

Volume 53 Number 1 Spring 2016

Conference & common room

The magazine for
independent schools



‘The finest
location in
the world’



fashion a Winning team

XXV is the exciting new performance sportswear brand from respected uniform suppliers Stevensons. Available year-round, its combination of cutting-edge technical fabrics and striking design give your students the edge before they have even left the changing room. So if you're upgrading your sports kit challenge us to raise the bar.



XXV

Performance Sportswear



engineered by
Stevensons
www.stevensons.co.uk

t: 01727 815715
e: info@stevensons.co.uk

Contents

Editorial	5
A mathematical error	7
Travel	
A Cat in the Arctic, <i>Neal Gwynne</i>	9
Teamwork in Tanzania, <i>Jane Williams</i>	13
Communications	
Informed parents please, <i>Jackie Ward</i>	15
Could do better, <i>O R Houseman</i>	17
Supporting resilience, <i>Kris Spencer</i>	19
Blow your own trumpet	22
Moving on	
Keeping ahead of the robots, <i>Virginia Isaac</i>	24
What's in a name? <i>Simon Henthorn</i>	26
Revenge of the all-rounder, <i>John Weiner</i>	28
Broader horizons will overcome reorganisation blues, <i>Professor Richard Harvey</i>	30
The 'Maternoster' effect, <i>Karen Kimura</i>	31
Testing! Testing! <i>Ann Entwisle</i>	32
Schools	
Grammar's footsteps, <i>Hugh Wright</i>	35
Do grammar schools have a role to play as part of an inclusive education system? <i>Adam Boddison</i>	37
From A* to <i>Star Wars</i>	39
Remembering Wolsey	42
Bon appétit, <i>Jerry Brand</i>	44
Teaching – the great performing art, <i>Christopher Martin</i>	46
Science and technology	
Catching up, <i>Cat Scutt</i>	48
Making the best and avoiding the worst of the internet	50
STEM knows no gender	52
Book reviews	
Kek and Mort, <i>Spells and the Hunt</i> , <i>Tom Wheare</i>	54
After Rae, <i>David Hargreaves</i>	57
Endpiece	
Letter from America, <i>Jason Morrow</i>	61



13



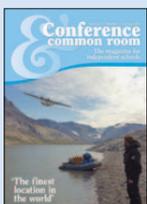
15



39



61



A Cat in the Arctic.
See page 9.

Helping schools to maximise their fundraising potential and develop cost-effective sustainable fundraising and development strategies since 1959

Proven fundraising expertise, drawn from approaching 60 years of continuous, practical, hands on experience.

There is only one name to trust.

There are few independent schools we have not worked with since our foundation and many have returned to us a second time or more.

Thinking of establishing a fundraising and development function? Talk to us first. We can almost certainly save you time and money, with an incremental approach to suit your school's particular circumstances.

Should your existing fundraising or development operation be working more effectively or could it benefit from review and specialist input? We can help.

For an initial no obligation visit or discussion, contact:

Mark Jefferies at mark@craigmyle.org.uk

Telephone: 07850 318 685

or

Ken Madine at ken@craigmyle.org.uk

Telephone: 07736 211 146

To find out more about us, or to download a copy of our latest Schools Newsletter, visit

www.craigmyle.org.uk

Editor

Tom Wheare

Managing Editor

Derek Bingham

Production Editor

Scott James

Advertising Manager

Gerry Cookson

Email: gcookson@johncatt.com

Conference & Common Room is published three times a year, in February, May and September.

ISSN 0265 4458

Subscriptions:

£25 for a two year subscription, post paid; discounts for bulk orders available.

Advertising and Subscription enquiries to the publishers:

John Catt Educational Ltd,
12 Deben Mill Business Centre,
Old Maltings Approach,
Melton, Woodbridge,
Suffolk IP12 1BL.

Tel: (01394) 389850.

Fax: (01394) 386893.

Email: enquiries@johncatt.com

Managing Director

Alex Sharratt

Publishing Director

Derek Bingham

ISSN 0265 4458

Editorial address:

Tom Wheare,
63 Chapel Lane, Zeals,
Warminster,
Wilts BA12 6NP
Email: tom@dunbry.plus.com

Opinions expressed in *Conference & Common Room* are not necessarily those of the publishers; likewise advertisements and editorial are printed in good faith, and their inclusion does not imply endorsement by the publishers.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted by any means electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recorded or otherwise, without the prior permission of the Editor and/or the publishers.

Printed in England by
Micropress Printers,
Suffolk, IP18 6DH



John Catt Educational Ltd
is a member of the
Independent Publishers Guild.

It used to be the first cuckoo in spring and now it's the first Christmas decorations in October. The retailers have been moisturising the world with their own version of the spirit of Christmas for weeks, hoping to soften wallets. Loudspeakers in shopping centres all over the western world proclaim the good retail news from high in each lavishly decorated atrium, adding by way of insult to the severe injuries inflicted on people's pockets, 'carols' that are no more than jingles reduced to a rhythmic lowest common denominator.

In mid-December, carol services bring school families together in a complex annual rite. These occasions are always premature since schools close a week or so before Christmas. They are usually well attended and they display a wealth of goodwill. Shortcomings in the music or the readings are overlooked, school halls are transformed in the mind's eye into fitting venues and catering begins as it means to go on throughout the 'festive' season.

This time of year has long been associated with increased consumption, as the ancient feasts that marked the winter solstice were characterised by a renewal of hope that justified a limited raid on carefully preserved resources. The Church's makeover of the pagan feast of mid-winter into the feast of the Nativity is well known: but the pagan priests, in their turn, must have annexed the simple reality that at this time of year, as daylight dawned earlier and some extra food could be eked out, families could give thanks and let their minds rise for a moment above the day to day struggle.

Schools that have chapels or nearby churches and good music departments will make the annual carol service a great occasion. The chaplain welcomes a very different crowd from the usual Sunday observants – and a much more numerous one. In parish churches, the carol service is, likewise, a significant social event which, surely, generates good feelings for however brief a period.

But the Christmas message is mixed and, if the focus moves from the angels singing of 'peace on the earth' to the reality here below, it is not altogether comfortable. In his Christmas hymn, *It came upon the midnight clear*, Edmund Hamilton Sears wrote 'Beneath the angel-strain have rolled two thousand years of wrong; and man at war with man hears not the love-song which they bring: O hush the noise ye men of strife and hear the angels sing.'

It is in the nature of Christmas that such thoughts should cross our minds and that they can be held at bay as our spirits are uplifted and children's voices soar in the familiar Christmas descants. If Dickens caught the spirit of Christmas in words, David Willcocks, who died in September 2015, caught it in music. His work was known across the world, from the perfection of the broadcast Carol services at King's to the much loved arrangements in 'Carols for Choirs', known familiarly to singers everywhere as 'the green book' and 'the orange book'.

The 'weary world' with 'its Babel sounds' that Sears depicts is worryingly familiar to the pupils in our schools. The anxieties of the cold war, experienced by the generation growing up at the time of the Cuban missile crisis, have been replaced in today's children by the uneasiness induced by fears for the planet and pressure to conform to the new commandments of recycling and energy saving, and their Manichean opposites, consumption and the gaining and expenditure of wealth.

It is striking that nearly every issue of *Conference & Common Room* features articles on how to cope with the internet. This great liberating construct has become, like the car, a problem as well as a blessing. Which teacher can feel entirely at ease with the influence of Facebook on suggestible minds? Is there really a need for Twitter? Is the ever-present voice and ear of the mobile phone an unmixed pastoral blessing? And, above all, can any of us cope with wall-to-wall news?

These are probably Luddite questions and almost certainly age-related, but we still seem to be struggling to make better societies. In the wonderful letters to America that Mollie Panter-Downes wrote for the *New Yorker* during the war, published by Picador as *London War Notes*, there emerges a tender portrayal of the way this island responded to some very testing times. There is sympathy for disaster but also hope for the future, and a foreshadowing of the Welfare State that benefited all and, alas, all too briefly, transformed our society.

Continued overleaf 



DoyleClayton

Workplace Lawyers
Delivering Workplace Solutions

Make the educated choice of lawyer...

Issues in the education sector are complicated, constantly changing and potentially damaging to reputation.

Our experienced education team can help your school to navigate its way through the challenges it faces and plan in advance for any key developments.

To discuss how our education team can help you, please contact:

Simon Henthorn
shenthorn@doyleclayton.co.uk
Head of Education
0207 778 7228

DATA PROTECTION

- Access requests
- Pupil records
- Security

EMPLOYMENT DISPUTES

- Disciplinary processes
- Grievances
- Managing employment tribunal claims
- Terminations

HEALTH & SAFETY

- Audits
- Compliance
- Policies and procedures
- Risk assessments

HR

- Contracts of employment
- Outsourcing and TUPE
- Policies
- Restructuring

IMMIGRATION

- Sponsorship licences
- Tier 4 and Tier 2 visas

PARENTS

- Claims
- Complaints
- Fee disputes

SAFEGUARDING

- Compliance
- Disclosure obligations
- Policy reviews

ELLINT Employment & Labor Lawyers International



But now, as that structure is being demolished, Beveridge's Giants of Want and Squalor have returned to our towns and cities, accompanied, almost unbelievably, by an inescapable need for food banks. For all the fluency of world communication, there are still glass ceilings and other, cruder barriers to progress, as Simon Henthorn's article demonstrates.

Gender inequality persists, despite the best efforts of teachers and students alike. Jason Morrow, recently relocated in New York City, remarks on how judgements about prejudice vary from country to country. Resilience is a precious attribute, as Kris Spencer reminds us, and all children need guidance as they advance into a world in which even the short-term employment future is shrouded in mystery.

Persuading children of their worth is something that can never be neglected. At Manchester High School for Girls they have added the brass of parental approval to the trumpets they encourage their pupils to blow about their own achievements. In a remarkable turn around from the traditional inhibitions of teenagers whose parents seek to praise them in public, girls have allowed the many good things they have done outside school to be celebrated openly in it and in front of their peers.

Perhaps the oddest thing about Christmas is the speed with which it becomes yesterday's event, compared with the two months of commercial build-up. We move swiftly on into the New Year, putting the cognitive dissonance of December 25th behind us and hoping against hope that 2016 will be a better year than 2015 has been. Perhaps remembering and practising some of the messages that apply to all 'men of good will' would help to achieve that, and, if anyone can do it, it is the remarkable, positive and generous children in our schools.



In November 2015, the Chairmen of the GSA/HMC Universities Sub-Committee wrote to their colleagues to point out that a report published by Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) in September, 2015, gave an entirely erroneous picture of the degree results achieved by former pupils of independent schools compared with those of former maintained school pupils in the same cohort. This is such an important issue that the authors have agreed that the letter should be reprinted in *Conference & Common Room* to achieve an even wider circulation.

Dear Colleague,

You will recall that in early September the HEFCE published a report entitled *Differences in degree outcomes: The effect of subject and student characteristics*. The data seemed to point to a significant and unfavourable difference in degree outcomes between students from the independent sector versus state sector peers. It now turns out that the **headline statistic published by HEFCE contained a basic mathematical error**. It was brought to our attention by a parent from a member school and was also spotted independently by academics who read the report online.

This basic mistake, on which the textual commentary in the report was based, led to **erroneous media coverage** with headlines such as 'Top Degree? You probably went to a state school'. The real headline is that 82% of independent school entrants receive a 1st or 2:1 compared to 73% from state schools and colleges (rather than the reverse, as initially published).

Two other points are important about this error. First, HEFCE has (silently) changed the mistake in the numerical appendix to its online document but not its overall interpretation in the body of the report which continues to maintain that the evidence points to generally higher performance achieved by state school graduates compared with independent school peers entering with like-for-like grades.

