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The Independent Schools Magazine



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In this issue...



BSA Supporting Excellence Awards

Bede's School, Sussex, has been recognised by The Boarding Schools' Association (BSA), for its work with vulnerable children at the BSA Supporting Excellence Awards 2023.

Bede's has been working alongside its local authority offering bursary funded weekly boarding places for Looked After Children (LAC) for over a decade. This significant milestone presented Bede's Assistant Head: Boarding, Paul Juniper, with an opportunity to undertake a detailed, statistical review of the programme.

Current pupils who are part of the programme were asked to rate their experience across a range of measures. The research indicated that despite the additional challenges experienced by LAC, they felt the same degree of belonging to Bede's as other boarding pupils.

In the ten years during which Bede's has been supporting the LAC programme, 22 children have so far joined the school. As well as those who are still currently studying at Bede's, 14 have already left with the equivalent of three A levels or more and a university offer. The vast majority of pupils also achieved considerable success at university.

The research indicated that a significant number of LAC had successfully applied to become prefects and represented the school in a range of sports.

Further information on the BSA Supporting Excellence Awards and a list of some of the winners and highly commended can be found on page 31.

Pictured: Robin Horsell, Co Founder of Schoolblazer presenting the award to Bede's Headmaster and CEO, Peter Goodyer

Cover background

Coronation celebrations

The Royal Hospital School, Suffolk, has marked the coronation of King Charles III with a celebratory parade (pictured), coronation lunch and chapel service. Musicians also performed on board HMS Diamond for a Coronation Reception held in support of the King and Queen.

Story, plus further Coronation coverage from around the nation can be found on page 8.

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Is Your School Mentioned?

Schools featured in this issue include:

Abbey School; ACS International School Cobham; ACS International School Hillingdon; Aldenham School; Bede's School; Beech Hall School; Bolton School Girls Division; Boundary Oak School; Bradford Grammar School; Canford School; Cheadle Hulme School; Christ College, Brecon; Cottesmore School; Cranleigh School; Denstone College; DLD College; Dwight School; Ellesmere College; Felsted School; Gordonstoun; Haberdashers' Boys' School; Haileybury; Heathfield School; Ipswich High School (Prep and Senior); Junior King's School; Kilgraston School; King Edward's School, Bath; King's Ely; Kingswood School; Loughborough Grammar School; Malvern College; Merchiston Castle School; Mill Hill School; Pocklington School; Queen's College, Taunton; Repton Prep; Royal Hospital School; St George's School, Edinburgh; St Leonards, St Andrews; St Margaret's School for Girls, Aberdeen; St Mary's, Cambridge; St Mary's Senior School, Colchester; Sedburgh School; Sevenoaks School; Solihull School; Strathallan School; Stroud School; Taunton School; Truro School; Village Prep School; Wellington College; Winchester College

Child Student Sponsor Licences

- Home Office compliance for independent schools

With an increasing number of students requiring visas to study in the UK following Brexit, a Child Student Sponsor Licence has become a commercial necessity for many independent schools. Immigration barrister, Zoe Jacob, takes a look at the Home Office guidance and suggests some steps schools can take to improve compliance...



A central tenet of the Home Office's guidance on Child Student Sponsor Licences is that the grant of a Licence to an independent school is "a privilege not a right". In other words, with the benefit of a Licence, comes the responsibility of upholding the Home Office's compliance regime. This can be intimidating for the Authorising Officer and Level 1 User(s) on the licence, for whom sponsor licence compliance is often another addition to an already busy workload, particularly given that the Home Office's published guidance on the issue spans several documents and amounts to hundreds of pages. Here are three steps that can help:

1. Implement a clear system for flagging and reporting relevant changes to student circumstances;

An important part of a Sponsor's duties is to report any relevant changes to student circumstances via the Sponsor Management System ('SMS'). The SMS is a (rather clunky) online portal through which the Licence is managed. Level 1 users each have their own username and password to access the SMS. Once logged in they can report any relevant changes in circumstances. All Level 1 users should therefore be aware of the changes in student circumstances which need to be reported, and the time frame for

reporting each change. Examples include:

- If a sponsored Child Student does not enrol within the enrolment period on their Certificate of Acceptance of Studies ('CAS') this must be reported within 10 working days of the enrolment period ending.
- If there is a significant change in a Child Student's circumstances e.g. a change in the location where they are studying, this must be reported within 10 working days of the Sponsor becoming aware.
- If a Child Student misses 10 consecutive "contact points" then this must be reported within 10 working days of the last missed contact point. Please note, the Sponsor can define a contact point. Daily class registration is often used to meet this definition.

In order to ensure that changes are reported in time, there needs to be a clear line of communication between admissions, pastoral and academic staff, who have access to the relevant information, and the Level 1 user, who will be making the relevant report. A simple solution is a short weekly meeting between all staff members who have close contact with sponsored Child Students, and the Level 1 User(s). The full list of sponsored pupils is

reviewed at this meeting, and any relevant changes in circumstances are flagged for reporting.

2. Create an automated system of reminders for key dates;

The key dates for Licence holders fall into two main categories:

- Key dates relating to the management of the licence – for example, the date on which the annual CAS allocation expires or the date by which the school is required to submit its Basic Compliance Assessment ('BCA').
- Key dates relating to the management of sponsored and non-sponsored students – for example, the dates on which the visas of all sponsored and non-sponsored students expire.

Failure to miss one of these key dates can have disastrous consequences; for example, if a school fails to submit a BCA on time, the Home Office may take compliance action. Similarly, allowing a student to study after their visa has expired, if a new visa conferring a right to study has not been obtained, is a breach of a Sponsor's compliance duties.

We suggest that all these dates are entered into a shared online calendar, accessible to the Authorising Officer and all Level 1 Users, with frequent reminders in the run up to any important date (for example a month, a week and

a day before the relevant date). This system prevents human error, and minimises the risk of a critical date being missed.

3. Compile a spreadsheet of all pupils' 'right to study' statuses in the UK

Child Student Sponsors are required to check that every pupil has a 'right to study' in the UK, either by virtue of being a British or Irish citizen or by holding an immigration status which permits study in the UK. These checks result in a large amount of information to collate and, importantly, it is information that the Home Office often requests if inspecting a school. We therefore recommend compiling a comprehensive spreadsheet with the names of each pupil, the basis on which they are permitted to study in the UK, and the date their documents were checked. Implementing this system can save a good deal of panic in the event this information is requested by the Home Office.

These three examples demonstrate that compliance with the Home Office's Sponsor Licence regime is as much about practical, implementable solutions as it is about legal principles.

Zoe Jacob is Immigration Partner at law firm Boodle Hatfield, www.boodlehathfield.com

Immigration support for schools - launch of new Due Diligence Service

The Boarding Schools' Association (BSA) has announced the launch of a new partnership which will enable a bespoke Due Diligence Service specifically for UK boarding schools recruiting international students.

Recruiting international students is hugely beneficial to the UK boarding sector but the risks in doing so must be appropriately considered and mitigated throughout the admissions process. For example, how can schools be sure that the source of their international fee income is from lawful means? Or how can admissions staff conduct due diligence on their international parents and other school fee payers?

Further information on the Due Diligence Service is available here: www.boarding.org.uk/immigration-support-for-schools

It is possible that schools may inadvertently breach sanctions regulations and become exposed to significant reputational risks where the source of international funds is not being adequately reviewed. Student sponsor schools also have a duty to ensure they are recruiting genuine international students, mitigating against the risk of exploitation and trafficking.

The new service will carry out due diligence on the key risk areas to provide clarity and peace of mind on source of funds and emerging relationships.

Taking entrepreneurship more seriously in schools

Executive Headmaster at Boundary Oak School, Hampshire, and formerly a derivatives trader in the City, James Polansky, writes about the introduction of entrepreneurship lessons at the school, and explains why it needs to be taken more seriously in education.

“Great, we have another double first with 4 A* A-levels, who is useless in the workplace” was unfortunately a phrase I heard far too often when placing graduates onto the trading floor at a City investment bank. It was one of the driving questions that propelled me into education: what is going wrong with our educational system when pupils, being awarded the top qualifications our schools and universities can offer, are still not prepared for work and life?

Is it that we are beholden to examination results? Are exams still fit for purpose? Is sticking to teaching through subjects whose parameters were defined in previous centuries too constrictive? Do all the previous constraints mean any new innovations are squeezed into one-off assemblies, off timetable sessions or added to the ever-growing list of topics that need to be covered in PSHE or form time?

To me one thing is clear: we need our pupils to have the ability to think for themselves and have the reflectiveness, resourcefulness, responsibility, and resilience to solve problems. They also need to be aware of when and where these problems may present themselves and have a toolkit of strategies to look for a solution.

Introducing entrepreneurship to the school curriculum

One of the biggest myths around entrepreneurs, that deters many potential ones, is that entrepreneurship is a potent mixture of creative genius and rampant capitalism. It is not – an entrepreneur is frequently solving a problem for society. They are often a force for good, with potential social and philanthropical benefits.

This is why we have decided to introduce lessons in entrepreneurship at Boundary Oak, as a weekly timetabled subject. The idea was crystallised when, at our careers hot desking event (parents discussing

with pupils their career paths), we realised over 60% of our parent body were self-employed or had their own businesses. If our pupils were to follow in their parents' footsteps the most common career would be as an entrepreneur; that was mind-blowing and very different from my experience at school. We would be doing our pupils a disservice if we did not equip them with the basic tools to embark on an entrepreneurial career.

Last term we started our first weekly entrepreneurship lessons to Year 9. I am delivering the Entrepreneurship lessons personally and I built an age-appropriate curriculum with information gleaned from both my previous experience in business and online Entrepreneurship courses.

The new Entrepreneurship lessons are part of a wider curriculum refresh for our Year 9s. Previously we taught Food Technology all year round, however we felt it was also important to make room for a wider array of subjects. Now Entrepreneurship, DT (Resistant Materials) and Food Technology share that same timetabled period, with one term given to each subject.

It will be a learning curve for all of us and will no doubt remain a work in progress, like all subjects should. From the very start, however, I did not want this to culminate in a sale of cupcakes in the school playground, with a few marketing posters and totting up a few pounds afterwards. This would be treated as an adult subject that would not shy away from the more difficult concepts.

I am proud to say that we now treat Entrepreneurship as we would any other subject at Boundary Oak. The lessons focus on the fundamentals of business and entrepreneurship and at the end of the course pupils end up with their own business website, a business plan, and a financial forecast spreadsheet. Our first term covered a wide range of

topics including business cycles, idea generation and validation, fundraising, business models and plans, financial modelling and cashflow management. The students also learn about essential skillsets needed to be an entrepreneur and vital skills such as understanding how the economy impacts businesses, how to recognise business opportunities and how to build and interpret a profit and loss forecast.

This is a powerful mixture of knowledge and skills that has already made a mark and inspired a number of pupils. The over-whelming response from pupils is the respect they feel when learning about entrepreneurship. They feel they are being treated as adults, empowered as adults and are being taught a subject that is, and will be, entirely relevant to them.

Parent and CEO of a Consultancy company, Mrs Sarah Adamson, said:



James Polansky

“I think it's fantastic that my son is learning about entrepreneurship at school as it's a crucial skill that he will need later in life as he enters the workforce or world of business. Receiving such a comprehensive foundation in entrepreneurship early on not only inspires the children to be ambitious, but it also gives them a tremendous head start for later in their academic life.”

This has made me question what other “subjects” should be incorporated into or given more prominence in our school curriculum. It is clear that our schools' national curriculum and examination system is long over-due an over-haul. Our pupils deserve it and are ready for it; we need to deliver it sooner rather than later.

Colour run for charity

Felsted School, Essex, has hosted a colour run, raising £6,000 for the school's charity partners, including those affected by cyclone Freddy in Malawi.

The event consisted of a 30 minute race around the course, with paint thrown at checkpoints along the way. Following this, everyone gathered for a 'paint party' with paint canons helping to cover anyone who hadn't yet decorated their colour run t-shirt.

In line with the school's continued drive for a 'more sustainable

Felsted' and to make the process as environmentally friendly as possible, the sustainably sourced paint (coloured corn flour) was bulk-bought and measured out into smaller paper bags by the Felsted Charity Team and volunteers, ready to be thrown at the dedicated 'paint gates' along the route.

Representatives from three of the charities supported by the event; Farleigh Hospice, CHES Homeless and The Felsted Mission attended.



The colour run at Felsted School

Embracing equality

Director of Careers and Outreach at Heathfield School, Berkshire, Rushi Millns (FRSA¹), discusses why women's equality is still a hot topic.

People may think we have come a long way towards equality for women over the past few decades, and comparatively that is true, but are we really there yet?

Socially, we assume we are, however if we look at the measures of equality in government and business, they tell a different story.

In the UK, women's representation in Parliament stands at around 35% – are we saying that men are two times better than women? Currently, Labour have 46%, almost an equal number of male and female MPs as a result of their all women short lists; the Liberal Democrats have a female majority but only 9 seats; and the Conservatives are male dominated with only 39% women Conservative MPs (SNP is only 7%). The corporate world shows even greater disparity, with only 8% of female CEOs in the FTSE 100, and 10% of the Fortune 500.

Around the world we see differences that may surprise us. Rwanda has a 61% majority of women MPs in Parliament, after a unilateral

decision by President Paul Kagame to promote gender parity in 2008. The Ugandan Parliament has a District Women's Representative selected for each of its 112 districts, who sit alongside the elected MPs from that district's constituencies. All the representatives are women, and their duty is to ensure that women's voices are heard.

On the flip side, in countries such as Iraq and Afghanistan, we are witnessing women's rights and equality being eroded or simply removed.

Engaging young people in the #EmbraceEquality and #WomensLeadership discussion is so important – this is the future into which they will step. Until we have equal representation we need to keep moving forward. They are the ones who are going to go into this world and we want them to enter a fair and equal one, so it's important that they engage with this topic and help find positive solutions.

In Afghanistan the current situation for women is horrific. Since the takeover by the Taliban in August

2021, women have been wholly excluded from public office and the judiciary. They are required to adhere to a strict dress code, compelled to stay at home, and not permitted to travel more than 75 km without a mahram or chaperone. Girls over 12 are no longer allowed to attend school.

In the 1960s, Tehran was a cosmopolitan city, women had the same choices and rights as women in the west. After the Iranian Revolution in 1979, there was a backlash against these western values and women's rights were repealed.

We must keep women's rights on the agenda and keep staking our claim.

Events like our recent symposium – 'Women's Equality and Leadership – Are we there yet?' – provide a forum for young people to discuss the issues and ideas at the heart of equality. Bringing together students from different backgrounds and lifestyles creates a real diversity of thinking.



