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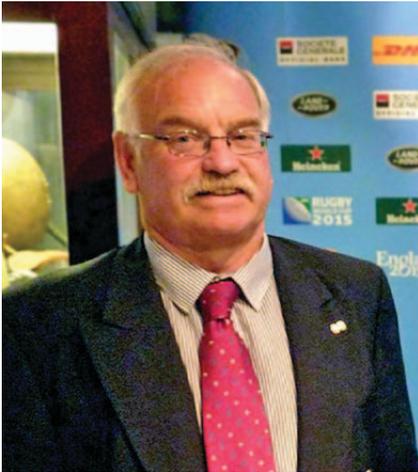


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From the editor



It is in the very DNA of our schools that we adopt the mantra of adopt, adapt and improve in all areas. However, there are times when the satisfaction of a project well done should be accepted and applauded. Remembrance Sunday is one such occasion that our family of schools do so well. The whole

school is involved, from music and maintenance departments to catering, academic and bursarial. The result is a respectful and appropriate service acted out to the highest standards that is much appreciated, not just by the school community but former pupils, parents and staff. I feel privileged to be able to attend such services at all my former schools where I have either been a pupil or a master, as well as receiving invitations from schools via my association with SATIPS — HMC, GSA and IAPS in particular. Wherever I am on that very special Sunday, I experience the same sense of community, thankfulness and loss. It continues to be such an important day in our calendars, and never more so as we remember the centenary of the ending of the Great War in 2018.

Our schools and institutions will remember this occasion in both

traditional and modern ways. I have been closely involved with the new war memorial that is to be erected at Welford Road, Leicester in memory of the fallen of the two World Wars who played for Leicester Tigers and the Barbarians. Many of the details concerning the latter will be held by our schools and if I may point you specifically to the article about this in the current edition of Prep School Magazine. My appeal is for information about your alumni who represented these clubs and I look forward to receiving the information. Some schools may still have contact details for the families concerned. It would be very rewarding to be able to pass on to them details of all that will be taking place in remembrance of their personal sacrifice.

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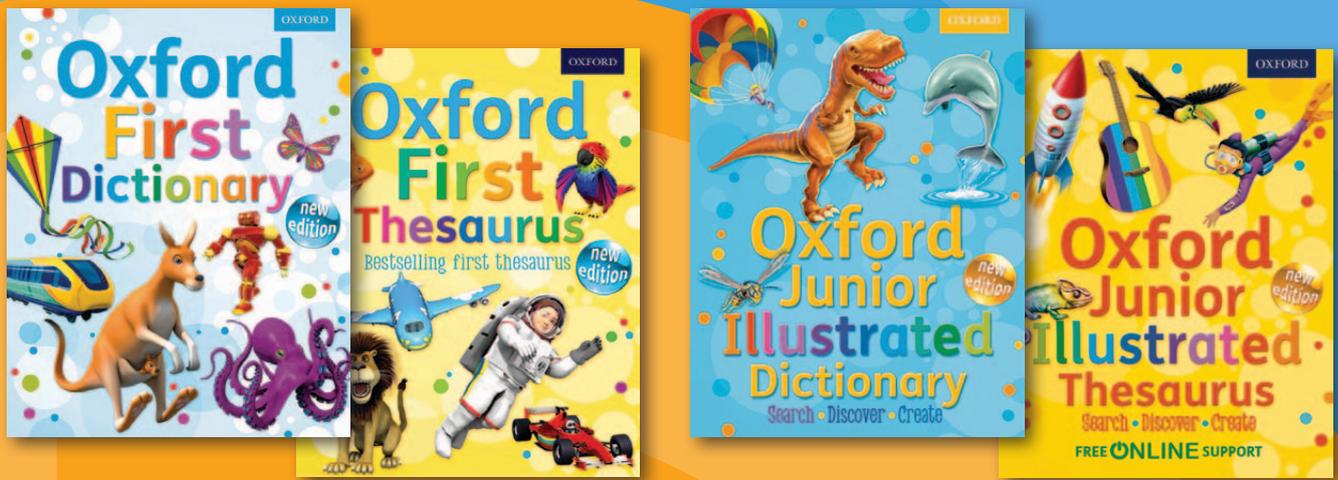
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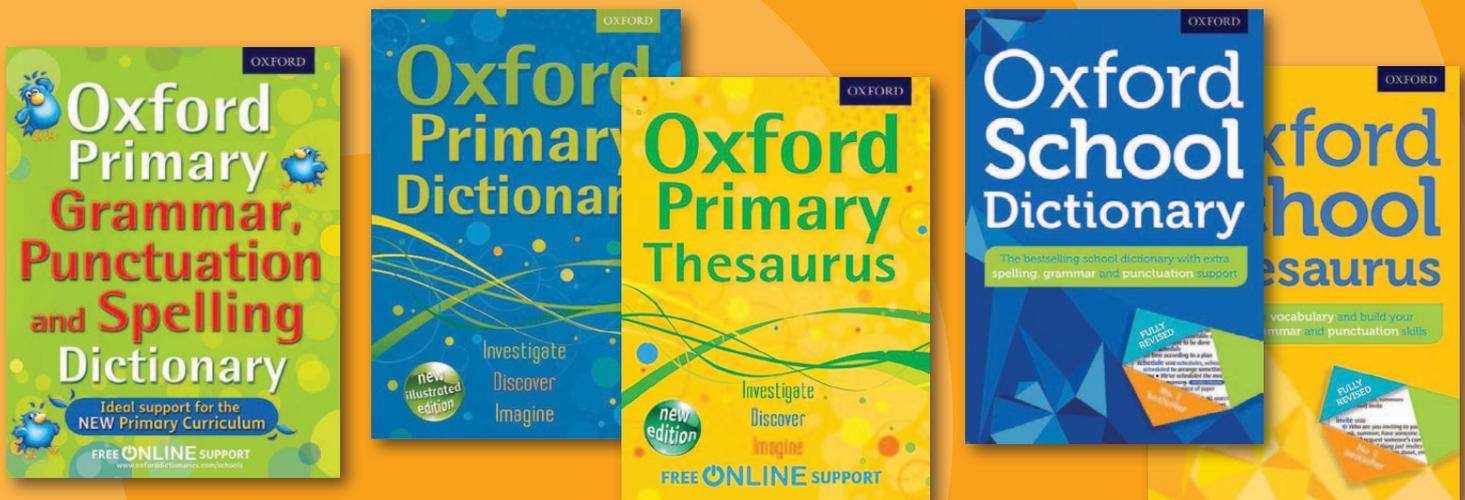
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OXFORD

(Pre)testing, (pre)testing



Dr Matthew Jenkinson, Deputy Head Academic at New College School, Oxford, discusses the shift from Common Entrance to pre-tests in prep school education

Oh dear — prep school parents have something new to worry about. Well, pre-tests aren't exactly new, but the emphasis they are now being given is a relatively recent development. As many schools have abolished Common Entrance or sidelined it as a real entrance exam (the vast, vast majority 'pass'), and senior schools have moved to get their ducks in a row earlier and earlier, pre-tests in Years 5, 6 or 7 have come more and more to the fore.

Those who work in prep schools, or who inhabit that nebulous and dubious world of extra tutoring, have witnessed this drift happening for years. If playground chatter and blood pressures, or the online cacophony of parents' forums are anything to go by then the worry that used to go into Common Entrance now goes into these pre-tests.

There is nothing inherently wrong in pre-testing if it is done honestly, humanely and rationally. Oversubscribed senior schools need to know who will be entering their school gates well in advance, and they are usually operating in competitive markets that drive them to attract the brightest and best as soon as they can. Pre-testing also brings with it many, many issues, few of them pleasant for the parties involved.

Let us first deal with pupils, as they are the most important constituency

There is nothing inherently wrong in pre-testing if it is done honestly, humanely and rationally.

here. They must not be dragged from pre-test to pre-test, school to school, in their formative years. Parents should carefully research possible senior schools and target those schools where their children will thrive. They should not target schools that they think will impress their friends (or enemies) over supper on a Saturday evening. This process is not unlike dating (though of course it is sufficiently different in key areas) in that each party is looking for a relationship that will gel. You might find your new date physically attractive, and they might tick many of the right boxes on paper but sometimes, once you actually talk to them, the relationship just doesn't work. Likewise, the school you rather like the look of might be shiny and famous, with a string of impressive exam results, but if it's not going to fit your child then it's not going to fit your child.

Of course, there is a new online 'common' pre-test that has been launched by the ISEB, partly to fill the gap that is increasingly being left with the gradual demise of Common Entrance. So long as senior schools use this properly, understand the system of shared data and agree on discrete timings of assessments, this is no bad thing. However, using it as yet another layer of selection — a pre-pre-test — is hardly healthy. Nor is it fair on prep schools to have to keep scheduling extra online pre-tests (the 'common' one has four papers and will sometimes take two afternoons) each time another Little Jenny or Jonny has been signed up for a school that uses this system. To repeat: discrete testing times when all relevant pupils can sit the pre-tests in a couple of sessions must be a priority for the future.

Our next constituency is parents. They must understand, and be made



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to understand, how each pre-test for each school works. Senior schools must be honest about this. If they treat the pre-test like a public exam and it's A* or bust, then say so. If, as is more often the case, the pre-test is but one stage in a series of judging whether a particular pupil is right for their school — brother/sister already at the school? Looking to bolster the school's extra-curricular performances? Like the cut of their jib? — then say so too. There are too many parents out there under the impression that the pre-test is like a GCSE or A level, and it causes them totally unnecessary anxiety when there are often other factors at work. This brings us on to another crucial factor, and another constituency. Prep schools, and the teachers therein, should not — and should not be

expected to — narrow the curriculum to suit the limited methods of testing in a lot of pre-tests. They should, of course, ensure that there will be no surprises in the pre-test, (Non) Verbal Reasoning shouldn't be a novelty on the day of the pre-test, the essentials of maths and English should be covered in a comprehensive way, as they should be anyway. The curriculum should not just become past paper after past paper, verbal reasoning paper after verbal reasoning paper.

Firstly, this makes prep schools — one of the last bastions of educational freedom — tedious pre-test machines. Secondly, it puts pupils off education right at a time when we should be enthusing them. Thirdly, it makes it more likely that some pupils will squeak into a senior school for

which they are temperamentally and academically unsuited, thereby being set up for years of misery at a senior level when their parents could have thought more carefully about what their child will need in the future.

Fourthly, it potentially undermines their chances of entering a school in which they would do well, because they are so mind-numbed by over-preparation that they give monosyllabic or tedious answers in the interview: 'What have you been reading in English recently?' 'Bond Verbal Reasoning Book 2.' 'What was the last book you read outside school?' 'Bond Verbal Reasoning Book 3.' 'What do you read when you are not reading Bond Verbal Reasoning books?' 'Bond Non-Verbal Reasoning books.' Most senior schools want interesting, well-educated, broadminded pupils, not machines. If they do want machines, can I suggest that you run very quickly in the opposite direction?

It is, of course, natural that parents worry about the future of their children. However, conveying that worry to those children, to the point of mental paralysis, is both pointless and damaging. They need to have faith in prep schools: the majority know what they are doing, and have done it many, many times before. Extra tutoring might make parents feel better about the whole situation, but it is often little more than a placebo. There won't be a huge discernible difference in many cases, aside from to the tutor's bank balance, as they skip off down the road, whether or not their tutee gets in to the promised school. The key is to use the crucial Year 5-7 window as a time for exploring many different types of school, and finding the one where the child will fit academically and temperamentally. That is where they will do best, in all areas, in the long run. It is not necessarily going to be at the school perched atop some spurious league table, or that is the current vogue amongst dinner-party chatterers.

New beginnings

Ben Evans, Headmaster of Edge Grove, Hertfordshire, reveals all about his new purpose-built preschool



Learning environments in education are changing beyond all recognition today and the new Edge Grove preschool facility is no exception. Gone are the traditional classrooms filled with uniform tables and chairs and in their place are new, cutting-edge learning zones. They are all inter-connected, allowing free flow around the building, independent choice of activity for children and an exciting, bright and modern environment that is both engaging and innovative.

Different muted colour shades on the walls and floors promote a calm

atmosphere with lots of natural wood and quality lighting to ensure maximum learning in the most pleasant and refreshing environment possible. Edge Grove's new preschool building also includes a Stem Zone.

This comprises a science kitchen (designed to be compatible for the height of a three year old) with sinks, fridges, induction hobs and cooking utensils, not to mention science equipment to inspire experimentation and learning.

From this area, the room leads on to a computer suite (complemented by banks of iPads) and a construction

area. Circle upholstered and illuminated nooks have been built into the wall for children to nestle into with their favourite book; a chance to rest, relax and be on their own in the midst of a busy day.

The toilets are located centrally and can be accessed independently from both downstairs zones, ensuring that children are independent but still supervised. There is also a Creative Zone; with a splash of bright red, this area is full of resources for art, craft and learning. Horseshoe shaped tables allow the teachers to work with small groups and also in collaborative



learning. A large walled area has been incorporated for the children to mark-make and draw to their hearts content. Two small trough sinks allow them to wash their brushes and paint pots, freely access water for their creative work and encourage greater independence.

Physical Zone — we have also included a large room upstairs with a 75-inch interactive screen, musical instruments, role-play areas and lots of space for music and movement; an area for physical development as well as creative play. A ceiling-mounted projector will illuminate the floor with different colours and shapes to enhance the zone and sensory experience further.

Outdoor play and learning environments are crucial too so the outside has been carefully planned and developed to complement the indoor zones and further enhance the children's learning, creativity and independence. A mud pie kitchen, den building area, huge sand pit, covered stage and seating, climbing frames and balance beams together with a huge road fully marked with traffic lights and a garage and petrol station, meaning there will never be a dull moment.

Carefully placed storage again means children can play independently and

learn to choose, work collaboratively, share and be creative risk-takers in a safe and welcoming environment. A further large grass area is perfect for team games and skill acquisition, as well as letting off lots of steam.

Forest School is also taught in the new preschool so the outdoor play and learning environments have been carefully planned and developed to complement the indoor zones and further enhance the children's learning, creativity and independence. All of these aspects will ensure the best possible start to an early years education for its youngest pupils.

Plans for the new lower school will also be a cutting-edge building, designed to allow for our innovative, creative teaching and learning (Years 3 and 4), as well as complement the grade 2 listed Georgian house and green belt setting. Benefiting from the latest building methods, a curved roof will house the central hall, as well as provide a welcome porch, giving height and space to the building. Six large classrooms will all come off the hall, grouped in year groups with shared resource areas to allow for collaborative planning and teaching.

The multi-use hall will be used for drama, assemblies and productions and also incorporate learning pods and library areas, making the best

use of the space. These areas will be used for small group teaching and learning, intervention work, individual study and break out areas, ensuring the whole building is used to its maximum potential with learning happening everywhere.

The classrooms will be fitted with learning walls and large interactive screens encouraging independence and collaborative learning. Each will have access to outside, wellington boot and coat storage to rationalise pupil flow and allow greater freedom for teachers who will make the best use of the 28 acres, Forest School areas and other outdoor learning environments surrounding the school.

Housing 40 children aged between three and four years, the preschool also offers a breakfast club from 8am and after-school activities until 6pm including dance, arts and crafts, tots tennis and multi-sports. Specialist teachers, from the nearby main Edge Grove school site, teach music and French each week.

Edge Grove School is a successful, vibrant day and boarding school for boys and girls aged 3-13 years, situated in 28 acres of glorious parkland in Hertfordshire. www.edgegrove.com

Should we care about endangered crafts?

Patricia Lovett MBE, retiring Chief Judge of the SATIPS National Handwriting competition, gives us a fascinating insight into both the endangered arts and a first-hand description of being involved in one of television's most popular programmes



© Robin Wood MBE: Jojo Woods, the only apprentice clog maker in the UK. Jojo is learning with master clog maker Jeremy Atkinson who still makes clogs using the traditional long knives to carve bespoke soles in wood. British clogs have a wood base and a leather upper, attached using brass pins.

For over 100 years, the UK has led the world in the manner in which we look after our rich heritage of historical buildings, our wonderful landscapes and our countryside. However, we are very much lagging behind most countries in our lack of support for the heritage that you cannot see, the intangible heritage, which includes the craft skills and knowledge that belong in the heads and hands of our heritage craftspeople, those who make the objects that go into those buildings.