Professor Alan Smithers from the Centre for Education and Employment Research at the University of Buckingham has since analysed the report further and produced his own paper. It shows that performance in entry qualifications – be they A level, Pre-U or the IB – is the single strongest predictor of subsequent degree performance. This is why the **proportion of pupils getting a 1st or 2:1 degree is much higher for independent school pupils**, a key message of reassurance for parents and governing bodies.

Second, a very small group of state school entrants admitted with A level grades AAB-CCC achieved a better degree than their independent school peers with the same entry grades. This group is tiny, comprising 1% of all those entering higher education from a state-funded school or college.

We will be sharing this corrected information as widely as we can. Professor Smithers has released his findings to the media for publication tomorrow (Tuesday 3 November). Both the Smithers' report and a joint GSA/HMC statement will be sent to the media and will be available on our respective websites. If you would like to tweet, blog or share the information with your parents, please do.

With very best wishes,

Hilary French and Chris Ramsey



Cambridge qualifications are recognised around the globe.

Cambridge Pre-U explores subjects in breadth and depth, bridging the gap between school and university learning. Our tried and tested syllabuses are supported by a strong range of teaching resources, six years of past papers and robust examiner feedback. Cambridge International AS & A Level is available to UK independent schools. It is a flexible qualification with AS Level counting towards A Level. Both are recognised by universities worldwide.

If you're reviewing your post-16 curriculum, now is the time to find out more. Visit www.cie.org.uk/cambridgeadvanced



Learn • Discover • Achieve





Flying west for the first drop.

A Cat in the Arctic

Neal Gwynne describes a mountaineering expedition with unusual transport

In July 2009, I sat on the side of a mountain in East Greenland after watching my group of school pupils from Glasgow make a successful 'first ascent', and looked down on the waters of Faxe Sø. There were many stunning mountains surrounding this lake, but there was no obvious way to access them as they were blocked by impassable rivers and the lake itself. As we rested, I commented to my co-leader, Alan Halewood, that we would need a seaplane and boats in future so that we could land on Faxe Sø. And, as we left to catch up with the pupils heading down to our camp in the valley, I had an idea for adventure planted in my head.

I made some enquiries about taking a seaplane to Greenland when I got back to the UK a couple of weeks later, initially still high on the excitement of the expedition before slipping into the inevitable post-expedition doldrums. It became clear

that modern seaplanes can neither fly the distance required for a trip to Greenland, nor carry the payloads necessary for an Arctic expedition, so I put the idea to the back of my mind.

Three years later, in Austria, I had a chance encounter with Paul Warren Wilson, who happened to have a part share in a Catalina and was the plane's chief pilot. I knew little about Catalina flying boats at the time, other than that they had been used extensively in East Greenland until the late 1960s.

Conversations with Paul and his infectious enthusiasm rekindled the idea of a Greenland seaplane expedition. I put my proposal to Gavin Horgan, recently appointed Headmaster of Worksoy College, with whom I had previously worked. He needed little convincing that this was an outlandish educational experience for young people, so permission was granted and funding secured!

Continued overleaf →



*Pick-up at the end of the expedition.
The Catalina Dome is right of centre.*

Paul and I started planning in earnest. There were numerous complicated logistics for us to consider. The destination was changed from the initial idea of Faxe Sø in Gaseland to Holger Danskes Briller in the southern Stauning Alps, which provided greater mountaineering objectives as well as shorter flying times.

The aims of the expedition were clear: to fly pupils from Worksoop College to East Greenland in *Miss Pick-up*, the UK's only airworthy WWII Catalina flying boat; land on Holger Danskes Briller; explore the southern Stauning Alps with the intention of making first ascents; and, throughout the expedition, to equip the pupils with the skills and experience required to become independent mountaineers, leading to lifelong participation and a love of the Arctic. Simple then!

A superb team of staff was put together including mountaineers, pilots, a doctor and an engineer: all had an enviable track record in their respective fields. Each member of the leader team was involved in the preparations for the expedition, crucial for the success of a moderately complicated venture such as this. Alan Halewood once again offered his services as the other mountain instructor on the expedition, his third such youth expedition with me, and took responsibility for the pre-expedition training in the UK.

Satellite imagery was obtained from the US Geological Survey in early June to assess the ice conditions in Holger Danskes Briller. These showed that the lakes were still very much frozen. This was not a surprise, as the historical imagery that we had gathered from the last ten years showed that these particular lakes tended not to become ice-free until the last week of June and the first week of July. Since an ice-free lake was critical to the success of the expedition, satellite imagery was viewed as frequently as possible throughout June.

All indications were that there had been a particularly harsh winter in East Greenland and that 2015's big thaw was going

to be late. Fortunately we had a Plan B – Faxe Sø! The last satellite photograph that we had access to, almost a week before the expedition's departure, showed large chunks of ice on Holger Danskes Briller, but, by comparison, Faxe Sø looked like a tropical paradise.

At 10am on Tuesday, 7th July, the Catalina departed from Loch Lomond, in typically 'dreich' west coast weather, heading for Akureyri in northern Iceland and, the following day, onward to the remote airstrip of Constable Pynt in East Greenland. There was lots of work to be done at the airstrip prior to going into the field the next day. All supplies had been sent by sea freight earlier in the year and these needed to be sorted and loaded onto the Catalina. Dinghies and engines had to be assembled and prepared for deployment from the blisters at the rear of the aircraft, since this was, of course, the only way to get our supplies, as well as ourselves, from plane to shore once we had landed on Faxe Sø.

It was a slightly ominous experience departing from Constable Pynt the next day on the first of the two flights into Faxe Sø required to carry the team as well as the substantial payload. We flew under the low cloud on a murky Arctic morning, sometimes only a very short distance above the partially frozen fjords, looking out as icebergs passed the windows. However, landing, deployment of the dinghies and unloading went hitch-free and the Catalina returned a few hours later with the rest of the team and equipment.

The team of ten students, two mountain instructors, two teachers and one doctor spent the next three weeks exploring the Vinblæsdal valley, using the dinghies to set up satellite camps and access mountains on all sides of Faxe Sø. The Arctic in summer has to be the finest location in the world for a youth expedition: moderately-sized mountains, so no risks from altitude sickness; 24-hour daylight, so no risk of being benighted; no nasty creepy-crawlies or bugs, so little chance of becoming ill; very sparsely populated, so no chance of untoward encounters with locals. And, of course, a plentiful supply of unclimbed mountains and unexplored glaciers and valleys.

One of the aims of the expedition was to provide the kind of training and experience that would allow the students to become independent mountaineers, going on to organise and participate in their own expeditions. There was therefore a substantial proportion of time allocated to training in mountaineering and campcraft, as well as the use of satellite phones, radios and EPIRBs, polar bear deterrents and firearms. The expedition doctor, Tariq Qureshi, taught the students a wilderness first aid course whilst they were in the field, which culminated in an exercise scenario requiring them to deploy many of the skills they had recently acquired.

The expedition was fortunate to be joined by four exceptional pilots. Our chief pilot was an ex-RAF Harrier instructor who had extensive experience of flying the Catalina across the globe, and also training and assessing other Catalina pilots. The flying component of the expedition was not without interest as Paul recounts in his flying report:

The last run of the day down the ski slope is often judged to be the most dangerous one and the most likely time for things to go wrong. And so it is with flying. Flying is not inherently dangerous, but is terribly unforgiving of any carelessness. On the last landing run at the lake,

approaching from the east end, we had a tailwind of about 7 knots. Simple, then – we fly to the far end of the lake, turn around, and land. But wait – as we reach the far end, the 7 knot tailwind has turned into a 12 knot headwind!

Now that is something quite hard to get one's head around, but of course, one must allow for various valley effects. On this occasion, the wind was blowing into the lake from both ends. What exactly did it do when the winds met in the middle? Presumably, it went upwards!

So there we were, on the last run, with exactly the sort of situation that, if treated with complacency, could lead to a major problem. Landing downwind in a seaplane is a highly undesirable thing to do: the hydrodynamic forces on the aircraft are much higher than normal, and can lead to instability, a water loop or a nosedive.

So I made several runs along the lake in each direction, finally choosing to land from west to east, as this gave the longer run into wind. All was well, and loading was completed in good time, including the interesting sight of the expedition leader deflating a boat whilst still in it on the water, prior to loading it into the Catalina.

It has been said that the age of exploration is over and that there is nothing left to conquer. I passionately believe that

exploration is alive and well, with thousands of unclimbed peaks in East Greenland alone. All that is required is imagination and a little day-dreaming. This expedition was a real adventure for all its participants, but it was also important that it achieved its objectives.

We did fly to and from East Greenland in the UK's only airworthy Catalina flying boat. We did climb some mountains: five Arctic peaks of which we anticipate that three are possibly first ascents. We did not explore the southern Stauning Alps, but we did explore the Vinblæsdal valley instead – such is the nature of expeditions. We did equip the students with the skills and experience required to become independent mountaineers, including, perhaps most importantly, exposure to real risks and learning how to manage them.

Will this lead to students developing lifelong participation and a love of the Arctic? Well, I hope so. This expedition has been described by some as the adventure of a lifetime, but better still it may be the start of a lifetime of adventure.

The expedition was supported by HRH Prince Philip, the Gino Watkins Memorial Fund and the RAF Benevolent Fund.

Neal Gwynne is Interim Headmaster at St Constantine International School, Tanzania.



The Catalina on Faxe Sø, with Catalina Dome in the background.



SPOT THE PUPIL WHO HAS AN **EXTRA LAYER** **OF PROTECTION**

Today, nearly 850 independent schools and over 320,000 pupils are protected by our personal accident scheme; with more than 12,000 pupils covered via our private health care scheme. **Are yours?**

To find out more, contact us today (quoting CCRSpring16):

📞 01444 335174

✉️ termly.schemes@marsh.com

🌐 uk.marsh.com/education

 **Marsh UK Education Forum**

Teamwork in Tanzania

Farlington girls renovate Kinole School



Lorraine Leivers, mountain guide, Iron Woman competitor and all-round inspirational woman, once again led Farlington girls and staff into East Africa. This summer, 21 Farlington students and three teachers joined the expert expedition leader from specialist company True Adventure for an expedition in Tanzania. Just as in Zambia two years earlier, the brief was to experience the real country, meet the people, do some meaningful work alongside local people and then have some rest and relaxation.

A few hours after breaking up from school, the team landed in Dar es Salaam. We spent a night in a hostel before heading off on a long bus drive south to the Uluguru Mountains, where we were due to trek up a 2200 metre high mountain. Although stunningly beautiful, the mountain range looked very daunting in the morning light the next day. Backpacks were shouldered and on day one of the trek we climbed to 1000 metres where our guides awaited us in the base camp hut. The climb was hard but there was lots of laughter and encouragement from all members of the team.

The path to the bottom of this mountain had begun almost two years earlier, in October 2013, when the trip had been launched on the back of the highly successful Zambia Expedition, also led by Lorraine and True Adventure. On that chilly October evening, the girls had committed to raise £2800 each by July 2015. The months between the two dates had been filled with evening and weekend jobs, dog walking, lawn mowing, mucking out of numerous stables, raffles and more cake sales than you would believe.

Regular meetings ensured the group stayed focused on their goals and together as a team. Excitement built throughout the final academic year, via a Training Weekend on the South Downs, a leadership conference for the staff and a very, very, very wet day spent climbing the Three Surrey Peaks in February.

All that seemed quite literally a world away as we sat outside our tents halfway up a Tanzanian mountain, with a



Women undertaking hard physical work.

stunning valley vista below us and the rest of the mountain behind – and above! Food has rarely tasted so good as our simple meal that evening. Everyone turned in for an early night with the hardest part of the climb yet to come.

