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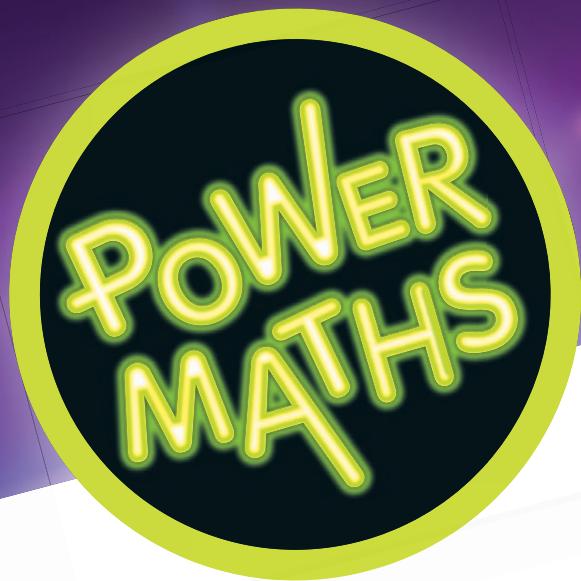
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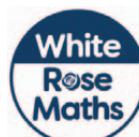


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# From the editor



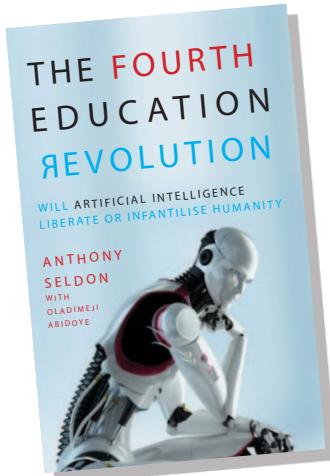
I trust you all have had a good summer break, as I have had. Certainly if you remained in the UK or Europe, you will have been blessed

with sunshine, and if that sunshine added to the beauty of social events, as it did for the christening of our third grandchild, then we can count ourselves doubly blessed. You will, I'm sure, have made good use of the time away from the conveyor belt of school, as I did. Given time to read is a real plus particularly when a book entitled *The Fourth Education Revolution* by Sir Anthony Seldon with Oladimeji Abidoye lands on your desk.

Superbly written and researched, the authors look at the history of education and then speculate how it will change as elements of Artificial Intelligence influence our lives. The first revolution took place thousands, indeed millions of years ago, when our ancestors passed on information regarding information for survival. The second revolution occurred around 4000BC in Mesopotamia with the introduction of writing and the need for institutions to teach it. The

third revolution has been with us for nearly 500 years and is very familiar to us. Teachers prepare material, organise the classroom, ensure that all are engaged in learning, set and mark assignments and prepare for terminal examinations and write summative reports. Pupils engage in five distinct activities. They memorise knowledge, apply that knowledge, turn knowledge into understanding, self assess and diagnose then reflect and develop autonomous learning.

The book then looks in detail at the many developments that have already happened in AI and suggests how the world of teaching, learning and schools will change. In essence,



the authors suggest that AI will give us holographic teachers who adapt learning to the precise needs and motivations of each student from cradle to grave. Personalised learning software will allow students to move at their own pace, pursuing their own interests and realise their potential whilst teacher time will be freed up to help make the profession the most prestigious of careers in the future. And there's more! I do highly recommend the book to you.

May I also draw your attention to INSPIRE, a wonderful new initiative launched at Windlesham House School, facilitated by Richard Foster and Justin Blake. INSPIRE equips young people to take a stand for peace and can help our prep schools mark the centenary of the end of World War One. INSPIRE is mobilising young people to commemorate those who have given their lives in conflict and celebrate a hopeful future through active peace building. This will culminate on Friday 9th November with events in schools across the country. Further information and resources are available via the website: [www.oasisinspire.org](http://www.oasisinspire.org)

Have another good academic year, both personally and professionally.

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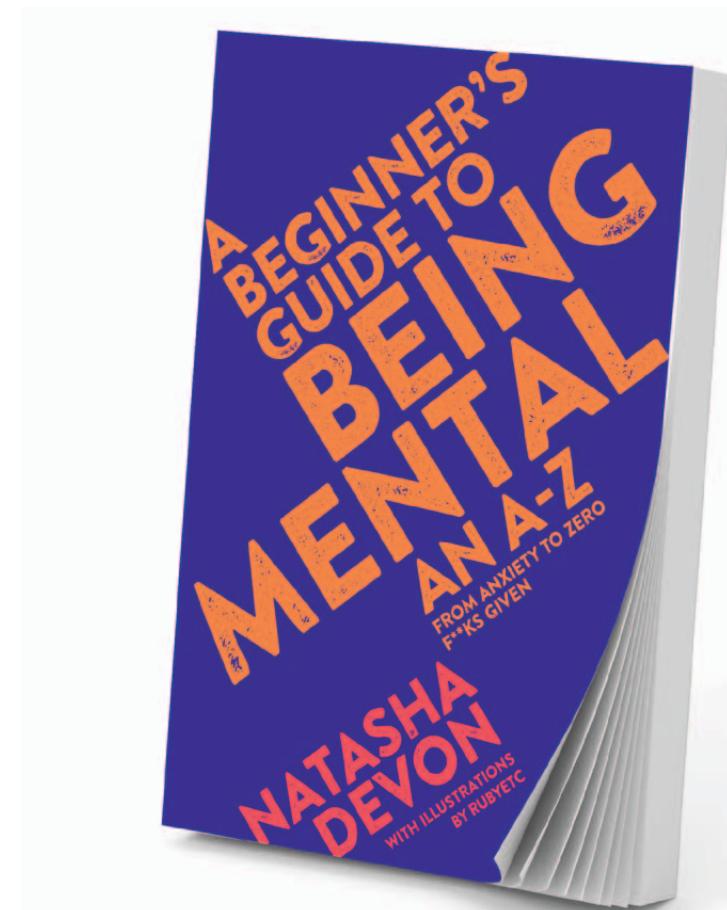
# A beginner's guide

*Natasha Devon MBE*, author of *A Beginner's Guide to Being Mental: An A-Z* and a campaigner for mental health, body image and gender equality, shares some top tips for safeguarding pupil and teacher mental health

Over the past decade, I have lost count of the sheer number of roundtables, conferences and policy labs I have attended on the topic of young people's mental health. Whether we're discussing the impact of technology and social media, increased instances of teenagers being hospitalised with self-harm or academic anxiety caused by more rigorous testing the conclusion is always the same. This needs to be acknowledged and dealt with by teachers.

Since 2010, brutal funding cuts have seen communities lose social services, sports clubs and libraries. Schools have therefore become the last bastion – a building that can be relied upon to remain open. I have heard stories of teachers having to intervene in family situations where there is domestic violence, wash pupils' clothes, even in one instance helping a family who had been made homeless to find accommodation, because there was simply no one else to do it.

Earlier this year, Damian Hinds revealed plans to make mental health education compulsory in all primary and secondary schools across England by 2022, with each expected to have a nominated 'mental health lead'. Yet with Children & Adolescent Mental Health Services cut by an estimated third since 2010, it is unclear what teachers are expected to do in the likely scenario that the mental health needs of their pupils go over and above what they are able to safely provide.



With parents increasingly under financial strain forcing them to work longer hours, teachers are not only expected to play social worker and counsellor, but mum or dad too. Just this week headlines reported a dramatic rise in the number of five year olds arriving at school without basic language and reading skills, unable to dress themselves and, perhaps most horrifyingly, not toilet trained.

On paper, the call for teachers to step into the breach makes sense. Government cannot be expected to legislate for what goes on behind the closed doors of every single home in the UK, but they do have control over what happens in schools. The problem is, of course, that austerity has impacted education to a huge extent too. In addition to Gove's attempts to 'improve' academic standards meaning teachers having to cope with seemingly endless surface-



level reforms and do mountains more paperwork for results-related pay, the expectation that they will also do more for pupils pastorally has happened alongside squeezed budgets and an industry recruitment crisis.

Is it any wonder, then, that the net result has been an unprecedented rise in mental ill health amongst teachers?

A BBC commissioned study for their *Inside Out* programme last year found that 70% of teachers have taken time off work in the past year for a physical or mental health problem they attribute directly to the stress of their job. Meanwhile, Leeds Beckett University published findings in January of this year showing half of teachers have a diagnosed mental

health issue and the NEU reported higher levels of teachers experiencing suicidal feelings.

Every single scholarly or press article I can find on the topic of teacher mental health places the blame squarely on workload. This is empirically provable – lack of time for recreation and relaxation can lead to over-production of a hormone called cortisol – an imbalance of which is one cause of depression. Increased stress also causes higher levels of adrenaline in the body, which not only leads to feelings of anxiety and panic, but can also affect the immune system, making the body more vulnerable to physical illnesses. This is widely researched and well known.

Yet, apparently, nothing is being done to address the unrealistic expectations being placed upon the teaching profession.

Some schools have introduced what might broadly be described as sticking plaster measures, with varying degrees of success. Teachers have been offered weekly yoga classes, mindfulness activities and team building excursions in an effort to boost morale. Whilst these aren't without merit (Mental Health First Aid England recommend taking one hour every day for these types of activities to maintain optimum mental wellbeing) they seem a little inadequate given the enormity of the problem at hand.

In my experience, the difference between a school workforce that is happy and well and one that is not often comes down to the quality of working relationships. School leaders are under huge amounts of pressure not only from policy-makers, but also often from parents. In the worst instances, they allow this pressure to trickle down to their staff, creating a fraught working environment. Schools are able to withstand higher levels of demand if the staff feel heard, understood and supported.

Mental ill health is also exacerbated if the person experiencing it becomes isolated. I've written often in my weekly TES column about how mainstream media wilfully conspires to represent teachers as untrustworthy or megalomaniacal and how that has in turn impacted social attitudes towards the profession. Teachers at all levels need more than ever to be supportive of one another both publicly and privately to counterbalance this.

Ultimately, however, this is a problem that can only be solved at the source. For all kinds of reasons, our education system is, I would argue, no longer fit for purpose. Adding endlessly to the teacher job specification can only mask the rotten core of the curriculum for so long when it is fundamental restructure and revolution that is needed.

And therein lies the catch 22... I've been working in schools and colleges all over the UK for a decade now and I've only ever met two teachers who I didn't think were particularly good people. As a profession, teaching is populated disproportionately with individuals who are motivated by wanting to make a difference and who care deeply about the children in their charge. That's what allows them to be taken advantage of. To say 'no' is to potentially put the wellbeing of a young person at risk, in the absence of any other support.

That is why the government will, I fear, continue to apply pressure to the

profession as, one by one, teacher snap under the strain. I'm often asked what can be done. I'm open to suggestions, but in the absence of a better one I am determined to use my platform to give this issue a persistent voice.

### **Natasha's top tips for safeguarding pupil and teacher mental health**

#### **1. Get MHFA trained**

Mental health first aid training teaches delegates to spot early symptoms of mental ill health in colleagues and pupils, what to say (and crucially, what not to) and what is appropriate to recommend in terms of further support and self-care. Just like 'regular' first aiders, mental health first aiders are not a substitute for medical professionals. However, they are trained in appropriate protocol that can save lives. Find out more at [www.mhfaengland.org.uk](http://www.mhfaengland.org.uk).

I'm currently campaigning for mental health first aiders in every work place to be enshrined in The Health & Safety At Work Act (as physical first aiders currently are). I'll be presenting my petition to Downing Street in October. Find more and sign the petition at [www.wheresyourheadat.org](http://www.wheresyourheadat.org)

#### **2. Reclaim sports and creativity**

Subjects we know have a therapeutic value like sports, art, music and drama have been defunded, devalued and, therefore, squeezed out of the curriculum.

Some schools I visit have taken small but powerful steps to reclaim these activities, using a 'little and often' approach. For example, Joe Wicks has produced a series of short YouTube videos for classes to do quick, energising workouts together without having to dedicate an entire lesson.

#### **3. Get parents on board**

In some of the schools I visit, parents of a whole year groups have imposed a 'cut off' time for mobile phone/internet use of, say, 8pm. This stops any pupil feeling singled-out or having the dreaded 'FOMO' (fear of missing out). It also encourages a

unified approach between schools and parents.

#### **4. Don't undervalue your role**

So often, I hear school staff say 'we're talking about mental health all the time but there are no services/solutions'. This is, of course, a valid fear. Talking can't replace therapeutic services. But neither is it entirely futile. Just by taking the time to talk to a colleague or pupil non-judgementally you have improved their brain chemistry (by controlling their dopamine secretion) and given them the gift of clearer thinking.

#### **5. Be rigorous when buying in outside PHSE resources**

If you have the budget, outside speakers or resources can be a great way to address the topic of mental health in PHSE. However, particularly in secondary schools, there are a lot of different organisations that are trying to claim a chunk of this busy market and, if handled wrong, mental health awareness lessons can do more harm than good.

I have listed organisations who I have seen doing great work in schools on the 'Education Resources' page of my website [www.natashadev.com](http://www.natashadev.com), as well as charities who can provide unbiased, evidence-based information on the 'Advice and Support' page.

You can find out more about Natasha's work by visiting her website [www.natashadev.com](http://www.natashadev.com) or following her on Twitter @\_NatashaDevon. Her book A Beginner's Guide to Being Mental: An A-Z is available now.

**Two readers of Prep School magazine could be in with a chance to receive a free, signed copy of Natasha's book. Email your name and address to [eajackson22@hotmail.com](mailto:eajackson22@hotmail.com) and we will pick two winners at random!**

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# Thinking well together

*Will Ord, Education Trainer and Director of Thinking Education, works internationally with teachers and parents*

In a world awash with facts, alternative facts, and statistics, the need for skilful thinking has never been greater. Just reflect on the quality of public debate and media coverage we witnessed during Brexit or the American election. Irrespective of your personal voting preferences, it's hard to avoid the word lamentable.

Schools, of course, are swift to recognise the importance of skilful thinking, but they can struggle to find the approaches, training and time to develop them effectively. Here are a few ideas to enhance the skills of thinking well together in your school. The ideas are based on my experience as a Philosophy for Children (P4C) trainer for 25 years, teacher, Chair of SAPERE, and education consultant.

## Make the argument

Appropriately, a focus on great thinking should be justified. Sometimes I hear teachers say: 'We'd love to develop thinking skills more, but we just don't have the time.' First of all, thinking skills are a key part of the curriculum. There's every right and duty to cover them. Secondly, it's not actually an issue of time, but of balance and priority. There are huge long-term benefits to developing great thinking for both teachers and children alike. Ask colleagues to reflect on whether precious teaching time is being spent on approaches that don't just 'work', but work most effectively.

## Create (and keep refreshing) shared understanding

It may seem a navel gazing exercise to some, but working to build shared understanding and terminology for thinking is absolutely essential. Let me give you an example focusing on creative thinking. I've asked thousands

of teachers, pupils and parents 'what is creative thinking?' Ironically, I receive exactly the same response about 80% of the time: 'Thinking outside the box'. The problem is that this answer is all too commonly the breadth and depth of the definition. If the concept is questioned further, the definition seems to run into a very uncreative wall

It's a brutal observation (and without blame), but I think many teachers can have a very impoverished concept of creative thinking. As a consequence, their pupils suffer the same fate. This could also be applied to the crucial concepts of critical thinking, confidence (versus self-esteem, for example), risk-taking and resilience. So, what could be done?

## ARTs

I'd recommend setting up some Action Research Teams. Put six priority thinking skills on the staffroom wall, and ask everyone to choose one to specialise in. Give them six months to define, research, benchmark, pilot and develop it together in and out of class. Then ask them to give a 15-minute training session on that specialism to all the staff. For example, you might have six colleagues covering 'creative thinking' with a clear definition, classroom activities to try, and ways to monitor progress. In essence, you will end up with six punchy, powerful, and homegrown INSETs that can run as a rolling programme over the year. The collaborative and practical research can lead to some inspiring changes for the school.

