix of human experience is nothing new. Dickens continues '...it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of light, it was the season of darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair...'

It's quite easy to feel overwhelmed by the events that surround us and even to despair of things ever changing.

How might we navigate life well in these times? One way is to resolve to be a bearer of kindness and richness of spirit. Good health is something we have less control over, but good mental health has been shown to be closely linked to having a sense of purpose and serving others.

In her Christmas Day speech from 2015 The Queen reflected that "the world has had to confront moments of darkness this year, but the Gospel of John contains a verse of great hope, which speaks about the birth of Jesus and is often read at Christmas carol services: 'The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it.'" She continued "There's an old saying that it is better to light a candle than curse the darkness."

We have to navigate life with all its uncertainty, cruelty, illness and poverty but the message of the Christian faith is that God has come to be with us in the midst of all this, to help us when we feel like giving up, to forgive us when we mess up and to give us an everlasting light to guide us every step of the way.



Reverend Antony Wilson is the new Chaplain at Mill Hill Foundation schools, working across Grimsdell, Belmont, Mill Hill School and Mill Hill International. He previously worked as a Church of England Vicar in two parishes in north Essex and as a part time Chaplain to 4th Battalion The Parachute Regiment, a role which he will continue. He said: 'I'm here to support pupils and staff across The Foundation, those of all faiths and no faith – basically you don't need to be religious to come and chat! I also have responsibility for leading Chapel in all our schools and that's a time when we gather and explore our spirituality. The Chapel is the heart of the school and a place of connection with each other, of comfort and even of challenge as we explore what it means to live well together.'

Let's resolve to help make 2022 a year in which we help the light to overcome darkness.

*In 1939, on the eve of the Second World War, Robert Gibbings launched his home-made punt on the River Thames and began a slow journey downstream, armed with a sketchpad and a microscope. From the river's source at the edge of the Cotswold Hills to the bustle of London, *'Sweet Thames Run Softly'* is a bucolic and reflective account – an antidote to the anxieties of wartime. It became a best-seller when published in 1941, and has been reprinted many times since. It is still widely available. A subsequent book chronicled his trip down the Seine in France.

Hockathon honours teacher who died from CJD

Two girls in the 6th Form at Bruton School for Girls, Somerset, organised a 'Hockathon' to raise money for the Cure CJD Campaign in memory of a teacher at BSG who developed this disease and died very suddenly.

The girls, along with head Jane Evans and others, played hockey for 12 hours non-stop and raised nearly £13,000 in her memory.

The girls organised the entire thing by themselves, including a Hidden Pizza Van (from 6pm), a live performance from "Blondie and Ska" (7pm) and fireworks to end the night at 8:30pm.

Molly and Lucy who organised the event said: "We've found that, when talking about the disease, very few people, if any at all, have any knowledge of it. Because of this,

we want to raise awareness and, ultimately, raise funds that would go towards finding a cure for this awful degenerative brain disorder.

"Our teacher died just before Christmas 2020 and, because of various lockdowns and other restrictions, we haven't been able to come together as a community to remember her until now.

"She always loved getting involved with school events and was the embodiment of community spirit. It is with this in mind that we organised the Hockathon, to carry this on a year after her passing."

Head of 6th Form and Careers and Languages Xavière Harvey said: "This time last year, one of our most dedicated teachers fell ill with CJD and it was devastating to see how quickly she lost her cognitive

ability and capacity for human interaction. This very cruel disease stripped a very talented linguist, speaking 4 languages fluently, from the ability to communicate in any language, in a matter of weeks and her tragic loss in the Christmas holidays was a shock to us all. Coming to terms with what happened was all the more difficult as a community in lockdown. One year on, the girls' spirit to overcome adversity is unabated, however, and their determination to raise funds to combat this dreadful disease remarkable"

All the pupils at BSG were involved in the fundraiser in some way, be it playing hockey, running the stalls, baking or making goodies to sell, advertising the event and supporting each other all the way through. They had organised

fundraising stalls run by the pupils, live music from Jukebox James, a pizza van and fireworks to mark the end of the 12 hours.



Pictured: Jane Evans, head, (right), and Sports Graduate Assistant Cara Jones. Image courtesy Ben Taylor

Communicating with parents – a worthwhile balancing act

Communicating effectively with parents is a key part of school life but getting the balance right can be challenging. In any school, parental involvement will vary, from the hands-off to the very engaged... and everything in between. Different parents have differing expectations, so a one size approach rarely fits all. How do you go about forging strong, positive relations with every family in your school community? *Jo Mason Head of Marketing and Communications at South Hampstead High School, discusses...*



It's important to find as many opportunities as possible to speak to parents, to understand their expectations. Tuning into the multifarious emails and phone calls received in school every day – by reception staff, teachers, senior leaders – can help to identify prevalent parental questions and concerns. Having an ear to the ground, and providing simple feedback mechanisms, as well as clear, concise answers, can often help to nip any issues in the bud before they escalate. Good communication should reduce unnecessary admin for everyone... and ideally eliminate the need for additional queries via parental WhatsApp chats!

A recent report about parent engagement, produced by the education technology company, Firefly, surveyed more than 2000 parents and teachers. One of the most positive messages was that 83% of parents were happy with their child's school. Teachers, however, were more cautious: only two-thirds felt that parents were positive – a salient reminder that our view from within school can be quite different to what parents think themselves. Unfortunately,

More information about Firefly's report can be found here: <https://fireflylearning.com/parent-engagement-free-report>

it's perhaps easier to recall the occasional negative comments, rather than the very many positive interactions with parents.

Firefly's research also found that parents, understandably, want to receive more personalised information about their child's learning: more regular communication, and more information on how they can support their child. The challenge for schools is how best to provide this amid teaching timetables, and a busy schedule of co-curricular activities and after-school events. Technology, of course, plays an important role. The pandemic allowed us to trial online parents' evenings, which we plan to continue. A great deal of our communication is email based, so it's encouraging that Firefly's research said most parents preferred this method of communication, as opposed to numerous different app notifications or a plethora of password-protected platforms. At South Hampstead, via Firefly's SchoolPost, we send one personalised email update every Friday, tailored to each parent and child, with all the key reminders and any actions required.

Occasionally, if required, we send texts. We aim to streamline parent communications, not to overwhelm.

Another point to consider is that students need to become increasingly independent as they progress through the school. When they start Senior School, parents as well as students need time to adjust to different levels of responsibility and involvement. We want pupils to remember when non-uniform days are happening or plan what sports kit to bring in; this sometimes means sharing less information with parents and encouraging them to step back.

At South Hampstead, we adopt a comprehensive approach to encouraging two-way conversations; our tutors check in with their pupils via regular 1:1s and are the first port of call for parents, while our Head hosts regular forums with parent class reps to listen to everyone's views. Our website signposts essentials such as term dates and key policies; parents who have time for longer reads can digest blog posts from our Head or review our pastoral spotlight on salient issues. Those who want to plan ahead can access the full school calendar online,

while half-termly newsletters and website news stories keep parents updated on key highlights – and anyone who is after more regular snapshots of everyday school life can follow us on Twitter. For easy reference, we also issue a parent handbook at the start of each year, with reminders about key contacts and protocols. A wealth of in-person events, from music concerts to pastoral sessions and social evenings, are also wonderful ways to create a cohesive community.

We always aim to communicate in a way that's timely, relevant and jargon-free. Schools need to be mindful that the average parent doesn't know what KS4 corresponds to, nor what PSHE stands for! More than anything, engaging with our parent community is a team effort involving everyone – from our reception team, teachers and senior leaders to our students themselves. It's this holistic approach that makes things work and ensures that our parent community receives the requisite information, whilst ensuring a sensible workload for everyone. It is really about striking the right balance.

Recognised as a centre for excellence

Alderley Edge School for Girls, Cheshire, has been re-accredited as an Apple Distinguished School for 2021–2024.

This status, first granted in 2018, has been awarded to the school for its ongoing commitment to providing a technology-rich environment to support its students in achieving their learning goals inside and outside of the classroom.

At AESG, the use of iPads in the classroom has allowed teachers to bring a topic to life in ways previously unimaginable, from using Augmented Reality programmes to peek inside the human body in Biology, to providing umpire training in PE. In addition, student creativity has flourished as the use of technology has enabled them to broaden their skills in videography, photography and drawing. Such activities create a dynamic learning environment focused on active learning and allows students to engage in a topic on a deeper basis.

Christmas sparkle

Stroud School, Hampshire, managed to keep the Christmas Spirit alive by holding live performances of both the Early Years and Key Stage 1 Nativities to families.

During the pandemic, Stroud School, like so many others, had to cut back on many of the Christmas festivities; however the Christmas Nativity was an absolute must. The children had been rehearsing very hard for their Christmas performance, and were very excited to act in front of their families.



Bursars need to be prepared for the beast of inflation

Accountant Henry Briggs considers how schools need to react to rising rates of inflation....

The Bank of England ('BoE'), in its latest quarterly report, anticipates the rate of inflation in the UK will be at 6% per annum by April this year. Many of us know that, for some commodities such as energy, it is already well above this.

Since 1997, when the Bank was given independence, inflation rates have been kept close to the set target of 2%, although it has been under upward pressure since the banking crisis in 2008 and more so since the outbreak of Covid. This is largely due to central banks introducing Quantitative Easing (QE); in simple terms, massive increases in the money supply. The other means of inflation control at their disposal, raising interest rates, was eventually applied at the BoE's meeting in December; but QE is still going strong and will continue to have effect.

Many believe this is too little too late and inflation has already started on an upward cycle that will be difficult to control. Those of us who lived through the 1970's will remember rates of inflation reaching 25%, but there are few Bursars of independent schools who will have been of working age then.

Henry Briggs is consultant to chartered accountants Haines Watts and a former school governor with expertise in advising and supporting both independent and state schools.

Inflation has often been called a Beast, on the basis that once it is out of the cage, it is very difficult to get it back in again. It becomes ingrained in every aspect of consumer and business behaviour and decision making. Ignoring its onset is not a wise move.

The short term effects are already evidencing themselves, as far as schools are concerned. At present, these are mainly a sharp rise in energy prices and a shortage in the supply of labour. This will soon be translated into rising salary costs (already under pressure from Teachers Pension Scheme and National Insurance contribution increases). For schools, payroll is by far the most important single cost; between 60 and 70% of total costs for most. So, bursars need to anticipate strong pressure on their costs which it will be difficult to contain, reduce or offset in other areas.

The best weapon against inflation for those organisations affected, but unable to control it, is, I'm afraid, the one thing that pours fuel on the fire – anticipation.

Bursars will need to project ahead and anticipate cost rises

when budgeting and setting fees and income policies, or their school will always be behind the curve, struggling to raise income to catch up with rising costs and overspends on budgets. Historically, parents investing in a private education for their children have had a tolerance to fee rises which they might not have for other areas of expenditure. But they too will be facing rises in all their outgoings. Whilst this means fee rises will be taken as expected, it does not mean that there will not be push back, or indeed a fall off of pupil numbers in the sector. All of this needs to be anticipated. Fee rises need to be calculated on the basis of expected cost increases and not on a broad RPI/CPI figure, though this will be the benchmark by which parents will view them. In inflationary times, upward pressure on salaries is greatest in the sectors where there are strong unions and skill shortages. Other newcomers to cost pressures are those caused by climate control factors and fair trade sources. Schools will feel these pressures more than most and so are likely to be faced with above indexation rises in costs.



Other areas for increasing income may prove difficult. With Covid and the establishment of branches of schools abroad, it is becoming harder to recruit overseas pupils. Bursars will need to look at ways of incremental charging for extras and other income supplements or sources. Some fee remission policies may need to be reviewed. Composition schemes (capital payments for fees in advance) may well come back into fashion with the inflationary mentality of paying in advance of cost rises.

On the positive side, parents invest in their children's education over a long cycle and may see a cycle of inflation as a shorter term one. Many of them will be in occupations where there are skill shortages, so their own incomes may well be rising above inflation. Let's hope this will be the case. But nothing beats being prepared.

Seasonal challenge from head

Three Shebbear College, Devon, singers took on a Head's Challenge in the last week of term – to recreate the 'Merry Christmas' song by Ed Sheeran and Elton John, Shebbear style!

The pupils learnt the song over the weekend, even writing a three-part harmony for certain parts. They then recorded the song with Rebecca Sadler-Smith, Head of Digital, Creative and Performing Arts at Shebbear College, in the

school's Recording Studio, before taking part in the filming of various scenes across the school (including the magical Christmas grotto created by the school's Maintenance Team last year) to create an in-house music video!

Head, Caroline Kirby, said 'I am a big fan of the Merry Christmas song, it's such a fun video and makes me feel very festive. Thinking about Prospect Lane, our fantastic Christmas grotto

as a backdrop, I mentioned to our Heads of Marketing and Performing Arts that we should do a Shebbear version with some pupils, and before I knew it, it became a 'Head's Challenge' to recreate this music video! I am so impressed with the three pupils involved, who completely rose to the challenge and by the sounds of it, had a lot of fun with the singing and filming! It's such a great Christmas end of term message from Shebbear – I love it!'



Award for Physics teacher

Lawrence Herklots, Teacher of Physics at King Edward VI School, Hampshire, has been awarded a Teacher of Physics Award from the Institute of Physics (IOP) for his inspirational physics teaching.

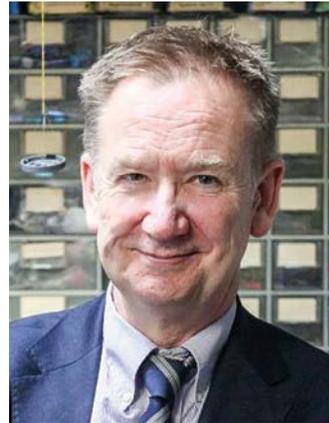
The Institute of Physics (IOP) celebrates outstanding classroom practice in the teaching of physics and the individual contribution to raising the profile of physics and science. Winners are chosen based on their contribution to teaching excellence, staff development, their work beyond the classroom, dedication to inclusion and their work with the wider community.

Rob Simm, Head of Physics at King Edward VI School, who submitted the nomination to the IOP, and has been mentored by Lawrence since he started in teaching says 'I very much doubt I would be where I am without his support and mentoring. He is one of the best teachers I have ever known and I have been extremely fortunate to have him as mentor'.

Lawrence Herklots, who has been teaching at King Edward's since 1987, has the unique ability to break down complex ideas for his students, from Key Stage 4 through to A Level, and strives to make the subject enjoyable, through the use of characters and other techniques.

He is also a Senior Examiner, provides regular training to teachers at King Edward's and in the local area, including setting up teaching groups to focus on developing and experimenting with new pedagogical methods, has authored text books, including the current A Level Physics text book, and writes for various journals. In 2020, Lawrence was invited to provide training and give lectures in Japan, following educators in Japan reading about Lawrence's many contributions to the field of Physics.

Paula Burrows, Assistant Head, details the work Lawrence does outside of the classroom to



promote Physics, 'Lawrence has written and directed three hugely amusing and successful physics musicals, all promoting understanding of key concepts in the historical and theoretical development of Physics'. Lawrence has since written a paper on the successes this approach to pedagogy has had and the extent to which musical theatre can enable the understanding and enjoyment of complex concepts in the teaching and learning of Physics.

Plastic free status

Yarm Prep School, Teesside, has been awarded 'Plastic Free Schools Status' following a legacy project devised by the 2020-21 School Captains.

They were challenged to create a scheme that would mark their time at the School and chose making it a single use plastic free environment.

An action plan was formulated for the elimination of single use plastic, including raising awareness of its use throughout the School, organising litter picks, challenging local supermarkets to consider their packaging and writing to local MPs to ask about their sustainability plans, such as recycling and a deposit scheme on bottles.

As a result of the project the school now uses paper straws, compostable food packaging and cling wrap, and reusable catering aprons and cups.

In the UK it is estimated that five million tonnes of plastic is used every year, nearly half of which is packaging.



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Please go to:
www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/gender-in-schools-tickets-156220737431

Higher Project Qualifications: Should schools push to younger pupils?

Research qualifications such as the HPQ (Higher Project Qualification), in which Year 11 students carry out an independent piece of research in an area of their choice, must demonstrate the potential value that they have for students, because these qualifications occupy a position outside of the priority subjects that dominate the school curriculum. Many schools are championing these opportunities and place high value on the investigative, life skills they nurture. The question is, should schools be pushing HPQs out to younger pupils? *Simon Winchester, Academic Director at St Margaret's School in Hertfordshire discusses...*

Towards the end of last term, I stood in our school hall and listened to a number of students who were educating me about the history of the Bolsheviks, the effectiveness of sugar taxes on public health and the engineering of a hydrogen powered aircraft. I even had the pleasure of observing how the wing on the front of a Formula 1 car generates downforce, through a wind tunnel one of our students had made. This all happened during our school's EPQ presentations evening, arguably the highlight of the academic calendar.

Making the case for change

The EPQ, (Extended Project Qualification), is long established as a means of broadening the A-level curriculum by allowing sixth form students to conduct a research project on a topic of their choice. HPQ, is essentially the equivalent for GCSE students and is equally popular in schools today. These qualifications allow students to explore an area of personal interest, and to develop the ability to work independently, to assimilate information, decide what is relevant and to oversee a project wholly on their own. Yet interestingly these projects are currently only undertaken from Year 11 upwards. The argument is, should schools be pushing for a similar scheme for younger students?