If, for example, a unique, one-of-a-kind historical building was about to be demolished for a supermarket or a meadow, which contains the only species of wild orchid, was to be made into a car park, people would be up in arms and it would be likely to make the national news. However, in the last ten years we have lost four heritage crafts and the first most people have heard about this was when the Heritage Crafts Association (HCA) published the HCA/Radcliffe Red List of Endangered Crafts (<http://heritagecrafts.org.uk/redlist/>) in May this year — and it certainly didn't make the national news!

In their research, the HCA contacted almost 170 different traditional crafts and placed them in one of four categories: Extinct (4 crafts that we know of), Critically Endangered (17 crafts), Endangered (45 crafts) and Currently Viable (93 crafts), with the rest being data deficient.

The reasons for crafts being critically endangered are varied and, sadly, there is no easy 'silver bullet' solution. In some cases the market has been flooded with cheap imports; in others the actual tools needed in the craft are not made any more; in some the raw materials are unavailable for reasons such as diseases in the wood being used. In other crafts, it is the ageing workforce — within some the youngest person is in their sixties. For most it is the challenges of passing the skills on.



© Phill Gregson: Joe Fredricks, apprentice wheel-wright, with his apprentice-piece of a covered wagon. The HCA managed to support Joe by finding funding for him to buy his own tools.



© Patricia Lovett MBE: Patricia Lovett MBE being interviewed by Tom Heap on BBC's *Countryfile* on 10th September 2017.

Those of us in education are all aware that funding follows qualification and not training. For many heritage crafts, herein lies a real problem as qualifications agencies are not offering subjects for fewer than 100 entrants per year. For heritage crafts, the number of entrants will often not reach even ten a year. This affects some heritage crafts that may not be obvious. The British Society of Scientific Glassblowers face this challenge, for example, as there are too few entrants to offer qualifications. This will seriously affect the future production of the complicated, specialised scientific equipment needed by the UK's scientists. Another challenge is that almost 80% of those in heritage craft are self-employed, 100% of the costs of a trainee have to be borne by the maker, and this is in an industry where the profit margin is usually very low in any case.

When BBC *Countryfile's* presenter Tom Heap interviewed me in September, there were certain points I was trying to make. It was rather a nerve-wracking experience as, similar to most people, I have had no

Those of us in education are all aware that funding follows qualification and not training.

media training and had no idea what questions would be asked. Sadly the more complicated reasons for the challenges in traditional crafts, and the reasons for supporting heritage skills were lost on the cutting room floor. It wasn't possible either to stress that the Heritage Crafts Association is not backward in its approach, but merely wanting to safeguard the craft skills such that future generations can not only have the opportunity to buy handmade quality craft products, but also for some to actually learn those craft skills and create their own craft items.

So does it matter that we have already lost four crafts in this century and others, with just one or two practitioners still carrying out the craft, could easily follow? Surely all this stuff can be made much more

cheaply in the Far East? Indeed it could, but those very people in the Far East and all over the world are coming here to experience our rich heritage, and what they buy often involves heritage crafts albeit for some at a luxury level. Post-Brexit, one of the aspects that, as a country, we need to emphasise, is what makes us unique; part of that is the historical craft basis that we have as a country. In exactly the same way that we all lose when one of our historical buildings or part of our beautiful countryside is destroyed, our lives and experiences also become poorer when part of our intangible, cultural heritage is lost.

Become a member and support the future of heritage crafts at www.heritagecrafts.org.uk
Find out more about Patricia Lovett MBE at www.patricialovett.com

Conquering the beast

James Hanson, the Headmaster of Aldro School, Surrey, discusses the mental health crisis and what we can do as teachers, parents and friends to help

'I can't do it, I just can't do it any more', shouted a very frustrated and angry nine year old during the middle of a Year 5 English exam, before dissolving in tears. The hours of subsequent meetings between pastoral care team members, relating to one child, added up hugely. On top of that came the hours invested in the child by the form tutor, the head of learning support and the school counsellor. Finally, came the time spent with parents by not only the head of learning support but the head as well. One issue, one blow-out, one very anxious young child, yet countless hours spent unpicking the reasons behind it.

It is our job, as schools, to be proactive when it comes to health and, especially, the mental health of our young charges, but there will be times when we will have to be reactionary. Was this one of those situations where we could, or should, have foreseen this happening? Sadly, it is a situation we see happening more and more, and our antennae had been raised in expectation of such fall-outs. In many of these cases, we find ourselves alerted to a potential problem when we observe them distracting others during lessons more than normal, having a strop when they only scored 12 out of 15 on a spelling test, or dissolving when faced with a minor discipline offence at the thought of that note going home.

Whether we see the signs beforehand



or not, we must be ready to deploy the mental health safety net. One of our key plans this year has been to pilot the use of pastoral tracking software — using the 'Affective Social tracking system' from Steer — to complement our data from tutors, parents and children. Our joint aim is to add to our understanding of what is really going on with our young charges, and equip our teaching staff and tutors to be pro-active, targeted and evidenced in their care.

This mental health crisis, is this just a recent phenomenon? Are these children now under much more strain than we were years, decades or even a generation ago? I ask, how many of us have witnessed cases of mental illness while we grew up at school or university? Did we feel it ourselves, or just decide to get on with it because

that is what everyone did? Exams may have made us nervous, under pressure or the like, but nobody I knew really talked about that one who suddenly disappeared or dropped out of the course because they couldn't hack the exams. Were there really few cases, or was it a taboo subject that nobody talked about, and even fewer people knew how to address it?

I vividly remember breaking down after one particularly difficult finals exam when the pressure-cork needed to come out. I was only halfway through that set of exams, but the outpouring of emotion did me a lot of good and helped me finish well. When I mentioned this to a peer going through the same set of exams, it was met with laughter and derision, as if I wasn't mentally strong enough to deserve success.

I ask, how many of us have witnessed cases of mental illness while we grew up at school or university?

I look at my news feed on social media with much interest in the past weeks because the cultural shift over the past decade has meant so many people I know now feel empowered to share openly about their difficult journey, their mental illness, and the growing needs of those around them. Those who work directly with mind networks and charities, devoted to supporting those at their lowest ebb, are ready to engage and make it easy to do so, even if the journey onwards is far from easy.

Within our schools, it is gratifying to see the numbers who are embracing mental health training for staff; we took the whole of our staff team through this 18 months ago. It is vital to do it, but we hadn't reckoned on how many issues this brought to the fore or surface for staff from their own lives, and that of their immediate families. So now we have a designated counsellor for the staff on our team, as well as our pastoral team for the children. As schools, we are now more adept at spotting the warning signs before a breakdown, and many schools have in place a great pastoral team of counsellors, learning mentors, and trained peer mentors who can get to work long before such an episode happens, as well as after worries surface.

When we look for causes and solutions, what worries me most about the mental health of our children — even more so than bullying — is anxiety and pressure due to examinations and meeting family expectations. It isn't always the initial fuel on the fire; social media can further exacerbate many of these anxieties. Equally, even though

statistics suggest bullying in schools is not on the increase either, we must be very aware of the relationships between children, both physically and digitally. My other major concern is that most young children have to process their feelings, let alone understand or articulate them to a willing supporter; this is often what makes dealing with anxiety so difficult for young children. We have an epidemic of mental illness amongst the young people in our country today, and you only have to look at the statistics on the major causes of deaths in males aged 16-40 to see suicides as the leading cause; a chilling reminder to us all.

At schools, we all have those tiger parents who push for their child to go on to top senior schools and universities, and those who protest that they just want their child to be happy, that their well-being matters more than grades. Not all parents fall neatly into either camp. As we parents all want the best for our children, there is likely to be some tiger-like behaviour in all of us. Similarly, as schools, we have a direct investment in these children to help them achieve their full potential, develop personally and to gain entry to the best-fit schools or universities. We also have a generation of children who are even more aware of how much their parents have spent on their education, and the parental expectations that they hold on to are often the words we say in anger, frustration or impatience. All of this adds up to a heavy hand of pressure on children.

For prep schools, the major cause of anxiety by far is this beast known as 'pre-testing' for entry to senior

schools. Why? Because of the expectation placed on them to succeed and reach the gold standard senior school often by relentless pushing through tutoring after school and demands for additional prepping towards the tests. I, like so many prep school heads, have been horrified over the past couple of years by the pace of change to pre-testing for 13+ entry and the race to the bottom for senior schools in conducting their assessment phase earlier and earlier in Year 6 just to cherry-pick the best students. Many of our children are barely ten years old as they start this pressured year, and the anxieties from all of us weigh incredibly heavily on them. What is our response? I am hopeful that all schools are doing their best to manage the children through it, and help parents understand that they, all too often, pour fuel onto this fire. Burying heads in the sand is not an option.

As teachers, we all want children to love school, embrace learning, and be free from the pressures from over-assessment. It is clear to me that their young bodies and minds are definitely not ready to undertake this level of anxiety from such assessments. What adolescence prepares children for in terms of challenge at 16 or 18 doesn't mean we should expect children to take on the same challenge at 10 or 11. Surely, we owe our young children an educational path through childhood where we don't rush their growing up, don't pepper all of it from age ten with relentless pressure, and allow mental health to come first.

To find out more about Aldro School in Shackleford, Surrey, visit: www.aldro.org.uk



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National Handwriting Competition

Paul Jackson introduces the 2018 National Handwriting Competition, which features two poems from Tony Mitton, a prolific writer and children's poet

The ever-popular National Handwriting Competition has been organised by SATIPS for many years and is one of the flagship events in the prep and primary schools' calendar. Nearly 11,000 entries were received last year in the different age categories, which also includes — quite rightly — a class for teachers to enter. The competition provides a wonderful opportunity for so many pupils up to the age of 13 to concentrate on their handwriting, which is still a vital skill as we all know. Full details for the

2018 competition can be found on handwritingcompetition.co.uk/take-part and includes the poems assigned to each age category that are to be copied out.

One of the very necessary jobs behind the scenes is to ask the authors of each poem that is chosen for their permission. We are incredibly fortunate to have received so much support from fantastic poets over the years, and this year has been no exception. Roger McGough, Michael Rosen, Tony Mitton and Brian

Moses have all given their blessing and we are very grateful to them. Tony Mitton's reply to my request is particularly poignant and, again, with his permission, I have included it for you to read. Similarly, Brian Moses has provided us with an excellent insight into the poet's world and his article follows.

We look forward to receiving entries from schools all over the country, and the world since a school in the USA has just contacted us. Excellent news.

Now, where is my pen?

Dear Paul,

Thank you for your email. It's lovely to have 'My Hat' chosen as the text for the next handwriting competition. I used to teach handwriting myself, quite zealously, as a primary teacher back in the '70s and '80s. So it's nice to think that many little hands and minds will be focusing on those carefully wrought words (theirs and mine).

Please go ahead with my approval. The main acknowledgement is just to me, Tony Mitton, as poet/author. The original source of the poem in published form is *Plum* (pub Scholastic 1998, illus. Peter Bailey). Since then *Plum* has come to be published by Frances Lincoln instead and 'Plum', the poem itself, has been numerous and variously featured in anthologies, etc.

Lovely to hear that your grandson has enjoyed *Diggers*; there are now 13 further titles in that series, but don't feel oppressed.

At the other end of the scale I have a novel coming out with David Fickling Books, Oxford, on the 2nd of November: *Potter's Boy*, which is set in imaginary China/Japan in the middle ages. Lots of mindfulness in that, I should mention, as I note you recently co-organised a conference on Mindfulness in Education, something I am very interested in, and a practitioner of, myself.

I hope the handwriting goes well and that the young scribes enjoy reading and saying 'My Hat'.

Very best wishes,

Tony Mitton.

Where do you get your ideas?

Brian Moses, professional children's poet and author whose poetry features in this year's National Handwriting Competition, gives us a chance to peek into the world of being a poet

'Where do you get your ideas from?' is the question I'm most asked when I visit schools. Occasionally a curve ball comes in, such as 'have you ever been arrested?' from a six year old in Southend, or 'have you ever used a Ouija board?' from another. More often than not it's the way ideas are born that fascinates children. They look at me as if I have a secret to impart, and that if they could share it they'd never struggle to find ideas for their own writing again. I toy with the notion of telling them that I purchase my ideas from an ideas supermarket or discover them in some online catalogue, but mostly I try to satisfy their curiosity.

I tell them that all writers are ideas detectives, we're always on the look out for something strange or different that might lead to a poem. There are, of course, very few new ideas, but there is always the possibility of taking an old idea and looking at it from a different angle. For example, think of fireworks and avoid whizz, bang and whooshes. Write instead about the charred and blackened treasures pulled from the bonfire ashes next morning.

An idea is like a knock on the door. Ignore the knocking and whomever it is gives up and goes away. So with poetry, when an idea calls, I need to be ready to act on it. Whatever I'm doing, wherever I am, I need to capture that idea, to scribble it down on a scrap of paper, file it away in a notebook

or talk it into a voice recorder. My family became used to me suddenly getting up from where we were sitting to hastily find something to scribble on. Quite often too, they fed me ideas, and it still goes on. My older daughter's partner is training to be a stuntman and on a family holiday this year he told us that he still hasn't fallen from the saddle of a horse. I was onto that straightaway: still haven't found a rainbow's pot of gold, still haven't discovered a cure for growing old, still haven't painted a new Mona Lisa, still haven't straightened the Leaning Tower of Pisa.

Often it is the things people say that get me thinking. I was in a school staff room once where I discovered that six teachers were all telling each other what they wore in bed. It was an absolute gift and I made notes as they spoke, which later developed into my poem 'What Teachers Wear in Bed'. Another time I heard a young boy ask his mum 'did pirates wear make up?' and I ended up with a poem all about a topsy-turvy world of pirates.

Perhaps the poem I'm most associated with, and the one that seems to be the most listened to poem on the Poetry Archive for much of the time, is 'Walking With My Iguana'. This is a performance poem involving drumming, which seems to inspire children to perform their own versions — take a look on YouTube. The idea behind this came from a meeting with a man and an iguana on

a very hot day on Bexhill beach. The creature was called Ziggy and only came out for a stroll during summer heat waves. I love finding out about things that sound as if they shouldn't be true, but actually are. I wrote the poem very quickly and premiered it a few weeks later at the Edinburgh Festival.

Signs that I see in the street or glimpse by the roadside as I'm driving are often a source of inspiration. In Nottingham once, a department store were holding a 'Monster Sale'. Well, obviously that meant there was to be a huge clear out of unwanted stock but looking at it another way, it might just have easily have been 'buy one monster, get one free'. A poem and a book resulted from that.

On another occasion I saw a sign for a 'Carpet Warehouse'. Not a terribly interesting subject for children but split 'carpet' into two and it becomes something quite different — 'car pet'. What could we find in a 'Car Pet Warehouse' instead? Perhaps it could be earwigs to keep in ashtrays, a hamster for the glove compartment or a snake on the backseat to deter car thieves. The possibilities are huge.

In any book that I write there are poems that I hope will make children smile or laugh, but poetry touches every emotion and I always make sure that in my books there are poems to make children shiver, or think, or wonder, or maybe feel a little sad at



times. I always include a selection of these in any performance I give, along with the humorous ones.

Friends ask how I keep coming up with fresh ideas. Surely, they say, you'll run out of ideas one day? But it's what I've done all my life; as a teacher for 13 years, in the days when you opened them up rather than closed them down, and then as a professional writer for the past 30 years. I've searched out ideas, both for my own writing and ideas to inspire children in the writing workshops I run on my school visits. A cat called Elvis moved in next door, Laika, the space dog, troubled me till I finally found the right words and the right mood, turtles in captivity, a white feather (from an angel?), stars, unicorns, snakes. Recently too, I've written to order, writing 30 poems in six months about space, sport, war, scary stuff, pre-1066 history and, most recently,

dogs. That's a real challenge, the final poems often wrung out of me in pure desperation as the deadlines loomed.

There's another question I'm asked by children, who see themselves as writers of the future. 'What advice would you give to anyone who wants to write?' I reply that, first of all, if you want to write, then write. Don't talk about it, do it. So many people talk about writing a book one day but never do. Secondly, keep a writer's notebook. Write down what you see, hear, jokes people tell you, thoughts about strange situations and odd signs. It will, as time goes on, become a treasure chest of ideas to refer to again and again. I have notebooks going back many years and they still prove useful. Finally, train yourself to be an observer. Look, listen, and note it down. Be receptive to anything and interested in everything. Spot possibilities. Be the ideas detective.

Brian Moses has been a professional children's poet since 1988. To date he has over 200 books published including volumes of his own poetry. Brian also runs writing workshops and performs his own poetry and percussion shows.