## Emphasise the power of thinking concepts

Thinking Concepts are essential if skills are to transfer across the curriculum, and into the future. They

are 'concepts on steroids' that allow you to think about all the other concepts. For example, the misleadingly simple concept and phrasing of 'if... then...' allows consequential thinking to be considered, expressed orally and in writing. Without it, the concept of 'cause and effect' can remain confusing for pupils.

Thinking Concepts unleash deeper thinking. Take the concept of 'all' versus 'some', imagine the four year olds having a class discussion about dragons. One pupil says: 'Dragons are bad!' A teacher could either move on to another opinion in the class, or use the thinking concept of all/some to push for depth: 'Do you mean all dragons are bad, or just *some*, Poppy?' 'Some dragons,' she replies, allowing the teacher to ask, 'So how could you tell the difference between the good and the bad dragons?' Imaginative tests for good/bad dragons erupt amongst them all! Consequently, the concept of 'all versus some' allows the discussion to be extended creatively and critically. So how well versed are your colleagues in the use, power and playfulness of thinking concepts? How could you upgrade class discussions to become quality-learning dialogue? Philosophy for Children would be a great place to start or take further.

## Better results? A side effect

Thinking well together is rewarding for both staff and pupils. It improves results, but I would argue this is merely a benign side effect of great teaching and learning for life. The real benefits of it lie in the motivation, depth, and playfulness that great thinking brings to the educational process itself. And, who knows, we might just need these skills for the century ahead...

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# A new school year



*Keith Morrow, the newly-appointed Headmaster of Hallfield School, offers advice on preparing children for a new school as he looks to become the ‘new boy’ himself*

I remember as a child, looking forward to the long summer holidays, and being haunted by the ‘back to school’ signs that appeared in the windows of high street shops before we had even broken up for school. If anything this is even more a mark of the times today where we have Christmas decorations in the shops in October and Easter eggs for sale on Boxing Day. I never appreciated that those three little words ‘back to school’ would continue to have such significance for me as an adult too.

September is the beginning of the new school year. All children, and perhaps parents, will have a mixture of excitement and trepidation thinking about the start of term. None more so than those children who start in Reception for the first time, or those who start at a new school.

This September, even more so than usual, I will be sharing those emotions with children as I embark on my fourth Headship and start a new and exciting role as Headmaster of Hallfield School in Birmingham. It's a large (nearly 600 pupils) and very well established prep school, with an excellent reputation.

I am very aware that it will be a big year for Hallfield as the school celebrates its 140th year during my first year at the helm, and I will only be the 14th headmaster in its entire history – an exciting yet daunting thought!

With all of this in mind, I would like to share a few essential tips for helping children settle into his or her

new school, new class, or with a new teacher. So here goes...

## 1. Routine, routine, routine

There is nothing that causes more worry with children than being unprepared for school, but we can advise our parents to help get their children more organised.

Firstly, at home, a good routine to get into before bedtime is to get their

school bag ready for the next day and ask them (with help for younger children) to go through a checklist of items needed and pack it accordingly.

Some children benefit from having a timetable or visual planer at home reminding them of which kit is needed on which day. For example, swimming kit on Mondays, violin on Wednesdays, spelling homework on Fridays, and so on.



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Having the right kit on the right day helps children get off to a flying start. It is also a great way of encouraging children to start taking responsibility for organising themselves.

## 2. Independence

All children are capable of remarkable independence from an early age, especially at school. For younger children, try and make sure that they can dress themselves and can change into PE kits independently. You can do this by asking parents to practise at home and encouraging their children to set out their clothes and put them in a neat pile at the end of the day.

This helps enormously with changing for PE at school. Even older children can be completely disorganised when changing for games. It is amazing how many children take each other's kit home on a Friday instead of their own, which usually surfaces on Monday, thanks to the name labels that parents stitch into the 152 items of the school kit!

## 3. Responsibility

At school, we are as much about teaching children about responsibility as we are about teaching the subjects in the curriculum. All children make mistakes, do things wrong, forget to behave in a certain way from time to time, and school is a safe and secure environment in which they can learn from their mistakes.

My advice to share with parents is to let children take responsibility for their actions. If a child in the juniors forgets to bring in their homework or forgets their swimming kit, it is their mistake and not their parents. The best way parents can help their children become more responsible is to allow their children to understand that actions have consequences, and this is how we all learn.

## 4. Communication

Schools have many and varied methods of communication including text messaging, emails and, of course, the website. Infants usually have a reading diary and juniors a planner or homework diary. Education is a tripartite process, involving the school, the parent and the child. Do find time to build up a relationship with your child's parent or guardian, offering positive information and sharing advice, as well as raising concerns.

## 5. Friendships

Children, and parents, often worry about whether their child will settle and make new friends. Positive relationships and friendships are key to your child feeling happy at school. I always tell children who are anxious about making new friends that the best way to establish a new friend is to be friendly and smile!

My experience is that children love welcoming new pupils to their school

and are always open to expanding their friendship groups. Schools have various 'buddy' systems in place for new starters and teachers are very skilled at ensuring new pupils are integrated socially into a new school.

Encourage your children to be friendly, to smile, to get involved in games and to join as many clubs and sports that are available for their age group.

It's wise to advise parents that other parents can help too. Not all parents manage the school drop-off/pick-up, so joining the Parent Teacher Association, meeting other parents, swapping details to get on the 'play-day' and party-circuit can all help children make new friends, especially if you have relocated to a new area.

Be patient and encourage children to be positive. We won't all have made a new best friend on day one.

I remember when I first started teaching. I was given the advice: 'don't smile until Christmas.' This piece of advice suggested that teachers needed to set out their stall with their children very clearly in the first few weeks of term to ensure that the rest of the year went well.

This is a very important truism in schools and I am sure Hallfield will be no exception. Over the coming weeks of a new school year, teachers, and even headmasters will be setting out their stall with the children (and maybe even some staff!).

Child may return home and inform their parents that they have a strict teacher, that they were told off for talking when they should not be, or that they had to practise walking down the path to assembly quietly. And yes, I am sure that all teachers at all schools will be doing these things.

However, I must admit, I have never been very good at not smiling, so if the children at Hallfield look carefully, I am sure they will see a smile creeping in before the week is out, never mind Christmas! I hope the new school year starts well for everyone.

# Stanley, I Presume

*Stanley Johnson* continues to lead a very varied life ranging from politics to broadcasting to appearances on reality TV shows as well as, of course, being the father of one Boris Johnson. I am delighted that he has agreed to share his personal memories of Prep School life

I first arrived at Ravenswood School in the remote Devon countryside in the winter term of 1948, when I was just eight. I stayed there until the end of 1953, when I went on to Sherborne at the age of thirteen.

I know that boarding prep schools nowadays have a bad press. There is a school of thought that believes it is harsh, even cruel, to send children away for two-thirds of the year, with only letters and the occasional visit to substitute for the tender loving care a parent can provide.

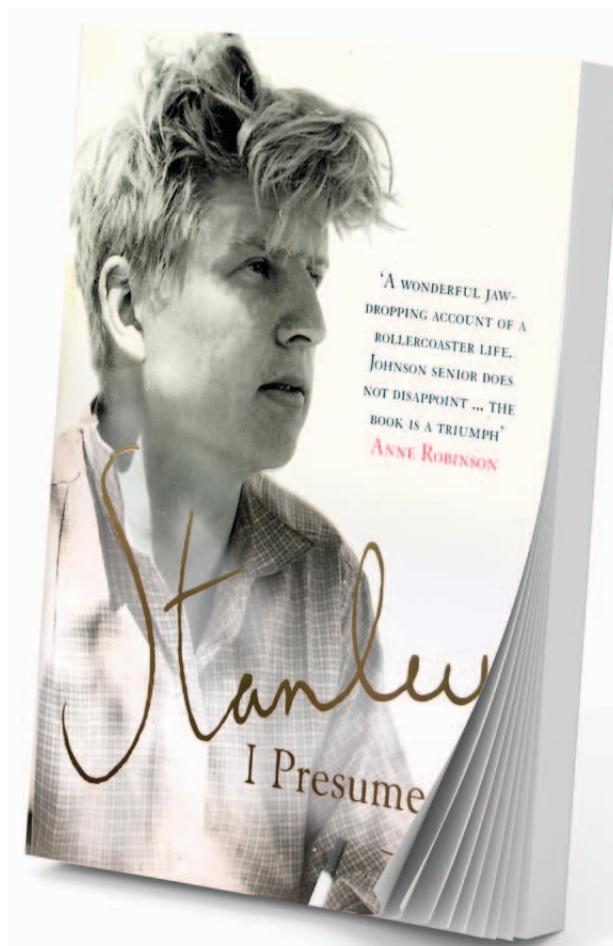
Personally, I don't remember being miserable at the prospect of leaving home. On the contrary, I was intrigued by the preparations being made. My mother received the school uniform list from the outfitters in Exeter and seemed to spend much of that last summer holiday sewing nametapes even on minor items, like socks and garters. Not being much of a seamstress, she complained quite loudly at the work involved. I suspect she was not alone in this.

My father was responsible for producing a tuck box. The joining instructions specified that every boy had to have such an item. In my case, it was an old toolbox, whose contents my father had transferred elsewhere. On the outside he attached a metal plate and banged out my name (S. P. JOHNSON), using a hammer and heavy-duty nail. This is not as easy as it sounds and the typography left something to be desired.

I should like to be able to report that Ravenswood is still going strong, but that is not the case.

As the years have rolled on, life has not been kind to boarding prep schools located more than two hundred miles from London. Parents seem ever less inclined to send their children long distances from home with only occasional visits being practicable. They are also perhaps

'A WONDERFUL JAW-DROPPING ACCOUNT OF A ROLLERCOASTER LIFE. JOHNSON SENIOR DOES NOT DISAPPOINT ... THE BOOK IS A TRIUMPH'  
ANNE ROBINSON



more sceptical of the merits of boarding prep schools, no matter where they are located, and possibly more confident of their own parenting skills.

Academically, I would say that Ravenswood did me proud. Though I took the Sherborne Scholarship Exam without success during my last year at prep school, I made up for that by winning an Open Scholarship at

Sherborne in the summer term of 1953, soon after I had arrived, and I am sure that this success had to be ascribed at least in part to the sound preparation Ravenswood had provided. Much of that credit must, I believe, go to R. L. Schuster himself. He carried a heavy teaching load because he took most of the classes in both Latin and Greek. And it wasn't just a question of teaching the sixth form in those subjects. I began Latin during my first term at prep school and Greek shortly afterwards. In fact, if I look back at my school days, both prep and public school, it seems to me that a very large proportion of my time was spent on Latin and Greek.

I calculated when I went up to Oxford that something like 80 per cent of all the tuition I received at school over the years had been in Greek and Latin and a large proportion of the rest had been spent on Ancient History or Divinity.

His great achievement was to make the Classics come alive and he did so without any of the props of the modern classroom. There were no PowerPoint presentations of life in Ancient Rome. The nearest we got to a mechanical aid to learning was the production, in Latin, of a newspaper. It was called *Acta Diurna – Daily Deeds*. One issue, I remember, recorded Caesar's arrival in Britain in 55 BC as seen by Joe Bloggs – Josephus Bloggus. We drew diagrams showing how far a centurion could march in a day, the armour he wore and the enormous load he had to carry (it included picks, shovels and bundles of stakes – sudes – to make defensive palisades at night).

I ask myself today, as I write this, where Schuster's own love of the Classics came from. I don't know the answer. I know he was a soldier, had fought in North Africa and had been taken prisoner at the fall

of Tobruk. Had he taught himself Greek and Latin in prison? Had he graduated before the war with a degree in Classics or at least a classical background enough to tell a gerund from a gerundive? I have no idea and it is too late to ask.

Schuster's co-headmaster, Major Hunter, was a rather different kettle of fish. I don't believe he took any classes, though he coached us at cricket. Like Mr Schuster, he had fought in the North African campaign and had been wounded, with the result that he had a metal plate in his head. His forte, I remember, was describing the Battle of El Alamein, in which he had participated, in great detail. He drew elaborate diagrams on the blackboard, using different coloured chalk to denote General Montgomery's 8th Army on one side and Rommel's desert troops on the other.

'And over here,' Major Hunter would



**Latin lesson at Ravenswood school, c.1952. I am in the front row, looking disgustingly keen**



**My parents in the summer of 1954. My older brother, Peter, is on the left, my older sister, Hilary, on the right and my younger sister, Gillian (Birdie), is patting our yellow Labrador, Leader.**

bark, indicating a great expanse of territory to the south, 'is the Qattara Depression, Rommel never anticipated that Monty would swing a long left hook through the Depression. But he did. As Monty himself said, he hit Rommel for six!'

My letters home from school, whether from Ravenswood or, later, from Sherborne, were never particularly illuminating. They were in fact archetypically Molesworthian. 'Dear Mummy and Daddy, my marks this week were 230, I came 3rd. We played St Aubyns and beat them by six wickets...'

Sometimes, there were special events, like listening to the Boat Race, which begged for inclusion in the weekly missive. Another such event was the annual meet of the Tiverton foxhounds.

As I look back, it is the sheer ruralness of life at Ravenswood that I remember. All the sounds you heard were country sounds. You would wake up early on a summer morning, even before the bell, and listen to

the cooing of wood pigeons. Even now, when I hear the sound of wood pigeons in the morning, I find myself back in my school dorm.

If you were in one of the upper dorms, say Ivanhoe or Talisman (all the school dormitories were named after Walter Scott's novels), and you snuck out of bed and looked out of the window while your schoolmates were still asleep, you could look down on this vast sweep of the Devon countryside. I can see it now. The squat tower of Stoodleigh church in the foreground, the stooks of wheat in the surrounding fields waiting to be gathered in by horse and cart or the occasional tractor and then, in the distance far below, a hint of mist (or was it smoke?) over Tiverton, all of eight miles off.

Each Sunday during term time the school would attend morning service at Stoodleigh church. The vicar would mount the pulpit in his billowing cassock and deliver the traditional sermon. I search my memory and I cannot find any trace of the homilies

that I am sure I must have absorbed over the years. What I do find is an abiding sense of peace, the sense of walking through the lychgate, finding a pew, listening to the words of the Book of Common Prayer, singing the hymns from the Ancient and Modern Hymn book.

There are some aspects of prep-school life that have stayed with me forever. Sometimes we would even walk, two abreast, all the way from Stoodleigh to the 'Iron Bridge' across the Exe on the Tiverton-Bampton road. Going down was easy but it was a long haul back up.

Sport Days were always particularly memorable. There was the usual cocktail of events on the school playing fields, which covered several acres in total (one of the advantages of Ravenswood's rural situation). The First XI played the Fathers and my own father, when it was his turn, always put up a more than passable performance.

He had very broad shoulders and could heft a cricket ball a great distance if he caught it in the middle of the bat. There was often a delay while the ball was retrieved from amid the stooks of the neighbouring farmer's fields. He also earned the admiration of the boys by allowing them to pile onto the back of the open Lancia while we drove at speed up the school drive.

One such episode was recorded at the time in a black and white cine film taken by the father of one of the boys and subsequently shown to the school one of those wet autumn Sundays when there was not much else to do. I can see myself now, sitting in the back surrounded by a gaggle of schoolmates and the two Labradors. Most of the boys are half in, half out of the car, and, of course, none are wearing seat belts because no one had heard of seat belts in those days.

Stanley, I Presume is published by Fourth Estate, his latest novel Kompromat is published by Oneworld-Publications

# Is it really just for boys?

*Jack Hardman, from M:Tech, the leading provider of music technology tuition for the 7-13 age range in the UK, points out how we can help girls succeed in the music industry too*

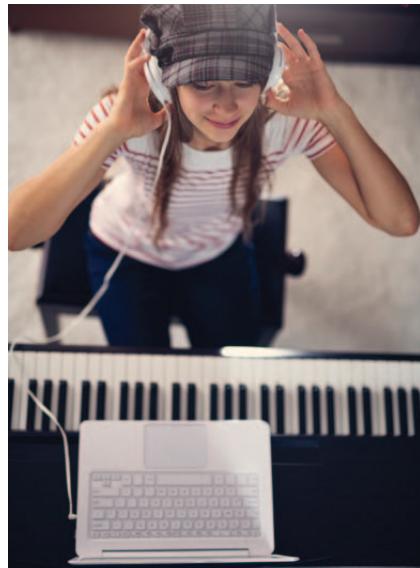
Girls' schools have been smashing the perception of 'male-only disciplines' for decades, with no subject out of bounds or off limits. Now, 100 years since it's women first got the vote, many leading girls' schools are on a collision course with music technology.

