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Contents

Summer ²⁰¹⁸

ISSUE 92

22



28



38



40



- 5 From the editor
- 7 How high can you fly with broken wings? *Dick Moore*
- 10 A warm welcome for... *Stephen Coverdale*
- 12 There's a new chief in town, *Amanda McLeod*
- 14 Reasons to read, *Paul Murray*
- 17 Keeping rugby alive, *Stefan de Bruin*
- 18 Loss of the enigmatic educator, *Tom Halliday*
- 21 Preparing students for tomorrow, *Tom Ryan*
- 22 The beautiful game in our schools, *Mark Dickson*
- 25 The SATIPS Poetry Competition, *SATIPS*
- 26 The legacy of inspirational teachers, *Andrew Roberts*
- 28 Preparing for an art scholarship, *Janet Miller*
- 30 The power of mindfulness, *Sheetal Kachhela*
- 32 Raising the roof, *Ian Morgan*
- 34 WoT! is your story? *Ian Morris*
- 35 A celebration of arts education, *Julie Finch*
- 36 Embracing a 'no rescue' policy, *Susan McKay*
- 38 The joys of the house system, *Philippa Studd*
- 40 The engineers of tomorrow, *Nigel Helliwell*
- 43 Blast from the past, *Dr Peter Kent*
- 44 FOMO and the book, *Charlotte Weatherley*
- 46 A swimming pool or a water park? *Neil Rollings*
- 48 Treachery at Traitors' Quay, *Alex Osiatynski*
- 50 Participation, respect, excellence and independence, *James Mundell*
- 52 To act or not to act, *Patricia Ellis*
- 54 Out of order? *Grant Murray*
- 55 SATIPS Broadsheet: Pastoral Development and PSHCE
- 61 SATIPS courses and directory
- 62 Viewpoint

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From the editor



Wellness, mindfulness and the general health of our school communities have been areas of significant interest to me personally for several years. It has led to a long association with Sir Anthony Seldon and support for all the work that he has been doing in the field. Between us, we organised a

conference entitled 'Mindfulness in Schools' at Loughborough University four years ago. There is no doubt that awareness of the issues involving mental health in our schools has increased immeasurably. However, as in all areas of school life, there is never room for complacency and I am, therefore, extremely grateful to Dick Moore for his very personal clarion call to us all. If a review of what we are doing for our communities helps just one of our pupils or staff – particularly as we are in examination season – then we can feel justifiably rewarded for our vigilance.

I have had the privilege of being at the sharp end of the Handwriting Competition. It has been an uplifting experience from the outset. Firstly, permissions had to be sought from some of our most eminent modern poets for their work to be used. It was

a delight to receive their positive and appreciative responses. Thereafter, our local postman was kept very busy delivering 3,000 individual entries from schools from as far afield as Durham and Doha! Once the initial sift had taken place, the new chief judge, Amanda McLeod, got down to the serious business. This year the winning school will receive a cup kindly donated by former Chief Judge, Patricia Lovett MBE whilst prizes to individuals will be provided by our supporting partner, Nexus. On behalf of SATIPS, may I thank everyone who has been involved with the handwriting competition and, indeed, all the competitions which our organisation runs.

May I wish you all a happy and enjoyable summer term. It will be busy and involved on every front but the holidays beckon once the dust has settled on another academic year.

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How high can you fly with broken wings?



Dick Moore was an English teacher, rugby coach and housemaster and then, for nearly 23 years, a headmaster of a co-educational day and boarding school. He is now a Mental Health First Aid instructor and a trainer with the Charlie Waller Memorial Trust

Is the emotional and mental health of the pupils in your school your top priority? We all know that young people today are facing pressures that educational leaders never experienced during their school days. Schools and universities, families and governments are driving young people to fly higher, whilst at the same time doing little or nothing to strengthen the wings needed to lift them ever closer to the sun. If what follows provokes or irritates, I make no apology. I have, frankly, heard too many platitudes, seen too much box ticking and read too often of high-minded intentions and have come to the conclusion that there are two primary intentions amongst the majority of school leaders. One is to safeguard or build upon one's reputation; the other is to cover one's backside. Neither will do anything to dent what is now widely recognised as being an epidemic of poor mental health amongst young people. All headteachers proclaim that 'our school is a happy school'. Is yours? Is it really?

The death of the third of my four sons triggered my interest in poor

adolescent emotional and mental health. Barney died over six years ago, at a time when mental health was only beginning to creep onto the educational agenda. It is now fully on the agenda, which makes it shameful that so little has really changed in the intervening years, despite incontrovertible evidence that substantial change is essential. There has been a great deal of hot air and government promises and glitzy conferences and shifting of blame and earnest determination that something must be done. But, at the end of the day, very little of substance has happened. Young people are every bit as at risk as they were when Barney died, and probably more so. Many of them are trying to fly high despite having wings made brittle by the very environment that should be strengthening them – education.

As well as acting as a mentor/ listening ear to young people and their parents, I have now visited over 300 schools in the UK and overseas to talk to staff, parents and teachers and to deliver Mental Health First Aid courses. It has come as a pleasant surprise that an increasing

proportion schools requesting such visits are prep schools, many of which fully appreciate that they create the template for what follows as their pupils enter the potentially turbulent years of adolescence.

I often invite schools to consider what a mentally healthy school might look like. Every school is different, of course, and these features are not cast in stone but nor are they especially challenging to implement. You might like to consider what your school does:

- Is building emotional, academic and social resilience formally included within the school's aims? Life can be difficult, painful, boring, and frustrating. It can involve failure. And exposing young people to such difficulties and supporting them appropriately is an essential learning experience.
- Is your Child Protection and/ or Safeguarding Policy almost entirely generic? Most schools seem to be content with ticking boxes rather than really exploring ways of safeguarding pupil health and welfare. Of course, third party abuse should be included



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in such documents, but so should poor emotional or mental health. Indeed, arguably such health risks represent a greater threat to well-being, both in terms of numbers and risk to life. I would suggest that this policy should also include a Suicide-Safer School policy along the lines suggested by the excellent publication by Papyrus 'Building Suicide Safer Schools'. This can be downloaded here: <https://www.papyrus-uk.org/about/our-campaigns>

- Do you have a well-being policy that includes both advice on staying mentally well, depression, disordered eating, anxiety disorder and self-harm, as well as appropriate referral protocols? An extensive and exhaustive draft policy may be found here: <https://www.cwmt.org.uk/mental-health-policy>
- Do ALL teachers of EVERY subject at EVERY level embed the five core skills of Social and Emotional Learning within their teaching: Self-Awareness, Social Awareness, Self-Management, Relationship Skills and Responsible Decision Making?
- Do all staff, but especially medical and pastoral staff, have appropriate training in the recognition of, and response to, common mental health issues? A staff INSET is one thing: it is much better to train a member of staff to become a Mental Health First Aid instructor, who can then cascade training down to colleagues.
- Do you have a network of professionals to support your pupils when their needs require it? One school counsellor will never be enough to meet the varying needs of all children in need of professional support, just as one SenCo would have a team to assist in meeting the learning needs of various pupils. For that reason, a school should develop a network of support inside the school and outside it to include mentors, listeners, and therapists – clinical and otherwise. Knowledge of how the area CAMHS operate and prioritises is essential.
- Does your school have plans in place to respond properly to gender and sexuality challenges? The number of young people who are uncertain about their gender is growing daily and schools need not only to ensure that staff are trained and available to answer questions sensitively and accurately, but also that the school has considered its response to such challenges, logistical and otherwise.
- Is there a culture of proactivity rather than simply reactivity at your school? Extending the good work of many Early Years departments in teaching about emotions and, especially, about emotional pain and strategies to enable pupils to cope with emotional pain is essential. This might involve, for example, endeavouring to counter millennia of male-ness and the seeing of any vulnerability as weakness ('man-up') or teaching alternatives to self-harming behaviour. Expecting young people simply to pick up such skills along the way is not good enough.
- Do you regularly debate aims and methodologies of education? The human brain is struggling to evolve quickly enough to keep up with the pace of social and technological change and yet our approach to education has barely changed. What sort of world are we preparing children for? What skills and capacities will our young people need to cope with the intense pressures of our increasingly high octane, fast moving world of immediacy and intense demands.
- Does your school operate largely unilaterally or do you work collaboratively with other schools in order to generate change? Is your school bold and daring, prepared to go out on a limb to challenge those who put their perceived business interests before the needs

and welfare of children? What, for example, have you done about the obnoxious and toxic practice of pre-testing?

I find my mood fluctuates between optimism and profound scepticism. A few weeks ago, I was invited by some sixth formers to visit a selective girls' high school in Hertfordshire and I was appalled at the lack of safeguarding and proactive pastoral care in place, as well as the obsession with academic results at the apparent expense of almost everything else. Then, soon after, I visited a prep school where the staff are utterly committed to building resilience and challenging the poor educational practice of exam factories. Prep schools are often instrumental in building in their pupils a strong emotional template – a template that will be essential as those children begin to meet the heightened challenges of adolescence. Should I be surprised that many prep schools appear to be leading the way in this respect? I have no doubt that like-minded schools, working together, could generate real change and create an educational environment where young people still aim to fly high, but with wings strong enough to withstand the heat of the sun. But, as one chair of governors of a highly prestigious school remarked to me, 'it will be difficult to work so closely with our competitors.' And that, for me, about sums it up.

Find out more about the Charlie Waller Memorial Trust at www.cwmt.org.uk

A warm welcome for...

There are many folk in our schools who have had incredibly varied careers. *Stephen Coverdale*, the new Financial Director for SATIPS, is certainly one of those and we warmly welcome him into the organisation

It is a privilege to have been invited to join SATIPS as its new Finance Officer and to have the opportunity to work alongside some very knowledgeable and committed officers and council members who all have the same clear aims and aspirations: to provide the best possible support, guidance and information for the members of SATIPS, the schools and the dedicated senior leaders and teachers who work within them.

At the outset, I must pay tribute to my predecessor, Christine Bilton, who, for the past five years or so, has overseen the financial affairs of SATIPS in a meticulous manner, working tirelessly to ensure SATIPS remains on a sure footing, questioning and challenging where necessary, but always providing sound advice. She will be a hard act to follow, of that there is no doubt.

Having been born in York, I was brought up near that great city, which partially explains my lifelong devotion to York City football club, which is unfortunately not so great at the moment. Schooling at St. Peter's, York, one of the oldest schools in the country, was a prelude to four very happy years at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, where I gained two separate degrees in Law and four cricket 'blues'. During this era, Cambridge and Oxford played far more first class matches against counties than they do now and some



of the greatest players in the world would be included in the opposition. In fact, although I did qualify as a solicitor and subsequently practised for a brief period, professional sport has been the focus of much of my life.

I had ten seasons as a player for Yorkshire county cricket club, understudying the late David Bairstow, the father of the current England wicket-keeper, Jonny Bairstow, who, incidentally, is another product of St. Peter's. As David was seemingly indestructible, never injured but selected for England on far fewer occasions than his talent merited, my opportunities in Yorkshire's first team were limited.

However, the overall experience proved invaluable for, after several years of working for the BBC when my cricket career had ended, broadcasting and producing sports programmes, I was appointed as Chief Executive of Northamptonshire County Cricket Club in 1985, staying in that role for the next 19 years. The turnover of senior level personnel is so great in modern day sport that one rather doubts that others will stay so long at the administrative helm of one professional sporting organisation in the future.

Although employed by Northamptonshire, I was a member of a number of committees dealing with significant issues affecting the game of cricket and its governance, and for three years was a Director of the England and Wales Cricket Board and member of the ECB's Management Board, having previously been a member of the group that established the structure and constitution of the ECB itself.

My post with Northamptonshire was high profile, constantly in the public eye, subject to media scrutiny, and requiring the ability to communicate effectively with a variety of stakeholders. Throughout, I was responsible for all facets of the business and associated activities – financial arrangements and planning, marketing, and venue and facility

SATIPS

Support and training in Prep Schools

management – all of which required a hands-on approach, to ensure that deadlines and the highest achievable standards were met. In those respects, the responsibilities were in essence the very same as those facing senior leaders in virtually every other business or organisation. Professional sporting clubs have to be run as businesses to survive, let alone prosper.

Subsequently, after several years as a company director for an events management company, I entered the world of education in March 2009, as a Business Manager for Cognita Schools, which is now one of largest providers of private education in both the UK and also throughout the world. Having spent almost nine years describing my role to outsiders as being that of a ‘glorified School Bursar’, overseeing the non-academic aspects of one of the largest schools in the Cognita group and whose pupils ranged from one year olds to those taking A Levels, the challenges and pressures facing those who govern and manage private schools have become all too obvious. Indeed, they seem to have increased significantly.

Nine years ago, the global financial crisis appeared to be at its height. One wonders whether the consequences have totally disappeared, for there remains a legacy of a lack of long-term confidence among some

parents, or prospective parents, which on occasions may inhibit their willingness to take lengthy commitments about funding regarding the education of their children. Equally, while London and the South East appear buoyant economically speaking, that is less true of other regions where economic pressures remain all too real.

Within schools, Compliance and Safeguarding have become ever more critical issues to be confronted on a daily basis, not merely, of course, to satisfy Inspection regimes – though the latter seem to focus on those aspects far more than they did even half a decade ago. Parental expectations appear to be greater, and while on occasions those may be unrealistic, by the very fact of paying fees to schools, some parents believe vehemently that they are entitled to have their lofty expectations fully met, increasing the pressures on senior management.

Social media has grown, indeed exploded, during the last decade. On the one hand, it offers greater marketing and promotional opportunities, but also provides the means for instant and widespread dissemination of criticism and gossip that, however untrue or unfounded, can cause serious reputational harm and damage. Most serious organisations and businesses now

have to dedicate time and staff both to utilise and also to monitor social media outlets. The impacts of curriculum changes are all too obvious to those who either have to deliver those changes or provide the necessary new resources. However, schools have to recognise the significant implications on them from more general legislative changes with which they are required to comply even if, on first impression, they may not seem of total relevance. Indeed, on the very near horizon, there will be significant changes to data protection legislation with the introduction of the new General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). With seemingly more stringent requirements imposed on those who retain and process personal data, and far greater penalties that could easily result in the closure of businesses found to be in breach, the urgent necessity to become familiar with the new In these all too interesting times, as the Chinese seemingly wish for us, SATIPS clearly has an important role to play through identifying best practice and supporting and providing training opportunities for those who work ‘at the coalface’. In turn we look forward to your support through membership and attendance at the various courses and events staged throughout each year.

There's a new chief in town



The ever-popular SATIPS National Handwriting Competition is now in full swing and children all over the country will be applying great care and effort to their entries. We warmly welcome our new Chief Judge, *Amanda McLeod*

It is with great honour that I have accepted the post of Chief Judge of The SATIPS National Handwriting Competition but, also, with huge trepidation. To follow in Patricia Lovett's footsteps is a daunting task and I hope that I will prove worthy.

Having gained my PGCE at Roehampton, I worked as an EYFS teacher in both the state and independent sectors, until I qualified as a Dyslexia Specialist and founded The McLeod Centre for Learning. The McLeod Centre is a London-based, CReSTeD registered setting that caters for pupils with SEND. We also specialise in entrance and higher public examination preparation, teach touch-typing and, of course, handwriting. However, its origins stem from humble stock as I set up my first classroom in my spare bedroom. From 2007 to 2013, I gradually turned my entire home into classrooms. My bedroom was the first to be modified while I slept in the sitting room; my sitting room was next while I slept on an airbed mattress in my kitchen (fridges are truly noisy!). Finally, during renovations to my current premises, my kitchen became a classroom/office and I made myself homeless. I experienced a year of shunting myself from flats that had en-suite bathrooms with televisions on the wall, to properties where I

would organise cockroach races in the kitchen sink and forever bless my soon-to-be fiancé for humanely finishing off the baby mouse that we found half dead, squeaking in a corner.

My interest in handwriting stems from being taught to write. We all remember our inspirational teachers and, Mrs Colquhoun, when I was four years old, was certainly one of those. On wet play days, she taught us to waltz, polka and Scottish Reel. In handwriting, we were introduced to letters through sight and sound: watching her scrape her chalk across the 6ft wide blackboard to create huge versions of said form and, all the while, filling our minds with vivid tales. The story to the letter 'a' was: 'I took my dog for a walk all the way around the pond but realised I had forgotten his lead. Taking the straight short cut back up, I got it, retraced my steps back down and carried on with my walk along the path.' My imagination was captured and I eagerly awaited each new letter story to open my world to writing. That being said, I also recollect my fear of being found out, desperate not to displease. I knew that I was incorrectly forming the number eight and, for months, carefully concealed my lack of knowledge by drawing two abutting circles very carefully.