A new poetry book *The Waggiest Tails - Poems by Dogs* (written with Roger Stevens) will be published in February 2018 and his first children's fiction book *Python* has just been published. Brian's website is www.brianmoses.co.uk, he blogs at brianmoses.blogspot.com and you can follow him on twitter @moses_brian.

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Parenting the young sports star

Neil Rollings, with 30 years of experience as the Director of Sports in prep and senior schools, and the Director of Independent Coach Education, discusses early developers in physical education

Size and speed are the enemies of pre-maturation sport. They give the early developers an undue advantage, and they unbalance the game. Anyone who has ever coached or refereed these games dreads the arrival of the man-child: the boy who scores five tries every game, or the girl who scores the same number of goals. Other parents look on enviously, as their own children play a bit part (at best). The show is dominated by the dramatic effectiveness of the 'early maturer', whose parents are kings of the touchline.

It is, however, the parents of the dominant player who have the most difficult task. In the face of lavish praise for the child's sporting 'talent', often accompanied by considerable attention from the pillaging parties of senior schools, it is easy to overlook the science.

Research clearly identifies that those born early in the school year have considerable initial advantage. If they have early success, and parents who play with them in the garden, the advantages compound. They command all the game time, are given dominant roles by coaches keen for victory and enjoy all the adulation that a school can offer. Science is equally clear that these advantages can easily disappear when the maturation lottery evens itself out.

Prodigious sporting success at prep school does not predict the same for adolescents.

How is the success of a young sports star measured? Is it the outrageous number of goals she scores at Under 11? Is it the international recognition at Under 18? Is it a career in professional sport? Or, is it a lifetime of enjoyment of the game? Each of these would demand a different approach.

There is a significant difference in the skill sets of a great player and a dominant one. The latter rarely pass and, consequently, score often. However, there is a point in the evolution of a young sportsman in which distribution becomes the primary skill, and where persistence becomes the quality that predicts success. If early maturers have been allowed to dominate every game — scoring record numbers of goals, tries and runs — they find themselves as adolescents without the tools to progress.

It is essential that early maturers develop two things: the first is a technical skill set high on distribution and creativity. The second are the psychological skills of emotional intelligence. At the heart of teamship there is determination, empathy and selflessness. If the star players never experience difficulty, are never substituted and are celebrated for dominating the game to an absurd extent, they will have no capacity to cope when these advantages have been evened out. If these players are efficiently used to win the game, it will often be at the expense of their development.

Players must develop their sport, but also be developed through sport. Without the drive to improve, defined by Ellen Winner as 'the rage to master', success soon dries up, and the relative age effect dilutes in the teenage years. If early achievers are allowed to believe in talent, and their dominance of it, they will soon lose motivation when the goals are

Children need intrinsic motivation to become the best that they can be.

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suddenly harder to come by. If they enjoy the process of getting better, and working towards this ambition, they have a chance of surviving the speed ramp of slowing progress. Parents cannot be seduced by the intoxicating idea that prep school success predicts anything beyond maturation. The only place where success comes before work is in the dictionary.

The parents of the man-child have a difficult task. They must find an environment that values development, provides ways for their child to fail, and rewards effort and improvement ahead of performance. They need to work closely with school (and the club) to ensure that the messages are the right ones, and are consistent. The child must be constantly challenged — physically and psychologically — and encouraged to see endeavour and application as more valuable than victory. She must experience disappointment, whilst constantly

seeking to improve skills, even when the competitive environment does not always demand them.

When the senior schools come with their well-polished seduction techniques for their sports scholarships, there is a key question: ask not what the child can do for the school, but what the school can do for the child. The programme of experiences that the scholarship involves, and the school's philosophies for dealing with early success, are critical for the medium term. Many of these programmes are little more than sordid fee discounting aimed at securing the match winning services of the prep school stars. Promising performers need to be in the right environment.

Children need intrinsic motivation to become the best that they can be. Not satisfied by being defined relative to the limitations of the opposition, they must be armed with the technical

skills, and attitudes, to enable them to achieve this.

Parents, teachers and children ride the wave of early success, the adulation that comes with game-dominating performance; but, the wave always crashes. That might be a disaster, or it might not be. It all depends on the environment where the early achievement occurs: its values, messages and its philosophy. Children don't choose that environment — adults select it for them. It's a big responsibility.

Neil Rollings is Chairman of the Professional Association of Directors of Sport in Independent Schools (www.padsis.com), and Managing Director of Independent Coach Education, the country's leading provider of training, recruitment and advisory services to schools, in sport (www.independentcoacheducation.co.uk)

Top tips on easing pupils into school

Homesickness is a complex affliction that affects all ages and certainly not just children at boarding school. We are grateful to the Ampleforth matrons, *Jane* and *Kate*, for their ideas, which can serve as a template in so many situations

Calling in a solicitor and a former Royal Navy officer might seem an extreme measure for settling pupils in, but these Matrons of Ampleforth College have unusual CVs. As part of Ampleforth's excellent pastoral care team who help to dispel homesickness, Jane Reynard and Kate Durée, Matrons at Ampleforth College, have helped numerous pupils settle into school.

Jane, a Matron at St Aidan's House, one of three houses for girls at the college, started her career many years ago as a solicitor before having her family and then going on to join the admissions department, and later the headmaster's department. She is a mother of two and lives near to the college with her family.

Kate is the Matron at St Thomas' House, one of the seven houses for boys at the college. Early in her career, she had a Short Service Commission in the Royal Navy and then spent a few years in London as a senior executive research associate before taking time out to have a family. She draws from her professional experience, as much as her experience as a mother of three, to provide support for the students in her care.

Here, they share their top tips on helping students to settle back into school after time at home:

Be positive. The first few days away from home can be hard on both

parents and children, but we advise parents to focus on encouraging their children to embrace the challenges that lie ahead at school. We emphasise the exciting journey the students are beginning and encourage parents to allow students time to settle in, catch up with friends, form new ones and to find their feet again. We encourage the students to telephone home only if they want to. We ask parents to bear in mind that the students will be very busy from the start so may not call.

Be welcoming. We endeavour to make the boarding houses as much a home-from-home as possible, but inevitably there are differences due to the academic, cultural and sporting demands placed on the students as well as the challenge of learning to live as part of a community in the boarding houses. Each house provides a home for students aged from 13 to 18 so that new students feel welcomed into a family-like environment. This structure allows the older students





Matrons at the College (left to right: Kate Durée, Jane Reynard, Kath Codrington, Anne Edwards and Annie Richardson).

to help in taking care of the younger students in the same way an elder sibling would. The level of care shown by older students to younger pupils is actually one of the most endearing aspects of the new term. The students are generous with their time, not only involving new students in their conversations but also introducing them to others and showing them around the college.

There is also a wider support network for new and returning students, comprising the boarding house team, namely the housemaster or mistress, their assistant, the matron and the house tutors — all of whom are available when needed. The boarding house team is always vigilant about helping pupils settle in and continuously watching out for homesickness.

Be organised. The matron will help to organise the new students' belongings in their rooms, while making sure that they are ready for lessons, sports etc. This organisation and routine provides a structure to the day and enables pupils to plan their extra-curricular activities and free time.

Be busy. At Ampleforth, we have a detailed and very busy induction programme for students compiled

by the deputy head of boarding. This sets out the timetable from breakfast to bedtime for the first week and includes events in the boarding houses and the school for all year groups. In particular, students spend the first full day of a new term, of a new academic year, in their home clothes. Each year group has a bespoke itinerary for the day. For example, Year 9, all of whom will be new to Ampleforth, spend the day with their tutors who accompany their respective Year 9 tutor group to various induction events and on a quiz, which takes these students around the college so that they become familiar with the campus. This provides an opportunity at the very start for the Year 9 students to meet other students in their year. Friendships across the houses are further developed at the Year 9 retreat, which takes place on the last day before the first exeat in September.

The first weekend after term starts back is always pupils only, and we encourage students to engage in as many of Ampleforth's activities as possible, to help them get to know one another. For example, on this weekend, all Year 9 students will have supper with their housemaster or housemistress in their boarding houses on Saturday evening and on

Sunday afternoon all students take part in the Raft Race at the college lakes. After the first weekend, we encourage parents to come to school over the weekend so they can get to know their children's friends and support any events or sports fixtures in person.

Be ready. It is common to feel homesick, particularly in the first few days and weeks of term. Many of the children experience this, but we are always available to provide support and guidance during this time and need to be ready for the unexpected — whether it's offering relationship advice or instructions on how to do the laundry, we are always on hand to help.

Jane says: 'At Ampleforth, we place the highest importance on pupils' well-being and feel it's really important for them to feel at home here. Whether it's a chat about what's on their mind, or having tactful conversations around everyday issues, we try to make them feel as comfortable as possible as they settle into their new term-time home.'

Kate says: 'The start of the new term can be a little overwhelming for some children, but after the first few days it's lovely to see pupils starting to develop friendships and ease back into their routines at the college.'

Thinking outside the box

Hilary Phillips, Headmistress of Monmouth School Girls' Prep, discusses overhauling the curriculum at her school and taking a new, refreshing approach

We had just had a great open morning, lots of prospective parents, plenty of current pupils in school to help out and show their pride in their school, and great feedback too. It was one of those occasions where, as a head, you feel immense contentment in your school and are reminded why you do the job. However, the bubble was quickly burst. A parent, who was collecting their child at the end of the morning, looked up at our quirky 'room in a box' display and remarked: 'Oh look, room in a box again. I must dig out Amelia's and send it in with Izzy. That'll save some time.' Izzy is 8 and Amelia is 16. I could see, stretching back into the mists of time, a never-ending set of rooms in a box, dusty, empty, neglected, sad, a tradition set in stone.

Don't get me wrong; a room in a box is a lovely thing and provides many learning opportunities for children. The children enjoy making them and learn valuable skills, particularly if the child actually makes it rather than it being a parent. They make an excellent display, not to mention providing a use for surplus shoe boxes. When I broached the subject with staff, they rallied to the defence of the room in a box. 'The children look forward to making them, they love to think they will be doing that next year, it's exciting!' I found it hard to disagree but wondered how an activity rolled out for ten years in a row could be the best use of a pupil's

time in today's fast changing world. It was a tradition, yes, but for the right reasons?

I'm not saying let's throw out traditions. I look forward to a Christmas tree, an Easter egg hunt and doing something ridiculous for Children in Need as much as the next person. However, I think the idea of tradition can be misunderstood. Rather than encouraging us to cling to the past, tradition should make us look back, evaluate, consider and then develop what we do. Tradition is about remembering and using those memories to inform our thinking, questioning and growing. As schools, we want to help our pupils to be creative, to show initiative, to develop their own questions and answers, so shouldn't we be providing pupils with fresh opportunities and encouraging them to find their own solutions? Employers need people who can think on their feet, respond rapidly to change, empathise, come up with new solutions, fail and try again. Repeating an activity cuts off a certain amount of creativity. A few individuals will come up with something new and original but many of us will unconsciously be guided by the examples we have seen before. However, make it something completely new and we open up the boundaries from the start.

What did this mean for staff here at Monmouth School Girls' Prep then? Change can be a painful process and

muttered 'we're throwing the baby out with the bath water' was bandied about. Staff meetings were tense as teachers waited for the discussion about schemes of work to start. They knew they were already doing a good job and were initially resistant to a half-baked idea delivered with no firm plan behind it. We turned to our Pre Prep for help. They had recently turned their curriculum on its head and were delivering a new four-year rotational plan. I loved the idea of this, mainly because I knew when we got round to year one of the plan again, staff would be keen to make changes and nothing would ever be the same. I'm a teacher and I know that you might teach the same lesson, but you are never happy with doing it in the same way. The headmistress of Monmouth School Pre Prep and Nursery, Jennie Phillips, came to talk to staff and explained the vision and how they were fulfilling it down the road. We are very lucky here in Monmouth to have five heads working for the same schools' group. Support and critique are readily available from people in the same situation. Jennie emphasized that the curriculum was an evolving process, that staff were trusted to know what pupils needed, to talk to each other, to see the need for evaluation and to work out ways to do this effectively. Schemes of work didn't need to be written for the full four years (phew!), but an overview needed to be drawn up.

This is when the fun began to start. We decided to piggyback on the Pre Prep by choosing an idea for each term. We didn't call this a topic, but considered it rather to be an idea that could link subjects and year groups throughout the school. This would help with cohesion but not restrict teachers. We decided to have a pattern to these themes, each year a scientific (Alchemy, A Load of Rubbish), an historical (Gods and Mortals, Revolution) and a geographical theme (What Lies Beneath, Extremes) encourages links between subject areas. Each year group chooses a key question to direct their thinking. A skills framework was drawn up, although it is constantly evolving and criteria for assessment were considered. Staff naturally found themselves thinking how they could

start the term to capture the pupils' imagination, and how they could finish together to bring the theme to a close. This term's theme has been 'Inspiration 125', and so Year 3 have looked at a child's life over the past 125 years when the school first began. Meanwhile, Year 6 considered the changing roles of women over the same period. We will come together in a celebration at the end of term based on how Christmas may have been celebrated 125 years ago. A skate on our ice rink erected on the playground for one night only, under lanterns with snow falling, anyone? Victorian special here we come.

Our curriculum upheaval is in its infancy but it has taken hold and teachers are enthused. They have planned trips to places we have never been, the children are using

our site to its full advantage, taking their learning where it can be done best. We have kept the skeletons of the maths and literacy programmes, but refreshed them with the new ideas and there is a palpable sense of excitement amongst girls and staff. The girls don't know what's coming, at least not until they have had input into their term's work and the staff probably don't know either!

They tell us the robots are coming to take over our jobs. Well yes, they probably will take the jobs of our current and future pupils if all we do is teach them to routinely calculate or think. If we make sure they can invent, judge, communicate and be socially at ease then they will be the ones creating the machines.

Perhaps we need to move on to turn our means of assessment on its head?



2018: a significant year for remembrance

Paul Jackson requests information from school archivists and alumni associations regarding former Barbarian Rugby players who lost their lives in the two World Wars

As an historian, I always begin my introduction to the teaching of the World Wars by discussing the most tangible objects that exist in our landscapes, namely our war memorials. As we know, hardly a family, village or town was left unscathed by the human tragedy, and our memorials appear in many traditional forms. On a personal level, I try to visit the stone obelisk at Gumley in Leicestershire from time to time. It is to be found in a beautiful and evocative location, next to the pavilion overlooking both the cricket ground and the regular trail of the local hunt. My late great uncle's name is etched on one side with a small number of other local men. These were the lucky ones; they came home and probably, very much like Uncle Sam, kept their medals in a rusty tobacco tin in the old shed at the end of the garden. On the other side of the monument are the names of his brothers, uncles, cousins and friends who didn't survive. S H Jackson of the Leicestershire Yeomanry never spoke about his experiences in the trenches. I had to contact the military records department at The National Archives in Kew to find out that he was awarded the military medal for storming a machine gun post.

The memorials are so important to

us and — as we reach the centenary years of the First World War and approach the 80th of the second — new ways of 'paying our respects' appear. Sir Anthony Seldon has recently developed the Via Sacra walk in France whilst many of you will have visited the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire.

However, for those involved with the game of rugby, a large and strikingly beautiful memorial sculpture is to be raised at Welford Road, dedicated to the fallen who represented two of the world's most iconic clubs, Leicester Tigers and the Barbarian Rugby Club, better known, of course, as the Baa Baas. Leicester Tigers are inextricably linked with the Royal Leicestershire regiment (the Tigers) from whom they get their name. 46 members of the regiment played for the Tigers and lost their lives. The Tigers are also linked to the world-famous Barbarians — who recently celebrated their 125th anniversary — due to the traditional Boxing Day fixture that was held between the clubs for many years.

The monument, designed by Harvey Gardiner and created in conjunction with artist Steve Winterburn, will feature two magnificent giant bronze tigers set onto an Art Deco Corten Steel base, standing some 36 feet high and will act as a gateway arch to

the ground. The names of the fallen will appear on it including the 100 Barbarians who lost their lives in the conflicts.

The lives of some of these men are well documented. Lieutenant-Colonel Edgar Mobbs who represented Northampton, England and the Barbarians, died at Passchendaele on the 31st of July 1917. The Mobbs memorial game between the Barbarians and the East Midlands was an important match on the rugby calendar and a statue of this outstanding player and soldier, who formed his own Battalion in the First World War, is to be found in the centre of Northampton.