Only three women have ever been nominated for the coveted 'Producer of the Year' award at the Grammys. None of them won. No woman has ever been awarded 'Best British Producer' at the Brit awards. Given the monumental domination of artists like Adele and Beyoncé, it seems outrageous that there are so few female success stories behind the mixing desk.

Kieron Smith, Head of Learning at GDST, feels the lack of role models for girls might be causing the misconception that music technology is only suitable for boys.

Where is the music industry going wrong? Perhaps, the lack of awareness of opportunities and role models; the more girls see role models, the more they'll see that it is possible to 'do it' in a mans' world. When children see that behaviour, they know it's okay to try and model it'.

Encouraging freedom of expression and experimentation is an ethos close to the heart of GDST, and Kieron knows the Trust's core values are vitally important in helping their children to reach their full potential in a broad range of subjects.



'Innovation runs throughout GDST. We want our pupils to be innovative, using new techniques and new technology. Don't be afraid to have a go, to get things wrong. We promote considered risk taking. Having these core values is only part of the process, embedding them into culture is hugely important.'

The GDST is now attacking the typically male-centric world of music technology head-on. Working alongside leading music-tech educators M:Tech, girls are able to take on the role of record producer from as young as seven. Pupils use the latest technologies to learn the secrets behind recorded music, creating and mixing their own songs independently.

Initiatives like M:Tech provide girls with invaluable exposure to music technology in their formative years,

allowing them to consider music production as a potential career avenue before being influenced by gender stereotypes.

The M:Tech course has been particularly popular at leading London girls' school Wimbledon High, where classes are regularly oversubscribed despite offering tuition across three days a week. While some may find this surprising, Gemma Norford, Director of Music at Wimbledon High, puts the popularity of the scheme down to the freedom it gives her pupils:

'Girls at Wimbledon High School find music technology really engaging. It allows them to create music that most children their age would be unable to play themselves. M:Tech allows them to fully explore their compositional skills in their own world of sound, giving girls an avenue in which to access music and all the benefits it offers.'

It's clear that when given the chance, girls embrace music technology with the same level of enthusiasm as their male counterparts. Increasing opportunities at this grassroots level empowers girls with a new sense of confidence and belief to one day succeed in music production, which can surely only have a positive affect on the wide professional industry.

With the popularity of initiatives like M:Tech growing throughout girls' schools, it can't be long until a new wave of female producers takes the Grammys and Brit Awards by storm.

# The truth about boys' schools

*Mike Piercy, Headmaster of The New Beacon, Sevenoaks, shares the realities of what it means to be a boy in a boys' school*

Last May, seeing the Year 4 boys at play on our grassy fields, I spotted tennis rackets, tennis balls, cricket bats, French cricket, chase and catch; a multiplicity of active games. The joyous cries of children happily at play filled the early summer air.

Yet, a few boys had chosen to read peacefully on a bench in a quieter corner, deaf to the bubbly hubbub. What really caught my eye however was the half dozen or so boys who had gathered the freshly cut grass, shaping it into an enormous birds' nest about a metre in diameter – perfectly symmetrical. The next day I walked past to see it had been cleverly transformed into about nine smaller nests, their artistry having created a different symmetry. Wonderful,

creative, imaginative and gentle play. There is a mistaken preconception that a boys' school must be testosterone driven, 'rough-tough' and rugby mad. It is not necessarily so. Having led two co-educational schools I became a convert to single sex education, discarding what I had always thought to be conventional wisdom. A number of boys from my previous school went on to a well-known boys' school. I saw how they thrived within a culture that was tailored to boys' needs and learning styles.

An all-boys' school can be liberating. Boys are allowed to be boys – they are less inhibited, they are happy to play girls in drama, they are happy to roll in the mud (if that is what

they are inclined to do) without loss of face or dignity in front of girls. I am often asked about the differences between my previous school and The New Beacon. I struggle to identify anything glaringly different because it's all about the culture and ethos of a school, boys, girls or co-ed, knowing, understanding and looking after the individual.

Take singing and choirs. In my previous two schools we had wonderful (auditioned) choirs. In each case there were about 20 girls and just five rather embarrassed boys often there through their parents' insistence – as opposed to encouragement or their own choice. At The New Beacon, where all boys sing as a matter of course, we have a choir comprising





boys from Year 5 and 6 – 10/11 years old – a choir of about 50 boys that may, in some ways, herald the terraces of Twickenham in years to come but the fact is they all sing – they really go for it!

Our senior Chapel Choir however is auditioned, is genuinely selective, with boys singing solos in weekly chapel services. Beneath their robes of a November evening can be found muddy knees and sports kit, straight from the rugby field to chapel. Later this year, in stark contrast, they will be singing in St. Peter's, The Vatican. These are opportunities that are seized and experiences that would happen for few – or certainly fewer – boys in a co-ed school.

Pastoral care is key, in any school, as is knowledge and acceptance of the individual. At The New Beacon we recognise, respect and celebrate ‘difference’ – of background, race, gender, belief and character. Clearly, no school would say otherwise. Yes, we have bouncy boys but, equally, we have the gentle and shy. Yes, the ebullient need sometimes to be subdued; empathy and emotional intelligence instilled. Yes, the restrained, reticent, reluctant (of which there are many) need encouragement; confidence nurtured

and enhanced. Quiet confidence is perfectly acceptable and is in fact appealing. Humility in all should be an intrinsic part of personal and social education. Knowing each individual is the key to unlocking confidence: there is no ‘type’ and it should not be said that a boys’ school suits a particular kind of boy.

While a human, social education is a central function of schools, learning to get on with others, to respect difference, to accept rather than to tolerate, it seems sometimes the classroom, teaching and learning, comes second to equality. The age group we educate at The New Beacon, 4 to 13 years of age, is the time when the fundamentals of learning must be embedded; work habits made secure. This is where a boys’ school comes into its own. Neuroscience has now provided evidence to support what we instinctively knew: the male brain is different to that of the female; boys learn differently to girls.

Teachers have a subconscious but understandable tendency to teach to the compliant – who tend to be girls more often than boys. Girls, more emotionally and conceptually advanced than boys in the younger years (some may say at all ages), will willingly put up their hands in class.

Boys, generally speaking, are less confident, more reluctant to volunteer their ideas, especially when mixed with girls. Girls will generally meet deadlines – boys need to learn this skill. Ask a class to write a page on Hamlet: the boys will finish with the last full stop on the last line; the girls will overspill. A boys’ school tailors teaching to the developing boy’s brain: clear boundaries; frequent assessment; deadlines; structure; movement (our day is divided in to 20 minute ‘blocks’ giving, say, a 20 minute mental maths test and an 80 minute science lesson in the lab).

A final anecdote. Amongst the older boys at morning break a ‘dance off’ is taking place, two boys putting dance moves together. Completely uninhibited, oblivious to all the games taking place around them, immersed in their own choreography, they’re having a great time. A few stop to watch, laugh (with, not at) and cheer. Meanwhile, nearby, the boys in the cricket nets prepare for the next round of the Kent Cup, the philosophy group meets to discuss the weekly ‘thunk’, the ‘fractions clinic’ is at work, Big Band practises in the music block and the art group is creating its next masterpiece.

# Preparing for a scholarship

*Ben Evans, Headmaster at Edge Grove School, reflects on preparing children and parents for the competitive scholarship process*

Dealing with scholarships, exhibitions, principal's awards or bursaries can be an ordeal for parents as they often mean different things to different schools. In basic terms, a scholarship is an award, often attracting a fee discount of around 10%, in acknowledgement of your child's exceptional academic ability or talent in sport, art, music, drama, technology or a combination of these (known as an all-rounder scholarship). Scholarships offers are very much limited in numbers today and there is often only one (possibly two) from each category per school available so they should be treated as something unique and certainly not a given.

Scholarship awards also come with certain responsibilities for the pupils as these can be removed as quickly as they were given. Children with scholarships will be expected to work very hard, demonstrate outstanding levels of behaviour for learning and conduct and always put their school commitments first.

## A competitive process

The application process is usually one strictly between the parents and the senior school to which they are applying. Prep or junior schools' involvement is limited to writing references for senior schools and preparing pupils for the scholarship assessment. Schools should not be selecting pupils for scholarships or suggest suitable candidates to senior schools. However, schools will advise parents carefully regarding a child's

suitability for a scholarship and if a child has exceptional talent they may like to speak to senior schools about the possibility of a scholarship in their chosen area.

Parents should be prepared for an often stressful and competitively driven process, not to mention the inevitable disappointment that failure to secure a scholarship will bring for parent and child. Ask yourself first, is your 10 or 11 year old emotionally resilient enough to cope with this at such a young age? It is worth remembering that even a bright child may not be successful if they are competing in a very strong category. Likewise, a child who plays Grade 7 bassoon at 12 years old may also be unsuccessful if they are competing against another child who happens to be Grade 8. It all depends on the year and field of candidates that have applied at that time.

## Keep it real

If your child is a true scholarship candidate, the signs you spot will be obvious, certainly from Year 5 onwards. Is their non-verbal reasoning score (NVR) above 130? Do they play two instruments well and at least one to Grade 5 level? Are they playing sport at a high club/county level or are they likely to in the near future? Do they enjoy art and drama and participate in activities outside school and again, to a high level? Ask yourself these kinds of questions first and if it isn't obvious then it's unlikely that they are suitable to apply for a scholarship.

Schools will be more than happy to advise and listen to them if they do because no school will want a pupil to be put through something that will end in distress for the child, nor will they want obvious talent and potential to be ignored or to go under developed. Children, of course, can be late developers but there will still be signs of scholarship potential from a young age and all good schools will have spotted these.

## Be prepared

The scholarship process has become increasingly competitive due to the large number of applicants per school in this area, the desire of more and more parents to have their children's abilities recognised and the need for parents to ensure senior school fees are slightly more affordable together with the increasing financial exigencies on schools which, in some cases, has resulted in fewer scholarships being offered.

The most important thing parents can do is to think of their child's wellbeing throughout the process. Consider carefully, with advice from your school, your child's suitability for a scholarship and the effect any disappointment may have on them. Only if you are absolutely certain they have the required academic ability or specific musical, sporting or artistic talent should you put them through what will inevitably be a long and possibly stressful process.

### **Don't employ a private tutor**

One thing all parents should avoid doing is paying for private tuition in a bid to secure a scholarship. This is completely unnecessary and pointless because if you believe your child requires a tutor to secure a scholarship, they are definitely not at scholarship standard. Consider the effect, should they by a miracle be given a scholarship due to the private tutoring they have received, that this will have on them when they join the school. They will feel academically inferior and will be at risk of having their scholarship removed once it becomes clear they are struggling.

There is preparation that can and should be done both at school and at home in order to help secure a scholarship. For academic scholarships, there will be past papers

that should be used to ensure children are used to the rubric and content of the exams and which teachers should go through carefully with the children to develop their exam technique and syllabus understanding. Likewise, an art scholarship portfolio will need to be compiled (over one or two years) to demonstrate the child's ability using a variety of medium and techniques. This will need to be carefully supported by the school.

### **Life goes on**

If your child is successful in securing a scholarship, all schools will expect scholars to be totally committed to school, set an example to others, work consistently to their full potential and be involved in all aspects of school life, not just their scholarship area. Parents can offer great support by ensuring their children understand

the honour of a scholarship award and the opportunity it will give them, at school and in the future.

In the case of failure, this is something that must be made very clear to the child at the outset of the scholarship application process. It is very competitive process with large numbers of applications and only a few awards. If children understand this, it will help to lessen their feelings of disappointment should things not go to plan.

If unsuccessful, life goes on and parents should treat the process as a positive experience. Treat your child to something special as a reward for their hard work and efforts, then look forward to the fun things that will be happening at school and simply move on.



# The National Handwriting Competition

The popular SATIPS National Handwriting Competition has reached its 2018 conclusion, Chief Judge *Amanda McLeod* reports on the event this year with useful tips for next year's entrants

On the 25th of February 2018, The Guardian published an article entitled 'Children struggle to hold pencils due to too much tech, doctors say'. This suggests that children at home, nursery and school were over-reliant on touchscreen technology and, consequently, not developing sufficient finger muscles to hold a pencil correctly. It declares that this is leading to 'increasing numbers of children... developing handwriting late'. This piece caused quite a furore and I was asked (as a committee member of The National Handwriting Association, NHA) to comment on Radios Melbourne, London and Humberside.

As a matter of fact, the reality is quite different. Two of the researchers who had been interviewed for the article responded by describing an almost complete lack of research into the relationship between touchscreen reliance, hand strength and handwriting production (Prunty & Sumner, 2018). They quoted from Bedford et al (2016) who found that touchscreen use was seen to increase significantly over the first three years of life. However, nothing was found to demonstrate that toddlers who regularly used touchscreens failed to meet their developmental milestones. Indeed, it was actually discovered that those who were exposed to earlier

touchscreen use (specifically, scrolling around a screen) also demonstrated earlier fine motor achievement. The message to take from this is that currently we have no real idea what the effect of touchscreen use is on the acquisition and development of handwriting skills.

Certainly, both fine and gross motor skills are needed for efficient handwriting and for years we have been told that only the dynamic tripod grip would promote the acquisition of speed (pen manipulated by thumb and index with the middle finger acting as support). However, as yet, no evidence has been found to support that a 'correct' tripod grip would produce any speed advantage over other grips (of course, if a student experiences writing pain, corrective measures should be taken). Other functional grips such as an alternative tripod (pen between index and middle finger with thumb as support), a dynamic quadropod (same as tripod but middle finger used to manipulate as well and ring finger used as support) plus lateral tripod and quadropod grasps (same finger formation as above but, whilst still allowing dynamic movement, the thumb will hook over the pencil) can be just as efficient when speed is of consideration.

As a handwriting specialist, I only ever see children for handwriting lessons when they are considered to have poor legibility (caused by either gross or fine motor problems, incomprehension of handwriting rules or SEND issues). It was, therefore, with excitement that I awaited the arrival of the 2018 competition entries. This excitement was justified and it was with delight that I was able to carry out my judging. The quality of handwriting in each class was notable, as was the evident pride of each candidate's entry. Of course, pride about one's own handwriting and the process it entails is important (the National Literacy Trust in 2014 reported that 14% of teenagers would like to write better and would be embarrassed if their friends saw their writing). Handwriting competitions promote both pride and neatness, plus give teachers a second chance to correct any incorrect letter formation.

Currently, most of our academic exams up to university level are completed by handwriting under timed conditions and it is important for writers to form their letters correctly in order to maintain legibility at speed. The letter 'a', for example, can look just as neat when formed clockwise or anti-clockwise. At speed, however, the clockwise version

will disintegrate into something resembling an ancient hieroglyph. Correctly formed letters, therefore, were my first point of judging for all classes (including the teachers).

My other criteria in order (and including the previous criteria) were:

- Class A, 4 years – sitting on line and size
- Classes A, 5 and 6 years – spacing plus joins (if used)
- Classes B, C and D, 7-13 years – joining (the National Curriculum requires joining by the end of Year 2). Style was of consideration for Year 5 entries and above as the National Curriculum states that students should develop their own style when writing, choosing

whether or not they wish to join all their letters.