Rushi Millns

Here students had the opportunity to connect and network with inspiring women leaders and senior professionals from across the globe. These highly successful, intelligent women confront our unconscious bias or preconceptions created by gender stereotypes, such as role or appearance, and highlight the challenges that bias poses.

All of our VIP speakers were very willing to come and share their experiences and views, and provide the fuel for further discussion. They wanted to see what our young people thought about equality and what positive solutions they would suggest towards a more equal future.

Igniting curiosity is a starting point. We want our young people to have high aspirations for themselves – to realise their world is their oyster and if you want to do it, go and do it – what is stopping you?

1. FRSA – Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts

Pioneering women in law

The Abbey School, Berkshire, has hosted public viewings of the landmark exhibition '100 Years of Women at the Bar' which features the extraordinary stories of women pioneers in the legal profession.

As part of a focus on female advocacy, the school hosted a gala evening for young people to promote and celebrate a career in the legal profession. Over 400 students and parents from 6 schools attended for a private view of the exhibition and to hear from keynote speakers Court of Appeal Judge Lady Justice Geraldine Andrews DBE; Founder of the First Hundred Years Project Dana Denis-Smith; and Barrister Samantha Woodham. Each speaker shared their personal story of challenge, opportunity and achievement to inspire the student audience.

Students presented three theatrical performances inspired by the true stories of legal pioneers featured in the 100 Years exhibition – Helena Normanton, Dame Linda Dobbs and Tribunal Judge Thaira Bibi. The original plays were written and performed by The Abbey School, The Holt School and the John Madejski Academy as part of The Abbey led ARCH collaboration which brings together young people from across Reading through innovative learning experiences.

Meanwhile, more female legal trailblazers were celebrated when Barrister Samantha Woodham, an alumna of The Abbey, was presented with a purple plaque award for delivering innovation in family law. Sam's legal innovation is improving the experience of divorcing couples through originating the 'one couple, one



lawyer' approach. The aim of the Innovate UK purple plaque award is to ensure the achievements of pioneering women are recognised and to inspire future generations of innovators. Just 14% of blue plaques celebrate the achievements of women.

The evening concluded with

networking and breakout rooms enabling students to talk directly to several members of the judiciary, legal and justice professions.

The '100 Years of Women at the Bar' exhibition is on display at The Supreme Court until 7 July 2023. Visitors can view between 0930 and 1630.

Female leadership and empowering girls

Heads of St George's School, Edinburgh, St Margaret's School for Girls, and Aberdeen and Kilgraston School, Perthshire, answer questions on female leadership and what schools can do to raise empowered young women.

Carol Chandler-Thompson, St George's School, Edinburgh



What can schools do to promote gender equity?

"There are so many things schools can

be doing to promote gender equity. As St George's is a single-sex environment, it provides us with fantastic opportunities to address the lack of equity that many women experience once they leave school. We create an environment as free from gender stereotypes as possible. The role models our littlest girls see on the sports field, in CCF uniforms, speaking in public, will all be female. From the earliest stage, they

understand what they can achieve and aspire to."

"As the girls get older those role models might be leading female professionals talking about their career path or challenges they have faced in male-dominated industries. Honest and open advice about how that feels and what has helped and supported them can be incredibly empowering."

"This year's International Women's Day (IWD) theme of 'Embrace Equity' gave us a brilliant opportunity at St George's to think about the different challenges and

opportunities faced by women from all different walks of life. This included a TEDx event marking IWD 2023 around 'Voices of Possibility'. It is incredibly inspiring for young women to hear voices they might not normally hear in school."

What is the biggest issue facing women in the UK right now?

"The issue that really keeps me up at night, is that of gender-based violence. The World Bank estimates that 35% of women worldwide have experienced gender-based violence. Globally, as many as 38% of the murders of women are committed by intimate partners."

"This was brought home to me very recently by the death of a close colleague Emma Pattison who has received wide press coverage. Figures like this can be overwhelming, but I think we have an important role as teachers and parents to help young people (boys and girls) understand what a healthy relationship looks like, what consent is and how to be able to express their views and feelings openly and clearly."

What is the best piece of career advice you have been given?

"If not you, then who?"

Anna Tomlinson, St Margaret's School for Girls, Aberdeen



What does gender equity mean to you?

"Gender equity for me is when people of all gender identities are able to shape their life and career and are offered the same opportunities, including education and leadership roles, without their gender being a factor."

Which women do you most admire?

"There are many women I admire, not least those who have forged a successful career in fields where women are still under-represented. At St Margaret's, we take every opportunity to introduce our students to such individuals. For example, earlier in the year a former pupil, Professor Sinead Farrington, shared her love of physics with

Primary 6 and 7 girls at an event for International Day of Girls and Women in Science.

"For me, the individuals I admire most are people who face up to the adversities of life and remain true to their own values, willing to learn, grow and contribute through and in spite of the challenges which life presents."

"A couple of years ago at one of our Inspirational Women events at school, I had the privilege of interviewing Melanie Reid, writer and columnist at The Times. Since 2010 when she fell off her horse and broke her neck, Melanie has written Spinal Column in The Times Saturday Magazine. Her book *The World I Fell Out Of* is an account of the almost full year she spent in hospital working hard to find a way

through a life which had changed beyond recognition.

"Melanie's writing is incredibly honest and moving and had already been the focus of more than one school assembly before we met. It was a joy to talk to her in person: she touched many members of our school community by encouraging those of us with well-functioning bodies to appreciate all that we have and to put aside any traditional ideas of beauty in the human body."

What can schools do to promote female leadership?

"From an early age providing girls (and indeed all young people) with opportunities to take responsibility and to contribute to both the school and wider community is vital

in developing young leaders.

"At St Margaret's, older pupils who are already fulfilling key leadership roles and are being seen to make a difference are powerful role models for their younger peers. A great example of this was our recent Culture Week, which was organised and run by sixth year pupils from our diversity discussion group. This has inspired other girls to put forward their ideas and to take the lead in upcoming Neurodiversity Celebration Week events."

"Furthermore, schools can support the development of emotional literacy, empathy and communication skills, thus helping young people to become self-reflective and compassionate leaders."

Tanya Davie, Kilgraston School, Perthshire



Why is it important to have female school leaders?

"I'm not sure I would agree that

it is important to have female school leaders as this excludes the influence of strong male leaders and we all have a part to play in educating the next generation irrespective of gender. What I would say is, that it is important to show young women what we are capable of. This is by showing them strong

female role models across different fields.

What can schools do to encourage gender equity?

"The destinations of Kilgraston leavers are just one area where we are witnessing long-held barriers being dismantled and broken down and this is something I am incredibly proud of. Every year around half of our pupils go on to study STEM subjects at university; subjects which typically were

dominated by men. This is what gender equality should look like; a world in which people are not inhibited or put off following their dreams and achieving their goals."

How can schools inspire and empower young girls to be leaders?

"We need to show our young girls that we believe in them and give them the opportunities to dream and to lead."

"Our Sixth Form pupils have this when they take part in the Young

Enterprise Scotland competition. This is a nationwide event aimed at young people and giving them the confidence to set up and run a business. Last year, the team from Kilgraston won our regional final, and we have high hopes for this year's team. It is a fantastic opportunity for our older pupils to utilise and put into practice some of what they learn in the classroom, and I have seen first-hand how it inspires and empowers them to lead and dream big."

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Celebrations and performance on HMS Diamond

Musicians from Royal Hospital School, Suffolk, were invited to perform on board one of the Royal Navy's newest ships, HMS Diamond, in London to support the Coronation of HM King Charles III and HM Queen Camilla. The First Sea Lord held a Coronation Reception on board in the week before the coronation and invited RHS musicians to play for his guests, an array of VIPs and dignitaries from Commonwealth nations, plus RHS Headmaster, Simon Lockyer.

Admiral Sir Ben Key (First Sea Lord) and Commander Peter Barfoot (Commanding Officer of HMS Diamond) spoke to the pupils after their performances and thanked them for their involvement in the Coronation celebrations on board HMS Diamond.

The school also hosted its own celebration of the King's

Pictured: A coronation cake



Coronation, consisting of a lunch and chapel service, and concluded with a celebratory parade by RHS' full body of 700 pupils, led by their pupil Guard and Marching Band, with Inspecting Officer, Colonel Matt Ketterer in attendance.

Choristers at the ceremony



For the first time in history, 14 girl choristers were invited to join the choirs of Westminster Abbey and HM Chapel Royal Choir, St James's Palace, to sing at the coronation ceremony of a British Monarch.

The girl choristers from Truro Cathedral Choir, who all attend Truro School in Cornwall, and from the Methodist College, Belfast, sang alongside the boy choristers of Westminster Abbey for the historic ceremony.

Ahead of their performance at King Charles III's coronation, Head of Choristers at Truro School, Rachel Vaughan, said, "The girls have been rehearsing at the Abbey for almost two weeks and are incredibly excited

Photo credit: © PA Wire



to have been given the opportunity to be the first girl choristers to ever sing at a Coronation. It is an honour to be here alongside the Abbey Choir, Chapel Royal, the girls from Methodist College, Belfast and an octet from the Monteverdi Choir. I will watch them sing with immeasurable pride."

Celebration picnic



Aerial cypher message

In tribute to King Charles over 250 students from Ipswich High Prep and Senior School, Suffolk, gathered on the river lawn at Ipswich High to recreate His Majesty's The King's cypher. The result was filmed by Captured It Media.

Other celebratory events at the school included Coronation themed dance performances, face painting, picnic lunches, fancy dress and head, Mr Dan Browning, speaking to all students about the

Pictured: The aerial cypher

monarchy as part of a collective history. He commented:

"We have enjoyed a host of special events to mark the coronation at IHS including a visual message to The King that we were able to film by drone. Education is about creating memories, foundations to flourish and a sense of belonging within an inclusive and tolerant community and this week, we have been able to take this to a whole new level."

To mark the beginning of King Charles III reign, families and friends from Stroud School, Hampshire, gathered together for a special Coronation picnic.

After a whole school assembly, honouring the occasion, children with their teachers, classmates and families celebrated the historical event on the front lawn, under a cover of colourful bunting.

Pictured: Coronation celebrations at Stroud School

And as the nation celebrated, Stroud children were reminded that the purpose of the monarchy is not merely to serve the interests of the Crown but to serve the people of our nation.

Stroud's senior school, King Edward VI School Southampton, has held its Royal Charter since 1553, so all pupils from both schools also signed Coronation Memorial books to mark this important moment in history.

Scottish Council of Independent Schools (SCIS) Annual Census results

Reporting on the figures of 71 member schools across Scotland, one of the key findings from the SCIS annual census showed an uptake in independent school pupils, increasing by 1.3% from the previous year to include a total of 29,414 children and young people.

The number of boarding pupils is also up, with a total of 2,745 pupils now boarding at SCIS schools. International boarders have greatly contributed to this uplift, jumping from 963 in 2019 to 1087 in 2022. As a result, boarders now make up 9.4% of the average independent school population.

SCIS' CENSUS results also revealed that 24.2% of families received financial assistance to attend an independent school, amounting to over £55.6 million of financial support. Moreover, 3.2% of senior school children received 100% fee assistance.

Commenting on the findings, Deputy Director of External Relations at SCIS, Alison Herbert, said: "The results of the census are incredibly reassuring. 4.2%

of Scottish children now attend independent schools – up from 3.9% in 2021. Having withstood the challenges caused by Covid-19 we, and our member schools, are delighted to see the number of independent school pupils outstrip pre-pandemic levels."

Key findings include:

- 4.2% of Scottish school children attend independent schools.
- 29,414 children and young people attend SCIS independent schools.
- Independent pupil numbers across SCIS schools have increased by 1.3%.
- 40% of boarding pupils are from 82 different countries.
- 2745 pupils board at SCIS member schools.
- The number of international boarders has increased year on year since 2020.
- 24.2% of pupils receive financial help.
- 3.2% of senior pupils receive 100% fees assistance.

International sustainability competition

A team of Winchester College, Hampshire, pupils has won US\$25,000 as runners-up in an international sustainability competition. In an online awards ceremony, the Earth Foundation announced that the three pupils – Maks, Eren and Alistair – competing under the team name 'Bactoplastics', placed in the top four out of 1290 teams worldwide.

The Earth Prize is an annual, global competition for teenage students, run by Geneva-based The Earth Foundation, that rewards the ideas and projects with the most potential to tackle environmental issues. In this year's competition, there were entrants from 116 countries and territories around the world.

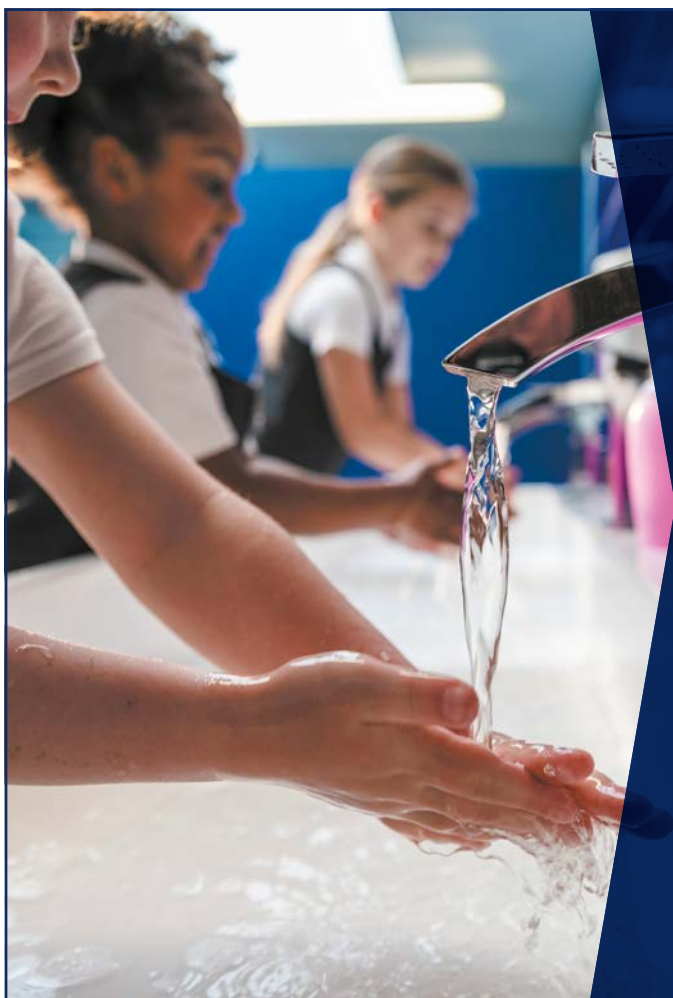
Working out of the school's Biology department, Team Bactoplastics is producing a complete protocol for industrial production of biodegradable plastics, polyhydroxyalkanoates (PHA), from food waste using genetically engineered bacteria.