On the day I was spotted (I had left a slight gap between the two), instead of the tirade I was dreading, I was simply told that I didn't know how to do it and that the correct way was to: 'Make an 'S' and go home straight!' So, many years before Carol Dweck had conceived the idea of positive mindset, I positively experienced the importance of being taught without condemnation and consequently allowed to flourish.

Becoming involved with The National Handwriting Association (NHA) was my re-introduction to the handwriting world as an adult. Through their training, the doors to this world were fully opened and it was thrilling to be invited to become a committee member of the NHA in 2011. It continues to be inspiring to work alongside those who are conducting the UK's current top research into handwriting; to be invited to trial pens during the design process and review other handwriting products before they hit the market; to visit schools to train teachers; and to have represented the NHA in the media. In 2015, I co-authored an article in the NHA's journal on the merits of handwriting versus typing. In it I wrote:

With the increasing use of information technology in the classroom, at home and in the working environment, the

necessity of learning to write by hand is being increasingly questioned. The apparent ease with which it is possible to produce legible, typed documents quickly, would appear to negate the need for handwriting; and, with the development of rapidly improving handwriting recognition software, in tandem with touch screen hardware, handwriting on paper may not be the norm for the future.

However, the importance of handwriting cannot be over emphasised, particularly whilst the majority of school and university students still complete all of their academic exams by handwriting on paper. Academic evidence suggests that writing by hand has an impact on developing reading skills. Children who are encouraged to practise handwriting letters and words, make quicker gains in reading (James & Engelhardt, 2012); and children who are encouraged to join, gain even more advantage. Handwriting promotes better conceptual understanding in subjects such as algebra (Anthony et al, 2007) and results in higher quality of written composition (Webb et al, 2013). Mueller & Oppenheimer, 2014 and Horbury, 2016, found handwriting to be the better medium

for recall and understanding compared to typed notes.

As adults, we use handwriting much less frequently but we do use it. Visiting Accident and Emergency recently, I saw that patients' medical records were recorded by hand. In 2014, when I appeared by telephone link on The Wright Stuff, Channel 5, the entire panel could be seen to be taking notes by hand (presumably to help them remember the conversation and to clarify their thoughts before speaking).

I am the author and series consultant of Scholastic's handwriting series Reception to Year 6 (Teacher's Books and Workbooks). In the Teacher's Book (Reception to Year 2), I devote a beginning chapter on the underlying skills that are needed for the development of an automatic and efficient handwriting style: gross motor, crossing the midline, proprioception, visual perception and fine motor. As well as giving advice for left-handers, every letter that is introduced is accompanied by examples of how it could be badly formed and how to correct it. I wanted my series to act as handwriting 'bibles' to help teachers and parents teach, support and correct handwriting: from beginning pattern making to letter formation, style and speed

building. Being a dyslexia specialist, I also wanted my books to promote reading capabilities. In no exercise, therefore, is a child expected to write or read a letter/word that hasn't been introduced already.

With regard to this year's National Handwriting Competition, I will certainly be relying on my dedicated and trusted SATIPS family to guide me during my initial footsteps or, rather, handprints! Entries for each category that I judge to be worthy of mention will be pieces that reflect correct: shape, size, placement on the line, spacing, slant, joins (following the National Curriculum) and style.

Over the next few years, I wish to introduce a SEND element to the competition; to reflect the efforts of those who try '150%' but rarely achieve the result they are looking for. As a result of their writing, these writers can often be judged negatively and I will write more about this in my first competition report. Certainly, this new class will have to be carefully planned to ensure a level playing field for each candidate and, to this end, I would welcome any thoughts that you may have over the next few months.

In the meantime, I wish every candidate the best of luck in their writing this year.



Reasons to read



Paul Murray, a history teacher at Diocesan College, Cape Town, illustrates how to encourage reading to benefit you and your students

With all the technological advances and change that we experience, is mankind happier or wiser than it was a hundred years ago? This is the central theme from the poet Thomas Stearns Elliott in his poem from 1934, 'The Rock'. Two of the lines from the poem, illustrating the point, read: 'Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge?' or 'Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?' How right was Elliott when, not so many years ago, he wrote these lines? It still is very much the case today that a person can have knowledge and know things, but also lack in wisdom and understanding. Those with wisdom know what to do next, and those with understanding are able to abstract the meaning from information. Amazingly enough, teachers are required to do this every day when they teach. And to be wise in what they do, they are required to know what to do next. That's good teaching!

Ironically, in the year that Elliott wrote this poem, the International Telecommunication Union was established – a specialised agency of the United Nations responsible for issues that concern information and communication technologies. Fortunately, Alex Raymond's 'Flash Gordon' was also born in that year, the adventurous hero of space opera in the form of the adventure comic strip. Ironically, Fuji film was also born in that same year. Again, fortunately, Kipling and Yeats were awarded the Gothenburg Prize for Poetry in that year; but Germany and

Japan went on aggressive escapades to seize territory. That was also the birth year of the American singer Pat Boone, in Jacksonville, Florida. His mellifluous voice is a great tonic and antidote to the hurly-burly of rushing around and the world's frenetic pace.

When Elliott was commenting on how a great deal of what we now do is dumbed-down – from wisdom to knowledge – one wonders whether he would have realised how today knowledge is so much more accessible. Two years earlier, in 1932, the English author Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* was published, a dystopian novel propounding that economic chaos and unemployment that will eventually lead to less need for humans to communicate with each other. Its themes include reproductive technology, sleep-learning, psychological manipulation and classical conditioning. This, all with the growing angst as events such as European and Japanese fascism, was on the rise; things were speeding up really fast. For instance, the year before Elliott's poem 'The Rock' was published, United Airlines acquired its first modern airliner for service – the Boeing 247.

Where does all of this bring us in education? Today, in our quest to do things quicker and slicker, we often pass over so much which is the humanist side of things. For instance, where is the gravitas, the pietas and the dignitas – those wonderful qualities that make us stand out as humans? To be a leader you needed these virtues – the serious

and intelligent, the thoughtful, the respectful, prestige and with charisma. Who today teaches this? Unless you are lucky enough to still have Latin as a subject at school.

How do we claim back those beautiful qualities, the virtues in education and the prestige that it deserves? Only through reading books, really. We cannot expect all teachers to have enough time to read *This is Not the End of the Book* by Umberto Eco and Jean-Claude Carrière. For they were just showing off in their talk: 'from cave paintings to Italian neorealism, from hieroglyphs to computer code, from the 17th century German Jesuit scholar Athanasius Kircher to Dan Brown, from the teachings of Jesus to Buddha to those of the cultists'. Nor are we expecting them necessarily to read D. H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* or Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment*. But, perhaps, they can be reading to inspire their students to want to read. Show the students that you like reading. A site like <https://www.wikihow.com/Encourage-Yourself-to-Read> can help you.

Whenever I see a student with a book I ask, what they are reading and they are always eager to share. That's already a step in the right direction. Perhaps look up the book and share a point or two next time you see them. Reading propagates reading, like learning. At 63 I'm doing a whole lot of reading – reviews, articles, politics, literature, history. This reading is passed across to my students. The lessons are filled with a person's reading, and now a lot more students



are reading as a result, and wanting to read more. 'Sir, have you read *Travels with Charley*?' 'Yes, I loved it, I couldn't put it down!' And then, from me to him, 'Have you read Ayn Rand's *The Fountainhead*? Careful not to read it during exams!'

A lot of the love for reading came from a close friend, Raymond Danowski, the American-born philanthropist who was putting together his collection of 20th century English poetry in the mid '70s. As book after book came to the farm in Hertfordshire where he was living at the time, he began shelving the whole collection in a barn, and it was there that he realised what was missing, and he said, 'It was all links and gaps ... I realised I had nothing, just a drop in a bucket.' From this initial stage, today the final product amounts to what is now known as the Danowski Poetry Library, a 75,000-volume collection of rare and first editions of

modern and contemporary poetry at Emory University. It includes every poetry volume in English published worldwide in the 20th century. In addition, there are 50,000 literary journals and several thousand broadsides, recordings, newspaper articles and manuscripts, among other artefacts. The whole escapade took 30 years from when Danowski started with the collection, until it was finally donated to Emory in 2004. Today, it is a living library with additions and new acquisitions added. See <http://danowski.library.emory.edu/>. More specifically, visit the Rose Library at Emory, where the collection is: <http://rose.library.emory.edu/about/contact.php>. The collection is said to be the largest of its kind in the world today. Imagine how many students will benefit!

Real education, to educate, can only be obtained through reading and becoming conscientised to the virtues

of being serious about learning, being intelligent, thoughtful and respectful, having prestige and charisma. You rarely get it from the subject you teach. So how else will you pass on the love of reading if you yourself are not serious about studying, reading, and engaging with serious thought patterns in mind? Where else will we reclaim the wisdom we have lost in knowledge, where else will we reclaim the knowledge lost in information? We need to bring it back, and reading good books will make us all much happier again.

Paul Murray was awarded his DPhil degree in the historical sciences by the University of Pretoria, based on his study of the Afrikaans poet C. Louis Leipoldt's *The Valley*. He writes for Litnet www.litnet.co.za and Voertall www.voertall.nu

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Keeping rugby alive



Often amused that his colleagues introduce him as Head of Rugby at Bilton Grange, before adding that he is also Head of Religious Studies, *Stefan de Bruin* is a Level 2 coach and has been involved with the Midlands' Lambs, coaching everyone from under-18s to two year olds

Having a headmaster who is in regular contact with the RFU is handy: in January it meant invitations for Alex Osiatynski and I to attend their Education and Age Grade Conference. The theme of the event was 'The Future Player', growing the game by looking at player retention, and is part of the launch of 'The Game of Our Lives', a campaign for both professional and grassroots rugby that aims to unite everyone involved in the sport by looking at player retention. Through a well-researched presentation by Chris Ralph from Two Circles, we learned that the older the player, the more likely rugby is to be their favourite sport; conversely, the younger the player, the more likely they are to drop out.

Chris went on to explain what players in each different age group consider the best part of playing rugby. Even at the lowest age group surveyed, 67% of rugby players rank rugby as the sport they enjoy playing most, and this figure climbed as players grew up. Playing with friends was enormously important, but Chris showed that this diminishes a little as players matured, with other factors gaining importance: enjoyment, competitiveness, and physicality.

The information from the survey suggested several key point indicators: the need for a simplification of the laws, a player-centred approach that urged communication between the various bodies involved in players' lives to prevent fixture clashes and

overplaying, eliminating leagues in earlier years to enable well balanced fixtures, and 'Kids First', to help players learn at their own pace.

Will Roberts, of the Youth Sport Trust, then outlined the generalisations of today's young people. In contrast to my own demographic, the so-called Generation X, who he told us are typically opportunistic, cynical, restless and disenfranchised, those born in Generation Z (i.e. since 1995) are empowered by technology, need no permission to act, and are highly self-motivated and connected. Sport is important to today's youth as it is connected with their health and body image. In counterpoint, young people made little connection between sport and their future career prospects.

What all this might mean for rugby is different formats for the requirements of different players and maximising players' voices, and the use of social media.

The conference then broke into workshops focusing on what delegates felt were the key aspects of what we had learned.

A group looking at attitudinal change to ensure a player-centred approach pointed out that the conference itself had very few current players and suggested player councils made up of representatives from different bodies involved in rugby. They also discussed the importance of thinking of every player (not just from one's own team) when arranging and managing

fixtures and the RFU rolling out the new Code of Practice in the same way as the recent promotion of Headcase, which saw a tremendous attitudinal change in the sport. Similar ideas were put forward by the group looking at breaking with tradition in fixtures and competitions – rethinking those that had ceased to be competitive, and introducing (or just enforcing) laws that prevented skewed matches.

A third group considered the development of partnerships: collaborations between different bodies involved in players' development. While it was recognised that these could be difficult, the importance of the Player First approach meant that effective communication and unselfish thinking was crucial in looking after young players.

Other groups looked at the value of sport – a point which preparatory schooling has never overlooked, the importance of educating parents regarding new thinking in rugby, and player welfare and the possible use of information technology.

Running conferences such as these keeps stakeholders invested and representatives from the RFU were certainly there to listen as much as to pass on information.

Useful links: Age Grade Rugby: www.englandrugby.com/agegraderugby includes a playing calendar, codes of practice, resources and support.

Loss of the enigmatic educator



Tom Halliday, Head of Juniors at Westbourne House, Chichester, writes about the great personalities in our schools that have had a lasting impact and inspired students

I recently read the superb *The Enigma of Kidson* by Jamie Blackett. Within this biography, Blackett spoke about the life of a teacher who, amongst other schools, taught at Eton. It was not the background of the historic establishment that made this book come to life, it was the multitude of commentaries from a huge number of Kidson's past pupils. Many famous names from the world of politics, sport, arts, education, business, civil service and the church retold fascinating and often humorous anecdotes about their favourite 'beak'. For me, the reading of this book raised the question – would Kidson, or a personality like him, have as great an impact on pupils within today's educational environment?

We live in a time when all industry is bound by 'red tape', most of which is necessary and has made vast improvements to many areas of our working lives. However, within the world of education, some days it seems that there is more bureaucracy than teaching, and consequently a certain level of creativity and individualism has been sapped out of our teachers.

This new 'audit' culture has its benefits, such as increased focus on accountability at all levels of education, improvements in governance, and stricter regulations with regards to safeguarding.

However, has the attempt to quantify learning through this new 'culture' damaged that which it tries to quantify?

Are we able to quantify the broader aspect of 'learning', for instance preparing them for their next stage, whether that is moving from Year 2 into Year 3, or from senior school to university? The learning of life skills (social, spiritual, moral and practical) could be argued as more important than any subject specific understanding. Are we as an industry stifling this development by tying the hands of those professionals who excel at developing the whole person?

Such a man was Michael Kidson. Many words were used to describe him in his biography, History Beak, critic, taskmaster, comedian and legendary schoolmaster – he was all of these things, but not one of them defined him. He refused to be labelled, he did not buy into the pomp and ceremony of Eton, and throughout his time there he did all he could to break the mould of a teacher at Eton.

He did this because he knew that he had to aid the individual student's development, not simply inform them of the intricacies of a period of history (which he excelled at) or to help one of his tutees pen the perfect application to Oxford. He realised that to be a truly outstanding teacher, it

required him to teach the whole child and support whatever that individual needed. What allowed Kidson to do so was his character; his highly eccentric and engaging personality that boys were naturally drawn to. His strength of character to forgo the rules and regulations, turning a blind eye to minor indiscretions, sparking interest through debates that were not on any curriculum and taking his tutees off on excursions that would make the modern day Senior Management Team have palpitations.

I was lucky enough to be taught by a teacher who fell into the same bracket as Kidson; a science master who guided me through my common entrance in his final year of teaching, following a career that spanned more than 40 years. It was not for any scientific knowledge that I gained that distinguishes this particular teacher. It was his dedication to improving and instilling a sense of character in me, and all of the pupils with whom he came into contact. He taught boys that boundaries are needed in life, and he taught them that it is important to have a sense of humour. To the younger children of the school he was a beastly character that seemed as ferocious as any villain in literature, but once you reached the upper years of the prep school you were unknowingly drawn to his somewhat bizarre manners. You may not have



known at the time, but in the same way that Kidson's students still talk of him in their adult life as one the biggest influences on them, so too do those who were taught by my prep school science master.

Are we able to facilitate and encourage these characters within today's schools? Today's 'red tape' would have hindered much of what Kidson and my science master did. I, therefore, return to the question at hand. Would individuals, like those mentioned and many more inspirational 'Mr Chips' characters of yesteryear, be able to have as great an impact today? Would such characters be drawn to a career within the modern day teaching profession given the strict boundaries within which one must work? The regard in which the teaching profession is held is not as it once was, and the subject of teachers' pay – rightly or wrongly – constantly receives negative criticism within the press. Therefore, something dramatic needs to occur to make teaching more appealing to graduates, including those with eccentricities to inspire others.

I am always pleased to see professionals who do garner positive mainstream media attention for pushing against the status quo in a similar way to Kidson. Whether that be Mr Drew Povey leading his team at Harrop Fold School in Channel 4's 'Educating Greater Manchester', or the unconventional headmaster of the award-winning West Rise Junior School, Mike Fairclough, whose school promotes creative learning within the school farm amongst the sheep, ducks and water buffalo.

We must celebrate these individuals who are given the platform to show that we can fight against the confines of bureaucratic system. We must also celebrate those individuals in our own schools, whose 'out of the box characters' are naturally engaging, and who can have a dramatic affect on the whole pupil's development. As I write, '#TeachersChangeLives' is a Department of Education initiative that allows people to record a short video about teachers who have had a dramatic affect on them. A small gesture you may think, but a positive one.