The All Blacks celebrated their 125th Anniversary in 2017 and played the Barbarians in that memorable game last November at Twickenham. GD Cobden was one player who was specially remembered at the match in terms of the new memorial. He played for the All Blacks (for 25 minutes before being stretchered off) prior to the start of the Second World War. He then came to Britain, joined the RAF and flew as a Spitfire pilot before being shot down and killed in The Battle of Britain. Both men are, of course, held in high regard at their schools. Mobbs attended Bedford Modern whilst Cobden was an old

boy of Christchurch Boys' High, New Zealand.

Details of the others on the list to be found are less detailed and my task in all this, as a representative of the Barbarian Rugby Club, is to find out as much as I can about the fallen so that the appropriate acknowledgements can be made. To that end, we hope to make contact with their families, universities, services, clubs and, of course, their schools because so many of them will have attended our prep and senior schools.

Thus, to help me in my quest, may I ask you to look at the list that appears on the Barbarians' website and then delve both into your own archives and scrolls dedicated to the fallen and send through any information, which you and your old boy associations may hold regarding the fallen Barbarians (and Tigers, of course). Details of their school, university and military careers will help to provide the background to the lives of these remarkable men and I am grateful to the pupils of Bilton Grange, Rugby who have made

a good start on the research as part of a history project.

Schools may wish to support the project in other ways and further details can be found on www.leicestertigers.com/heritage. Do, of course, feel free to contact me at eajackson22@hotmail.com

Paul Jackson is the curator of the Webb Ellis Museum of Rugby Football, Rugby, which includes the Barbarian Collection.



A case for residential trips

Heather Cavanagh, Head of Burgess Hill Girls' Junior School, says that before you set off you may need to calm the worries of anxious parents

In a school system that is too often cloistered, risk-averse and claustrophobically classroom-based, the opportunity to take young children out of their comfort zone on a residential trip should be grabbed with both hands. Some of the most meaningful education takes place beyond the school walls and away from the direct influence of parents.

Building self-confidence and self-esteem is fundamental to any young person's development. It helps to extend their perception and appreciation of the world around them. Residential trips play an important role in this and in the social, emotional and academic development of a child.

For some children, a trip of this kind may be the first time they have been away from their families. Combine this with the opportunity to be away from home with one's friends and developing some skills of independence and it is easy to see the enormous opportunity for growth and personal development that residential trips offer.

At a time when our cash-strapped colleagues in the state sector are struggling to provide these extra-curricular opportunities, residential trips are one of many areas in which the independent sector offering can really stand out. A report from LKMco earlier this year titled 'School Residentials' revealed that maintained schools serving disadvantaged

communities run far fewer residential trips for their pupils, and that even when they do only a third of teachers are confident that their pupils could all afford to participate. The author, Loic Menzies, says he experienced 'first-hand just how eye-opening these trips can be for pupils, how they change a group dynamic and give young people a whole new perspective on life'.

Residential trips ask a lot of teachers and eat up precious school resources, but for me they are well worth the effort and the organisational demands. They offer children a unique opportunity to claim their independence, make their own decisions and build new friendships that can bring about positive, long-term change for pupils, both in and out of the classroom. These trips are not just beneficial but vital to providing balance and a renewed enthusiasm for learning.

As a veteran of many a school residential trip, I have plenty of anecdotal evidence to support my belief. For a more evidence-based approach, see the University of Exeter's analysis of a pupil impact survey. It showed that many aspects of the experience combine to create the positive energy of school trips but that it can be separated into four key components: living with others, challenge, teacher relationships and learning about one's self. There was a significant correlation between the improvement in individual pupils'

classroom attainment over the course of a term and the impact that the residential had on them.

They also noted a significant improvement in pupils' pro-social behavior (behaviour intended to benefit someone else) and a significant reduction in perceived hyperactivity.

Pupils may feel that they know their classmates and teachers well from day-to-day contact in school, but the experience of living with them in a residential community can add a completely new dimension. It raises key issues such as interpersonal skills, including leadership, team work, trust and respect. Pupils who do not normally shine in the classroom often excel on a residential trip. This can help to improve performance and relationships back at school. I can recall numerous children who once released from the constraints of a fixed timetable and text books, begin to blossom in confidence. These pupils, who can often go relatively unnoticed in school, suddenly become more visible to the staff.

Residential trips can also make a major contribution to the acquisition of academic knowledge and development of life skills. Outdoor activities included on residential trips offer a valuable alternative, often non-competitive, avenue for achievement, as well as opportunities to develop independence and self-reliance. Through successfully facing



up to the challenges overcoming fears and anxieties, young people can make major strides in confidence, which has implications for all aspects of their development.

A Year 6 pupil comes to mind. In school, they were quiet and unassuming with teachers commenting on how they needed to have confidence in their ability. One of the challenges on the trip was for teams to create a shelter that they could then sleep in overnight. Gradually, the more confident children, who were used to automatically succeeding, become despondent and defeated with the task. The quieter pupil had reflected and observed the situation and was then able to step in and lead the team to success.

In turn this pupil's credibility and social standing rocketed. Back at school we saw a marked difference in their willingness to be involved in school life. Consequently, this contributed to a positive impact on their academic results. Had the parents not had the courage and the confidence to send their anxious child on the trip, this opportunity would never have arisen.

Getting parents on side can, on the rare occasion, be challenging. Fearful, anxious — though well meant and loving — parents will make a child reluctant to go on a residential trip. Where parents are not able to express confidence in their child's ability to succeed, there is a high probability that the experience will not be a successful one; sadly, in extreme circumstances, they do not go at all.

Parents with this kind of anxiety can inadvertently send their child off with negative messages about the forthcoming trip, and when their child experiences some normal emotional discomfort — homesickness, separation, and adjustment issues — they are more likely to ask to be 'rescued' by mum and dad. Subsequently, collecting them from the trip early, the incomplete experience may be a negative memory of failure that may carry through into adulthood.

If parents, too, are not ready to experience some parental discomfort they won't be strong enough to provide the encouragement their child needs to undertake this major new experience. Parents who are not

confident and ready for their child's residential experience may send off a child who is unable to work through the adjustments required.

Finally, beware offering the 'safety blanket' of mobile phones. In my opinion, these have created a false necessity to be in constant communication and, sadly, are often a projected parental need. A 'no mobile phone' policy will in the long run prevent unnecessary upset for parents and child. Otherwise, staff will be faced with the considerable challenges of finding time for 30+ children to phone home, charging 30+ phones, safeguarding and ensuring appropriate internet usage.

Supportive parents will have faith in their child's school, and their child! They will find the time away soon passes, and when they collect their son or daughter from the school car park, breathless with excitement and exuding new confidence and enthusiasm for learning, they will wonder what they were worried about.

Our next round of residential trips is in the Summer Term and I, for one, can't wait to get packing!

Protecting your daughter from gender stereotypes



Gwen Byrom, President-Elect of the Girls' Schools Association, discusses gender stereotyping amongst girls and what we can do to better ourselves

When my eldest daughter was a toddler, I struggled to find suitable clothes for her. Not because she was an unusual shape, or size —she didn't have three legs — but because she was a girl. I remember wandering around the girls' clothing aisles despairing at the tide of sugar pink, satin and flowers that assaulted me at every turn. Not, in any way, practical wear for an active, messy, but perfectly normal, three-year-old girl. Finally, I admitted defeat, moved across to the boys' department and bought the practical jeans and fleece sweaters I had been searching for.

This was almost 20 years ago now, and I don't think she has suffered for it. She has her own very particular sense of style as a young woman, but she certainly wasn't scarred for life and has no lesser sense of her own identity as a woman than her peers.

My next child was a boy, and I encountered related issues. In his early years, my son did have a penchant for nail polish and although this caused some raised eyebrows at times, we went with it. Once again, as he became a young man, no damage was done to him or his sense of masculinity. Children number

three, four and five have been treated similarly and, as yet, the world hasn't come to an end.

At this point, you might say 'so what? That's a perfectly reasonable response, and we, as enlightened 21st century parents would do the same'. I would agree with you, of course. So if we are all in agreement, why does the #genderedcheese hashtag on Twitter do such great trade? If we all hate the pink/blue and princess/hero divide in clothing and toys, who is buying this stuff? Why is there still a problem with gender and stereotypes?

The girls' attitudes survey conducted by Girlguiding UK this year shows that gender stereotyping is alive and well in 2017, and that girls are acutely aware of the challenges they face. 55% of girls aged 11-21 say that gender stereotypes affect their ability to say what they think, with girls claiming they will modify their behaviour or change what they wear to fit in with perceived norms. They are also sensitive to the fact that boys suffer too; they have their own pressures to conform. In fact, one of the ways that girls report challenging gender stereotypes is to support boys who wish to step outside of the cultural

norms assigned to them.

It's a well-rehearsed argument that gendered choices in education are a problem that needs to be addressed. In addition to the data showing the skewed gender balance in subject choice during exam years, girls in the age seven to ten bracket, in some cases, showed an even more distorted perspective regarding what's a 'girl' or 'boy' subject. Subjects, including art, music, drama and biology, were seen as being more for girls, whilst physics, chemistry, computing, PE and politics were perceived as being the preserve of boys.

So how do we, as parents, help to overcome these perceptions? It's not easy, since it appears we are part of the problem. From birth, children are treated differently according to their gender; it isn't just about clothing, but about the way they are treated too. The Baby X study was conducted in 1975 by Seavy, Katz and Zalk. In this experiment, men and women were given a three-month-old baby to play with, dressed in a yellow jumper. A selection of toys was available, including some that could be classified as for either girls (dolls) or boys (footballs) or neutral (teething rings).

One third of the participants were told the baby was a girl, one third were told it was a boy, and one third were not told the gender. In each case the researchers saw that the response to the baby was highly dependent upon whether the participant was told they were caring for a baby boy or girl. It wasn't simply the choice of toy that was used to engage the baby either, but the degree to which the babies were touched differed depending upon its perceived sex.

Before we say to ourselves 'but things have moved on since the '70s', we should not be too self-congratulatory. A 2016 study has shown similar results, with both men and women making assumptions about a three-month-old baby's gender and degree of masculinity — or not — based upon the pitch of its cry. This is despite there being no difference in the pitch of children's voices up to puberty.

Returning to the Girlguiding UK study, around a third of girls aged 11-21 felt that gender stereotyping from their parents could be part of the problem. However, it was one of the areas that they felt most comfortable in

challenging gendered attitudes. These responses being seemingly ingrained doesn't mean we can't help to change them. Awareness of the depth to which cultural pressures impact upon both girls and boys goes part of the way to helping to address them. Although the recent BBC programme *No More Boys and Girls: Can Our Kids Go Gender Free?* stirred controversy with its gender-neutral approach attracting criticism, it did highlight the way in which both boys and girls exhibited gendered beliefs about the role of men and women at a very young age.

We need to think hard about our own language and assumptions. How often do we, without thinking, make comments that reveal our own biases? From 'running like a girl' to 'man up', *fireman* to *fishwife*, our speech is littered with phrases which reinforce gendered thinking. If we think about more external influences, an open conversation with children about what they see in the media, and hear in the playground, can help to equip them to challenge the biases they face. Honest conversations about how we find a balance, the challenges we face in the

workplace and society, then a good dose of positive role modelling will do no harm whatsoever too. As comedian Robert Webb says, 'It's not such a terrible thing to want to be a princess when you're five, but it would be nice if there were some other options'. Talking about, and role modelling, these options is part of our job as parents and educators.

I am not calling here for an abolition of gender, or for us to avoid any discussion of gender in relation to our children. Nonetheless, a little mindfulness about our own language and behaviours, and some close attention to what our children are saying, might help to break down some of the barriers of which girls are so painfully aware.

I'd also recommend considering a girls' school for your daughter, as a place where she can develop her own interests and choose subjects freely according to her aspirations. You can look up the very positive statistics on girls studying maths and physics at single-sex schools — they speak for themselves. But then again I am biased...



Mashujaa Day

Anthony Millard, the Chairman of Anthony Millard Consulting and an experienced former headmaster, discusses Mashujaa day and his own personal heroes

I have started to write this article on Mashujaa Day — a Kenyan public holiday where extraordinary individuals and their contributions to the struggle for independence are celebrated. These can be famous leaders, critical to historical junctures, or more humble folk who have achieved some everyday good. Leadership in education comes in all shapes and sizes. Today in schools movement towards contemporary concepts of ‘collaborative’ and ‘distributed’ leadership qualifies it. Looking back over 40 years in education, my view remains unchanged. It is great individual leadership in schools that matters most. Complex structures are necessary for the management of today’s great enterprises including schools if corporate performance and motivation are to be optimised. However, the moral, educational and commercial buck stops firmly on the head’s desk, where it has always been!

Many of us have been fortunate enough at some time in our careers to be inspired by great school leaders and teachers. While the opposite can also be true! My greatest mentor was Alan Quilter, the transformatory headmaster of Wells Cathedral School, 1966-1984. Determined to play his role in WWII, Alan had run away from Dulwich College aged 16 to join the merchant navy. Torpedoed in the South China Sea, but having read prodigiously, (not by accident Joseph Conrad was his favourite author) he arrived in Cambridge without ‘matric’ but succeeded in persuading Peterhouse to admit him as an undergraduate. Imbued with a huge love of English literature, something he was later to pass on to his

pupil Jeffrey Archer, Alan was a natural schoolmaster. He progressed through Uppingham, the ‘50s clearing house of future headmasters, to leadership posts at Wellington School and then the headship of Wells Cathedral School at the tender age of 37. Hardly viable, incredibly parochial and housed in a mixture of crumbling church buildings and nissen huts, Alan gave this school a well-deserved national reputation for excellence during his long headship. Strategically brilliant, Alan’s two great decisions were firstly to make Wells one of the first boarding schools to embrace full co-education, and secondly to establish all-round musical excellence alongside its cathedral choir. Wells Cathedral School became one of the four government-supported specialist music schools and is the only one where international excellence for music is set within the context of a normal school with a wide-ranging curriculum and extracurricular activities. However, Alan was much more than strategic imagination. His strength of personality was matched by what my mother would have called ‘the common touch’. He passionately believed in the young, both pupils and teachers new to teaching, and was intolerant of any unnecessary bounds to their ambitions and aspirations. Each individual was given his special attention when needed. It was my privilege to serve as Alan’s last deputy head.

Most heads of my generation have now retired and, in too many cases, have passed on. Stephen Winkley (Headmaster Uppingham and then Rossall) makes a brilliant representative of heroic leadership, both intellectually but also possessing that imagination and empathy

necessary for great headship. All of us have those we have known who we would add to our list of heroes. It would be good to see that list completed including the titans of the prep schools. The latter led from the front as heads while also covering a multitude of roles. I shall never forget making a winter visit to a prep school in Yorkshire whose head ruled in papal splendour, until the lights fused and the school was plunged into darkness. He donned overalls, seized his toolbox and climbed into the attic, explaining that only he knew the secrets, let alone the location, of an ancient fuse box.

But back to today. Much of my life is now taken up in assisting boards to appoint heads. The bane of searches is undue importance attached to modern HR ‘best practice’ and also ‘political correctness’. Anthony Millard Consulting has no wish to be ‘incorrect’ but equally wants to be unconstrained in its search for excellence in school leadership. This is an art rather than a science. We are blind to the background of candidates and resistant to the languages of educational bureaucracy and corporate management speak. What we do look for is contemporary action-centred leadership anchored to the unchanging values of great education. Of course the head is a supreme team leader, but that has always been true. Real leadership involves listening and patient consultation. However, at its heart is moral courage and the ability to make a decisive individual contribution within the incredibly complex arena of a great school. Alan Quilter and Stephen Winkley both were exemplars of this. They would have both got Mashujaa.

SATIPSKI 2018

The ever-popular SATIPSKI event is now under way for 2018, our first event in association with IBT Travel. We look forward to another successful and enjoyable competition, and Gillian Gilyead looks forward to receiving your entries.



SATIPSKI 2018 will be held on the Indoor Snow Slope at Hemel Hempstead, on Monday the 14th of May. This is a team event and there will be three sessions: Under-11 Boys at 10:00-11:30am; Under-14 Boys at 11:30-13:00pm; Girls (Under-14 and Under-11) at 13:30-15:00pm.

The number of teams in each category will be strictly limited. All team members who complete two runs will be given an individual ranking. Individual results will be in team categories, i.e. an Under-11 skier racing for an Under-14 team will not be counted as an Under-11 individual.