A-Level pupil Maks Fedorovskyy, explained: "Our product would reduce pressure on landfills due to its 7-week degradation time, while repurposing up to 1.5 million tonnes of food waste annually."

The pupils spend 20 hours per week in the laboratory conducting dozens of biochemical experiments. They have secured a partnership with University College London to continue their work in their labs over the summer months. The team will be investing their prize money back into the project to try and ensure it can evolve to have a real world impact.



Team Bactoplastics



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When planning a new school building, we never underestimate the amount of collaboration and resource that goes into pinpointing all your considerations, so that you can create the environment that you need.

Pupil requirements, teaching needs, subject specific facilities, existing setting considerations, planning stipulations and budget parameters. These are all very familiar to us and through our dedication to the education sector, we are aware of the implications of these elements, and we know how to deliver on them.

We like to think of the next stage as similar to making a cake... all of these 'ingredients' must be measured, put in a bowl, and blended together to form the right consistency. Then baked at just the right temperature for the mixture to transform into something that when finished will take centre stage on the table.

Whilst our sales directors may not be fully qualified MasterChef's or wear aprons when they visit, they do have 5 star status when it comes to blending your ingredients and adding a few extras that come from years of experience of designing and building within an educational setting.

We like to think that we can create something visually mouth-watering that will also surpass your taste expectations.

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wow factor that will exceed your expectations.

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"Your Director, Brian was very helpful and informative, he understood our ideas and helped us to achieve our project through his experience and advice. Brian was very attentive to detail, always listened and was always happy to help and give advice in anyway."

Headteacher
St Clare's Pre-School

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specification within your budget providing you with cost certainty from the start.

From this point on, you are in safe hands knowing that your ingredients are going to be transformed into something very special that will take centre stage on your table.

From concept through to delivery and installation, your new school building is our priority, and we ensure that we go over and above so that the process is completely stress free and is an enjoyable experience for you and your establishment.

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School Bursar
Forum School

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The modern bursar is all business

Education Executive Search Agency specialist, Hayley Mintern, explores the rise of Chief Operating Officers in schools and how it's a fascinating illustration of the sector's wider transformation.

Back in 2005, the Chair of the Independent Schools' Bursars Association predicted that with the legislative and financial changes on the horizon, the role of the bursar would have to evolve.

Almost twenty years later, his prediction rings true.

The school landscape is facing a significant period of change – and the leadership roles that define it are changing too.

Schools are becoming ever more business-like as they respond to an array of challenges. No role more clearly illustrates this period of change – and the sector-wide pressures fuelling it – than that of the bursar.

The face of a sector-wide transformation

From rising costs to changing regulation and fierce competition,

schools today are navigating a wide range of challenges.

As critical as ever to a school's operations, many are renaming and reshaping the bursar's role in a reflection of the diverse issues they now face.

The role of Chief Operating Officer is typical in other sectors – and even commonplace in other areas of education – but until a few years ago the role was not seen in schools. Now, it is becoming popularised as the modern bursar.

Where once a bursar was primarily focused on a school's financial affairs, the role has now expanded significantly in both scope and complexity.

What makes a modern bursar?

Beyond the traditional financial management responsibilities, bursars today are also expected to

be leaders and collaborators within their institutions and in some cases equal to the head.

They are often called upon to work closely with other departments, such as admissions, marketing, IT, estates and academic affairs, to ensure that decisions are aligned with the school's objectives.

This requires strong communication skills and the ability to build solid working relationships across the institution.

A title in transition

In retitling the role to COO, schools are acknowledging the growing complexity of their operations. A school's COO acts much the same as in other sectors. Their primary function is to implement an institution's goals and objectives into daily operations.

They must be able to navigate the sector's novel challenges and provide strategic leadership to their schools. They must be efficient communicators and have a thorough understanding of all departments.

At their most effective, they are supported by a dedicated team to support the COO or bursar's function. This is a crucial change – where before a bursar was commonly seen as a 'one stop shop', many schools now recognise the management responsibilities are too great for one person alone.

This shift also allows more of the bursar's focus to go on strategic leadership and long term adaptability. The need for leadership with a strong sense of versatility was highlighted in the pandemic. Schools now view it as essential that their leaders can manage different scenarios and keep operations running smoothly no matter what.

As the current period of change continues, this need will not dissipate.



Looking ahead

The transformation underway in schools has been set in motion by changes in technology, management practices, and the increasing complexity of financial operations.

The next five years across the sector are set to be interesting.

Parents are continuing to make sacrifices to choose independent education and will continue to do so even in the face of a cost of living crunch.

We're seeing fees being covered by a combination of bursaries and extended family – grandparents, aunts and uncles. It involves sacrifices for many families. That – alongside competition from other schools – raises the expectations of both parents and pupils and they look beyond the curriculum at trips and sports.

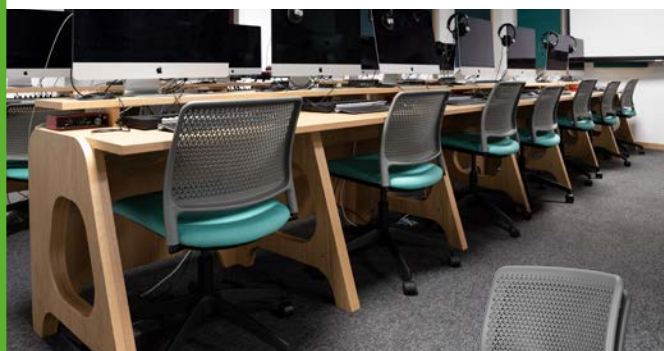
Some institutions are joining forces to create larger entities, and investment from private equity continues to flood into the sector.

Schools are being impacted by larger forces in varying ways – but all are facing a future where competition is high, and evolution essential.

These influences will undoubtedly change what our schools offer. The period ahead is set to be full of challenges and opportunities for education leaders to build a new vision for the sector – and new definitions for the roles within it.

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Hayley Mintern is a Partner at executive search agency Anderson Quigley, www.andersonquigley.com. She has supported the education sector for ten years, providing executive search and interim and consultancy solutions to Independent Schools, Academy Trusts, FE Colleges, and Universities.

The Well Good initiative

Head of Maths at Bolton School Girls Division, Greater Manchester, Grant Heppleston, looks at the Well Good initiative the school has been involved with and encourages other schools to get involved not just because it is helping provide clean drinking water in the developing world but because it's fun too.

This is a well-good article.

well-good.org is a website where local kids are making global impacts.

What's exciting about the project is that clean drinking water for the developing world is earned by school pupils answering maths questions on the website.

For every ten correctly answered maths questions, well-good provides one day's water for one person in the developing world.

And kids love it!

Knowing that their work is having such a major impact on the lives of others is a real motivator. At the end of each session pupils will often proudly announce things like 'I helped saved 21 lives today'. The aim is that this feel-good factor will help to instil life-long charitable values in pupils.

Well-good uses money raised through sponsorship from the business community to fund well constructions around the globe. The more people that use the site the more sponsorship we can generate. So far nine projects have been funded around the world.

More sponsors are always needed – as word gets out, more and more schools are signing up, more

maths is being completed and more wells need funding. This is a great way for businesses to use their social responsibility funds whilst simultaneously promoting their business.

well-good.org has had around three million internet hits, more than six million maths questions have been answered and many people in Malawi, Nepal, Indonesia, India, Niger, Pakistan and Bangladesh now have clean drinking water.

A recent mention in Chris Smith's famous newsletter and twitter resulted in many more schools from the UK and also, from around the world, hearing about well-good.org and now well-good maths is taking place in eight further countries.

I am the Head of Maths at Bolton School GD and the project was originally designed to complement, and take advantage of, the excellent charitable ethos that is nurtured within our school. well-good.org is a resource that promotes the Social, Moral, Spiritual, Cultural (SMSC) aspects of the curriculum, so it is not just a resource for maths teachers. Because pupils can hop on and off the site for short or long durations, it is an excellent form-time activity and homework challenge as well. Scoring enables classes (or year groups) to compete

against each other, creating even more excitement and motivation. Many schools have run school-wide competitions with great success. Cross-curricular opportunities relating to climate change and water poverty have opened up too.

There are several ways that pupils can 'play' on the website. Most recently I have added times table races with the option that pupils can challenge family, carers and friends to races, helping to engage everybody in their learning.

Pupils can 'Play for punchlines' needing to answer sufficient questions in order to display answers to jokes, 'Beat the clock', and a times tables memory game. More games are on the drawing board but I am a one-man band so expansion is pretty linear.

A quick-fire question/answer format is used so that pupils' scores and the required 'ten correct answers' turn-over quickly. Pupils can practise times tables, operations with negative numbers, and can also work with decimals and primes. Honing these essential skills has had a great impact on pupils' overall mathematical competence and they also approach the subject with more positivity. Higher-end topics are also just around the corner.

well-good.org is completely free to use – although donations are incredibly helpful if a school is able to contribute.

If you would like your school to be part of the growing well-good community, then simply visit well-good.org and fill out the form on the contact page – it's that simple.

If you know of any businesses that may be interested in becoming a well-good sponsor, please direct them to well-good.org.

And please spread the word!

Love food!

Rupert Weber of leading meals producer, apetito, talks about the importance of children enjoying their food when it comes to school mealtimes.



It's easy for schools to focus on commercials and logistics of catering for pupils alongside the nutritional balance. Yet, it's important for us all to remember how vital it is that children actually enjoy their food...

It's good for pupils to develop a broad culinary repertoire, helping them experiment and establish their likes and dislikes.

The formative years of a child's life are crucial for their physical, cognitive, and emotional development. And it's during these years that their eating habits are formed and influenced – setting them on a path for life!

And schools have a key role to play in encouraging children to enjoy their food and introduce them to different foods outside of what they might have at home, whilst maintaining that all important 'nutritional balance'.

This doesn't mean forcing pupils to eat certain foods or restrict others. It's about creating a positive and enjoyable food environment that guides and encourages children to try new foods and make healthy choices.

Studies have shown that children who enjoy a variety of foods early in life, are more likely to maintain a healthy diet later in life.

All our meals here at apetito do the 'heavy lifting' for you. They are developed to meet nutritional standards – you can choose from more than 200 main meals and desserts which can broaden the selection that pupils can choose from. It's a range that we know children will love, that comes packed with goodness and nutrition.

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<https://www.apetito.co.uk/our-service/school-meal-services/school-menus>





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We understand the importance of reducing carbon emissions and helping schools achieve their sustainability goals. Our structures are designed with energy efficiency in mind, which can significantly reduce operating costs and minimise environmental impact. Our future proof structures are 25% better than

the LETI 2030 School Target for embodied carbon.

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- Thermal performance of walls exceeds new building regulations

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Our virtually airtight structures significantly reduce air leakage from the building to reduce the need for heating and cooling to cut energy and carbon consumption. Tensioned inside and out for an exceptional airtightness rating of $<1.0\text{m}^3/\text{h.m}^2$ at 50 Pa, which exceeds new building regulations and approaches Passivhaus levels.

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Jargon-busting the quality of the International Baccalaureate's Primary Years Programme

Head of School from Dwight School, London, Chris Beddows makes the case for the International Baccalaureate's Primary Years Programme (PYP).

There is a high degree of probability that you are reading this with little knowledge or understanding of the International Baccalaureate's Primary Years Programme. From its origins of being conceived from the minds of a small and innovative group of forward-thinking educators in a cosy pub (probably) in Switzerland in 1996, to now having the IB in 5,600 schools in 159 countries shows a vested interest and commitment to an international education. So why is there still uncertainty about its pedigree, particularly the PYP, in the UK?

In a nutshell the Primary Years Programme is designed to provide schools with a framework for students to grow into confident, well-rounded learners who can be successful in a myriad of ways, both in and out of school. It allows schools to focus on the head and the heart, something that can be lost in schools preparing students to ace tests such as the 11+ and, deep breaths, the 4+. The head part of this philosophical standpoint is the solid academic growth that students experience based in a methodology that facilitates students making connections between subject areas, underpinning learning on concepts that stand the test of time, as opposed to stand alone facts that one easily forgets or can find on Google in 0.096 of a second. The heart piece is the traits of care, empathy, intercultural understanding and respect that can blossom in school if equal weight is

given to them along side curriculum coverage. It also covers aspects of mental wellness which we all know are so fundamental coming out of a global pandemic.

"PYP students demonstrate consistently higher levels of well-being compared to their non PYP student counterparts" August 2020. The Australian Council for International Research

The workings of a PYP classroom put the student at the centre and is a place where their voices and sparks come alive. While there is no preparation for tests, the students make progress in the fundamental curricular areas of reading, writing, mathematics and sciences, but it is how this is taught that is really the key. No longer should classrooms have teachers chalking and talking and sharing facts that students write down, work hard to remember and then regurgitate in an exam. Instead, students are learners at the centre of the lesson and teachers collaboratively work with their students, meddling in the learning process by dropping in facts that challenge, or questions that confound and elicit further research from their crop of invested and engaged learners. Students have agency and ownership over the direction of their learning with the teacher knowing where they want their students to get to, but the exciting uncertainty about how they will get there. This is a partnership and a magical dance in the learning process of the lively and engaging PYP classroom.

In the academic year of a PYP school, the content of the curriculum is guided by six transdisciplinary themes¹ that are of global significance. Students broaden their learning by developing their conceptual understandings, strengthening their knowledge and skills across, between and beyond subject areas. It is the PYP Exhibition that is a real highlight and milestone project of the PYP. Occurring at the end of Year 6, the students work in collaborative groups to conduct an in-depth inquiry into a real-life issue or problem that is relevant to them. It is an authentic assessment that requires students to showcase the development of the approaches to learning skills (ATLs): social skills, thinking skills, self-management skills, research skills and communication skills. Over a significant period of time, students are immersed in this process and their journey tracked by their teachers and a team of mentors. Continual reflection and feedback, shapes the direction of the exhibition which then culminates in a community presentation. This process shows me much more about a student and their growth, development and learning journey than a test.

International mindedness is also a central tenet to the PYP and, instead of it being a stand-alone subject or marketing gimmick, it is a necessity in the world we are all part of today and woven into the fabric of a PYP school.



It is not the wonderfully diverse makeup of a school that makes it truly international, but it is the embodiment of a set of attitudes and values that transcend global values and allow students and families to thrive in all parts of the world. Can they make a difference and positively contribute to society? That, along with mastery of the life skills that have been mentioned in this piece of writing, should be the basis for entry into the next phase of a student's learning journey, not a test.

To conclude, the PYP has evolved to become a world leader in future-focused education and I am seeing more recognition and belief of its status as a highly rich and dynamic curriculum amongst parents who want their child to be a forward thinking and positive member of society and one who can challenge, question and learn. The PYP is an example of best educational practice globally, and I hope it continues to gain traction as a tried and tested educational offering in the UK. It is a curriculum that should be embraced by all as it is one that responds to the challenges and opportunities facing young students in our rapidly changing world.