A fundamental part of the True Adventure philosophy is that the students run the trip. They make all the decisions, handle all the money, buy the provisions and fulfil all the management roles. This process began back in Horsham on the day of departure. Each day was run by a student leadership team, developing crucial decision-making skills, along with people management, diplomacy, negotiation and some very tricky maths at times, when the exchange rate in a country differed from what we had expected.

Leadership skills came to the fore on that second day which saw the team triumph at the peak, over 2200 metres above our starting point the day before. A sudden mist rolled in to prevent us actually seeing just how far we had climbed, but our legs told us exactly how far we had come! Ironically many people, especially the 'elderly' amongst our group, found the descent harder than the ascent: older knees do not bend as well as young ones.

Now truly operating as a team, we headed off via another long bumpy road journey to our project site. Kinole is a quiet, isolated village at the foot of the Uluguru Mountains. The school of 1,050 students and just 19 teachers is at the heart of the community. Muslim and Christian families live and study



International class.

side by side. The children and staff clearly had great pride in their school, coming to the site early to sweep the whole campus each morning with handfuls of twigs.

Although loved, the buildings were in a sorry state, with huge holes in some of the concrete floors and dirty faded walls that simply did not reflect the atmosphere and ethos of the place. The Farlington team had just a few days to transform the site physically so that it better reflected the positive, upbeat, happy community that it housed. Classrooms were emptied, concrete and gallons upon gallons of paint were bought and mixed, local workmen were hired, holes were filled, walls were scrubbed and then painted and painted and painted.

Work went on well into the night via head torches, until wonderful local food was served, having been bought, prepared and served by a different cooking team each day. An amazingly patient, kind and gentle lady called Mwandia oversaw the shopping and cooking. One meal involved the catching of a live chicken which then had to be killed and plucked before it could be cooked, not something you see in Horsham very often!

We were camping out in the classrooms, sleeping on concrete floors with rows of mosquito nets strung up across the space. Although quite cramped and cosy, with very little room for private space, the team dynamics ensured that all went smoothly and that the focus was very much on completing the job in hand.

By the end of our stay we had painted 11 classrooms inside and out and four new floors had been laid. Classroom furniture had been mended and the school buildings now matched the expectations and high standards of the students and staff. In his speech at the end of our labours, the Headmaster commented specifically on how amazed he was that a group of women could achieve so much physical work in such a short space of time. In a country where 95% of girls do not go onto secondary education but on to domestic life and marriage, it was a bonus to show an example of just how much women can achieve when given the chance.

Sad goodbyes were said, with songs and hundreds of bubbles being floated into the African air. Pens, toothbrushes,

small toys and sports equipment were distributed and the team headed off on safari. Although just 24 hours in duration the safari was, quite simply, awesome! We saw a pride of lions, including some adorable cubs; lots of giraffes, also with a baby or two; lots of elephants, some VERY close up, and quite a few baby elephants; baboons, hippo, gazelles – and crocodiles. We camped that night in the African bush, ate around a camp fire and listened to the sounds of the African night. In the morning we celebrated the sunrise with the baboons, which sit in the trees and face the rising sun, a beautifully spiritual moment.

Our final night was spent at Kipepeo beach at Kingamboni, a stunning stretch of sand around a sweeping bay. The hotel bunks were a welcome change from the floor and we had a chance to reflect on what we had gained from our short time in this amazingly diverse and beautiful country. Everyone, whether they were 16 or 48, had been changed by the trip. We all felt humbled by the happiness and understandable pride the people of Tanzania showed in their country.

Tanzania is a stunningly beautiful place geographically, culturally and in terms of wildlife. A Tanzanian adventure proved to be a unique and wonderfully varied experience for us all. For the staff, it was simply a privilege to be part of a genuinely unique educational experience, in the widest sense of the word education. If, as we hope, we seek to educate the whole person, child to adult, then I do believe we witnessed the end of that process. We took out teenage girls and brought back confident, competent, educated young women.

They achieved that transition themselves as a team, with the guidance and support of True Adventure and Lorraine. These 21 girls packed more into two weeks' adventure than many do in an entire gap year. They certainly made a genuine, long-lasting difference to the lives of over 1000 students and staff of an East African school. The key to education is to challenge, learn and triumph and all 21 girls did that. What next?

Jane Williams is head of years 10 and 11 at Farlington School.

Informed parents please

Sutton High School has started sharing information such as pupils' individual target grades more openly with their parents – to very good effect

Sutton High School is part of the Girls' Day School Trust and, like many other schools, we hold a good deal of information about our pupils' achievement. As is also often the case in a high-performing school, we have traditionally kept parents informed of how their child is progressing through regular reporting and parents' evenings.

However, we sometimes found that the information we gave parents was confusing. Parents might know that their daughter was achieving to Level 5b in maths, for example, but they may have had little understanding of whether this was good progress or not so good, in terms of her capability. This could lead to some parents being surprised or even disappointed at exam time when their child's results were not what they expected.

This is something we wanted to change. The decision was made to overhaul the way pupil progress was being monitored at Sutton High. As part of this, we wanted to track the girls' achievement more closely and share much more information with parents than had been the case in the past. This was a key

factor in our overall aim to ensure that every child was fully supported in achieving all they were truly capable of.

Pulling valuable information from data

Like most schools, our staff have a wealth of information available to them about pupils' attainment, including MidYIS or ALIS scores, assessment grades and exam results. This data is stored electronically in our management information system – we use the one supplied by SIMS Independent.

In a major change to the way we had done things before, we began using this information to create what we call Target Minimum Levels for each girl – essentially, grades that we feel our pupils are capable of achieving, based on their previous attainment. We then introduced a simple traffic light system that flags green, amber or red to indicate whether or not a pupil is on track, almost on track or falling behind in the progress they are making towards these grades. We did this right across the curriculum. *Continued overleaf* →





While Sutton High is unlikely to be the first school to have produced target grades and tracked individual progress in this way, what might perhaps be more unusual is the transparent approach we have taken to sharing this information with parents.

Parent power

Parents now get to see details of target grades and other information about their child's progress much more regularly. This makes it easier for them to feel more involved with their child's education and, importantly, enables them to see more clearly how effective the help we provide is if their child starts to slip back. Teachers are having more regular conversations with parents over the course of the school term too.

This is not something we necessarily foresaw and we have had to ensure that staff are available to deal with an increase in enquiries. However, we regard this as a positive – parents' evenings now reflect on progress and look forward to next steps, rather than just focusing on updating parents on what's happened since the previous meeting. And, taking this one step further, we also share target grades and achievement information more regularly with the pupils themselves.

Positive and motivated pupils

Being able to see the progress they are making towards their own learning goals has had a marked impact on motivating many of our pupils, and, for some girls, they've exceeded even their own expectations.

One Year 11 pupil was recently given an A grade as her target, something she was not achieving at the time and, even more to the point, something she didn't really believe she was capable of. Knowing that we believe in her A grade potential has given her greater confidence in her ability and, with staff across the school supporting her, she is well on her way to meeting her target.

In the sixth form we have introduced an academic audit booklet that the girls manage themselves. The booklets allow them to set their own targets in each subject and track their progress towards the grade the school believes they are capable of. This has encouraged them to take responsibility for their own learning and achievement.

But the greatest benefit of the new system for us as a school is that we can now recognise and celebrate the progress and achievement of every child, not just those girls who consistently get the top grades. Those girls who have all green marks on their report – meaning they're on target for every subject – are praised for this achievement. Equally, in our prize-giving assembly at the end of the year, our Progress Prize is awarded to the pupils who have made a really great effort to improve their achievement across the year.

The right help at the right time

One of the key changes in introducing this new system is that we can identify issues much sooner and take action to improve things: interventions can happen quickly and in a timely manner to help children progress. This is immensely useful for boosting the girls' achievement throughout the academic year, but particularly for the Year 10s sitting the exams which take place in June. Now we can see clearly where each child is after these exams, while there is still time to get them back on track, if necessary, before their mocks.

Teachers have embraced the new system and our heads of year have been very positive about the changes because they can now get a quick overall view of how the girls in their year are doing, term by term, across subjects. As a school, we have a policy that once a target is set, a girl is deemed to be capable of this level of work and so target grades do not drop down, unless there are exceptional circumstances. And it's working. From an achievement point of view, we have not only seen the percentage of A* grades increase, but it has also made a difference to the number of girls who improve by a grade or more.

The benefit of tracking our pupils' achievement more closely and sharing more information with parents, pupils and teachers has had a ripple effect of positive change across the school. While there was some hard work initially to alter the way we did things and to put new structures in place, this new process has now become just a normal part of the school day.

For us, it was simply about using the data we already had at our fingertips but being a bit smarter about it, and we are now in a stronger position to help every one of our girls achieve their absolute best.

Jackie Ward is director of studies at Sutton High School (GDST).

Could do better

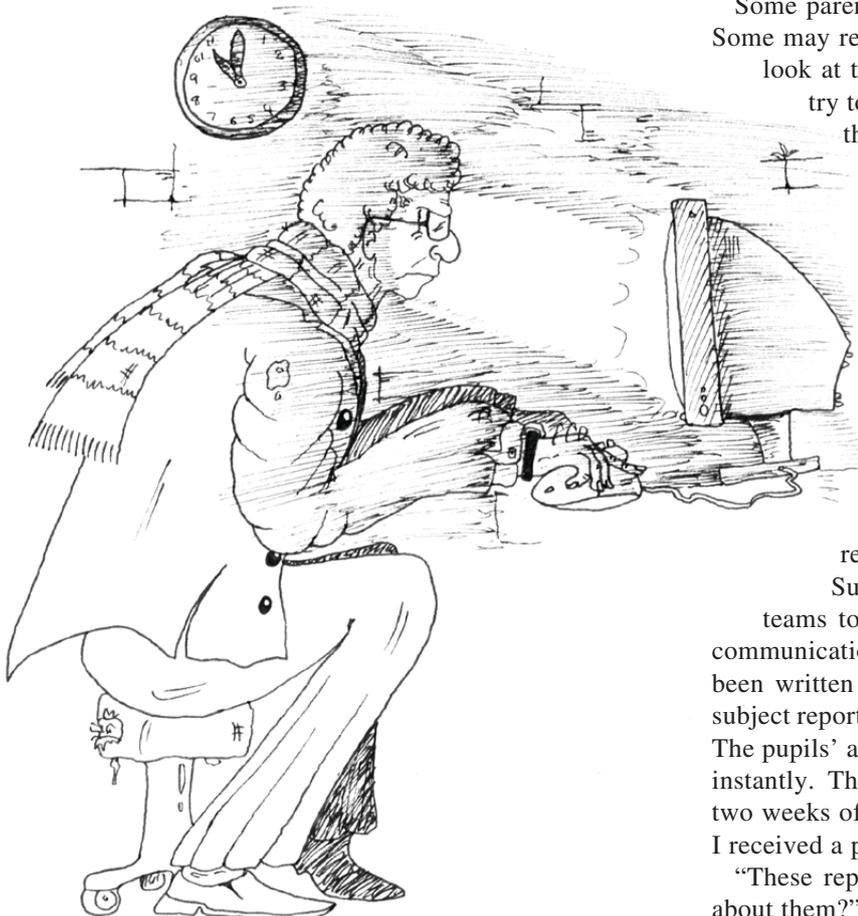
O R Houseman reports on reports and aborts his retorts

Report writing is still a significant part of the housemaster's workload at the end of term. It is increasingly unclear, however, why and to whom these reports must be written. The housemaster's report would traditionally follow individual subject reports written by classroom teachers. It would summarize and draw conclusions from those academic reports, describe the boy's sporting, cultural and social contributions to school life, and contain some words of advice for future progress.