The 2015 reforms to GCSEs significantly reduced the coursework component for most subjects with a far greater focus on the depth of knowledge required for final exams. All school academic departments will feel a responsibility to use Year 7 to 9 to prepare pupils for the experience they will have at GCSE stage; and as a consequence,

Years 7 to 9 are now largely spent preparing students for summative examinations. This means helping students to become familiar with working in timed exam conditions and giving them a good grounding in the taught content demanded by GCSEs. To its detriment, independent research as a skill, is therefore pushed into the background.

From Year 7, those younger students would also benefit from exposure to smaller-scale research projects that they can get involved with and earn qualifications as they grow and develop. It doesn't make viable sense to delay the development of important research skills, which could be instrumental to their future and also stand them in better stead in the lead up to exams.

The value of research

The value of research skills can often be underestimated. The kind of independent research project offered by the HPQ teaches so many valuable skills that students will require later in life. For instance, the ability to make sense of a complex situation, proficiency in evaluating the impact of complex decision-making over a given period of time, the capacity to chart a course through multiple sources of information, and ultimately, the capability to take control of a project and see it through to final completion. This is a skill that all children need to learn from a young age.

Of course, creative teachers will not simply spend all of a student's time in secondary school prepping them for exams. There is plenty of scope for teachers to develop these skill sets through flipped learning approaches, but this could and should happen prior to Year 11. This might include asking



students to go away and assimilate information in advance of a lesson so that lesson time with teachers can be spent exploring how a student works with that information. Flipped learning can also offer micro-opportunities for this kind of independent research project and can make for more enjoyable, dynamic and productive homework sessions as opposed to another tedious worksheet.

What the HPQ offers is a formalised assessment opportunity, a structure and validation for the project. Whether or not a similar scheme for younger children needs to be structured in the same way, is probably not essential, it is more important that they have exposure to small projects that they can own. Many independent schools will echo this through the expectations of their scholars, requiring them to conduct an independent project of this kind, linking this back to the expectations of their scholarship pathway.

Reviewing the breadth of the curriculum

Of course, the boldest step would be to review that breadth of curriculum in the younger years of secondary school and make the space, amongst the crowd of 'facilitating' or core subjects. For example, in between the vital sessions on PSHE and sex and relationships, alongside the creative arts subjects which have been so badly suppressed as a result of the pandemic, or next to the technical and scientific subjects that are necessary to prepare pupils for the future. We need to look for opportunities to make the space within this crowd for a protected zone within the curriculum, which focuses on allowing all pupils to make sense of information, to think creatively and critically and with independence and resilience. The cultivation of honed research skills is not just appropriate for teenagers, it applies to all children, and we should be doing more to bridge those gaps.



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NATIONWIDE SUPPLIERS OF PEUGEOT (RECOMMENDED),
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Supporting mental health & emotional wellbeing

Rachel Whitton, Deputy Head (Pastoral and Boarding) at Heathfield School, Berkshire, discusses the school's approach to supporting student mental health and wellbeing.

With leading mental health charities reporting heightened levels of anxiety and depression, triggered by the continuing uncertainties surrounding Covid19, supporting our students' mental health and wellbeing in school is a priority, now more than ever before.

At Heathfield we have a broad support network across the school, all staff have initial in-house mental health training so they can recognise if a student is struggling. Our pastoral team includes an on-site life coach who is a Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) Practitioner. We also have a visiting confidential counsellor and run a peer mentoring programme and an online helpline so students can seek support without the initial need for a face to face meeting.

Most of our students are very open, which reflects the 'family' feel of the school and illustrates that they feel they can express themselves, which is important. When students first experience issues they may get stuck in negative emotions, focusing on the effects the situation is having on them rather than looking ahead for a solution. Staff work collectively

to support students, encouraging them to move forward from the negative emotions of the 'wallowing' stage, to find positive movement by addressing the issue and suggesting strategies to help resolve it. We build upon advice previously given by always asking, "What have you been advised to do? Let's start there'.

Relationships are also key for our peer mentoring programme, there is a real feeling of 'sisterhood' amongst the students so the programme has proved to be very successful. Peer mentors are given training from our counsellor. Mentoring provides the opportunity for students to share with someone who has 'been through it too', so they connect through shared experience.

Building resilience and grit, and helping our students gain insight into the way they think and feel, provides them with the tools to cope with the present situation and increase their knowledge and understanding of ways to deal with challenges in the future. Our positive psychology programme, 'Flourishing', proactively educates students about the six pillars of mental health and introduces

strategies to help them learn how to gain greater expertise and self-awareness to support themselves. We use a psychometric survey by People Diagnostix, to provide a baseline measure of each student's overall wellbeing, and then develop their understanding and recognition of how to improve the areas they find more challenging through positive psychology education.

Consciously being in the 'now' is an excellent way to reduce extreme stress and anxiety. We highlight the importance of patience, taking time in the moment rather than being frustrated that not everything is in place instantly, which in today's world of instant access and gratification provided by social media, can be challenging.

Research shows that daily physical activity has a very positive effect on wellbeing, producing endorphins to counteract the stress hormones. We strongly encourage physical activity in all its forms, including yoga, workout sessions, mindfulness and a wide selection of both individual and team sports.

Students can also walk in the school grounds with one of



our school dogs - animals help emotional regulation and develop self-confidence. The physical act of walking is 'moving forward' rather than sitting being 'stagnant', and this often frees students up to accepting new ideas or approaches.

At Heathfield we place a great emphasis on praising 'effort' rather than focusing solely on 'results'. Having the grit and resilience to overcome challenges and find solutions to problems along their learning journey is far more important. Success is individual and based on achieving personal goals with patience and hard work.

Positive mental health and wellbeing ensure that our students have the tenacity to face challenges and the intrinsic desire to succeed beyond grades, and find purpose, meaning and accomplishment in life. What is more important than the futures of our students?

Pioneering mental health award

Holme Grange School, Berkshire, has achieved the School Mental Health Award which is delivered by the Carnegie Centre of Excellence for Mental Health in Schools.

The school was awarded a Gold standard for its outstanding mental health and wellbeing provision.

Holme Grange provides a wide range of activities to boost the wellbeing of both pupils and staff, including mindfulness sessions, yoga classes, buddy systems and working closely with other agencies such as No.5 Young

People in Reading and Arc in Wokingham.

Holme Grange School Headteacher, Mrs Claire Robinson, said: "The Award framework has allowed us to celebrate the work we do and as we completed an audit of the provision across the School, remind ourselves of how extensive our work is and how embedded it is into the life of the School. The award recognises and validates the hard work and effort of the staff team and the school community at Holme Grange."

The school also hosts a bi-annual Parent Conference where parents and people from the local area are invited to hear from a variety of speakers on varied topics to help support the School community to better understand issues like mental health. Their next event in January 2022 will focus on personal wellbeing and the wellbeing of our planet and is entitled "Healthy Me, Healthy Planet".

A focal point of the school's mental health and wellbeing provision is breaking down stigmas. As part of the Pupil Leadership Team, there

is a Head of Wellbeing position. When applying for this role, a Year 10 pupil spoke about their own experience of poor mental health and their desire to challenge opinions and to encourage others to open up.

The Carnegie Centre of Excellence for Mental Health in Schools aims to strengthen pupils' mental health by supporting schools to make a positive change at all levels of the UK's education system, improving students' outcomes and life chances.

New online wellbeing hub for local pupils

Cheltenham Ladies' College (CLC) Gloucestershire, has collaborated with mental health and wellbeing experts Teen Tips to give thousands of local pupils, parents and school staff access to The Wellbeing Hub, an interactive online platform.

The Wellbeing Hub offers preventative, evidence-based mental health resources, which can now be accessed by more than 2,000 students at Balcarras Academy, Pittville School and The High School Leckhampton, as well as 873 pupils at CLC. Their parents and school staff members also have access to The Wellbeing Hub, meaning

that thousands of people in the local area are now able to access a wealth of resources including webinars and courses developed by child and adolescent mental health and wellbeing experts, Teen Tips.

Charlotte Woodhead, Head of Lower College and Wellbeing Co-ordinator at Cheltenham Ladies' College, said:

"Protecting and providing for the wellbeing and health of children and young people is a priority at all times. The impact of the pandemic, however, with its effect on the lives and education of young people, has made this even more urgent.

"This is what makes the launch of The Wellbeing Hub so exciting: it provides a wealth of resources for staff, students and their families who can access what is relevant and most

helpful for them personally. Each young person has unique needs and a particular set of circumstances, so this is ideal.

"We are thrilled that more than 2,000 students from local schools, as well as their families and school staff members will also benefit from access to The Wellbeing Hub. This, along with many other outreach programmes and forms of support offered to other local schools, attests to Cheltenham Ladies' College's commitment to the wellbeing of young people across our wider community."

The Wellbeing Hub is a live interactive web app which provides expert support for the whole school community to access 24/7. Pupils are able to access tools to help manage their own mental health and

wellbeing, as well as benefit from staff who are trained to understand and meet their social and emotional needs via The Wellbeing Hub's award-winning, preventative mental health CPD course. There are tailored resources for parents and staff members, with training and resources delivered via webinars, talks, podcasts, top tips and more.

Alicia Drummond, founder of Teen Tips said: "We're absolutely delighted to be working with Cheltenham Ladies' College. They are committed to the health and wellbeing of young people in their community. Our Wellbeing Hub couldn't be more relevant as we recover from the pandemic. It is having a positive impact on tens of thousands of young people across the UK."

Taste of Japan

Top Japanese chef, Daisuke Hayashi, demonstrated his skills during Rugby School's 'international culture week'. Chef Hayashi, who opened a new London restaurant, Roketsu, in November, was appointed by the Japanese government as 'Japanese cuisine goodwill ambassador'.

The week was organised by Rugby School's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion student prefect team, including Deputy Head of School, Rin Teshima (right). The last night featured a Japanese festival with student-led food stalls, games, kung fu and traditional Japanese dancing.

Rugby School Japan will open in 2023.



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Family connections



Twenty-five of the Prep and Prep-Prep pupils at Elstree School, Berkshire, are sons or daughters of Elstree Alumni. They marked this occasion by taking a photo of them all on the front steps. Olivia Inglis, Headmaster's wife, said, "To have nearly 10% of Elstree Alumni children in the School is a wonderful compliment to the current staff and children at Elstree."

Olivia added, "We are sure that the number of alumni sending their children to Elstree will increase in the future, but it's great to have Debs Burles (née McMullen) back at Elstree".

Debs joined the team as Marketing Manager in the summer along with her son Alfie starting in the school. Debs is daughter of former Headmaster Terrence McMullen,

and was a pupil at Elstree from 1980 to 1986. She returned as an Elstree Gapper in 1991. Debs was married in St Peter's Church Woolhampton, in 2007 with a reception back at Elstree.

Debs said, "I have an obvious affinity with the school having lived here for the first twenty years of my life. I was so excited to find out that my desk was

based in what was my father's Headmaster's Study!"

Elstree School has always valued its Alumni who are all invited to become members of the Elstree School Association (ESA) when they leave the School. There are various ESA events throughout the year and all are encouraged to keep a connection with the School and keep in touch with each other.



Merger schools invest

Construction work has now concluded after an extensive refurbishment programme resulting from the merger of two of the country's oldest schools – Durham School and The Chorister School.

From September 2021, Durham School and The Chorister School, which have shared a heritage of 600 years, began to operate under one single Foundation known as The Durham Cathedral Schools Foundation.

Kieran McLaughlin, Durham School head, and the first principal of the new Foundation, said: "The investment in facilities allows us to offer a more vibrant boarding experience and through the merger,

we have been able to combine the strengths of both schools and build on the strong heritage and values they have shared for over 600 years.

"There are also many social benefits associated with a larger school community, such as the chance for more pupils to take part in competitive sports teams and greater opportunities to participate in musical and cultural events.

"I believe the merged Foundation offers a strong and vibrant future for both schools with outstanding academic, pastoral and co-curricular opportunities for all pupils and will further enhance the provision of independent education within the City of Durham."

Pictured (L to R): Kieran McLaughlin, Rob Ribchester (Chairman: Board of Governors of the Durham Cathedral Schools Foundation), Andrew Wilson, (Associate and Chartered Building Surveyor, Howarth Litchfield), Gavin Vest (Managing Director, VEST Construction) and Sally Harrod (Head of Chorister School)

Award and accreditation

Eltham College, London, has been awarded the Microsoft Showcase School Award for the third year running by Microsoft and The Secondary Geography Quality Mark Award from the Geographical Association.

The Microsoft Showcase School Award acknowledges the extensive digital learning and teaching that has become integral to the school's approach. Eltham therefore remains part of an exclusive community of just 325 schools around the world. The College has, this year, also worked with Thomas Clarkson Academy in Wisbech and mentored and guided them in receiving Showcase School status and is keen to continue to work with other schools to help them understand and implement similar teaching practices.

Head of Design Technology, Maxim Gennari, said: "As one of only 52 schools in the UK who hold the prestigious title of Showcase School, the accreditation reflects the priority the College places on integrating digital technology into teaching and learning".

The Geography Quality Mark awarded by The Geographical Association, the leading subject association for teachers of geography recognises and promotes quality and progress in geography leadership, curriculum development and learning and teaching in 35 schools in the UK and internationally.

Paul Angel, Head of Geography, said: "The Geography department at Eltham College is ambitious and we strive to embrace new ideas and have introduced contemporary topics to make learning enjoyable and memorable. We are looking forward to applying for Centre of Excellence in our future submission."

Guy Sanderson, Headmaster of Eltham College, praised the teachers and students: "These two recent awards continue to place Eltham College at the forefront of learning and teaching in South East London, they reflect the dedication and skill of our teachers and commitment and hard work of our students."

Saving Money and reducing carbon emissions

With over 140 Independent School clients, Powerful Allies is by far the largest energy partner within the sector and so we are particularly proud to support ISBA, GSA, BSA, CISC, MIST and IAPS members across the UK.

In these challenging times, it is crucial for Independent Schools to work with partners they can trust, and Powerful Allies has built a reputation second to none as a truly trusted partner, as the very many client references below and on our website will attest.

Transparency

Powerful Allies has created a unique Open Competition charter which defines and guarantees Best Practice energy procurement.

In an unregulated sector, we alone have created a Code of Practice which exceeds all others and introduces transparency hitherto unknown in the tender process.

Trusted Partner

We know our Bursars regularly speak to each other and our key reputation is everything. Indeed we are proud to list our key clients on our website. You will recognise many of the names. *Our clients trust us and we trust our clients. Grown up behavior, honest discussion, mature and impartial advice.*

Energy Cost and Emission Reduction

At the end of the day, we are retained by superb clients because we reduce energy costs and we reduce carbon emissions. That is the bottom line. And our clients know how we do this, and what we earn and they have complete confidence that our contracts really do provide Best Value. Demonstrable Best Value with 100% Renewable source electricity at zero extra cost.

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

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

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

James Robson

James Robson, Chairman



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

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

Brian Rollason
(Building Services Engineering Manager)



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

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

Alexandra D'Arcy-Irvine
(School Business Manager)

Proud to Support





‘Rainforest classroom’ to boost learning

St Mary’s School in Cambridge has transformed one of its classrooms into an indoor ‘rainforest’ to help boost the health, wellbeing and productivity of its students. The investment is the first phase of a longer-term project, which aims to bring nature into classrooms across the whole school.

With the help of its students, staff, parents and additional funds from St Mary’s Circle of Friends, the school has created a multi-sensory ‘Biophilic Classroom’. The space is designed to create a unique green haven that will have a positive impact on both the learning and wellbeing of St Mary’s students and staff. Biophilic interior design is often used in construction to increase human connection to the natural world and incorporate greenery and more plants into indoor spaces.

The first stage of plans has seen the school turn one of its Sixth Form classrooms into a dramatic

‘Tropical Rainforest’ space. A variety of large plants have been arranged at varying levels to replicate the rainforest environment. In addition, the plants that have been used represent the main layers of the rainforest, with the tallest plant being around 7ft. The different species also show the diversity, colour and beauty of the plants within a rainforest environment. Feedback has already been very positive with students commenting on the ‘calming’ effects of the room.

Longer-term, St Mary’s aims to create more Biophilic classrooms across the whole of the school and St Mary’s gardeners have already been growing and increasing the number of indoor plants across the whole of the school. Students have also been encouraged to bring in their own small plant donations to add to the collection.

Outdoor Learning Coordinator and Year 9 Head of Year at St Mary’s

School, Mrs J Hutchison, said:

“The influence nature can have on our wellbeing has been well researched. It’s been scientifically shown that plants and views of nature can boost health, wellbeing, focus and even productivity in the classroom. On average, people spend nearly 90% of their time indoors, therefore, it is so important to consider this fact when designing classroom environments. We are also acutely aware of how important it is for our students to connect with nature, both indoors and outdoors, especially given the last 18 months. We are committed to providing our girls with environments and experiences that continue to inspire them. We are delighted with our Biophilic classroom and we hope that it will bring a sense of calm and magic for students and staff alike. We can’t wait to create even more across the entire school.”

‘Food fayre’ supports charity

Sarum Hall School, London, held a ‘Food Fayre’ for students and their families.

The event attracted food businesses to sell their wares in the playground which resembled a mini farmers market for the afternoon.

At the school’s own stand were jams and chutneys made using ingredients from the school garden, as well as fresh bakes, apple juice and eggs donated from families of the school.