1. International Baccalaureate How the PYP works, <https://www.ibo.org/programmes/primary-years-programme/how-the-pyp-works/>

Real Living Wage Employer accreditation

Bede's School, Sussex has been accredited as a Living Wage Employer in a move that means a pay boost for the school's lowest-paid members of staff.

Committed to paying employees salaries which reflect the actual cost of living, rather than just the Government's minimum hourly rates. St Bede's School Trust currently supports 1,070 jobs of which 564 are in the local vicinity of Eastbourne and Wealden.

Any employee over the age of 23 will now be paid £10.90 per hour, compared with the national minimum wage of £9.50.

Dr Jonathan Northway, the Bursar at Bede's, said: "Bede's has regularly paid more than the National Living Wage, however, the impact of the current cost of living crisis has made it very clear that we needed to do more.

"Becoming a Real Living Wage employer is a practical

demonstration of our appreciation for our committed employees."

The Trust follows in the footsteps of big household names such as Google, IKEA, Nationwide, Barclays, Aviva and Burberry.

Headmaster and CEO, Peter Goodyer, said: "We are genuinely proud of all our staff and the brilliant work they do and we believe it is only right that they are fairly rewarded.

"This accreditation by the Living Wage Foundation underpins that commitment."

More than 12,000 employers – including half of the FTSE 100 companies – have joined the Living Wage campaign, which enjoys cross-party support. As a result, almost 450,000 employees have received a pay rise.

To find out more about the Living Wage Foundation, visit: www.livingwage.org.uk

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Driving sustainability with efficient heating solutions

Faced with ambitious carbon neutral targets and inflated energy prices, independent schools across the country are placing an ever-greater focus on sustainability. However, there are challenges especially when dealing with older school estate. Renewables expert, Mark Gibbons, assesses some of the various energy-efficient and low carbon heating options on offer and how it's possible to turn challenges into opportunities.



Mark Gibbons

The heating and hot water system is typically a good starting point for improvement, especially in buildings relying on ageing systems. The problem? There's no silver bullet solution. And with each building type having its own individual requirements, deciding on the best approach can be challenging.

But with challenges come opportunities. So, let's consider some of the options.

Energy efficiency

The first step, especially with older school estate, should always be energy efficiency as this is crucial to reduce both emissions and operating costs. Look to reduce energy demand and heat losses wherever practicably possible. Measures might range from lagging pipework in unheated areas to installing insulation.

Heat pumps

Where possible, consider an all-electric approach. Air source heat pumps can provide a highly efficient, sustainable method of supplying low carbon heating or indirect hot water requirements, especially in newer, well-insulated buildings.

With an exceptionally high seasonal co-efficient of performance (SCOP) of up to 400%, they can deliver up to 4kW of heat output for every 1kWh of electricity used to run the heat pump.

The caveat is that when refurbishing existing school estate, a series of adaptations will likely be needed to make the buildings and system heat pump ready. Physical space, available electrical power and/or CAPEX budget should also be considered at the outset.

Hybrid solutions

A more practical solution in older buildings might be to install a hybrid solution that combines heat pumps with natural gas boilers. The benefit of hybrid systems is that they can overcome project limitations while meeting heat demand more sustainably. The remaining gas use can eventually be cut by using renewable gases, such as green hydrogen.

Combined heat and power

What are the options for historic, listed buildings? In draughty old buildings with high heat losses and constant demand for heating and hot water, combined heat and power could provide a sustainable, cost-effective option.

CHP produces useful heat and electricity at the point of use in a single, highly efficient process. In this way, it can achieve total fuel efficiency of 85-90%, double that of conventional technology.

That means typical primary energy savings of up to 30% and an emissions reduction of around 20%, compared with traditional generation. Added to which, the on-site generated electricity can be used for catering and/or lighting within the building – or even for charging electric vehicles – for further reductions in energy bills.

Carbon, cost and comfort

In short, as buildings have different needs and constraints, each project is likely to require a bespoke solution to achieve the best possible outcome. But the time for assessing the heating system and implementing the achievable options is now and manufacturers are at hand to offer advice and support. Ultimately, the benefits are clear: improved sustainability, a more reliable heating and hot water provision, and in turn a better future for us all.

CASE STUDY

CHP at Aldenham School, Hertfordshire

When the time came to replace the ageing boilers at one of their boarding houses, Estates Manager Tony Albon and Bursar Karl Mahon knew they had a challenge on their hands. Leaky, with walls made of thick solid brick and parts of the building fabric dating back to the 16th Century, the feasible options were limited.

Having seen for themselves how a CHP system was performing in a neighbouring school, they made the decision to install a 20% hydrogen-blend ready CHP and boiler system.

A year on, and the energy data has revealed that the system has been performing even better than originally anticipated – delivering an annual reduction in gas consumption of 35-40% and generating an additional £4,500 of electricity for use within the building.

In fact, so successful has the system been, that Aldenham has since replicated it in a second boarding house where a parallel energy trend is now being observed. The school is now

preparing to fit a third CHP and boiler system in another of its boarding houses over the summer.

However, in the new building block, which will be designed for low temperature heating, Tony and Karl are contemplating installing heat pumps to deliver the lowest carbon footprint.

Karl said, "We've been on a major learning curve. We knew we had a challenge on our hands when refurbishing the heating system at Paull's House. And we're delighted to have achieved

all our requirements in our boarding houses: economic and environmental sustainability, and a reliable, energy-efficient heating and hot water system that never fails to deliver.

"For our new development, we're keen to explore heat pumps. How have we got this far? By partnering with a heat expert. This is a complex area, and we believe that working with specialists is the best way to arrive at the right solution for each building every time."

The Evolution of the Library

30 years ago the only thing library software really did was issue and return books. Now, with software like ours here at Accessit, the library is playing a big role in wider literacy improvements throughout a school's subjects, and linking physical and online resources with topics in an easy-to-use way like never before.

We've seen automatic syncing with MIS to keep student information up to date, even auto-emailing overdue reminders to softly let students and their parents know that they may need to have another look in their bag for that book.

We're now cloud based saving a school's IT team time, and also allowing pupils to access their library and its resources anywhere.

One librarian can scan and catalogue 100 new books in a minute and have the book data

automatically downloaded, so there goes tedious data entry.

When Ofsted comes calling, librarians can easily pull reports on a library's usage, and also better focus the investment in the library as a genre's popularity changes.

Accessit Library links with online subscription resources such as Britannica; to save pupils from some of the less trustworthy search results they find elsewhere online.

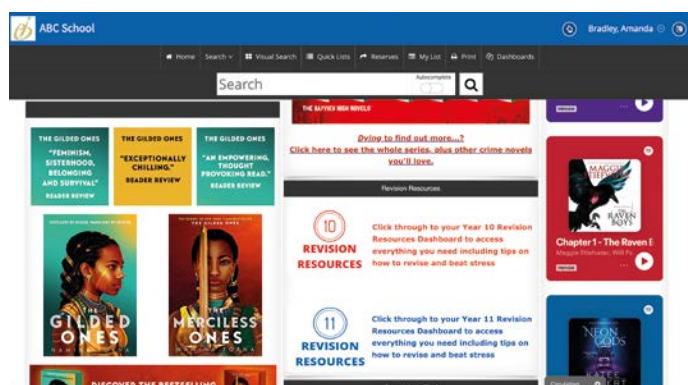
We've spent our time making the often basic but time-consuming tasks simple and easy to manage so librarians and teachers can focus on students not admin, and that's what has helped us make our name

as the library has evolved with technology.

Investment in Literacy Outcomes

If there's one thing we would ask of schools in 2023 and looking to 2024, it would be to take a look at how you're using your library and consider whether it is reaching its full potential.

Here at Accessit, we believe every school can do better, and we invite you to give us the opportunity to show how we can help. Ninety-nine per cent of our schools are still with us after all these years, so we must be doing something right!



By A Johnston, Accessit Library

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Profile

In conversation with Charles Fillingham

Born:

1972, Nailsea, Somerset

Married:

Yes with two children

Universities attended:

Jesus College, Oxford; UCL, Institute of Education; King's College, London; Bristol University; University of Wales

First Job:

Teacher of French and German, Langley Park School for Boys, Beckenham, Kent

First Management Job:

Head of Languages, The Grey Coat Hospital, Westminster, London

First job in independent education:

Deputy Head, City of London School, London

Appointed to current job:

January 2023

Favourite piece of music:

"Take on me" by A-Ha

Favourite food:

Sunday roast

Favourite drink:

Cheap white wine

Favourite holiday destination:

France

Favourite leisure pastime:

Cycling

Favourite TV or radio programme/series:

"Today" on Radio 4

Suggested epitaph:

He did his best?

Q Solihull is one of the oldest schools in the country, founded in 1560. It is a religious foundation whose charitable objects are to 'provide the advancement of education by providing an independent day school for boys and girls which shall have a religious character in accordance with the tenets of the Church of England and provide a liberal education'. The school welcomes pupils of all faiths or none, but what do you see as the definition of a 'liberal education' today?

A Solihull School is preparing today's children for tomorrow's world. The fact that we have been doing the same thing for centuries shows that we have a recipe that works. Ours is not a secret recipe – we are motivated by the age-old value of academic endeavour, by a determination to seize life's opportunities as they come along and by a drive to serve the communities to which we belong. A liberal education these days fosters a love of knowledge and an understanding of the world around us. This is nothing new, of course, and I am pleased to think that modern Silhillians go on to become the kind of Renaissance men and women for the 21st century, just as their forebears did in the 16th century.

Q The school has its own chapel, holds regular services, and employs its own Chaplain, all in the Church of England tradition. How do you ensure that the religious aspects of the school are fully inclusive yet remain in line with the charitable objects?

A Chapel services at Solihull are busy and inclusive. We have all the regular elements that can be found in most schools: a parents' prayer group, a Christian Union, annual confirmation services, lessons and carols at Christmas, of course. In addition, the chaplain has also led special events for Ukrainian families as well as charitable projects and art projects. Generally speaking, the pupils appreciate chapel assemblies and the chapel choir offers some evidence in that it has nearly 100 members.

Whatever your personal beliefs, it is true to say that Christian ethics underpin many aspects of Western society. From a simple visit to an art gallery to preparations to read literature at university, our pupils would find themselves

short-changed if they were unfamiliar with Christian traditions, parables, stories and prayers. Naturally, both our Prep and Senior Schools have multi-faith rooms which are well used in particular by the Muslim pupils in our community.

Q You started at Solihull in January. With the benefit of a term's experience under your belt, how have your views evolved about changes you wish to make?

A It would be a foolish headmaster indeed who moved up from London to take responsibility for a new school thinking that he already had all the answers. The first term was spent dealing with day-to-day matters as you might expect, but also with meeting every member of staff and hosting nearly a dozen events for parents and Old Silhillians. As the term progressed, I understood enough to know the right questions to ask for further information and I sent out questionnaires to all key stakeholders. By very early in the second term, I was able to agree key priorities with the governors, to set them out for the whole community and to prepare a plan of actions which will move us closer to our strategic goals. There are some quick wins and also some long journeys over rocky terrain, but my philosophy is that, once you know where you are headed, you just need to keep on moving in that direction.

Q You have said that should Labour's plans to overhaul England's school ratings with 'report cards' come to pass, it would likely be welcomed by schools across the sectors, describing the current system of one-word summaries of an entire school as 'blunt instruments'. What would the benefits of this change be, especially in relation to the independent school sector where many are outside the OFSTED regime?

A In many ways, I am in favour of inspection and I can see that an accountability framework is a really valuable tool for schools. A spirit of openness and honesty is much the best approach in life as well as in education. I am also in favour of league tables and I prefer more sharing of information rather than less – we mark our

Charles Fillingham has been Executive Head at Solihull School, West Midlands since January 2023. He was previously Head at Francis Holland School (FHS) in Regent's Park.



pupils' work and we can expect to be marked on ours too. That said, schools are complicated eco-systems and are not easily distilled down into just one word or one phrase. One of the strengths of inspections within the independent sector has been that each school has been judged against a range of criteria and that it has been possible to receive different grades in different categories. I know from my own service in the state sector and from my colleagues who serve there now that the knock-on effects from being down-graded by Ofsted can be immense and entirely out of kilter with the lived existence of the school which does not actually change dramatically from the day before the inspection to the day after. I would prefer a system which rates schools against nine or ten areas, more like a set of GCSE certificates than a pass or fail driving test.

Q You are a linguist and you started in the profession as a language teacher. Was teaching always your intended career path? Who or what was your inspiration for this choice?

A As a boy, I loved school and I still do. My decision to become a teacher was fixed in my mind from about the age of 16 when I decided that I didn't want to be the prime minister anymore. The most inspirational teacher at Nailsea School, near Bristol, was Mrs Windo, my English teacher for both years of the GCSE. She was a teacher who cared enormously; she had a dry wit and she allowed each of us to be the best version of ourselves.

I would still very much describe myself as a teacher – I teach French and German and usually have either one or two classes in Year 8 or Year 9 these days. To my mind, it is important that the headteacher still teaches and still marks books and still does reports and parents' evenings and so on. I would be a poor role model indeed if I told my colleagues how very important it is to turn out good lessons in one breath and then said that I was too busy myself in the very next breath.

Q You are an advocate of Internationalism. How does this translate into practical aspects of school life?

A Obvious examples are pupil exchanges, teacher exchanges, a sabbatical offering for staff, international work experience and international partner schools. In my life, I have twice had the opportunity to live abroad – France and Austria, both are a long time ago now, but both shaped my world view and inspired my approach to life. As educators, if we can develop a spirit of internationalism for our pupils and if we can invite them to see that their own future could be almost anywhere in the world then I believe that we are doing them a good service.

When young people visit other countries, they should not see themselves only as tourists, but rather try to see what it is to live or work in another country. Very often this can be achieved by spending a few days learning in school alongside children from the host country. Over the years, I have initiated such schemes in France and Germany of course, but also in Singapore, Japan, China and the USA. Not all school systems are the same as Great Britain and the culture of a classroom abroad can be quite eye-opening. Did you know for example, that Austrian children click their fingers to attract the teacher's attention?

Q You were head at FHS Regent's Park when planning permission was granted to build the new Sixth Form Centre at Linhope House which opened recently. There was initially some opposition from the local residents. How did you go about overcoming this and restoring solid community relations?

A Good relations take time and energy and getting off to a good start is important. In the case of Linhope House which was the first properly new building at FHS since 1915, this project was too important to fail. Our neighbours in that part of London were concerned about traffic and noise on their quiet, residential street – I met with individuals and groups, I listened and, wherever possible, I made adjustments. Sometimes it would be easy to misinterpret the emotions of others and what we perceive as hostility may be nothing of the sort. It is important to meet face-to-face, to listen and to give time to each other.