The Headmaster would then read this report and add his own words. The traditional Headmaster's report used to say nothing more than 'Well done!' or 'Splendid!' or, if he was in exceptionally expansive mood, 'He would do well to heed the advice in these reports.'

However, the Headmaster has not read a report for years. Instead, he now meets each housemaster, discusses each pupil and dictates his own report, which says something slightly more substantial than the 'splendid!' or 'he would do well to heed the advice in these reports' of yesteryear. No housemaster resents this apparent usurpation of his position as the focal point for the parents' knowledge of their son's

Aborting the retorts.



progress, because they no longer need a report to tell them which teams he has played in and how well he performed in the orchestra since they have watched every game and listened to every concert.

Some parents have even watched practices and rehearsals and, in any case, the housemaster had no intention of writing about these activities anyway. The only real difference for the housemaster is the fact that a task which he may in the past have viewed as an opportunity to communicate directly with the Headmaster and demonstrate his particular knowledge of the boys in his house, and indeed his general educational wisdom, has lost that purpose. So it remains a letter to the parents, not about their son's accomplishments, but instead a general assessment of the development of his character. But do they read it?

Electronic communication has made it possible to send more information more frequently and more quickly to more people. It allows a school to make great claims for ecological care by sending nothing on paper, and saves thousands of pounds in postage. But the more information that is sent electronically, the less is read. When parents received a letter in the post containing a printed report on paper, they opened the letter and read it. They now receive an email telling them their child's report can be found somewhere online.

Some parents delete the email, or at least ignore it unread. Some may read the email, but decide it is too much effort to look at the school website to find the report. Some may try to look at the school website, but can't remember their password. So the reports disappear unread.

It may cause the housemaster some frustration to think that the 15 minutes he spent writing a report has been wasted time which he will never recover, but he may comfort himself with the thought that the exercise of putting his thoughts down in writing has helped his understanding of that particular pupil and will therefore enhance his management of his progress the following term. And the parent who does not read his child's report has wasted only 15 minutes of the housemaster's time: a parent who does read a report can take up much more than 15 minutes.

Such is the enthusiasm of school management teams to use electronic communication and to increase communication with parents, that now no sooner have reports been written than the parents can read them. This term the subject reports were written two weeks before the end of term. The pupils' academic tutors were told to send them to parents instantly. This doubled the housemaster's work in the last two weeks of term. Before I had read a boy's subject reports I received a phone call:

"These reports are not good enough. What are you doing about them?"

Continued overleaf →

Communications

I made polite conversation while looking up the boy's report on my computer screen. I vaguely listened to the father repeat his question while reading the report. It seemed fine. In many respects this was a relief, but did not make the rest of the conversation any easier. I tried to be positive and encouraging.

"I wouldn't be too worried. There are some constructive criticisms here, but that is quite normal at this stage of the course. And we knew there had been a problem with that piece of work in chemistry, and that is now fine. As I see it, these reports say that if he does all he is advised to do he should be getting As in all of his A levels.

"It is not good enough. I am disappointed in him, and I am disappointed with the school. This is not what I want to see. It is unacceptable. He needs better grades than this. I want to know what you are doing about it."

It is never easy to have a conversation with someone who has decided to believe something despite all evidence suggesting the contrary. This father had decided that the report was bad, and he would neither read the words in the report, nor listen to anything that told him otherwise. I tried explaining the grade system used in the reports.

"Perhaps I should say a little about the grading system being used..."

"He needs As in every subject and he has not got As in every subject."

"No, but these grades are not a prediction of what he is going to get in the summer. They are an assessment of the work he has done in the last three weeks on one aspect of the course."

"He needs to work harder."

"Well, that is true, there is more he can be doing, and he has acknowledged that."

"What are you and his teachers doing to make him work harder?"

I have heard this question before; it is never easy to answer; it is always infuriating. The truthful answer is something like: "We have done absolutely everything. He has managed to defy every effort to teach him and make him work harder. He is lazy and not as clever as you think he is. Your ambitions for him are hugely unrealistic, but his teachers and I are working so hard that he will probably get pretty close to achieving them.

"The fact that he is going to get A grades, (and he is, though you do not believe that), is entirely down to his teachers' efforts, not his. We have already given him more help than he deserves to receive or will ever appreciate. However, when he gets to university he will struggle to complete his course because he is totally incapable of working independently."

I did not say this. However, I did not need to reply as he had started again.

"I want to speak to every one of his teachers to find out what he needs to do."

I pointed out the fact that every teacher had said exactly what the boy needed to do in the report which we were now discussing. I told him that they had told him this directly in every lesson. They had made it very clear indeed.

"I need to know. If I know, then I shall make him work every day at home. He works properly at home when I am there to supervise him. I want detailed instructions from each of his teachers by this evening."

I spoke to the boy's teachers and passed on this message,

adding my own apologies. His chemistry teacher's response was typical:

"But I have said what he needs to do in the report. And I gave him his holiday work in yesterday's lesson. He knows what he needs to do."

"I know, and you have said it very clearly. But could you perhaps just write down exactly what work you have asked him to do, so I can then pass that on to his father, and he can check that the boy is working properly."

"I thought we were supposed to be encouraging independent work and responsibility."

"Well, we are, but not quite yet. Not if it means they might not get an A."

"Essentially you are asking me to write a report on the report I have already written?"

"Well, I'm not, his father is, but, yes, that's what we are asking you to do."

The father called me again the next day.

"He is doing far too much music and drama. This will stop. He is here to get A levels, not to become a musician or an actor."

"I am not entirely convinced that he will work harder if he stops his music and drama. In fact, I have had several complaints from his music teachers recently that he has failed to turn up to rehearsals. It hardly seems that this is the reason for his failure to complete his chemistry work on time. I fear he has not been entirely honest with you, if he has said this is the reason for recent failings in work."

In many circumstances I would have considered that line rather too bold, with some parents even dangerously confrontational, but I was less concerned in this case, as I was now certain that he was not listening to anything I said anyway.

"He will stop choir rehearsals and pull out of the play immediately."

I had been right. I put the news to the choirmaster and the head of drama.

"But he has missed the last two rehearsals. Tell his father he is going to too many parties at the weekends."

The discussions, phone calls, and email exchanges went on for some time. Eventually we arranged a meeting for all concerned. The father said he would be in the country at the weekend and would come into school. "Excellent," I said, "I shall get everyone together and we shall talk through the various options."

"There are no options, he will give up..."

I organised a meeting and told the father all was in place. "I am not here this Saturday, I am here next Saturday. We can meet then."

"That may be difficult. The holidays begin on Friday. I cannot guarantee that we will all be in school on the first day of the holidays."

"I shall come in on Friday."

He did come in on Friday, and the head of music, the head of drama, the boy's tutor and I met the father and the mother. He was charming, polite and humorous. She was charming, polite and quiet. When she did speak it was to disagree with the father. We talked for an hour. We concluded that they would discuss everything with the boy over the holiday. We changed nothing.

The boy's next end of term report will be in the post.

O R Houseman is always available on the first day of the holidays.

Supporting resilience

Kris Spencer considers ways in which we develop resilience amongst our pupils

Resilience is in part about having the ability to develop appropriate coping strategies when dealing with stress, conflict, pressure and difficulties. It also incorporates the ability to bounce back after the problem is over. Resourcefulness, good communication skills, hope, and the ability to manage strong feelings and emotions are also linked to resilience.

Levels of vulnerability

The school years, and especially the adolescent years, are a time when the external pressures placed on our pupils by the educational system and society coincide with the physical and psychological changes associated with their development from children to young adults. The result is that our pupils are especially vulnerable to feelings of stress and pressure, and so need to draw on their reserves of resilience to cope.

Some pupils seem to have a calmer and less anxious experience in their adolescent years than others. It is also clear that some pupils have a greater number of issues to face or more challenging issues to deal with, and that some are also more sensitive to issues that are less problematic for others. This can result in unhappiness and low mood.

Acutely, some pupils faced with problems which they feel they cannot cope with might develop coping strategies we would consider inappropriate. Self-harm, school refusal and eating disorders are all self-imposed behaviours used by pupils when they feel they cannot cope. We might also point to a lack of resilience when a coping strategy places the pupil in conflict with the broader needs of his or her school: spending a day on the cricket field or on the river with GCSEs looming is one such example of where pupils feel that something just has to give.

The good news is that it does seem that resilience is a trait which can be taught and nourished. School and parents are the key in supporting and shaping the way in which children develop their resilience, but friends and peers also have a part to play in the process.

Nature and nurture

When discussing differences in personality traits, the question of nature versus nurture is often raised. A *nature* viewpoint would suggest that some children are *naturally* more resilient than others. This is probably true, but most commentators suggest that *nurture* is also an important component in determining an individual's levels of resilience. This supports the view that, given the right background, it is possible to build resilience over time and over a lifetime; and that whatever the emotional strengths we are born with, resilience is a trait which can be nurtured and developed.

Similarly, it is equally apparent that resilience can be weakened. Resilience is a process. Research suggests that we



Kris Spencer

'Resilience is linked to other traits like confidence and self-esteem. Importantly, it is linked to how supported we feel, and also to the boundaries we have been given as to what is acceptable and how to behave.'

learn resilience from those around us and from interacting with our environment. We develop the toughness we need to cope, in part at least, from experience – from a skinned knee to a bad exam result. One of the reasons that our high achievers are sometimes the most vulnerable may be because they lack some of the experience of failure which might once have been termed character building. A strong perfectionist streak is linked in some pupils to an inability to let go or compromise, and this, again, might leave a pupil more open to some of the inappropriate coping strategies mentioned above.

Resilience through experience

If we learn resilience from those around us – our parents, our friends, our teachers – we can also experience it, second hand, from the lives of others and from fictional characters in books and films. Resilience is linked to other traits like confidence and self-esteem. Importantly, it is linked to how supported we

Communications

<p>Family / Parental Recent divorce Acrimonious divorce Only child High profile parents Absent parents High achieving sibling Unrealistic goals – parental Controlling parents Boundaries not clearly set or enforced Family history of mental illness A drug or alcohol dependent parent Abusive parent Illness of parent or sibling Parent’s loss of job or income</p>	<p>Academic LDD issues (especially when undiagnosed) Unrealistic goals – self-imposed Conflict of interests – work/sport Wrong choice of subjects at GCSE or A level Too many A levels Struggles with exams Conflict with teachers about work or behaviour High achiever Low achiever</p>
<p>Friendship / Social Few friends Not satisfied with friends Has been bullied Feels excluded Drugs/alcohol use</p>	<p>Personality traits Perfectionist Introvert Extrovert Overly self-critical Spectrum issues Poor body image</p>

Figure 1: Risk factors.

feel, and also to the boundaries we have been given as to what is acceptable and how to behave. A high level of dependence on others to provide solutions to problems would not seem to encourage or support resilience and, in some circumstances, it might even be seen to diminish it.

It would seem, then, that resilience develops when there are cumulative *protective factors*, and is weakened when these factors are absent or wrongly applied. The protective factors are likely to encourage an individual to cope and find solutions when exposed to *risk factors*. Even so, no person is wholly immune to breaking down in some way as a result of specific or cumulative pressures. The concepts of risk and vulnerability are closely linked to the need for resilience.

Risk factors

All our pupils are at risk from the pressures of being young people in their complex and complicated world. Because of this, it is important that we give them all the support they need to develop their resilience. There are times when we can predict that they are particularly vulnerable. For instance, exam times, especially entrance exams and the external exams in Years 11 and 13, are particularly pressured. It is also true that pupils with a combination of risk factors may be particularly vulnerable. Figure 1 includes some of the risk factors identified by the children’s charity *Barnardo’s*.