- Class E, staff – individuality

Next year, I would like to suggest the following points to bear in mind:

- Class A, 4 years – correctly-sized letters and ones that sit on the line (if using grid lines)
- Class A, 5 and 6 years – if using fully cursive script, letters must have an exit and entry strokes (which must start from the line and not have been added after the letter has been written); letters must have the i and t dotted/crossed correctly
- Class B, 7 and 8 years – formation of f (the vertical must be straight); correctly-sized letters and ones

that sit on the line (if using grid lines); there was a lot of heavy writing indicating a possible lack of automaticity in production

- Class C, 9 and 10 years – formation of f (vertical must be straight) and r (up/down same vertical), legibility if using italics
- Class D, 11, 12 and 13 years – legibility if using italics, formation of f (vertical must be straight) and r (up/down same vertical)
- Class E, staff – formation of high exit r onto e

I am already looking forward to being involved with the 2019 entries and will be writing more about the process early next year. Well done!

#### **4 Years**

- 1st. Hannah Ismail, Norfolk House  
2nd. Reuben Dhillon, Norfolk House  
3rd. Kathryn Okunade, Norfolk House

#### **5 Years**

- 1st. Minghao Hugo Jiang, Milbourne Lodge  
2nd. Dominic Rose, St Faiths  
3rd. Akshay Patel, Milbourne Lodge

#### **6 Years**

- 1st. Ebrahim Gorjestani, Durston House  
2nd. Beechwood Park  
3rd. Mila Nahonaya, The Granville School

#### **7 Years**

- 1st. Isla Perks, Copley Junior, Sprotborough  
2nd. Tristan Reid, St Faiths  
3rd. Beechwood Park

#### **8 Years**

- 1st. Felicity Lee, North London Collegiate  
2nd. Seb Abraham, St Bernards  
3rd. Oliver Hatton, York House

#### **9 Years**

- 1st. Avery Screemany, St Bernards  
2nd. Koyenum Adoh, St Bernards  
3rd. Beechwood Park

#### **10 Years**

- 1st. Beechwood Park  
2nd. Mia Fairfax, Oxford High  
3rd. Amy Montgomerie, Eaton House

#### **11 Years**

- 1st. Romilly Tuckley, Bootham Junior  
2nd. Zainab Chaudhry, The Gleddings  
3rd. Nefeli Sideri, High March

#### **12 Years**

- 1st. Freya Milligan, Westholme School  
2nd. Constanze Topel, St Faiths  
3rd. Maddy Elphinstone, Langley Park School for Girls

#### **13 Years**

- 1st. Charlotte Corrigan, Westholme School Cert  
2nd. Lucy Taylor, Ashfold School  
3rd. Rive Lewis, St Faiths

#### **Staff**

- 1st. Amy Bridges, Bootham Junior  
2nd. Amy Long, North London Collegiate  
3rd. Elisa Woodford, Ashfold School

Many congratulations to St. Bernards Prep, Slough who are The 2018 National Handwriting Winning School and holders of the Nexus Shield.

2nd. Beechwood Park

3rd. Norfolk House

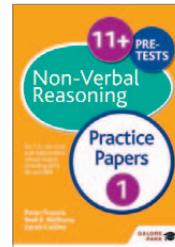
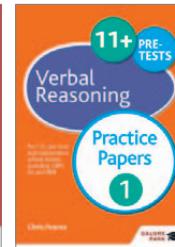
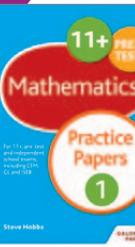
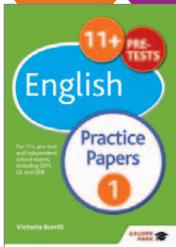
Well done to all who took part and do look out for details of the 2019 competition.

# RIGOROUS REVISION FOR ENTRANCE EXAM SUCCESS

GALORE PARK 

11+

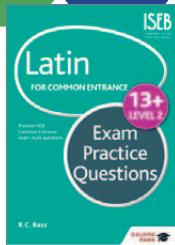
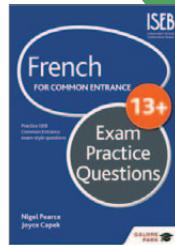
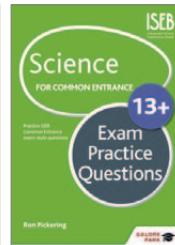
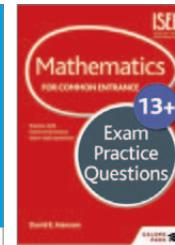
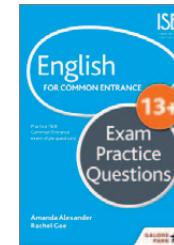
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## How does your school compare?



Have a look at your listing on  
our online guide to UK  
independent schools:  
[www.schoolsearch.co.uk](http://www.schoolsearch.co.uk)

Tell the world about your  
school in up to 800 words,  
add images, Twitter feed  
and social media links,  
open days and video.

In association with  
John Catt's *Which School?*  
now in its 94th edition.

Contact:  
[enquiries@johncatt.com](mailto:enquiries@johncatt.com)

A screenshot of the schoolsearch.co.uk website displayed on a tablet. The page shows a search interface with fields for gender, age, region, and postcode, along with a map and a list of independent schools. The website has a clean, modern design with a red header and footer.

# Let's play golf



*Brian Mudge, a professional golfer for nearly 40 years who now coaches everyone from complete beginners to 97 year olds and players with autism at Grow Golf Coaching, explains that golf clubs have to be more proactive in getting juniors to play golf*

Golf is a very difficult game for beginners of all ages, and speaking from experience as a golf coach, it takes two to three years to hook a junior to golf for life.

Year one includes regular weekly lessons and introducing them to the various skills required to play golf. Year two is getting them to play and practice independently, as well as introducing them to the fun of competition and cutting their junior handicaps. Year three is as a coach, hopefully enjoying the fruits of your labour by giving them continued guidance and watching them blossom. The traditional route for juniors coming into the game is declining. Often a golfing parent or grandparent would bring their child to the golf club and introduce them. Regular lessons would ensue and the golfing family member would be in a position to help the professional by taking the child on to the course at quiet times. Here they would learn to improve their skills as well as a lot about rules and etiquette. With golf declining as a sport now for so many reasons, new approaches should be adopted.

Professionals have to get out to the schools searching for talented boys and girls to teach and sell them the game of golf. Golf club committees and owners have to encourage and empower their golf professionals to do this and make the golf club more welcoming to not only the children

but their families also. Getting rid of crazy dress standards will help. That doesn't mean you don't want children to look smart on the course, but this can be done gradually along with teaching them all the rules and etiquette. All our juniors at Overstone Park have a team player shirt and wear it with pride so often I sometimes wonder if they get a chance to wash it!

At Overstone Park we have a good combination of a supportive club membership and management that values the importance of family involvement. Our club gents and ladies captains of 2016 donated half of the money they raised for various causes in their year towards coaching fees and membership costs to school children who never would have had the opportunity to play golf previously. The Captains Scholarship Scheme was now born.

Captains since 2016 have continued to support the scheme and our Junior membership has grown to over 60. Our target is to maintain a production line of 100 active junior golfers.

By now the parents are more involved with the club by simply transporting them there and also they can see how much their children are enjoying and improving their golf.

In 2018 our new owners offered free memberships to children age 12 and under. They know golf faces fresh challenges for attracting juniors to the game and have shown great vision.

Adults and children when they are trained want the game to be faster and new rules are coming soon that will help this.

Ready golf will be encouraged, which is playing your shot when you are ready and not waiting for the player furthest from the hole to hit their shot. Looking at more nine-hole competitions and playing courses of tees closer to the green to help novice, older or disabled players.

The aim is to cut nine-holes to 90 minutes that will suit many people already leading hectic lives. It is my opinion, as an experienced golf coach, that golf can be helpful with improving mental health, obesity and even concentration levels in the classroom.

Computer games have become such a part of children's lives that it can quite easily influence their levels of activity to a harmful point. Golf is not like that and teaches you to be more resilient because a game of golf, just like life, is full of highs and lows.

The message is if schools can seek out their local golf clubs and those clubs can get their professionals into those schools the future of golf is more assured. Maybe, as a spin off, concentration levels in classrooms will be improved with happier, more active children dreaming of hitting good golf shots instead of when the next Xbox game is coming out.

# The importance of the maverick teacher



*Christopher Parsons, Deputy Head (Academic) at Norwich Lower School and Visiting Lecturer in Educational Psychology at the University of Buckingham, will be editing a new SATIPS broadsheet aimed at senior management teams*

There are currently two gradual movements underway in the teaching profession, which together are either exciting or ominous depending on your perspective. The first one is the move to increasingly harness technology to personalise and deliver content-rich instruction, either through computers, or indeed – in the next ten years perhaps – amiable robots. This innovation should conceivably improve learning through achieving a level of individualised instruction that a human class teacher would struggle to manage, and also through the sheer volume of knowledge and information that such technology will seamlessly draw upon. The second movement is the concurrent transfer of the human teacher into the role of the ‘Guide on the Side’ – the expert in no particular subject area other than the science of pedagogy and how to coach individuals. This – we are told – will also assist with the personalisation of instruction, as the teacher will no longer get in the way of learners pursuing what they themselves find most pertinent and interesting. And in letting the robot take-over the role

of the ‘Sage’, the teacher will be able to spend more time engaging in those more tricky human endeavours of encouraging and nurturing a growth-mindset and a sense of self-efficacy.

So, what is there not to like?

Put bluntly, I fear we’re going to lose one of the most inspiring and pivotal of our evolved developmental mechanisms...

Yes, it is true that we want our children to develop a love of learning for its own sake – to become ‘independent lifelong learners’ who will continue to grow and develop no matter what their age and circumstances. When we’re drowning in a world of constantly changing information, and where our offspring are likely to shift careers more than once in their lifetimes, we really need to engage the natural learning machines which we are told our children are, and help them to find their ‘bliss’, their ‘element’ or other such unique personal chemistry.

It is also perhaps true that our education system has become overly focused on qualifications which will trigger a life of economic productivity,

and that this process in itself has become skewed towards valuing those things which are most easy to measure – irrespective of whether they will be directly relevant to the kinds of lives and careers that we either need, or we actually aspire to. The old-fashioned didactic teacher can appear to us as a transmitter of what is narrow, limited and imposed from the past.

However, in the midst of this we have a curious phenomenon frequently spoken about by people later in life when reflecting back on their schooling. We particularly hear about it if they are trying to relay a tale about a key turning point in their formation – where they suddenly found themselves on a fast track to destiny. In this we hear the legend of the ‘maverick’ teacher – someone who, perhaps through seeming to break some rules, ended having a distinctly right effect.

World-renowned educationalist Dylan Wiliam is fond of saying: ‘The truth is that, in education, everything works somewhere and nothing works everywhere.’ He means this to imply



that we'll never be able to fully prescribe a single 'best approach' to teaching a particular thing or indeed rule-out any technique as never being of any use.

The reality is that, if you dig deep enough behind the headlines of neuroscience hype, you start to realise that humans are ridiculously complex and unpredictable beings, and that human society and history never fully repeats itself. Our own individual journey through life always remains as a fundamentally unpredictable work-in-progress. Essentially, our attempts to successfully engineer and navigate our futures are a matter of trial and error, and the vast majority of the time, all that the science of learning can really give to teachers and school leaders are rules of thumb for what should likely have a particular effect, across a large group of people, on average.

If schools impose a one-size-fits-all, top-down policy of mechanised 'best practice' teaching techniques – as is increasingly attempted by headteachers determined to withstand Ofsted, or who misguidedly think that they can impose perfection through the use of scripted lessons – then they are going to disillusion as many children as they manage to rescue.

The reality is that children need inspiration, and the truth is that this comes in no stronger form than through the experience and example of other humans. It might be in finding a sense of purpose and meaning, a hook of relevance and direction. It might be in opening-up a possible route that we didn't realise was there, or in revealing a landscape and terrain that we never suspected existed. It might well be in revealing the vibrancy, vitality and compelling essence of an area of study or aspect of life, which we have previously overlooked, ignored, dismissed or misunderstood.

In hoping and searching for such inspirations, we look naturally for a connection with those who teach us; for the subtle signs that they hold a key which we hope is to be found somewhere, and it is when our connections with those teachers hit a unique, bespoke and unexpected moment that these lightning-charged transformative experiences are at their strongest.

In all of this then, there is a fundamental need for teachers who can authentically speak of what they know; who can channel a passion based on personal experience, and communicate an authoritative truth.

This is where we have a need for teachers who take the role of the leader, the figurehead, the guru or sage in unique moments – however low-key, mundane or 'off-piste' the circumstances might be. And in the present circumstances of highly accountable, play-safe education by numbers – where the robots are poised to take-over as the experts, and the humans are going to just be there to reassuringly cheer-on from the sidelines – such teachers are increasingly going to be the ones who might be considered – in their own unassuming way – to be the mavericks. For they are increasingly the ones who in the eyes of the managers, the consultants and the inspectors may not appear to be toeing the line and doing exactly what is considered most efficient, safe and controllable.

It is these teachers – the ones who disrupt the smooth flow of learning with a bit of unexpectedly transformative education – which I fear we are in perilous danger of phasing-out. Please, let's find and value the potential maverick in each teacher – that potential to do the wrong thing, at the right time, and in the process enable the extraordinary to happen.

# Schools need to recognise their power



*Adam D'Souza has taught History, English and Philosophy in an ISA all-through school in London, where he led on preparatory curriculum innovation and established an adult learning programme for the local community*

Another day, another news article about independent schools, probably illustrated by that photo of top-hatted boys from Eton. As teachers and leaders in the wider independent education sector, we probably decry this as lazy sub-editing, however it is indicative of a deeper truth. Many independent senior schools are well-known brands – their single monikers are synonymous with their identities, values and alumni – yet I cannot think of a prep school that has ‘broken through’ into the mainstream public consciousness in the same way. Why not? Why should prep schools market themselves simply as gateways to senior schools? In a brutally honest analysis, so many prep schools’ prospectuses and websites are focused on borrowing prestige from the pupils’ destination senior schools, or tallying up scholarships. Prep schools are missing out on a huge opportunity to market themselves as a vital part of education in their own right – prep schools need to recognise their power.

## The challenges of a competitive market

It’s been a tough few years for prep schools. With usually fewer pupils

than the average senior school, margins are tighter. Several schools have gone to the wall. From 2003 to 2016, thirty-six IAPS prep schools closed, according to the Independent Schools Yearbook. Mirroring the consolidation of schools in the state 1 sector into multi-academy trusts, various prep schools have been hoovered up by a new breed of educational entrepreneur at the helm of a for-profit schools group. Alpha Plus in London has no fewer than twenty-two schools, while Sam Antrobus’ new Wishford Schools group already has seven schools and counting.

Senior schools, whom prep schools traditionally looked on as partners, handing on pupils at 13 in a gentlemanly entente cordiale, have increasingly muscled in on prep schools’ natural territory. In my own area of south west London alone, the senior schools King’s College School Wimbledon, Epsom College and St John’s Leatherhead have all opened in-house Lower Schools for 11+ entry. With fee costs rising beyond inflation, this looks like a tempting offer to parents: instead of pre-testing and then the uncertainty of Common

Entrance performance two years later, why not simply use the local primary and then have the journey to GCSE and sixth form nailed down by 11?

And if not pitching their tents on prep schools’ turf, then some senior schools are acquiring stand-alone prep schools and incorporating them into all-through provision: Mount House in Devon and Stoneygate in Leicester have both gone this way.

## The renaissance of prep school education

This article might read like the obituary of prep school education. But in truth it is the opposite: I want to issue a call to arms to teachers and leaders for a renaissance of prep school education. Our winning hand in the independent sector is just that – our independence. Prep schools are smaller, nimbler and less hidebound by traditions or exam specifications than our senior school relations. And unfettered by the chains of SATs and ever-growing class sizes in state primaries, we can offer a more personal education that takes children by the hand as they grow through this vital transitional time between early childhood and their teenage years.

An IPSOS Mori poll showed that 57% of parents would educate privately if they could, with smaller class sizes a significant 2 motivating factor.

There is clearly an appetite for what we do.