At the event, guests were given the chance to get a sense of what school meals are like at Sarum Hall. Free bite-size portions of braised lamb taco with charred tomato & mango and ginger salsa, and zero-waste cauliflower & black quinoa with feta and pomegranate salad were on offer.

Headmistress Miss Victoria Savage commented: “The science behind food technology and the understanding of a healthy, balanced diet is very important to the Sarum Hall community. We are lucky enough to have our own purpose-built food studio where girls come to learn not just how to cook, but about nutrition, food production, and about food sustainability. We believe food should be enjoyed by all, that it should be fun, and it should bring people together. So what better way to re-open the school to parents than with an event all about food!”

The event was held outdoors and year groups and their families were staggered to ease crowding. Children also enjoyed face painting and music while the event took place.

Profits from the afternoon are to be donated to The Felix Project, an organisation which rescues surplus food from the food industry and delivers it to almost 1000 frontline charities, primary schools and holiday programmes to help feed local communities.

Open window policy unworkable

A quarter of teachers (27%) say implementing the government's open window policy isn't possible, because they work in classrooms where windows cannot be opened, according to new research released this month (January). This means around 162,000 teachers are working in classrooms with no ventilation.

The figures, released just a few days into the new school term, were revealed as part of a Whitepaper released by the phs Group.

Almost 70% of school staff voiced concern about being put at risk of COVID infection, with a quarter foreseeing regulating COVID in classrooms during the approaching winter months difficult to manage.

The independent research, conducted with education staff across the UK and commissioned by phs, the organisation leading a major study into pollution and air quality in schools alongside the University of Surrey, found a fifth (21%) of teachers claim they do not understand or are not familiar with the Government's open window policy. This policy dictates that windows should be opened in classrooms to ventilate the air and purge potential viruses.

The University of Cambridge's Professor Paul Linden, an expert on the role of ventilation in the airborne transmission of COVID-19 said: "If we're going to keep our

schools open we have to keep our children and teachers safe.

"We know that poor ventilation increases the risk of infection. COVID is spread through airborne particles that can be filtered from the air and removed by introducing more fresh air. Opening windows is just the first step, and we have to ask ourselves how practical this is, and how much responsibility can we put on teachers? How much do we open windows and for how long? Every classroom is different and ventilation is complicated; we can't expect teachers to be ventilation experts. The best answer has to be a combination of solutions that suits each classroom."

A fifth (21%) of teachers expressed the current guidelines on ventilation were impractical, with a further quarter (25%) saying it caused more problems. A quarter (24%) of educators claimed it causes more viruses due to students and teachers being cold in the classroom, leading to causing further absenteeism with half (52%) saying they have more staff off than ever before.

Nine in 10 education staff said there was between one and 10 rooms in their school with windows that couldn't be opened, with half of staff (50%) saying it was impossible to implement the open window guidelines in five to 10 classrooms at their school.

Independent evidence

phs has been steadfast in its commitment to finding the optimum way of creating a cleaner and safer environment in schools and anywhere indoors.

Independent laboratory testing has provided the strongest evidence yet that phs Group's phs' AERAMAX® PROFESSIONAL III & IV have been proven to be effective in eliminating aerosolised concentration of SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) by 99.9999% through a single air pass test of the purifier. Similarly, phs BIOZONE and MINI POWERZONE units, are proven for effectiveness against SARS-CoV-2 by an independent third-party lab when tested against the approved surrogate Human Coronavirus (OC43). The results found that the UV light technology which treats airborne contaminants passing through the units, which possibly contain COVID-19 material, saw a 99.1% inactivation of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, the virus that causes COVID-19, in as little as 0.25 seconds of exposure. Furthermore, a similar test on the effectiveness of the Photo Plasma technology adopted by BIOZONE saw a 99.3% reduction of the surrogate Human Coronavirus (OC43) on surfaces in under 30 minutes.

In addition, AERAMAX PROFESSIONAL air purifiers reached 99.99% airborne reduction of a surrogate Human Coronavirus 229E in a 20m³ test chamber within 1 hour of operation in a separate test, helping to create a cleaner and safer indoor environment.

More information:

www.phs.co.uk/about-phs/expertise-news/phs-aeramax-air-purifiers-proven-to-eliminate-coronavirus-surrogate/

COVID-19: Time for a fresh air approach in classrooms



We know that COVID-19 is spreading in schools.



We know that poor ventilation increases the risk of infection. COVID-19 is spread through airborne particles that can be filtered from the air and removed by introducing more fresh air.



*70% of school staff are worried about COVID infection in schools.



We have to accept that opening windows is only a first step and the best answer has to be a combination of solutions that suits each individual classroom.



There is technology available to support schools and teachers that can clean the air and effectively remove COVID-19.



The phs solution to air cleaning

Our air cleaning products, phs Fellowes AERAMAX (AM3 & AM4) air purifiers and BIOZONE units have been independently tested and are proven to be effective against COVID-19.



For more information, visit www.phs.co.uk/aircare

*Research conducted by phs Group
https://www.phs.co.uk/media/2997/97172-phs-group-education-air-care-whitepaper_final.pdf

Tackling the increased risk of contagion in schools over the winter

The severity of the Omicron Variant

The Omicron variant of coronavirus multiplies 70 times faster than Delta in the human bronchus according to a recent study¹ conducted by Dr Michael Chan Chi-wai of the LKS Faculty of Medicine at The University of Hong Kong. The good news is that the study added: "In contrast, the Omicron variant replicated less efficiently (more than 10 times lower) in the human lung tissue than the original Sars-CoV-2 virus, which may suggest lower severity of the disease."

Regardless, the impact of staffing levels in your school due to sickness will be significant this month.

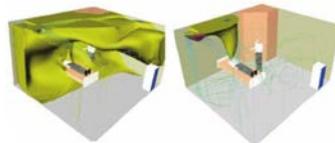
There is no substitute for ventilation, but air filtration and disinfection will most definitely help to reduce the risk of contagion. For example recent research² by the Department of Medicine at the University of Cambridge, said: "We were really surprised by quite how effective air filters were at removing airborne SARS-CoV-2 on the wards. Although it was only a small study, it highlights their potential to improve the safety of wards, particularly in areas not designed for managing highly infectious diseases such as COVID-19." In this instance they were using a combination of HEPA filtration and ultra-violet (UV-C) light.

Which system to purchase?

The question every school is asking is which units should they purchase? Filtration fan speed alone (m3/hr or CADR) is not the only metric that should be considered, filter positioning is also very important.

References

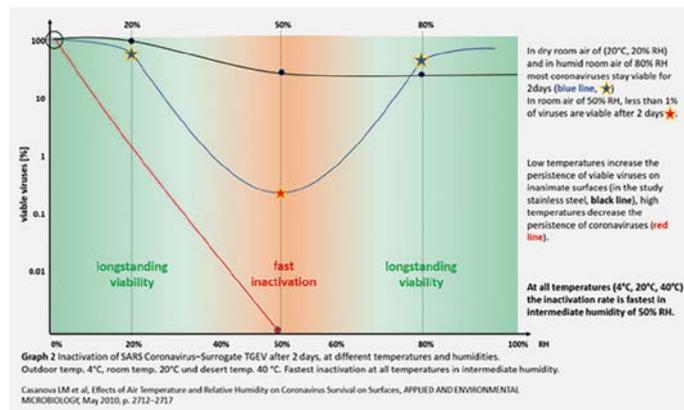
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- This article is written by Paul Kasler on behalf of Aura Air Limited, the UK Distributor of the Aura Smart Air range of products. The unique, all-in-one, Aura Air unit, incorporates a patented RAY Filter, UV-C light and also a patented Sterionizer, 24/7 air quality monitoring and recording, as well as intelligent, unattended operation. The product received regulatory approval by the Department of Health in Israel in October last year. The system successfully passed tests in Californian Labs, in August last year(5), achieving 99.99% effectiveness in eliminating viruses, such as SARS COV-2, in enclosed spaces. In a controlled laboratory environment, the device was able to eliminate airborne active SARS-CoV-2 by 87.37% in just 30 minutes and by 99.998% in 60 minutes. Since the start of the pandemic Aura Air has been deployed throughout Sheba Hospital and in particular its COVID wards. Sheba Hospital was ranked by Newsweek as one of the "Top 10 Clinical Hospitals in the World" and in July 2020, a white paper was submitted by the hospital on the efficacy of the Aura Air unit.



The location and height of the air filter is critical³

1. Location, location, location

Being able to correctly position a filter unit is critical³. In the highly contagious situation we are now in, the protection of every one of your teachers is paramount. Ideally the teacher's unit would be located between the front of the class and the teacher at seated, head height, to try and capture any aerosol droplets as soon they are emitted before they reach the teacher i.e. a unit that can be shelf or wall mounted.



High and low humidity levels increase the viability of viruses

2. How do you know the Filter system is effective?

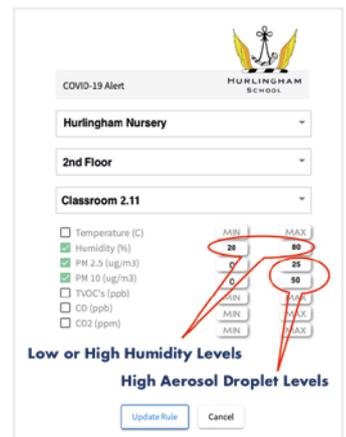
Most filter systems simply have a red/amber/green light to indicate "air quality". Very, very few filters have integrated sensors that monitor and display the key 7 air quality parameters in real-time. You need this information to not only check that the filter is not blocked over time, but also as a tool to confirm that you have placed the unit in the optimum position. Parameters such as high particulate levels (PM2.5 & PM10) and % humidity (see graph) are key to identifying a potentially critical Omicron situation. If the system provides an e-mail alert to key members of your staff, if such condition breaches occurred, this

would be highly beneficial. Please note that high CO2 levels can only be improved by fresh air ventilation.

3. Legal complications

New York Attorney General Letitia James is seeking an emergency court order with Amazon in the USA regarding its COVID-19 protocols⁴. It is imperative that you select a system that helps you protect against litigation. One approach is to select a system that also continuously monitors and RECORDS key air quality parameters. This data can then be replayed in Court, so that the school can confirm the air quality in a classroom on a particular day and time period in the past and that the school acted above and beyond government guidelines.

The one good thing hopefully to come out of this pandemic, will be the greater awareness of the importance of air quality on student performance and productivity. A unit that has integrated air quality measurement capabilities, will serve as a useful long term investment to continuously validate the indoor air quality in your school.



Does the system have a monitoring or an alert capability?

20% Voucher Code: "Schools20" and £35pm Rental option

Special Aura Air pricing and new rental scheme for UK schools

Special Filter Pricing for UK Schools

Aura Air has secured 10,000 Aura Smart Air, all-in-one, filtration, disinfection and monitoring units for the UK in January and is offering a special discount of 20% for educational establishments.

This price includes the Dashboard Monitoring & Alert software, allowing schools to monitor all of their classrooms and staff rooms in real-time and also instantly send e-mail alerts if any critical air quality conditions are breached.

New Rental Option

Aura Air is also offering a rental option, including supply of the replacement patented RAY Filters every 6 months, for the special rate of £35+VAT per month (*a minimum rental period applies). There is no maintenance required, other than replacement of the RAY Filter, which can be swapped out by untrained staff in seconds.

Unique features of Aura Air

The Aura Air units are unique in that purification is not only achieved by its patented RAY filter, but also from its integrated bipolar ioniser and hidden UV technology. In schools where air conditioning is the only viable option for classroom heating, Aura Air units because of their size and design, can be placed near the outlets to help reduce potential issues caused by a closed loop aircon system. However this should still not be considered a substitute for fresh air ventilation.

Aura Air analyses 7 air quality readings every 10 seconds, to decide on how it should

perform, without requiring staff intervention, therefore making it ideal in a classroom environment.

Among those UK schools most recently benefiting from this high-grade air purification and unattended operation is London's Hurlingham Prep School & Nursery, which chose Aura Air units for all of its classrooms and workspaces (48 units deployed) and Davison CE High School for Girls (62 units). Both are also able to track the air quality in every room over a rolling twelve-month basis to provide a 24/7 air quality audit trail.



Pictured: London's Hurlingham Prep School & Nursery has deployed 48 Aura Air units to date

Aura Air director, Paul Kasler said: "During the winter we expect to see a substantial increase in Aura Air purchases, as schools seek to protect themselves against the considerably more infectious Omicron virus. A key strength of the Aura Air unit is that it can be easily located close to the teacher, to help to specifically improve their protection".

Summary of the benefits of deploying Aura Air:

- Unattended, intelligent operation
- Units can be optimally placed, without being obtrusive or an obstruction
- Centralised air quality monitoring and control
- Full audit trail, ready to handle future government directives on minimum/desired air quality standards in UK schools
- Free custom "safer & cleaner air" stickers to place on the window of every room protected by Aura Air providing reassurance to parents and staff that air quality is being taken seriously.

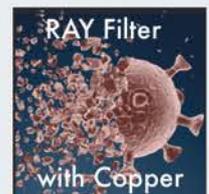
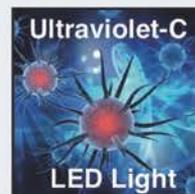
For further information or a site visit:
020 8420 4234 www.aurasmartair.co.uk

Why deploy Aura Air across your school?

Cleans, disinfects AND monitors

Intelligent, unattended operation

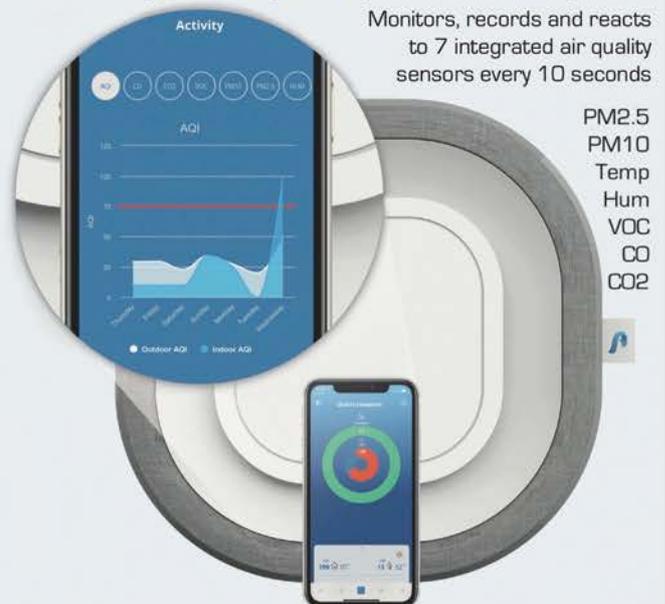
Compact & easy to install



A triple attack on viruses & bacteria

Technology in Aura Air	Coronavirus Reduction %
Filter with Copper	99.9744%
Sterionizer	99.9651%
UV-C LED	99.9631%

Test results published July 2020 by Sheba Clinical Hospital



www.aurasmartair.co.uk
020 8420 4234
info@aura-air.co.uk

"The air filtration system not only provides a significant line of defence against Covid but also dramatically reduces the impact of the polluted air that we are inevitably exposed to as an urban school."

Simon Gould, Headmaster of Hurlingham Primary School (48 units deployed to date)

How will a change in flexible working laws affect independent schools?



As flexible working becomes the 'new norm' in a post-pandemic world, Olivia Stanton, solicitor at Moore Barlow, looks at how proposed changes could affect independent schools.

"Since lockdown restrictions have been lifted in the past few months, many businesses have adopted a hybrid approach to balance working from home and in the office. In light of this, the government launched a consultation on statutory flexible working requests to consider whether prior approaches to requesting flexibility in relation to working hours and place of work are still the best way of operating.

The consultation has now closed and, while we await the outcome

to the consultation, it is important that school leaders are aware of how the landscape is changing and what this could potentially mean for the future of their workforce.

The rationale behind the government's consultation is to make flexible working easier for an employee to request and harder for an employer to reject outright.

Under current law, a statutory request to change working hours or place of work must be submitted in writing,

following which an employer has three months to respond with a decision. The employer must consider the request in a 'reasonable manner'.

Once an employer has received a request, the employer may either accept it without further discussion, or hold a meeting with the employee to talk it through. Having held the meeting, the employer may reject the request, relying on one of eight business reasons. These include that the work cannot be reorganised amongst other staff, an inability to recruit additional staff (where the requirement would be for someone to work one or two days per week) and a detrimental impact on quality and performance. These grounds are most often relied upon by schools.

It is clear from the recent consultation that the government is deliberating over whether these reasons remain valid in the modern working world and whether to relax them.

The consultation considered whether to allow any employee to make a statutory request for flexible working irrespective of length of service. Currently, a request may only be submitted by an employee who has been employed for at least 26 weeks. It appears likely that flexible working arrangements will be encouraged and will become a regular feature in discussions between employers and employees, including perhaps at the recruitment stage.

Flexible working requests have been commonplace in schools for many years, often connected with childcare responsibilities.

Requests for hybrid working are already increasing and are likely to be easier to accommodate for non-teaching staff. While pupils are being taught at school, teachers will be required to carry out their teaching duties on site. Some schools have received requests from teaching staff to be permitted to work from home in non-contact time. Such requests can be difficult to accommodate as schools need to ensure that sufficient teaching staff are available to provide pastoral support, in addition to their teaching and extra-curricular duties.

Support and administrative staff have demonstrated that during recent periods of school closure they have carried out their duties from home very effectively. This has resulted in a reluctance among some of the support staff to be in school during all their working hours. As we wait for the government's response to the consultation on flexible working, schools should anticipate an increase in requests for hybrid working arrangements.