Rules and Conditions

- The event is open to boys and girls in preparatory schools, which are members of SATIPS. In schools, which have both junior and senior departments, pupils in the senior part are not eligible even though they meet the age criterion. Children who have already skied for the senior part of the school in the current academic year are not eligible.
- It is expected that all teams will be in the charge of a member of staff. If this is not the case the entry form must be signed by the headteacher, giving authority to the person concerned.
- Children must be full-time pupils for the summer term at the school they are representing.
- Competitors must be able to ski under control and be able to execute good turns. Please do not bring children unless you are sure they are capable of riding a poma lift and skiing the whole slope.
- Four skiers make up a team (three will do). Schools may enter a maximum of two teams.
- Results will be determined as teams, by adding the best three individual times of each run, and individuals, by adding the times of the two runs.
- Entries must be made on the enclosed form and signed by the member of staff responsible or the headteacher. Entries will close on Wednesday, the 21st of March. Names of skiers must be submitted by Friday, the 27th of April.
- Entries not complying with the rules will not be accepted.
- Any matter arising that is not covered by these rules will be determined by the race jury, whose decision is final.
- All further information will be sent by email, so please ensure the email address you supply is accurate and clear; typing is always the best.
- The entry fee will be £75 per team.
- It is a condition of entry that schools must provide one race official per team entered. Please indicate the names of your race official(s) on the entry form.
- All racers must wear a proper ski helmet. These can be borrowed at the Snow Centre, as can boots, skis and sticks, at no extra charge.

If you wish, you may send the entry form now with no names of skiers and send a second copy with the names later. Entries will only be considered definite if accompanied by the appropriate fee and are accepted in the order of arrival. As numbers are limited, each session's list may be closed before the final date.

The first form must be sent by post. Please return entry forms and cheques (£75 per team, payable to SATIPS) to: Gillian Gilyead, 1, Garden Court, Wheathampstead, AL4 8RE.

The second copy, with names, may be sent by post or email.

Please note that the names of the skiers must be supplied on the official entry form, properly signed. A simple email list is not acceptable.

For an entry form and enquiries please call 01582 833582 or email gilliangilyead@aol.com.

Life beyond the classroom

Teaching in independent schools is a very fulfilling career but, as we all know, it can be an all-consuming passion leaving very little time for anything else. However, there are colleagues who still find both the time and the energy to live life to the full. *Frazer Hemming-Allen*, Director of Physical Education & Sports Science at Rugby School, is one of those people and exemplifies the view that teachers at independent schools are a select breed

As we are aware, the pressures upon staff and our pupils in independent schools today continue to rise. The need to provide a balanced, all-round education with fully-immersed and happy pupils who achieve good exam results, means the pressure is always on to deliver. The daily routine such as ours can take its toll on both new staff unaccustomed to the routine of an independent school, as well as established staff who know exactly what lies ahead at the start of term. Long hours and a strong desire to fully involve ourselves in school life brings a great deal of satisfaction to new and established staff alike, but over time can also have implications for our health, our families and our *joie de vivre*.

I have always been of the opinion that there must be some form of 'release' to maintain objectivity, productivity and focus at work. Finding ways to relax outside the confines of the school becomes not only desirable but also essential. We all recharge our batteries in a variety of different ways, and it is to this end that on the invitation of friends and colleagues, I was invited to provide an insight into how I occupy my time outside the classroom.

On my appointment as Head of Physical Education & Director of Boys' Games at Rugby back in 1994, I quickly realised the magnitude of the all-encompassing role of a teacher at a school such as Rugby involved. Full academic, pastoral and extracurricular immersion during term time was a 'given' and led me to adopt a philosophy of where possible, always to make full use of the holidays once the term, school tours and various expeditions had come to an end.

Present day

A typical day at Rugby school starts around 7:30am. Clearing an email backlog before chapel at 8:25am, followed by first period at 8:45am are the order of the day. Four lessons before lunch conclude the first half of the day's proceedings. A series of post-lunch tutorials then follow before the afternoon's senior games and lower school academic lessons begin. Following the afternoon's sport and academic sessions, the extracurricular enrichment slots then start, and staff put on another 'hat' to deliver a wide array of activities. Depending upon their pastoral duties, staff are then likely to be involved until mid-late evening in the boarding houses.

This, no doubt, is a similar routine on a theme that many of us have grown accustomed to and we would not swap it, not least because it takes time to get used to! However, a 10-12 hour day, six to seven days a week can come at a price if you do not have a coping mechanism in place.

My interest in 'extreme sports' started many years ago and has remained with me to this day. I am lucky to have not only had a career in sport, but have used elements of it as a focus of my free time. Whether it be scuba diving, skiing, paragliding, climbing or canoeing, I am fortunate to have a wonderful wife who shares my interests, the time and the continuing desire to fit most of them in.

A love of 'free flight' has enabled me to experience and enjoy the sport of paragliding worldwide for over 20 years. The locations, views, and experiences I have enjoyed provide long periods of positive reflection and bring back memories that will remain with me for the rest of my life. These memories are also particularly vivid when I am having a bad day at work! A life-long interest in scuba diving has also progressed to underwater photography. A particular interest



in sharks, their conservation and marine ecosystems in general, have allowed me to travel to some of the most extraordinary places on earth. The passion for diving and underwater photography/videography has led, in turn, to lecturing to local history groups, the WI, dive clubs and marine biologists on a variety of topics from marine conservation, shark awareness, and historic ship wrecks ranging from Henry VIII's warship, *The Mary Rose*, to the Red Sea graveyard of WW2 wrecks such as the *SS Thistlegorm*, as well as the German fleet that sunk in Scapa Flow, Scotland in the later stages of WW1.

Over the years, I have also been able to use my passion for extreme sports and employ them in my academic teaching. Experiences of diving to extreme depths, or paragliding around and up the face Mont Blanc — with photo and video — have all helped to provide a new angle to deliver sports science, physical education and even GCSE history lessons. Topics such as gaseous exchange in the lungs, oxygen debt at altitude, nitrogen saturation at depth, motivation and managing stress in sport and the

effects of torpedo damage on British shipping in WW2 are all topics that I have delivered using an alternative approach, whilst also complementing the contents of the textbook. Sparking pupils' interest and imagination in the world around us is part and parcel of our role as teachers, but for my part, the benefits of personal experience and a practical approach to teaching continue to both motivate and sustain me even after all those years in the classroom.

A short holiday to the Isle of Man in recent years to film the migratory basking sharks has since resulted in some of my photos being used to promote the Isle of Man 'basking shark and whale watch' charity website, around the island's ports and on the Liverpool and Heysham ferries. The possibility that a hobby may have hopefully benefitted these endangered creatures and educated the public in the process, makes it all the more rewarding sharing the water with these 30-foot giants.

Teaching can become all-consuming and it is easy to lose focus and, perhaps on occasions, also our perspective. Having lost one parent

to cancer, the other having on-going treatment and a best friend affected by this disease, whenever possible I take the opportunity to do several guest lectures for cancer research charities such as Macmillan, Marie Curie and the Royal Marsden Hospital. Talks on a variety of topics hopefully help to provide some fascination in our environment, whilst helping to raise funds for these wonderful organisations. Ultimately, over the years, it has always helped to put everything in perspective, especially when we face the demands of a pressured school day.

The virtues of challenge, endeavour, motivation, determination, success and failure and the benefits of going outside 'one's comfort zone' are all fundamental skills that our pupils must experience and learn from as they grow. It is also important to impart to them that when faced with challenge, they always have something 'extra' to give and this talent lies inside of all of them. Pupils should be encouraged to test themselves and not be afraid of failure. Whether this is in the classroom, on the games field, on stage, playing a musical instrument or on a Duke of Edinburgh expedition, stepping outside their comfort zone will ultimately bring beneficial results. I hope I am able to continue to find ways to facilitate this until I am ready to leave the classroom.

After a career in teaching, which has brought challenge, enjoyment, stress, pressure and ultimately immense satisfaction, my only words of advice to new staff to the profession in independent schools is: enjoy every minute of it! It's all worth it. If you are also lucky enough to find a partner who shares your interests outside work, this combination will ensure that you will be able to find and maintain the kind of life outside the classroom that will sustain and invigorate you during your life inside it.

The old adage continues to ring in my ears: 'and in the end it's not the years in your life that count, it's the life in your years'.

Launch of the Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Quality Mark

I recently attended the launch of a new initiative for our schools at the House of Lords. I am very grateful to Marguerite Heath for explaining the philosophy and background to the SMSC programme and award — Paul Jackson

The launch of SMSC Quality Mark was an uplifting occasion hosted by Lord Jim Knight, former Minister of State for Schools and Learning, and now Chief Education Adviser at the TES, in the House of Lords. Lord Knight said that the time was right for the Quality Mark, there being a particular need for Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Education at this time.

The keynote speaker, Steve Chalke

MBE, founder of the Oasis Charitable Trust, defined SMSC for the audience of educational leaders from both the independent and state sectors: 'It's what I see when I'm looking at you. It's what I hear when I'm talking to you! It's about the whole way we interact. It's about people in community — together.'

A common thread through all the speeches was the importance of raising children to be the best versions

of themselves that they could possibly be. They spoke of how the SMSC Quality Mark captures the essence of education and how we should be celebrating its place at the heart of learning and school development.

Janet Palmer, until recently HMI lead for SMSC, spoke of the challenges facing the young in our fast changing world. However, she said it was her firm view that 'through a well-considered approach to their SMSC

Steve Chalke MBE



Janet Palmer





development, pupils can be armed with the appropriate knowledge, skills and values that will help them cope with their future, and just as importantly, help them to make a positive contribution to it.'

Justin Blake from Windlesham House School in Sussex, Sam Done who is Principal of Hillcrest Academy in Leeds, and David Harris from Abbey Catholic Primary School in Birmingham all endorsed the Quality Mark, having been the first through the process.

The SMSC Quality Mark is the outcome of work undertaken by The Citizenship Foundation and experts in the field of education who felt it was time for an SMSC self-review tool that would better equip schools to implement their vision for SMSC and review provision for their pupils' SMSC development.

Schools will have the opportunity to have their assessments (at bronze, silver, gold levels) verified by a team of independent assessors based around the country. These consultants will



Lord Jim Knight

also offer guidance and training to support schools in raising standards in SMSC across the curriculum and all aspects of school development.

The SMSC Quality Mark, although administered by the Citizenship Foundation, is supervised by an independent Quality Assurance Panel to ensure complete impartiality.

The Citizenship Foundation is very

proud to have launched this initiative. We believe that SMSC has the potential to raise aspirations, develop empathy, deepen spirituality, connect young people with their communities and develop values that challenge individuals beyond the material world. It creates opportunities for pupils to learn and practise human virtues and values such as compassion, hope, faith and forgiveness.

Through SMSC we have the opportunity to nurture reflective wisdom that will enable our children to make wise and appropriate choices in the complex and changing circumstances that they are likely to encounter in the modern world. We hope that the Quality Mark will help to maintain focus on this important aspect of education, and support its implementation in schools.

Marguerite Heath, Director of Education and Learning at the Citizenship Foundation and Chair of the SMSC Quality Assurance Panel



A new global mark of quality for international schools



Colin Bell introduces The Patron's Accreditation and Compliance, a new accreditation programme with royal approval from the Council of British International Schools

The Council of British International Schools (COBIS) is a global membership association for international schools primarily teaching the National Curriculum for England and Wales or the International Baccalaureate (IB). With schools in 80 countries worldwide, our diverse membership base consists of over 290 unique learning institutions sharing a reputation for quality. Accreditation for schools teaching the British curriculum has previously been limited to the UK Department for Education's (DfE) British Schools Overseas (BSO) scheme (although there are more options for IB schools) and the demand for an alternative to a process that some schools found challenging has been rising since I joined COBIS in 2010. In more recent years, we consulted with our members to identify how the BSO scheme could be improved and asked them to visualise what a viable alternative would look like. Although hopeful of a change in criteria to the BSO programme from the DfE, especially in terms of restrictions on teaching British values in the Middle East, our lobbying efforts did not yield positive results and our members remained at odds with the government's system. This led us to the development of a new, fit-for-purpose accreditation journey that focuses on school improvement called The Patron's Accreditation and Compliance — named after COBIS Patron, HRH The Duke Of York, KG.

Insuring quality

The COBIS Patron's Accreditation and COBIS Compliance system is distinct from other accreditation and inspection systems, with elements of autonomy for schools to select areas to evaluate which fit with their identified development objectives. We recognise that schools are highly diverse and exist in complex contexts. Therefore, a one-size approach to a professional accreditation process is not in the best interests of schools, the communities they serve and

the unique ministerial jurisdictions in which they operate worldwide. We knew, when developing the programme, it had to be innovative and unique and its characteristics reflect and were directly influenced by the views of our schools. It sets high expectations and standards of accountability, it values education for international understanding, it is based on a realistic five-year cycle, is far removed from a 'snapshot inspection of condition' and harnesses digital power to reduce time and cost. The system was also designed to reflect self-evaluation and support school improvement. At the heart of everything COBIS does is child protection and with that in mind, we made certain that the accreditation programme had a strong emphasis on scrutinising the effectiveness of safeguarding practices.

Supported by technology

The majority of the school improvement journey takes place on the COBIS Digital Workbook (DWB), an online platform developed by Titus Learning where schools can upload evidence against the standards for accreditation and compliance, which include safeguarding, teaching and learning and leadership amongst others. The DWB allows collaboration and communication with the school's assigned LIP, or Lead Improvement Partner. The LIP is an international schools professional assigned and trained by COBIS to lead on accreditation and will visit your school, along with a number of accreditation team members called 'peer accreditors', at the culmination of the improvement journey. At the time of publication, we've accredited three schools that took part in a pilot stage of The Patron's Accreditation in early 2017, while Doha College was the first school to participate in the full accreditation process. Dr Steffen Sommer, Principal of Doha College, was impressed by the Accreditation Team tasked with visiting the school and the formal report that followed, saying:

'The COBIS Patron's Accreditation was the least intrusive evaluation we have ever experienced. The team were highly qualified and suitably experienced in the accreditation and school evaluation processes, explained the essence of the COBIS accreditation to staff and governors right at the outset, and made every effort to blend in. The full written reports, which are well written and usable as a working document and as marketing material, arrived only days after the team had left so that process and delivery of results were in keeping with the promise of an efficient, precise and targeted accreditation which encourages and enables ongoing self-evaluation.'

A busy year ahead

Peter Simpson, Director of Accreditation at COBIS and former headteacher at The British School in The Netherlands, has confirmed that 25-30 new international schools will receive The Patron's Accreditation or become compliant with the COBIS standards during the new academic year 2017-18 and based on the level of interest we've received, that number looks set to rise. By 2022, all COBIS member schools will have been through the programme but that's not to say that schools that choose to go down the DfE's BSO route will no longer be given recognition. In fact, BSO schools will continue to be welcomed as COBIS Accredited Members.

Colin Bell is CEO at the Council of British International Schools (COBIS).

He tweets @COBIS_CEO. More information, including the standards and criteria for accreditation, can be found at www.cobis.org.uk

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WoT! is your story?

Ian Morris, the Chaplain at Bishop's Stortford College and our regular contributor of wonderful ideas for whole school assemblies, says that we should make more of Lent by doing less

Lent is often seen as a time of having to give up the things we most like in order to endure weeks of denial and testing in the mistaken belief that our sacrifice will somehow please the Almighty. I know that's how I used to see it. Foregoing chocolate or wine when your birthday always falls in Lent was, in my eyes, a huge sacrifice! However, I've come to realise that Lent is not about looking to ourselves but looking to others and God. We lead such busy lives running here, there and everywhere, so choosing to put those things aside for a while allows us to create the space so that we can draw closer to our community and our creator. Through the practices of prayer, fasting and giving, it allows us to reflect on what is really important and be renewed.

St Paul famously wrote that within the treasure chest of our soul, faith, hope, and love abide'. Yet by squeezing in so much stuff into our everyday lives — much of it good — we end up squeezing out these precious gems that are the core of our being. Our lives are so cluttered juggling the demands of work, family and hobbies that we find that we have lost faith, hope has been crushed and our love has been diminished.

Last year I did the following assembly to launch our Lent initiative. It encouraged staff and students to take time out in REST — the name of our chaplaincy centre — where they could participate in some of the prayerful,

reflective activities I had set up or just be for a little while.

You will need:

A large cardboard box labelled 'My Life', in which you have cut a hole in the bottom.

Personal items scattered about the front that represent different aspects of your life, for example: family photos, or school books, or hobby/sports gear, or a TV guide etc.

3 containers, each one labelled as 'Faith', 'Hope' and 'Love'. In the Love container I place some small heart-shaped stress balls I happened to have from a previous assembly, in the Faith container I popped in some blue glass beads, and in the Hope container I had some green glass beads.