It would be very wrong to use such a list to label pupils, but we can, perhaps, use it to develop our strategies. Our

schools already do a number of things to build and develop the resilience of pupils. PSHE programmes include many elements with links to resilience; the learning support department is a major source of academic care; some schools employ an academic mentoring programme whereby older pupils tutor younger pupils; pastoral care is provided by tutors, year heads and divisional heads and housemasters; and through tutorials and assemblies we can raise issues and approaches of relevance to resilience. Our pastoral structures also represent a chain through which pupils who are not coping can find the support they need to deal with their problems and bounce back.

Support factors

There are other things that a school does which help to develop resilience in the pupil body. Pedagogies which emphasise collaboration and independent learning have been linked to resilience. In some schools a peer-mentoring system offers training to pupils to listen to the problems of others. Activities like the Duke of Edinburgh’s Award and a community support programme take pupils out of their comfort zones in a controlled way. At their best, such activities have a *steeling effect* which helps to build the self-reliance and self-esteem that are so closely linked to resilience. Other extra-curricular activities, like sport and music and drama, can also contribute to this *steeling effect*.

The charity NCH - Action for Children has identified a number of factors which support resilience which are

<p>Family factors <i>Close bond with at least one person</i> <i>Nurturance and trust</i> Lack of separations Lack of parental mental health or addiction problems <i>Required helpfulness</i> <i>Encouragement for autonomy (girls)</i> <i>Encouragement for expression of feelings (boys)</i> Close grandparents Sibling attachment Four or fewer children Sufficient financial and material resources</p>	<p>Individual factors Female (overall) Male (adolescent years) <i>Sense of competence and self-efficacy</i> <i>Internal locus of control</i> <i>Empathy with others</i> <i>Problem-solving skills</i> <i>Communication skills</i> <i>Sociable</i> <i>Independent</i> <i>Reflective, not impulsive</i> <i>Ability to concentrate on school work</i> <i>Autonomy (girls)</i> <i>Emotional expressiveness (boys)</i> <i>Sense of humour</i> <i>Hobbies</i> <i>Willingness and capacity to plan</i> <i>A set of values</i> <i>Intelligence</i> <i>Preference for structure</i> <i>Achievement orientation</i> <i>Positive self-concept</i> <i>Social maturity</i></p>
<p>Wider community factors Neighbour and other non-kin support Peer contact <i>Good school experiences</i> <i>Positive adult role models</i></p>	

Figure 2: Support factors.

summarised in figure 2. The factors I have placed in italics are those which a school might take a hand in nurturing. They present as opportunities. The key factor seems to be in identifying a person of warmth – an adult – to whom the child can turn and who they feel is looking out for them.

Supporting resilience

We cannot prevent many of the problems and pressures which our pupils will encounter as they move up the school. It would not be healthy to screen our pupils from all that they will face as they grow up. But we might look at whether we are actually contributing to pressures and conflicts that need not be there. Teacher tug-of-war between extracurricular activities such as music and sport, or expectations which ignore or circumvent homework timetables, can overload our pupils. Carol Dweck suggests that we should praise wisely by not praising intelligence or talent but rather by praising ‘the process that

kids engage in: their effort, their strategies, their focus, their perseverance, their improvement – this *process praise* creates kids who are hardy and resilient.’

In developing our approach to resilience it is important to aim to build the capacity to be resilient in *all* our pupils in order to reduce their vulnerability to adversity. As schools, the full force of our pastoral support is mobilised when a pupil’s defences are breached, but we might do more to develop or make explicit what we do to shore up defences and prevent the breach in the first place.

In order to achieve this, a consideration of the cumulative risk and support factors acknowledges both that the issues are complex and that if parents, pupils and teachers work together, they can support and develop the resilience of their communities.

Kris Spencer is a governor and director of Notting Hill Prep School and assistant head at Latymer Upper School.

Blow your own trumpet

Parents, please encourage your daughters to step into the spotlight

Whether at the school gates, watching a sports match or collecting from a school trip, mums and dads everywhere know that the pushy parents of their child's school friends are to be avoided at all costs. However, Manchester High School for Girls is actively encouraging their parents to get pushy, and put that on the agenda for a special 'Blow Your Own Trumpet' week. Parents were asked to write in about their daughter's achievements, ones that the girl herself may not have had the confidence to shout about in school.

"We all know the caricature of a 'pushy' parent; the one-way conversations at the school gates, evening tutoring, the relentless involvement in every after-school activity going. It's easy to mock. While there is obviously a down side to parents being too ambitious for their children and piling the pressure on, what we don't want to do is give our girls the message that it's wrong to talk about their achievements," says Helen Jeys, deputy head and head of pastoral care at Manchester High School for Girls.

"We've found that girls can be far too modest for fear of coming across as boastful in the eyes of their peers, which is why we need mums and dads on board to let us in on some of the successes they've been keeping hidden.

"Blow Your Own Trumpet week is all about our girls having the self-confidence, not arrogance, to celebrate their accomplishments. We live in an increasingly competitive world. Whether it be an interview for work experience, a university place or even their dream job, our girls need to be able to articulate their personal triumphs and feel proud of them."

Pupils' achievements were celebrated throughout the week with a display of trumpet shapes in the School's reception area highlighting what the girls feel proud of, special assemblies and a lunchtime soap box that girls can jump on to share their stories.

Nicola Stockdale from Audenshaw is studying for her GCSEs at Manchester High School for Girls. Nicola is one of the quieter members of the school community, but her mum, Jenny, took us up on our invitation to celebrate her daughter's achievements and wrote to the School:

Nicola has faced many personal difficulties over the last two years: she lost her father to cancer just 12 months ago and despite this has remained a wonderful, positive girl. Along with her younger sister she has raised almost £2000 for bowel cancer charities, but her skills don't end there. Over the summer, she has been volunteering at Debdale Outdoor Centre, where she has helped to supervise many children, some with difficulties, on the water, introducing them to sailing and windsurfing in a safe environment. During this time she has achieved a V100 certificate for 100 volunteering hours and has successfully passed her powerboat exam to receive her powerboat licence.

My whole family are extremely proud of the young lady that Nicola has become. It's wonderful that the teachers at

Manchester High have recognised that some girls haven't yet developed the confidence to shout about their successes and weeks such as this really do give them a helping hand. I'm not worried about being labelled a 'pushy' parent; I'm just a normal mum who is impressed everyday by my inspirational daughter.

Nicola herself says,

I know my mum believes in me 110% and this gives me the confidence to go out and try new things. I'm pleased that she wrote to school to let people know about my fundraising and volunteering activities, as it's something I probably wouldn't have brought up myself. Now there are lots of other people at school believing in me and willing me on – it's a good feeling.

Bahar and Bisma Din, 13-year-old twins, have been collecting donations for a convoy which left for Europe in mid-September to help the refugees in Calais and in other affected areas. Their mother, Mrs Din, said:

I'm extremely proud of the girls for the time and effort they have put into this. They have not only collected donations but also washed and folded old clothes and put together food packs for adults and aid gift packs for young children.

Thirteen-year-old Emily Bold's mother, Mrs Jane Bold, said of her daughter:

Emily has Asperger's Syndrome, which brings about many stresses for her, but it also provides her with some spectacular talents! She is showing an exceptional prowess in music and she has also always been creative in other ways, and has recently taken an interest in special effects make up. She is building a portfolio and is investigating make up colleges in USA and Canada that she would like to attend in the future. She is already planning on going to a summer camp in Toronto next year when she turns 14.

Eleven-year-old Araminta Rowley-Fox's grandfather was recently very ill and nearly died. Araminta's mother, Mrs Rachael Rowley-Fox, explained in her email to school:

Minti's grandad was diagnosed with dementia and a heart and kidney tumour. Minti seemed to understand that the real him was there somewhere and she listened and learned how to communicate with him again. She knows how to reach him, make him laugh and get him involved.

She supported me, kept herself stable and calm and encouraged grandad, a retired musician, to pick up his instrument again and play for the first time in years. She records and documents his life, which is very therapeutic and helps them relate and create a life story. We are extremely proud of her.



Bahar and Bisma Din

Nicola and Jennifer Stockdale



Araminta Rowley-Fox



Emily Bold

Keeping ahead of the robots

Virginia Isaac urges parents and pupils to look around and ahead

At the HMC Annual Conference in St Andrew's last year Mary Curnock Cook, chief executive of UCAS, expressed her concern that students from the private sector were in danger of 'sleepwalking' through their education, sticking to a narrow range of courses and careers, often going to the same universities their parents attended. She said that of the 30,000 different courses on offer at British institutions, half of all privately educated students applied to just 1,500 of them. "Independent schools should encourage their students to be independent-minded and to develop a sense of future self that breaks the mould a bit", said Curnock Cook.

Looking back on when I was a governor for seven years of a prestigious private school in Gloucestershire, we often asked in council meetings about university entrance successes, particularly the numbers of students going to Oxbridge and Russell Group institutions. Never once were we told (or indeed did we ask) about what happened to the students post university. It seemed that the sole concern of the school and governors was to ensure that the pupils got first class exam

results and were accepted into a high ranking university. Job done, I was told and I still hear this when I visit high-flying schools today.

In this respect one can hardly blame the school. If this is what parents are expecting, it would be foolish to suggest a seemingly unconventional university course or, indeed, other options. But the world in terms of higher education and youth employment is a very different one from when those parents were leaving school.

The vast range of courses, the reality of student debt and the rapidly changing employment landscape means that decisions made at 16 and 18 carry far more weight, or have far more serious consequences if they are the wrong ones. 25,000 students drop out of university in their first year. This is inevitably as a result of choice of wrong course or institution or even going to university in the first place.

We all recognise that the world of work is becoming more complex, but we are perhaps unaware of the speed with which things are changing. Bill Gates said once "We always

'Soon this will all be ours.'



overestimate the amount of change that will occur in the next two years and underestimate the amount that will occur in the next ten. Don't let yourself be lulled into inaction!" Automation is no longer just affecting relatively low value jobs in agriculture, manufacturing or the service sectors, it is now making inroads into the world of skilled professionals too.

We have yet to see if driverless cars or 3D printing make any real impact, but we already take for granted optical readers, on-line translation, automatic data analysis and algorithmic or machine marking. More than that, robotics are beginning to transform high level jobs that were exclusively the preserve of the university educated – pharmacy, computing (Cloud technology is starting to replace IT managers in every company), accountancy and financial trading.

Discovery software can analyse millions of documents and tease out the relevant ones which were previously the responsibility of lawyers and paralegals searching through cardboard boxes and, as computers get better at analysing images, even occupations that require extensive training, such as radiology, could be at risk. Two academics from the University of Oxford (Frey and Osborne 2013) concluded that nearly half of US employment will be vulnerable to automation within the next two decades and the UK is not that far behind.

Parents are the first to admit that they are not clear about alternatives to university. At the same time they are also generally unaware of the range of courses on offer, the direction that they might lead to and the extraordinary variety of jobs and careers that are now out there. Understandably, they therefore stick to what they know and what worked for them. But this may not be the case in the future.

Recent research into parental attitudes commissioned by Inspiring Futures in conjunction with the GTI Group and carried out by Yougov, clearly indicated five things – figures in brackets denote very important and important. Parents of pupils in independent schools responded as follows:

Parents expected the school to provide up to date and comprehensive careers advice to their children (63% think that this is very important).

Parents would like their children to start receiving careers education and advice before they start to choose their GCSE options (68%) and they would like more information at that time too (74%).

Parents value the opportunity for their children to have one-to-one careers guidance sessions (78%).

While 63% of parents feel that they know a lot about entry to university only 1% felt they knew a lot about higher apprenticeships.

Parents are keen to understand how subjects link to future careers (59%).