Despite the potential for a dichotomy of working styles, nothing has been announced by the government as yet, but now is a key time for schools to begin preparing for any potential changes to the law. Once we know the outcome to the consultation, schools should update their procedures dealing with requests for flexible working arrangements. Now is a good time to consider carefully the impact of hybrid working and to have an open mind. We believe that this will be the direction of travel in many workplaces.

Olivia Stanton is an independent schools and charities solicitor at leading law firm Moore Barlow. For more information, please visit www.moorebarlow.com.

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Vent-Axia Launches New Webpage to Help Schools Improve Ventilation to Help Fight COVID



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ISA Awards ceremony

The Independent Schools Association (ISA) celebrated the successes of its Member schools with the ISA Awards 2021 towards the end of last term.

Outstanding local community involvement, excellence in Mental Health and wellbeing support and innovation in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, a new award for this year, were just some of the areas of achievement celebrated at the awards ceremony in Coventry.

The ISA Awards celebrate the breadth of excellence and innovation across the independent sector and commends the hard work of Headteachers and their staff. Despite Covid-19 challenging schools for another academic year and beyond, the dedication towards providing an exceptional education to children has remained due to the perseverance and resilience from ISA Members and their schools.

The ISA Award for Excellence and Innovation in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion was a new honour introduced this year and went to Dwight School London. This award celebrated the promotion of inclusion across the school. Dwight School demonstrated a commitment to building an anti-racist culture for all pupils and engaged with the entire school

community on a personal level on the issues of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

ISA Senior School of the Year was awarded to King's High School Warwick. This award recognised how the school makes a positive impact to the educational outcomes of the children in its care. The efforts from King's High, particularly the focus on wellbeing, community and learning marked a great response to the pandemic from the Warwickshire school. The offering of a range of programmes and activities aligned to these themes provided a solid foundation for a well-rounded but high attaining education in both Covid and more normal times.

ISA Junior School of the Year went to Heathcote Prep School in Danbury, Essex. Like the Senior School Award, this award celebrated positive outcomes across the school's operations, from special educational needs, sport, the arts, curriculum, or the co-curriculum. Heathcote responded to the challenges of the past year by demonstrating exemplary teamwork and embraced technology as they trained staff to become Microsoft Innovative Educators. Heathcote have been deservedly recognised for their outstanding dedication

and innovation by Microsoft and Pearson.

Chief Executive Officer of the ISA, Rudolf Elliott Lockhart, added: "The ISA Awards 2021 was an opportunity to recognise some of the wonderful achievements of Members' schools over the past year. The standard of entries was extremely high and the judges had a tough time with many fabulous schools just missing out on awards.

"The introduction of the award for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion reflects the work taking place across the Association to encourage the development of fully inclusive environments in schools and to ensure pupils can be champions for EDI both now and throughout the rest of their lives.

"After a difficult year for everyone, it was a pleasure to bring people together from across our Association to celebrate the different and remarkable ways that ISA schools provide for the pupils in their care."

The winners of the ISA Awards 2021 were:

ISA Junior School of the Year Award: Heathcote Prep School, Essex

ISA Senior School of the Year Award: King's High School Warwick

ISA Award for Excellence and Innovation in Early Years: Emmanuel School Derby

ISA Award for Outstanding Sport in a Small School: Myddelton College, Denbighshire

ISA Award for Outstanding Sport in a Large School: Bournemouth Collegiate School

ISA Award for Excellence and Innovation in Performing Arts: King's High School Warwick

ISA Award for Excellence and Innovation in Fine Arts: Rochester Independent College, Kent

ISA Award for Outstanding Provision for Learning Support: Frewen College, Sussex

ISA Award for Excellence in Pupil Personal Development: Moon Hall School Reigate, Surrey

ISA Award for Excellence and Innovation in Mental Health and Wellbeing: DLD College London

ISA Award for Excellence and Innovation in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: Dwight School London

ISA Award for Outstanding Local Community Involvement: Leighton Park School, Reading

ISA Award for Outstanding International Involvement: Myddelton College, Denbighshire



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FOODS

Independent School Meals

When it comes reducing our carbon footprint, we are what we eat

Mike Meek, procurement director at allmanhall, the independent education sector's leading food procurement experts, explores the complexity of food supply chain emissions.

“Over the last fifty years, we have quietly accelerated towards an environmental crisis, mostly without many of us noticing the scale and impact of these interconnected challenges. Our population has grown exponentially, from 2.5 billion in 1950 to 7.9 billion people today, and our demand for energy and resources have far outstripped the restorative powers of our planet.

Food is often the poor relation in the climate debate accounting for up to 30% of all global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Furthermore, different foods vary in their production systems, harvesting, storage, packaging, and modes of transportation, resulting in certain foods emitting considerably more carbon than others.

The emphasis needs to be on what food is being eaten, not just where it comes from.

We are often told that sourcing food locally is key to sustainably eating. However, this oversimplification is not the case for most foods, with the impact of transport often minimal. For example, you might be surprised to learn that for beef, transport only accounts for 2% of beef's carbon footprint. Therefore, as is the case for many foods, reducing 'food



miles' will have a minimal impact. Likewise, UK produce grown out of season in hothouses can be as bad as airfreighted produce, emitting significantly more carbon than produce imported from overseas, grown in season and outdoors. It is important to understand the complexities of your supply chains, not simply the last mile supplier.

As food procurement experts specialising in independent education, allmanhall are implementing a carbon impact

assessment tool, to quantify precisely how much CO2 sits within school meals. Carbon impact assessment tools remove ambiguity and simplify the process of measuring and reducing complex carbon emissions, enabling schools to adapt recipes and menus accordingly. Furthermore, audits on catering operations, carried out by independent experts can help the reduction and removal of food waste.

Pupils are demanding change.

Deloitte's 2021 Global Gen Z survey 'a call for accountability and action' highlights an expectation for action – the environment is a higher priority than unemployment, healthcare and, remarkably, education. There is an expectation for organisations to work together to tackle climate change, a recognition of the need for global system change and an appetite for playing a part in the transformation.

We need to act with urgency. The most complex challenges will involve tackling the environmental impacts of our supply chains. It is best to face this challenge early, as it moves from a nice to have to a need to have with impending legislation.

Last year, the Department for Education released a draft strategy regarding environmental sustainability. Its vision? For the UK to be "the world-leading education sector in sustainability and climate change by 2030." You can read allmanhall's review of this draft, along with other articles on this complex topic, by visiting <https://allmanhall.co.uk/blog>.



School to change its name

Colston's School, founded by Edward Colston in 1710, has announced that it will be changing its name. The process of choosing a new name will now begin and will involve students, former pupils, parents and staff, with the new name to be announced in the summer.

Back in June 2021 the school began an extensive name consultation, inviting views from the school community as well as the general public. The consultation was launched following the events that took place in Bristol in June 2020, namely the toppling of the Colston statue, that prompted renewed questions over the retention of the Colston name across the city. What became clear was that the name Colston has become a symbol of the city's extensive links to slavery and will forever be associated with the enslavement and deaths of African men, women and children.

Of the survey's 2,500 plus responses, more than 1,000 came

from members of the public, with their overall opinion being in favour of retaining the name. However, analysis of the feedback of those respondents who were closer to the school, such as current pupils, more recent former pupils and staff, showed that they were more inclined to see a change in the name of the school as a positive step.

Nick Baker, Chair of Governors at Colston's School, said: "After a lengthy period of consultation, consideration, and reflection, it became clear that those with a closer connection to the school, would prefer to have a name that was more relevant for the pupils and staff of today and tomorrow.

"It is hoped that a new identity will do more to reflect the values and ethos that the school stands for today and to make it even more welcoming to the local community it serves."

The Board have made it clear that this decision will not erase the school's history, and that the



teaching of the transatlantic slave trade and the role of Edward Colston in Bristol's history will remain a key part of the school's curriculum.

The announcement has been welcomed by the School's Headmaster, Jeremy McCullough, who commented: "Changing the name will not change the nature of our happy, diverse and forward-looking school. We will continue to provide an excellent and holistic education and to do our very best to support those families who entrust us with their children.

"It is an exciting new chapter for the school, and I am proud of our pupils and staff for engaging in this complex discussion and for

being a part of the future they want to see."

The survey received 2,502 responses in total. 1,096 responses were received from the general public – 81% of these respondents said that the school should retain the name of Colston's.

Colston's was founded in 1710 by Edward Colston as Colston's Hospital. It was originally an all-boys boarding school, but day-boys were admitted in 1949 and girls were admitted to the sixth form in 1984. In 1991 it merged with the Collegiate School, a girls' school in Winterbourne, and was named Colston's Collegiate School until 2005 when it was again re-named Colston's School.

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Profile

In conversation with Dorothy MacGinty

Born: 1958

Married:

Married to Frank; children Charlie, Alex and Beth

Schools and University Attended:

Holy Cross High School, Edinburgh University

First job:

Teacher of Physical Education, St Aidan's High School

First management job:

1986 Head of department – Physical Education and Biology

Appointed to current job:

Easter 2015

Favourite piece of music:

Competition between Mozart and swing

Favourite food:

Anything Italian

Favourite drink:

Definitely New Zealand Sauvignon

Favourite holiday destination:

Probably Europe, anywhere warm with good walks and good swimming

Favourite leisure pastime:

Local history, reading, gardening, golf and upcycling furniture

Favourite TV or radio programme/series:

Strictly, Silent Witness

Suggested epitaph:

When Jonathan Sacks was asked, what is the question God will ask us when we enter Heaven, he said "Have you loved the life I have given you?" I would say yes I have, to the full!

Q Kilgraston has a distinguished history in the Catholic tradition. Your senior girls have the chance to take a two-week exchange to schools in 40 other countries who are also members of the Sacred Heart Network. If a parent asks you what their daughter could expect to gain from such a trip, what would you say is the key benefit?

A *Experiencing living in, and learning from, another culture, not just visiting it in a tourist capacity, are incomparable. Frequently, a foreign language can be learnt, or an existing one enhanced. Global contacts are always made, standing pupils in a stronger position for future business and networking opportunities. Expanding your mind, stretching beyond your comfort zone, this is what childhood is all about. Taking part in foreign exchanges – for instance, we run a twinning programme with Unison World School, one of India's top all-girl boarding schools, located in Dehradun among the Himalayan foothills – drills-down into cultural respect and understanding that will stay with you for the rest of your life. Diversity and heritage comprehension has never been more important and will only expand as a vital life-skill in everyone's personal armoury.*

Q Early on in your career path you studied for and were awarded, a Religious Education Teaching Certificate and – some years later – a Montessori Teaching Diploma. Looking back, what have these aspects of training contributed to your work as a teacher, and, indeed, as a head?

A *I have taught in secular schools, an ecumenical school, an Anglican school and in Catholic schools. The important aspects in all of these religious environments, for me, is the importance of teaching children and young people the common values of all faiths and giving children of no faith a sense of spirituality. The Montessori training gave me an understanding of the whole education process, from pre-school through primary education and beyond. It has allowed me to lead junior and senior education with the insight of how the child learns and develops throughout their whole education. While we all know that 'every day is a school day,' there is also a lot to be said for experience. Pursuing the career path*

that I have done has afforded me the benefit of already having faced many of the daily challenges of being a Head.

Q Kilgraston was founded as a girls' school in 1930, and this remains its focus, though boys are now welcomed in the Junior Years. Can you see merit in the so-called diamond system – co-ed to 12, single-sex until 16, co-ed again to 18?

A *At Kilgraston we have re-introduced boys to Junior Years; it has worked well, boys presenting healthy competition in the classroom as they approach their learning in a completely different way. We have no plans to introduce the diamond model. My idea of girls moving into a co-educational environment at the age of sixteen negates, I think, the advantages of an all-girls environment, where pupils have already built-up strong self-esteem, becoming confident adults. I firmly believe these attributes are better supported by a single sex Sixth Form. I am of the opinion that an all-girls senior school is the best possible option for a teenage girl, but of course, I'm a bit biased!*

Q Your students will have been very aware of the Cop26 discussions which took place late last year in Glasgow. Climate change can be a seriously frightening prospect for young people. How do you balance the need for knowledge and debate without generating undue alarm?

A *Our approach to caring for the world in which we live is always couched as a 'can do,' 'positive' challenge where everyone can make a difference, contributions being valued and progressive.*

Kilgraston has done an enormous amount of work to highlight the need for action to combat climate change. There have been very pro-active environmental campaigns led by the eco-committee and supported by every member of the school community. From our '100 little things that will make a big difference' challenge (pupils encouraged to use small adjustments to their day-to-day lifestyles) to planting hundreds of indigenous trees and an extensive fruit orchard, everyone takes part. Stakeholder involvement is the key to understanding and not being afraid. Teaching pupils that the highest emission-producing

Dorothy MacGinty has been Headmistress of Kilgraston School, Perthshire, since 2015. She was previously Headmistress of St. Francis' College in Hertfordshire.



countries have huge environmental responsibility allows them to understand that we all have a part to play.

Together with talking to the children about proactive behaviour at assemblies, we have also been emphasising the beauty of the world we live in and the need to appreciate the natural wonders all around.

Q Kilgraston has been 'ahead of the curve' on local environmental issues in many ways – examples include no idling of cars on campus, protection of native red squirrels, recycling of clothes in your 'Wear It Again' campaign. Which of your initiatives have you been most proud of, and why?

A *I think persuading all areas of school to stop the use of single-use plastics and encourage the narrative to take place at home has been one of my most rewarding achievements. Throughout the week, pupils and staff members will catch my attention to tell me about their environmental initiatives in the family house. Just last week, a senior girl told me that, when washing dishes, they now collect the water from the hot tap until it runs to the required temperature, using the retained water to rinse dishes and in the kettle. Brilliant! Unnecessary use of paper is also high on our agenda, as is highlighting to girls, on a monthly basis, the amount of food waste from our dining hall (steadily reducing, I'm glad to report). Later this year, we are also taking part in the Queen's 'Plant a tree for the Jubilee' green canopy initiative. As a passionate plant enthusiast, making the world a greener place is one of my biggest joys.*

Q Kilgraston has around 190 day pupils from ages 5–18 and 80 or so boarders aged between 8–18 from nearly 20 countries around the world. Communication with parents is always important, but perhaps particularly so during the pandemic. Have you introduced new systems or policies since Covid, and do you anticipate any staying for the longer term?

A *We have introduced on-line parents' evenings which actually work extremely well and we'll continue*

this into the near future. Both UK and international parents know exactly when their appointments are and staff can share information confidentially over the TEAMS platform. Parents book slots with each teacher in advance, giving them the flexibility to accommodate work commitments etc. These occasions now make it much easier for our global family to connect.

We have increased the content of weekly newsletters, giving more information about both current and future events to parents and guardians as there is less opportunity for parents to pop into reception than there was before the pandemic. All public performances, such as Music concerts, Christmas Carol Services and Harvest festivals etc are being filmed on a private YouTube channel to share with parents as, very sadly, at the time of going to press, they are still not allowed into school here in Scotland.

Q You hit the national headlines a couple of years back when Kilgraston was the first UK school to ban mobile phones on campus during the day. Others have followed your lead. What is your assessment of the benefits of such a policy?

A *Children don't need further pressure, there's enough already, especially given exam assessment uncertainty. Schools are for learning and fun with real-time friends, not furtive glances and inward turmoil, frequent by-products of social media use. I agree that mobiles are an essential part of life's tool-kit, but too quickly they can become an unwelcome accessory, encompassing a gamut of challenges. The main benefits of removing them from the daily routine have been the lack of distraction for senior girls; no more waiting for the buzz from a mobile device, allowing greater concentration in lessons. Improved interaction amongst pupils is another benefit, better communication, not just through peers, but across all year groups. Less dependency on devices has led to greater team building and collaborative interaction. Parents report that reliance on mobile devices at home has also greatly reduced due to the lack of the 'hamster wheel' use throughout the school day.*

Q Kilgraston now offers nearly 50 regular extra-curricular activities, and prides itself on inspiring students to leave with a well-rounded view of life and a wide range of interests alongside academic results. When you were a pupil there were few, if any, such activities on offer at most schools. So what – or maybe who – inspired you to become a teacher and ultimately a successful head?

A *I was very fortunate that my parents were always keen that I experienced as many activities as possible beyond the school gates. They were only too happy to encourage me in my pursuits of dance, gymnastics, netball and drama – to their cost as drivers! I was fortunate to attend a grammar school, Holy Cross in Hamilton, who had a vibrant extra-curricular programme. Here, I loved joining hill walks, outdoor education weeks and playing in netball and volleyball teams. My inspiration to become a teacher came from my mother who was Head teacher of a large primary school in the west of Scotland. She always told me that "children have one chance at education, and it needs to be as good as it possibly can be". She was so right and it has been my mantra throughout my teaching career. Early role models and experiences are absolutely vital for all children. An inspirational influence can change the course of a young life forever.*

Q Irrespective of how Covid pans out in 2022, your final couple of terms at Kilgraston will doubtless feature the usual debates about the respective benefits of formal exams, teacher assessments, or some hybrid system. What's your stand?