Jamie Blackett concludes towards the end of his work that Kidson 'civilised all, and he saved some'. One of those he civilised, Matthew Pinsent, summed up this 'quixotic man' and his lasting impression 'as a man who was unstinting in his drive to make his boys better at what they did'. Kidson often quoted others he deemed wiser than himself. One such quote he believed true came from the English poet and author A. C. Benson. It reads: 'Education is what remains when you have forgotten everything that you were taught.'

If this is so, then more focus must be given to those who can have a lasting effect on pupils, and less focus on the endless need to quantify everything we as teachers do. Our 'audit culture' has developed with the intention to raise standards in teaching, but this must not be to the detriment of those who have the natural ability to inspire, civilise and save – our enigmatic educators of the future.

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Preparing students for tomorrow

With 32 years of experience in education, 18 in senior management and 11 as a headteacher, *Tony Ryan* explains the importance of design and technology in schools

Recent changes to how overall school performance is set and measured have resulted in a dramatic shift in emphasis and delivery by schools. Politicians have grouped a number of subjects together (EBacc) and prioritised their study ahead of others. Schools will have an average points score published for how well their students performed across Ebacc subjects. While I would fully support the concept that every able student should study EBacc subjects (English, mathematics, science and computer science, geography, history, and a second language), this leaves little curriculum space for subjects not included within the Ebacc. Consequently, many schools have marginalised or dropped the 'creative' subjects from their curriculum. Ironically, while the UK continues to undervalue design & technology education (D&T), South East Asian countries have recognised their importance in their curriculum and are visiting the UK in large numbers to learn how D&T is taught.

As an ex-headteacher, I believe that one should always look at the needs of the students first when designing a school curriculum, and not exclusively on any accountability measures that may be utilised to make an overall judgement about the school.

D&T was introduced to the curriculum 27 years ago. At the time, the UK became the first country in the world to realise the importance

of providing a technological and design education and make its study compulsory. The subject has long suffered from its association with its predecessors woodwork, metalwork, technical drawing and needlework. D&T originated from these beginnings but it has evolved and matured into a very different subject.

Students studying at schools today will grow, live and work within a fast-changing technological world. Experts predict that the very nature of work is likely to change dramatically, with adaptability being critical and technology being integrated fully into how they function and operate, both in the workplace and wider society. If we are truly placing the needs of the student before any other consideration, it is hard to see why D&T is not a part of the core curriculum offer. I firmly believe that D&T is the flux that brings the other STEM subjects together and provides a context for the application of skills and knowledge acquired elsewhere. As robots, automation and artificial intelligence perform more tasks, current patterns of employment will continue to be disrupted and a workforce that can respond to industry's changing needs will have to evolve.

What will students learn within a taught programme of D&T?

- D&T should capture each student's imagination. Students are presented with contexts for problems (e.g.

improving living/working spaces) and are encouraged to respond with freedom and creativity. Once a solution starts to take shape, students are encouraged to research and use their knowledge of modern materials to select a design that is 'fit for purpose'.

- Students are given opportunities to explore digital technologies. New and emerging technologies will stretch students learning and lead to new solutions to old problems.
- Students will explore the topic in depth, transitioning with maturity from drawings and models of superficial solutions to real-life prototypes and feedback, in the process developing higher order thinking skills. Students will work alone to explore the context of a problem, but will also be required to work collaboratively, sharing their knowledge and learning with peers.

As the newly appointed Chief Executive of The Design & Technology Association, I will be working to promote a subject that I believe to be a prerequisite for all students. We will continue to offer support and training for our 11,000 members nationally, will work to bring business and industry closer to the world of education and will seek to reach out to parents and other stakeholders. Through these actions, we will work to support the next generation of creatives, engineers, designers, entrepreneurs and innovators.

The beautiful game in our schools



Mark Dickson, Chief Executive of the Independent Schools' Football Association (ISFA), discusses football in prep schools

In the years immediately preceding WW1, football became an increasingly professional sport. At the same time, many independent schools, who believed sport should be played as an amateur to a high Corinthian code, decided to switch to other sports considered more appropriate for 'young gentlemen'. A few of the most notable schools, such as Eton, Winchester, Westminster Charterhouse and Shrewsbury – not feeling the need to prove their social credentials – remained loyal to football, but they were the minority. It has taken football a century to recover the lost ground in independent schools.

Nowadays football is thriving in the sector as never before. Former pupils are playing in the Premier League

and in England's international teams, while professional club academies are littered with independent schoolboys, almost unthinkable a quarter of a century ago. This change has taken place mainly in the last 20 years, brought about by many factors: most sports now have at least an element of professionalism at the top end; the independent sector is more egalitarian, accepting pupils from all walks of life and thus hopefully reducing or eliminating the social factor; and, perhaps above all, the incredible popularity of the Premier League has created a demand from parents and pupils that many schools have felt difficult to resist.

ISFA has overseen this transformation of the game in the sector. A small organisation 20 years ago, operating

almost entirely for around 40 senior schools, ISFA now has over 300 member schools and runs tournaments, representative teams and development activities at all age levels.

ISFA's Blue Riband event for prep schools is the Under-11 Seven-a-Side Tournament, 14 Regional Championships held around the country, leading to 18 schools competing at the National Finals, held at the magnificent FA National Football Centre at St. George's Park, headquarters for all the England teams. A similar event is held for girls, also with finals at St. George's Park.

At U13 level, the Investec ISFA U13 Cup is open to all independent schools so only the most serious and committed prep schools risk challenging the larger senior schools. Nevertheless, prep schools have often done well and Lochinver House, from Potters Bar, will compete in the 2018 Cup Final at Burton Albion FC.

Other events organised by ISFA that have proved popular include girls' tournaments at various age levels, coaches' conferences and courses and the Junior Hub School programme for both boys and girls at the younger age groups.

An increasing area of concern in all school sport remains safety and potential injury. All contact sport carries an element of risk that must



RWT Photography



be balanced against the health, fitness and enjoyment benefits. Fortunately, football appears to stand up relatively well, with most injuries being of the soft tissue variety.

Another concern in schools' football relates to behaviour and the suggestion that children too easily mimic some of the less attractive antics of the professional game. The Chairman of ISFA is former Harrow School housemaster and Premier League and FIFA referee, David Elleray MBE. Nowadays, Mr Elleray is Chairman of The FA Referees Committee and Technical Director of IFAB, the international body that oversees the Laws of the Game.

Mr. Elleray is quick to point out that schools' football is very different to professional football. 'There is no reason why behaviour on the football field should not match that

in any other walk of school life. Generally, respect towards referees and standards of behaviour in schools' football are exceptionally high and we are very proud of that. If a school has an issue with behaviour on the field, it would be well advised to accept that it is a disciplinary problem and deal with it accordingly, rather than attempt to pass the blame onto football. Children's behaviour will ultimately reflect the standards set for them by their teachers.'

The main area of concern is heading the ball and a suggestion that a ban at the younger age levels might be considered. The FA Head of Performance Medicine, Dr Charlotte Cowie, has commissioned research on this issue. Speaking on the subject to Alan Shearer in the recent BBC documentary 'Dementia, Football and Me', she commented: 'It is open

to review at any point. If evidence is emerging, even early evidence, then that is something that we always have to bear in mind, but at the moment the advice that we are getting from people who are working in that area is that they don't feel that is the most logical step to take.'

The aims of ISFA in the future will be to encourage and nourish the ever-growing enthusiasm for the game in the independent sector, to provide opportunities for boys and girls of all standards to enjoy and have fun playing football and to ensure that standards of safety and behaviour remain at the highest level.

For further information on independent schools football and opportunities for prep schools, email fdm@isfa.org.uk or go to www.isfa.org.uk

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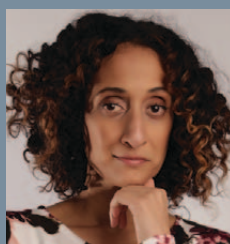
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The SATIPS Poetry Competition

Find out more about the SATIPS Poetry Competition this year...

The SATIPS Poetry Competition has been re-established by Stephen Davies of Bryanston and Stephen is looking forward to the entries. The poet John Mole, a former pupil at St Dunstons and King's Bruton, wrote a series of vignettes as 'a sudden impulse to re-experience my time as a pupil'. They certainly re-create the atmosphere in our schools around 70 years ago! John's recent works include *All the Frogs*, *The Point of Loss*, and *Gestures and Counterpoints*.

PREP SCHOOL 1950

LETTER WRITING

Every Sunday after Church
is Letter Writing.
Be careful what you say
or the master on parade
will confiscate your marbles.

Dear Mother, Dear Father,
I'm reading *The Colditz Story*
after Lights-Out.
Your postal orders
buy me batteries for my torch.

COLD BATH

We line up to be next
with Matron watching
in her white coat.
It's jolly freezing
but she says it's good for us.
Start each day
as you mean to go on.
Fold your pyjamas,
make your own bed,
stop shivering and be a man.

MORNING PRAYERS

The hymn this Saturday
is *Onward Christian Soldiers*.
In a resounding wooden hut
we march as if to the war
that Mr. Brown came back from.

We should respect his nerves
but he thumps the piano
Irresistibly, and the boards
are just too tempting
for us not to stamp our feet.

BREAK TIME

Invisible but in our sights
the targets loom up
as we fly at sixty feet
with arms outstretched
and roaring mouths wide open.

We are Gibson's crew
above the Möhne and Eder
as we dodge the flak,
release our bombs
then stand there to attention.

FRIDAY

French and Latin
with their conjugations
and declensions
are the discipline
that sports a threadbare gown.

Think of yourself
in cricket whites tomorrow.
Place each noun, each verb
like a well-aimed googly
to turn the match around.

AFTERNOON GAMES

Patches on their sleeves
and puffing pipes
they patrol the touchline.
Officers on duty
in their tweedy togs

except for Mr. Brown
who stands apart
in a shapeless raincoat
hiding the matchbox
where he stubs his cigarettes.

MODELLING

Show your workings,
how you got there
or where it went wrong.
A residual smear of chalk
behind each correction.

Junior officers
in the operations room.
Airfix trophies,
Spitfires in progress
beneath a rank of desk lids.

EPIDEMIC

A day in the Sick Bay
not for the sake of rhyme
but for good reason.
Just to be on the safe side
as it could be something worse.

This word is a bad one
rife with contagion
like what may lie in wait
on the wireless
for Dick Barton, Special Agent.

LEAVE SUNDAY

It comes around
three times a term
and those of us remaining
walk in file
and mufti before tea

In winter the headmaster
wears a greatcoat
grandly buttoned up.
Inside our duffels
we are all the same.

The legacy of inspirational teachers



Andrew Roberts, an eminent historian, journalist and broadcaster, addresses the question of what makes a great prep school teacher

Our schools continue to evolve and change but the presence of inspirational teachers is, perhaps, the true legacy of their worth. Andrew Roberts is as well placed as anyone to demonstrate the point. Educated at Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, where he gained a first in Modern History. Andrew is a visiting Professor at the Department of War Studies, King's College, London and a Lehrman Institute Distinguished lecturer at the New York Historical Society. Andrew is also President of The Cliveden Literary Festival. His best-selling book on Napoleon is out in paperback whilst his new work on Winston Churchill is to be published later this year.

What makes a great – as opposed to merely a good – prep school teacher? Nowadays, we parents take for granted that prep school teachers will be intelligent, motivated, fine communicators and good on the pastoral side of things. Frankly, with the astronomical levels of school fees, so they should be. But what makes some prep school teachers stand out so much that over four decades later – I am 55 years old after all – one can remember their names, their

personalities, their abilities, quirks and eccentricities?

When one is reunited with prep school contemporaries, it's generally not the sporting or academic achievements, let alone the school facilities, that are recalled: it's always the teachers. That is true whether one has a positive experience of school, or a negative. My own experience of Cranleigh Preparatory School was powerfully, gloriously positive; not so much at the Senior School, from which I was expelled.

My choice of the word 'eccentricities' in the first paragraph was deliberate. The teachers – called masters in those days – all had their own tics, peculiarities, accents and distinguishing features that we pupils studied intently. These had to be observed with an extraordinary degree of concentration, so that we could mimic them after lights out in the dormitory. It is clear to me in retrospect that, of course, over time the teachers played up to these, secretly enjoying being the subject of these harmless send-ups rather than being offended by them.

Our headmaster, M.A.C. Wheeler, had been an officer in the Raj during WW2, and used to swear at us in Urdu

and other tongues of the North-West Frontier, secure in the knowledge that no one knew what he was saying about us. The French teacher would mimic our appalling French accents, and nickname us after our worst mispronunciations. The geography teacher would similarly pretend that we were all impossibly stupid, and reacted with exaggerated surprise when anyone got anything right at all. It's probably against all educational guidelines to behave like this towards pupils today, yet it worked superbly, and urged us on in order to prove our teachers wrong about the low expectations they seemed to have for us. It was a high-risk strategy they adopted, but one that paid off handsomely.

The reason I am an historian today is because of Christopher Perry, my history teacher, a man who was able to make the past come alive in a truly extraordinary way. He taught at Cranleigh Prep for a hundred terms, or a third of a century. He seemed to be in his 60s, though he must have in fact have been in his 30s, and although he was short and somewhat bald – think Captain Mainwaring in Dad's Army – he was truly charismatic.

Mr Perry – as I still think of him, though I know him well enough now to call him Christopher – had the ability to make history come alive in a way that was extraordinarily intellectually intoxicating. For one thing, he seemed to have mastered the art of time travel, and actually personally knew King Alfred, Sir Walter Raleigh and Florence Nightingale. He spoke of them conversationally, as people whom one felt could step in from the room at any time. History for him – and thus for us – was a living entity, and an exciting one.

Mr Perry – nicknamed ‘Pom’ for some reason lost to antiquity – would sit cross-legged on his schoolroom table and tell the story of Britain from 1066 to the end of WW1 (WW2 was a current affair in those days), acting out the roles played by the major figures. I seem to remember King Charles I having a somewhat squeaky voice and Oliver Cromwell a gravelly one. Occasionally Mr Perry would refer to quotes and statistics in books, but solely to ascertain their absolute accuracy, for which he was a stickler. The rest of it came from his capacious knowledge. He would set tests for the class of 200 historical dates, in which the class both had to know what happened in each year and – much harder – the year in which certain things happened. He, therefore, established for us the key fact about history: that chronology is everything. Very often the entire class would get 198, 199 or even 200 correct. We were not geniuses; we were just enthused, competitive, and keen to impress Mr Perry.

Instead of being told to read books, Mr Perry would allow us to borrow them from his personal library in the history room; it was an Aladdin’s Cave for some of my friends and I. History lessons became something that one looked forward to, and for me the rest of the week paled by comparison. It was only later that I recognised that it was partly because he engaged every sense: one heard the roar of Napoleon’s Grand Battery at Waterloo,

We parents take for granted that prep school teachers will be intelligent, motivated, fine communicators and good on the pastoral side of things.

smelt its gunpowder, felt the ground shake beneath it. His history had narrative structure, and answered the key question: ‘what happened next?’

The current events of the day – I vividly remember the deaths of Chairman Mao and General Franco in 1975, and the fall of Saigon the same year, when I was 12 – were discussed in their historical contexts, further adding to the sense of history being a living, evolving, and, above all, a relevant phenomenon. I don’t know how Mr Perry voted in the European referendum in 2016, but I would be surprised if it was for remain. The heroes of his classes, and thankfully he did not shy away from the presently deeply politically incorrect Great Man (and Woman) Theory of History, were Queen Elizabeth I, the Duke of Marlborough, Admiral Nelson, Lord Kitchener, and everyone else who tried to ensure that Britain remained sovereign and independent.

Mr Perry also took us to castles in Anglesey and Normandy; five castles in one (very long) day, I remember. The drama and romance of history was brought home by these visits. I was certainly not one of those natural swats, an easy child to teach. In 2004, when giving the prizes at the Prep School Speech Day, I was allowed to examine the Conduct Book, and discovered that my name appeared more than anyone else’s when I was there, by quite some way.

Here are some of the high crimes and misdemeanours for which I was punished, up to and including being given six-of-the-best by ‘Mac’

Wheeler: ‘Fighting at the wrong time,’ ‘Talking when specifically told not to,’ ‘Ink misuse’ (which I think would make a great title for my autobiography), ‘Attempting to leave dinner without permission,’ ‘Speaking after the bell, twice,’ ‘Misbehaving in bathroom,’ ‘Stupid behaviour in tea,’ ‘Stupid behaviour in class,’ ‘Talking after silence bell, four times in a week,’ ‘Misbehaviour when returning from Art,’ ‘Send down [that is, for a beating] twice inside the week,’ ‘Dirty knees at prayers, three times,’ ‘Bad behaviour before tea,’ ‘Causing disturbance in prep,’ ‘Talking after repeated warnings,’ ‘Defacing table in dining hall,’ ‘Disobedience during Wet Games and New Boy Test,’ ‘Fooling during prep,’ and ‘Misbehaviour while waiting for supper grace.’ The astringent and economical use of words is almost Hemingway-esque.