Q Research suggests that unprecedented numbers of head teachers are quitting within 5 years of taking the job. What can be done to reverse that trend?

A Having only just arrived at Solihull, I have no plans to leave any time soon. Do you know something that I don't?

I am in my eighth year as a headteacher now and I think that it is a fantastic job – it is varied, it is hugely stimulating and it is massively rewarding to be able to guide or lead a large community of people. I am greatly helped by the governors, of course, but also by the friendship of other headteachers. From time to time, it is absolutely invaluable to be able to call someone else who is facing similar issues or who may have experienced something similar in the past. Within HMC, I belong to a cluster group of headteachers in schools just like Solihull and from my time in the GSA I have a strong support network in the form of "The class of 2016" that is to say, those of us who became headteachers in that same year.

Q As part of your MSc research project in 2019 you explored the relationships between state school heads and independent school heads. How would you summarise your findings? Did you suggest any action points?

A The MSc programme with Oxford was really powerful. Two of my deputies at Francis Holland were also taking masters courses at the same time and the academic rigour of our work was raised considerably as a result.

The project that year asked whether or not independent schools can become agents for upwards social mobility and the answer was resoundingly positive. Many articles and books on this topic are woefully out of date and out of touch with modern teaching. I was in touch with dozens of independent and maintained schools to complete my research thoroughly and the hostility or suspicion about which academics often write is simply no longer there.

Continued >

Profile In conversation with Charles Fillingham (continued)

Educationalists want the very best life chances for the young people in their care and rivalries such as private vs state are falling away in favour of seeing each child as an individual on his or her own path. My project came to pretty upbeat conclusions.

Q You have been involved with the development of an online toolkit that aims to support and enable young people from less advantaged backgrounds to access selective universities successfully. Is this also available to independent school pupils? What role do and should independent schools play in respect of widening participation post-18?

A Schools such as Solihull and others have pupils from a massive range of backgrounds and we are proud to offer transformational bursaries to offer a Solihull education to some who could not otherwise afford it.

There is great competition these days for places at elite universities. One of the issues is simple demographics – it has been nearly 50 years since Oxford and Cambridge last built new undergraduate colleges. During that time, the participation rates in higher education have gone through the roof and so it is small wonder that it has become more difficult to access these universities. My experience is that independent school headteachers understand why universities want to play their part in social equity – we

do too. It is sensible that the most selective courses are taking into account a range of factors and it must certainly not be the case that there is a binary state school / private school divide.

Q You enjoy endurance and outdoor sports; you have run in the London Marathon and completed a charity cycle ride from London to Paris. What's your next free-time challenge?

A Hmm, not sure. We live near the Grand Union Canal and there is a sign which says that it is 16 miles to Birmingham and 126 to London – I've walked the first, but I haven't done the second one yet.

Building partnerships for positive mental health

Head of Mill Hill School, London, Jane Sanchez, and Head of Copthall School, London, Evelyn Forde, look at the partnership between the schools and how it led to a joint Mental Health and Wellbeing Summit.

Formed in June 2017, the partnership between Mill Hill School and Copthall School aims to:

- Deliver an enriched educational experience beyond the curriculum for pupils
- Create development opportunities for pupils and staff
- Provide opportunities to engage with a community larger than that contained within each schools' own walls.
- Improve academic results and facilitate personal development for pupils

In its initial stages, our partnership focused on sharing facilities and resources with one another to ensure a more comprehensive experience for both cohorts of pupils. Highlights of the partnership have included shared DofE and CCF programmes, Sixth Form Careers Fairs, A Level RS teaching, PSHE seminars and a STEM scholarship programme which has seen pupils from both schools benefiting from bespoke lectures and mentoring. Whilst sharing colleagues' expertise and resources has had a positive impact on pupils, we always knew we could do more. At the heart of the partnership is our shared philosophy, that every pupil should be able to thrive and be supported in doing so. Both schools' values and vision statements re-affirm these shared beliefs. It is

this shared passion for individual development and wellbeing that led to us submitting a successful bid to the DfE to host a joint wellbeing conference.

The bid was secured in 2019, with the preliminary plan being to host a conference that involved all stakeholders and the wider community in a one-day extravaganza to raise awareness and further understanding of maintaining positive mental health. Much to our frustration, the conference had to be put on hold (and completely redrafted) time and time again due to COVID related restrictions. It was then that it became affectionately known as the 'Summit'... and last March we finally reached the top.

The event finally took place over two-weeks across both schools simultaneously. It involved 16 different guest speakers, reached over 1600 pupils and 300 staff, and resulted in 75 Lower Sixth pupils achieving their MHFA Youth certificate. There were several highlights: Through a spoken word poetry workshop, Zohab Zee Khan delivered messages about making positive decisions, accepting oneself and never giving up. Dr Emma Ross' (The Well HQ) seminar on the importance of understanding your own body, especially your menstrual cycle and the power this can unlock and how this impacts your mental

health. And Dr Pooky Knightsmith's address to staff on the importance of building trust and relationships with pupils. One pupil commented that: 'it was really interesting and helped solidify how important it is to view yourself with respect and in a healthy way'. We also offered wellbeing sessions to pupils and staff on the importance of sleep, diet and nutrition and physical activity. Activities such as massages, fitness classes, Tai Chi lessons and the smoothie making bikes – a particular crowd pleaser – reminded everybody of the need to maintain balance.

Whilst it was a privilege for us to hear and learn from experts in their field, perhaps the most important element of the Summit was that it afforded our pupils more opportunity to sit alongside each other and learn from one another's lived experiences, something we are looking to continue in the post-COVID era.

All in all, it was an exciting fortnight filled with inspiring talks, workshops and activities but we know that the legacy the Summit leaves behind is more important than the conference itself. We have invested in training to ensure our Head of PSHE is a qualified MHFA instructor (of both adult and youth courses) and she will continue to train cohorts of staff and pupils in the coming years. Inspired by the course, Lower Sixth pupils have formed their own group



that will work with the younger in both schools. In working together to identify our priorities for the conference we were able to identify areas of strength and weakness in our provision and quickly realised the complementary nature of many of these within our partnership. Moving forward, we will collaborate to ensure all areas of the curriculum, especially in relation to PSHE, are delivered at the highest level at both schools.

Partnerships, especially those between Independent and State schools can be much more than a sharing of facilities and resources and through careful identification of each other's strengths the whole community can benefit.

A special thanks must go to our visitors: Dr Pooky Knightsmith, Dr Emma Ross and The Well HQ, Zohab Zee Khan, The University Guys, Nathan from The Self-Esteem Team, Let's All Talk Mental Health, Elevate Education, Alison Lam, Ed Kirwan, Zeeshan Hasmi, Iain Mahoney, Sheila Mulvenney, Nerys Hughes, Nell Hardy and Natasha Devon.

No boys? No worries!

Subject Lead in Drama from St Mary's Senior School Colchester, Essex, Rachel Harries, reflects on the challenges and successes of drama productions in a single sex school and suggests three things to consider when working with a single sex cast.



Rachel Harries

December 1991. My first school production as a teacher. *Guys and Dolls*. Curtain Up. A full blooded Runyan Land peopled by High Society dolls, hen-pecked husbands carrying the obligatory parcels, slightly more dubious looking ladies, and gamblers galore. The chorus disappear and we segue into Fugue for Tin Horns and off we went. In my time in mixed schools, I worked through various musicals, Shakespeare productions and impromptu cabarets and Music Halls. I never thought twice about the choice of show, or worried about casting.

And then I moved to a girls' school.

Suddenly I was faced with a situation I hadn't had to face before: no boys. I know this sounds obvious, but if I'm honest, in the process of applying for the

post, interviewing and the giddy excitement of being appointed, I never really thought about the realities of doing a show in a single sex school and the implications of having no boys.

Over the years I have come to realise that there are three things to consider with a single sex cast.

The first obstacle to overcome is the choice of production. Whereas before the romances in the show were often reflected in the hook-ups and intrigues of the Year 11s and Sixth Formers, now I had to face the fact that perhaps, overt love stories with inevitable snogging were not the way forward. Teenagers can be self-conscious enough, so respecting their boundaries seemed paramount, and this led to re-evaluating the choices I

needed to make. There are, actually, quite a lot of shows that do not revolve around a love-story or have one that is quite anodyne (*The Sound of Music*, I'm looking at you!). Shows like *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* are colourful, story book kind of shows that really don't rely on gender specific casting. It's the same really with *The Wizard of Oz*; only a handful of actual male roles. Sometimes it may even be possible to make a character female without changing any dialogue. Chorus roles are an excellent example; so what if all the inhabitants of the Emerald City are women? Who cares if Dickensian London is populated by females?

Another thing that has always been beneficial to single sex casting is to tailor make your own pieces; it's not easy to write a full-scale production, but if you can, it can be so useful, because you can write with your cast in mind. At St Mary's I have tended to alternate a big, licensed, show with a pantomime, as I find these easier to create myself. Again, no one has ever questioned why Happyville/Merrytown/the Casbah etc have been overrun with women. And it is easy to write what you need; instead of a Fairy Godmother and a Demon King, I have always gone down the route of a good and bad fairy or equivalent. So, Abanazar became Abanazia, and the genie of the lamp became the long-lost sister of the good fairy. This year (in

Treasure Island) the Spirit Guardian of the Oceans wars with the Dread Pirate Queen of the Seven Seas. Yes, it's hardly *Hamlet*, but to be fair, a whole lot more fun for an audience sitting for two hours on a school chair.

The final thing I firmly believe in is to not insult your audience. When there are inevitable male characters, please believe me when I tell you that not a single person there, mums, dads, Great Aunt Nancy or whoever is unaware that all the cast are girls! So, I have never tried to disguise this fact. There is really no need to rely on fake beards or hidden ponytails. Instead embrace the hair. Girls who are comfortable with their appearance will give far better performances, because they know they don't have to convince anyone and don't feel self-conscious. So, Joseph? Wear that side ponytail (it was 2009!). Beast? Cowardly Lion? Embrace those curls! Your audience are not going to sit there worrying about gender roles but will only see the fantastic performances the young people give.

Of course, single sex casting used to be the norm. And nowadays colour-blind casting and diversity encourage us all to see the role and not the actor, and this is a development which seems to embrace and celebrate the way I have tried to develop performance during my career, particularly during my years at St Mary's.



St Mary's Senior School Wizard of Oz production

BBC children's show appearance

Isha Kaur Athwal, 11, a pupil at Bradford Grammar School, West Yorkshire, has appeared in an acting role for Series Two and Three of the CBeebies television programme, Biff, Chip and Kipper based on the much-loved books, which is being aired now.

Acting since the age of five, Isha has previously performed in the film *The Runaways*, featuring the actors Mark Addy and Tara Fitzgerald, as well as in various adverts. She also voiced Frankie the Cat in the

Pip and Posy animation, which was aired on Channel 5 and won a British Animation Award for Best Children's Preschool Series.

Isha, said: "I play the part of Anneena in Biff, Chip and Kipper. I love my acting and enjoy working with production teams on set. I'd love to do it all the time, but I think I should play it safe with my education too. I'd like to be a vet. Maybe I could be a vet on TV!"



Pictured: Isha Kaur Athwal

Classical music showcase

Christ College, Brecon, Powys, has hosted a one-off musical medley combining harp and piano.

Old Breconian and harpist Anna Phillips returned to her former college along with her pianist peer Konya Kanneh-Mason for an exclusive performance of *Two Friends in Concert*.

Anna is no stranger to the spotlight having performed in a joint concert with King Charles' former official harpist Claire Jones, as well as in front of the Duchess of Gloucester in Covent Garden and in Times Square with the American Youth Harp Ensemble. She is also set to perform her debut solo recital at Wigmore Hall in London later this year.



Konya Kanneh-Mason

Konya, has performed in concerts around the world with her six siblings including the 2018 BAFTAs, the 2021 BBC Proms at The Royal Albert Hall and The Royal Variety Performance.

Konya and her family have appeared in several documentaries including BBC FOUR's *Young, Gifted and Classical* and BBC One's 2020 lockdown-inspired *Imagine* series.

Director of Music at Christ College Brecon, Jonathan Ling, said: "We were so excited to welcome Anna back and delighted she brought Konya with her to perform at what was a fantastic night of moving music."



Anna Phillips

Heading to the West End

Year 12, Queen's College, Taunton, Somerset, pupil, Millie Gubby, is heading to the West End to share the stage with music legend Michael Ball in the revival of Andrew Lloyd Webber's musical, *Aspects of Love* at London's Lyric Theatre.

Millie, who joined Queen's College in Year 7 with a Performing Arts scholarship has been chosen to play the role of young Jenny in the

musical. The show will run for 26 weeks, during which Queen's College will be fully supporting Millie remotely with her A Level studies.

Headteacher, Julian Noad said, "We are all so proud of Millie. This is an outstanding achievement and an amazing opportunity for her - she is definitely a star of the future."

The new production of *Aspects of Love*, produced by Nica Burns, has already begun rehearsals and the show opens at the Lyric Theatre on London's Shaftesbury Avenue from 12 May, with an opening night on 25 May.

The production is directed by Jonathan Kent with music by Andrew Lloyd Webber and lyrics by Don Black and Charles Hart. It is based on the novel by David Garnett and tells the story of Rose Vibert, a beautiful actress who finds herself homeless and penniless after her breakthrough play closes early in post-war France.



Millie Gubby



Tabor Academy students performing in Ellesmere

Exchange trip

Year nine to 13 pupils from the Tabor Academy in Boston, Massachusetts, have visited Ellesmere College, Shropshire, as part of a drama exchange which has been running for more than 20 years and performed the thriller *The 39 Steps* at the college theatre.

The team were in Shropshire for one week and also boarded in the school facilities.

The pupils were joined by Charlie Babbitt, Technical Manager, and Jesse Hawley, Drama, English and Performing Arts Coordinator at Tabor Academy, who said: "The value of this exchange programme for our students is that they not only have the opportunity to be immersed in the culture of another school, but they are called on to stick their necks out and share work they've done—which can feel quite risky and vulnerable, but which can open the door to a deeper form of communication than just by simply paying Ellesmere a visit.

"It also builds some real-life skills they'll need such as being

adaptable and flexible in the face of uncertainty."

The Tabor students also enjoyed a tour of The Storyhouse Theatre in Chester and had a sightseeing tour in and around Ellesmere campus and town.

Each of the schools produces a play that they perform in their home country, and then bring it over to the exchange school – ready to perform in front of audiences at a number of schools.