We have much to celebrate: subject-specialist teaching from a much younger age than our counterparts in the state sector allows us to take advantage of the window when children are awakened to the joy of learning. Having taught from pre-prep to sixth form, I believe that prep classes are the most exciting year groups to work with. We can share our expertise with pupils who are grown up enough to make sense of complex ideas, yet still intellectually hungry before teenage ennui sets in and exams mean subjects get sliced and diced into little pieces. If a class is enthusiastic about something, then there is space and time to divert down hidden byways of knowledge without GCSE specifications, assessment objectives and coursework breathing down the teacher's neck. Some of the most intellectually ambitious teaching I have seen has been with prep school classes.

Consider the professional musicianship demonstrated by pupils in the nation's cathedral choir schools. Each day children as young as 7 years old are taught music spanning the last 500 years, from Tudor polyphony to post-modernism, often sight-reading very complex musical scores, and singing in several different languages.

At my own school, I watched in awe while supervising a revision session for Year 7 pupils, who practised conversations in Mandarin Chinese. The children could read characters and pronounce the language with beautiful intonation after just ten weeks of lessons. I was inspired to take a course myself with their teacher Coco Gu; my own progress has not been so stellar.

Meanwhile, another colleague, Dr Francesca Simkin, showed her Year 5 English class hard-hitting scenes from Shakespeare plays (in the original, unmodernised language) including

the trial scene at the start of King Lear. Then over the following weeks, the children pitched story concepts and wrote these up into their own short plays, which they performed in a showcase to their parents. Lighting and sound was managed by a pupil too.

These are just personal snapshots of the transformative teaching that is taking place in prep schools up and down the country. If prep schools are to survive and thrive, then we must shout loud about their lifelong impact on children's intellectual and character growth, not just talk about where pupils go after they leave.

College3 in India. In a similar vein, a consortium of four prep schools collaborated to develop the Pre-Senior Baccalaureate4, an academic and co-curricular qualification for 11+ and 13+ candidates modelled on the IB Diploma. Although both these programmes are still framed around making prep school leavers attractive to destination senior schools.

Perhaps prep schools simply need a re-brand? In the United States, schools serving this age group are called as middle schools; the term 'prep school' is shorthand for 'college prep', i.e. what we would call senior schools. Maybe

**We have much to celebrate: subject-specialist teaching from a much younger age than our counterparts in the state sector allows us to take advantage of the window when children are awakened to the joy of learning.**

#### Asserting their independence

Several prep schools have already begun defining their impact by creating their own curriculum, beyond the somewhat restrictive diet of Common Entrance. Orwell Park School in Suffolk has developed the OPS Challenge, a scheme for Year 6 and 7 pupils that recognises achievements beyond the classroom, run on similar lines to the Duke of Edinburgh Award. Pupils commit to weekly practice sessions, and test themselves in the outdoors with exciting hiking, bushcraft and canoeing expeditions. Year 7 pupils are also offered the opportunity to experience life in a very different culture, by participating in an exchange with children at Mayo

'junior school' is a simpler and less judgement-laden label?

There is still an opportunity for a prep school to create a strong, distinctive and self contained identity as a centre of excellence in teaching. This school will define itself beyond preparation for senior schools, and create an unusual and noteworthy curriculum.

The prize will be moving into the mainstream public consciousness. Where one goes, many will follow. In future, perhaps the news media will show photographs of prep school pupils and everyone will groan, 'That school again...'

Adam tweets at @adamdsouza

# The General Knowledge Challenge

*Harry Paget of Papplewick School, the organiser of the SATIPS General Knowledge Challenge, reports on another highly successful year for the competition*

The 2018 SATIPS Challenge was another hotly contested affair. Westminster Under School continues to produce a number of well-rounded candidates and provided the winners of both competitions in the shape of Alexander Weiss and Harry Calcraft. Despite Westminster Under School winning both team awards, nine different schools made up the rest of the top fives. 103 Individual prizewinners were drawn from 37 different schools. Given the large number of pupils who clearly haven't been paying attention in science lessons, I feel the need to state that Andy Murray definitely didn't win the Australian Open while pregnant. One hopes they just didn't read the question properly!

Moving forward to 2019, we're looking to make the challenge a bit more accessible to all pupils, while still retaining enough difficulty that it lives up to its name. At Papplewick,

we decided to follow an increasing number of schools by entering all our pupils this year. We found it really interesting to see the scores across different classes. There were a lot of pupils who surprised us and rewarding the top three in each class gave a boost to those who possess a good general knowledge but can find academic work more of a struggle. Equally, it highlighted some gifted pupils who needed to be a bit more aware of the world around them! To help with this, we will be offering discounts for schools seeking to enter larger groups.

In light of this, we will try to swap some 'medium' questions for easier ones to avoid knocking pupils' confidence. Judging the level is always tricky, but we want to try and increase the average score a bit. Interestingly, most schools would have scored in the 90s, or even full marks if they had collaborated! We hope it will still

remain a broad and rigorous test of knowledge that challenges even the brightest. A number of challenge prizewinners have gone on to win scholarships to top schools in recent years.

#### **Junior Team Competition**

1. Westminster Under School
2. West House School
3. Newland House
4. Alleyn's Junior School
5. Magdalen College School

#### **Senior Team Competition**

1. Westminster Under School
2. King's College Junior School
- 3= Devonshire House and St John's Northwood
5. Marlborough House

#### **First ten questions from the Senior Challenge**

1. Who did Henry Charles Albert David Mountbatten-Windsor marry on May 19th?
2. What is the only U.S. State whose name starts with the letter F?
3. What name is both a receptacle for holy water and a typeset of one particular style?

**'An investment in knowledge pays the best interest.'**  
- Benjamin Franklin

# General knowledge encourages children to want to learn more, discover new things, and broaden their horizons.

4. In The Hobbit, what was the name of Bilbo's home?
5. Whose latest album is called 'Reputation'?
6. Jade Jones & Bianca Walkden represent GB in which sport?
7. Which country decided to allow women to drive for the first time in 2017?
8. In which city would you find the Colosseum, the Pantheon and the Trevi Fountain?
9. Who composed the Enigma Variations?
10. Which 'strong and stable' leader admitted to running through fields of wheat?

## Why bother with general knowledge?

About 60 years ago, Anthony Downs coined the term 'rational ignorance'. This is the choice of someone not to learn some information because the benefit isn't worth the hassle. Some would argue that in the age of Google, where facts are just a click away, skills are the only thing that matter and knowledge is obsolete. Increasingly, a number of voices within education are arguing that skills are dependent on knowledge and aren't quite as transferable as we might previously have thought. Academic E.D. Hirsch Jr, writing in *The Knowledge Deficit*, maintains that 'there is no way around the need for children to gain broad general knowledge in order to gain broad general proficiency in

reading'. Equally, some knowledge of a topic area helps us to interpret information in a similar field. In the era of 'fake news', we are better able to discern when we have some knowledge of the subject area. William Poundstone puts it well: 'knowledge is not wisdom, but it is a prerequisite for wisdom.' Pupils should seek to acquire sufficient cultural capital to be able to engage in discussions on a wide range of topics. Developing a broad conversational knowledge of major topic areas aids one's ability in public speaking, interviews and building relationships.

As a society, our general knowledge changes over time and American researchers at Kent University found interesting results comparing 2013 students to their 1980 counterparts. In 1980 researchers produced a baseline set of questions in order to test long-term memory, but throwing those same questions at 2013 contemporaries showed the extent of the knowledge shift. Even allowing for popular culture changes, their performance was concerning. In core subject areas contemporary students fared worse, but on subject areas like Batman, cigarette brands and kilts, modern students fared better. It seems modern general knowledge is geared more towards culture than to traditional academic subjects. Pop culture is important in the sense that it helps to know what others know, but I am worried about the lack of foundational knowledge in academic

subject areas. You can't learn from history if you don't know it!

As teachers, we want to instil a thirst for learning. Self-motivated pupils achieve more, and my teaching experience has certainly proved the validity of the old proverb, 'you can lead a horse to water, but you can't make it drink.' General knowledge encourages children to want to learn more, discover new things, and broaden their horizons. Going back to what I mentioned about cultural capital and conversational knowledge, I can't help but feel that general knowledge is also beneficial for those dreaded senior school interviews. The current affairs elements of general knowledge keeps them abreast of the latest developments and aware of the world around them while also giving them a large number of reference points for a wide range of discussions. Rather than just raising up future pub quiz stars, I truly believe that general knowledge is a real benefit to learning, particularly at this stage of children's development. There is plenty of time to specialise later if they want, but at prep school we should be seeking to broaden children's knowledge.

General knowledge is also great fun, and not just for the winners. The surge in popularity of the HQ Trivia app reflects this. I continue to be amazed at the engagement of our pupils watching or participating in our University Challenge style House competition. I love witnessing the satisfaction of that child who got the answer that nobody else got, the change of expression when a pupil's educated guess pays off, or the answer that comes from the most unexpected place. It has also made a surprisingly good spectator sport as those in the audience relish the moments when they might have done better. If your school doesn't take part in some form of general knowledge, then I truly believe you are missing out. In the words of Benjamin Franklin, 'an investment in knowledge pays the best interest.'

# The governors' code

*Ian Nichol, the Vice Chair of Governors at Lawrence Sheriff School, writes in their weekly school newsletter on the true purpose of governors*

What are school governors actually for? It's a question we get asked a lot. At one level the answer is extremely straightforward: we wade through a vast amount of bureaucratic paperwork to satisfy government requirements. But, beyond that, we hope we can make a positive contribution to the happiness and success of everyone at the school.

School governors are not a recent invention. When Winchester College was founded over 600 years ago, a group of independent trustees visited the school 'with not more than six horses... to scrutinise the teaching and the progress in school of the scholars... and the quality of the food provided for the same... and correct or reform anything needing correction or reform'. These days we tend to leave our horses at home, but otherwise the job hasn't changed hugely.

Even so, it helps to set out in precise terms the principles under which governors do their work. In this connection, we recently carried out a biennial review of the Governors' Code. This is the document that sets out the role of governors in the terms of their duties to the school, their relationship with the headteachers and staff, and the way they should interact with each other. You can find the Code on the Lawrence Sheriff website in the section on Governors accessed from 'Quick Links'.

For me, the essence of the Code comes in Clause 6. This confirms that the governors 'recognise that strong relationships based on trust are at the heart of good governance: they create the atmosphere where tough but necessary questions can best be asked and resolved. We see the relationship between governors and school leaders as a mix of constructive challengers and keen supporters. We are all in this together.'

my experience a bit of cheerleading never goes amiss. Staff should always have the confidence that they will be supported in properly carrying out their duties. And there must be an open, honest relationship with the headteacher and senior staff. For the very reason that we are all in this together, the headteacher and the senior deputy headteacher are themselves members of the governing body.

We see the relationship between governors and school leaders as a mix of constructive challengers and keen supporters.

What are the other key elements of the Code? First, it emphasises that the governors' role is a strategic one, planning for the school long-term through policies within which the staff do their work. We are not here to check up on how people do their jobs: that is for the headteacher and his leadership team. Beyond that, governors have got to be more than cheerleaders for the school, though in

Much of this should go without saying, but saying it clearly and within one page of A4 paper still has considerable merit. That's what the Governors' Code is for, which you can read for yourself on the adjacent page.

### The governors' code

This document sets out the principles under which the governors ('we') of Lawrence Sheriff School ('the school') do our work. It cannot be all-encompassing, but in circumstances not covered here governors should act in line with the spirit of this document.

1. We will act selflessly in the school's best interests at all times, having regard to the needs of students, staff, parents and the wider community.
2. We aim to create an educational community which enables all of its members to be happy and to fulfil their true potential. We emphasise the school's pursuit of academic excellence whilst also working with the students to foster their spiritual, moral, physical and emotional development.
3. We will get to know the school well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities, while respecting individuals at all levels within the school community.
4. We believe that governance arrangements for the school have historically worked well, and intend that they should not be fettered by overenthusiastic bureaucracy or regulation for the future.
5. We will have full regard for the authority of the headteacher and their team.
6. We recognise that strong relationships based on trust are at the heart of good governance: they create the atmosphere where tough but necessary questions can best be asked and resolved. We see the relationship between governors and school leaders as a mix of constructive challenge and keen support. We are all in this together.
7. We understand that the role of a governor is strategic, not operational. If at times the boundary is blurred, we will consult to ensure we act appropriately within our authority.
8. We will encourage the free expression of our individual views and differences as we reach decisions. Once decisions are made we will abide by them with unanimity.
9. We will work openly and honestly, maximising each other's strengths and recognising that the governor role suits committed people with a wide variety of skills and qualities.
10. We will not shrink from challenging poor behaviour should it arise among us.
11. We accept that being a governor is time-consuming (10 to 20 days a year at a current estimate, and unlikely to reduce given modern approaches to regulation). We will devote the necessary time.
12. We are committed to both initial and ongoing training in our governor roles, arranged and paid for by the school, and we recognise this as essential in supporting and developing our performance.
13. We will respond with all reasonable promptness to communications regarding our governor work, prepare thoroughly for meetings and attend them with regularity.
14. The governor who acts as headteacher of the school (currently Dr Peter Kent) makes the additional commitment that, as far as lies within the headteacher's power:
  - Governors will be reimbursed for their out-of-pocket expenses on governor business.
  - The governing board will be provided with a high level of professional clerking which ensures that meetings are well planned and take place at appropriate intervals with manageable agendas and papers provided seven days in advance.
  - Governors will be positively encouraged to play a full part in school life and governance.

# Tommy the Learned Cat



*Julie G. Fox* is the founder of charitable publishing house Clever Fox Press and the author of 40 children's titles who writes and collaborates with illustrators and toymakers from around the world, mostly from countries facing economic or humanitarian crisis

I was only a year into writing for children (something I started doing at the end of 2015) when Rugby School in Warwickshire was about to celebrate its 450th anniversary. The school put together a weighty volume of its history called *From Elizabeth to Elizabeth*, tracing the story of the school from Queen Elizabeth I to the currently reigning Queen Elizabeth II. And I remember opening to the first page of the book and wondering how many of the school's thirteen-year-olds would have enough patience to read through the first chapter. I haven't polled the year 9 boys and girls since then, but the idea that there should be something much less serious or lengthy, and more fun, written especially for children (or even by children) nudged in my head. It sat there till my cat decided to hide herself in my daughter's suitcase as she was packing to return to Rugby School after a holiday. I picked the cat out of the suitcase, fed her some of her most favourite canned food and sat down to write what has become a gift for Rugby School's 450th, a book about the school from the point of view of a cat, Tommy the Learned Cat, who comes to school as a boarder with his favourite human Annee Brown.

As my children attended Rugby School for some time and I visited the place plenty, it only took me a few hours

of internet research and a few dozen questions directed to my annoyed teens ('Mother, do you really have to know all that?!') in order to fill the gaps in my knowledge about Rugby School. I finished the story, found a brilliant artist who helped me create full-page illustrations that would attract readers of all ages, and worked with a good editor to make sure that my English was up to scratch (I was born in Russia, left the country as a political refugee in my late teens, and have spoken and written in English for half of my life, but still I stare at an odd sentence wondering whether it sounds native). Six months later I presented at least a dozen hardcover

copies to Rugby School and went on to do many others (all of them picture books on various subjects, some of them starring the now famous Tommy the Learned Cat). Then I thought that Rugby School doesn't have to be the only school to tell its story, and I don't want to be the only author enjoying such an amazing adventure in creating a book based on the history and the life of a school.

As a former ESL teacher, I have entertained the idea of making 'book writing' and 'book making' a class or a series of classes that I could teach to children of almost any age. With the introduction of modern technology, books can be put together within a



very short period of time using a good story, scanned or digital illustrations, and simple software. Printing books now is easier and faster than ordering your business cards. So why not tour the country (scratch that, the world!) and help children create books about their lives and their schools? Whether it's the pony in a nearby field that helps the children tell the story of their rural prep school, or the pigeon on the roof of a city academy, or the seagull on the gate of a seaside nursery, an animal character could soar over the roof or run through the grounds or dig under the fence and tell the story, or at least inspire children to look at their school through the eyes of an animal. And things start to look absolutely amazing and totally unexpected if you imagine looking at them through the eyes of an animal.