Yet for all that I must have been a difficult child to teach – and clearly not a good advertisement for the efficacy of corporal punishment, either – Mr Perry managed to inspire a love of history that got me a history scholarship to the Senior School, a history exhibition to Cambridge, from where I have a PhD in – you guessed it – history. The word ‘inspirational’ is wildly over-used today, but an inspirational teacher can be a life-changing experience, and mine was Mr Christopher ‘Pom’ Perry.

Prof Andrew Roberts FRSL, FRHistS, is a Visiting Professor at King’s College, London, the Lehrman Institute Lecturer at the New York Historical Society and the President of the Cliveden Literary Festival.

Preparing for an art scholarship

With over 20 years' experience of teaching art in prep schools, *Janet Miller*, a teacher at Moreton Hall, Shropshire, describes preparing students to apply for art scholarships

Schools publish their different requirements, but ultimately all are looking for the same qualities – a keen student who has a clear passion for making art. Occasionally, you can discover a student with the X factor and know you would feel privileged to nurture the talent. The process is collaboration between pupil, teacher and parents, as the work produced in school should be supported by work completed in their leisure time.

You do need to know in advance who is thinking of applying, especially important if they are boarders. They would join my invitation-only lunchtime and after school clubs for Able, Gifted & Talented (AG&T) students. This provides opportunity to work on a larger format with quicker techniques, using observation as a starting point. We can develop a theme and are able to work with more specialist techniques, such as oil paint and printing; there is always something developed using several techniques to create a mixed-media theme. Popular tasks involve a table of assorted materials and a time limit, so they are encouraged to think creatively and make decisions. Boarders are encouraged to utilise the department's materials and facilities independently at weekends and develop their own personal sketchbooks.

The portfolio, sometimes limited to a number of pieces, should demonstrate a range of media, processes and skills. Painting, mixed media, photography

– often of 3D pieces – printing, and drawings show transferable skills and adds interest.

There will be an interview, or a chance to discuss their work, and the teacher is there to gauge an understanding of the processes and their interests. The quality of work should speak for itself. A standard question is 'who is your favourite artist?' and children should refer to artists who inspired their pieces of work. Ill-prepared candidates will often proffer Van Gogh if unsure, but frequently struggle to name a painting. Trial interviews are useful for all children to go through the process of talking about their work and the process of making.

Asking children if they visit galleries is another standard question. Talking about and interacting with art is vital to ensure children can form opinions to justify and inform their decisions. When visiting London, we always head to the Saatchi Gallery, as contemporary art will provoke a reaction and get the children to question what art actually is. Seeing art from living and international artists, flooded with light in white box rooms is refreshing. Then we venture towards The National Gallery, with dark coloured, patterned walls, filled with classic pieces by all the masters – they have to be steered to particular pieces or they quickly become overwhelmed with the photorealistic quality of oil painted folds in silk dresses, rearing horses and magnificent and idyllic landscapes.

Our cultural weekends, marked on the calendar through the school holidays, pack in quality family time and are forming them as well-rounded children – one hopes!

Some schools offer their art scholarship process within a programme of a two-day taster, for others it is simply an hour. It is difficult to access ability within an hour, which often includes the interview and viewing the folder. We can forget that these young charges are nervous, with unfamiliar surroundings, for something they couldn't realistically prepare for. They have to work quickly and spontaneously and are tasked with having to remember to mention their artists – coupled with the weight of expectation of their teachers and parents. Some will be over-prepared and will rattle off galleries and artists before even asked.

Two noteworthy applications came in the form of an animator and a youngster with a passion for religious portraits. The animator's folder looked fairly standard with the regular still life, self-portrait, landscape but then two shoe boxes were opened to reveal the most exquisite plasticine models – it was then that she became animated herself, describing making animations in her bedroom in which all her family had voice-overs roles. We enthusiastically watched the animations, which turned out to have received national accolades. Three



years later, her skill and talent have continued to shine and this will surely become her career path that we have had the privilege to steer.

The other, from a young boy, was a delightful surprise when we found a gutsy stack of seventy A3 portraits tucked in the pocket of his portfolio. All on a theme, inspired by museums visits in Europe, brimming with creative thought, acute vision and quiet confidence. All used a range of exciting marks, all were unique using a mix of medias and showing hours of a child busy and engaged with making art, with national competition wins to validate the talent. These applications are rare and provide our benchmark. Both candidates were clearly encouraged at home. It doesn't require fancy materials, but I would advise parents to buy good quality paper, some waxy coloured pencils, some oil pastels and a couple of soft tonal pencils. Indeed, I have seen some lovely sketchbook work using almost-expired felt-tips. A3 paper seems big but their work will benefit from having space to expand. It is surprising how quickly children get used to working confidently on a larger scale.

The folder work is crucial and it is always nice to see it supported by a small sketchbook, indicative of their interest. Observation drawing is a skill that we hope to see, both

from their lessons and from outside the classroom. I recommend this to parents, encouraging them to draw anything that helps to develop looking and drawing what they see. In class, we set up objects on white paper with a good light source and urge using HB, 2B and 4B grade pencils.

When I stress 'sharp pencil', my class frequently reply 'sharp pencils, sharp minds'. I encourage the use of erasers to add highlights rather than erasing their lines, as, in the scholarship process, it's important to get marks on the paper. This is good practice for their scholarship drawing, required on the day. In class we stress that they should indicate the shadow to anchor the object to the page and that the piece doesn't need to be finished. I advise students to make a light sketch and develop one area with a range of tones, so if they don't finish it, it can still show the potential. Teachers will be keen to see confidence in the marks, whether photographic realism or bold scratchy marks. Drawing at GCSE level, or 'recording' as it is phrased, is worthy of 25% of their grade, and encompasses all types of drawing.

Despite the children proclaiming it went well and they did their best, this will not be any indication of the headteachers letter that follows. Not every child will be luckily enough to achieve a scholarship. Disappointment

is evident and the fall out can be that it discourages the children from wanting to continue their love of art as they feel they are not good enough. The parents often request further feedback and seek a candid response from the process if they don't feel satisfied with the information. As teachers, we can feel it is a personal hit especially if we feel it is a strong application. As parents, we all think our children are deserving of recognition of their talents.

My two boys have gone through the process in the last two years, the first successful and the second not. Ironically, the stronger of the two didn't receive the accolade and that is difficult to justify to them. It is a knock back, but I know it's the child without the badge that has the natural talent and who is destined for a career in art. He knows I will continue to encourage his talent from the kitchen table on Sundays. History is littered with many distinguished individuals who speak of their denied artistic recognition early on in their career, having pursued their belief that they can make a difference, and even reach the dizzy heights of fame. I encourage children to be resilient and see positives in these hurdles. I reference James Dyson in my Design and Technology lessons, spending 15 years making 5,127 models before his design was recognised and considered.

The power of mindfulness

Sheetal Kachhela, Edge Grove School's yoga teacher, discusses the power of mindfulness in yoga for children

Yoga is a rich, diverse and holistic ritual that promotes physical, spiritual and emotional well-being. It originated in India more than 5,000 years ago and, contrary to popular belief, it is not accustomed to any religion or belief structure. Instead, it is a practice that cultivates wellness for our health, bringing harmony and balance to the entire body and mind. Yoga can transform even the most anxious person into being assured again and can bring the most withdrawn individual back to life. From 'downward dog' to 'mountain pose', yoga is a journey and a way of life that is accessible to all and is benefitted by many.

The environment and technology around us has changed immensely since I was a child and it will continue to do so at a phenomenal pace. This constant change has exposed children to fast-paced online technology at their fingertips – tablets, smartphones and watches to name but a few. Even when offline, children endure the pressures of studying and exam preparation; they might also have social commitments to juggle, the need to develop friendships and will sometimes experience family issues. The list is endless and whether they are the most energetic or grounded children these elements may start to have an undesirable effect on both the body and the mind, at a much younger age than we might expect.

Resting minds and bodies

Recent and ongoing studies into mental health suggest that children

between the ages of 10 and 21 years are more likely to develop some form of mental health problem due to the expectations placed on them and the fast paced nature of life today. Some recent statistics to support this are:

- One in ten children have a diagnosable mental health disorder – that's roughly three children in every classroom.
- Half of all mental health problems

manifest by the age of 14 and develop with 75% by the age of 24.

- Almost one in four children and young people show some evidence of mental ill health including anxiety and depression.

With the rapid advances in technology, increasing speeds of advertising, society's need to be present on social media and all of the material distractions that our



children are exposed to today, it is no wonder that these mental health statistics are on the rise. Our minds are constantly working, continuously looking down at our phones, thinking one thought after another, even while we are sleeping. Very rarely do we rest our minds completely the same way that we recognise the benefit of resting our bodies. Surely it should be an act of self-care to give our minds the chance to rest in the same way that we rest our bodies? The ability to give ourselves a moment in the day, a chance to reflect, a chance to be mindful, a chance to 'just be' would serve as a priceless act if it was to aid in the reduction of people suffering with mental health issues.

In knowing this fact, the art of not thinking or being able to clear our minds of all the stress and anxiety is one that we should embrace and yet it does not come naturally to us as adults, let alone to children. It is for this very reason that we should place great importance on and recognise the need to re-train ourselves and educate the adults of the future to take those moments to 'just be', ensuring not just a healthier body, but a healthier mind as well.

Being present in the moment

In a bid to try and reduce these statistics schools should be placing greater importance on dedicating slots in the weekly timetable where children as young as pre-school age and through to Year 8, have the opportunity to practise the art of being in the present moment. Teachers need to be specifically trained in acts of mindfulness and in children's yoga to ensure they are well equipped to deliver these essential lifelong learnings; whether this is through discrete lessons or after school clubs.

Through mindfulness techniques, we can provide children with an opportunity to not only start, but to continue their day on the right foot and in the right frame of mind. A step in the right direction is to ensure that pupils are given a few moments



at the start and end of each lesson to be mindful of the space or classroom they are about to enter, to think about the lesson that they are about to embark upon and to adopt the right mental state before they initiate any form of learning.

Parallel to the mindfulness techniques, teaching quality children's yoga can really help. Yoga is very popular with children; both boys and girls, as it not only allows them to build on their core strength and concentration but it also aims to draw attention too and improve breathing techniques – all essential elements to our well-being and, when balanced correctly, they can help to successfully manage stress and anxiety often caused by the pressures described earlier.

Taking the time to 'just be'

In a society where image is

everything, the implementation of yoga is a great way for children to develop positive body awareness, boosting self-image and confidence, as well as gaining an understanding of how to use their bodies in a healthy way. It releases the happy endorphin hormone, a natural analgesic, making them feel good.

Delivering a first class education is paramount and as we move through the technological era at great speeds, we are seeing the benefits of teaching mindfulness and yoga at school. Yoga allows children to participate with each other non-competitively and most importantly it acts as an alternate, yet essential way for children to become offline in a device free space, clearing their minds in a moment to 'just be'.

Raising the roof

Ian Morgan, from Haberdashers' Monmouth Schools, takes a look at the benefits of musical education and their latest community singing project that has proved to be a resounding success

A spectacular and heart-warming community singing project involving boys and girls from five Welsh schools has been an overwhelming success. Around 150 children, aged between 9 and 11 years old, created a massed choir of voices at the impressive Blake Theatre in the ancient border town of Monmouth. Well-known comedian, actor and presenter, Miles Jupp, compered the concert and spoke about the importance of music and singing in offering a rounded and balanced education. Now the hugely successful project led by Haberdashers' Monmouth Schools looks set to become a permanent fixture in the area's music calendar.

Mr Joe Walton and Mr Mike Steer, music teachers at Monmouth School Boys' Prep and Monmouth School Girls' Prep, respectively, were the brains behind the scheme.

'We wanted to bring the children of Monmouth together,' explained Mr Walton. 'We wanted to give the children an experience of the real joy of singing and music-making using suitable music that had been recently composed.'

Children from primary schools in three areas of the Welsh border town – Overmonnow, Osbaston and Kymin View – took part in the enjoyable initiative. They joined pupils from Monmouth School Boys' Prep and Monmouth School Girls' Prep for a term of singing that culminated in a concert, watched by more than 500 people.

Haberdashers' Monmouth Schools recognise the importance of learning

music from an early age and specialist tuition starts at Monmouth Schools Pre-Prep and Nursery. The schools' insightful approach to learning is from the position that every child has musical potential that should be nurtured and developed. Although there are specialist, auditioned choirs throughout the schools, all pupils participate in community singing.

Headteacher at Monmouth School Girls' Prep, Mrs Hilary Phillips, said: 'We are all aware of the ways in which music can enhance all areas of learning, but perhaps the most important benefit that making music together brings is a sense of well-being and community spirit.'

'There is something special in massed voices and the project was aimed at sharing that with schools who find it harder to provide specialist provision.'

'The concert proves that with time and attention, a non-selective group of singers can fill a hall with song and smiles.'

Mr Walton explained: 'Our joined-up approach to learning has been inspired by the great Hungarian composer Zoltan Kodály and our music lessons are child centred, allowing pupils an opportunity for discovery and enquiry.'

'In the Kodály approach, musical learning happens through song, movement and singing games, which form the basis of a developing musicianship.'

'Instrumental learning provides an important continuation and we strongly support and encourage the strengthening of this learning process.'

'Our provision enables strong musical progress to be made by all. Our boys and girls receive over an hour of curriculum music and further time is set aside for singing and hymn practice.'

'The curriculum lessons develop knowledge about music through the direct experience of music, developing and refining the skills of singing, movement, performing, conducting, listening, inner hearing, memory, reading, writing and creating.'

Inspired by their love of music – the practical and multi-sensory approach to music teaching as well as the benefits to health, well-being and also academic achievement – Mr Walton and Mr Steer liaised with Monmouth's primary schools last year.

Perhaps, not surprisingly, the project immediately received the overwhelming support and approval from Gwent Music, the local music hub in the area.

'At Monmouth, our pupils embark on an educational journey within a distinctive community,' said Mr Steer.

'Community is a core value of the schools; our founder, William Jones, is the definitive example of the difference one person can make in the wider community.'

'Gwent Music encouraged us to approach the primary schools in Monmouth and helped us to set up the important first meeting with the primary school heads to take our idea forward.'

The Friday Afternoons singing initiative was inspired by legendary



English composer, Benjamin Britten, and launched nationally in 2013. The scheme's song bank contains new music and support material to help teachers develop their students' skills – as performers, listeners and composers.

'We focused on an enjoyment and a love of singing during our Friday afternoon slots and the rehearsals for all the children worked well at Monmouth School Girls' Prep,' said Mr Steer.

The culmination of the project – the big concert at the Blake Theatre on Friday 23rd March – was outstanding. At the concert, Gwent Music's North Monmouthshire Music Centre Junior Ensembles was excellent and performed alongside the singers from the schools – highlighting the many opportunities for local children in the area.

The massed choir combined beautifully, singing seven songs from the Friday Afternoons' initiative, including Jonathan Dove's *Fire*, *Three Little Birds*, *Fast Car* and *Laura*.

British composer Jonathan Dove composed all the songs recently with the exception of Benjamin Britten's *Oliver Cromwell* – part of the original set of *Friday Afternoons'* songs in the 1930s.

Mr Walton said: 'The children sang with great enthusiasm and the big concert and the project, as a whole, was the great success for which we had all hoped.

'It was inspiring to see the children walk on to the stage – row after row of pupils from five different schools all assimilated and working as one body of singers.

'In our Kodály approach, good singing, awareness of tuning and a strong sense of pitch is developed through the gradual introduction and use of singing names and hand signs.

'The hand signs and singing names are a great tool for developing melodic understanding, inner hearing, sight reading and memory.

'We used this in our teaching of

the songs for the concert and the massed choir finished with a dazzling performance of *Mad Moon* which included, at the children's suggestion, a dance known as the internet craze, *flossing*.'

Headteacher at Monmouth School Boys' Prep, Mr Neil Shaw, said: 'It was wonderful to hear stories of how children from different schools brought together by the project became friends and were getting to know each other over tea.

'And it was inspiring to hear how one child had been transformed by the experience from a tearful start to rehearsals to performing centre stage on the night. It was truly magical.'

Mr Walton added: 'It was a joyful occasion and greatly appreciated by audience and the children. Will we do it again? It's definitely something that we will seek to repeat, hopefully, on an annual basis.'

WoT! is your story?

Another issue and another instalment of WoT! is Your Story? from Ian Morris...

Experience tells us that taking the time to lay firm foundations at the start of a year pays dividends even though it's tempting to rush on with our curriculum plans. So please feel free to build on this golden oldie that I recently gave a polish.