Last year the Gatsby Charitable Foundation published a report entitled *Good Career Guidance*. This was based on international research and that done within the independent sector in this country. The report identified eight benchmarks of good practice for career education, information, advice and guidance in secondary schools. These benchmarks are being universally adopted and promoted by a range of organisations including Teach First, the new Careers and

“Independent schools should encourage their students to be independent-minded and to develop a sense of future self that breaks the mould a bit”

Enterprise company and the Department for Education, and are fast becoming the gold standard for good careers.

All schools are encouraged to embed a programme of career education and guidance and publish their strategy on their website. Increasingly this is also something that parents look for when choosing a school for their children, as well as something that schools inspectors are advised to look out for.

It is often said that there ‘is now no such thing as a career’ and that it is fruitless to try to match young people to jobs in the future. Nevertheless, contact with employers, and becoming savvy about the world of work and what might lie ahead, is becoming an essential component of a school education. It is not just a question of access to information. Young people need to be able to understand their strengths and weaknesses, their interests and enthusiasms and the kind of organisation, if any, that they would wish to work in.

There are many on-line programmes that can help to elicit this, but to ensure legitimate and workable interpretation this should be done in conjunction with one-to-one guidance sessions with professional advisers working closely with school staff and parents or guardians. Only in this way can young people make informed decisions, identify the skills that they need to ensure that they are on the road to success and start planning confidently for their futures.

How you perform in the workplace is not the same as how you perform in the classroom, so encouraging a young person to understand their own personality, aptitudes, skills and interests through psychometric profiling alongside their academic performance in school is a good way to motivate them and to take a look at what jobs might suit them. Finding out what you love to do is a good start to finding a job you will love to do.

Stephen Isherwood, CEO of the Association of Graduate Recruiters.

Virginia Isaac is the CEO of Inspiring Futures.

To find out more about the services Inspiring Futures offer to schools, students and parents you can visit www.inspiringfutures.org.uk or call 01276 687515.

What's in a name?

Simon Henthorn asks whether your school's recruitment processes are robust enough to combat unconscious discrimination

When recruiting for any role, a school will be looking to appoint the best candidate. Evidence suggests, however, that unconscious bias can creep into the recruitment process when the employer is sifting through application forms or CVs and shortlisting candidates for interview.

There has been a lot of discussion in the press recently about the influence your name can have on your chances when applying for a job. In his speech to the Conservative party conference in September, David Cameron revealed that people with 'white-sounding' names are nearly twice as likely to get called back for job interviews as people with 'ethnic-sounding' names, despite having exactly the same qualifications.

He gave the example of Jorden Berkeley, a black university graduate from London, who was told by a careers adviser to include her middle name, Elizabeth, on job applications, an approach which proved successful. The National Bureau of Economic Research in America produced a study that showed that applicants with 'white-sounding' names only had to make ten job applications to get one call back, whereas those with 'ethnic-sounding' names had to make 15. Another study showed that certain names can have positive or negative implications. For example, people thought Margaret and Ron would be 'hardworking', but that Ace would be 'a jerk'.

Figures from the School Workforce in England 2014 survey revealed that in state schools in England 87.5% of teachers are white British, as are 93.7% of head teachers, 86.6% of teaching assistants and 87.2% of non-classroom based support staff. A number of organisations, including Teach First, the Civil Service, local government, learndirect, HSBC, Deloitte, Virgin Money, KPMG, BBC and the NHS have pledged to use 'name blind recruitment' for graduate positions. This means that candidates will not be asked to provide their name when completing job application forms.

Job applicants are protected against unlawful discrimination. If an employer eliminates a job applicant at any stage of the recruitment process because of, for example, their race, gender, religion or age, this will amount to unlawful direct discrimination. The job applicant can bring an employment tribunal claim and receive compensation, which could include loss of earnings as well as an award for injury to feelings. It is similarly unlawful to discriminate when offering school places.

Name blind recruitment reduces the risk of unconscious race discrimination, but only at the shortlisting stage. If a candidate makes it through to the interview stage, there is a still a risk of unconscious or, indeed, conscious bias creeping in at that point. If that's the case anyway, why bother with name blind recruitment?

Well, it can help in defending discrimination claims. Employment tribunals are entitled to draw inferences of unlawful discrimination if the facts before them justify this. For example, if a white candidate and a black candidate have exactly the same qualifications, but the white candidate is called for interview and the black candidate is rejected

outright, the employment tribunal is entitled to infer that the reason for the difference in treatment is race.

However, if names are omitted from the application form so that the employer does not have any indication of the candidates' race, then there is no basis on which the tribunal can draw an inference that race was the reason. For the same reason, employers do not generally ask for a candidate's date of birth on the application form.

Many employers will argue that if they do not know a person's name, they will not be able to carry out background checks before interview. However schools should not be carrying out background checks at this point: background checks should only be carried out on the successful candidate once the school is ready to make them an offer which would be conditional on the results of such checks being satisfactory.

It has also become increasingly common for employers to check out a candidate's Facebook profile or their Twitter account before inviting them to interview, which they obviously can't do if they don't have their name. However this is not good recruitment practice either and is not recommended. Selection for a job should be based purely on the information provided by the candidate during the application and assessment process and during interview.

There are other ways in which schools can seek to reduce the risk of unconscious bias creeping into their selection processes. Many graduate recruitment systems already use computerised systems for the initial sifting of job applications. The computer system analyses whether candidates meet the selection criteria and, if they do not, they cannot progress to the next stage. In these situations, early sifting of applications has absolutely nothing to do with an applicant's name.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission's Code of Practice recommends that:

Wherever possible, more than one person should be involved in shortlisting candidates, to reduce the risk of one individual's bias prejudicing an application.

The marking system, including any cut-off score for selection, should be agreed before applications are assessed, and applied consistently to all applications.

Each person should mark the applications separately before agreeing on a final mark.

Selection should be based only on information provided in the application forms.

The weight given to each item in the person specification should not be changed during shortlisting.

Name blind recruitment is not a silver bullet but it may help to reduce discrimination risks. It is certainly something that schools may wish to consider as part of a wider review of their recruitment processes.

Simon Henthorn is head of education at Doyle Clayton, specialist employment lawyers.



Face Fit

Revenge of the all-rounder

John Weiner urges universities to feast on the well-rounded

For the model school leaver, take one 11 year-old, add a dash of academic rigour, blend carefully with a pinch of supportive pastoral care and serve with a garnish of co-curricular opportunity. Leave to ripen for seven years until fully matured into a well-rounded individual.

Go on – admit it, I've pretty much described your school's glossy marketing literature. And actually, there's not too much wrong with this tried and tested formula, as independent schools have been doing a pretty decent job of churning out confident young adults for longer than many countries have existed.

Whilst most school leaders, parents and pupils would warmly agree that it is vital for independent schools to keep a sensible balance between the trinity of academic, pastoral and co-curricular activities, universities have traditionally been more worried about the exam results. However, in recent years, grade inflation and the difficulty of choosing between students who are all meeting the entry standards may be forcing universities to look a little more closely at the 'other' bits.

Now the ones that really matter with regard to university entrance are, of course, the things our charges do alongside their academic studies that differentiate them from the masses and that will convince their prospective higher educators that they are indeed worth a punt (even if their chosen university uses alternative modes of river transport). But this is no problem you may say – independent schools are famous for their provision outside the classroom. True, but as character building as scrummaging in the mud may be, universities these days are looking for more.

A recent study by the gap year organisation World Challenge, available on their website, makes interesting reading. When asked to give three things other than academic performance that add most value to a personal statement, only 18.5% of universities responded with sports. 12.3% mentioned music in their top three and a miserly 7.7% listed drama. Seems like the trusty cornerstones of co-curricular programmes in our schools up and down the country aren't impressing the universities any more. So what do they want? 92% said work experience and 68% listed regular volunteering. The third most popular response was good old Duke of Edinburgh's Award, so breathe a sigh of relief on that one, but even then it only appeared 28% of the time.

So what does this tell us in independent schools? Ditch the drama, sport and music? Of course not, as there is no doubt about the value that these bring when it comes to building teamwork, confidence and self-esteem, which are all vital to success in life. However, it does tell us that we need to ensure that our pupils do have the time, opportunity and gumption to demonstrate their independence and ability to plan and organise activities which develop their characters outside the confines of school.



John Weiner

With so many fantastic things on offer in our schools, it can be tempting to try to make sure that our pupils have met all possible opportunities before they leave the school gates. But this approach limits and may even prevent one of the life skills that universities are looking for – one that perhaps independent school pupils could develop – the ability to go and sort something out for themselves, by themselves. After all, no one will be doing it for them after they have left our care.

This doesn't mean that we can't help. Programmes that encourage and reward pupils for wider interests and efforts outside school are an excellent way of highlighting and reinforcing such behaviours. At my current school we offer The Caterham Award to sixth formers who can demonstrate that they are contributing outside the classroom in a range of areas, both in and out of school.

The Creativity, Action, Service (CAS) part of the IB similarly credits such activities and both these examples include elements of reflection to help pupils assess what they have learned as well as record what they have done. This all contributes towards pupils taking ownership for their own development, which will stand them in good stead well beyond their school years. A win all round for the all-rounders, I reckon.

John Weiner teaches at Caterham School and is the author of The SMT Spy, a blog on leadership in schools (smtspy.blogspot.co.uk).

HERE & THERE

If you have news of topical interest, however brief, for 'Here and There', please email it to Tom Wheare at postmaster@dunbry.plus.com. Items should not exceed 150 words. Good colour photographs are also welcome.

Golden achievement

Last October 37 pupils who left Bancroft's School in the previous three years attended the Duke of Edinburgh's Award presentation ceremony at St James's Palace to receive their Gold Awards. It is extremely rare to have such a large group from one borough, let alone one school, a fact not lost on The Earl of Wessex who exclaimed, "They are all from your school? Now that's just showing off!"

He spent time talking to members of the group and their parents about their experiences and what they had done during their expeditions. The magnificent surroundings were a fitting setting to celebrate the individual achievements involving a series of demanding expeditions, the acquisition of new skills and a strong commitment to community support. In recognition of how well this reflects on the school and the staff, the ceremony concluded with a special presentation to two teachers, Pat Morton and Luke Brennand, for their significant input into the success of DofE at Bancroft's.

Dominic Argyle, the DofE manager at Bancroft's, reflected that "this number of Gold awards is a fantastic achievement for our School and represents incalculable hours of work and effort by the participants, their parents and school staff. This wonderful event was a fitting ending to a splendid effort all round."



Picture courtesy of Tempest Photography.



Richard Harvey

Broader horizons will overcome reorganisation blues

Professor Richard Harvey thinks well of the Extended Project Qualification

When I worked in an office, someone created a mood meter. There were various moods, including all manner of dire situations, but the worst was ‘a reorganisation has been announced’. Similarly, during the reorganisation of A levels it is easy to feel at a low ebb. However, as unwelcome as the timing may be, the reforms do provide an opportunity for changes that, from my perspective as a university admissions officer, would be most delightful.

Linear A levels should lead to students who have deep learning rather than the ‘do I need to know this for the exam’ mindset that can be so damaging in a fresh university student. But alongside the introduction of linear A levels have been a number of changes that are causing obvious logistical problems.

The reform of AS levels means that they are examined quite differently from the A level, so many teachers claim that the AS syllabus no longer neatly segues into the A level one; and they have also been down-graded in terms of UCAS tariff, so they will be less popular with applicants.

One option is to jump wholesale into the International Baccalaureate or IB. The IB is popular at the University of East Anglia (UEA) and, from a school’s perspective, jumping sideways out of the politicised British curriculum must feel very attractive. But what for schools that cannot find the resources for IB?

Given that in the majority of schools we have a core of three linear A levels, the remaining conundrum is what to do in the fourth place? A fourth A level? Surely too brutal for most students. Or does one stick to three A levels and insert an extra AS level? But the new AS levels carry only 40% of the tariff of a full A level, so that will be unpopular with high-achieving students. Or does one take the space to undertake some enrichment activity, with or without tariff? One option that I believe deserves serious consideration is the study of the Extended Project Qualification or EPQ.