Tommy the Learned Cat turns out to be a very smart kitty indeed. He goes to every lesson and learns maths, physics, history, modern languages, English, music, art, drama and anything and everything Rugby has to offer to its human pupils. While doing this, Tommy paints his best masterpieces in the art department, performs Rossini's 'Duet for Two Cats' at a music theatre competition, and plans his next holiday to Italy, hoping to utilise his newly acquired knowledge of Italian to interact with the local community of *gatti liberi* (free-roaming Roman cats). He demonstrates static electricity to his human classmates by rubbing on the carpet and turning into a scary monster with his fur standing up, learns the importance of balancing local ecosystems by hunting ill and weak animals, and wonders about his ability to always find home (*psi trailing*) in geography. He performs as the Cheshire Cat on the stage of Rugby's theatre in Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, excels at hockey and rugby, and calculates the formula for his jumps in maths. Tommy spends hours in the school's library, reading everything he can get his paws on and generally being the type of pupil



any teacher would dream of. While doing all those amazing things, Tommy discovers many fun facts about the history of Rugby School. And so the history of your school could come to life with a little help from any mascot your pupils come up with and with some guidance from a creative adult who could lead your kids on an adventure that will result in a colourful volume produced by the pupils themselves, professionally published and available for sale worldwide at the push of a button.

Yes, I could hardly believe it myself when I listed my first book, *Goodbye, Emma*, about a child refugee who had to leave his pet dog behind when fleeing his war-torn country. The book was up and running on Amazon sites worldwide within twenty-four hours of uploading the files. Within a couple of days, the world knew the story of a child who carefully packed 'five of his favourite books, four of his favourite

toys, three of his favourite pictures, two of his favourite games into one suitcase' and left his home forever. *Goodbye, Emma* was based on my story. My young brother was the child carefully packing his bag and saying goodbye to our dog. Emma the dog did exist. The only difference between the real story and the book, which saw the light in the winter of 2016, was the fact that when my brother and I left the former Soviet Union a quarter of a century ago, there was no war and no 'bombs falling from the sky'. But the loss of a pet was real.

Since the winter of 2016, I have written and published more than 30 books, with all the profits being donated to charities supporting child refugees and children fighting life-threatening illnesses. A charity, Clever Fox Press, was born mid 2016. I donned a pair of fox ears, and I'm happiest when I am with the kids, teaching them how to make books.



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# The Primary Mathematics Challenge



The Primary Mathematics Challenge highlights the importance of problem solving and logical thinking in the progression of a pupil

One of the most important things we can teach our children is to think for themselves and to reason things out. Problem solving is at the heart of the primary school curriculum and the heart of mathematical reasoning. Learning mathematics without taking part in problem solving is like learning football skills but never being allowed to play a game. Problem solving allows pupils to draw on their mathematical skills and decide how to use them, rather than following routines to practise skills they have been taught. Sometimes teachers will add a problem solving section at the end of a particular theme they have been teaching, so that pupils can use their newly acquired skills.

The nice thing about Primary Mathematics Challenge (PMC) is that the questions are fairly unpredictable; so that children have to use their logical skills to think through the questions, and then decide which knowledge they need to apply in order to solve the problem. The Challenge takes place in one week in November. It takes 45 minutes and must be done under test conditions. We hope that most of the pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 will be able to have a go at the paper and enjoy the experience. The questions at the end of the paper are tough and will challenge even the most able, but as long as the pupils

understand that this is the case, they should not be intimidated by it.

Some of the teachers who regularly use PMC in their teaching tell us that they prepare the pupils by letting them work together on questions from previous years, gradually building up their confidence and competence in tackling the questions and reading the questions carefully!

The question paper has multiple choice answers, so practising with old papers gives children a chance to think of strategies to deal with multiple choice, perhaps checking each of the answers they have rejected – if they have sufficient time – or establishing which questions are absolutely unlikely.

Children who have gained very high marks in PMC are invited to take place in the Bonus Round later in the school year. These are the high flying mathematicians and some of them go on to compete in international mathematics Olympiads further down the line.

Not all children enjoy the competitive aspect of a mathematical challenge, but with PMC they have a chance to take part in an event which does not have life changing effects for them. Unlike the exams and entry tests that will have a big influence on the rest of their school career PMC can be something they might do ‘just for fun’, without being too concerned about the consequences.

Each year we ask teachers to let us have feedback from the children about the experience. The comments we receive are overwhelmingly positive, with: ‘loved the funny names, they made me laugh’ and ‘made my brain ache’ appearing regularly each year.

If you haven’t tried Primary Mathematics Challenge before, take the plunge this year. There is plenty of information about past papers and administration of the Challenge to be found at [www.primarymathschallenge.org.uk](http://www.primarymathschallenge.org.uk)

You can even download a selection of past PMC papers and give it a go in your classroom today!

**Ms Plummet has organised rock climbing for her class at a total cost of £415. She charges each child £12.50 and 30 children pay to go.**

**What is the difference between the cost and the money she collects from the children?**

- A £12.50
- B £25
- C £40
- D £53.50
- E There is no difference



# The SATIPS Poetry Competition

The ever-popular competition is up and running once again under the auspices of Stephen Davies at Bryanston School. It has become a regular feature once again due his passion and organisation. Thank you also to David Caddy for taking on the difficult task of judging and congratulations to all the schools and their pupils

## **Years 7 & 8**

The Years 7 and 8 entries were of a consistently high standard with many Year 7 entries surpassing Year 8's efforts. There was a range of poetic approaches employed, mostly covering dark subject matter. Twenty-six poems made my longlist indicating that there was quality in depth and some difficult decisions to be made. I commend everyone's efforts in making my task difficult. Judging poems can be a bit like choosing fruit. One day one might select an apple; another day one chooses a banana or plum. Here there was plenty of very good fruit on offer.

Grace W's poem, 'Perfectly Imperfect' (Vinehall) won First Prize with its two-part shape poem. The visual element of the poem creeps up on the reader slowly and perfectly matches the poem's content, which has a high quotient of highly descriptive and poetic language. The poem in deceptively simple revealing its hidden depths gradually and with considerable force of expression. It is a stunning poem for someone of this age and a most worthy winner. Krish D's poem, 'Night Time Terror' (St Martin's) gained the Second Prize with a highly atmospheric poem written in six quatrains. Here the reader is drawn into the world of a terrifying storm with the inanimate objects of a derelict house bouncing

around petrified. This unusual poem showed good language use. Alex L's poem, 'Bedroom' (Packwood Haugh) won the Third Prize, with a witty and concise take on a boy's messy bedroom and his mum's efforts to get him to tidy up. Written in four even sestets, the poem employed exact and precise language with natural rhythm.

The Highly Commended poems were Dylan B's 'Creak Creak Croak', (St Martin's) which employed pithy and precise lines in six tercets about an old sofa, Oscar T's 'The Ford' (Lanesborough) showed strong poetic technique throughout and made an impression, Jimi A's 'Winter' (Edge Grove) possessed wonderful descriptive language in an atmospheric poem, Nishan P's 'The Colour of All Colours' (St Martin's) beguiled with its exploration of the colour blue, Oliver S's 'A Riddle' (Vinehall) was suitably enigmatic with good use of vocabulary, Beatrice M's 'Lost Voices' (Vinehall) impressed with its theme of loss, Hady S's 'Goal!' (Quainton Hall) was a spirited effort in five quatrains and a couplet, Jenson A's 'The Sounds of the Zoo' (St Martin's) conveyed a range of sounds employing compact rhyme and metre in four tight quatrains, and Ishan T's 'St. Peter's Basilica' (Quainton Hall) was a dramatic and descriptive poem in fourteen lines of rhyme and metre.

The outstanding school was St. Martin's School, Northwood, narrowly pipping the excellent contributions from Vinehall School.

## **Years 5 & 6**

The Years 5 and 6 entries were inspiring to read and of a very high overall standard. Many poems concerned family loss, the elements and the natural world. There were a select number of poems on unusual subjects. These were often unpredictable and thus stood out. Given the large number of entries, this was a highly competitive field to adjudicate.

In order to differentiate between many poems on the same subject and using similar vocabulary, I was forced to penalise small errors. Ultimately, there were thirty-two well crafted, energised and inventive poems that demanded close attention and forced their way into a longlist.

Sam K's poem 'Snow Falls' (Town Close) won the First Prize with its simple statement in six couplets with every word contributing to the eloquence and effects of the whole. Such precise description and economy where less is more shone through in this elemental and powerful poem. Anish L's 'The Joys of Spring' poem (St Martin's) won the Second Prize with its seemingly effortless eight

# Both teachers and students are to be commended for their efforts. I found the visual poetry striking and moving with a high amount of poetic technique involved.

quatrains celebrating the vibrancy and diversity of spring. All of the rhymes were natural and drew the reader deeper into the poem's world. Max R's poem, 'The Tempest' (Lanesborough) won the Third Prize with a dramatic rendering of a deadly storm employing a torrent of words at pace, in rhyme, slant rhyme and metre, throughout.

The following poems are Highly Commended: Wilf L's 'The Final Straw' (Lanesborough), employing compact rhyme within a comic piece about a boy excessively holiday packing, Imogen B's 'Left's Meant To Be' (Brambletye) inventively and playfully manipulates words in a thoughtful and comic way. Eva S's 'From The Yard' (Belmont) delineates and evokes the contrasts between a girl from a stable yard and the city. Vinehall School Form 6's 'Precious Memories' unlocked memories inside objects in an inventive collaborative piece, Anish L's 'The Twinkle in my Life' (St Martin's) commemorated the passing of his grandma in seven quatrains of rhyme and metre, Luca C's 'Appearance' (Eaton House the Manor) captivated with its strong lines and descriptive powers. I was particularly struck by his line 'The boats swayed silently like ballerinas performing on stage', and Oscar W's evocative 'Spring Colours' (St Martin's) culminating in Demeter running to embrace Persephone.

Anish L and Oscar W from St Martin's School are to be congratulated for getting two poems each in the longlist. Other notable entries were written by Billy G (Eaton House the Manor), Boris S ('Beauties

of Nature' Eaton House the Manor), Molly M (Norland Place), Rebecca W (Brambletye), Joe M (Belmont), Dhrur J (Belmont) and Callum D (Eaton House the Manor).

The outstanding school was St. Martin's School, Northwood, who narrowly eclipsed Eaton House the Manor Prep School.

## Years 3 & 4

The Years 3 and 4 entries conveyed a strong sense of the possibilities of finding poetry in unusual sources and in the diversity of its delivery. Both teachers and students are to be commended for their efforts. I found the visual poetry striking and moving with a high amount of poetic technique involved. I wanted to be moved by the simplicity of the sentiments expressed and the use of poetic techniques. The winning poem, 'Mysterious Monster' by Krishay V (St Martin's) drew my mind's eye and my eyes into its world as a visual poem and journey. The use of compacted alliteration throughout the body of the monster combined with fiery words emanating from the monster's mouth on the bottom right of the page made an immediate and deep impression. Sometimes memorable lines make poems sing in the reader's imagination, and that was the case in the Second Prize poem. Oscar T's 'Bob Learns to Sing' (Lanesborough), consisting of three quatrains, combines wit and succinctness with the appropriate and stunning rhyme of 'learn' and 'gurn', with the latter indicating Bob's face pulling as he finally succeeds in improving his singing. In Third Place, Rishi G's poem, 'Paint Is Fun' (St

Martin's), cast its spell by drawing the reader into its world through the sheer simplicity and accuracy of its language within the exuberant world of having fun with paint. The visual poem evokes and invokes its theme with great language use, red, green and blue paint on a yellow turtle. Quite stunning!

There were a number of other outstanding submissions that deserve special mention and are equally Highly Commended. Oscar L's poem, 'Frost & Icicles' (Lanesborough), packed a punch in three short and expertly rhymed lines; Willow G's poem, 'Maths' (Vinehall) scattered rhymes throughout her lines to produce a memorable and fun poem, Charlie P's poem, 'Mist' (Vinehall) concentrated on sumptuous language work to evoke mist and showed great potential for a Year 3 student, and Elisha P's poem, 'Magic Box' (Felsted) impressed with a series of unpredictable lines that grabbed the reader's attention.

The best entries in this category from a school came from St. Martin's School, Northwood.

Overall, the outstanding school in all the three categories was St. Martin's School, Northwood. Congratulations to all the students and teachers on their great work.

Congratulations also to St Martins school who, as overall winners of the competition, hold the Nexus shield. Do contact Stephen at Bryanston regarding next year's competition-shd@bryanston.co.uk

# Assessment methods

Having taught in schools in the UK and internationally, *Matthew Barrett*, Deputy Head of Surbiton High Boys' Preparatory School, suggests a research based model to bring clarity and efficiency to assessment methods

The aim of this article is to discover where the boundaries between formative assessment and summative assessment lie, and to explore the most suitable ways each method may be used. There is confusion among both education lecturers and teachers regarding the definitions and, more importantly, applications of both formative and summative assessment (Taras, 2008, Harlen & James, 2006). As such, it would seem apparent that this needs to be clarified.

Summative assessment is defined by Harlen & Qualter (2004) as: 'The process by which teachers gather

evidence in a planned and systematic way in order to draw inferences about their pupils' learning, based on their professional judgement, and to report at a particular time on their pupils' achievements.'

Formative assessment is defined by Black & Wiliam (2009) as: 'Practice in a classroom is formative to the extent that evidence about pupil achievement is elicited, interpreted, and used by teachers, learners, or their peers, to make decisions about the next steps in instruction that are likely to be better, or better founded, than the decisions they would have taken in

the absence of the evidence that was elicited.'

These definitions, although outlining key aspects of each of the assessment types such as planning and overall decision making, do not wholly cover the process by which formative assessment can be used summatively and vice versa. It is the relationship between the two that requires clarification.

## What is the use?

The idea of formative assessment feeding into the next steps of the pupils' learning process is apparent but does that mean summative

### Characteristics of FA

Promotes learning

Acknowledges the individual

Incorrect answers = diagnostic information

Validity & usefulness are paramount

Pupils are owners of their learning

Self & Peer assessment, shared objectives, quality feedback and effective questioning is witnessed

### Characteristics of SA

Takes place at certain reporting intervals

Relates to progression against public criteria

Results may be combined for various purposes

Reliability & Validity are important

Based on evidence of full range of performance against criteria

## Educational Assessment

### Using FA summatively

1. Examples must be related to accepted criteria
2. Must be a range of samples with which to culminate grades
3. Reliability has to increase - through internal verification/ moderation

### Using SA formatively

1. Must take into account the individual student, the beginning point and effort etc.
2. Effective feedback must be provided
3. Students must take ownership of the process

assessments cannot be used in this way? If so that seems a little restrictive and, conversely does this also mean that valid formative assessments should not be used summatively? Below I have created a visual to outline some of the main characteristics differentiating formative and summative assessment as indicated by research (Scriven, 1967, Ramprasad 1983, Harlen & James, 1997, Garrison & Ehringhaus, 2009, Stewart 2012).

Although external, summative testing is deemed a requirement of schools by governments, there is an argument that: 'Teacher's intuitive, intimate and continuing knowledge of student learning is the best basis for improving and reporting on student learning' (Brown, et al, 2010)

Unless a pupil perceives they are successful in a range of summative assessments throughout their school life, there is a real danger of that pupil becoming disinterested in education. Formative assessment exponents claim these methods have the power to motivate and give ownership of learning to the pupil, thus helping teachers to provide a somewhat personalised learning experience.

Historically, assessment has been predominantly used for summative purposes and as a tool for reporting and certification, resulting in a lack of importance being placed on the use of assessment to help pupils to develop (Crooks, 1998). Thankfully there has been a large movement towards the use of assessment as a tool to support pupils and not just an occasional yardstick capable of demoralising. The key to effective formative assessment is the adjustment of teaching to meet the learning needs of the pupils and ensuring the pupils, themselves, play an active role in this redirection of their learning (Clark, 2012).