The main part of the assembly is telling the story of Bob, a builder who wants to retire soon. So you could just tell the story and link it to Jesus' wise and foolish builders parable (Matthew 7:24-27). Or you could be in role as a builder, constructing a few jokes, dance moves, and setting a building task to illustrate the story:

I had two teams of two – each team made up of a member of staff who chose a pupil to help them. Each team is given a packet of dry spaghetti and a packet of marshmallows. Team 1 – building on a tray of sand, they are set the challenge of building a construction as high as they can. Team 2 – building in a tray of gravel, they are set the challenge of building a construction as strong as they can.

During the telling of the tale I used a PowerPoint to show images of an idyllic location and poor construction at each stage of the story. I didn't try this, as I've only just thought about it whilst writing this, but you could also get the children to:

- Join in with the repetitive phrase, 'To get the job done...'
- Come up with some hand actions
- Build up the story by repeating the previous stages before adding the next one.

The story

Bob had had enough of building. He had spent years building but now he longed to hang up his trowel and put his feet up. So Bob called Barry, his boss, and told him of his intention to retire. After Bob had stopped speaking, Barry asked one final request. He had previously bought a plot of land in an idyllic location and wanted Bob to build his final house on it. Reluctantly Bob agreed. Bob just wanted 'to get the job done' and so set about building the house as quickly as he could.

To get the job done he didn't dig the foundations as deep as he usually would. To get the job done he didn't lay the bricks as straight as he usually would. To get the job done he didn't fit the windows as snug as he usually would. To get the job done he didn't tile the roof as watertight as he usually would. To get the job done he didn't paint the walls as neatly as he usually would. To get the job done Bob ordered a bog-standard bathroom and a cheap as chips kitchen.

In just over half the time it would usually take to build a house, Bob had got the job done. He called his boss, Barry to tell him the news. Barry was amazed at the progress and asked Bob to meet him at the house the following day.

On reaching the house the following day, Bob was amazed at all the cars that were parked in the driveway. As he approached the front door he could see familiar faces through the windows and hear excited chatter. He open the door to a loud, 'Surprise!' as workmates past and present all raised a glass to toast him. At the far end of the hallway, Barry beamed and walked towards Bob. As he did so Barry took out a set of keys from his pocket and held them out to Bob: 'Bob, this house is yours! It's my retirement gift from me to you.' Hearing an audible gasp from the children at this moment was priceless!

Bob smiled awkwardly and thanked Barry. Here we then checked in our marshmallow and spaghetti builders. Whilst admiring how each construction looks, give each tray a shake to see if they can withstand the 'storms of life'. Congratulate each team and award prizes for their efforts.

Our life is the house that God gives us. It's important that we lay firm foundations and build well. Otherwise the shortcuts we take now will haunt us later. Jesus told the crowds that those who actually put his words into practice are the ones whose houses will stand firm when the storm hits.

So let's be less Bob and more like Barry. Otherwise we will rue the missed opportunities and regret not having taken the time to do the right thing.

Singing or playing, 'The wise man built his house on the rock' might be a way to end or exit the assembly.



A celebration of arts education

An education in art is a celebration of many things, writes *Julie Finch*, and she names but a few below

This can include:

- Children and young people, their perspectives on life and their talent.
- Schools and art teachers, where skills are developed, teachers enable, children and young people realise their creativity and art is positioned as important to life.
- In a changing world, art enables us to understand perspectives and create our own response, it enables us to use our minds to find solutions and express ourselves

With these three important perspectives in mind, children and young people, art education and impact of art on the world, I quote Michael Rosen, broadcaster and children's author:

'Arts are a means by which we can investigate and understand the past and the present, our world and our feelings. We can do this by 'doing' it or by 'spectating it' or both. Through art we can relate ourselves with other; we can discover the shape of history and humanity and where and how we fit into it.'

Art is important to children and young people because:

- Creativity begins at birth; we are all born with potential.
- We need creativity in our adult lives – so it must be nurtured.
- If children are not exposed to creativity, it is equal to not being exposed to sport and physical activity – art cascades sunlight onto lives.



- All young people are curators, through imagery, their digital presence, they are curating a portrait of themselves each day – there has never been a greater need for creative thinking and art as self-expression (good or bad) and this has an impact on lives.

Art and creativity in the classroom powers a child's understanding of the world because:

- Teachers inspire and lead.
- They share an understanding of cultures and tolerance in the classroom and perspectives on the world.
- They develop creative skills and rounded children and young people.
- They create places for safe

experimentation, not failure; places for exploration, motivation and solution finding.

The world we live in demands elevated and amplified levels of skills, the Harvard Business Review states that 'creativity can benefit every function of an organisation', creativity is recognised as an essential way of thinking.

- This is demonstrated through the fact that art and culture contributes over 156 billion pounds to the economy.
- Creative industries span a wide range of careers, many based on artistic practice, such as architecture, design and the media industry.
- For consumers of creativity and art – whatever their profession – art and culture contributes to the visitor economy in the UK, which is a world leader.

Whether you are a budding Picasso, Rembrandt or Jeremy Deller. Whether the pupils you teach are first time artists or training to be an architect. Whether a child aspires to work for Google or run a café. Whether children and young people are destined to be a captain of industry or a sole trader.

It is likely that the teaching that the child or young person received and their experience of this will influence and shape their success, career path and the fullness of their lives and interests into adulthood. It is a responsibility and these three perspectives are why art matters!

Embracing a 'no rescue' policy

Susan McKay, Assistant Head of St Mary's Junior School, Cambridge, discusses how and why we should be building resilience in our students

There are many lessons to be learnt at school. Alongside history, French, and physics, for example, are the many valuable lessons that children learn outside the formality of the classroom. The minds of Junior School pupils are as malleable and impressionable as the plasticine they love to play with. For this reason, teachers at our Junior School are embracing a 'no rescue' policy, in order to begin to instil a sense of resilience at this young age.

You may remember a time when dread washed over you as you walked to school and heard a fellow classmate mention the day's subjects; you realised you'd forgotten to bring your Latin homework. If only you had written yourself a note to remember. If only you had checked the kitchen table before you left. After confessing to your teacher, and apologising with the utmost sincerity, you take a vow to never forget anything for school again.

Had the ability to communicate instantly at the time been on a par with that experienced by today's young people, many of whom have their own mobile phones, a swift text to your parents might have been followed by a dash into school by your mother or father, and the guilty confession might have been avoided altogether. Had that happened, however, you might also have been prevented from experiencing a valuable life lesson: being well-

prepared and managing to remember what you need for the day ahead is much more enjoyable and efficient than being forgetful and caught out.

Shaping confident and aspirational young adults who take responsibility for themselves is an important part of the education schools provide. We want our students, on encountering a problem, to be able to do their best to overcome it – not by simply calling on their parents. Failure is inevitable for all of us in life in some form; we all know that. So we prepare our students to the best of our ability for those moments, rather than trying to shelter them from these easily-fixed problems with limited consequences. We work to replace attitudes of absentmindedness and forgetfulness with an ambition to be accountable and resourceful. If we allow our children to be human and honest and accept responsibility, aren't we then paving a better way for them in the future?

Learning new habits is best done through a process of actually doing, thinking and acting differently. I often ask pupils 'what have you learnt from that?' or 'how can you make that better?' or 'what could you do differently?'. By using these types of questions I'm not scolding or telling off, but simply encouraging the girls to think for themselves. It will take experience and practice for children to hone the skills that will benefit them throughout their lives – and any of us

who have invested time and effort in developing new habits will understand that the first thing that's required is resilience, to stick at it! In order for us to successfully encourage such a spirit of resilience in our pupils, however, we need the support of our pupils' parents, so that we can work together to deliver a joined up approach for pupils.

There's a popular saying among parenting circles that 'a child who always forgets has a parent who always remembers'. This is exactly the kind of mentality we wish to challenge. It's the call at work from the familiar, distressed, voice of your ten year old as they plead with you, when you know you are going to be asked to head out of the office early or change your plans in order to save the day or to collect a forgotten item that's required for an after-school activity. We understand that parents want to fix everything for their children – it's an inbuilt instinct that parents have, isn't it? But it doesn't have to be the case on every occasion.

Calling all superhero parents: try to give yourself some time off! Learning comes from making, and rectifying, mistakes. So let your child forget their pencil case, or their homework, or their hockey stick. It is by no means the end of the world if they have to work with a partner in a lesson, or borrow equipment from a class-mate, or admit to a teacher that they are human and have made an honest



mistake. By putting themselves in the position of managing such situations children learn to communicate with their peers, and to approach teachers in what might feel like a daunting situation, to find a solution for a problem they have incurred. And all while you are able to continue with your own busy schedule.

Implementing a 'no rescue' policy might seem uncomfortable and unfamiliar to begin with, but it's a test of your own resilience to see if you can manage it; in order to develop resilience in young people, adults need to be resilient too.

Discuss with your child your change in tack so that it doesn't come as a surprise. Mention that you will no longer be able to recover any forgotten items from home, and so they need to be responsible for remembering what they need for the day. The most

influential change that can be made at home is coming up with better ways to be responsible, and to remember things, together. Suggest a calendar for important dates, a checklist on the door to read before they leave home, or getting organised the night before, for example. Finding a creative and effective way of remembering what they need will be the first step on the road to responsibility.

This doesn't have to feel like an overly old-fashioned or harsh change in behaviour. Showing empathy when children have forgotten something will help to encourage independent behaviour to develop in a positive way. By understanding that it is acceptable to forget, but crucially that this ultimately affects their enjoyment of the day and their ability to fully participate in activities, will reinforce positive mind-sets and behaviours. Our Junior School girls

tend to welcome the change: they enjoy opportunities to show their independence, and they now embrace their everyday challenges with ease and confidence.

Of course, we are working with parents and students across the school at all stages to develop strong and confident young people, but we are especially passionate about making a positive impact at the Junior School by imparting these lessons early on. It is imperative in today's society that we teach our children to act in a such way; we want them to be leaders, thinkers, and doers. Focusing on these invaluable qualities and life lessons, which our pupils are learning alongside their academic, sporting and creative pursuits, is vital. We would encourage all parents to partner with us to truly embrace a no rescue policy – and to see how pupils excel at working out solutions for themselves.

The joys of the house system

Philippa Studd, an Assistant Principal (Juniors) at Highgate School, explains the benefits of having a house system in place at her school, encouraging development amongst individual students and as a community too

For hundreds of years, house systems have existed across independent schools as a way to build identity and belonging, instill pride and create a bit of fun and healthy competition within schools. There is no greater champion of this than J.K. Rowling who – with Gryffindor, Slytherin, Hufflepuff and Ravenclaw – demonstrated how enriching a successful house system can be to a child's school experience and development.

As the Assistant Principal responsible for the pupils' personal development, I find the house system to be a vital tool in engaging children in identifying their strengths and learning how to use them to contribute to their team. The focus is less on the individual demonstrations of talents and more on developing an understanding of how it is important, within any organisation, to have a breadth of people with different strengths, interests and ideas to contribute to its success. With that in mind, we have designed a programme that offers something for everyone; orators or mathematicians; sports stars or musical enthusiasts; leaders or followers. The four Heads of House monitor personal engagement and give termly awards to those who have inspired, collaborated, encouraged and contributed to their house's success. This ensures that children are not only recognised when they take to the stage in events such as 'House

Poetry' or 'House Countdown'. It gives opportunity for those unsung heroes in the background, who quietly help during team tasks in the 'House DTE Challenge' or discreetly show compassion to their peers whilst making their way around the 'House Fun Day Obstacle Course', to be celebrated and rewarded in equal measure too.

In a world where everyone is striving to prove themselves as individuals, the house system encourages children to reflect on the importance their individual contributions can make to their team. As a standalone number, individuals' House Point scores are nominal but when contributing to their House Total alongside one hundred other children, the results can be pivotal in winning the coveted House Trophy. Encouraging the children to be motivated to try their hardest for the good of their community rather than just for their own personal recognition is one of the principal reasons that our positive behaviour management system is intrinsically linked to contributing towards the success of their house alongside their individual recognition.

Another important factor in our house system is facilitating our pupils with occasions to be charitable. Each house holds an annual event for a charity of their choice and the pupils are engaged in deciding whom they will support and how. Under the direction

of the nominated Year 6 House Charity Reps, the houses organise their day for the whole school to fundraise for their chosen charity. The most recent event celebrated was Number Day for NSPCC, where the children came to school wearing numerically themed fancy dress and saw a team of teachers and support staff battle it out against each other in a maths challenge assembly to win points for their house. As we continue to develop our house projects, it is hoped that, in the future, we will be able to include the donation of time, as well as money, to a good cause and, spending hours volunteering or helping in the local community will translate into points.

The sense of identity and belonging the house system cultivates is, for me, one of the greatest benefits it offers. I enjoy walking the corridors and seeing Year 4 pupils' high fiving their fellow Year 5 house members or hearing the pupils engaging with our vast and varied team of support staff whom they know to be in their house. More recently, I discovered the Year 6 pupils, with the support of their Head of House, conducting participation questionnaires and using the results to identify younger children, who are unsure what they have to offer, in order to mentor them. These examples demonstrate how a house system can enrich and enhance the school community; bringing



groups of people together that may otherwise not have the opportunity to interact. The children take great pride in welcoming their younger siblings into their house and our own sorting ceremony is an event which all the children look forward to attending to hear where the new cohort of Year 3s will be placed at the end of their first half term in the school. Although our current house system in the Junior School is relatively new in contrast to the age of the school, it is hoped that a legacy will be built whereby generations of a family will pass through; knowing that they will contribute to the success of a house that once included their parents or even grandparents.

Of course, no house system would

be complete without a bit of healthy competition and the inter-house events provide many opportunities for that. In contrast to competitive sport games, auditioning for the lead part in a play or achieving a high score in an assessment, house events provide an opportunity for the children to learn that competition can be fun, inclusive and light hearted. It gives those children in the E team the chance to play with the A team or mathematicians, whose skills may normally only be seen in the classroom, the platform to take to the stage and impress with their problem solving capabilities. It gives younger pupils something to aspire to, whilst also feeling involved in the process, and all pupils the opportunity to

have a go at things they might not necessarily consider themselves strong at.

In our final assembly each term we take the time to not only reveal where each house is placed, but also to summarise the key successes to remind the pupils why, alongside the announcement of who is in the lead, it is important that we recognise and remember the process they all undertook to help their house get there. A personal highlight of my job is hearing four hundred hands drum rolling excitedly on the floor to reveal which house is victorious and I cannot help but think that a school without a house system is missing something very special indeed.

The engineers of tomorrow

Nigel Helliwell, Headmaster of St Faith's School, Cambridge, discusses the growing demand from the engineering and science sectors and the important role that schools play in transforming stereotypes

In March, Adam Hargreaves, son of the late Roger Hargreaves, creator of the well-known Mr Men and Little Miss books, introduced his latest personality called Little Miss Inventor. I suspect that the timing of the arrival of this character, empowered by her ability to create new inventions to help her friends, is no coincidence. 2018 is the UK Year of Engineering – a time to celebrate the considerable contribution of engineering to our society and, more importantly, to recognise the importance of engineering in our children's futures. According to the CBI, over the next five years the engineering, science and high-tech sectors expect a 90% increase in employer demand. Engineering UK estimates that the UK needs to produce 180,000 engineers per year and currently there is a shortfall of 70,000 per year.

The timing of the arrival of Little Miss Inventor is not, I believe, the only coincidence. As a youngster who uses her brainpower to create solutions to solve practical problems – the true essence of engineering – Little Miss Inventor is the perfect role model for our young generation, both girls and boys. Barely a week passes by without the role of women in STEM industries featuring in the news and the need for schools to do more to break the stereotypical male image of these school subjects. When Dame Ann Dowling, Professor of Mechanical

Engineering and Deputy Vice-Chancellor at Cambridge University, spoke at our Prize Giving in 2015, she pointedly referred to the image of the typical engineer, a man on a building site wearing a high visibility jacket and hard hat. Why, she asked, would young women want to pursue a profession that is so visibly male?