A *2020 was a shock to everyone. When, in early February, I suggested to Kilgraston's teaching body that there was a possibility of public exams being cancelled, there was, understandably, disbelief. "Collect as much evidence as you possibly can, just in case exams don't happen": and they did. This approach stood us in very good stead for both 2020's and 2021's assessments, both teachers and pupils quickly getting into the swing of accruing information, producing it on demand, for accountability and assessment.*

Continued >

Profile *In conversation with Dorothy MacGinty (continued)*

The SQA are planning an exam diet later this year and we'll be ready. We are working hard on preparing pupils who have had no experience of sitting public exams in the last few years. In order to give realistic assessment experience, all senior pupils have had external exam assessment conditions mimicked and we have every intention of carrying this forward to January's prelims. Meanwhile, we are collecting evidence from the work produced in the event of exam cancellation. However, even before the pandemic, I was an advocate of increased teacher assessment. I think one-off, 'do or die' exams are very hard on children – not every child is at their best in an exam situation – and should determine only a percentage of the final result. As hard as it has been, I do feel that we have started to go some way to permanently changing the traditional method of grading.

Q Kindness and consideration for others are high on your list of desirable attributes to encourage in Kilgraston students. How do you measure your success?

A *It is a difficult thing to quantify. I measure the 'kindness factor' by seeing how well pupils interact, support each other, join in House activities and competitions, their ability to express concern and congratulate each other. If there is an increase of discipline issues coming across my desk, which is fairly rare, it rings immediate alarm bells. What I love most is when pupils speak to me or knock on my door – I have an open-door policy to encourage pupils' interaction. When they report a concern that someone is being left out, or doesn't seem quite right in themselves, this is when I know that our community is really working correctly. Just this week, during a Duke of Edinburgh Award training exercise, teams were allocated gas cylinders on which to cook their lunch. Unfortunately, one team had an empty tank. Immediately and, without even consulting her teammate, one girl invited those without gas to put the pasta into their already boiling pot. That's kindness in action and a true measure of being a well-rounded individual that no amount of exam-sitting will produce.*

Q Retirement looms. What are your plans?

A *Loads! Taking up golf again is a high priority. I thought when I came back to Scotland seven years ago, I would have the opportunity to play some of the country's magnificent courses and my handicap would reduce – how wrong I was. Leading a boarding school – as all boarding Heads will know – doesn't allow for four hours' on the course at the weekend! Gardening is another passion. I'll miss my greenhouse but we will install a new one as soon as possible and I am planning to do an organic gardening course. Having lived in school houses, on campus, for over twenty two years, my husband and I are very much looking forward to moving into our recently purchased house and redecorating it just the way we want it; I already have my eye on an interior design course. Hopefully, more entertaining at home will also be on the agenda; Friday and Saturday nights have – for the last two decades – generally meant evenings in school. I know I will be one of those annoying people who, in a year's time, will say, "I just don't know how I fitted in work!"*

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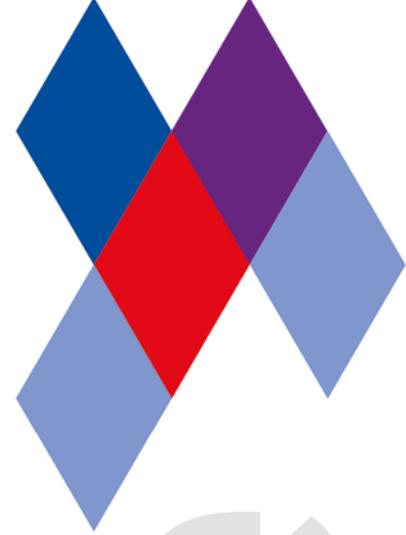
The current pandemic has wreaked havoc in our lives and many school's finances. It's hard to plan when you don't know what's round the corner! But now is also a time to challenge the status quo and see whether there are better options out there.

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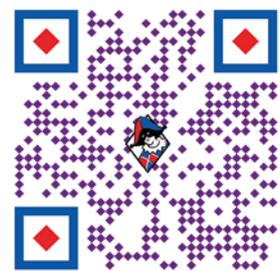
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Staff create a hilarious Panto

In Christmas season 2020, amidst Covid restrictions, Michael Jenkins, a drama teacher at Moreton Hall, Shropshire, decided to stage a panto led by school staff to buoy the pupil' spirits. It was a huge success, with pupils thoroughly enjoying staff stumbling through their lines and the inside jokes. Back by popular demand, amidst more Covid restrictions this year, the staff created another hilarious panto to the delight of all.

This time, the pupils of Moreton Hall were taken on a very special journey to the magical land of 'Moretonia' based on the story of Aladdin. Written by Mr Jenkins and co-directed with Mrs Howells, Head of Drama, the production showcased this British art form with a unique Moreton twist.

The performances were... interesting. George Budd, Principal, delivered an almost too convincing villain and

Stuart Penrose, sports teacher, shone as innocent Aladdin in search of wealth and his princess, Jasmine. Other primary characters distinguished themselves: Sean Lang, Head of STEM, as a Genie with a swagger and a scooter; Lorna Campbell, Director of Development, as the kind, but not so bright, Wishee Washee; Pat Willis, receptionist, as the sassy Slave of The Ring; and, Hannah Davies, science teacher, as the lovely Jasmine, who surprised with some seriously slick dance moves.

Despite all this talent on stage, one performance stood out above all: Dr James Hindson, geography teacher, as a transcendent Widow Twankey. He owned the stage with his coiled energy: continually pacing, dropping one liners, and adjusting his full bosom. He owes a debt to the costume department for his purple gravity-defying hair and hooped skirt.

"While the cast still needed rehearsal, this didn't matter as The Holroyd Theatre was filled with laughter and spontaneity, especially from our Dame, Dr Hindson, who still doesn't know his lines," said Mr Jenkins.

The reimagined version of "Twelve Days of Christmas" including "five rolls of toilet paper" and "eight smelly socks", presented by an

enthusiastic cast of characters dressed as angels from a primary school nativity play, turned into a rollicking sing-along with the audience.

"At a time where shared experiences are still few, working with the staff over our lunch times was a tonic and a joy," Mrs Howells said. "The entire Moreton community pulled together in the usual vibrant way."



Charity Christmas singles

Pupils at Gresham's School, Norfolk, were hard at work at the end of last term recording Christmas singles to raise money for the school's charity of the year, Holt Youth Project. The two groups, Gresham's Guys and Gresham's Girls, have each created a song from scratch in the school's Strathmore recording studio. Back in 2016, Gresham's Girls produced their first single for charity and it soon became an annual tradition due to its success, with the Gresham's Guys coming along with their own single in 2020.

This year, the Guys have reworked the Spice Girls' '2Become1' and the Girls' have put together their own rendition of Stereophonics' 'Dakota'. The singles have been created with the aid of Gresham's music teachers, as well as some industry greats, such as Ash Soan who recorded the rhythm for the songs and Eric James who helped to master the tracks.

It is hoped that the singles will raise a good total for Holt Youth Project.



The charity exists to provide a safe environment for young people to meet and socialise with the minimum of supervision, which builds their social communication skills and promotes ownership. The centre is a place where young people have opportunities that empower them to reach their goals and aspirations through various programmes and activities.

The Girls' single can be listened to and downloaded here: <https://greshamsgirls.bandcamp.com/track/dakota>

The Guys' single can be downloaded and listened to here: <https://greshamsguys.bandcamp.com/track/2-become-1>

The school's Young Media Leaders have also created and edited music videos for the singles during their academic enrichment time, which have been released on YouTube, and can be found by searching 'Gresham's Media'. Any donations to the Gresham's Guys and Girls fund are gratefully received, and can be made via the Just Giving link: <https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/greshams-guys-and-girls-2021>



Energy and charm

The Leys School, Cambridgeshire, was able to stage a full-scale musical theatre production at the end of last term – for the first time since the pandemic – and Little Women was a feast for the eyes and the ears.

The Broadway musical, based on Louisa May Alcott’s novel, struck a chord with its theme of a family finding strength in their loving bonds during difficult

days. Director Cory Pulman-Jones selected it for this reason and because it has many good parts for strong female actors and singers, something the school has in abundance in its current cohort.

The story is set during the American Civil War.

Costume designer Carol Bye’s mid-19th century crinoline dresses were a visual delight and the stagecraft was very effective.



First girl choristers

For the first time in its 111-year history, Ealing Abbey Choir is including girls in its intake of new choristers.

Three girls and five boys – all in Year 4 at St Benedict’s School, London – have successfully auditioned to take their first steps to becoming choristers, by joining the choir as Probationers.

The choir sings each Sunday in the

Abbey Church at 10:30am Mass, at Christmas and Easter.

In recent years the choir has toured the United States, Poland, Barcelona, Vienna, Switzerland, Hungary and Rome. Its musical repertoire includes works by twentieth century composers such as Howells, Duruflé, Messiaen and Tavener, as well as Gregorian chant and Latin polyphony.



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Concert Band Gold

Bolton School’s Joint Senior Concert Band received a grading of Gold Award after taking part in the National Concert Band Regional Festival at Oldham at the end of last term. It was the first time such an event has been held in two years and the band performed a programme of challenging music to a panel of adjudicators who commented: ‘This is a really promising band with brilliant potential. To get to this level so soon in the year is a real achievement.’

Music Teacher Miss Sherry said: ‘This was a wonderful opportunity for students from both Boys’ and Girls’ Divisions to perform for experienced adjudicators, alongside semi-professional and University bands, and we were the only School to take part, in the North West regional heats. Thank you to those pupils for representing the School and their parents for supporting them.’

The band have been invited to perform at the national finals at the Royal Northern College of Music in the spring.



Curriculum and assessment 'no longer fit for purpose'

Following a survey of teachers and senior leaders in both the state and independent sector, a new HMC report published at the end of last year finds the current educational system is perceived to be failing to prepare young people to thrive in the 21st century, current assessments are too narrowly focussed and used for the wrong ends and the majority of respondents favour urgent reform of GCSEs.

The author of the report, Sarah Fletcher, High Mistress of St Paul's Girls' School and Chair of HMC 'Reform of Assessment' Working Group, has called on the Government to appoint an independent and impartial individual or organisation to swiftly lead a wide consultation with educators, business, universities, parents and students to help inform the design of a new model of assessment.

Respondents to the survey, carried out earlier this summer, believe:

- The current education system is too focussed on qualifications at the expense of broader aims, and thereby is falling significantly short in preparing young people to thrive in the 21st century.
- There are concerns about how well the education system develops wellbeing, both mental and physical. It is also seen as falling short in promoting the values, creativity, and critical thinking & problem-solving skills young people need for personal agency and to play an active role in creating a respectful, tolerant and sustainable world.
- The education system fails to motivate students by responding effectively to their needs.
- The educational system does not adequately meet the needs of diverse learners, including those with disabilities.
- Assessment is too narrowly focused and is being used for the wrong ends. Exams are more successful in serving the purposes of university selection and employers

than in encouraging learner development or in motivating engagement in education.

- There is appetite for further research into the use of technology to improve access to learning and assessment.
- 94% of respondents believe GCSEs either need complete or partial reform, 54% wish to see that process commence immediately, whilst 35% would like to see it take place after a period of consolidation post pandemic.

Sarah Fletcher said: "Nearly 800 people replied to our survey, including 450 senior leaders and teachers, over half from the state sector. Their responses provide a fascinating insight into the state of education in this country. The passion and idealism of the teaching profession shines through. Respondents support student centred and future facing outcomes. They are excited by the advantages technology could offer in improving standards, bringing learning communities together, and in developing more personalised approaches to assessment. They are clear, however, that the current educational system is falling short.

In their view, the curriculum is not sufficiently relevant or motivating. Assessment appears to focus more on benchmarking and the needs of university selection than on student progression, and there is real worry about inclusion. The scores relating to the needs of students with physical and mental ill-health are very low, while economic status is still viewed as the biggest barrier to success. Social mobility, curriculum and assessment are closely intertwined and there is no

doubting the need for a proper review of our provision if we are to offer the inclusive, equitable system to which we aspire. Wellbeing scores very poorly by every measure, which is a significant concern.

The world has changed since the curriculum was devised. While the acquisition of knowledge and qualifications are understood to be important, these are currently limiting broader learning. There needs to be more emphasis on curiosity and a love of learning, so young people develop the flexible, adaptable mindsets they need to upskill and reskill in later life. Cultural and social awareness are essential if they are to engage positively in an interconnected world, while skills in digital literacy and engagement with new technologies are at a premium. Crucially, creativity and critical thinking lie at the heart of problem solving and innovation, and are essential if young people are to feel empowered in a changed and changing world. In none of these respects is our curriculum perceived as successful. We need to find new ways of developing and nurturing the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values young people need to take control of their own futures and to play their part in creating an ethical, sustainable, and respectful world.

There is real appetite amongst the teaching community to look at these issues and soon. The overwhelming belief is that politicians should cede place to professionals, allowing review and reform to be driven by those at the forefront of education – teachers, academics, researchers, wellbeing experts and recent school leavers.



Swimmer's life saved

Two lifeguards at a Health Club who were trained while in the sixth form at Exeter School have saved the life of a local photographer, and are keen to spread the word about the importance of lifesaving training.

Alumni Archie Leather (2015-2020) and Alex Foster (2009-2019) resuscitated photographer Andrew Butler while on duty at the club.

Andrew Butler suffered a cardiac arrest after a swim, an alarm was raised, and Archie was first on the scene. Andrew's life was saved through compressions and the use of a defibrillator.

Archie has been working as a lifeguard for three years. He said this was the first time he had experienced such a major event.

"I was in the moment and all my training kicked in," he said. "I didn't think about it, I just did it. We refresh our training every month and being able to save Andrew's life has given me more self-confidence."

Andrew said that the fast response not only saved his life but massively reduced the potential for lasting damage from the event. Both Archie and Andrew now wish to share the need for defibrillator and lifesaving training to be more widely available.

Archie – pictured with Andrew – is studying geography and planning at Cardiff University; he wishes to join the Royal Navy when he graduates and fly helicopters.

The full report can be accessed here: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/0980wmvryjs45id/HMC%20report%20-%20FINAL.pdf?dl=0>



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Senior school ready

The £5m building project at Crosfield School, Berkshire, has now been completed, allowing expansion of its provision from the current 13 age group to 16 years.

The new state-of-the-art senior school building will have its first

cohort of Year 11 pupils to sit their GCSEs in 2023.

Craig Watson, Headmaster, said: "Parents and pupils wanted the choice to stay at the school beyond year eight, and this fantastic new building for our

Senior pupils will mean that we can offer our broad and thorough education to many more students for years to come.

"We pride ourselves in offering the best environment for pupils to learn and develop in, and the



new facilities will ensure that our students continue to thrive in an outstanding learning space."

Jamie Harwood, director for builders Beard added: "One of the key aspects to this project was the close relationship with the client. Despite some hurdles to overcome, by working together and communicating openly, we delivered these exceptional new facilities in time for the children to start their new term".

Pictured: Caroline Purdom, Bursar at Crosfields, and Matthew Bennett from Beard



New building opened

Halliford School, Middlesex, has named their new building in recognition of their Chair of Governors, Mr Ken Woodward QPM, who has dedicated much to Halliford over many years. Ken has served as a Governor for over twenty years and has successfully led the School as Chairman for the last twelve years, plus his son attended Halliford School. As the School marks its Centenary, the opening of the new Woodward Building at the end of last term was at the heart of the School's celebrations.

Headmaster, Mr James Davies, led the ceremony with a speech about ensuring the best possible facilities for their students. Ken followed by thanking Halliford for the honour of having the new building named after him. He encouraged the staff and students to use and enjoy this facility which houses a Learning Resource Centre on the ground floor, plus six classrooms and offices for the English and History Departments.

Ken unveiled the building's name plaque at the ceremony attended by the Mayor of Elmbridge, several local school Heads, the School

Governors, and local friends of the School and Old Hallifordians. He then cut the ribbon and officially opened the building, inviting guests to see the new build for themselves. Guests enjoyed refreshments prepared by the in-house catering team and had a chance to tour the new space, which will soon be bustling with students.

The Headmaster was keen to avoid disruption to the local neighbours caused by the build and therefore opted for a modular building

which also has the advantage that the construction process is much shorter thanks to the expertise of construction specialists, The Darwin Group. Work commenced in May 2021, with the delivery of 27 pre-built modules, and the building was completed in just 21 weeks. The eye-catching exterior of the new build was designed with numerous windows on each storey, creating a space flooded with natural light and a spacious learning environment for the students and staff of 805 sq m.



Mr Davies said, "The Woodward Building offers state-of-the-art modern facilities for our students and provides exciting, stimulating spaces for them to work both independently and collaboratively with our new Learning Resource Centre at the heart of the school site. I am particularly proud that we have also managed to create a completely sustainable carbon-neutral building with the roof space home to a vast solar array."



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Day of celebration

Brentwood Preparatory School held an official opening for its multi-million pound expanded facilities towards the end of last term, a year after its doors opened to pupils. A whole day of celebration was held for pupils and their parents, many of whom hadn't seen the facilities since

they were completed in November 2020 due to lockdown restrictions.

A brand new assembly and dining hall, a three storey classroom block and reception area, and three interconnecting Foundation (Nursery) rooms, which overlook

a bespoke and innovative play space, now grace the campus of the 129-year-old Preparatory School and pupils have benefited hugely from the expansion.

Parents were shown round the new facilities by their sons and

daughters and particularly remarked on the modern Science, Art and Design Technology studios, the fully kitted out Food Technology suite, and the blank canvas 'Futures Room', where pupils were engaged with virtual reality headsets.



Pictured: Chair of Governors Sir Michael Snyder, headmaster Jason Whiskerd, and members of the school council at the official opening

Enhancing opportunities for girls to pursue DT and Computing

Construction of a new £3m Design Centre at King Edward VI High School for Girls, Birmingham, has begun.