### **Using formative assessments summatively**

Using formative assessments summatively can be valid as long as three important characteristics are met. The assessments must be related

to widely accepted criteria, there must be a range of formative assessment material that is used to culminate in the summative assessment judgement and the reliability has to increase, through internal verification, or standardization. (Harlen & James, 1997)

Harlen (2005) argues the importance of using teacher summative assessments for high stakes testing as the validity will increase due to the larger quantity of assessments available when compared with external testing. This holds some merit, with a caveat that the tests must be assessed against recognised criteria.

Unfortunately, when referring to reliability, Brookhart (2013) states: 'The results of 100 years of study of teacher judgement in the USA... in both classroom level... and large-scale summative assessment, teacher judgement has been found to be variable.'

Perhaps part of the reason for this variability is the tendency of teachers to include their perception of the pupil's effort and work rate in summative assessments (when really is it a formative assessment feature). It is when these factors are separated from attainment results, which may increase the substance and respect of teacher summative assessments (Brookhart, 2013).

### **Using summative assessments formatively**

Summative assessment should be a part of classroom testing, if it is administered in the right way, and speaks to a pupil's intrinsic motivation it can, in itself, become useful as an incentive for studying (Brookhart & Bronowicz, 2003).

Therefore, if the summative assessment is given in the classroom, with the correct processes arranged it could become a formative tool. Some parameters will need to be met, such as evidencing effective feedback and ensuring the pupil takes increasing ownership of their learning.

### **The international view**

In Japan, pupils are celebrated just as much for their effort levels as they are for their attainment and this could be a lesson for our education systems (Clarke, 2005). This is not only the case in Japan, in Finland pupils' effort levels are judged to be a larger determinant of attainment compared to their ability (Oakes, 2013). The impact of assessment upon the motivation of pupils must not be underestimated and the use of repeated summative assessments leading to 'failure' will undoubtedly have a marked effect on a child's self-efficacy. The summative use of formative assessments therefore may hold the key to maintaining and developing a pupil's confidence as well as being a tool for reporting on attainment.

### **In sum**

The success of developing effective formative assessment practices can be influenced by the leadership of the school, institutionalising assessment for learning and arriving at agreement with teachers and stakeholders regarding the benefit of this practice. The school must be a research led establishment open to change and innovation (Dimmock 2012).

Perhaps there is the possibility of increased efficiency in the use of assessments, as Harlen (2005) states: 'There seems to be value in maintaining the distinction between formative and summative *purposes* of assessment while seeking synergy in relation to the *processes* of assessment.'

This succinctly summarises the points made. As practitioners we may think alternatively about assessment, using assessment artifacts for multiple reasons whilst maintaining validity and reliability.

Whilst some summative assessment demands are beyond our control we can, as both teachers and leaders, ensure our schools utilise assessment, in all its forms, for the main function of learning (Everard et al, 2004).

# Outdoor mindfulness and nature

*John Arnold, Director of Mindful Mountains, talks about mindfulness as something that can be nurtured through raising awareness and fostering our connections with nature*

Nature, the outdoors and physical activity provide a perfect context for learning the practice of mindfulness, which once learned can be brought back to the context of your school.

Ego-centric thinking softens in the face of nature, which instead fosters eco-centric thinking. We see the deep connections within nature and learn that we also are a part of this matrix of energy, cause and effect and acceptance. Physical activity and movement with awareness brings us closer to the wonders of our body and mind and we begin to appreciate that the forces that are inherent in nature are also in ourselves and influence our daily lives.

Combining light physical exercise and sporting activities, such as hiking, yoga and skiing, with mindfulness practices can teach us much about our connections with nature and the natural environment. When these connections are purposefully nurtured health benefits follow: stress is reduced, the nervous system is calmed: the body is soothed and the mind quietens. Outdoor mindfulness has the partner of Nature, which is a powerful force for health and personal growth.

The context is, 'growing in our capacities' for awareness, compassion,

insight and wisdom. The environment is outdoors, in nature where the elements of the natural world are prevalent. The activities are walking, hiking, yoga, Tai Chi, Chi Gong, mindful movement and meditation. Seeking a soothing of the integrated self is a natural phenomenon, one that humans have done consciously and often without knowing it for thousands of years, there's a primordial drive to sooth and recuperate. We acknowledge this and view seeking quietness, stillness and being grounded and centred as natural instincts.

#### **In nature**

The separated self is something we encounter within our society today, the view that we must be independent is fundamentally at odds with how we live our lives within connected interdependent communities. Presently we do not live as independent beings and this view, where it prevails, sees society's struggling with psychological ill health.

We seek to relate with the five essential elements of Earth, Water, Air, Wood and Metal. The Earth we find through the mountain terrain, hills and land; Water in the rivers, streams, land and plant moisture, rain

and snow; Air is found in our breath, in the space outside of our body, through the wind and air currents in our atmosphere; Wood as explored through the plant life, forests and moorland and Metal as an element of the rocks and stone. Whilst moving through the natural landscape we notice the elements as they are represented to us and purposefully move towards them, connecting with their energies and vibrations and what they symbolise.

'While our contemporary way of living separates us more and more from nature (which only exacerbates our mistaken belief that we are independent from the natural world), the truth is that our minds and bodies area as intertwined with the moon and stars as they are with the air we breathe and the water we drink.' – Mark Coleman, *Awake in The Wild*, 2006.

#### **Through movement**

Physical activity triggers the production of hormones, such as endorphins, which have a positive influence on our sense of wellbeing and emotions. Hiking and skiing in the mountain environment further shapes our emotions through terrain and weather changes and physical exertion. Yoga, Tai Chi, Chi Gong



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create safe places where our bodies can move freely with no limitations from the environment, we experience time and space to grow awareness of the body, its movement and our mental activity.

Mindful movement is moving with purpose, intention and being aware of it. Using all our senses to witness the sensations of the body, whilst also observing the rhythms of the mind and emotions – perfect training for entering ‘flow’ states.

‘Although we might think of emotions as non-physical, in fact they ripple throughout our body. For this reason, staying as close as possible to the raw sensations of the body becomes particularly important when we are dealing with high emotion.’ – Dr Tamara Russell, Mindfulness in Motion, 2015.

#### **And stillness**

In stillness we see movement of the mind, in movement we see stillness of the mind. The combination of physical activity with periods of stillness merges the boundaries of each. What we learn on the mat is applied on the mountain, trusting the process and

adopting the attitude of a beginner’s mind.

The experience of sitting shows us that the mind is anything but still. The contrast of the stillness of the body is the movement, the busyness of the mind. We move to the breath and here we notice movement, the body moves to facilitate the breath, the flow of air which is the breath. In seeking stillness our busy mind is illuminated and while this can sometimes be uncomfortable, it is a transition we must make to become more open and less judgmental.

‘Try to be mindful, and let things take their natural course. Then your mind will become still in any surroundings, like a clear forest pool. All kinds of wonderful, rare animals will come to drink at the pool, and you will clearly see the nature of all things. You will see many strange and wonderful things come and go, but you will be still.’ – Achaan Chah, A Still Forest Pool, 2008.

#### **With awareness**

Experiencing with awareness the nature of thoughts, that they arise, exist and pass, is hugely liberating.

The realisation and acceptance that we are not our thoughts, that they shape our lives but do not need to shape our identity, is often a breakthrough. The stillness of mind arises from not interfering with it, not engaging with it; instead we observe, notice and witness, that which we observe, and our reactions to that which we observe.

Physical activity done with awareness brings about a realisation of movements, motion and muscular tensions. We learn to trust our bodies, beginning from where we are in the present moment; we learn to be in our moving bodies with the absence of striving and judging.

‘We are all like waves rising and falling on the surface of the ocean, and when the wave looks deep within, it finds the ocean. When we do not hold on to the past, cherish the future or take hold of the present, we see imperturbability.’ – Christopher Titmus, An Awakened Life, 2000.

To find out more about Mindful Mountains please get in touch with John at [johnarnoldski@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:johnarnoldski@yahoo.co.uk)



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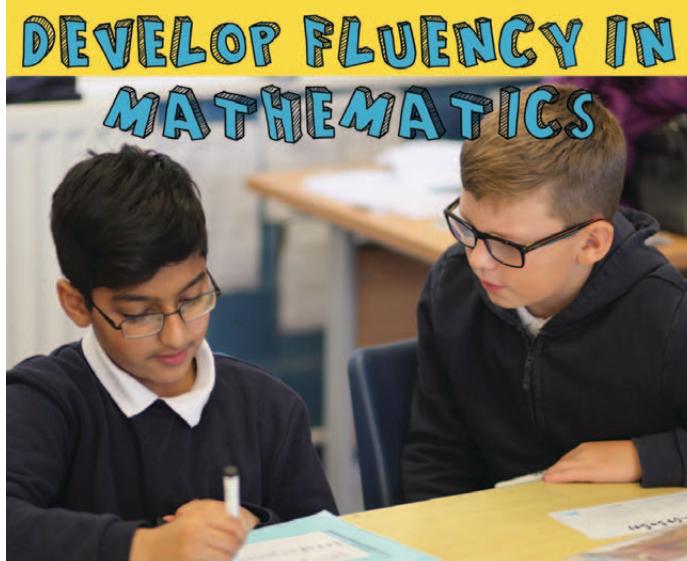
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# Become a Talent Architect

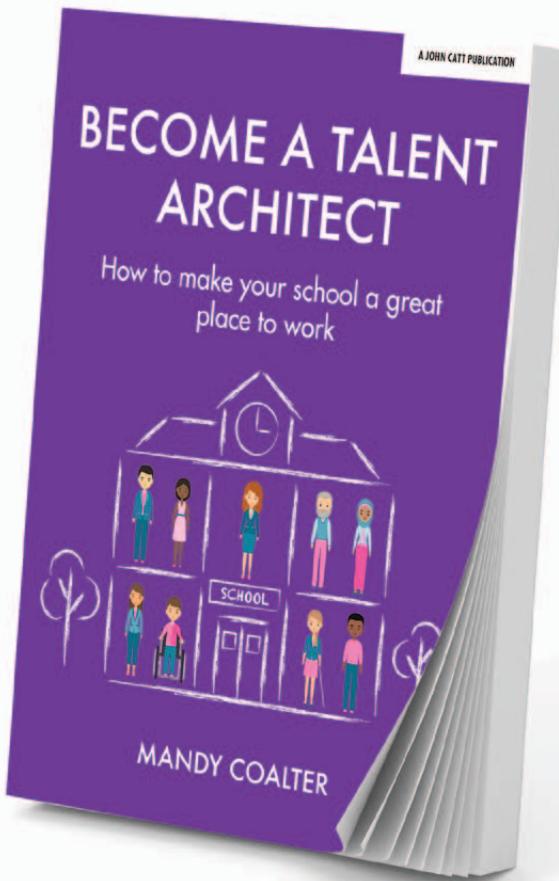
Prep School magazine readers are treated to an extract from a new book by Mandy Coalter, *Become a Talent Architect: How to make your school a great place to work*, published by John Catt Educational

## **Developing resilience**

I am absolutely amazed that given all the evidence around teacher workload, wastage rates and young teachers leaving the profession, that personal resilience training is not a core part of the teacher training curriculum. I introduced this in my school organisation and it had a significant impact on the well-being of trainee and new teachers. I can't think of another profession where you are expected to be 'good' or 'outstanding' after just one year of training. The expectations and scrutiny of new teachers is incredible. If you are running a school centred initial teacher training (SCITT) make this a core part of your curriculum. If you are a school taking on trainees and NQTs make sure you offer this to them as part of their CPD package. There are many good providers who can help with this and also train up your own people to deliver so it becomes no cost.

Resilience training is beneficial for all groups of staff, not just trainees. Knowing how to cope when the job gets tough and having the techniques that resilient people employ is vital to help you stay well. All teachers have bad lessons; resilient teachers seek support and help, reflect, learn and bounce back. Those without resilience will keep their feelings to themselves and this can lead to negative thoughts about their own abilities as a teacher and a downward spiral.

A great way to get everyone talking about resilience is to use an external resilience tool for test this out. Robertson Cooper has a free I-resilience tool available on their website that you can complete and get an instant report back on your own resilience. Every school leader ought to be aware of their own personal resilience and how to ensure they have the support they need.



## **Resilience coaching**

If you have great leaders at all levels and are developing a coaching culture you will be in a strong position to start to use coaching specifically for resilience. Ensuring all your middle leaders are well equipped to coach and mentor teachers and others who need support with workload can be very powerful. If you have developed a culture where it is normal to ask

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for help, which resilience training school wide will do, then this becomes a great way of supporting people in need.

### **Helping people to cope with the juggling act of life**

Your employees have lives outside of work, but we can find as individuals that it is the challenges we face outside of work that impact on our ability to cope with our weekday workload. In all my years of managing employee assistance programmes I have seen that most staff access counselling support for personal rather than work issues.

Bereavement, relationship problems and money worries are just a few things any one of us can face in our lives. Making sure that your staff know where to turn if it all gets too much can be vital. The Education Support Network is a fantastic free resource and you should make sure all your staff are aware of it. If your school group or local authority buys in to an employee assistance programme make sure this is well publicised in your school. These usually provide expert counselling free to staff, sometimes over the telephone, sometimes face to face and some even offer it to family members too. The cost per employee is really cheap now and well worth the investment. Some larger schools have their own on site counselling support for the pupils and if appropriate this can be offered to staff too.

Helping staff to juggle the demands of life is not just about the major problems any one of us can face at any time. It is also about the small things that we have to juggle every day. Dropping off and picking up the kids; the dry cleaning, the car service, getting a haircut, getting the ironing done. Some schools I have worked with have liaised with local providers to provide easy access to local services. So for example, a local garage comes to collect your car from school, do the annual service and MOT then drops the car back with keys left at reception. Or a school brings in a

local dry cleaner or ironing service so you can bring your clothes in to school and they are done and ready in school to collect end of day. Or a local hairdresser or beautician comes in regularly to take appointments.

You don't have to pay for these things, and you may find you can negotiate a great discount for your staff so not only does it make life a bit easier it is also cheaper for them.

### **Supporting employee wellbeing**

It is important that your approach to well-being is a whole school one. It needs to be led from the top and your SLT and governors need to be at the forefront of modelling and supporting well-being and building it in to your school planning and systems.

In addition, you can only create a real culture of well-being if every individual plays their part. Creating a whole school pledge is a great way to secure commitment from all stakeholders. I have seen schools do this, ensuring that there are clear commitments from governors and SLT, but also that individual employees show a commitment to manage their own personal well-being.

In today's 24/7 world we operate in conditions which are not good for our health; where lack of sleep, poor diet, lack of exercise and little relaxation take their toll on the human body and mind which is still primed for a world of hunting and gathering. Supporting your staff to understand this and recognise that small steps can help them look after themselves better are an important part of your strategy.

There are loads of resources you can access to help with this. I love and highly recommend the book The Four Pillar Plan by Dr Rhangan Chatterjee as a really useful starting resource. In the book he sets out the four pillars: relaxation, sleep, exercise and diet and how the secret of well-being is to ensure you have balance across the four pillars rather than concentrating on one area such as exercise. During his many years of GP practice he has used this method and gives

inspirational stories of how he has helped patients transform their lives.

I have personally adopted the four pillar plan and can vouch for its effect on my own personal well-being. I know a number of headteachers who have done the same and are also huge fans as a result!

Many schools I have worked with have kick started well-being with a 'well-being week' so that they can begin to get staff talking about issues such as the importance of sleep and diet to their personal energy and resilience. One school has an 'advent calendar' approach to this in December and makes it fun and involving. Another school has an early finish week in December, knowing that this is a busy month and that both staff and pupils welcome some downtime, as well as giving staff the chance to get to their own children's Christmas play. Other schools have run sessions on diet and sleep or brought in fitness providers to deliver sessions at lunchtime or after the school day ends. The options are endless and most are either really cheap or free.