The assembly began in the usual 'WoT!' way with the theme song and suitable corny Lent-based gags, followed by slides recapping on the traditions of Shrove Tuesday. This includes an exhibition pancake 'race' — any pancake challenge can be used here depending on the space you have available, such as most/highest/furthest toss, or most eaten in 30 seconds to name but a few.

After the fun and games, introduce Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Lent, a season of reflection and renewal. Ask if anyone has given up anything before and mention how the focus of Lent is not about looking inward but about us looking outward to others and upwards to God.

Pick up the box marked 'My Life' and explain how, at the start, God pours in Faith, Hope and Love. Then explain how we fill our lives with lots of stuff and, as we do, we often become too busy to replenish the Faith, Hope and Love that we lose along the way. You should practise jiggling the box or holding it in such a way that the small beads or whatever you have chosen to use to represent Faith, Hope and Love fall out as you pile in your larger personal effects.

Explain how Lent offers us the opportunity to fast from some of the good stuff we do for a while and just put it to one side so that we can make space to refill our lives with the Faith, Hope and Love that are essential to our well-being. Here you could take out the TV guide and the mobile device as examples and say how deciding not to use them for a while each day or week would free up time to help you help others, or make space to be mindful or pray.

If you have or can set up a quiet room that students and staff could use then this is the ideal time to plug it! For some great ideas about engaging activities that folks of all ages can use, check out www.prayerspacesinschools.com

The assembly finished with a time of quiet reflection.

Head and heart



Miles Latham, the Managing Partner of Affixxius Films, writes on how modern parents are ‘buying’ independent schools

Unsurprisingly, ‘my word, Emily, did you see the square footage of the classics department?’ is not an exciting remark that registrars or headteachers will often hear emanating from the mouths of soon-to-be customers. If one listed the various ‘things’ that any given independent school has or does, one will find the list differs only in relatively minor ways. Schools sometimes don’t like to hear this, but as someone with experience of well over 300 independent schools in the UK and overseas, I can assure you it’s the case. You offer a ‘broad and balanced curriculum’, a ‘firm commitment to pastoral care’ and a ‘wide range of co-curricular activities’, I’m sure. I’m not saying any of this isn’t true, I’m simply pointing out that it is by no means uniquely true.

The days of one-upmanship in the various ‘cherries on top’ of

independent schools — be it a Forest School or interactive whiteboards in classrooms — are rapidly decreasing as both prep and senior schools realise that the provision and facilities that they can offer a family must compete with those around them for their offering to be sustainable. Of course, where genuine specialties exist — a superb hockey school, top-of-the-table academics, or a renowned music school — certain families will always be drawn, but what of the majority? A great deal of independent schools are, contrary to certain ill-informed political views, notably normal places full of notably normal children. How are these modern parents deciding between school x and school y, let alone the ‘free at point of delivery’ alternative they have half a mile down the road?

God help you people, I am your modern buying audience. Married,

one child, early(ish)-30s, a small business owner — by no means ‘rich’ — but comfortable enough in the grand scheme of things. If (and it’s a big if) I am able to send my son to an independent school, I will do so with a significant change to my lifestyle. I’ve heard us called ‘sacrifice parents’, or the more witty ‘JAMs’ (Just About Managing). In the time I spend with independent schools learning about their audiences, this is the group I hear is growing. Moreover, my family is split; my wife was educated completely in the state system and I was educated (from Year 6) in the independent system. She thinks I went to Hogwarts, I think she went to Grange Hill. We’re both completely wrong and completely right in our own ways, but more important is the psychological dynamic this creates. This complexity of background and of financial status is the new ‘wave’





of post-financial-crash buyers to the independent schools sector — at least the ‘normal’ majority of it.

So how does this ‘type’ buy? Put simply, we buy brand. The ability to buy anything (almost literally with online buying) at any time and have it within 24 hours can’t help but change attitudes to parting with your money. The modern audience is used to buying on how they feel towards the options in front of them. How many review stars does it have? What do the comments say? More to the point — does the picture of the product look trustworthy? Does the brand look ‘decent’? Have I heard of it? Has a friend or family member bought it or something similar? All of these questions point not to what the product is, but how I feel about it. This is brand buying at its purest.

What does this have to do with independent schools? Everything. Independent schools are the epitome of the ‘high brand’. There is an average customer spend of between £10,000 to £20,000 per annum, for the care and development of their most prized emotional asset when there is

a zero-cost alternative to them. The differentiators of opportunity, breadth and quality are inherently present in all high-brand propositions. ‘You get what you pay for’ is essentially the mantra of the independent schools world.

Therefore, my point is simple. Independent schools have to stop marketing to the ‘heads’ of their audiences, and market to their ‘hearts’ instead. In many ways, it’s like buying a house. Four bedrooms, good garden and local amenities just like the last four houses we’ve been to see, but this one feels like home. There is no coincidence that the vast majority of language one hears from happy, buying parents of independent schools has the same tonality: ‘... I knew she’d be happy here...’, ‘... the atmosphere was lovely...’ and ‘... it felt like he’d fit in...’.

Yet, the outward message is often one of two things; either archly practical or staggeringly generic. The latter we call ‘three under a tree’ marketing. This is a wide, landscape image of three suspiciously diverse children sat under a tree with a large, vague word — usually ‘ambition’ or ‘family’ or something else suitably

meaningless — in a bad font sprawled over the empty space. Sound familiar? Independent schools have to be smarter than this to appeal to this modern buyer I’ve described. Stop telling us ‘things about stuff’ that we already know and get smarter with emotion. Marketing is hard, sorry.

I work in independent schools for two main reasons that pertain to all this waffle. First, I work in the medium that allows this emotion to be brought to the fore — film — and it’s an area that is finally being given the chance to shine. Crucially, I don’t mean the classic ‘school promo video’; a headteacher propped up in front of a fireplace with a labrador telling me when a school was founded followed by a list of generic platitudes that any other school has the right to say. I mean film that makes you ‘feel’ in just the same way that high brands advertise through broadcast and digital platforms. Secondly, schools have the most wonderful storytelling potential. Kids are hilarious; they’re inspiring and unpredictable. It should be a marketer’s dream.

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What makes a good head?



Christopher Parsons, Deputy Head (Academic) at Norwich Lower School and a Visiting Lecturer at the University of Buckingham, ponders the question of what makes a good headteacher

What makes a head a good one? Is it primarily what they are, or what they do?

This is not a new question in the domain of leadership theory, so can we simply look to the examples set by iconic heads of the past? Could they help us navigate our current school landscape?

When we do gaze back at the past, we are struck by so many apparent contrasts with the present. With the incessant rise of accountability demands, compliance measures and ever-shifting marketing pressures, many prep school heads could be forgiven for rarely surfacing from the paperwork and peripheral aspects of a job that never seems to be fully complete.

Still, what does make a good head in the present day? Is there anything that distinguishes them from an efficiently multitasking manager? Whether in the past or the present, the answer must surely lie in what differentiates any real leader from an appointed administrator. In simple terms, the good head will provide for their school a clear direction of travel, and they will educe from their staff the discretionary effort required to go the extra mile when times demand it.

A vision is key, then, of where a school aspires to go, and of what it aspires to be. Real leaders realise that they

can't simply bury their heads in a tidy pile of administrative box ticking and assume that providence will steer their ship to the Promised Land. Good leaders also realise that they can't compel any more than competent functioning from their colleagues, and competence in itself will never be enough to ensure that a prep school thrives and delivers a schooling worthy of the trust placed in it.

For schools such as ours to truly succeed, it requires a staff body joined in common enterprise, with commitment levels, which can only be freely given. How do existing successful heads go about achieving these tasks? The answer, as you might expect, involves no shiny clean silver bullet. Rather, it involves myriad ongoing and adaptable traits, skills and behaviours. In other words, it involves an inseparable bond between what heads are and what they do.

'The best heads have a sound moral compass and are able to apply this to all of their decision-making,' says Charlie Minogue, the Headmaster of Moor Park School in Ludlow. He believes that good heads have core values that they share clearly, and stick to consistently. 'Ideally, staff should know what you would think in various circumstances so that they can make decisions in your absence and this is achieved through good communication and consistency of action.'

A similar message comes from Tania Botting, the Headmistress of Greenfield School in Woking, and the Vice Chairman of IAPS. She agrees that a head's vision must genuinely flow from the ethos and values of the school, and that, whilst a good head will use a variety of leadership styles to match the situation, '...most importantly they need to be authentic and consistent.'

Clearly, people accepting positions of headship need to be a good fit for their school and governing body. However, amongst all the values and decisions needing to be made, Tania sees a very simple underlying principle that should unite all Heads: 'every decision I make is in the best interests of the children.'

Being authentic in expressing values, with a key focus on the child, also comes through strongly from Siobhan McGrath, the Principle of Southbank International School in Kensington. For her, heads should be '...completely student centred — everything they do should be for students.'

It's clear that in communicating through everything that they do a strong message about values, ethos and vision, a good head ably fulfils the need for a leader to provide direction. Through acting authentically though, they also take a key first step in engaging the discretionary effort and



support of their colleagues. What else can help to accomplish this? According to Siobhan, a good head ‘builds excellent relationships with everyone they work with’. They are able to coach others successfully, they run a school that concentrates on professional development and — of vital importance to her — they have compassion.

Tania Botting agrees that a head needs to be a ‘people person’ — approachable, sensitive, empathic and with a good sense of humour — and Charlie Minogue highlights the importance of listening skills.

These ‘soft skill’ attributes, when combined with authenticity, not only help with building everyday good will and well-being amongst staff. It seems that they can also help in the

conduct of ‘hard conversations’, both in ensuring that messages are properly communicated, and in enabling people to move on and feel fairly treated when the outcome is non-negotiable.

Amongst the various other attributes identified by the above school leaders, one of the clearest to come through is that, despite the need for consistent and authentic action, the ability to constantly and flexibly adapt to a changing situation is essential.

As Tania Botting explains: ‘the reason that the role of headship is so challenging is due to the complexity and frequency and lack of structure to the day — unexpected events happen on a daily basis, and while not all of these are necessarily negative events, they require quick thinking and adaptability.’

‘You literally have to adjust your behaviours from one minute to the next,’ says Siobhan McGrath. ‘You have to be able to juggle multiple tasks with different people requiring different things from you. This is the case every day, all week, every week. It never, ever lets up.’

So, we can’t ever separate what a good head is from what they do. They can’t merely be a virtuous presence, but neither can they just act out a book of best advice, and walking the line between the best intersection of the two clearly demands constant learning and adaptation.

Nevertheless, unless it all starts to look too much again, let’s hear Charlie Minogue refrain one clearly agreed-upon point: ‘The needs of the children come first.’

Charting challenges and changes

Oxford University Press examine evolving language in children's dictionaries and how we can look to cultivate a love of language

Language is something that never stops growing; like humans, it evolves with the times. Words become old-fashioned and are dropped from everyday use, while new words are invented to explain the changing world. For example, take a word like *prithie*, which is no longer in use in Modern English, while words such as *blog*, *vlog*, *online*, *wifi* and *selfie* have become more prevalent. Indeed, dictionary publishers occasionally even get requests from groups and organisations keen to get 'their' words included as a way of making their stamp upon the language and the culture of the times.

As with adults, children's language has changed considerably over the last few decades. The curriculum, technology, the internet, increased travel and exposure to global language (e.g. words like *cappuccino*), are all adding to children's vocabulary, as is their access to diverse children's fiction and popular culture. Just as *The Hobbit* found its way into the dictionary at the height of Tolkienism, you'd be hard pressed to find a child today who, growing up in the midst of Pottermania, was unaware of what a *muggle* was.

But why create a dictionary specifically aimed at children at all? Well, just as you might not give *War and Peace* to an eight-year-old,

giving them an adult dictionary, with complex definitions and phonetic symbols, is likely to be difficult to understand.

Recent analysis shows that children and adults often use very different words. For example, the most frequent adjectives used by children include *strange*, *beautiful*, *safe*, and *bright*, while those used by adults include *public*, *political*, *social*, and *economic*. A children's dictionary can also tailor examples of words to a context to which children will relate. For example, an adult dictionary will probably define *borrow* in the context of money. In a children's dictionary, one might *borrow* a toy or a mobile phone. Children also require terminology for their everyday educational needs that adults may rarely have to use, like *phoneme* or *grapheme*. Additionally, there are of course words in adult dictionaries that would not be appropriate for young readers.

How then — bearing in mind that the original *Oxford English Dictionary* took almost 50 years to create — do we make dictionaries suitable for young people that keep up with the growth of language, while maintaining historical richness and keeping content relevant for the target age range? If the dictionary reflects language and language reflects usage

at a given time, then a children's dictionary published in any decade is a snapshot of the children's world around them at that time. Therefore, an up-to-date, ever-adapting resource was needed to catalogue the language of young people, and from this the Oxford Corpus was born.

A corpus is a large database of words, containing over 300 million words used in books and online sites for children and young teenagers. The Corpus also contains words used by over 650,000 children in the BBC Radio 2 500 Words story writing competition. Our dictionary team uses the Oxford Corpus to research how children read and use language and to ensure our dictionaries are age-appropriate and up-to-date as language usage changes. It also helps us identify new or re-emerging word trends like *hashtag* and *minion*, words they find tricky to spell, and common issues with grammar and punctuation.

The Oxford Corpus is an invaluable tool for modern lexicographers in that all individual decisions about what to include and exclude can be supported by hard evidence compiled through in-depth research. The Corpus includes language that children are likely to read in fiction and non-fiction, not only contemporary picture books and novels, but classics and

even Shakespeare. It also includes a considerable amount of language written by children themselves, which allows compilers to make informed choices about which words merit inclusion, based on word frequency and usage in children's writing. Children's lexicographers also rely on valuable input from teachers on the best words to help develop literacy and to deliver the requirements of the curriculum, which helps them to make decisions about levelled and age-appropriate content.

Children benefit most from a dictionary that is specially written with an understanding of where they are in their development and the kind of language that they will understand.

This is why, since we first published the *Oxford School Dictionary* in the 1970s, we have significantly increased the number of specialist children's dictionaries from 2 to 17. This expertly targets all ages and stages, ensuring that every child and young person is catered for. Our children's dictionaries are updated regularly, every 5 to 10 years as part of a rolling programme, in keeping with changing requirements, with all revisions and word selections based on intensive research.

The rise of the digital world and rapid globalisation has meant that language is evolving quicker than ever before, and our children and young people are riding the wave of that change. They need dictionaries

that can evolve fluidly alongside their needs, that understand the changing requirements of a rapidly progressing society while recognising the rich history of our language, and engage, entice and excite children at all ages and stages.

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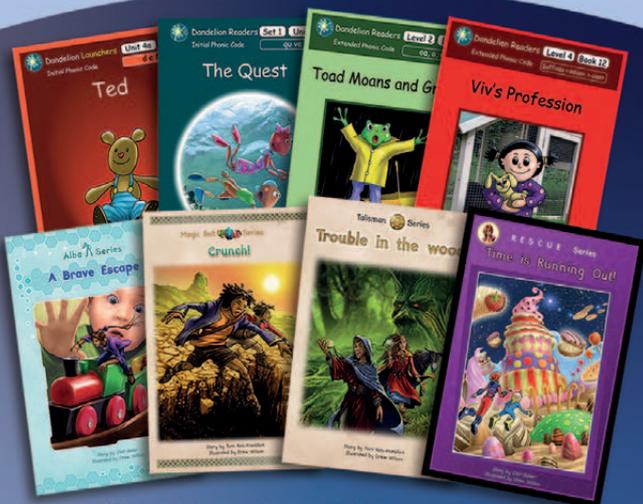
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Why morphology matters

Tami Reis-Frankfort, an author at Phonic Books, discusses teaching literacy, morphology and the study of words

In recent years, the teaching of reading and spelling has focused on phonic skills (blending, segmenting, phoneme manipulation) and letter/sound correspondences. As written English has a morphophonemic system, the next logical step in teaching literacy should be English morphology. Research has shown that an understanding of English morphology helps improve literacy by developing vocabulary, comprehension, spelling and communication skills.

What is morphology?

Morphology is a branch of linguistics that deals with the internal structure of words. Many words can be subdivided into smaller meaningful units called morphemes. The study of morphology teaches children to recognise, analyse and understand the structure of words and parts of words, such as base words, prefixes, suffixes and root words.

What is a morpheme?

A morpheme is the smallest unit of meaning in a word. For example, in the word 'dogs', the smallest unit of meaning is 'dog' and can stand-alone. It is the base word because it has a meaning of its own. When the suffix 's' is added to make the word 'dogs', it has a grammatical function (to indicate that the noun is plural). Every word comprises one or more morphemes.