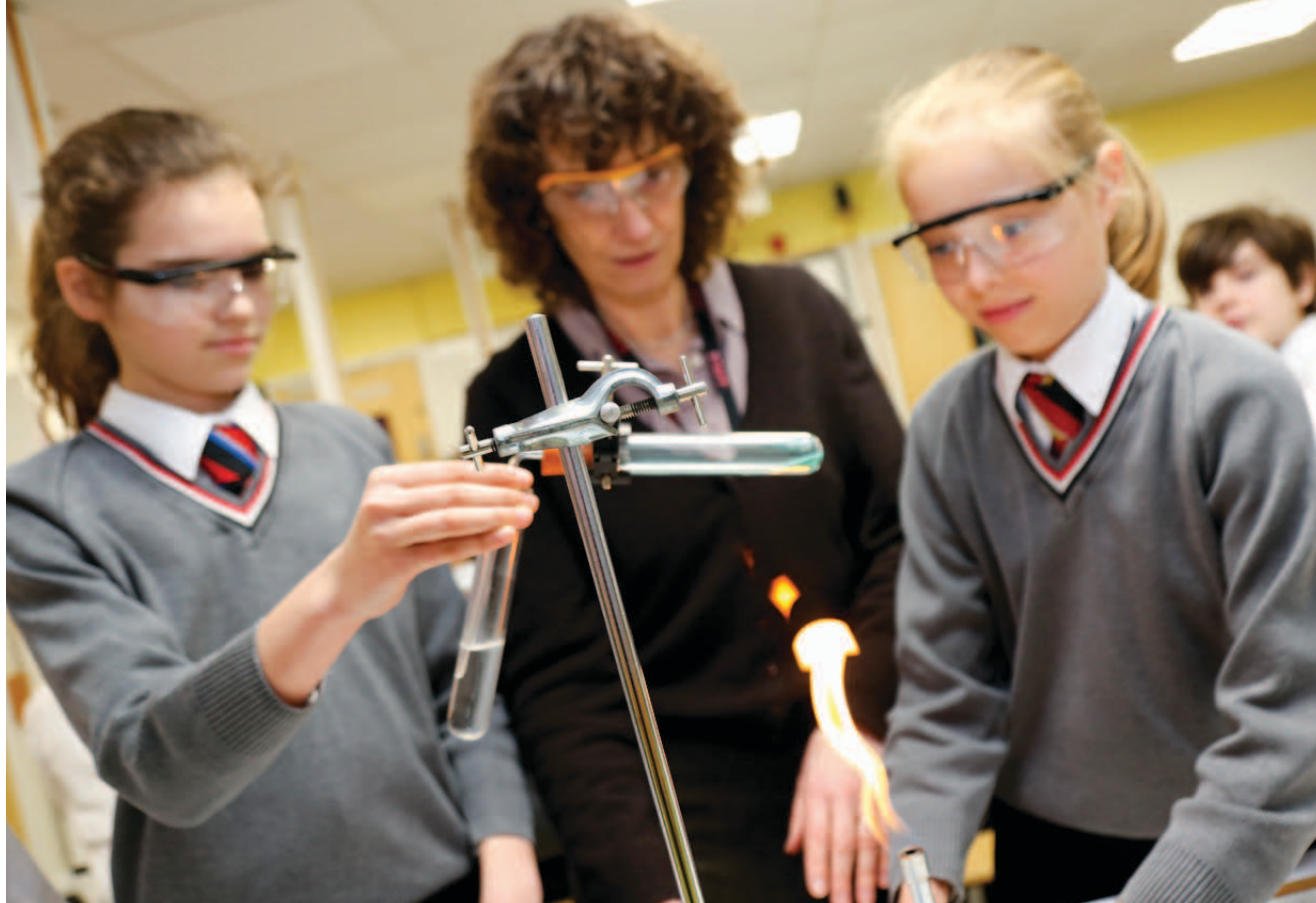
Most commentators on this subject agree. We must do more at the earliest stages to encourage children to develop naturally, without gender determining their choice of subjects in schools and ultimately, their future careers. Given the importance of STEM in the modern world, tackling

the issues of gender stereotyping in STEM subjects is vital.

Schools have a crucial part to play. While the focus of many educational, political and industrial advisors has been on STEM education in secondary schools, I believe that this is too late. By the age of 12, gender stereotypes may already be influencing pupils' views of subjects. The answer is to deal with the issue earlier, even at an age when children first read the Mr Men and Little Miss books!

In 2015, St Faith's introduced Engineering as a core curriculum subject for all pupils aged 7 to 13, a new discipline in which pupils work





in project teams to solve problems by applying their knowledge of science, maths, computing and design. Even the younger children in the pre-prep have exposure to our engineering curriculum, testing their creativity skills in age appropriate challenges. Teaching Engineering from such an early age normalises the subject for the children and makes it part of their day-to-day vocabulary. Young minds at this age are not biased in terms of gender and ability to perform a task – girls and boys alike will attack a challenge with great gusto, showing little or no inhibition!

Of course, the role models that young minds are exposed to will have a considerable impact on their views. Whilst schools cannot and should not select staff according to gender, it is remarkably effective when teachers assume roles that fly in the face of gender stereotypes. At St Faith's, both our engineering teachers are women, both are engineering graduates and both are our very own Little Miss Inventors!

Indeed, our Head of Engineering, Dr Nicola Hoyle, studied maths at Oxford University at the age of 16, completed a PhD at Southampton University, worked for the Williams Formula 1 team and led a team at a visual effects company, Double Negative,

which won an Oscar and BAFTA for their computer graphics on the film *Inception*. The fact that she created special effects for some of the Harry Potter films elevates her 'hero' status amongst our pupils! During maternity leave, she spent time in secondary schools teaching A Level maths. When discussing gender stereotyping in STEM, Dr Hoyle comments, 'I soon realised that A level was too late. Pupils had already chosen their subjects and their courses for university. I realised that a love for problem solving had to come at a very young age, to open up the world to the children and show them what is possible.'

After just two and half years of teaching engineering at St Faith's, we are beginning to see the results. In a recent careers survey, the most popular option chosen by Year 8 pupils was engineering, with as many girls as boys selecting it. In computing, a subject incorporating coding, introduced at St Faith's in 2012 and now taught to all pupils from age five, more girls than boys feature in our top sets, another pleasing statistic given the traditional male image of this subject.

In February 2018, we were honoured to be given the 'Strategic Initiative of the Year' award at the annual Times

Educational Supplement awards, for the introduction of engineering to the curriculum. The judges commented: 'It is a STEM dream. An admirable, innovative and challenging project, using local expertise and encouragement with superb results. To introduce engineering as a curriculum subject from age seven is a bold and inspirational step. We were deeply impressed.'

So why not consider introducing engineering to your prep pupils? We would be more than happy to help. In November we will be running a course, on behalf of the IAPS, on the introduction and teaching of engineering to young children. This will be aimed at teachers of science and design technology, as well as senior managers, who want to learn about how to teach this new subject, and introduce it to the prep school curriculum. Alternatively, you would be welcome to visit St Faith's at another time, to see the engineering lessons in action and speak with our engineering teachers.

Given that 2018 is the Year of Engineering, I believe there could be no better time, and indeed no better place than our prep and junior schools, to develop a young generation of little inventors.

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Blast from the past



Back in the day, how did Lawrence Sheriff School cope with snow? Headteacher *Dr Peter Kent* tells us more in his school newsletter, *The Weekly Word*

In December 2017, I reluctantly decided to close the school for two days, following heavy snowfalls. Indeed, schools all over Warwickshire and neighbouring counties were closed too. The closures were received with varying degrees of understanding and/or protest. Such closures have been mercifully rare, but they always trigger the assertion from the older generation that 'they never used to close schools for snow when I was young. Why can't we cope now?'

I always take great interest in these claims both as governor and as unofficial archivist. It seems a fair question. If schools never used to close for snow, why do they have to now? First of all, did schools ever close because of snow? The simple answer is yes, they did. But the truth is more complex than that. On many occasions snowfalls were so heavy that schools were closed. Those, for example, in outlying villages with limited road access, or those on top of windswept hills would be almost inaccessible. But in those days (e.g. for much of the last century) most parents did not have telephones. There was no local radio. So, there was no easy means of letting parents know.

Closed or not, children would be sent to battle through deep snow and arrive at school ready for work. In those days, both at small village schools and at Lawrence Sheriff School, the headteacher lived on site. They could get in, provided they cleared a path for the few miles from home to school. They could not turn away shivering, exhausted

and bedraggled youngsters. So the practice became common of allowing those children who arrived into school where a fire had been lit. The children would cluster around the fire, notwithstanding spitting coals or logs. They would spend a shortened day sharing stories, table tests, singing songs... any communal activity that was both educational and able to be tailored to a wide range of age and ability. The school was officially designated 'closed'. Registers were not marked. Would those children who did get in, doubtless in some cases sent by hard-hearted parents who knew the children would never be turned away, have memories of a school that was opened or closed?

Not only was the headteacher nearby, but often staff too. In the 1950s, when I attended Lawrence Sheriff School, nearly every teacher lived within a two-mile radius. Many walked or cycled in every day. At Eastlands School (not far from Lawrence Sheriff), the same was true, except that a few came in by train from places like Coventry or Leamington. Villages like Clifton, Dunchurch, Wolston and Brinklow had regular rail services. Car travel was rare. Such schools had no car parks. Lawrence Sheriff had a space alongside the main entrance (and still



does) where about half a dozen spaces could be filled. It was never full. The headteacher parked 'at home'.

So, the key ingredients of the vibrant school: pupils, and staff, could be mustered on any day. Teachers who lived too far away to travel on foot were required by their contract to report for duty at the nearest school to their home. Imagine a system today where strangers reported for teaching duty at Reception. What would our Safeguarding Policy permit? If heating broke down, children would be taught in their outdoor clothes and wear mittens. Periodically, they would be sent out to run about and warm up. There are logbook reports of temperature inside as low as 4 degrees Celsius, and stories (perhaps folklore) of frozen ink. For better or worse, schools then and now were very different places. And the regulations within which they once worked bear little comparison to those today. One thing schools have always had to do is to observe the law.

FOMO and the book

Charlotte Weatherley, the Deputy Head and Head of English at Knighton House School, Blandford, explores reading and books during the age of social media

Recently, I had a startling conversation with a teenager. Not a grunting teenager, but a highly articulate, 'out there' sort of teen – think Teen Vogue and shopping at Brandy Melville. The conversation between us went something like this:

'I am thinking of cancelling my Instagram account.'

'Wow!'

'My friends and I are unhappy with its sapping of our free time and finding the energy required to monitor the permanent traffic of pictures is killing us; plus, it's exhausting to be in a constant state of visual perfection readiness.'

'Gosh!'

'Doesn't it say in that book you keep quoting at us (she meant *Swimming Upstream*, *Parenting Girls for Resilience in a Toxic Culture* by Laura H. Choate) that girls have taken up 'online' as simply another way to judge themselves (often as wanting) and it's a further obstacle to a productive, fulfilled life? I don't want to be judging and scrutinising the microscopic, better-left-private details of my contemporaries' lives, and I don't want everyone judging and scrutinising mine.'

'Goodness!'

My part in the conversation was clearly negligible, my usual loquaciousness on matters relating to the young consisting only of a series of sprightly exclamation marks. Like many teachers, I see social media as established and necessary to life – specifically, adolescent life. It is how

our pupils connect with each other, how they (and we) access information about the world. In a 2016 survey, 28% of teens were getting their news via social media. For some, it may be seen as an addiction, for others it is a positive platform for self-expression. I worried greatly (as do most adults) about the impact social media was having on the mental well-being of young people, but it had not occurred to me for one moment that perhaps these thoughts chimed with those of young people themselves.

Antidotes to social media's non-stop search for new audiences do in fact exist; a quick look online gives us humour (you laugh in the face of the Photoshopped), the Liberal Arts (I think that means acting and painting your way through the pain of 50 not 100 Likes) and detox (asking your parents to hide all devices, trying to make it through the day, cold turkey), but what about books? Could the printed word be, once again, at the forefront of a revolution? Could reading be the counterweight to what we hate about social media: the cats and cucumbers are funny, we really love our connected life, but how we abhor the need to fashion an online persona so alien to our real selves.

Gutenberg would be tickled pink to think books could do this, and as for the lads who invented Cuneiform, one of the earliest known writing systems (invented about 5000 years ago), they wouldn't need convincing. But how could it work? How could we persuade a generation of YouTubers that the 'rush' induced by a sneezing baby panda or a laughing goat could

also be felt when reading a great book? Here is how I think it might work: listed below are social media sites/websites and book titles. Each listing explains the site, followed by how the book taps into the themes of its digital counterpart. So, before naturally reaching for your device this time (the heaviest users check their phones 5,427 times a day, according to researcher Dscout), reach for the book. Not an instant return, it must be admitted, but an effort worth making: no one to criticise your thinking, no one to demand you answer now and no one to derail you with their views, just your own judgement and your own enjoyment – solo.

Social media site and its book counterpart

<https://www.boredpanda.com/funny-pinterest-fails/> and *Why We Took the Car* by Wolfgang Herrndorf. There is almost nothing funnier than the melted wax crayon art fail, but the 'fails' in *Why We Took the Car* resonate even more deeply because we recognise them as our own, small, every day failings as well: 'When someone doesn't have any nicknames, it's for one of two reasons. Either you're incredibly boring and don't get any because of that, or you don't have any friends. But there is one other possibility. You could be boring and have no friends. And I'm afraid that's my problem.' Ouch.

YouTube – *What Went Viral in 2017* and *Stolen* by Lucy Christopher. If you Google 'What Went Viral in 2017' one result is the Los Angeles-based choreographer Kyle Hanagami's, 'Shape of You' routine. The dancing

is intense, sensuous and absolutely mesmerising, rather like Lucy Christopher's novel – kidnapped at an airport, the main character is torn between desire for, and fear of, her young captor. The book is written as one intensely felt letter to the perpetrator.

YouTube's Cat vs Cucumber compilation and *All Dogs Have ADHD* by Kathy Hoopman. Cats and cucumbers are just enduringly funny (although who doesn't love the fainting goats), but whilst the laughs in Kathy Hoopman's book are genuine, the message is much more in earnest.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xuCn8ux2gbs> and *Wolf by Wolf* by Ryan Graudin. In *The History of the World, I Guess* by Bill Wurtz, the creation of the universe is explained in a 20 minute video – clever, extremely clever, but not the sustained cleverness of our universe re-imagined, as in Ryan Graudin's novel: 'The year is 1956, and the Axis powers of the Third Reich and Imperial Japan rule the world...' The poignancy of this novel, the energy of the motorbike riders who race to win an audience with Adolf

Hitler, is all told through the voice of the brutalised Yael, child of the concentration camps.

<https://www.boredpanda.com> and *The Illustrator's Notebook* by Mohieddine Ellabbad. Bored Panda showcases art and design by incredibly talented people across the globe and describes itself as the only magazine for pandas; *The Illustrator's Notebook* takes a similar broad view of art, from both the Western and the Arabic traditions, without the pandas.

<https://www.instagram.com> and *Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi.

Instagram tells us all we want to know of breaking news, but the novel *Persepolis* represents the reality to an adolescent, already grappling boys, spots and personal identity, of repressive regimes, war and refugee status; in its use of the graphic novel format, it is even more powerful for the seeming disconnect between form and content.

Netflix and The Ghost Child by Sonya Hartnett.

Nothing can be better than watching a great film and to compare the genre of film with that of the written

word is risky, but *The Ghost Child* has a cinematic quality that is quite staggering, with parts of the book playing out in your head like stills from a film reel: 'His royal spirit, disturbed winging like a dark bat into the sky.' 'He was a kestrel, an eel, a lacewing.'

Making the landscape of books too separate from their online lives, as though young people can juggle only one or the other, has been a mistake that we adults have made for them. The teen of the original conversation is from a well-read family, but she admits that among her peers, talking about books was about as likely as Kim Kardashian being made UK ambassador for Start-rite shoes, because nowhere was it given a platform. Teachers try to incorporate the best aspects of social media into their teaching in the hope of retaining the interest of their pupils, losing sight along the way of the powerful benefits of being a reader, not least that readers are happier, healthier and more connected to their communities than their non-reading opposites and, consequently, much better placed to balance the demands that social media makes upon them.



A swimming pool or a water park?

With 30 years of experience as the Director of Sports in prep and senior schools and the Director of Independent Coach Education, *Neil Rollings* reflects on the crossroads that physical education faces in schools today

If the only aim of schools were to provide pupils with fun, investment decisions would be very easy. Water slides would replace swimming pools and roller coasters would be preferred to libraries. But never in the history of the arms race, in which school

facility development has gathered unprecedented pace, has this been suggested because there is more to education than fun. And that's the same for physical education.

The foundation of schools is experiences that are deep and

worthwhile, enduring and illuminating. It goes far beyond the temporary appeal of the frivolous. The challenge since schools began has been to engage young people in activities that have a medium-term impact, not an immediate appeal. And



Sport is busy changing its character in the hope of making itself more accessible to youth – shorter, less intrusive, more convenient and constant excitement.

to find satisfaction in overcoming challenges that are not immediately easy. This is not the same as fun.

Physical activity is perhaps the best example of this. Meaningful achievement comes at the end of the effort. Often it doesn't reveal itself until the end of a prolonged period of gruelling training and preparation. There are defeats, discomfort, disappointments and reverses along the way.