The schools I have worked with that have started to really embed a change in well-being and workload have built an employee well-being group of staff that guides this work and creates a network of champions to work with the headteacher and the SLT. This is easy to do and can be a group that develops both pupil and staff well-being campaigns.

When you put coping with the workload at the centre of your approach you find there are all sorts of actions you can control and do that will have impact. I have seen the transformational difference this can make to school leaders and their staff and I urge you to see the workload issue in this way and take action to develop a comprehensive approach to employee well-being.

# A new look

Redcliffe School is an independent prep school based in West London. Following the appointment of the new head, Sarah Lemmon, in September 2017, Redcliffe became fully co-educational. For Sarah, her new role and this new era at Redcliffe created the perfect opportunity to work with Perry, the uniform supplier, to update and enhance the uniform. Sarah Lemmon was interviewed to discuss her vision for the new uniform and asked how, from her perspective, Perry helped to develop her vision for the school uniform and turn it into reality.

**You have recently introduced a new uniform to Redcliffe School. What was it that made you decide to make these changes?**

We decided to change the uniform following my appointment as Head as I saw it as a real opportunity to think about the way that the school was moving forward, becoming a co-ed school to eleven, and decided it was now the time to modernise our approach and freshen up the uniform.

We had had our existing uniform for about 20 years so the parents and governing body also welcomed this change.

**From your perspective, how did the process of designing a new uniform work?**

The process was very easy as we had lots of meetings where we were able to look at different design options and then think about which one was right for us. We wanted to maintain the identity of our school and give the uniform a crisp and modern twist.

For the summer dress, the cloth we used was designed specifically for us by the garment technology department at Perry. By keeping the same colour scheme but having a new fabric it kept to our brief very well. We were



absolutely delighted with how the dresses looked when they were first worn at the end of the last academic year.

### **What do you think the standout features of the new Redcliffe School uniform are?**

Our existing blazers now have an added trim to the collar and lapels which look very smart.

Perry went the extra mile by offering to trim students' existing blazers over half term for a minute cost to parents. This ensured the changeover was smooth and reinforced our message that Perry is good value for money.

### **How long did the process take from making the decision to have a new uniform, to seeing pupils wearing it in school?**

The whole process was quite swift. My first discussions with the School Relationship Team at Perry were in January 2017 and by that September the pupils were already wearing the new designs.

### **What was the reaction from the pupils and parents to the new uniform?**

When we first introduced the new uniform, the idea was that we would start it from the bottom of the school with the higher years given the option to adopt it slowly over time. However, everybody took on board the new uniform immediately! Even girls in their final year of the school, for whom it was not mandatory, decided to have the new uniform.

### **Being a school in Central London, surrounded by shops, why do you think Perry's online service works for your parents?**

The opportunity of being able to buy things online is really helpful for working, busy parents.



It is a very quick and efficient service and the staff at the end of the phone, or on email, are knowledgeable and helpful. Orders are quickly fulfilled and sent to the parents at home that means it is a stress-free process for everyone.

### **As you are aware we offer an appointment based service to measure children at schools and in our showrooms. What benefit do you think this had for your parents?**

Having somebody talk through the ordering process with prospective parents is really helpful, especially for families who have come from abroad.

The personal touch of explaining the types of uniform and how to measure their child can also be quite reassuring for parents who have not gone through the school uniform process before.

**We offer parents a name tape sew-in service. Whilst we know that parents appreciate this service, what are the advantages to the school of offering a name taping service?**

It's really important that all uniform is named, especially with such young children, and this is an invaluable service from Perry.

**Perry emphasises the importance of being 'Your Uniform Partner' and establishing long term relationships. How do you find they have done this with your school?**

I have built a good relationship with Perry. I know that I can pick up the telephone and discuss with my School Relationship Manager any queries I may have and the response is always that we will resolve them together as a team.

Personal touches and proactive responses like these are yet another reason why Redcliffe School has chosen Perry to be our uniform supplier for the last fourteen years.

### **Do you have any advice for other schools wanting to create a new uniform?**

I think the advice for any other school would be to think about what it is that you want and get in touch with Perry. They are then very experienced at helping you shape where you want to go and how you see your vision of your school going forward. I have certainly found it to work for Redcliffe extraordinarily well.

To watch the interview with Sarah Lemmon, go to: [www.perryuniform.co.uk](http://www.perryuniform.co.uk)

To find out how Perry can work with you and your school, contact Caroline Bunting at: [caroline@perryuniform.co.uk](mailto:caroline@perryuniform.co.uk) or call 0113 238 9520

# ACTION CALENDAR - OCTOBER

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
1. Make a list of things that you're looking forward to	2. Find an action you can take to overcome a problem or worry	3. Adopt a growth mindset. Change 'I can't' into 'I can't... yet'	4. Be willing to ask for help when you need it today (and always)	5. Avoid saying, 'must' or 'should' to yourself today	7. Shift your mood by doing something you really enjoy	6. Put a problem in perspective and see the bigger picture
8. Get the basics right - eat well, exercise and go to bed on time	9. When things get tough, say to yourself 'this too shall pass'	10. Reach out to someone you trust and share your feelings with them	11. Look for something positive in a difficult situation	12. When things go wrong, be compassionate to yourself	13. Challenge negative thoughts. Find an alternative interpretation	14. Go for walk to clear your head when you feel overwhelmed
15. Find fun ways to distract yourself from unhelpful thoughts	16. Set yourself an achievable goal and make it happen	17. Use one of your strengths to overcome a challenge today	18. Let go of the small stuff and focus on the things that matter	19. Write worries down and save them for a specific 'worry time'	20. If you can't change it, change the way you think about it	21. Ask yourself, 'what's the best that can happen?'
22. Make a list of 3 things that you feel hopeful about	23. Remember that all feelings and situations pass in time	24. Choose to see something good about what has gone wrong	25. Notice when you are feeling judgemental and be kind instead	26. Identify what helped you get through a tough time in your life	27. Write down 3 things you're grateful for (even if today was hard)	28. Think about what you can learn from a recent challenge
29. Catch yourself over-reacting and take a deep breath	30. Ask for help from a friend, family member or colleague	31. Remember we all struggle at times - it's part of being human				

The SATIPS Broadsheets are a superb practical resource for schools. The editor of the Science broadsheet is Luke Busfield from Ludgrove School.

# SATIPS

Support and training in Prep, Primary and Senior Schools



## **Editorial**

I have spent much of this term lording over my colleagues and peers since the arrival of a very shiny new pin badge which adorns my lapel - the specific details of this will be revealed later on this very page. Exciting indeed.

It marks the beginning of what might become a qualifications arms race between schools for pupils and even possibly between candidates for positions in our narrow prep-school market.

## **Association for Science Education (ASE)**

Since my last meandering missive, I have become a paid up member of the ASE and have made good use of their numerous online resources. The membership comes with a whopping public liability insurance that covers you for demonstrations and practical activities and if you are not a member of a union and covered by their own policy, it is worth it for the peace of mind alone. Membership is definitely recommended if only for their excellent magazine, and if you are not able to talk your school into coughing up for the membership you can claim the cost of it back against tax.

As an added bonus, I strongly suspect that as a member of the ASE you might be able to add the post nominals MASE to your alphabet soup. After all, you can use MiP or

MRSiChem if you are a member of the Institute of Physics or the Royal Society of Chemistry.

While we are on the subject of post nominals, ASE membership offers access to several other extremely valuable post NQT qualifications, namely those of Registered Scientist (RSci) and Chartered Science Teacher (CSciTeach).

\*\*Please be aware that much of what follows has been sourced from the ASE website itself but any inaccuracies within are entirely my own fault and not a misrepresentation by the ASE.\*\*

### **Registered Scientist (RSci)**

Science teachers who have improved since entering the profession, have QTS, and have at least two years in the role should consider applying for the Registered Scientist Award. This a registered mark recognising excellence in science teaching and learning. The ASE is licensed by the Science Council to award RSci to eligible members.

You must:

- Be an ASE member
- Hold a QCF Level 5 qualification. For example a Foundation Degree, Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE) or Higher National Diploma HND
- Be able to demonstrate the following key competencies:

- Application of knowledge and understanding
- Personal responsibility
- Interpersonal skills
- Professional practice
- Professional standards
- Agree to an annual CPD review
- Agree to the Code of Conduct of the licensed body (ASE)

It provides:

- A pathway towards becoming a Chartered Science Teacher (CSciTeach)
- Recognition of your expertise, experience and commitment
- A framework to support your future career development
- Wider recognition of your skills
- A demonstration of your commitment to employers, colleagues and clients
- A framework to create a broader community of scientists working across a huge range of sectors and disciplines
- A quality mark for the standard of your professional practice

### **Chartered Science Teacher (CSciTeach)**

The ASE, like the Royal Society of Chemistry and the Institute of

Physics, is empowered by the Science Council under the terms of its Royal Charter to award CSciTeach to eligible members. It is a chartered mark recognising excellence in science teaching and learning and is a Master's level qualification. Staff who have been working for a minimum of four years and have taken on some responsibilities, particularly heads of department, should definitely consider it.

The register of Chartered Science Teachers is a special section of the Science Council's register of Chartered Scientists (CSci) which underpins the quality and equivalence of the awards. CSciTeach applicants must be active in science teaching and learning in the UK or overseas. This includes teachers in all state and independent schools, colleges and universities, as well as advisers, inspectors, consultants and researchers.

You must:

- Be an ASE member
- Have an Honours level qualification, with a minimum of 50% of course content in science
- Have at least four years' experience of teaching science following QTS (or equivalence) including additional responsibilities over the past two years
- A Masters level qualification in education or be able to demonstrate equivalence through experience
- Meet the required competence standards and be able to demonstrate your impact on science teaching and learning

It provides:

- Recognition of your expertise, experience and commitment
- A framework to support your future career development

- Wider recognition for your skills
- A quality mark and measure of your commitment to employers, parents, governors, colleagues and clients
- A framework to create a broader community of scientists working across a huge range of sectors and disciplines

CSciTeach appealed to me more than the more generic Chartered Teacher or Masters in Education qualifications because of four small but important factors. Firstly, it was affordable, so I could self-fund it. Secondly, it relies on work that I had already done and so did not require an inordinate amount of additional work which I honestly do not have the time to facilitate. Thirdly, because CSciTeach has to be maintained each year, it will help me stay motivated to keep on top of current research and developments in our field. Finally, it is the only qualification I know of that has a badge with your post-nominals on it. I have convinced myself that the common room are in awe despite a complete absence of the normal diagnostic symptoms (swooning etc.).

#### **Outreach / volunteering**

As prep school teachers, it is extremely easy to become isolated in our little schools or even within our own departments. In an ongoing effort to prevent the fossilisation of our teaching it is important to look to learn from outside of our respective bubbles and to that end I did a few extremely enjoyable sessions at our local primary over the summer half term. Regular readers might remember a similar escapade at around this time last year, which proved extremely valuable. Although this was an unpaid investment of my holiday, and aside from the enormous feeling of wellbeing and worthiness

it gave me, it also helped me reassess what our new entrants should be capable of and what they might not. I learned some new approaches to old topics, new (to me) behaviour management, and built some relationships with peers at a very different type of school.

If you are interested in a little outreach work, either for your own professional development (it does look good on your CSciTeach application) or as part of your school's charity status, start by sending a few emails out offering your services and a few dates. You never know where it could lead you or what you might pick up.

You might even extract a small amount of money from your school in return for them recording it as part of their work for charity status. Now there's a thought...

Many thanks to Mrs. Clarke, Mrs. Logan, and the rest of the team at Farley Hill Primary for having me. I hope I was useful to you.

#### **The termly plea**

If you feel the urge to contribute to our growing Science Teacher community please contact me on the email address supplied. Contributions could include (but are not limited to) any exciting teaching ideas, reviews of equipment or events or apparatus, reports on active research that you have carried out, or anything that you would like to share.

I would like to finish this term by congratulating the science team at ISEB for the most balanced and well assembled trio of exam papers that we have seen in a while. Theirs is not a role that I envy and I am extremely glad that someone (else) does it.

Luke Busfield Luke Busfield B.Sc (Hons), QTS, CSciTeach, MASE

# 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@applewick.org.uk](mailto:pagethar@applewick.org.uk))
- National Handwriting Competition Paul Jackson ([ejackson22@hotmail.com](mailto:ejackson22@hotmail.com))
  - Poetry Competition Stephen Davies ([shd@bryanston.co.uk](mailto:shd@bryanston.co.uk))
  - SATIPSKI Gillian Gilyead ([gilliangilyead@aol.com](mailto:gilliangilyead@aol.com))
- Annual Art Exhibition Alayne Parsley ([A.Parsley@cheltenhamcollege.org](mailto:A.Parsley@cheltenhamcollege.org))

Full details of all these events are at <http://satips.org/competitions>

## **Prep School Magazine**

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

## **What next? Joining SATIPS or seeking further information?**

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

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# SATIPS courses and directory

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## Courses and events

A selection of forthcoming courses from Autumn 2018 onwards:

24/09/18	Stretch and Challenge	London
25/09/18	Leading Prep School Music to Outstanding	London
27/09/18	GDPR – Getting to Grips	London
05/10/18	Differentiating the Learning Experience	London
08/10/18	Librarian Refresher Course	London
06/11/18	The Inspection Ready Leader: ISI Compliance (including Boarding) How to do your own audit	London
07/11/18	Learning Observation and Performance Management	London
13/11/18	Critical Thinking	London
14/11/18	Raising Achievement	London
15/11/18	Common Entrance English at 13+	London
15/11/18	Pastoral Care Conference	London
15/11/18	Developing Teaching and Learning in Maths for more able pupils	London

These courses will run as training days in London, Bristol, Birmingham or 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](mailto:training@satips.org) or telephone 07584 862263.

# On headship...

Sometimes the job of being a headteacher is presented as centring around high level strategy. Well I suppose that it does to some extent, but if that is all it is about then something is missing. The reality of school life is that the day to day normally has to be resolved before there is space to move on to the strategic level.

Like all secondary heads, I have had to learn the hard way what I can and cannot do. If for example I spent all of my time teaching I would be letting down my colleagues, since they have a reasonable expectation that whilst they are focused on their pupils I am dealing with the school's wider interests to make sure that LSS gets the best possible deal in areas such as budget and other resources. However, it is still my job to monitor what goes on in the classroom and for every one of my 18 years as headteacher I have done at least some teaching.

In a similar way, whilst not directly involved in other, less high profile aspects of the day to day running of LSS, I recognise their importance and the need to make sure that we have systems that operate efficiently to ensure the smooth running of the school. An example of such process would be lost property. There are no circumstances in which I am able personally to look for items that have been lost, but I do want to ensure that we have clear processes in place. I would like to remind you of our arrangements for dealing with lost property. Enquiries should first be made to the Staff Room, at break or at the start/end of lunchtime when pupils should ask for Billie Green who will carry the key for lost property and will always help in finding their equipment.

Other items of value which are necessary to studies (eg musical instruments) should be stored in a secure place by arrangement with the appropriate member of staff.

If items are left at Hart Field then they are kept for boys to collect next time they are there. However, if an item is needed urgently such as a coat or shoes and enough information is provided (e.g a description and the name is in the item) then it might be possible to arrange transfer (though we do not have the resources to promise that this will happen immediately). However, just saying 'black shoes' have been lost isn't enough of a description for us to find them.

Our overall advice would be:

- Have all items named (including shoes).
- Encourage students to check for themselves – supposedly 'lost' items are often found where they were left (e.g. coat still on back of chair in classroom) having not yet made it to the lost property area.
- Encourage your son to be responsible for his own items.

I would also like to remind you about the school's mobile phone policy, which informs parents that the school advises students in Years 7-11 not to bring mobile phones/MP3/music players/gaming devices into school and that if such equipment is brought in against the advice of the school we accept no responsibility for their safekeeping.

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



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