The EPQ is an extended piece of work that is a close approximation to university assessment. The choice of topic is free, but would normally be related to the student’s future career or course of study. The assessment is usually a 5000-word essay, but may also be a composition, a drama or other artefact, plus a smaller essay or report. As an A level standard qualification, it offers a higher level qualification with an A* grade (unlike the AS). Some schools are able to timetable the EPQ before universities consider applications, so this gives applicants the tactical advantage of offering a graded qualification on their UCAS form.

As well as these tactical advantages, the EPQ has intellectual advantages: it is an enquiry-driven piece of work that encourages intellectual curiosity and independent thinking. It is this self-motivation and drive which, we believe, distinguishes the potential first-class applicants from those who have good grades but have yet to find their intellectual impetus. This is

particularly important when applying to subjects that are not always offered at A level: interdisciplinary subjects such as environmental sciences, development studies, American studies or nursing; or subjects where the demand for places is so great that any opportunity to show intellect must be taken – medicine or creative writing for example.

At UEA we have been pondering how best to incorporate the EPQ in our offers. Over the years, UEA has developed a distinctive educational flavour. Unlike many other highly ranked institutions, undergraduate education has always been important to our institutional well-being. With an attractive staff-student ratio of around 13:1, which is notably lower than many of our competitors, we are trying to encourage those highly desirable but expensive activities such as small-group seminars, off-textbook teaching and student-research.

Furthermore, as part of the Norwich Research Park our students have vast resources to draw upon: around 13,000 people work on the park so undergraduate projects can cover a surprisingly wide range of topics. In my own discipline of computer science, as I write, undergraduates are considering, among other things the iconography of lutes; the classification of whisky; the analysis of melody; the fall of RBS; and the modelling of cloth in medieval clothing!

It is that astonishing breadth of topics that makes modern science so interesting, but it can be daunting for students brought up on the nourishing but unvaried diet of three A levels. So, to make the most of our teaching, students need to be intellectually curious and self-motivated, and we feel that the EPQ really encourages that. So not only do we count the EPQ but, where possible, we will make a lower offer to students holding an EPQ.

Getting started with the EPQ need not be too demanding and, because it makes efficient use of the school holiday, many schools find that staffing is manageable. If you are interested in sharing best practice and learning from others, then you are very welcome at UEA’s EPQ conference, which will run on the 9th June, 2016. This is the day before our annual careers advisors conference – contact Dr Jane Bryan (J.Bryan@uea.ac.uk) for details – so why not stay on for that and hear Mary Curnock Cook, UCAS supremo, and a raft of other distinguished speakers. It would be my pleasure to meet you and discuss EPQs and other hot topics.

Professor Richard Harvey is the academic director of admissions at the University of East Anglia. His chair is in computer sciences and his current project involves teaching a computer to lip-read humans in multiple languages. He is responsible for the admissions and outreach strategy for UEA across all categories of students and currently sits on the UCAS Council.

Karen Kimura at Bromley High School (GDST).



The ‘Maternoster’ effect

The GDST offers its alumnae a family lift to the top via mentoring and careers guidance

The benefits of mentoring are well known and well documented. Top business leaders such as Sheryl Sandberg and Karren Brady have spoken about the need for women to mentor, coach, and ‘pull up’ other women, to help them realise their ambitions whatever career path they have chosen.

Unfortunately, many people do not have access to a formal mentoring programme through their university or workplace. That’s why the GDST Alumnae Network is an ideal community to support mentoring activities, particularly as so many former students tell us they have a ‘common bond’ with their contemporaries in other GDST schools.

In 2014, we carried out a pilot mentoring scheme to see whether it could and should be included as part of our on-going offer for GDST alumnae. Fifty participants from across the Trust were brought together so that experienced alumnae could mentor those younger than themselves at critical stages in their personal and professional development. With an Alumnae Network of over 65,000, there are many ways that former students can support and guide each other – from insights on specific roles and sectors to sharing experiences of dealing with interviews or leadership challenges.

The feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with every

mentee who responded saying that they had benefitted from the scheme. We were delighted with the outcome and will be continuing the mentoring scheme with one intake a year from 2015. Many participants noted that they appreciated being matched with someone from outside their sector and organization, since that allowed them to speak freely and learn from people who consider issues from a different perspective.

At its heart, mentoring is about building a mutual relationship of trust and respect where both parties stand to benefit. The mentee gains from the knowledge and guidance of someone more experienced, while the mentor gains a fresh perspective which enhances their coaching skills and generates a sense of reward.

Reviewing applications from mentees, we have noticed that there are three points in a woman’s career when support from a mentor, specifically a female mentor, can be particularly valuable. The first is when young women first enter the workplace, in their early 20s, when a mentor can help them adapt to new expectations and acclimatise to the office culture.

The second point is when what the GDST’s chief executive, Helen Fraser, has called the ‘baby question’ arises in a woman’s late 20s and early 30s. A more experienced woman,

Moving on

who has already navigated the whirlpools and doldrums of balancing work and family life, can lead by example and show that what might seem unattainable can, in fact, be achieved.

The third is when a woman is considering throwing her hat into the ring for that big, important, career-defining job or promotion. Then, an experienced female mentor, perhaps in a senior leadership position, can reassure them that they have the skills and experience to get the job done and inspire them with the confidence they need to go for it.

The really encouraging news is that, according to a recent survey in the U S, participants in a mentoring relationship, as either a mentee or a mentor, are five or six times more likely to get a promotion, and 20% more likely to get a pay rise. This also rings true with the participants on our scheme who noted that their performance and motivation levels increased as a result of working with a mentor. Our experience shows that the most successful partnerships arise when the mentees are very clear about what they want to achieve and have asked themselves: what do I want to get out of the mentoring relationship? This self-reflection exercise really allows mentors to understand how they can add value.

Hearing from alumnae working in different sectors and at different stages of their careers also helps us to learn a lot about the working environment our current students will enter. We like to believe that no careers are off-limits to girls, yet gender stereotypes still linger, influencing perceptions of many jobs and careers. Do a search online for images of chief executives or surgeons or judges, and you don't see many women. Do a similar search for images of nurses or child-minders or personal assistants, and it will come as no surprise that there aren't many men to be seen.

These stereotypes permeate our national and indeed global culture, and our students can't help but subconsciously absorb them. Raising awareness of different jobs at an early age enables girls to imagine themselves in a full range of roles, and not limit their horizons too early or too readily. This is something that GDST schools do as a matter of course,

starting in the junior years, which is why they are perfectly placed to nurture girls' interests and ambitions in a safe and supportive environment.

GDST senior schools and sixth forms take this even further with their strong focus on employability skills. Our CareerStart programme supports the development of the soft skills, such as leadership, teamwork and communication, that will be essential to our students throughout their careers and are consistently at the top of employers' wish lists.

When it comes to university courses, GDST students consistently break the mould by studying subjects in disciplines where women remain underrepresented. In 2013, over 43% of our A level students studied science, technology, engineering, maths, medicine or related subjects. The vast majority of girls from GDST schools go on to the place of their choice in higher education with 69% securing places at the 24 leading (Russell Group) universities and 8.2% gaining places at Oxford or Cambridge.

The focus on lifelong learning and employability skills combined with the encouragement our alumnae receive as they embark on and progress in their chosen careers, allows the GDST to continue to support its student community long after they have left school.

One of the participants on this year's Alumnae Mentoring Scheme commented:

Everyone needs a mentor. I don't believe there is ever a time where you are 'too successful', 'too sorted', to have no need of dialogue and support. It is never a weakness to ask for help, in fact, I believe it is a sign of strength. As part of the Alumnae Network, we already have this shared experience and bond, and so want the best for each other. That's absolutely something to embrace and make the most of!

We couldn't agree more!

Karen Kimura is learning and development manager at The Girls' Day School Trust (GDST).

Testing! Testing!

And yet more testing: Ann Entwisle urges senior schools to reduce the number of their entrance examinations

At a recent meeting with prep school teachers, a frustrated and exasperated director of studies asked me if there was anything that could be done to reduce the amount of time spent by pupils in his school sitting an array of different assessments and examinations to senior independent schools. He was referring not just to the growing number of pre-tests but, at the other end of the process, to the proliferation of scholarship assessments.

Parents were entering their children for scholarship examinations for a range of schools in the hope that at least one of them would offer their child a prestigious scholarship place, ideally accompanied by a discount on fees. The

result was that prep schools, under pressure from parents, were having to prepare candidates not just for entrance examinations in Year 8, but also now for pre-tests in Year 6 and for a growing range of scholarship examinations, all taken at different times of the year.

The scholarship papers were of particular concern. Some, he told me, were so idiosyncratic in nature that they bore no relation to anything his pupils had been studying and were almost impossible to comprehend. In one case, a pupil reported being presented with a set of questions that looked as if they had just been torn out of a textbook.

"Why don't senior schools use the ISEB Common Academic



It is not just the prep schools that are concerned about the nature and quality of scholarship assessment.

Scholarship Examinations?” he asked me. “Surely it saves senior schools a lot of time and effort if they don’t have to set the papers themselves, and it’s in the best interests of the pupils to give them an examination based on a recognised syllabus.” I admitted that I was at a loss to know why so few schools used the Board’s scholarship papers but, if we weren’t providing examinations which senior schools wanted to use, then I needed to investigate the reasons.

It is not just the prep schools that are concerned about the nature and quality of scholarship assessment. Earlier this year Tim Hands, the Master of Magdalen College School, Oxford, and a former Chairman of HMC, wrote an article expressing concern about the pressure placed on pupils by sitting multiple scholarship papers. He questioned why so many Heads felt that they had to set scholarship papers which were unique to their schools and called for a ‘common paper’ which could be used by all.

It was an important message, and one which many prep schools would heartily endorse, but it also highlighted the fact that some senior school Heads still do not seem to know about the Common Academic Scholarship Examination (CASE) papers which the Board has been producing for the last ten years. Clearly ISEB must redouble its efforts to promote the assessments and examinations it produces for the independent sector, a sector it exists to serve with the backing of its patron associations – HMC, GSA and IAPS.

In addition to Common Entrance, the ISEB sets scholarship papers at 13+ in eight different subjects. Based on the Common Entrance syllabuses, they are written by highly

experienced and knowledgeable subject specialists drawn from the country’s leading independent schools and are available for use in either February or May. Mark schemes are provided, but schools are free to set their own criteria for marking, placing emphasis on the particular knowledge and skills that they want to assess. In short, the examinations are sufficiently flexible to serve the needs of most schools. Senior schools can choose to use just one subject, or all eight.

But perhaps yours is a school that knows all about the Common Academic Scholarship Examination papers but has decided not to use them. If that is the case, I urge you to look at the papers again, as outdated perceptions can linger and much may have changed since you last considered using them. Give them to your heads of department and get them to tell us what they think.

Through our annual surveys, the Board seeks feedback on all of its examinations and assessments but, sadly, constructive comments from senior schools are conspicuously lacking, both for Common Entrance and scholarship examinations. The Board wants to ensure that senior schools are provided with assessments that serve their needs, and that includes scholarship examinations. Your feedback is vital if we are going to continue to achieve this.

The Board also has an important role to play in reducing the number of pre-tests which many prep school pupils sit. I am pleased to report that the online Common Pre-Tests are meeting that need. The tests, in English, mathematics, verbal and non-verbal reasoning, were first commissioned by the Board in 2011, following a consultation process with both senior and

Moving on

prep schools. They are now being used by a growing number of senior schools to assess candidates in Year 6 or Year 7.