Do the phonic and the morphemic approaches conflict?

The phonic approach uses sounds and syllables to decode and encode words. For example, chunking the word 'contradict' into syllables would look like this:

Con - tra - dict

The morphemic approach looks at units of meaning within the word, so the word 'contradict' would be chunked like this:

Contra - dict

The prefix 'contra' means 'against' and the root word 'dict' means 'say'. However, children will still need phonics to decode and encode morphemes using their phonic skills. For example, in order to read the word 'governmental', children will still need to decode the sounds within each morpheme: g o v e r n - m e n t - a l (in this word the base word is 'govern' which has two suffixes added to it, 'ment' and 'al'). There is a strong case that both phonics and morphology are needed and should be combined when learning to read and write.

The benefits of morphology

The study of morphology helps children to comprehend the meaning of parts of the word and how they link together. For example, learning the

purpose of the suffix 'ed' and how it changes the tense of the word to the past tense will help children apply it to other words they read with the suffix 'ed'. For most children, this happens automatically but many children struggle to explain how the word is changed when the suffix 'ed' is added to a word. They also need help in learning how to spell words when the suffix is added to them. Therefore, why not teach this explicitly and help children develop their grammar, spelling and comprehension at the same time?

At a later stage children can begin to learn about Latin and Greek root words and how they relate to the affixes that are added to them. For example, when teaching the root word 'ject' (throw), children can learn to read, comprehend and spell words such as 'eject', 'inject', 'reject' and 'project'. Children will then be able to use this approach when reading new words and this will help to expand their reading and spelling vocabulary. Having access to a large bank of words will help children comprehend increasingly complex texts. This is particularly important in secondary school when many of the subject-based words originate from Latin and Greek.

How to make morphology stick

We know that in order to learn new information it must be transferred from short-term memory into long-term memory. How can this be achieved when teaching morphology?

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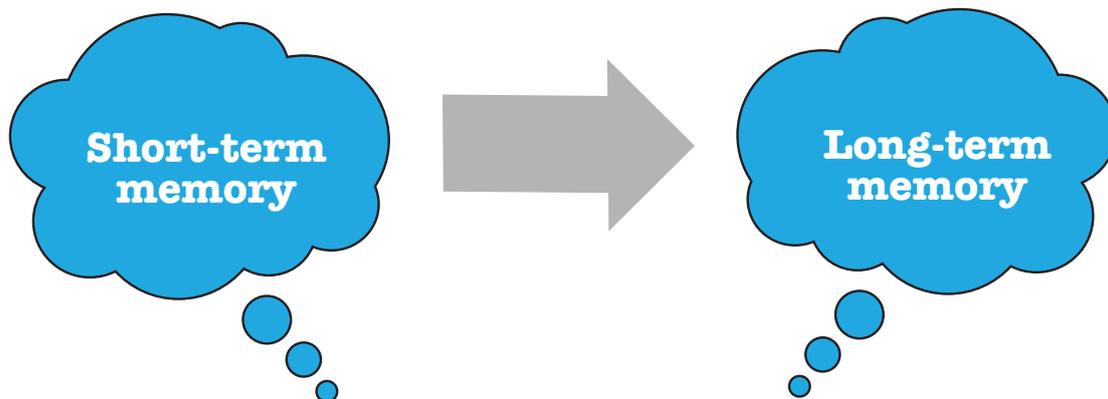
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Build on what children already know

When introducing morphemes, it is best to start with what children already know. This way they can make connections and links to information that is already stored in their long-term memory. For example, when discussing the prefix ‘re’ (again, back) ask the children to figure out what the morpheme means by presenting a list of words they already know and understand: reread, rewrite, rewind, replay. Once they recognise the meaning of the morphemes ‘re’ in those words, they can begin to deduce the meaning in more complex words: revisit, revive, retreat.

Find the pattern

We all learn when we can spot patterns and this helps us organise new information. When teaching groups of words together, we help children spot the patterns of meaning and spelling in those words. For example, when teaching the prefix ‘ir’ the children can learn that this prefix precedes base words beginning with ‘r’ and it must stay intact as it means ‘not’. They can learn to spell irregular, irresponsible, irrational etc.

Be silly

One of the best ways to get children to remember morphemes is to get them to make up words. Once they have learned the meaning of a morpheme they can make up their own. They can

have great fun trying to work out the meaning of each other’s words.

exthrow?

subfeel?

intertalk?

to learn through games, mind maps, quizzes etc. The secret is to make it fun so that the children don’t realise they are revising!

Below is an example of how to learn the meaning of words with morphemes linked to parts of the body:

The study of morphology can easily be made into fun, detective work. Children enjoy discovering how words work and learning new vocabulary is empowering. Morphology matters! Let’s teach it.

All these activities and more are included in a new workbook published by Phonic Books Ltd, *Amber Guardians Workbook*, which complements the new reading series ‘Amber Guardians’.

Varied repetition

In order to commit new learning to our long-term memory, we need to be exposed to it repeatedly. As teachers we find different ways to get children to revisit information we want them

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Book 8: Root words ‘cap’, ‘capit’, ‘man’, ‘spect’ and ‘ped’

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>man = hand</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> manicure manage manual manufacture manacles | <p>cap, capit = head</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> cap capital caption decapitate capital letter |
| <p>ped = foot</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> pedals biped quadruped pedestrian centipede expedition | <p>spect = see</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> spectacles inspect inspector respect suspect spectator |

Underline the root words in the lists. Discuss the words and their meaning. Can you guess how they are connected to the root within them? Use these words to complete the cloze activity on the next page.

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From data protection to greater inclusion

Clare Wright, the Co-Founder of Classlist, discusses the benefits that using her social network can bring to your school

One of the joys of technology is that it takes away the burden of monotonous tasks, creating time for more life-affirming activities. For schools and PTAs, that's where Classlist comes in. It's a free, data protection registered platform that acts as a safe, secure, online community for parents — a 'virtual school gate'.

'All schools are bound by the issue of data protection,' says John Baugh, Head of the Dragon School, a co-educational prep and pre-prep in Oxford. 'Classlist solves the problem of parents wanting one another's contact details. It's very helpful.'

Parents choose to join Classlist. They add their own contact details, deciding which information to share with other parents and which information to keep private. This reduces the admin load of schools that no longer have to perform the laborious task of creating and updating contact lists.

Jane Crouch, Head of Headington Preparatory School for Girls, agrees: 'Before we adopted Classlist we made sure that it was in line with data protection — we needed to make sure that parents' details couldn't be spread far and wide. I also wanted to make sure that content posted on Classlist wouldn't be shared on social media. So, before signing up, we ran a small pilot scheme with Year 5 parents to see how the platform worked in

practice. We talked to other schools that were using it, too. Knowing their experience was very helpful in making our decision to take Classlist on.'

The reputation of the platform is growing. Hundreds of prep, primary and senior schools nationwide — in both the independent and state sectors — are using Classlist to promote communication amongst the parent body.

At Christ Church Cathedral School in Oxford, the parents have been using Classlist for two years. Head Richard Murray admits that, when the platform was first suggested, he was worried that a parent portal could potentially become a place for negative discussion.

'But I decided that the benefits Classlist would bring outweighed that concern,' says Richard. 'That has been the case. The PA has alerted me to the things that are exercising parents, and so any issues are brought out into the open, discussed and resolved. That transparency facilitates the relationship between the school and the parents.'

'It's incredibly important to know that there is good inter-parent communication and good communication between the school and the parental body,' says Jane Crouch. 'It builds trust. It shows parents that the school is listening to them. It supports the social

and academic development of the students. Classlist is a way of strengthening that communication — particularly as it uses a medium that today's parents are very comfortable with. They feel at ease when they're talking online.'

Ease of communication doesn't mean disrespectful commentary. Classlist is a notably different environment to social media forums like Facebook or WhatsApp, and Classlist's member guidelines state that it must not be used to complain about the school or people connected with it. Kelly Walsh, Chair of the Parents' Association at St George's, an independent co-ed school in Weybridge, Surrey, says: 'One of the things that has really stood out for us with Classlist is that we haven't had to deal with even a single instance of inappropriate comment. Parents are very clear that this is not a social media site, so there's no banter — it's about helping the school and helping their children.'

Once a parent has signed up for Classlist they can send and receive class and private messages, join sub-groups within the site (such as volunteering or co-curricular activity groups) and arrange events such as coffees or private birthday parties themselves.

'This lifts our admin load,' says Richard. 'Parents use Classlist to

ask what prep the children have to do, or ask about missing uniform — requests that would formerly have gone through the office.’

The PTA can email the parent body directly to send reminders or ask for volunteers, and they can see how many people have read those emails. They can sell second-hand uniform on the site if they wish, along with tickets for events.

Headington Preparatory School for Girls have been using Classlist since the spring and every child has at least one parent on the site. For Ann Millar, Chair of the Form Reps at the school, one of the key benefits of the platform is the knowledge that all parents have received a message, and no one has slipped through the net.

‘Before we had Classlist, if I wanted to send a message out to parents I would have to pass it to the Form reps and the Form Reps would have to pass it on to the parents in their class,’ says Ann. ‘The system was patchy and time-consuming.’

She says that improving communication has helped the whole parent body to become more aware of what the PTA is doing. That helps to build a sense of community. ‘People have contacted me via Classlist who might not otherwise have done so,’ she adds. ‘And more people are volunteering to help with events.’

‘We’re not heavily focused on fundraising through our Prep Form Reps, that’s done through the whole school Parents’ Association,’ Jane says, ‘but I can see that Classlist would help to support fundraisers and other initiatives that draw on parent time. It’s another way for asking for help, if it’s needed.’

The platform also provides a way of maintaining a school’s relationship with parents, even when their children have left the school. Richard Murray believes that Classlist could help schools tap into the ‘Old Parents Network’.

‘We’re based in a university town,’ he says. ‘Many of our parents come



into the area through their work at the Oxford colleges. They don’t have long-standing roots in the town and the school can become a key social community for them. They form strong bonds with one another and with us, and they’re keen to retain those connections after their children move on. Classlist could become a way to help those parents keep their links with the school and to continue supporting us, long-term.’

That’s another of the joys of technology. It enables us to build closer relationships with one another. Classlist exists to improve parental communication. The closer parents grow, the deeper the bonds they’ll feel for the school. The deeper the bonds, the more they’ll do. In this virtuous circle, everyone benefits.

Happy's Circus

Established in 1992, Happy's Circus is the UK's market leader in taking Circus Entertainment into schools

We are a family owned professional all-human circus touring the UK dedicated to bringing the enchanting world of circus to schools. The shows are self-funding, providing a great family fun day, enabling parents, friends and pupils to get together at school to have fun!

We focus on presenting traditional circus in a contemporary style which appeals to adults and children. The shows feature specially selected international artists, original comedy and audience participation. We work directly with Head Teachers, Bursars and PTAs. Book us to give your school a really memorable event.

The shows are available 7 days a week and run for around two hours including a 30 minute interval. We perform in our all-weather Big Top with up to 600 seats. Weekend shows are at 14.00. Weekday shows start between 17.00 - 18.00 and the event can commence when school

ends to provide continuity with the day, offering a range of additional entertainment, food and drink.

Our aim is to bring the magical experience of the circus to your school and for everyone to have loads of fun! We work with you at the initial stages, helping you organise your event. To ensure success you need to promote the show and sell tickets face to face and online before the event. We provide you with a marketing plan. You only need to sell enough tickets to cover our fee, unless you want to make a profit.

The show alone will provide a fabulous day to socialise, creating a lovely shared memory. The bare minimum of helpers you need is six. If you provide a bar and some food, you will need to rope in more volunteers

You can also fundraise by offering a range of activities which we can guide you through.

How it works

- Decide when you would like us to visit and book the date ASAP
- Our experienced team will assist you, providing full marketing support
- If you are fundraising, you can raise additional funds by organising activities before the show, as well as during the 30 minute interval. Ideas include face painting, playing games, bouncy castle, sweets, cakes, drinks, BBQ, bar, selling pitches to outside vendors and sell a programme which includes advertising space for local businesses.
- Small schools can increase fundraising by joining forces with other small schools/organisations
- Approach local businesses for sponsorship and matched funding
- Fee payable 7 days after the event



Our visit may be the first time some children see a circus. The school can really enhance the experience by integrating Circus into the curriculum throughout the week leading up to our visit with painting and drawing circus themes, the history of circus, dressing up in circus costumes, showing our videos and organising fancy dress competitions on Circus Day.

What you need to do

- Advance Publicity and Ticket Sales.
- Provide suitable flat grassed area, minimum size 50m x 50m.
- Provide access to your site, if your school does not have a suitable area, then try your local council, they hire out many recreational areas.
- Meet us on arrival.
- Provide helpers on the day.
- Allow us to stay overnight after the event.

Happy's Circus is fully self-contained with innovative sound and lighting technology with light transport which makes us ideal for sites with limited access. Our staff are RBB checked and abide by a strict code of conduct.

Testimonial

'Pilgrims Pre-Preparatory School, Bedford booked Happy's Circus in April 2016 (and twice before that) and we've always been delighted with their service. The booking process was very straightforward: the office staff were always ready to answer our questions and help us to tailor the event to our individual needs. Communication from Happy's was excellent, with regular emails from Angie and the team. They sent us a brilliant information pack containing posters and a CD-ROM with everything you need to know to put on the event, including ideas for fundraising, marketing, site layout, brochures, and so much more. The focus is definitely on helping schools make their event a fundraising success.

On the day, the circus arrived and set up quickly and efficiently, leaving the



members of the PTA to concentrate on food and fundraising stalls. The circus staff were professional and courteous throughout, and got on with the set-up quickly and efficiently.

The show itself is always incredibly impressive – The Happy's Circus team are true professionals, and everyone was amazed by the expertise of the performers. The show is genuinely entertaining for both children and adults. We wouldn't hesitate to recommend Happy's Circus to other schools.' — Carrie Clarke, PTA Secretary, Pilgrims Pre-Preparatory School, Bedford.

Invite parents, friends and pupils to share a Happy's Circus Family Fun Day

When you book Happy's Circus you are putting your trust in our

experienced team. We will support you with a marketing plan and advice for your event including an action plan, an event pack, tickets, posters, educational teaching resources, photographs, full risk assessments, Health & Safety information and confirmation of our £10M public liability insurance.

See our advert on page 50 for more details.

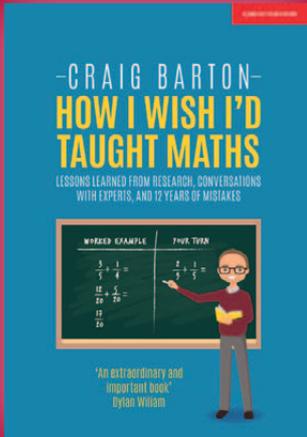
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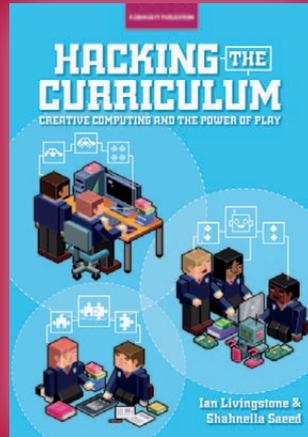
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How I Wish I'd Taught Maths

Lessons learned from research, conversations with experts, and 12 years of mistakes

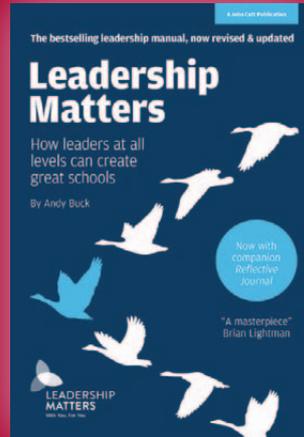
By Craig Barton
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Creative computing and the power of play

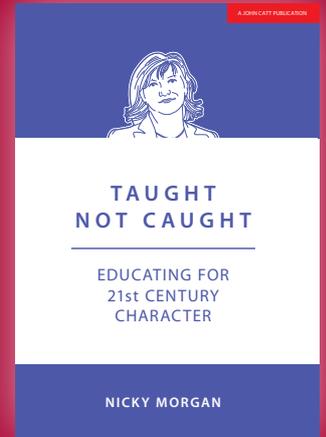
By Ian Livingstone and Shahneila Saeed
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How leaders at all levels can create great schools

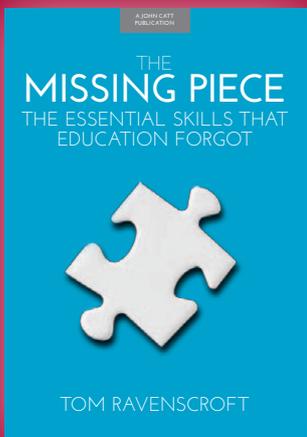
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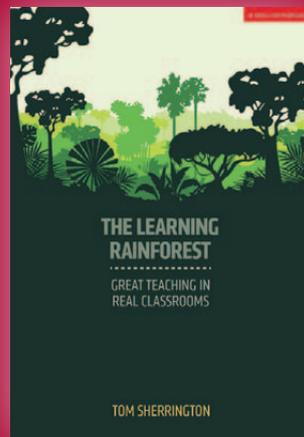
By Tom Ravenscroft
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What Does This Look Like in the Classroom?