The new facility will support the Edgbaston school's plans for the delivery of GCSE Design and Technology and GCSE Computing from September 2022. It will be joined to the existing Peter Bennett Centre, which will also be transformed to provide additional space for art, including an enhanced exhibition space and an art library.

Principal Kirsty von Malaisé joined representatives of main contractor Interclass and architects Pinnegar Hayward Design to mark the start of the build.

Mrs von Malaisé said: "Developing design skills and computing skills, including critical thinking and purposeful creativity, are vital components of innovation and complex problem solving. Girls' schools have a particular role to play in supporting young people to develop such skills, ensuring equal access to a wide range of career opportunities: the new Design Centre will be an exciting addition to our site."

While science-related degrees have long been popular choices for KEHS pupils, there is growing interest in engineering, design, maths and IT-related courses. Of the departing Upper Sixths in 2021, 31 are studying STEM (Science,



Technology, Engineering or Maths) subjects, including five who are reading Computer Science.

Work on the new Design Centre is scheduled to last until summer 2022.

Pictured from left: Oliver Homan (PHD), Jamie Travis (Interclass), Shaun Harvey (Interclass), Kirsty von Malaisé, Sara Barnes (Interclass) and Des O'Neill (Interclass)

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Young minds tackle climate change

Ten primary schools across Surrey, Middlesex and Doha, Qatar have signed up to a new competition which will enable children to develop their science and mathematics capabilities, while engaging with experts in the sustainability industry and helping to tackle climate change.

The inaugural ACS Future Impact competition, organised by ACS International Schools, will see children aged 7-11 working in teams to develop and present proposals for how their school and/or their local community can reduce its negative environmental impact. A range of exciting prizes will be available to help winning teams put their proposals into action and to further students' knowledge and understanding of environmental issues.

Teams will work together to identify an environmental issue such as global warming, fossil fuels and alternative energy sources, plastic pollution or food waste. Once teams have selected the issue, they will consider their solution which should be specific to their school or local community, meaning that it can be put in place by teachers, students, local councillors or the local public.

Students have six weeks to develop their proposals; during the process they will build confidence in science and mathematics through real-life application of their learning through the UK national curriculum.

Participating schools will select their top team(s) this month

(January), which will progress to a live final in March, hosted at ACS International School Cobham. Teams which progress to the final will be allocated a mentor with expertise in environmental sustainability, who will be able to help students develop their proposals to the next level, ready for the live final, where teams will pitch their proposals to a panel of industry judges. As well as the level of depth and feasibility of the solution, teams will be judged on their creativity and out-of-the-box thinking.

One prize that is up for grabs is being donated by Sustainable Advantage, a consultancy that helps organisations become more sustainable. Sustainable Advantage will provide three

winning schools with a comprehensive sustainability review, covering environmental, social and corporate governance issues. The three schools will also receive a bespoke action plan, setting out clear targets and advice on how to achieve these in the coming year.

Participating schools include:

- St Peter's Leatherhead
- St Andrews Cobham
- West Byfleet Junior School
- Cobham Free School
- West Ashted School
- Field End Junior School
- ACS Hillingdon
- ACS Cobham
- ACS Egham
- ACS Doha

Rooting for success

St Benedict's School, London, has planted 120 trees in celebration of the School's 120th anniversary.

The wild cherry trees, which were provided by the Woodland Trust, have been planted on the School's site, and also at Holy Family Catholic Primary in Acton, in recognition of St Benedict's strong partnership with the school.

St Benedict's Chair of governors, Joe Berger planted the first tree at the School's Perivale sports

grounds, at a short ceremony attended by the Headmaster Andrew Johnson, the Junior School Headmaster Rob Simmons, and students from St Benedict's Eco Society. All the remaining trees were then planted by the Combined Cadet Corps – at Perivale and on the St Benedict's site.

St Benedict's parents have also donated almost £700 to Restore our Planet's 'Trillion Trees' project, which is helping to restore and protect the world's forests.



Over 100,000 trees protected

Felsted School, Essex, has protected 108,665 trees and counting after partnering up with the groundbreaking charity One Tribe earlier last year.

Pupils and staff are encouraged to engage in projects to help protect the environment both locally and around the world. By donating a percentage of the transaction of each admissions registration, and every long haul overseas school trip (equivalent to 500 trees) Felsted is playing their part in helping to save our planet for future generations.

Felsted Head, Chris Townsend comments; "As a school with a global community, Felsted is committed to making a difference to the sustainability of the planet. We are delighted to be partnered with

One Tribe and encourage individuals and businesses to get involved to have an even greater impact."

At the COP26 climate summit, more than 100 world leaders have promised to end and reverse deforestation by 2030, however deforestation is currently happening at an alarming rate, with an acre of forest being lost every second of every day. According to One Tribe, this accounts for up to 15% of net global carbon emissions each year, equivalent to the carbon emissions of every car, truck, bus, plane, ship and train on the planet. Preventing deforestation means that all of this carbon can remain safely stored in the world's forests.

Felsted uses 100% renewable electricity on the school site.

Pictured: Pupils and Head Chris Townsend plant a fruit tree as part of the Boarding Schools Association's 'Boarding Orchard' National Initiative



Pictured: Mr Johnson is second from the right; Mr Simmons is end on the left

New trees for campus

Environmentally-active Ashville College, Yorkshire, pupils have planted hundreds of trees on its grounds to help boost on-site biodiversity.

In an ongoing partnership with the Woodland Trust, pupils under the supervision of the independent school's grounds team added 420 native British trees – a mixture of hazel, blackthorn, crab apple, dog rose and rowan – to create a hedge running adjacent to one of its sports pitches and a public footpath.

This is in addition to 500 native trees that were planted last November to enhance existing hedges or establish new ones to the southwest edge of the 64-acre campus.

The Woodland Trust has provided all the trees as part of its Big Climate Fightback campaign, which has so far seen more than 1.8 million trees planted by schools, community groups and businesses around the UK.

As the saplings grow, they will provide a habitat and movement corridors for wildlife and produce pollen, nectar, nuts, fruit and berries for insects, birds and small mammals.

Annual tree-plantings are among many initiatives led by the College's dedicated Green Committee, which works hard to encourage pupils to think about how their actions can either harm or benefit the environment.

In the last two weeks of term, the Green Committee also ran a Fairtrade stall in the College's Pre-Prep, Prep, and Senior Schools, where pupils were the vendors! In addition to protecting workers' rights, and striving for safer working conditions and fairer pay for workers, and high quality, ethically produced products for shoppers, Fairtrade means sustainable trade, and environmental protection is a key element of Fairtrade's view of sustainability.

The pupils sold items which they had bought from the Harrogate Fair Trade Shop, with a double philanthropic benefit, as the proceeds are going to Edukid, an organisation which provides a primary, secondary and university education, enabling the most disadvantaged children to achieve their dreams and break out of their poverty.



Accreditation for international work

St Mary's School in Cambridge has been awarded an Accreditation by The British Council in the International School Awards for integrating international learning throughout its entire school and teaching curriculum.

This accolade – which is valid for three years – demonstrates St Mary's commitment to international education and its implementation of clear activity plans and impact assessments to develop its quality of international education.

Illustrating its work in this area, St Mary's recently hosted its first international 'Learning Lunch' with former student, Chanel Tsui, who is now a clinical pharmacist at Queen Mary Hospital, Hong Kong. The learning lunch helped bridge the time difference of eight hours and almost 6,000 miles for the former alumna – enabling her to virtually meet students and answer any questions they had about her chosen career path.

Miss Dutton, International Coordinator at St Mary's School, said: "Achieving this accolade is such fantastic news for St Mary's. It's so rewarding to be acknowledged for the ongoing commitment that we have to international learning. At every turn we strive to provide new ways for our students to connect

with the wider world – this might be through activities such as working collaboratively with an overseas partner school, or by raising awareness of global issues in our learning. We now look forward to continuing this commitment and taking it to the next level."

Charlotte Avery, Headmistress at St Mary's School, Cambridge, said: "International learning is a big part of our school's culture. As educators, our role is to encourage our girls to be outward-looking, well-informed, responsible world citizens. Our girls benefit from collaborating with young people from around the world through our partnerships with overseas schools. We continue to be highly committed to developing international awareness and understanding within our school, and we are overjoyed that this has been recognised and commended by The British Council."

St Mary's has an International Committee in place at the school, which consists of a wide range of students from across all age groups. The Committee works hard to raise awareness of issues that are of personal interest to international students, as well as promoting global developments that are of importance to the whole student body.

Pictured (l to r): Dr Andrew Flint, St Mary's Teacher of History & Politics/High Performance Learning Lead, a selection of student members from the International Committee and St Mary's International Coordinator, Miss Dutton

Driving Positive Change

Olivera Raraty, Headmistress of Malvern St James Girls' School, reflects on the GSA Conference in Manchester at the end of last term.

This has been quite a year for school leaders who have battled Covid on their own front line, continuing to educate children whilst not knowing how many positive cases amongst pupils or teachers they would be facing each day, and adapting accordingly. As Sam Price, Headmistress of Benenden School and President of the Girls' Schools Association (whose alma mater was the school I now lead), put it in her opening address at the annual conference: 'We work in resilient and supportive communities.'

In any normal year, a large gathering of Head teachers in one conference hall would have been standard, but this year it seemed almost surprising, if not improbable, that so many had made it to the table. For many, like me it was almost a necessary luxury, a chance to connect in person with a fellowship that had been a sustaining influence through challenging times and to have our wider purpose as GSA Heads reaffirmed as a powerful force for good in society.

The theme of conference, Girls: the voice for positive change, was encapsulated in Price's address, which highlighted that young people care about others and the planet and that it is unrealistic to mock them for their 'woke ideas'. 'Our duty is to be supporting their voice in an informed and educated way' and we 'need to listen to the same extent that they speak.'

Journalist Libby Purves got to the heart of the issue in her keynote address when she said 'Man's voice,' unless we are careful, 'will always be the default option', as women for too long 'were seen as weaker – schoolgirl, mistress, mummy.' Women's education has changed this, but we need to go further.

'Current femininity puts great pressure still on women to be lovely and biddable,' said Purves, which she described as 'a new form of sexism'. Many Heads in the room will have experienced her observation that 'In society even now, we are expected to

be seen as peacemakers... gentle and polite, and not interrupt the chairman; not to be seen as shrill or confrontational.' The answer is to instil in younger generations the confidence to be 'captain of your soul and mistress of your fate.'

She went on to say that part of understanding mental health is the need to accept that girls will be angry, frustrated and anxious; this need not be seen as a mental health problem. It's important not to turn everything into victimhood.' Her final advice on what we need instead is to 'reprogramme our brain and listen to every voice, young and old, and process this; to make up our minds what is wise or foolish.' Wise words indeed from a remarkable woman.

On 'listening to every voice', Price argued that Equality, Diversity, Inclusion (EDI) is all about divergence and understanding neurodiversity better. Yet, an EDI survey from GSA schools found under 25s at odds with the older generation on EDI issues, where being 'woke' is seen as derogatory. Rather nobly, Price commented 'It is about being better informed and "woken up" to the issues that are important.'

Continuing the theme of empowering ethical leadership of the future, conference heard from Phoebe Hanson of Force of Nature about eco anxiety. 'Tokenism,' she said, 'all talk or no action, feeds eco-anxiety'. This was an impassioned plea by a young activist exhorting leaders to help young women to 'uncover their power and find their passion by taking on a single issue' and fighting for it. 'We all underestimate the impact on young people and their need to feel validation, feeling seen and heard, as part of a wider community.' The need for greater visibility was highlighted in a panel discussion where it was revealed that less than 5% of tech investment in start-ups goes to women. We need a broader base to innovation if we are to address major climate change and key environmental challenges.

Carl Ennis, UK CEO of Siemens,

spoke powerfully on the need for female engineers to change the world: 'We need everyone to have a seat at the table... we need to have the brightest minds'. Women make up 51% of the workforce in the UK, but only 26% are employed in STEM. This is a problem if we are to create environments that are suitable for young women and have greater gender parity in engineering and technology. Ennis brought home the reality of female under-representation within the industry and said 'This won't change until we create an inclusive environment and avoid digital deprivation.' The Siemens See Me programme, in collaboration with GSA, has set an ambitious 50% target for gender equality by 2025 and to promote the key skills needed: data, AI, cyber security and leadership, as well as soft skills: EQ, social awareness, relationship management, and resilience.

As an educationalist, I know, as do colleagues in the maintained sector, that soft skills are not given enough space within the current GCSE curriculum.

Sarah Fletcher, High Mistress of St Paul's Girls' School, shared the results of a recent survey conducted across independent and state schools sectors which confirmed that only 41% of respondents thought the national curriculum effective in developing persistent learners, with soft skills like curiosity, empathy and self-efficacy coming out very low. What it is achieving is in inverse correlation to people's views of the purpose of education. Qualifications come out on top for what the National Curriculum delivers, whereas wellbeing, thought important by many, scores only 24% in terms of what is perceived to be achieved – a sad reflection of two years of high stakes examinations. We are the only country to impose this exam regime on 16 year olds, yet, as pointed out by Hannah Jackson – the Red Shepherdess and Young Farmer of the Year 2018 – Britain has the lowest maths scores at 16 globally. So,



it's not as if assessment is leading to performance! Indeed, we are being overtaken by other countries with different assessment cultures leading to higher performance and confidence.

A recurring theme of conference was the need to review our curriculum to reflect the world we are living in and for the skills to match. There was recognition that digital technology had revolutionised schools and the workplace during the pandemic and this would only accelerate. This raises questions about how we use technology to support our pupils in their learning and how we assess our teenagers to reflect their way of working. Jackson gave a powerful indictment of our current system: 'Many exist in school, rather than thriving'.... 'Our system is built for high achievers and not for the majority.' 'We need to help young people find their motivation and to enjoy learning for its own sake to build confidence. This means going with their natural grain and not against it.'

The conference speakers all made powerful contributions to Sam Price's important and timely theme, inspiring us with views that challenge the status quo. If we as a society are to be ready for the challenges of the 21st century, we need to make sure that young women are empowered to act fearlessly and for their voices to be listened to as driving positive change.

Unique Learning Partnership

Six schools in Abingdon, Oxfordshire, were excited to see the launch of their new independent state school partnership at the end of last term. Building on existing relationships between schools within the town, work on the formal partnership began over a year ago. After many years of informal collaboration between the schools, it was clear that the provision of a formal, mutually beneficial partnership would provide a springboard for students and an opportunity to widen horizons for all. *Abingdon School's Jane Warne reports...*

The OX14 Learning Partnership benefits from schools in close proximity with good community ties. It aims to raise educational aspirations across the OX14 postcode by providing opportunities for students and staff to be challenged, inspired and learn from each other. Each school has recruited a Partnership Champion, a senior member of staff who will support the strategic vision and operational delivery of the partnership as well as inspire and motivate colleagues, and help to facilitate involvement. They form the Operations Group which meets once a half term and communicates regularly, in addition to meeting at joint events and activities.

The Steering group, made up of headteachers and school leaders within the six schools, meets two to three times a year to ensure the partnership is strategic and impactful. This group has agreed the following aims, to:

- Provide opportunities for aspiration and challenge through widening horizons for all stakeholders.
- Use extra-curricular activities to develop character, promote cultural engagement and support civic pride.
- Support the mental health and wellbeing of students, staff and parents using a whole school/partnership approach. This will be based on Public Health England's eight principles for promoting a whole school approach to emotional health and wellbeing.

These priorities will shape the partnership and activities will be planned to provide opportunities for growth and development in these areas. They will also give the partnership clarity and structure to ensure impactful and valuable opportunities for the community.



Pictured: Heads & senior leaders at a launch event, representing the six schools involved: John Mason, Radley College, Fitzharrys, Abingdon, St Helen & St Katharine, and Larkmead

A Partnership Coordinator and a Mental Health and Wellbeing Coordinator have been appointed to work between the schools to support and facilitate partnership plans. Both of these roles have been funded by the Mercers' Company, a livery company focused on being a philanthropic force for good. Accessing funds in this way has enabled more money to be available to spend on partnership activities and is a replicable model for others in similar funding relationships.

A student voice committee has also been set up, forming an integral part of the partnership. With representation from all the schools, this group of students provide a platform for idea generation, student views and collaboration. The committee is hoping to hold a lecture event with a view to holding a student conference the following year.

A range of both extra-curricular and academic activities and events across subjects such as sport, music, languages, the arts, careers and UCAS support will encourage

collaboration between the schools as well as providing opportunities. An example is The Oxfordshire Academy of Broadcast Journalism which has been set up to help students develop their skills in the media. A wide and varied lecture programme will also provide a basis for further discussion and learning. The Peer Support Lead, PSL, programme has been established, involving students from each school who help support the pastoral care and wellbeing of younger students. The PSLs attend several townwide training sessions and benefit from collaboration with others and the opportunity to reflect on their experiences. The training covers relevant topics such as friendships, anxiety and wellbeing, often supported by guest speakers.

In the future the partnership is open to expansion and may involve other schools and institutions to widen the scope of the venture. The nearby city of Oxford, has a rich educational heritage and links with the University could provide additional support for the

Partnership. Meetings are being held to discuss a town wide UCAS strategy to enable all students to access a comprehensive package of support, particularly those applying to Oxbridge.