Director of Drama at the Artsmark Platinum Awards school Ellesmere College, Rachel Schubert, said: "Both schools have benefitted hugely from the relationship.

"There are so many advantages to these trips, the chance to soak up the culture of a different country, enjoy an open and frank exchange of views and ideas and how contemporaries are using the wonderful medium of drama in an educational setting.

"We very much look forward to our return trip to Massachusetts in 2024!"

Motown special fundraiser

Cranleigh School, Surrey, have hosted a Motown special at Cranleigh Arts Centre raising £4,000 for the performing arts hub.

Pupils performed a collection of songs from the Motown record label and included the songs *Baby Love*, *You Can't Hurry Love*, and *Dancing in the Street*. The show ended with

a performance of Diana Ross's *I'm Coming Out*, a fitting way to end an entertaining night of soulful music.

Cranleigh Arts Centre's Artistic Director, Sophie Woods, said: "The money raised is huge for us, the most money we have made from a show ever and very generous from Cranleigh School."



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Grease

Students, aged 10 – 16, from ACS International School Hillingdon, Middlesex, recently stepped back to the 1950s to perform the hit musical, Grease, to an audience who laughed, danced and sang along to the musical's classics, "Greased Lightnin'", "You're The One That I Want" and "Summer Nights".

Almost 60 students from Grades 5 – 10 were involved in every aspect of the production – from lighting to sound, backstage, band and cast. Teachers supported each of the students backstage with

sound and lighting and parents helped with hair and make-up and ensuring students took to the stage on time.

Director of Performance and Choreographer, Katerina Sleiman, said: "Grease is a childhood memory and favourite for many; a beautiful collaboration of theatre and music brought to life by the students who have shown great dedication and have worked incredibly hard over the last few months. We're looking forward to next year's production already."

Pictured: Students perform in Grease



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Marking a dramatic season

From comedy to tragedy, a trio of shows has marked another season of Drama and Theatre productions at Cheadle Hulme School (CHS), Cheshire.

In the Autumn term, the School's Senior School thespians presented an interpretation of Blood Wedding – the tragedy from Spain's revered playwright, Federico Garcia Lorca. CHS's young actors from Year 10 to Year 13 rose to the challenge of tackling his demanding and complex social subject matters with a mature and deeply emotive performance.

Lifting spirits, a rousing Musical Theatre production of The Wizard of Oz kick-started the Spring term. A sell-out success, families filled the School's Holden Hall to see the

classic story of friendship brim to life with colour and classic musical numbers. CHS choreographer of 7 years, Mr Joe Clarke also took to the Director's chair for his first CHS production.

Seeing out their final Summer term as Waconians, Year 13 students Lily Odell and Georgia Willbourn directed the swan song to their time in Drama and Theatre at CHS with student led Sixth Form Play Six:Teen Edition. Of the poignant performance, they said: "We both hope to pursue a career in the arts, so the opportunity to direct and perform has been an invaluable experience that has seen us collaborate with our peers, work through challenges, and develop our skills whilst having the best time ever!"



Pictured: Wizard of Oz Musical

Dance festival

Following a round of successful auditions, 15 pupils from Bede's Senior School, East Sussex, Legat Dance Academy took to the main stage at the opening of 'Move It' at London's Excel Centre.

'Move It' is billed as the biggest dance event in the world and brings together thousands of dancers over three days covering all genres from street dance, to ballet, hip hop to contemporary jazz. Attendees have a chance to meet with professionals and also representatives from dance schools and colleges across the UK as well as taking part in classes.

The pupils – aged 14-18 – performed to a packed audience with a group dance called 'Red', choreographed by Bede's Director



Students performing 'Red' at the Move It Festival

of Dance, Sherrie Pennington and her colleague, Emma Manes.

Their dance was inspired by the fairy tale, Little Red Riding Hood. Six ballet dancers perform en pointe while being circled by contemporary jazz dancers, who are 'watchers' to the musical backdrop of 'Somebody's watching me.'

On the second day Sherrie, a performer in numerous West End musicals, held one of the main dance classes at the Excel Centre on behalf of Bede's.

GL Assessment unveils the Adaptive Admissions Test

If you are looking for a reliable and robust admissions test that can help you assess a candidate's attainment and potential, then the Adaptive Admissions Test is the perfect choice for your school, writes David Hilton...

The Adaptive Admissions Test is a reliable and robust admissions test that is designed to help independent schools assess candidates' attainment and ability. It has been developed by GL Assessment, who have provided independent schools with a range of assessments for over 40 years.

The Adaptive Admissions Test is designed to evaluate students in Year 6 or Year 7 ahead of entry to senior school. It is developed by subject experts and includes four multiple-choice tests looking at verbal reasoning, non-verbal reasoning, English, and mathematics.

The test is flexible, so schools can choose which elements they want

to use. Each individual test is valid in and of itself, so schools can choose the combination that best suits their needs. All four tests take two hours and 15 minutes to complete, with individual elements lasting from 30 minutes upwards.

Fully adaptive to ability

The Adaptive Admissions Test adapts to the student's ability level as they take each test, which means that it is not possible to guess the answers or get by on luck. This makes it a highly accurate measure of a student's attainment and abilities. Results are standardised to the independent sector, based on data from over 20,000 independent school students, meaning schools can be confident that the results are reliable and fair.



David Hilton is the Head of Admissions Testing at GL Assessment

The assessment has also been developed to suit the needs of both the most academic and non-selective schools. The test is timed, but an untimed version is also available for pupils with additional needs.

The test can also be taken in a student's own prep school, the senior school they are applying to or at an independent test centre. And because the test is online, schools receive the results quickly. This is obviously a significant advantage over traditional paper-based exams, which can take several weeks to mark.

The online format of the test also means that it can easily be used to assess international students who would like to come to the UK – or elsewhere in the world – to study. The tests use language that almost all EAL students should be able to cope with, and a familiarisation website

means that pupils can practise questions and get a good idea of the format of the test before they take the test itself.

Streamlined process

GL Assessment's experience working with the independent sector means that the transfer to the Adaptive Admissions Test is smooth, with a streamlined process for both the schools overseeing the test and those waiting on the results.

To arrange a call to discuss how the Adaptive Admissions Test can help your school get a more complete picture of a prospective student's abilities, please email Andy Small, Independent Schools Advisor, at admissions@gl-assessment.co.uk



Teaching Latin? Start here

Steven Hunt, Lecturer in Classics Education at Cambridge University, teacher trainer and author of numerous Classics textbooks, including the revised edition of *Starting to Teach Latin* recently published by Bloomsbury, explains where to start when beginning to teach Latin (or where to look for new teaching ideas if you've been teaching Latin for some time).

People are often surprised that some 10,000 pupils across the UK take Latin GCSEs every year – a figure which has been unchanged for over twenty years. Latin shows no sign of dying, with the proportion of pupils in independent schools taking Latin exams remaining a healthy 70%. The number of state schools where Latin is being offered is also slowly on the increase, due to the efforts of the UK charity Classics for All and the government-funded Latin Excellence Programme, which aims to get forty non-selective schools putting Latin onto the timetable where it has never existed before.

Latin is not just a language: course materials emphasise that knowing the language is key to understanding the culture and history of the ancient Romans themselves – and the way they

have influenced thought, literature and art ever since. And they continue to affect our cultural life – not just in Europe and North America, but increasingly in the Far East, where at the university level many Chinese are now finding much to value in the ancient Greek and Roman authors and are comparing them with the way their own philosophical ideas have developed. Latin GCSE is a mini liberal arts course, encompassing language skills, the appreciation of fine literature packed full of what are still contemporary ideas, and the exploration of ancient Roman beliefs and cultural practices.

When I took over the role of Subject Lecturer in Classics Education at Cambridge University, I realised the need for a book which would help not just my own teacher trainees, but also many of

those students who came straight out of university and went into teaching without training, but learning 'on the job.'

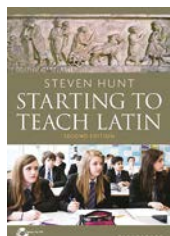
Because of the lack of a central place for information about teaching and learning Latin and the other classical subjects regularly taught in schools (ancient Greek, classical civilisation and ancient history), I found myself inundated with questions about all of them – how to teach, what course books to use, the types and content of exams – even questions about the right Latin for mottoes and tattoos! Unless you had gained access to the *hortus secretus* / secret garden of Latin, there was almost no collective memory of where to start and how to keep going.

Starting to Teach Latin (2016) was the first handbook designed to help new teachers and also for



more experienced teachers as a resource for finding out where to look for teaching ideas and support in the subject community. Now in its second edition, *Starting to Teach Latin* (2023) has been thoroughly updated to take account of new course publications and emerging pedagogies (such as spoken Latin and simple readers). It also provides information about where to look for sources for the marginalised voices of ancient Roman women and enslaved people – an area of current interest to teachers and pupils alike.

The ancient Roman world remains as full of life and interest today as it has always been. The beginning and the more experienced teacher of Latin will find much to learn in *Starting to Teach Latin*.



Starting to Teach Latin, Second Edition is published by Bloomsbury. You can order your copy online at www.bloomsbury.com/starting-to-teach-latin-9781350368132

Award for classics teacher

A Classics teacher at Loughborough Grammar School, Leicestershire, Mireya Gonzalez Rodriguez, has been presented with the 'Making Classics More Inclusive Award' at the 2023 Classical Association Teachers Awards.

Mireya initiated a programme of Classics lectures at the Loughborough Schools Foundation delivered by world-leading scholars such as Emily Hauser, Edith Hall and Llewellyn Morgan. The lectures are open to everyone, without charge, and were started by Mireya during

the first lockdown. The lectures proved incredibly successful, with hundreds of staff, students, and members of the public regularly attending them.

The Classical Association is an educational charity, dedicated to making classical subjects widely accessible. The CA 2023 Awards, in partnership with Bloomsbury Academic, recognise outstanding teaching and innovative pre-university education initiatives.

Mireya has also created an outreach programme in

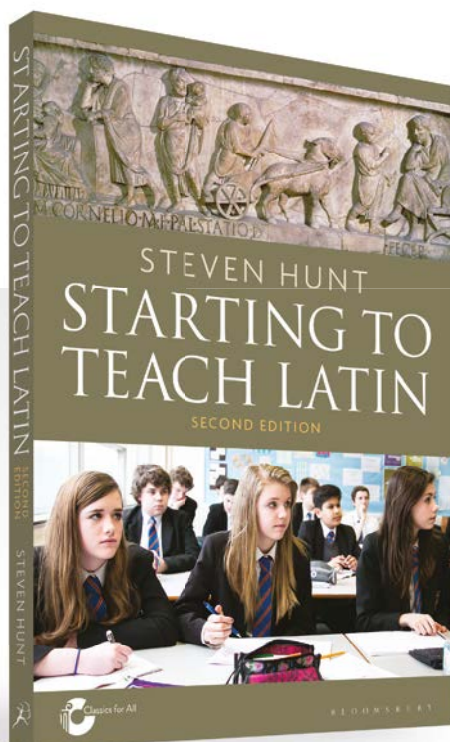
Cyprus where students from the Loughborough Schools Foundation teach classical subjects to primary-aged children of those in the British Forces to introduce them to the classical world and inspire their curiosity of the Classics.

Mireya said: "My aim was to make classics more inclusive through enrichment and outreach and I'm so pleased to have been able to achieve this. I am grateful for the recognition – it was very unexpected!"



Pictured: Mireya Gonzalez Rodriguez, Classics teacher at The Loughborough Schools Foundation

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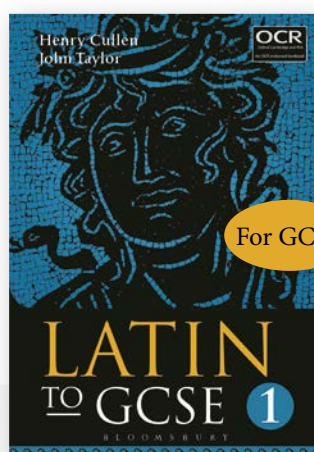
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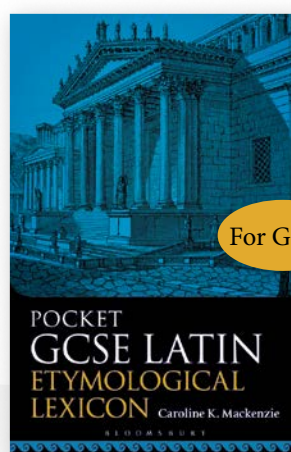
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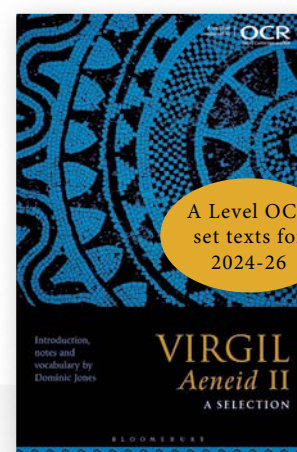
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Retaining religious values in the age of the Equality Act



Employment and Immigration Solicitor, Callum De Freitas, outlines what schools need to consider when balancing religious values with the Equality Act, and suggests some precautionary steps that could be taken to minimise the risk of discrimination.

What does the Equality Act cover?

Under the Equality Act 2010, religion and belief is a “protected characteristic”, meaning that a person is discriminated against if they are treated less favourably due to their religion or philosophical belief. This includes atheists and those without religious beliefs. Other protected characteristics include disability, race, sex, sexual orientation, and gender reassignment.

Individuals are protected from discrimination at work and in education – they are also protected from discrimination if they are associated with someone who has a protected characteristic (for example, their child) or if they’ve complained about discrimination on someone else’s behalf.

Many independent schools are founded on or influenced by religious values, while accepting students of varied faiths, along with agnostic and atheist students. However, there will inevitably be circumstances where individuals with contrasting beliefs come into conflict. A religious student and an atheist student may find themselves in a heated discussion regarding the existence of God. Or a teacher might voice their opinions on sexuality or gender, which could be seen by students as homophobic or transphobic.

Dealing with incidents

There are obvious practical benefits to peacefully resolving any conflicts that might arise – whether the involved parties are students, teachers, parents, or governors. If an amicable outcome can be achieved, this will negate the need to consider the risks of legal action and help to maintain positive interpersonal relationships within the school community. It is therefore important to ensure that staff receive appropriate training on conflict resolution and dealing

with sensitive topics, to help them nip any potential issues in the bud before they spiral into allegations of discrimination.

Where a peaceful resolution to a dispute cannot be reached, any disciplinary action should be approached with caution, to ensure that it is not itself discriminatory.

Taking the earlier example of the discussion between the religious and atheist students, the school would have to take care not to treat one student less favourably than the other by virtue of their religious beliefs. However, if one student was physically violent while the other was not, then disparate punishments may, in the circumstances, be more justifiable, as there would be a basis for this beyond the differing views held by the individuals.