It has always been like that, but the contrast between these enduring features and the everyday life of a teenager has never been so stark. This is a world of instant and frivolous. Activities and communications that have immediate appeal, which fade equally quickly. Social media might provide more welcome distraction than Shakespeare, but the latter conveys a greater and more substantial meaning. The 20-year life of instant communications has not been enough for humans to evolve; man's search for meaning has a history that goes well beyond 2000 years.

Physical activity in schools is at a crossroads. On the one hand, it offers successes that are only achievable on the far side of effort, and this is increasingly distant from the inclination of teenagers addicted to instant distraction and immediate

gratification. If the sole purpose was fun, then school sport is becoming obsolete. Students resent 'giving up' time for sport that could be used for other, instantly attractive and less demanding activities. The games experience has to be as brief and low-key as possible. Activities requiring patience and application, such as cricket, are becoming hideously unfashionable. Those demanding commitment and selflessness are in apparently terminal decline.

But what are the 'other activities'? What is so compelling that it relegates sport as the Saturday activity of choice? Social media? Shopping? Underage drinking? 'Hanging out'? Are these the activities that will replace the satisfactions, relationships and lifetime memories that games brought to previous generations?

The dramatic growth of wealth and material possessions of recent generations has not been accompanied by growth in satisfaction and happiness. The average Briton is less satisfied with life than they were 50 years ago. Possessions, instant communications and money have not produced the paradise that economists predicted. Meaning and purpose have not been made more accessible and freely available at the same rate as texting. Dedication, application and commitment may be less fashionable,

but they are still at the root of achievement and satisfaction.

Sport is busy changing its character in the hope of making itself more accessible to youth – shorter, less intrusive, more convenient and constant excitement. Of course, that is not irrelevant. But the same pupil surveys that want games to be less intrusive would want the same for maths. The soul of sport is lost when it becomes meaningless. Instant sport may be appealing on the surface, but, like 'Snapchat', it soon disappears. The waterslide ride may be thrilling, but it is soon over and forgotten. Learning to work for something that has enduring value may be unfashionable, but it is not irrelevant. It has a solid history that should not be summarily dismissed. The answer is not to make it easy, but to teach children to love it being hard and worthwhile.

However, fun is not without significance. It should not be dismissed as a Puritanical irrelevance. Fun accesses brain processes that make learning more real. Learning linked to humour is stickier and longer lasting. Fun is part of the process of sport, but it is not the entire process. There is something deeper at work as well.

So the challenge for education is to combine the two.



Treachery at Traitors' Quay

Alex Osiatynski, Headmaster of Bilton Grange Prep School near Rugby, having previously been Director of Music at the Loughborough Endowed Schools, reviews Treachery at Traitor's Quay

Treachery at Traitors' Quay is one of the latest releases from Out of the Ark Music, from whose dramatic stable many nativities and other productions have emanated over the years – all those witty and inventive ways of retelling the Christmas story have always been well worth performing and watching. Treachery at Traitors' Quay is, however, as far as I can tell the second musical play created by Mary Green and Julie Stanley for Out of the Ark, the first being *Mystery at Magpie Manor*, which the Year 3 children at Bilton Grange performed by chance last summer. It was a good yarn, a whodunit simplified down for the sake of younger children with some vaguely toe-curling gags and a few silly character names. Treachery at Traitors' Quay certainly builds on this theme but, by transporting the action to the 1940s and involving the issue of evacuee children, cleverly builds in a topic which is frequently introduced to children at Key Stage 2 (at whom this play is firmly pointed), namely WW2 and the impact domestically, especially on children.

The play charts the adventures of a group of evacuees who travel from London to the West Country with their teacher, and you have to quickly get over the stereotype characterisations that abound! The local posh family are snooty, the village folk are endearing, apart from those characters whose puffed-up self-importance has been rather obviously borrowed from *Dad's Army*, and then you have the comically named Wheeler and Dealer, Jolly and Jape. Although the point of naming them thus, when the script doesn't really exploit it, eludes me somewhat. The children become aware of sinister goings-on and, of course, single-handedly expose a traitor in their midst.

The script is generally strong, and the interjection at scene changes of Churchill reading extracts of his speeches adds an extra dimension, I suspect both in performance and in the learning process: it should not

be forgotten that putting on plays of this nature is not just about the performance. It is understandable that compressing a whodunit into a sub-60 minute musical is going to involve cutting a few corners, and to that end the audience can't really engage in the process of solving the mystery, but I doubt they will mind. The Agatha Christie-esque dénouement, in which the possible guilt of virtually every (adult) character is considered, is good fun with a suitably unlikely outcome: I shan't spoil the surprise for anyone wishing to enjoy the moment for the first time.

The songs are almost universally brilliant, starting with the locomotion of 'The Evacuation' as the children leave Paddington station. Syncopation and a motoring accompaniment (pausing for a reflective middle verse as the children consider the enormity of leaving home) give the show an energetic start, in a way not dissimilar to the driving rhythms of Tim Minchin's 'Matilda'. 'The Jitterbug' allows for a focus on the Land Girls (another good learning topic built in) as well as having at least one number, which allows for more involved choreography. 'Letters' is a poignant dialogue between children writing letters home and their mothers receiving them. 'Doing Our Bit' helps to expand on the learning topic of 'dig for victory', and although stylistically it is very similar to 'The Jitterbug' I don't think this matters; I was, however, bemused by the sudden attempt at four-part vocal close harmony in the last two bars, which would be taxing for most schools to attempt. 'Spying on the Spy' is a dark, chromatic contrast to the other songs as the children begin their manhunt. 'Go Home Hitler' is an excellent play on the patriotic songs of the time (à la Vera Lynn) and the show ends with 'Keep Calm and Carry On'. This is the only moment where I have a slight criticism, which is that the very ending, after a suitably rousing key change before the last verse, is somewhat limper than it might be – and if that sounds like nitpicking, it is really...

The excellent backing tracks are authentically sampled, including sound effects to use during the performance. The accompanying CD-ROM (I honestly didn't realise they still existed) has a function to show the song words dynamically on an interactive whiteboard or screen, which is useful during the rehearsal process, and also provides for PDF versions of the script, score and ancillary pages of the showbook. If purchased online, these features can also be accessed through an online player via your online account.

I suspect that Treachery at Traitors' Quay will become a favourite with teachers and pupils; add to this the fact that schools with a CCLI licence can use the handy song list as a reminder of which song lyrics they have projected, for logging on their CCLI return, together it is a compelling package that Green and Stanley, and Out of the Ark Music, have put together. I will certainly be recommending it to our team for a performance next year!

Note: If this musical is being performed to anyone other than school staff and pupils, an Annual Performance Licence will need to be obtained directly from Out of the Ark Music

Participation, respect, excellence and independence

James Mundell, Headmaster of Giggleswick Junior School in North Yorkshire, tells us how the school uses outdoor adventure as part of the school's repertoire

When I arrived in Giggleswick as a NQT in 2004, I knew I was coming to teach in an attractive part of the country, but I was unprepared for the sheer beauty of the surroundings here. Giggleswick Junior School, where I have been Headmaster since 2015, is just outside the Yorkshire Dales National Park and this has many advantages for our pupils. It means we can engage with our natural surroundings by taking the children out for various activities, such as forest sessions, weekly 'out and about' and daily sport/PE. We are fortunate that the school is set within beautiful grounds, so it's unsurprising that we place so much emphasis on being outdoors and are fully aware of the benefits this can bring.

There has been a school on this site since 1512, although it has undergone a number of re-incarnations since it was founded. A restructure in 2007 established the Junior school and we have an Early Years unit and the Senior school, taking students up to age 18. Giggleswick is a relatively small school with 80 pupils in the Juniors and 360 in the Seniors, including some boarders, mostly at Senior level.

The school's core values include participation, respect and excellence.

We foster independence in our pupils and encourage outdoor education and adventure. Because we have small class sizes, staff really know the pupils and can plan for individual needs. Pupils gain confidence in speaking and answering as there is no opportunity to fade into the background in a small class.

Another strength is the community feel we have developed, where parents, pupils and staff work as a partnership team. I believe that the combination of our size and rural location, our core values and the fact that we are lucky enough to have specialist staff, means that we offer a wrap-around holistic experience for our pupils.

Participation is key: every child sings in the school choir and we offer a broad curriculum that includes drama, design, music, art, computer studies and a range of sporting activities, all with a child-led emphasis. Respect is fostered by strong pastoral support during an extended school day, and by our tutoring system that builds on these foundations to instil pride, compassion and independence in our pupils. Pupils are incredibly tolerant of each other and we have a very low incidence of behavioural concerns. We encourage children to strive for excellence and go beyond what

they feel they are capable of to fully develop their potential.

A crucial component in developing pupils is the work we do with them outdoors. Since 2011, every Year 6 student attends an Outward Bound® week-long residential course in the Lake District with two of our teaching staff. We took our time deciding on the right outdoor adventure provider for our pupils and decided on The Outward Bound Trust because of the way it balances physical skills with personal development and reflection and because its aims and ethos chime so well with our own. As a well-established educational charity with royal patronage, the Trust has many years of expertise embodied in its instructors. We chose a water-based course for our pupils because this supplements the activities we can do already in our own environment. The Trust centre in Ullswater offers a different experience and this benefits the children partly because of the contrast with school. During the residential, they spend a lot of time on the lake, swimming, kayaking and undertaking outdoor challenges.

Every year, we meet with the Learning and Adventure Manager based at the centre before the course begins to agree our learning objectives, which



are tailor-made for the specific year group we are taking. Both individual and team goals are important and we discuss these fully when structuring the activities for the week.

Until I saw The Trust at work for myself (I now spend a full day each year with the pupils during the residential) I didn't realise quite how they work to develop strong team-building and leadership skills, alongside resilience, confidence and creativity. Pupils do learn outdoor skills, which will hold them in good stead as preparation for more advanced outdoor courses in Senior School, but just as importantly they are nurtured to develop their self-worth and to take pride in whatever they achieve. This is priceless, especially for those children who may have experienced challenges socially, intellectually or emotionally. The course moves them out of their safe-zones and into a stretch zone where

what they learn is hugely rewarding in so many ways.

It's easy to forget that some young people and perhaps their parents, find a week away from home quite daunting but I can safely say that all our pupils come away achieving something and benefiting from the experience. One anxious and introverted boy, afraid of water and long walks, really came out of himself. With encouragement, he took part in all the activities and managed to climb one of the fells, so going way beyond his own and others' expectations. Another rather shy child was the only one to climb the telegraph pole and stay on the top, unlike other more confident and outgoing children in his peer group.

So, it really is the highlight of their final year in the Juniors and it is a joy to see how the Year 6s enthuse the younger pupils at the post-course assembly they present. Younger

children who might be full of trepidation come away feeling excited and impatient to experience the residential course themselves.

Like all Heads, I want my pupils to be happy, well-rounded individuals able to fully participate in the life of the school and outside it, and to go on to the next stage of life with confidence. I have seen for myself how our emphasis on outdoor education helps every child feel valued, independent and confident. The residential course with The Trust develops our holistic approach to education: developing key skills for life in children, and enhancing our aim to nurture the personal development in all our pupils, including resilience, confidence, independence, empathy, and collective ownership, in a carefully planned and delivered environment.

To act or not to act



Patricia Ellis, from Wizard Video production, shares some tips with readers on how to stage and record your own school show

Over the last 30 years, Wizard Video has recorded thousands of school shows. I also have experience of staging them as I ran my own dance school in Surrey for 44 years. Shows add creativity to National Curriculum work and enables less academically able pupils to shine and gain confidence through teamwork.

So here are some of our tips for successfully staging and video recording your school show:

- Once you have settled on a show date, ask parents for help. You may have hidden talent in the way of prop-makers, make-up artists.
- Before selling any seats decide on the position of the camera.
- Many schools forget to do this and compromise the success of the video.
- In a school hall, some firm staging for tripod and camera will enable a clear view over audience heads.

Costumes

- It's wise to have costume colours that contrast with the background.
- Black leotards may look good in your dance studio, but may look dull on stage. In fact, go for blocks of colour – bright cyclamen, yellow or turquoise look great when well lit.
- The bigger the venue, the brighter you can go with costumes and makeup.
- Inexpensive and accessible face paints are a useful alternative to costly, professional make up.
- Have you contacted other nearby

schools? They may be able to lend you just what you want.

Scenery

- A backcloth can add interest to the stage. It's surprising what can be hired and delivered to your school.
- Of course your Art department may be persuaded to produce scenery as a project. Think big!

Lighting for video

- Some white light mixed into colour will ensure that the performers' faces show up.
- One-colour lighting washes are a problem, e.g. blue lights to match blue costumes results in blue faces!
- Side lighting from the wings gives outline and shaping to performers.
- Most high-end digital cameras can cope with strobe and UV lights.
- Video cannot see down to such a low level as the human eye, therefore have even lighting, not just a bright spot in the middle of the stage

Sound

If you are relying on senior pupils to operate your sound or lighting, make sure they have training and plenty of practice. Many school shows have been ruined through the loudspeakers blasting out or emanating a loud earsplitting squealing noise.

- If it isn't 'in-house' it's worth getting professional help to supply and man your sound desk.
- It's fun to add some pre-recorded sounds to your CD soundtrack – e.g. storm, rain, traffic and voices.

Speeches and positioning of Wizard microphones: we will take a feed from the sound desk and set up radio mikes near the stage. If you are having end-of-show speeches, please stand by our mikes or ask your sound operator for an extra roving mike. Be aware that our microphones are not intended to amplify the sound for the audience.

Filming

A show video is a great memento for children and parents. It is a record of the production, which you probably won't have seen from front of house. Older students will appreciate what you are trying to achieve with your staging and choreography.

Filming live performance is not easy. It's an acquired skill, with specialist techniques for achieving a visual balance combining wide and close up shots. Even in a single camera shoot, we ensure smooth transitions from wide to close up and good sound recording.

On the day of the show

You should have already reserved space for our camera operators (and a parking space for them to unload) to set up their equipment. Floor space of 1.5 square metres (each) is a good rule of thumb or if this is in theatre seating rows, make sure you place 'reserved' signs on the six seats that the cameras will be using.

Spare ten minutes to meet the camera operator for a brief chat about the show.

Backstage

It's important to have some basic backstage rules and etiquette that

will aid the smooth running of the performance and keep everyone safe and happy. Patience can run thin at times of high stress so it's important everyone knows and understands what the rules are before the performance.

Also organise chaperones fetching children from dressing rooms and in the wings to supervise.

- Have your list displayed showing which child is in each dressing room.
- Allocate dressing rooms so that the 'busiest' performers are closest to the stage and locate 'quick change areas' for seniors at the side of the stage.
- Get each child to provide a labelled bag or container to keep their

personal belongings in to save lost items and tears after the show.

- Tell them to stay in their designated area at all times so that they can be easily 'found' when called. There are lots of performers to keep track of who could miss their entrance if they are not in the right place on cue.
- Each performer should be responsible and not rely on others to know what's happening next. They should know where they need to be at all times and make sure they are there.
- Quiet at all times and keep the noise to a minimum backstage.
- Be conscious of bleeding light from doors opening backstage. Tell the children that when waiting in the

wings, if you can see the audience, they can see you – and so can the camera. Stay out of sight, especially arms, legs, hands and feet. Using masking tape, place a line to mark the area over which performers should not cross.

- Lay props out ahead of time and stress that props go back to the props table after use.

Don't forget to rehearse the finale and make it clear to the children what is going to happen afterwards.

Allocate some help to clear up otherwise you will be left doing it on your own.

And, finally, expect to be exhausted for at least a week but delighted at what you and your students have achieved!



Out of order?



Grant Murray, head of Risk & Compliance at Redwood Collections, explores both the moral and business cases for applying for an Order for Sale

According to the Independent Schools Financial Benchmarking Survey 2015, 38% of surveyed schools have an unpaid debt that is secured via a charging order on a property. However, very few charge holders realise that they may apply for an order for sale that can result in the property being sold and the debt cleared. Charging orders have long been a common way of enforcing a County Court Judgment (CCJ). It is believed that around 100,000 charging orders are granted to claimants each year for anything from an unpaid credit card, a water bill, or unpaid school fees.

There are many reasons why a creditor may choose to secure their CCJ with a charging order. In the case of schools, it is often because there is a tacit agreement with the debtor to secure the debt against the property until such time as the pupils finish their examinations or otherwise leave at the end of the current year or key stage. This is sometimes accompanied by an agreement for the parents to make token payments to clear the debt.

So you have a charge on the property and the debt is 'secured' against an asset. But when the child has left, the payments have stopped and the debtor is no longer responding to letters – what happens next? The debtor will often be content to simply let the charge remain on their property. This can almost seem to be a guaranteed long-term investment (charging orders generally accrue 8% statutory interest pa) but the charge

may not be secure. Depending on how the charge was registered with HM Land Registry, the debtor may still be able to sell the property without the consent of the school, leaving the charging order redundant and the debt unpaid. This is something that needs to be clarified.