Ensuring the Partnership remains impactful is of high priority. Activities and programmes will be monitored and evaluated to provide a rigorous impact reporting system. The Partnership will use the ImpactEd platform to support this process, providing access to validated, research based questions and surveys. The platform will also help to evaluate and understand less tangible social and emotional and non cognitive competencies such as grit and self efficacy.

The formation of the OX14 Learning Partnership is a very positive step in the future of collaboration between schools in the Abingdon community. The mutual benefits are already evident and it is hoped that, with the formalisation of the Partnership, these will be both consolidated and expanded to new initiatives.

'The World of Languages and Languages of the World'

John Cloughton, former Chief Master of King Edward's School, Birmingham, introduces the thinking behind the new WOLLOW initiative, designed to encourage curiosity, understanding and enjoyment of languages in KS2 and KS3.

Let's imagine you – or I – have got the chance to give a language lesson to a Year 5 or Year 6 class. One alternative is to teach the boys and girls the days of the week in French, or Spanish, an obvious, simple and, perhaps, not naturally interesting task. The other is to teach them not the days of the week, but about the days of the week, in English, French or any language you like. If you were to do the latter, the following questions and answers and ideas and opportunities might emerge:

- i) Who on earth – or in heaven – are Tues and Wednes and Thurs and Fri named after?
- ii) And why?
- iii) Why in the English days of the week are there four names from the Northmen, two from the pagan world of Sun and Moon and one, lonely Roman god, Saturn?
- iv) Why is there not even one day of the week which comes from

Christianity: after all, it's been going here for 1.5 millennia?

- v) Why are French days of the week different?
- vi) Why are two, Samedi and Lundi, the same as in English?
- vii) What does Dimanche mean and what's it doing on a Sunday?
- viii) Is it coincidence that French days and the planets share names?
- ix) Is it a coincidence that Thursday (Thor) and Jeudi (Jove) are both thunderbolters and both on a Thursday (or a Jeudi)?
- x) Why are there seven days in a week, after all?
- xi) Did the Romans have days of the week? If not, why not?
- xii) Why are French and Italian and Spanish days of the week so similar and English so different?
- xiii) At this point, it may just be that a pupil from Russia, or Pakistan

or Afghanistan or Germany volunteers his days of the week, and off we jolly well go.

That will do, I think. Of course, we rarely do find the time to wonder why Tuesday is Tuesday, but such a lesson encourages thought and curiosity, encompasses history and geography, empire and religion and, perhaps best of all, allows the pupils to use their knowledge, their family and language history, to fill the gaps in our ignorance. 'What larks', as someone once said. And that's a 'WoLLoW' lesson.

In recent times, a number of us from Birmingham, Norwich School, Cheadle Hulme School have been constructing a programme which is designed to encourage curiosity, understanding and enjoyment of languages in KS2 and KS3. We think that this is particularly valuable when the pupils in front of us are increasingly bilingual, if not multilingual, a reality which seems to have had little or no impact on

what we teach. And another reality is that the teaching of languages in the early years is, too often, fragmented, undervalued and has no coherent link to what is taught in secondary school. As Steffan Griffiths, the Head of Norwich School, said at our first 'WoLLoW' conference: 'We teach Italian in our junior schools so that, when those pupils move into the senior school, they don't have too much of an advantage over the pupils coming from elsewhere. That must be a nonsense.'

Anyway, it's not hard to get down to the hollow and there be a WoLLoWER. The resources are accessible – for free – on the 'WoLLoW' website and those resources can provide a full-year curriculum or individual lessons or topics to be cherry-picked according to your whims – or schemes of work. All you have to do is jump in, or whatever hippotamoï do.

At the first WOLLOW Conference...

'The teaching of languages in a multilingual society'

On Wednesday 10th November, 'WoLLoW' - World of Languages and Languages of the World - held its inaugural conference at King Edward's School, Birmingham with the support of the Schools of King Edward VI in Birmingham and Norwich School. Over 50 teachers and educationalists, not only from Birmingham but all over the country, attended from state and independent schools, primary and secondary schools.

'WoLLoW' is a language project which aims to address two key issues:

- the deep concerns about the teaching and take-up of languages in this country,
- the extent to which the teaching of languages is responding to the increasingly multilingual nature of our classrooms.

The 'WoLLoW' programme provides free resources to teachers in KS2 and KS3 with the following aims:

- to encourage a curiosity about and enjoyment of languages;
- to enable pupils to understand how languages work as a preparation for studying specific and different languages in the future;
- to develop and celebrate the linguistic and cultural diversity of our society;
- to use languages as a means of integrating the curriculum, encouraging thought across subject divides.

As befits a programme with a quadruped as a symbol, the conference had four legs. The first leg addressed the issue of the reality of multilingualism in primary education in Birmingham. Paula Rudd, the Head of Water Mill Primary School in Selly Oak, and Deborah Fance, the Head of Heathmount Primary School in Balsall Heath, talked about the challenges and rewards of running

junior schools in a city as diverse and fluid in its population as Birmingham: Paula said that, since September, 48 pupils had arrived at her school, almost all of whom spoke no English. At Water Mill, 30 languages are spoken and in a small survey of 54 pupils, only 11 lived in a home where English was the only language spoken, 8 lived in a home where English was not spoken at all and 26 speak two or three languages at home. Deborah Fance described a school, less than a mile from the City Centre, where 99% of the pupils are EAL: her data would be even more multilingual.

The ensuing discussion emphasised the importance of ensuring that multilingual children did not lose their family/heritage language, not only for their future lives and careers but also to ensure that they were not separated from their families and culture.

The second leg was about the 'WoLLoW' programme itself. The co-founders of WoLLoW explained the origins and purpose of WoLLoW, starting as an enquiry into the teaching of all languages, including English, then becoming linked to the wider, national concerns about the teaching of languages. Abbie Dean, MFL teacher at Norwich School and the creator of the resources, and John Wilson, Head of MFL at Cheadle Hulme School, then described their own experiences teaching the course to different ages and in different schools through partnership work with local state schools. Abbie and John emphasised that, although the course at KS2 and KS3 was designed as an all-year curriculum, the resources were such that they could be combined with the teaching of a single language, as required by Ofsted.

A brief video was shown of some WoLLoW lessons being taught in Norwich and Birmingham:

https://youtu.be/Z2_lznGdq

The third leg was a presentation, 'Lessons from linguistics: recycling knowledge of linguistics in the language classroom.' by Dr Julio Villa-García, Senior Lecturer, Department of Linguistics and English Language at the University of Manchester. 'WoLLoW' has been working with the university about the project for some time. Dr Villa-García talked about what it meant to be bilingual and how the bilingual brain operates and went on to describe how some of the exercises in linguistics could be adapted and used in the school curriculum.

The final leg turned to one of the key political issues of the moment, migration and this country's capacity to enable refugees to settle successfully in this country. Hafssa is a young woman who has migrated from Iraq via Jordan with her mother and younger brother and sister. She has come to live in Coventry under the government's refugee resettlement programme: 750 refugees from Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan have been settled in Coventry since 2015. Hafssa is now working as an apprentice financial officer for Coventry City Council. She explained her own family's journey and the value to them of arriving with a knowledge of English. However, she said the real problem lay in refugees who arrived in this country without English and said that it was much, much harder for those families to engage with and become integrated in the wider community.

In conclusion, Steffan Griffiths emphasised that the 'WoLLoW' programme was in its infancy and would grow through being used and developed by teachers in as many schools as possible. However, there was a strong sense in the audience that this was an imaginative, perhaps even visionary approach to the deep and deepening concerns about the teaching of languages – and the numbers of those learning – at every level from primary school to tertiary education.

If you would like to know more... about WOLLOW please contact

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'Look forward, provoke and challenge... the message for 2022

Melanie Honeybourne, Bursar at York House School, Hertfordshire, reflects on the recent conference held in Newport...

As a bursar relatively new to the sector pre-Covid, I was particularly delighted when it was confirmed that the ISBA conference would be going ahead in November 2021. The opportunity to reconnect with fellow bursars, our association and key suppliers face to face, was invaluable.

The setting for the 2021 conference was ICC in Newport, Wales over a three day period (22-24 November 2021) with delegates, as usual, being given maximum flexibility with the option of staying two or three nights or indeed just day time attendance.

I opted for the two-night package, travelling across to Newport on the morning of Tuesday 23rd November in good time for the Welcome to Conference presentation from ISBA Chief Executive, David Woodgate. For colleagues that had been able to commit to the full three days there had been a day of events on the Monday, most notably a Keynote address from ISI Chief Inspector, Vanessa Ward.

The conference is structured such that there are keynote speakers' sessions, which all delegates attend, complemented by panel discussions, four or five of which run at the same time covering different specialisms, allowing delegates to attend those most relevant or of interest to them. Throughout the conference there is a substantial exhibition running, exhibiting products and services of interest to independent schools, and delegates dip in and out of this when they are not in the formal conference events.

David Woodgate welcomed us to conference with his 'To boldly go... into an unknown future' theme. The inevitable part was that we would discuss the unprecedented previous eighteen months and the many threats now facing the independent education sector. The welcome part of this, was that the focus was very much on the positives, 'do not try and return to your March 2020 position' look forwards, provoke and challenge.

ISBA did not disappoint on the standard we have come to expect from it. Its line-up of key note speakers was impressive, opening with Rt Hon Baroness Nicky Morgan, former Secretary of State for Education, who talked to us about the next five years in our sector. She was followed by David Smellie of Farrer & Co, one of the top employment and safeguarding lawyers in the UK.

Key themes were certainly starting to emerge, and it was clear that governance and sustainability should be close to the top of a bursars' list of priorities.

To close the first day delegates were transported back four decades to be addressed by Baroness Floella Benjamin DBE. Suddenly the audience was full of 'play school babies' as the very engaging Baroness Benjamin spoke to us about Equality and Diversity. Drawing deeply on her own personal experiences throughout her life, she was captivating.

All that remained for the day was for delegates to enjoy ISBA's hospitality at the 'welcome back to conference' drinks reception.

The second day of conference was due to be opened by Rt Hon David Lammy MP. He, however, was unable to attend due to illness, but I dare say, few of us were disappointed by the time last minute stand in, Richard Gerver had finished his presentation. In my view he was definitely the most captivating keynote of the conference. Richard was down to earth, witty and not least, incredibly knowledgeable.

Some old ISBA favourites appeared throughout the afternoon too. The very charismatic Professor Joe Nellis managed to keep us all smiling whilst talking about the difficult subject of the current economic outlook. For the final keynote of the conference ISBA raised its game once again. Julie Robinson, CEO, ISC, hosted Dr Jonnie Penn and Sir Anthony Seldon to talk about AI (Artificial Intelligence) and education.



Jonnie Penn is a talented individual that has achieved more in his 34 years, than most of us will in a life time. A New York Times bestselling author, technologist, activist and public speaker, he has even played ball with Barack Obama. Sir Anthony Seldon needs little introduction and together they were here to talk to us about the future of AI and education. To end on such a positive, forward looking topic, which distracted us momentarily from our current day pressures, was a smart move from ISBA.

In full conference tradition, the event closes with a drinks reception and formal dinner. To date the dinner has always been a black tie affair which was waived this year in favour of smart business wear. ISBA, if you are reading this, I cannot tell you how delighted bursars are that this event is no longer black tie. Dinner was delicious and the final opportunity to socialise and network 'in person' with long missed colleagues, was invaluable.

My reflections of this event would not be complete without mentioning Tracy Edwards MBE, our after-dinner speaker. Modest and humorous, she relayed how she had been expelled from school at 15 years old and from that, went off to travel and found sailing. An incredibly inspiring lady.

Thank you ISBA for what, in my opinion, was a fantastic conference. To see people in person this year would have been enough, but it was very much more. A great venue with some inspiring speakers, talking on the perfect blend of subjects.

The inspiration of books

Suzy Ward, Head of Pocklington Prep School, discusses what reading means to her, and to pupils who now benefit from a new library and a new reading scheme...

Reading was my first love. I remember sitting next to my Mother as she read Ruth Brown's 'A Dark, Dark Tale', and how it felt twenty years later to read it to my own daughter. I vividly remember our family's 1989 holiday to Dorset where I discovered Anne Digby's 'Trebizon' boarding school series which later inspired me to seek employment in a similar sort of school. I can still recall studying Brian Friel's 'Translations' at A Level, inspiring a lifelong interest in the cultural significance of language.

Books inspire memories, interests and even life changes. They are a legacy that we can pass on to our children. When I started working as a teacher, I looked forward to the magical day when I would begin my first ever class text, imagining that I would inspire my eager and attentive class to read more and seek out new treasures. Unfortunately, that wasn't quite how it worked out – but those

early days inspired me to strive to promote reading wherever I taught.

I was incredibly lucky, just over a year ago, to start as Head of Pocklington Prep School. I was even luckier to find myself surrounded by staff who wanted to promote reading and improve standards. We had a small library, but it didn't have the variety that would serve to inspire our children and it was situated in a teacher's classroom. We therefore embarked upon a multi-faceted approach to placing reading at the centre of our curriculum and school life.

Once a space had been identified, we were able to work to create an inspirational library. Beautifully designed furniture, a stunning bespoke mural, fairy lights and a reading den all serve to make the space somewhere special. Staff sought pupil opinion on the selection of new books, ensuring they really felt involved in the process. All of a sudden, the library



is the place everyone wants to be. The Librarian is the key leadership role of choice amongst our pupils. Physically, the library is literally at the centre of the school, with a door leading outside so children can come in at playtime.

Making physical space for reading was just the start. We knew that, as is typical of prep school life, time is squeezed by all sorts of exciting adventures. As a staff, we made a commitment to making time for quality reading, planning a twenty-minute session each day before lunch. Every single member of teaching staff is involved either in supervising classes of readers, or hearing children read aloud and checking their progress. This has sent a clear message to all that reading is vital. It is the bedrock upon which we base all our study.

Time and space then allowed for the introduction of a new 'reading scheme', although Accelerated Reader really isn't that. I have heard both good and bad things about this scheme, and seen it implemented effectively in a number of schools. We have found that the scheme works well when coupled with our own flexibility and high-quality staff training. Children read between two very wide levels and there are hundreds of 'real' books to choose from in each level. But, if they are desperate to read a particular book that is not in their level, of course we say yes. We know that the motivation to read is key and therefore we always want to be supportive and positive.

These changes are just the first steps in ensuring a reading culture becomes entirely embedded within our school. The novelty of these changes will gradually wear off and we will need to ensure that we keep promoting reading in different ways, through different means, and never take it for granted that everyone loves reading (straight away!).

First word millionaire!

Year 6 pupil, Thea, has become Prep School's first 'word millionaire', for reading a million words since beginning the Accelerated Reader programme in September.

The introduction of the reading scheme coincided with the unveiling of the brand-new Prep School library, which has been transformed into a fresh, inspiring space with beautiful mural designs and a plethora of new books for pupils to enjoy.

The Accelerated Reader programme helps teachers support and monitor children's reading practice and is designed to motivate pupils to read and foster a love of words and books. Pupils choose a book at an appropriate level, which is assigned points based on factors including word count, sentence length and vocabulary. After the book is completed, a short reading quiz is taken to earn the points and measure how much of the book has been understood.

Suzy Ward, Head of Prep School, presented Thea with a certificate and badge for her achievement and hopefully she will be the first of many word millionaires, as other pupils are inspired to achieve the same goal. Prep School are currently devising a hall of fame to be displayed in the new library, and plan to hold a word millionaire celebration party at the end of the academic year to recognise the achievements of all word millionaires in the school.

Jen Cliff, Year 6 teacher said: "We are finding the introduction of the Accelerated Reading programme and our brand-new library have really inspired the children across Prep School to foster a love of reading and it is great to see the facility so well used both in class and break times."

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What book should Jonny read next?

Afrodite Petridou, Assistant Director of Studies, Head of English Department and Class Teacher at Hornsby House School, London, discusses a question she often gets asked at Parents' Evenings...

Parents' Evening. I welcome Jonny's parents into the classroom. 'Jonny is a great child, with good manners and he likes maths, Art and science' I start. 'But how's his English?' mum asks worriedly. Pause. 'Jonny can read, and he is able to follow the plot. He can retrieve information from a text. He can distinguish between fiction and non-fiction.' Parents are now heaving a sigh of relief. 'But' I continue, 'he needs to develop his writing style and use descriptive and figurative language, selecting words and phrases carefully to enhance impact of writing. Jonny needs to develop his reading comprehension strategies, especially inferring meaning from context and understanding how an author uses language.'

'And what do we need to do to help Jonny?'

The million-dollar question.

'Jonny needs to read more.'

My answer, sadly, isn't up to the mark and hence doesn't seem to allay parents' fears.

'But he reads every night' mum insists. 'He goes to his room and reads for 20 minutes before bedtime.'

'What does he read?'

'At the moment, he's reading Tom Gates, he just loves the series.'

'It's great that he likes reading and we want to maintain the positive attitude. However, Jonny needs to be exposed to more genres, authors, writing styles and techniques, books that allow him to see how skilled authors use language for effect.'

And this is the part where most parents ask how to do that and what books their child needs to read, and more often than not, teachers give them a list of children's classics and all is well.

I have a little confession to make. Although children are highly encouraged to read classics and

there is great value in classic literature, they most certainly do NOT need to read exclusively this genre. It's true, classics teach us to unlearn the superficiality, lack of depth of character and impatience that surround us in the hyper-accelerated 21st century life. However, in order to develop their reading comprehension skills, a child does not need to have read the unabridged version of 'Oliver Twist' or 'Pride and Prejudice' or the complete works of William Shakespeare by the time they're in Year 3.