The example of the teacher is more complex. On the one hand, the school would want to avoid any allegations of discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation or gender reassignment from LGBT students, so failing to take any action is unlikely to be appropriate – but, if they choose to discipline the teacher, they should also be cautious of a discrimination claim from the teacher, on the basis that they are being treated less favourably due to their philosophical or religious beliefs.

Objectionable manifestation of beliefs

Relevant to these discussions is the concept of the “objectionable manifestation” of beliefs – the protected characteristic of religion or belief has its limits, in that an individual cannot rely on the Equality Act’s protection if they manifest their beliefs in a manner which is “objectionable”. For example, while some Christians believe that homosexuality is a sin, a Christian teacher who is verbally abusive to LGBT students

could not rely on the Equality Act to protect himself from being disciplined.

But an individual need not be verbally abusive for the manifestation of their beliefs to be objectionable. In the Employment Tribunal case of *Randall v Trent College Limited*, a school chaplain gave sermons telling students that they did not have to accept the “ideas and ideologies of LGBT activists” where they conflicted with Christian values. After complaints by students, parents, and other members of staff, the chaplain’s employment was ultimately terminated. He claimed that he had been discriminated against because of his beliefs – but the Tribunal found that his manifestation of those beliefs was objectionable because he had ignored the school’s warnings not to give sermons on controversial topics and had violated his safeguarding duties to pupils.

By contrast, the Employment Tribunal in *Forstater v CGD Europe* held that the mocking and satirising of gender self-identification on social media was not an objectionable manifestation of beliefs, but rather the “common currency of debate in a democratic society”. While this case did not relate to the education system, and the decision may well have been different if *Forstater* were a teacher, it should still act as a reminder to schools that, just because an opinion might be offensive to some, this does not necessarily justify severe disciplinary action being taken in response. In circumstances where it is unclear whether the manifestation of beliefs is “objectionable” in the legal sense, it is likely to be wise to obtain legal advice before taking any disciplinary action.

What should schools do?

If schools want to maintain their religious values while minimising

the risks of discrimination, then there are several precautionary steps they can take.

In general, the regular review of internal policies, ensuring that they are clear in their expectations of staff and students, would be a good place to start.

The equal opportunities policy will obviously be particularly relevant and should be routinely updated to account for any changes in the law. It should clearly set out what discrimination is and what steps the school is taking to maintain a welcoming and inclusive culture, as well as providing clarity to the school community as to their individual obligations.

Since September 2020, all secondary schools in England have been required to teach Relationships and Sex Education and to have a policy on the same. These policies should set out what content will be taught and include information for parents on their rights to withdraw their child from lessons.

Disciplinary policies and procedures should be comprehensive, explaining what conduct is likely to result in disciplinary action while giving schools the required flexibility to deal with a variety of discrimination-related infractions.

Schools should also flag their expectations of conduct in staff’s contracts of employment and in parents’ and pupils’ contracts with the school, clearly setting out what misconduct is likely to result in the termination of employment or expulsion, as applicable.

It may also be wise to signpost on the website the general beliefs which inform the school’s teachings – this will better apprise parents as to the nature of the education their children are likely to receive, while also helping to highlight any obvious conflicts with the school’s values that some parents may find challenging.

Callum De Freitas is a solicitor at legal practice, Field Seymour Parkes LLP, www.fsp-law.com

BSA Supporting Excellence Awards 2023

The Boarding Schools' Association has announced the winners of its annual Supporting Excellence Awards. First held in 2018, the BSA Awards celebrate the achievements, hard work, and dedication of schools and individuals within boarding.

Among the winners and highly commended finalists were:

Best Community Work via BSA 'On Board' Initiative Award

WINNER: Wellington College, Berkshire

HIGHLY COMMENDED: ACS International School, Cobham, Surrey and Sedburgh School, Cumbria

Boarding Innovation Award

WINNER: Strathallan School, Perthshire and Kinross

HIGHLY COMMENDED: St Mary's Cambridge

Boarding Research Award

WINNER: St Leonards, St Andrews, Fife

Most Original Activity During National Boarding Week Award

WINNER: Denstone College, Staffordshire

Wellbeing & Mental Health Initiative Award

WINNER: Canford School, Dorset

HIGHLY COMMENDED: DLD College, London, Haileybury, Hertfordshire

Supporting Junior Boarders Award

WINNER: Repton Prep School, Derbyshire

HIGHLY COMMENDED: Cottesmore School, West Sussex and Junior King's School, Canterbury, Kent

Working with Vulnerable Children Award

WINNER: Bede's School, East Sussex

INDEX (Inclusion and Diversity Excellence) Initiative Award

WINNER: Gordonstoun, Moray

Best New Artwork Project

WINNER: Mwangi Mungai, Malvern College, Worcestershire

Khadija Saye Photography Award

(named in honour of the former Rugby School boarding pupil and international photographer who died in the Grenfell Tower fire in 2017.)

WINNER: Sophie Watson, Gordonstoun, Moray

HIGHLY COMMENDED: Jennifer Mobbs, Gordonstoun, Moray and Ella Martin, King's Ely, Cambridgeshire

Stephen Winkley Award

(named in honour of the former BSA Chair (2003), and Headmaster of Uppingham (1991-2006) and Rossall Schools (2008-2013) and commends the achievements of an individual who has made a significant contribution to the cause of boarding.)

WINNER: Tom Murray, Port Regis, Dorset

HIGHLY COMMENDED: Kate Scott, Chetham's School of Music, Greater Manchester

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CHANGING FACES... CHANGING PLACES...



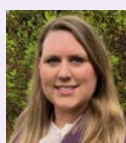
Sean Price has been appointed to take over from Greg Taylor as the new Head Teacher of the Junior School at King Edward's School, Bath.

Sean joins King Edward's from Westonbirt Prep School where he has been Headmaster for the last seven years. After gaining a degree from Cardiff University in English Language Studies, Sean worked in the sales industry before completing his PGCE at the University of Bath. He has since honed his skills and

experience across both the state and independent sectors.

Sean also holds various roles within IAPS, the Independent Association of Prep Schools, of which the Junior School is a member, including serving as the National Sports Committee Chair and Director.

Sean joins the Junior School at the beginning of the Spring Term in 2024. His appointment follows the decision by Greg Taylor to step down as Head Teacher of the Junior School after a long and distinguished career at KES.



Taunton School, Somerset, has announced the appointment of new Head of Pre-Prep and Nursery.

Rebecca Lewis is set to join the school in September 2023. She is currently Deputy Head of a primary school in Solihull.

Rebecca has extensive experience of working in early years settings. Prior

to her current school – Oak Cottage Primary – she worked as a teacher, curriculum and Key Stage 1 lead at a neighbouring school in Solihull.

She has also worked in two different nursery settings and served as an external moderator at Key Stage 1 for the local authority.

Rebecca takes over from outgoing Head, Louise Leah, who held the position for five years.



Chatsworth Schools have announced the appointment of Mrs Kirstie Hampshire as the new Head of

The Village Prep School, London, from 1st September 2023. Current head, Mrs Morven MacDonald, will be stepping down at the end of this academic year, July 2023, to take a career break with Chatsworth's full support.

Mrs Hampshire joins The Village Prep School from nearby Hereward House School, London, where she is the current Head of the Middle School.

In addition to Kirstie Hampshire's appointment, from September 2024, The Village Prep School will begin to welcome girls older than 11 as the school will open Year 7 and 8 classes in addition to the Prep and Pre-Prep.



Mill Hill School, London, has appointed David Benson as its new Head from January

2024.

Mr Benson joins from the Kensington Aldridge Academy (KAA), which he has led since September 2013, to replace Jane Sanchez, who is moving to another role within The Mill Hill School Foundation.

Having been educated at St. Paul's, Mr Benson qualified from the Teach First programme and has made the move from his most recent role in the state sector to the independent

sector after 10 years at the academy.

Mr Benson was named as one of the 10 most influential people in education by the Times Education Supplement in 2018. Mr Benson is also a published author on educational issues, with one of his own publications on curriculum planning currently included on PGCE courses.

Mr Benson has previously written for the national media, highlighting the potential benefits of building on the current partnerships that exist between private and state schools, focusing on the all-important objective of supporting pupils.



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60 seconds of calm in the classroom

Head of Art at Sevenoaks School, Kent, Charley Openshaw, explores creating mindful moments with art.

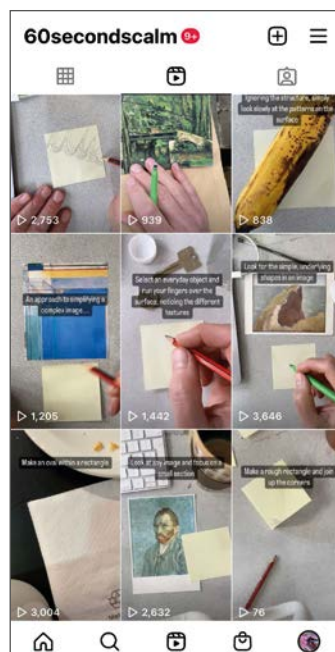
Slow looking

Towering cliffs dwarf a group of riders crossing a river in a dusty, sun-baked landscape. Swirling brushstrokes capture not only the immensity of the landscape but also the fine details of the human drama below. Smoke gently rises from their distant destination. These are just some aspects of Green River Cliffs, Wyoming by Thomas Moran (1881) that hangs in the National Gallery of Art, Washington DC that I recall from a visit as part of a Project Zero conference.

Shari Tishman spoke about the profound benefits of “taking the time to carefully observe more than meets the eye at first glance” (Tishman 2018). We were required to spend two hours looking at this single painting. It seemed a long time. As an art teacher, students are eager for an instant opinion, some quick reassurance about their work. Looking at one painting for such an extended period was a little daunting. However, there is much to be gained from this example of slow looking and this deliberate slowing of normal processes has preoccupied me since.

60 seconds of calm

It may therefore seem odd that my interest in slow looking has now evolved into much shorter activities: sixty second activities that are shared on Instagram: @60secondscalm. Whilst we were teaching and learning online, I offered some slow looking sessions to staff via Teams and realised



that digital platforms could be an effective means of sharing the activities. Now back in school, I wondered if there was scope to offer something similar to students.

A further spur into action was a parent webinar on anxiety delivered by Caroline Clarke-Wooster, our Lead School Counsellor. I realised that the practical activities she suggested to help cope with anxiety were very similar to slow looking processes. I wondered if an effective strategy could be for students to stumble across very short “looking activities” in their social media feeds. Acknowledging that they were already using these platforms, perhaps a short, calming, looking-based activity with the modest aim of providing a gentle moment or two of slowly

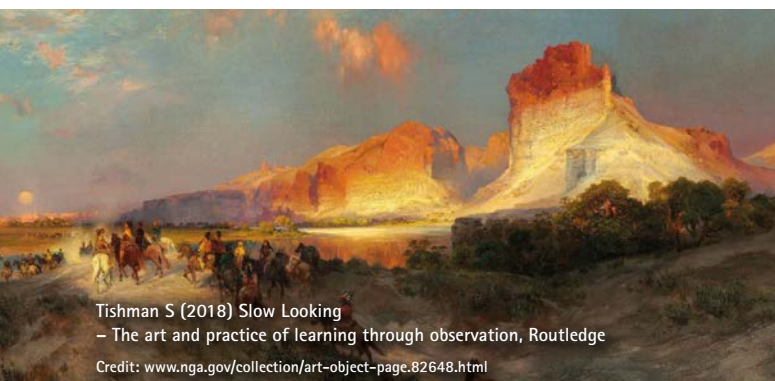
noticing more of what we see would be useful.

In the activities themselves, all contained within a sixty second film, I aim to use only materials that are commonly to hand, most often a post-it note and a pen. Often, they are filmed at my desk, hinting at how they can be inserted into the working day. They all require looking slowly at an image or object, noticing something about it and making some form of visual response. Although I teach art, these are not drawing lessons; the visual outcomes are simply by products of the process of looking. For example, I might crop out a small area of an image, perhaps a couple of trees in a postcard of a painting and respond. Most often, the form of response will be limited, perhaps to just scribbled dots in order slow the process and force the focus simply onto tonal variation.



Application in the classroom

I hope that these activities might find application not just for individuals but also within the classroom. Sixty seconds of calm, achieved by slowly looking, is enough to refocus a group, add structure between tasks or simply to start or finish a lesson. Tutors may also find a use; my Sixth Form group certainly said they enjoyed looking slowly at The Master of Flémalle's Nativity (c.1420s) over a number of Saturday mornings. However, it develops, I am appreciating myself the discipline of slowing down to look for just a minute every day.



Tishman S (2018) Slow Looking
– The art and practice of learning through observation, Routledge
Credit: www.nga.gov/collection/art-object-page.82648.html

The full article can be read in the fourth edition of Sevenoaks School's academic journal Innovate at www.sevenoaksschool.org/innovate

Faldo Series Junior Tour grand final qualification

King's Ely, Cambridgeshire, Sixth Form student and golfer, Paul Collington, has driven his way to victory in the eminent Faldo Series Junior Tour.

Paul, who is in Year 13, beat 152 of the UK's most able junior players in the competition, which was held at Brocket Hall in Hertfordshire.

Paul placed first with a total of 214, -5, for the Par 73, three-rounds. This qualifies him for the Faldo Series Junior Tour Grand Final, which will see him playing against the world's most talented junior golfers in Al Ain, United Arab Emirates (UAE), in the autumn.

Paul joined King's Ely Junior in Year 7, and is Captain of Golf at

Pictured: Paul Collington



King's Ely, and a member at Gog Magog Golf Club in Great Shelford, Cambridge. Paul usually practises or plays golf every day, and he first started having lessons when he was six years old. He plays off +2.6.

Speaking about his win, Paul said: "It is an incredible way to kick off the season! I was really pleased to achieve three solid rounds with the bonus of gaining world ranking points, and a trip to the Grand Final in UAE in September."



Channel Swimming Association awards

Beech Hall Mencap Marvels, a team of young swimmers from Beech Hall School, Cheshire, have earned two Channel Swimming Association awards for their achievements. The team, comprising pupils aged from 13 to 15, won an award for being the youngest team to cross the Channel and also for

Pictured: Beech Hall Mencap Marvels

setting a new record as the fastest six-person team to complete the challenging swim. Alongside their accomplishments in the water, the Beech Hall Mencap Marvels have also raised over £50,000 for Mencap, a leading charity supporting people with learning disabilities.



Centenary refurbishment

The Leverhulme Pavilion at Bolton School, Lancashire, has undergone a thorough refurbishment. The building, which has floor to ceiling windows and doors that overlook the new all-weather sports pitch, saw upgrades to its meeting room, changing rooms, toilets, kitchen and serving area.