Bridging the gap between research and practice

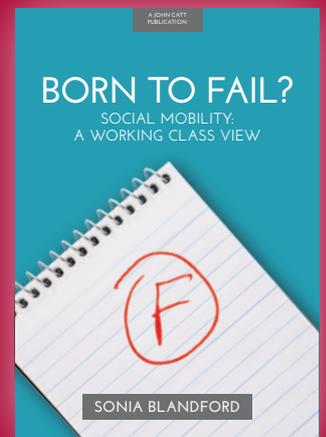
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By Sonia Blandford
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The SATIPS Broadsheets are a superb practical resource for schools. Each issue, we intend to highlight a different subject area.

SATIPS

Broadsheet

Support and training in Prep, Primary and Senior Schools

We have recharged our batteries, visited new places, galleries and museums, had time to look at websites and magazines, read books...and reflect on the work from the previous year. I have bought some inspirational bric-a-brac from charity shops to fuel drawings and have taken countless photographs.

Chris Ofili is used by many GCSE Art students, inspiring colour, pattern and texture. I visited his exhibition at the National Gallery, London, expecting the same pieces with layers of spots of paint. Small watercolours and a series of sketchbook line drawings with economical use of line greeted visitors — some people walked out, uninspired. However, if they had continued into the main room, the jaw dropping tapestry would have greeted them — confirming the exhibition title, *Weaving Magic*. The exotic image took five weavers three years to translate and weave his watercolour into a giant 5m tapestry. Grey painted women dance around the ‘floor to ceiling’ frieze painted by Royal Opera House scenic painters. Then the tapestry is an explosion of colour with every stitch made from several



coloured strands to create the shimmer and sing. It is mesmerising and uplifting, drawing you in to check that it really is made from wool. The video in another room shows Ofili explaining the process and the painstaking work of the weavers. I left wanting to pick up some watercolours and root through my sewing box for wools and cottons.

Local artists into schools

Inviting parents or local people into school can be a memorable experience for children and teachers; the makers also enjoy explaining their craft too. We invited a couple of local weavers into school to tie in with our weaving project. They demonstrated five types of looms and showed examples of their work from book marks and scarves to creative wall-hangings and items of clothing. They gave talks about the history of weaving and explained that it was traditionally a man’s role. Children then handled the wools and made items and had the opportunity to try using the looms. I am always fascinated at how much information the children are able to recall from such visitors.

Local Gallery

Our local gallery is run as a charity and has developed from a small shop on the fringe of town into part café now. Selling local produce, it sees meeting of parents and toddlers, art workshops, weekend craft demonstrations and stalls, children’s art workshops, artist in residence and evening musical events. It now sees a section of the gallery dedicated to displaying children’s art and has nominated an education officer to liaise with schools.

Giacometti film

Final Portrait, created by Stanley Tucci, based the amusing movie on the true story of how Alberto Giacometti invited a critic to sit for him. The comedy is based on Lord’s own memoirs of how Giacometti assured him the portrait would take a couple of hours and every day he repainted and

eventually declared that art is never finished. The story tells of their friendship. This film sits perfectly with the Giacometti retrospective exhibition at Tate Modern. There is a great review of the exhibition, including the experience of one of his sitters, and two artists inspired by his work in *Tate Etc.* a must-read magazine to subscribe to.

Mindfulness and Art

This summer, a pop up shop appeared in our local village for two weeks only. It offered workshops in lino and screen-printing, as well as selling a range of beautiful, contemporary designed, printed and ceramic products. Tea towels, lampshades, cushions, notebooks, pencil cases, as well as porcelain pots. I love well-designed and crafted local products and like to support local start-up businesses, but this had a twist. All the products were produced by adults as part of Designs In Mind — a mind Self Help Group. This is a mental health support group that provides a creative, progressive and entrepreneurial environment for people who are in touch with Adult Mental Health Services.

The aim is for people to achieve their full potential at their own pace through:

- Public art commissions
- A designed retail range of high quality ceramics and printed goods.
- Learning new skills in Art workshops
- Deliver workshops

Designs in Mind tells a story whilst celebrating the creative talents and provides opportunities to work with both new and traditional craft techniques. It challenges stigma and transforms lives so that individuals can realise their artistic potential. Peer support and mentoring is encouraged. Opportunities are also available for work placements and volunteering for creative arts students, students studying health and social care and others.

The organisers also bring their workshops into schools, informing about the powerful benefits of Art as well as learning new printing methods.

Successful projects

Self-portraits — Students spent a whole term developing this project. They photographed each other or took selfies, inspired by the Selfie exhibition at the Saatchi Gallery. They had to use a piece of African fabric within the shot, making a headscarf, covering their face or shoulders etc.



The strong colour, pattern and design created dramatic images. Another African fabric was photographed and enlarged using Photoshop and the portrait cut and laid on top. Some preferred to create this manually with scissors and glue. A1 card was scaled up and the image drawn out. There was lots of editing with erasers before the tone was built using a full range of pencils. Several portrait artists were used as inspiration, such as the cross hatching technique of Lucien Freud.

Some needed more help and encouragement, but the class had plenty of sound role models sitting around them. The patterns encouraged individuality — using acrylics, inks and various printing methods including colographs, press print, stencilling, and mono-printing.

The results, when displayed together were dramatic.

Shiny vintage cars — Any garage with their chrome, reflections, shiny metal and curved shapes is an inspiration. I used the British Heritage Motor Museum with its classic car collection. Photographs were used by the children to practise their Photoshop skills to crop, lighten, adjust, change contrast etc. A gridded system was used to enlarge accurately up to A2 and layers of materials were added. Inks and washes, then different paints before dry materials of coloured pencil and oil pastel. The success was the composition.

Statues — Year 5 were inspired by the carved and colourful wooden statues by Jim Dine. They drew statues from a local museum, simplifying the folded fabrics into block shapes. Sketchbook drawings using thick and thin pens

of log slices were then screen-printed onto coloured paper. These were cut out and collaged on, using carbon paper. Oil pastel with scratched in pencil lines were added. Background shades of green paint were mixed to unify them in display.

An exhibition called Maya, in Liverpool Museum, was the inspiration for A1 sized drawings by Year 3. The stone artefacts were interesting talking points but the large format proved an initial challenge. They worked from photographs to see the dark areas to create a 3D effect. The texture was added by holding and using the pencils in various ways. Graphite powder, graphite sticks, putty rubber were all used to create their intentions. The children grew enormously in confidence, ability to sustain focus and their drawing ability.



IAPS

We were lucky enough to have some winning work in the IAPS Art Competition. The winners had their work displayed in a small art gallery alongside the regular work for sale. It was a great idea that reproductions of their work would be sold and the profits used to fund scholarships for underprivileged children.

One of our pupils had produced many monoprint portraits of figures, using newspapers, politicians and Afghani portraits as his inspiration. He used the lunchtime sessions to develop these. You could clearly see an interest, close observation and natural talent for confident mark-making. These sessions are important for keen and able art pupils of all ages, and allow us to tap into individual pupils' interest and skills.

Is 3D a dying art form in the classrooms?

It is during the summer holidays that we consider our curriculums that we will deliver in September. But, are we covering all areas of the art curriculum? Are we giving the children enough opportunities to develop the tactile skills and problem solving of working three dimensionally? If we are incorporating modelling, are we giving them enough choices of materials? 3D work can be expensive — materials like modroc, firing clay, then there is safe storage of wet work in progress, naming. Then finished work display. Hour long lessons see a rushed process of getting material out and putting them away before the next class comes in. Helping students to solve problems takes more time with each pupil.

There is increased health and safety involved with plaster, clay dust, cutting tools etc. Some schools have worked small. Our youngest children love working with play-doh, salt dough but often the experience doesn't continue. Some parents may refrain from children making a mess on the kitchen table as invariably everything is used at once as they visualise their ideas — paint, glue, newspaper, string, something to make holes. Despite the experiences we give them in class, some children are more hands on and can visualise and design with ease. One of my own children during the holidays has used the entire contents of the recycling, including their new school shoe boxes to create volcanoes and football pitches, whilst my other son has no interest in 'making' and used his box to store his Lego in. The maker has built himself a tree house — of sorts. It hasn't quite materialised in the ideas he verbalised but

he wasn't short of creativity and he spent many happy afternoons just knocking nails and offcuts of wood into our apple tree, drilling holes and winding rope.

Parent and child events

We have continued with our highly popular art and designing events at weekends. For a couple of hours, great teamwork and fun is key to the success of the session. It does need planning, having materials organised and time to clear away, as they disappear with their objects they have made.

Recommended Books

Pattern & the secrets of lasting design by Emma Bridgewater. This was a lovely holiday read with images of her sponge-wear and you can see how her childhood inspired her designs.

The Craft Companion by Ramona Barry & Rebecca Jobson.

This has 33 crafting techniques from embroidery and clay to collage and baskets. What makes this book different are the images of more than 150 contemporary artists' work and offers 170 project ideas.

Slowing Down

We are under pressure for children to work fast, work to deadlines, work spontaneously but my summer reading included a book called *Slow Stitch* — mindful and contemplative textile art, which emphasised the importance of making time for working slowly and methodically through techniques.

Welcome to the team



We bid a warm welcome to Ben Mono, Head of Geography at Eagle House, as our new Geography Broadsheet editor. Educated at Mill Hill and Southampton University, Ben taught at Breaside Prep, Bromley and Mowden School (Lancing Prep) before taking on his current role at Eagle House. A Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society and the IAPS Geography Leader for District 10, Ben brings a wealth of experience to the role and we are delighted to have him join the SATIPS team of eminent Broadsheet editors.

Employment History

2002 – Present: Head of Geography, Eagle House School, Sandhurst

1998 – 2001: Head of History and Geography, Mowden School (Lancing Prep), Hove

1996 – 1998: Teacher of History and Geography, Breaside Prep School, Bromley

Education

1994 – 1995: Cheltenham & Gloucester College of Higher Education, Secondary PGCE (History and Geography)

1990 – 1993: University of Southampton, Modern History and Politics with Philosophy

1984 – 1989: Mill Hill School, London

Professional

SATIPS Geography Broadsheet Editor since 2017

Recognised Apple Teacher since 2016

IAPS Geography Leader for District 10 since 2013

Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society

Member of the Geographical Association

SATIPS

Support and training in Prep Schools

1

Why should my school be in membership?

- **SATIPS** offers a breadth of training, networking and supportive opportunities to schools in membership
 - It is the **ONLY** organisation in Britain which is dedicated to the needs of teaching staff in prep schools.
- **SATIPS** is absolutely concerned with catering for staff ranging from NQT to Head of Department or Senior Leadership Team. We also aim to cover all age ranges from Nursery to Key Stage 3.

SATIPS offers a four part core of activities and support:

Broadsheets

These are published each term, covering a wide range of curriculum interests as well as specific concerns: e.g. Senior Management, Special Needs and Pre-Prep.

Broadsheet articles are usually written by practising prep school teachers with occasional contributions from leaders in their field. This ensures that whatever the article is about the reader can be certain that he or she will not only share subject and age-group relevance but also cultural assumptions: e.g. parental expectations or what 'works'. Writing articles for the Broadsheets encourages staff to reflect on their classroom practice and curriculum development.

Broadsheets are edited by prep school teachers who, with proven track records in their field, have taken on the role of subject ambassador.

Further information about the Broadsheets can be found on the website.

Courses and INSET

SATIPS offers a wide range of training courses, conference and other in-service opportunities. We can advise on and facilitate INSET trainings days for schools in most areas of the country.

Courses are designed to cover a wide range of interests.

Attention is given to course feedback which helps to shape our programme.

School requests for training is particularly encouraged.

The programme is primarily directed at the classroom practitioner.

New to the programme this year are certificated courses, more details of which are on the website.

Our trainers and consultants are very carefully selected.

Our aim is to always make use of known experts in their field.

Full details of the training programme can be found on the website.

Member schools receive a substantial discount on course fees.

SATIPS²

Support and training in Prep Schools

Competitions, Exhibitions and events for pupils

SATIPS offers a variety of pupil-focused events. Over many years schools have enjoyed entering their pupils in events that have a nationwide attraction with high standards. These events include:

- **SATIPS** Challenge (annual general knowledge quiz)
 - National Handwriting Competition
 - Poetry Competition
 - SATIPSKI
 - Annual Art Exhibition
 - Challenge Harry Paget (pagethar@papplewick.org.uk)
 - National Handwriting Competition Paul Jackson (ejackson22@hotmail.com)
 - Poetry Competition Stephen Davies (shd@bryanston.co.uk)
 - SATIPSKI Gillian Gilyead (gilliangilyead@aol.com)
 - Annual Art Exhibition Alayne Parsley (A.Parsley@cheltenhamcollege.org)
- Full details of all these events are at <http://satips.org/competitions>

Prep School Magazine

'Prep School' is published three times a year. It offers readers in prep schools a broad range of authoritative articles on educational issues.

What next? Joining SATIPS or seeking further information?

We are proud of what **SATIPS** offers. With all Council members and Officers still working in prep schools we believe we understand the demands on staff working in school and are here to support them.

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SATIPS courses and directory

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Courses and events

A selection of forthcoming courses for Spring 2018:

| | | |
|----------|---|---------|
| 22/01/18 | Preparing for a full quality ISI inspection | London |
| 30/01/18 | Preparing for an ISI compliance inspection (including boarding) | London |
| 30/01/18 | Emotional Health and Resilience | London |
| 05/02/18 | ISI Marking and Feedback | London |
| 08/02/18 | Outstanding Middle Leadership | London |
| 19/02/18 | Leading Prep School Music to Outstanding | London |
| 20/02/18 | Using critical thinking and problem solving | London |
| 21/02/18 | An introduction to music teaching for the non-specialist | London |
| 26/02/18 | Preparing for a full quality ISI inspection | London |
| 27/02/18 | Bringing coding and computing to life EYFS and KS1 | London |
| 01/03/18 | What NQTs and RQTs want and need | London |
| 05/03/18 | Embedding growth mindsets in schools and classrooms | London |
| 09/03/18 | Staff wellbeing and pastoral care | London |
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On ethical leadership...

Over recent months, I have been working with a group exploring the meaning of the term 'ethical leadership'. Almost every week brings a fresh news story, which questions decisions made by schools on a range of ethical issues, whether it be sixth form admissions, use of budgets and resources or policy on attendance or exclusions. As our school system has become increasingly diverse, with responsibility invested in individual schools or groups of schools, the behaviour of individual organisations has increasingly been a matter for them. With central and local government exerting less and less control, how do we all take responsibility for establishing a common set of professional values?

To respond to this challenge, I have been asked to join a newly established commission on ethical leadership. The commission is broad-based, drawing together state and independent schools, universities, the College of Teaching, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools and the Chair of the Committee for Standards in Public Life. I was honoured to be asked to join the group, partly as a result of my work with school principals internationally.

The letter of invitation to those serving on the commission points out: 'Most established professions have such a code: education has professional standards but no codes of ethics. As leadership organisations for those entrusted with the formation of the nation's young, we believe a code would help establish and clarify the ethical beliefs and values that motivate and direct our work'.

The work of the commission is likely to be challenging. We are already grappling with questions such as 'why have a code of ethics?' and 'what can we learn from the ethical standards used by other professions?'

There are a whole series of reasons for establishing an ethical code, but the most important one of all is that it will ultimately be of benefit to the children that we all serve.

One of my colleagues, a headteacher from Australia, pointed out recently that in one sense ethical leadership is easy, since the priority is to 'just do the right thing'. However, as she wisely observed, the difficult bit is the question that follows on from this: 'how do I know what the right thing is?'

Let us know what you think of Dr Peter Kent's views – get in touch with us at editor@prepschoolmag.co.uk

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