Classic books are great—but magazines, recipes, leaflets, comics and even instructions on a webpage can all be great too. Following a recipe to make some cupcakes is valuable and quality reading.

When parents are asking 'What do we get them to read next', the answer is 'Anything they like as long as the book is not on a kindred subject. It's how they read the book that makes all the difference. It's all about demonstrating to children how to read properly, a skill which, although sometimes is mistakenly taken for granted, takes a lot of practice to master.'

It all starts with children and adults being positively predisposed; considering reading as a fun, interactive, high-quality activity they can do together. Throwing on cosy pyjamas, sitting comfortably in that big, soft armchair and picking up a book. Having a chat about the title, the book cover, the illustrations. 'What do you think the theme will be?' 'What makes you think that?' 'What does this pile of jackets crushed in the corner of the room say?', 'Why is there gold foil lettering on the spine of the book?'

Child and adult are now slowly stepping into the uniquely portable magic otherwise known

as a book.

It's important to model skilled reading behaviour, enjoyment, and interest as well as fluent and expressive reading and intonation. Read question marks, full stops, commas, semi-colons, and ellipses. Read italics, bold type, and capital letters the way the author intended these words to be read. Ask the children why they think that word is in italics and how we should read it. 'Why did the author do this? What effect does it have on the reader?'

Listen to the child read. What do you notice? Encourage them to use intonation, to stop to take a breath when they see a full stop, to pause at commas. This helps the children to slow down, retain information more effectively and create a mental image about what they're reading. Emphasis should not be placed exclusively on decoding and children's phonological awareness; adults should be focusing on developing fluent reading capabilities which allow children to read accurately, and with appropriate stress and intonation.

When reading to children, parents can model the comprehension of unfamiliar vocabulary and talk through their thought processes when comprehending a text, e.g., 'Hmm... What do you think the word 'undulating' means? I agree, it's a tricky one. Shall we go back to the previous sentence and read that part so we can guess what it could mean?'

Check their understanding of what they've read; 'Can you tell me three things that ... did before they went to bed?', 'What was revealed at the end of this chapter?'. Encourage them to make predictions based on what they've read so far and justify their opinion; 'What do you think will happen next?' 'Why do you think that?'

Encourage children to be active



readers, prompting them to be curious about what they're reading, predicting, fact-checking, clarifying and asking questions to help them pursue a deeper understanding of the text: 'How do these words create a feeling of...?', 'Do you think this character's behaviour will change from now on?', 'What impression of ... do you get from these two paragraphs? Why?', 'Why did the author use this simile?'

Language and discussion provide the foundation of thinking and learning and should be prioritised.

While you're reading, why not pause and ask the child to draw a picture? For example, use an old roll of wallpaper to make a treasure map with clues or 'tea stain' paper and write a letter as Henry VIII. Children's creativity is stimulated through drawing and they can link this activity to reading and its positive connotation.

Although the notion of reading as a staple of entertainment and relaxation is challenged by hectic family lives, the best way for a child to enjoy a book is to share it with their family. By building reading routines, parents are also starting the journey of building a lifelong love of reading for pleasure all the while contributing positively to their children's educational performance.

England hockey dreams

A talented young hockey player from the North-East dreams of representing her country in the sport having been selected to train at an elite level.

Teenager Charlotte Graham, has secured a place on the England Hockey u16 girls' team having shown great aptitude for the sport at school, club and county levels.

The Year 11 student at Dame Allan's Schools, in Newcastle, has already attended two training weekends.

"I was invited to try out for England in October and was so happy to be selected," said Charlotte, 15, who is studying for her GCSEs at Dame Allan's Girls' School.

"The squad currently has 36 girls and it will be reduced to 26, so I hope to train well enough to remain part of the team and be able to represent England in a match."



Charlotte was first introduced to hockey when she joined Dame Allan's Junior School, in Year 5.

Within a year, she had joined the JPC junior hockey club in Newcastle and played her first season of ladies hockey there when just 13-years-old.

For the last four years Charlotte has also played hockey for Northumberland County. She has taken an active role at the Academy Centre and latterly the Performance Centre as part of England Hockey's player pathway.

In August, Charlotte was selected to play in England Hockey's Northern Pennine Pumas u15 girls' team, competing in the Futures Cup against squads from Wales, Scotland, the Midlands, South East and South West.

Will Scott, Principal of Dame Allan's Schools, said: "Charlotte's impressive hockey journey is the very reason we like to introduce our pupils to all types of sport in the Junior school, so their talents can be identified and nurtured from a young age.

"Charlotte is a dedicated and talented hockey player and we wish her every success in the sport going forward".



National schools' cross-country winners

Teenagers from Bradford Grammar School, Yorkshire, are celebrating after becoming senior national schools' cross country champions.

The team from Bradford Grammar School (BGS) had a nine-hour trip to Tretherras School, in Newquay, to take part in the senior category of the English Schools' Athletics Association Cross Country Cup.

Rebecca Flaherty, Amelie Lane, Emily Gibbins, Carla Barennes, Grace Dawson and Elsa Foster competed on a fast, challenging course that was muddy underfoot. Strong winds also made for a tough competition.

Rebecca led her teammates to victory from the start of the race to clinch first place. Amelie and Emily were just a short distance behind. Overall, the girls were comfortable winners of the team

race with 37 points to spare over their nearest rival, St Catherine's School.

Oliver Rogers, director of sport at Bradford Grammar School, said: "BGS has a long tradition of excellence in the cross country and orienteering fields. The girls have worked incredibly hard for a number of years to get this far and to see them take it one step further and win the title was fantastic. Well done to all of them."

The students are a young team and four will still be eligible in two years' time. In the New Year, all six girls will compete in the Bradford, West Yorkshire and maybe also English Schools' Cross Country as individuals. They also have the prestigious King Henry Relays to look forward to as a team.

Olympic rower opens boathouse

St Peter's School, Yorkshire, Boathouse has been officially opened by Olympic Rower Greg Searle MBE.

Greg delivered a morning Masterclass to pupils from the Boat Club which focused on the importance of making choices not sacrifices and inspiring the children to adapt constantly in order to improve and succeed.

Greg answered questions from the pupils and gave them the opportunity to hold his three Olympic medals including his Gold from Barcelona, before

being presented with a Boat Club Pennant by current Boathouse captains George Smith and Hannah Gowland.

In the afternoon, a large number of guests gathered at the Boathouse for the official opening. Those who had donated a brick to the Boathouse fundraising campaign saw their bricks unveiled, whilst those donors who had sponsored the naming of a boat were thanked with a special Boat Naming Ceremony.

The Boat Naming was followed by speeches from Head Master Jeremy

Walker and Greg Searle and the event concluded with a Ribbon Cutting Ceremony, before the

Boats were carried from the newly opened Boathouse and down to the River Ouse for a Row Past.



LTA National Champions

Kirkham Grammar School girls secured themselves a place at the LTA National Finals at Bolton Arena where they competed against the top schools in the country for a national ranking and title.

After a couple of lost matches, the team got into winning ways and by the start of day 2, KGS were top of the leaderboard on games with all to play for against Repton School. Three of four KGS girls won their singles matches, and both KGS pairs won their doubles.

An amazing weekend saw Kirkham Grammar School crowned as the 2021 LTA National Champions – a phenomenal achievement and a first for KGS Tennis!

Head of Girls' Sport at Kirkham Grammar School, Lindsey Osborne, said, "The way the girls played was simply out of this world. They were committed to every shot played and I can honestly say that them being crowned National Tennis Champions is the highlight of my career to date. A truly amazing achievement for a very talented team!"



Olympian alumna inspires

Olympic bronze medallist Emma Wilson, who claimed a bronze in the RS:X windsurfing event at Tokyo 2020 last summer, inspired pupils at Ballard School, Hampshire, when she returned to her old school for a visit.

Emma, who attended the New Milton school from Year 3 to Year 6, brought her medal to show current pupils.

The Olympian is not only a windsurfing champ, but also won the RS:X event at the Youth Sailing World Championships in 2016 and 2017, as well as medals at both the 2018 and 2019 RS:X European Championships.

She was happy to sign autographs and let the children take turns holding, and even wearing, her medal.

She said: "I shared with them some of the advice which has always helped me – carry on with your dreams, believe in yourself and keep enjoying it."

Headmaster, Andrew McCleave, pictured with Emma, said: "We are rightly proud of all our brilliant alumni who so often go on to achieve great heights in their careers and lives. Emma will be competing in Paris 2024 on a new foiling windsurfer, and we will all be behind her and hope to see her back at Ballard with the Gold medal!"



KGS Head of Girls' Sport, Mrs Lindsey Osborne, with the winning team

Representing England

Seven young sporting stars at York House School, Hertfordshire, have been selected from the South region to represent England in the world's largest and most international youth football tournament – the Gothia Youth World Cup, set to take place in Sweden in July.

The Gothia Cup is hugely competitive and every year, around 1,700 teams from 80 nations take part. They play around 4,500 matches in total across 110 pitches.

Having enjoyed success at the Prep Schools' Lions trials recently, which includes playing matches against Academies and district teams from other areas in the region, the schools' achievement in football has gone from strength to strength particularly in the case of the girls' football team.

Rhiannon Burr, Head of Girls Games at York House School (pictured) commented: "We are hugely proud of all of our pupils and their achievements and it is wonderful to see more girls competing at this level too, particularly as this is our first year attending and competing.

The success has been phenomenal and we have been enjoying celebrating at school."

The tournament itself is unique; a meeting place for the world's youth, irrespective of religion, skin colour, gender or nationality, with football as the common denominator.

Jon Gray Headmaster, said: "My thanks goes to our entire PE department for their hard work and enthusiasm in inspiring and motivating our pupils. Our staff have been instrumental in encouraging our pupils to reach for the stars and also in supporting our girls, not only to give football a go, but to participate passionately and to a standard that has been recognised on a national level. This is an amazing opportunity and we couldn't be more delighted for them all."



Gymnastics medal haul

Maltman's Green School, Buckinghamshire, girls were crowned National Champions across multiple categories at both the IAPS and ISGA National Gymnastics Championships.



CHANGING FACES... CHANGING PLACES...



Aldenham Foundation (the group encompassing Aldenham School, Aldenham Prep

School, Aldenham Nursery, St Hilda's Prep School and Bluebird Nursery) has announced the appointment of the new Head of The Aldenham Foundation, Mrs Alex Hems, from the start of the 2022-2023 academic year.

Alex Hems will take up her new role



Hereford Cathedral School has announced that Mrs Helen Hoffmann has been appointed to

succeed Mr Chris Wright as Head of the Junior School.

Mrs Hoffmann currently holds the position of Headteacher at Derwent Lodge, Somerhill in Kent, prior to which she worked as Head of Juniors and then Director of Studies at Vinehall School, Robertsbridge.



Clare Fraser has taken over as head teacher at Cleve House School and Preschool in Bristol

after six years as deputy head.

She succeeds Craig Wardle, who leaves the school after six years as head to join Benedict House



Dr Daniel Koch has been appointed as the permanent Headmaster of Loughborough

Grammar School, and will take up his post at the start of the Autumn Term in 2022.

Daniel will take over the role from Dr Christopher Barnett, who has been serving as interim Head since



Suzannah Cryer has been appointed the new Head of Highfield School, Hampshire.

She will replace retiring Headmaster Phillip Evitt and take up her new role next September, signalling a return to the school for the former Head of Drama and Head of Boarding.

Currently Deputy Head at Thomas's Prep School in Battersea, Mrs Cryer

when she moves from her current post as Head of St George's School in Edinburgh.

Educated at St Helen's Northwood and Somerville College, Oxford, she began her teaching career at Alleyn's School, before working at St Paul's Girls' School, North London Collegiate School and Francis Holland School. She was then appointed as Deputy Head of Wycombe Abbey before moving to Scotland.

Mrs Hoffmann graduated with a BA Hons, a PGCE (Distinction) and an MA in Literature and brings with her extensive school leadership experience from a career in both academic and pastoral roles in IAPS and HMC schools. Alongside her teaching career, Mrs Hoffmann has an eclectic range of interests and qualifications. She has learnt both French and upholstery to diploma level and is a skilled demonstration dancer for the Royal Scottish Country Dance Association.

Preparatory School in Sidcup, south east London.

Mrs. Fraser has worked at Cleve House for 12 years in total and she has also taught at several other local schools including Colston's Collegiate and St. Mary's Catholic Primary, in Bradley Stoke.

September 2021.

A keen sportsman, author and University of Oxford alumnus, Daniel will be leaving the role of Senior Deputy Head (Vice Master) at Bedford School. Earlier in his career he was Head of Sixth Form at South Hampstead High School in London and Head of History at Worth School in West Sussex.

previously had a successful seven-year association with Highfield, leading the drama department on joining the school in 2012 and adding the boarding role in 2016 before heading to south London in 2019.

Mrs Cryer and her actor-writer husband Bob's three children also have a strong association with Highfield and Brookham – Hope having been a regular volunteer in the boarding house while Martha and Connie are former Highfieldians.



Anna Karacan has been appointed to take over from current headteacher

Martin Stott who will be leaving in July after 15 years at the helm of the Old Hall School, Shropshire.

Currently deputy head of Kellet School in Hong Kong Mrs Karacan was also instrumental in setting up Harrow Prep School in Hong Kong



Bromsgrove School's Board of Governors has announced the appointment of Mr Michael Punt as the

next Headmaster of Bromsgrove School. Michael will join the School in August 2022.

Michael is currently the Headmaster



Mr Mark Scholey is the new Head of Sutton Valence Preparatory School, effective as of

September 2022. Mr Scholey will succeed Miss Claire Corkran, who departs at the end of this academic year after 12 years at the School.

Mr Scholey is currently Deputy Head at Dulwich Prep London. He previously held leadership posts at Parkside School and has also worked at Danes Hill School. Before teaching, he worked for the London Organising Committee



Gordonstoun Junior School has appointed a Scottish educationist to be its new Head. Cath

Lyall has been Interim Head since August and has now been appointed to the post permanently. A graduate of Glasgow University, Mrs Lyall has previously taught at state and



Mrs Tanya Davie will be the new head at Kilgraston School, Perthshire, taking over from

Mrs Dorothy MacGinty, when she retires at Easter after seven years in the role.

Mrs Davie is currently the Academic Deputy Head at St Bede's College in Manchester. Formerly Head of Mathematics and Physical Education at St Bede's, Mrs Davie has also previously held posts

and will be the first female head in the Trust's 150 year history.

She has worked in both the state and private sector having studied at Manchester University and is now completing a MA at Keele University.

The move also marks a return to Shropshire for Anna who was educated at Wrekin College and she will move back to the county with her husband and two daughters.

of Chigwell School, a post he has held since 2007. Prior to that he was Deputy Head academic at The Perse School, Cambridge. Michael has an MA in Physics from St Peter's College, Oxford and an MSc in Semi-conductor Science and Technology from Imperial College London.

for the Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2012 and, before that, in management consultancy for Accenture. He was educated at King's College School, Wimbledon before taking an undergraduate degree in History at Durham University followed by a PGCE and Masters in Education from the University of Cambridge.

He is married to Pippa and they have a son, Nicholas, aged four. His interests include sport, especially hockey and running, reading, cooking and going on family walks.

independent schools, including Applegrove Primary and Glasgow Academy, over a twenty-year career which has also seen her involved in sports coaching and drama direction as well as support for learning. Mrs Lyall lives with her husband Andrew at Gordonstoun, and they have two children who attend the school.

at all-girls schools, including St. Margaret's School, Edinburgh, and North Manchester High School for Girls. She is also a former Head of Department at The Royal High School, Edinburgh.

Mrs Davie will be moving to Perthshire together with her husband, Deno. The couple has a daughter in her second year at university in Scotland and a son in his final year of secondary education.

Heads Hunted

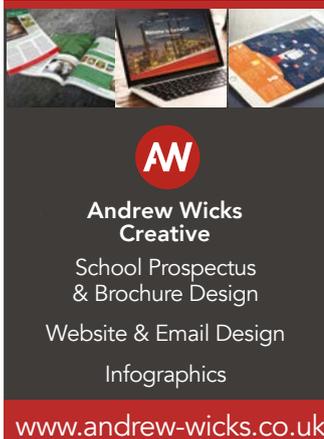
Among the upcoming head and principal appointments:

Chigwell School	Essex
Hampshire School	London
Moor Park School	Shropshire
Prestfelde School	Shropshire
Sarum Hall School	London
St. Clare's	Oxfordshire

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

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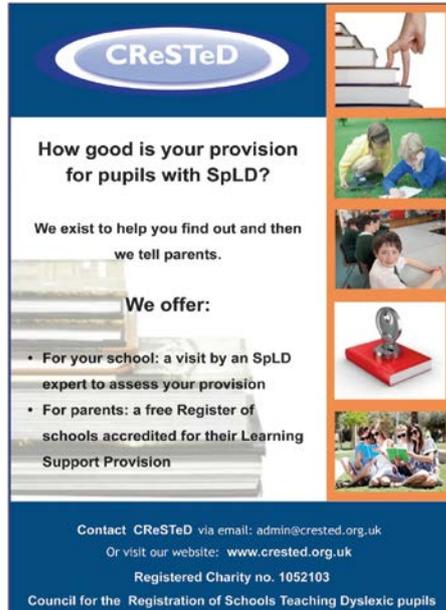
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