The pavilion and adjoining sports pitches, near the main school campus, are used by both Divisions for hockey and lacrosse lessons, training and competitive fixtures, as well as by Bolton Hockey Club and the University of Bolton.

Pictured: The Leverhulme Pavilion

Director of Sport in the Girls' Division, Mrs Heatherington, said: "The refurbished Leverhulme Pavilion has not only improved the fabric of the building but the upgrades to the changing and toilet facilities, along with a kitchen re-fit, have enhanced the post-match hospitality we are able to offer in our school fixtures."

The restoration took place forty years after the Third Viscount Leverhulme, who was Chairman of Governors from 1949-1990, gifted the pavilion to Bolton School and one hundred years after the site was first purchased by the Foundation.

New Director of Sport

Merchiston Castle School, Edinburgh, has appointed former rugby star Nick De Luca as the new Director of Sport.

The former international rugby union centre will join the school in September 2023, leaving his position at Uppingham School where he has spent the last six years as Director of Rugby and then Director of Sport.

Having played for Scottish Rugby Union, Biarritz Olympique Pays Basque, and Wasps consecutively, Nick De Luca will bring a wealth of expertise and twelve years of professional rugby experience to the pupils at Merchiston.

He is also a mental health advocate, previously campaigning for greater mental health support for professional rugby players. A qualified Youth Mental Health First Aid instructor, Nick is passionate about empowering young people to prioritise their mental wellbeing and creating enjoyment in sport.

Pictured: Nick De Luca



This appointment will further strengthen Merchiston's sports department, with figures including rugby coach Roddy Deans, who led the boys to victory in the Scottish Rugby School's Cup finals in December last year, and Merchiston's Director of Tennis, Wimbledon semi-finalist Simon Pender.

Merchiston's Head Teacher, Jonathan Anderson, said: "I am delighted to welcome Nick De Luca as our new Director of Sport.

With his professional background, vast experience and passion for sports, I am confident he will be an asset to our community."

TG Escapes design Biophilic School concept using Modular Construction

Exposure to Nature

It is well known that reconnection with nature can play a major role in enhancing a child's development, mental resilience and capacity to thrive and learn. A study between Aarhus University in Denmark and Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences in the US, showed that children who grow up in greener surroundings have up to 55% less risk of developing various mental disorders. Biophilia, or a love of the natural world, is programmed into our DNA and appropriate architectural design can serve to nurture our deep-rooted need to connect to nature.

Biophilic Design

Biophilic design in classrooms has been shown to boost children's wellbeing both physically and mentally, improving cognitive ability and emotional wellbeing. Furthermore, adding sensory elements from the living natural environment can inspire curiosity, imagination and discovery whilst offering a significant boost to learning by way of increased attendance, improved behaviour and increased focus.

Improved Educational Outcomes

These benefits have been proven by a variety of scientific experiments. One study by A Sigman shows that children exposed to nature scored higher on concentration and self-discipline and performed better in core curricular subjects. Other studies show test scores can



improve by between 5 and 14% with speed of learning boosted by as much as 26%.

A Biophilic School

Having practised the implementation of biophilic design principles for many years, TG Escapes wanted to design an entirely biophilic primary school that is sensitive to the environment, cost effective and practical to build using modern methods of construction.

They have designed a single-entry nursery and primary concept school. Constructed from timber, the school will have a low embodied carbon value; be highly sustainable and net-zero in its lifetime. Furthermore, it will be more affordable to build, maintain and run than traditionally constructed buildings.

The design comprises separate pavilions for various school

functions, connected by covered walkways and canopies and arranged to envelop a central landscaped, terraced area with an outdoor class at its centre. This promotes an interaction and connection with nature. It encourages sociability and play, whilst maximising the opportunity for outdoor learning, exercise and fresh air in all weathers.

Cost and Carbon

The building will be cost effective to build and to operate and extremely eco-friendly. As TG Escapes are utilising an existing, panelised modular system, they are able to make a whole life carbon calculation. The total cost of the build, (excluding landscaping and services which will be site specific) will be £4m. Comparing this design to the EBD OG benchmark survey for primary, the scheme provides 7.31m² per pupil (including circulation)

versus the benchmark 5.69m². The benchmark shows that an average cost of a net-zero school is around £2500 pm². Their biophilic buildings come in at only £1,823 pm² leaving plenty of headroom for external works.

The whole life carbon calculation exceeds the RIBA 2030 target for schools.

Biophilic Schools. Better for the Environment. Better for our Children

TG Escapes believe that our relationship with nature is a cornerstone foundation for robust mental health and a young mind's capacity for learning. They are working with MTM Consulting to identify a suitable site and partner to build a biophilic school and are also happy to work with independent education providers should they have a project to suit this biophilic approach.



For more information call 0800 917 7726 or email info@tgescapes.co.uk

Heads Hunted

Among the upcoming head and principal appointments:

Brentwood Prep School	Essex
Cranleigh School	Surrey
Frensham Heights	Surrey
Pangbourne College	Berkshire
Greenfield School	Surrey
Quainton Hall Prep	Middlesex
Packwood Haugh	Shropshire

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

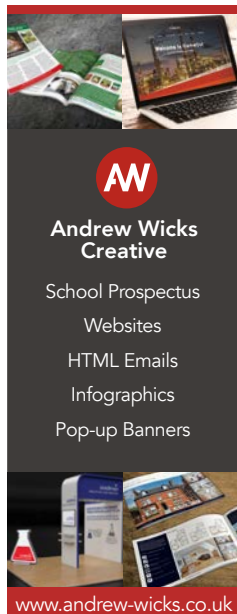
News items, contributions, comments and suggestions are always welcomed by the editor.

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The Independent Schools Magazine

Vires per Verum – Strength through Truth

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

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Designing for contemporary learning in a heritage setting

How do you design a new school building within a heritage setting? Architect, James McGillivray explains how to make the process easier.



James McGillivray

Many schools are both blessed and cursed with a beautiful historic building right at the heart of their campus precisely where the head of curriculum would rather have a state-of-the-art STEM Centre. They often make a great first impression to prospective parents but can feel like a significant constraint on developing nearby.

These two things need not be in opposition and we have made it our practice's work to reconcile the heritage status (and picturesque appearance) of buildings with the need to provide modern facilities fit for a contemporary education.

Designing in a heritage setting can be a complex and challenging task, particularly when dealing with listed buildings or registered parkland. The key to success lies in understanding and respecting the cultural, historical, and architectural significance of the existing environment, making a strong educational case and engaging with the statutory consultees.

Understand the significance of the context

Start by gaining an understanding of the context of the site. Research the history and architectural style of the surrounding buildings and parkland, as well as any local planning regulations and

guidelines. The Historic England List (National Heritage List for England) available on their website can give an instant insight into what is considered significant about the building. Many schools maintain an archive and this can also be a useful source of documentation, photographs and plans.

Invest in good advice

Designing in a heritage context requires teamwork. The right heritage consultant can be a huge asset. They can be vital in analysing where the true significance lies in what is rather unromantically referred to as the "Heritage Asset". Look too for an architect who works with the context. A wedding cake on a platter which ignores the neighbouring 17th Century country house is unlikely to get far with Historic England. Your new sixth form centre may also involve some alterations to the buildings, and so a structural engineer who understands sensitive adaptation of existing buildings will also be an important team member.

Make the case for educational need

Be clear about the benefits of the new facilities in terms of teaching and learning. Be prepared to answer the question "Why can

this not be accommodated in the existing buildings?", or "Why can it not be built at the other end of the campus out of sight of the listed building?"

Engage early

Once you have a clear brief, a heritage assessment and an initial design idea, it pays to engage with the conservation officer from the local authority via a request for Pre-application Advice, or in some cases from Historic England, Cadw and Historic Environment Scotland via their Pre-application Advisory Service. Both are confidential. This process will give an early steer as to where the main concerns are and may even open up other possibilities which had not previously been considered.

Be prepared to compromise to reach a consensus on the balance of harm and benefits. In the case of our recently completed Academic Hub for Haberdashers' Boys' School, Hertfordshire, we engaged with Historic England very early in the design process and over the course of almost a year were able to move from a position of opposition to the proposals, to having their full support for the planning application, whilst still including the modern teaching facilities which the school required. The new buildings were next to a Grade II* House and set in Listed parkland. The rigour of this process will often test both the design rationale and the educational justification for the new building and can result in a leaner, sleeker outcome.

Look for opportunities to enhance historic fabric/landscape

Repairs or even alterations can sometimes be made to historic buildings as part of a new project. If planned carefully, this can be designed to enhance the surroundings and improve facilities for the school. It could even mean the demolition or removal

of inappropriate extensions or additions to the listed building. Not every last brick of a Listed Building is sacrosanct. Over the centuries, poorly judged changes to the building can creep in and the conservation officer can be sympathetic to change if it is handled correctly. Just bear in mind that carrying out unauthorised work to a Listed Building is a criminal, not a civil offence!

Don't forget landscape. Planting can be a cost-effective enhancement and an educational resource. The restoration of registered parkland can provide much needed additional social space or areas for learning.

Be creative

The new building does not need to mimic the old. Indeed, conservation officers do not want to see pastiche next to a historic building. It will always look weak next to the real thing and can muddy the waters from the point of view of the clarity of the history of the buildings.

Imaginative thinking is the key to creating new facilities in a heritage setting and so be open to considering a range of ideas. Historic buildings only survive when there is someone to care for them and the best way to ensure this is to find ways to adapt them and their surroundings to meet current needs. This will include not just upgrading educational facilities, but improving accessibility and sustainability. The planning authorities are aware of this and taking a collaborative and enlightened approach to creating your new facilities is the best route to a successful new building.



Haberdashers' Boys School

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In support of the arts

Head of Pocklington School, East Yorkshire, Toby Seth, considers the importance of the arts and the integral role it can play in schools and to wider society.

The government's latest idea to require all students to study mathematics (in some form or another) to Sixth Form level has not been met entirely with acclaim, with its detractors citing a lack of mathematics teachers and the significant number of students who are desperate to move away from maths for their post-16 choices. Maths, science, technology, technical and engineering subjects are of course vital and underpin much of society's achievements but this oft-heard view, allied to recent and laudable initiatives to celebrate and promote these types of disciplines, risks ignoring another key element of our curriculum and society.

The Arts (taking as broad an interpretation of these as possible) are equally integral to schools and our wider society but the current trend towards promoting STEM and ignoring or perhaps even downgrading the importance of the Arts is worrying. Lee Elliot Major, the UK's first Professor of Social Mobility at Exeter University commented "In my view, children should devote as much time to art and sport as core academic study". Geoff Barton, General Secretary of ASCL, stated in his recently released video blog that "never has there been a need more than there is now for us to reclaim the importance of the

arts". He cites funding and the apparent importance of certain subjects over others as being key drivers of why the Arts have fallen away in popularity and as an area of focus. The disparity between independent school provision and the maintained sector is manifest, and highlighted again by Guy Black, Baron Black of Brentwood, when he asked the question 'Why does the government seem so determined to destroy classical music in the UK?'. He cited music teacher recruitment, GCSE and A-level music entries, threatened cuts to the BBC and grassroots music venues closing apace as concerning indicators.

To many, it has felt like the last few years have not been overly kind to art and culture in the UK. Yes, our digital existence during COVID years encouraged people to consider other ways in which they might access musical, artistic and cultural experiences. These were genuinely eye opening in some ways – Jamie Oliver beaming directly into our kitchens, the Natural History Museum's digital delivery, the plethora and explosion of podcasts since 2020 and of course the possibility of now 'sharing' a viewing or listening experience through a variety of applications.

But all these initiatives miss the fundamental point of art, culture

and music. Since the earliest cave paintings and gatherings around fires, we have crafted and shared cultural experiences together. Watching a performance of Macbeth on television doesn't compare to seeing it live on stage. Yes, one can say "I've seen it" but can you honestly say you've "experienced" it? The same goes for watching a sporting event on television. No amount of jumping around one's living room can make up for similar amounts of jumping in a live stadium. A concert or gig is no different. Even 'grass roots' (for want of a better term) experience of music, sport, art or drama is better than the digital version. Some will say the arts are simply about creativity and lack the rigour and resilience required in some other subjects areas. Show me the actor, musician or successful writer who lacks rigour and resilience! Music practice alone requires all of these qualities and more to perfect your piece – whether Grade 1 or Grade 8.

And this is just one of the reasons why we are so proud to champion art and culture here at Pocklington. Just before the Easter break, the School celebrated its inaugural 'Arts Week', during which we bore witness to a cornucopia of artistic expression, dramatic creativity and inventive spirit. Events included student art installations,



Toby Seth

impromptu concerts on site and in the local community, drama workshops for all, a celebration of our Trinity Drama students' achievements and 'have a go' art exhibitions every day of the week. We are good at celebrating our pupils' achievements at Pocklington School, and given its frequency and prominence in our weekly and weekend calendars, sport is often a source of much of this celebration. Of course, at key points in the termly calendar we laud our pupils' approach to a variety of theatre productions, music concerts and other extra-curricular activities. It was, however, incredibly enriching to spend a whole week focussed on and in celebration of 'The Arts'. At a time when they don't appear to be receiving the praise and support they richly deserve, it was pleasing to be able to buck this trend. Here's hoping we can all celebrate The Arts and create an atmosphere in which our children feel inspired and empowered to continue to embrace creativity and innovation in all forms.

Transforming Lives Exhibition: The Power of Art to Engage

The Methodist Art Collection is back at Kingswood School, Bath, more than fifty years after its departure. The exhibition, Transforming Lives: The Power of Art to Engage aims to bring people together and create conversations, notably with students across various disciplines. There will also be opportunities for the local community to see the works with events which are open to the public.

Eleven paintings will be displayed at the school until July 2023, and includes examples of world art by international artists such as the Indian-American British Asian artist F N Souza and the Indian painter Jyoti Sahi, as well as British

women artists Eularia Clarke and Maggi Hambling.

The Methodist Modern Art Collection was always intended to tour and 2023 marks sixty years since the first travelling exhibition of the Collection entitled The Church and the Artist, toured from July 1963 – September 1965. At the end of the first tour, the Collection went to Kingswood School, where it was displayed until the early 1970s.

The choice of Kingswood School is also highly symbolic for this exhibition: the school was founded by John Wesley, the most prominent of the founders

of Methodism, and celebrates its 275th anniversary in 2023. The exhibition is part of the events programme marking this milestone. It will also coincide with a Methodist Schools Conference, also called Transforming Lives, when

the exhibition will be viewed and discussed by international delegates.

The exhibition is by appointment only. To book email Rev Katy Thomas at kthomas@kingswood.bath.sch.uk Individual or small groups are welcome. Admission is free.





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