There will always be those who are simply taking advantage of the system. Often such debtors know that the debt to the school will not immediately affect their credit worthiness in the same way that, for example, missing mortgage payments would. Priority may therefore be given to their other outgoings rather than their obligation to pay the school. An application for an Order for Sale has been shown to reverse this standpoint and often produces favourable repayment offers or settlements in full.

It is perfectly reasonable to take into consideration someone's net worth (where possible to determine to a fair degree of accuracy) when assessing the appropriateness of an order for sale against a recalcitrant debtor. Some may be experiencing genuine financial hardship in terms of their income/expenditure, but also have a very high net worth. For these 'cash poor, asset rich' debtors, does it really constitute fair treatment of them to perpetuate their financial difficulty by accepting a low value instalment arrangement, keeping them indebted for an extended period of time, incurring even more interest? Perhaps it would suit all parties if the court granted the school's Order for Sale and the

debtor's assets were liquidated. Depending on the value of their assets this could result in their debts being cleared, their monthly outgoings greatly reduced and substantial net funds given to them at the end of the process.

Any reputable solicitor or debt collection agency should have measures in place to spot sensitive circumstances and take them into consideration when weighing up whether to issue an order for sale, then advise the school accordingly. This helps to reassure the school that legal action is not issued inappropriately.

Further protection for the vulnerable is provided by Section 15 of the Trusts for Land and Appointment of Trustees Act 1996, which requires courts to consider the interests and the welfare of the debtor, other members of the debtor's household (and dependent children in particular) when considering a creditor's application for an order for sale. Therefore if a judge ultimately approves a school's application for an Order for Sale, that school can be sure that the decision has given appropriate consideration to the debtor's circumstances.

Finally, schools seeking assurance of the fair treatment of their debtors should consider instructing a debt collection agency that is authorised by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), the new regulator for the financial services industry. Such agencies are bound by the principles of the FCA's Treating Customers Fairly initiative.

The SATIPS Broadsheets are a superb practical resource for schools. The editor of the Pastoral Development and PSHCE broadsheet is Tim Pitman.

SATIPS

Support and training in Prep, Primary and Senior Schools

Broadsheet

'Happy New Year'

Further into the future we go. Some find the Easter term the most difficult and return post festivities with the dread of cloud-filled skies, illness, cold and exams. This pivotal term has built its reputation based on recurring trends. There can be constant disruptions and loss of direction. At the beginning and end of the academic year we have Christmas and the summer holidays which are very pleasant goals. There is apparently little to sell the dark hours of the middle term. This is where resilience is needed most. Through a strong pastoral system and reactive PSHCE we can transform our Spring Term into a hive of productive activity. The focus on well-being must be clear though and it will be hard work, but worth it.

The starting point of course is optimism and what people may feel at the beginning of term is that they are descending further and further into darkness. In fact the reverse is true: the day is increasing in length every day by between two and three minutes.

Sunset times:

At the beginning of term 16:11
At half term 17:05
At the end of term 18:20

That has got to be worth smiling about.

The Practical Tip For Pastoral Themes and PSHCE

'Emotional Intelligence'

PSHCE with younger pupils can be difficult to deliver, and often younger and even older learners will respond to the old faithful methods, in particular the oft-neglected class reading or story-telling. This, coupled with the need to guide pupils in developing their emotional intelligence in their formative years has led me to devote almost all of my Year 3 curriculum to exploring emotions through shared stories. I often feel that areas of empathy, courage, dealing with challenges and growth mindset are left until trends of behaviour have been established and even reinforced. An early forming of positive emotional intelligence can only be advantageous.

I came upon an excellent resource which we have used successfully. It is the 'Feeling Brave' series which consists of five stories that revolve around the experiences of a wolf and they explore; self confidence, feelings of loss, change, fears and bullying. It is beautifully illustrated and the size of the books mean that there resource

lends itself perfectly to a circle time delivery. There is a teacher's book and copious follow up activities. The stories have captivated our Year 3 children but can be used down to Year 1 with some adaption.

The effectiveness of story telling has encouraged us to search out more titles which will put serious issues in an acceptable and engaging format for youngsters. I have to say that Dr Seuss' *The Lorax* has come to my attention when planning environmental topics and sustainability. Story- telling is an ancient art and I would love to feel that it has a very solid place in our pastoral care of the children. Whether it be bedtime stories in the boarding house, end of day stories or even the reading of the *Lorax* as part of forest school, sitting amongst the very characters of the book.

www.feelbrave.com/stories

Whole School Strategy For Pastoral Themes and PSHCE

'Joining the dots for maximum effect'

Integrated and cohesive planning of pastoral themes and PSHCE will really affect the impact of their precious messages. Many leaders of PSHCE bemoan the limited amount

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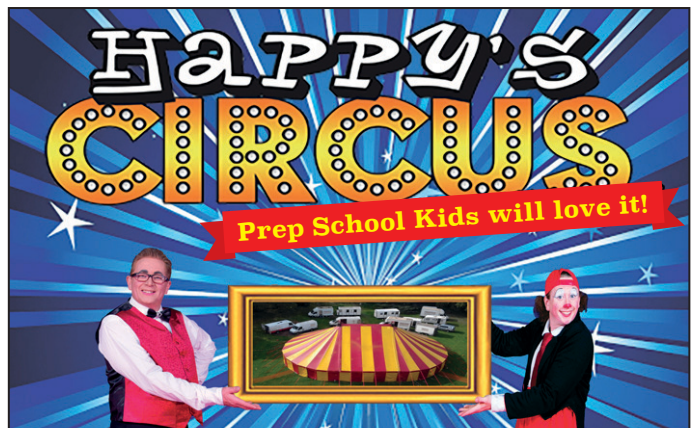
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Please mention you saw us in Prep School Magazine!

of time allocated to a subject of such importance. We have to be creative and find ways of ensuring that our curriculum is high profile, recycled and reinforced. Joined up thinking in terms of the curriculum is important, but I am not sure how well Geography, Biology and History, for example, really sync with PSHCE coverage of sustainability. It's a case of finding as many strands as possible outside the curriculum to weave into a thread which draws the school along in a clear direction.

A strategy which might be adapted to suit schools' differing structures could use the following threads:

PSHCE

Year group assemblies

Whole school assemblies

Form time

Whole school termly focuses

These are all excellent vehicles for approaching a theme. The impact is huge if they work together.

The first question is, 'which end of the telescope do we use?' Is it important to establish a whole school focus based on mission statement and then ask the school to follow on in its coat tails? Or do we try and concoct a consensus with all parties involved, from bottom up? There does need to be an initial consensus from SLT, pastoral leaders, the head of PSHCE and SMSC coordinator.

Throughout the age groups approaches and exact topic areas in PSHCE vary but they have enough cohesion for whole school assemblies, year group assemblies and form time to be relevant. With the school geared up for 'Helping others be the best that they can be' PSHCE obliges by focusing on emotional intelligence, relationships, setting goals, diversity, citizenship and mental health. As

can be seen below, the themes are cohesive. The term looks tuned.

This school operates in vertically grouped sections:

Years 7&8 forming the senior school

Years 5&6 forming the middle school

Years 3&4 forming the junior school

A term's planning for the middle school could work like this:

Week beg 1-10/1

Key Topic

What is the school focus?

How does PSHCEE fit in?

Topic for PSHCEE

Be the best that you can be for yourself and the wider community

Weekly Form Time Activities

N/A

Year Group Assembly

N/A

Week beg 2-15/1

Key Topic

Effort – How do you show effort?

Topic for PSHCEE

Resolutions – planning for improvement

Weekly Form Time Activities

Pastoral Tracking

Year Group Assembly

Head of Year – Inspiring story about determination

Week beg 3-22/1

Key Topic

Perseverance

Topic for PSHCEE

Working effectively independently

Weekly Form Time Activities

Form Teacher – Nelson Mandela

Year Group Assembly

Director of Studies – Academic – Growth Mindset

Week beg 4-29/1

Key Topic

Perseverance

Topic for PSHCEE

'Outside In' – Diversity, disability and Mental Health

Weekly Form Time Activities

Form Teacher– John Amaechi (LGBT)

Year Group Assembly

Head of Sport

Week beg 5-5/2

Key Topic

Participation

Topic for PSHCEE

'International Women's Day'

Weekly Form Time Activities

Form Teacher – Malala Yousafzai

Year Group Assembly

Form Teacher – 'Finally winning the vote'

Week beg 6-19/2

Key Topic

Participation

Topic for PSHCEE

'News Stories and philosophy' The 'Conceptometer'

Weekly Form Time Activities

Pastoral Tracking

Year Group Assembly

Music Dept, Communal singing

Week beg 7-26/2

Key Topic

Presentation – Be smart, think smart

Topic for PSHCEE

Personal Hygiene

Weekly Form Time Activities

Form Teacher – Jonny Wilkinson

Year Group Assembly

Form teacher - TBC

Week beg 8-5/3

Key Topic

Presentation

Topic for PSHCEE

'So, how have you done?' Resolutions

Review

Weekly Form Time Activities

Personal Hygiene

Year Group Assembly

Head of Art - TBC

Week beg 9-12/3

Key Topic

Punctuality

Topic for PSHCEE

Personal Hygiene

Weekly Form Time Activities

Form Teacher – J K Rowling

Year Group Assembly

Head of Drama- punctuality Role Play

Week beg 10 -19/3

Key Topic

Celebration of achievements and summary

Topic for PSHCE

'Eco Committee'

Weekly Form Time Activities

Contributions to a sustainable environment

Year Group Assembly

Celebration Assembly

You can follow the progress of this

planning each week by clicking on

<https://learning4lifewhs.blogspot.co.uk/>

There are also free resources available to download.

Pastoral Themes and PSHCE in a Global Context

'We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them.'

Albert Einstein

Hopefully we are some way towards changing thinking, the next step is practically acting on changing behaviour.

I am delighted that I am not the only one who seems a little jaded by debate and rhetoric.

Author and education journalist Peter Tait recently tweeted:

'My hope for 2018 is that we stop making education an industry with all the opining, back-slapping + interest groups and do something practical.'

I think that we have managed to make ourselves painfully aware of the mess that we are in. Moaning about current regimes and personalities without a positive contribution to resolving future problems is a waste of time. Navel contemplation is...

As teachers and educators we are in a perfect position to act, every

day, in every way. If it is simply by being role models in how we deal with conflict, or investigating how we might approach social problems. The danger is that if we do not act we will let another generation slip through our hands, ill prepared and ill informed to make good decisions. It is an inescapable fact that many of our future decision makers and influencers will have been privately educated. We have an opportunity to help change the mindset which got us into the trouble we are in.

My call is to those who are doing a very good job of raising awareness of problems, whether it be mental health, sustainability, border control or financial situations. Those who speak to our teachers at conferences and CPD sessions must give practical strategies which can be implemented in schools immediately.

My worry is that of the many, many pupils I have taught, I can't think of many who have practically made a significant contribution to a more sustainable future. There are some big decisions to be made and trends to be broken. Time for action.

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.

SATIPS

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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Courses and events

A selection of forthcoming courses from Summer 2018 onwards:

03/05/18	Don't Miss! – General Data Protection Regulation	London
18/05/18	Lesson Observation and Performance Management	London
14/09/18	Pastoral Conference	London
24/09/18	Ongoing Learning and Development in the 2nd Year of Teaching	London
25/09/18	Leading Prep School Music to Outstanding	London
05/10/18	Differentiating the Learning Experience	London
12/11/18	Staff Wellbeing and Pastoral Care	London
13/11/18	Critical Thinking	London
15/11/18	Preparing for CE English at 13+	London
28/01/19	Preparing for CE English at 11+	London

These courses will run as training days in London, Bristol, Birmingham and York. The cost of the day courses includes follow-up project based work and one to one feedback. They are also available as inset days. Bespoke training packages for schools are available with discount for more than one course booked. For more information please email the team on training@satips.org or telephone 07584 862263.

On headship matters...

I was recently talking to a friend about a trip he was planning to visit his wife's family in Australia. The trip he was planning was to be in term time and he had already contacted his children's school. 'The school say that if we go they will fine us,' he told me, 'so we have added that into the cost of the trip.'

I have already shared that when I was seconded for a year as President of ASCL, the professional association for secondary school leaders, the majority of media enquiries related to term time holidays and parental fines. I was never a popular choice with broadcasters when put up for interviews, because when asked the inevitable question 'have you ever fined a parent for taking a term time holiday?' my answer was always a truthful 'no'.

The reason for my reluctance is summed up by the story I started the article with. I think that fines are not a good way to build a relationship with parents, but they can also serve as a way of bypassing the real issue by creating the impression that paying the money to the school is just another part of the cost of the trip.

My preferred approach continues to be to reason with parents by seeking to explain the damage that term time absence does, both to their own child and to everyone else in the class. I have yet to hear about a planned absence that is not seen as educational and a valuable opportunity. The point is, when all of these opportunities are put together they damage the continuity of learning, both for the child concerned and for the rest of the group who experience regular disruption through classmates not being there and then requesting help with catching up.

Of course, there can be genuinely exceptional circumstances and in the end parents are the ones who have to balance the damage that the absence is certain to cause against whatever the urgent set of circumstances are.

In the end, the issue is a much broader one that goes far beyond something that can be addressed through the payment of a fine. I will continue to keep our policy under review with the Governing Body, but my plea to all parents remains the same: please do not take your child out of school during term time.

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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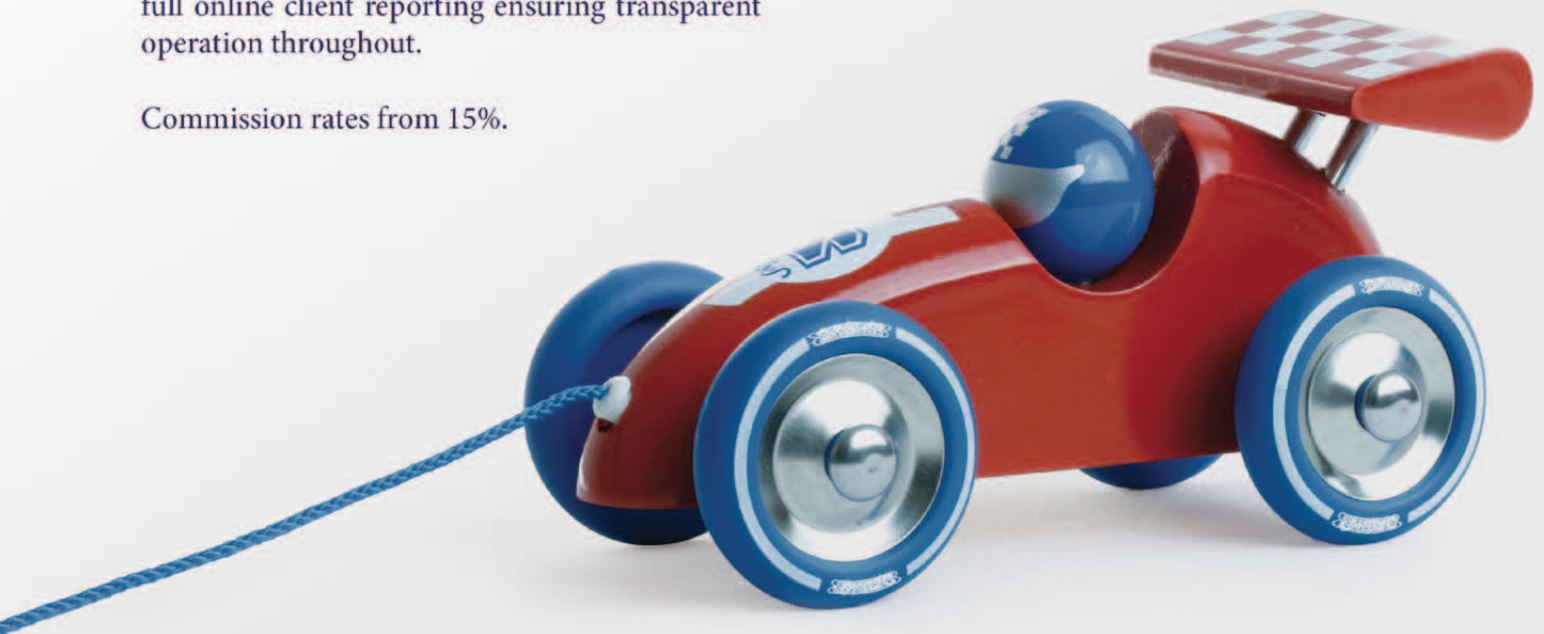
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