The tests are online, adaptive, auto-marked and standardised for the independent sector. They have the advantage that candidates sit the tests only once, with the results available immediately to any senior school registered to receive them. Established users include Westminster, St Paul's, Headington, Brighton College, Wellington College and Hurstpierpoint College, with Cheltenham College, Harrow, St Swithun's and University College School all coming on board this year. If you currently pre-test candidates and use your own tests, I strongly urge you to consider the Common Pre-Tests, not just for their commonality, but for their quality and reliability.

Senior schools need to consider the pressure put on pupils

by constant testing, and the difficulties faced by prep-school teachers in preparing them for a wide range of examinations, often at the expense of valuable teaching time. If pupils are able to sit just one set of pre-tests, for which it is not possible to practise, followed by just one set of entrance examinations and, for the most able, just one set of scholarship assessments, that burden would be substantially reduced.

Ann Entwisle is the chief administrator of the Independent Schools Examinations Board.

For more information about the assessments and examinations offered by the Independent Schools Examinations Board, go to www.iseb.co.uk or email enquiries@iseb.co.uk

HERE & THERE

If you have news of topical interest, however brief, for 'Here and There', please email it to Tom Wheare at postmaster@dunbry.plus.com. Items should not exceed 150 words. Good colour photographs are also welcome.



India to get first British partnership school

King's College, Taunton is breaking new ground by opening the first British partnership school in India. The school has chosen not to follow the common 'franchise' route into international development adopted by other UK schools in China or the Far East, but has formed a full partnership with a group of Indian educationalists.

The new school, which will be called King's College India, will be located on a 23-acre site in the city of Rohtak, Haryana, close to Delhi. Until partition, Rohtak was regarded as an educational hub of India. It houses universities and medical colleges, but this is the first truly international school in the region. Rohtak has been earmarked by the Indian government for extensive industrial growth and is already the base for a number of major multinational companies in India.

Construction of the new school is well underway, with a strikingly attractive core of buildings enclosing a spacious circular garden and amphitheatre. Facilities for boarding and sport, including cricket, football and golf, will be outstanding. The new international school will eventually provide a boarding and day school for 1250 pupils aged six to 18. The school will follow the UK Common Entrance system, followed by IGCSEs and A levels.

A new Head has been appointed: Bradley Sailes is himself an old boy of King's College, Taunton, and has extensive experience of senior leadership in schools in the UK, Kenya and Nigeria.

King's College India will open to prep school pupils in August 2016, largely following a curriculum based on that of King's College's own prep school, King's Hall. Secondary schooling will be developed in the following years. The plan is for the new school to be inspected by the UK's Independent School's Inspectorate and the Council of British International Schools.

Private schooling is not uncommon in India: there are around 3000 fee paying schools in Delhi alone. King's College India is setting up a scholarship programme to assist Indian families in meeting the costs of sending their children to the new school.

Grammar's footsteps

Intrigued by the furore over the possible reintroduction of grammar schools, Hugh Wright's Danish neighbour asked him to elucidate. Danes play cricket, so they are familiar with some of the arcana of English society, but this proved a tricky challenge even for an experienced Headmaster and former chairman of HMC

Schools provided by the state and run by Local Education Authorities (LEAs) in each city or county only began in the second half of the 19th century. Before that date all education was provided by the church, or by locally funded or fee paying schools. The very rich educated their children at home with private tutors, which is why schools where the parents paid fees were called public schools – *ie* not in private homes. These fee-paying schools were mostly boarding schools and children were sent to them from all over the country. Some are world famous and very old foundations: almost all were for boys, whilst a few from the 19th century onwards were for girls.

The local day schools were usually called Grammar Schools, and they might charge small fees and some children would be paid for by charities or local benefactors. The main subject in the curriculum was Latin – hence the name. Shakespeare went to one of these schools in his home town, so the education there was not bad! These schools often only catered for pupils up to the age of 14. The better off would then send their sons to a boarding school if they wished them to go to university or into one of the professions.

Some of these grammar schools are very old foundations. Many were founded in the reign of Edward VI to replace the monastery schools swept away in the Reformation, but some were older than that. My first Headship was of Stockport Grammar School, founded in 1487 by a man who had made his money in the City of London and wished to support boys like him in Stockport. He made sure it was connected to one of the Medieval City Livery Companies and that link with the Goldsmiths' Company still remains.

When the state started to provide universal education free of charge many of these local schools were taken into the state system. But the best or strongest of them, those that were able to charge fees and owned their own land, continued and still do so, often retaining their original name (*eg* the Manchester Grammar School).

But a second band of grammar schools sprang up after the Second World War. The 1944 Education act reorganized the state system completely. Under it every Local Education Authority had to provide and control both state primary schools and state secondary schools. These secondary schools were of two sorts: grammar schools and secondary modern schools. The use of the traditional name for an academic school caused some confusion, but they were from the beginning somewhat exclusive, providing only for a small proportion of the age cohort selected by an 11+ exam which made much use of now discredited IQ tests. Most children went to secondary modern schools which were less well funded and finished at 16, when some might transfer to the local grammar school for the six

or seven terms of the sixth form during which pupils were prepared for university.

By the same act, about 120 schools, including nearly all the traditional independent grammar schools, were given a Direct Grant by the state. As well as the pupils they could take via the 11+ exam, they could recruit pupils selected by their own entrance tests, and these pupils, often up to 70% of the total number in the school, were funded by the state and some few by the LEA. Both these places and places in the state grammar schools became highly valued by parents and there was much bitterness if children failed to get into them.

Under the Labour government of 1974 to 1979 the Direct Grant was phased out and local authorities were all required to make plans for the provision of Comprehensive schools. The Education Act of 1976 effectively forced the schools in the Direct Grant Scheme to choose between becoming fully state maintained or fully independent. Most, reluctantly, chose to join the independent sector, hugely boosting its academic standards.

The Assisted Places Scheme, a sort of 'nephew' of Direct Grant introduced by a Conservative government in 1981, survived until 1997, when it too was phased out by a Labour administration. Comprehensive schools became the preferred form for both Labour and Conservative governments and LEAs are forbidden to open new grammar schools. However there was some local discretion and some local authorities, such as Kent, have retained their grammar schools. Meanwhile many former Direct Grant/Assisted Places schools have raised large sums to fund endowments which provide free or subsidized places for those who cannot afford the full fees. The story of my last school illustrates all this and shows how within the broad picture there are local variations.

King Edward's School, Birmingham was founded before the Reformation by two groups of Catholic laymen who endowed it with land to pay the schoolmaster. After the Reformation it was refounded by King Edward VI (hence its name) and allowed to retain its land. This land became the centre of the growing and now enormous city of Birmingham.

As the income from this land grew in the 19th century, the governors of the original school, always very successful and popular, founded five other schools, three for boys and two for girls, to take children up to the age of 14. They could then transfer, if they were clever enough, to the first founded school or a newly founded sister school – and all the schools are called after King Edward!

As the 1944 Act made it compulsory that schools should retain all pupils first to the age of 15 then later to 16, the governors of the Foundation of King Edward's School felt they could not afford to subsidise seven schools, so they kept

Schools

the two independent schools but handed over the five that had acted as feeder schools to the LEA, so they are now state grammar schools. They are very popular, not least because they receive grants from the Foundation's income, which is now very large, as well as their normal state funding. The Foundation has always funded free places in their independent schools as far as they can afford to do so, and the governors have recently started a state school which is independent of the LEA. I was 'Chief Master' (the traditional title) of the original independent boys' school, but by a historical quirk was also 'Head' of all seven schools.

I hope this goes some way towards clarifying the situation, though, to be honest, I don't suppose it does! This system is far from perfect and the gap between the standards of results and facilities in the two systems has tended to widen since the state withdrew from subsidising independent schools.

In the absence of government funding, these schools have

spent huge sums of money on improving their facilities and provision. More recently, and partly in response to government pressure, the endowment of free and reduced fee places in the independent schools is growing all the time, and these schools are making great efforts to increase the funds available to widen access. Happily there is increasing partnership between the sectors and the model of governance in independent schools is being used more widely in the state system.

Educational controversy is nothing new. The views of Anthony Crossland, that intemperate opponent of grammar schools, were, according to Shakespeare, anticipated by Jack Cade in *Henry VI Part II*. He accused Lord Say of having 'most traitorously corrupted the youth of the realm in erecting a grammar school.' And where did Cade come from? Kent!

Hugh Wright is a former head of classics and therefore well aware of the importance of good grammar.

A 1930s Grammar School.



Do grammar schools have a role to play as part of an inclusive education system?

Adam Boddison gives a view from the tertiary sector



The debate on grammar schools has been dividing opinion for decades, with arguments both for and against their existence as part of an inclusive education system. Although the affordances and constraints are well documented and wide-ranging, the main areas of disagreement are centred on social mobility, selection and elitism.

One of the central arguments put forward in defence of grammar schools is that they have a role to play in terms of social mobility. If a student has academic talent but is from a socio-economic background that would prohibit access to the independent sector, then grammar schools are championed as a route to optimise access to university and, in turn, the 'middle class'. Indeed, there are many thousands of students who have made this very journey.

However, it would be right to question the proportion of students who actually fall into this category, since critics would argue that grammar schools are increasingly filled with those who can afford private education, thereby reducing the potential impact on social mobility and simultaneously having an adverse commercial impact on independent schools by reducing the potential number of fee-paying students.

The drift of students from the independent sector to state grammar schools can be seen as socially inclusive since it facilitates an environment based more on academic talent than ability to pay; whereas a system without grammar schools could directly result in social division between those who can afford private education and those who have to 'make do' with state education. In defence of the independent sector, many schools currently offer scholarships and many more were able to maximise social inclusion through the Assisted Places Scheme, which supported more than 80,000 students until it was abolished in 1997.

Several education ministers have argued that if state education had a high quality offer and adequately met the

needs of all students, then there would be no need for grammar schools or even private schools, but there is a serious question as to whether that ambition could ever become a reality. A mistake that has been repeated all too frequently is to think that where there is a successful application of education policy it can be replicated across the entire system.

A current example is the ambition for every state school to become an academy or free school. It is evident that this has worked in some contexts, but that does not necessarily mean it will work in all contexts. Similarly, to argue that grammar schools are the only way to educate our brightest students within the state sector would be foolish. The reality of an inclusive education system that promotes social mobility is that we need different types of schools that can cater for students with different needs, without the preconceived notion that some types of school are better than others.

To draw an analogy with buying a car, the choice is typically focused around the needs and preferences of the buyer rather than whether society thinks one car is better than another car. Clearly, those with the money can access cars not available to most people, but that does not undermine the quality of and confidence in the cars that most people drive. In the same way that it would be nonsensical to insist that everybody drove the same car, it would be nonsensical to make all schools the same, so grammar schools, special schools, private schools and all other types of school are part of an inclusive education system.

A central argument against grammar schools is the issue of selection. In particular, should a test taken by students at the age of 11 determine the type of education they receive for the next seven years? There are two issues here: the timing of the test and whether the test selects the right students. On the issue of timing, it is worth noting that some grammar schools allow entry at age 13 and many offer entry at age 16, so there

Schools

are already multiple entry points available for students who develop their academic talent at different stages. Indeed, independent schools are generally more flexible with entry points.

Perhaps more important is the often unresolved issue in relation to dealing with students who pass the test but struggle in the highly academic environment. For example, critics of the 11+ would argue that the test is unfairly biased towards those who can afford tuition to help pass the test, some of whom may later be revealed to be precisely those struggling students. In the interests of all students, maybe there ought to be exit points as well as entry points in grammar schools. This already happens after GCSEs with particular entry requirements for the sixth form, but should there also be an exit point at age 13?

On the issue of whether the 11+ tests select the right students for grammar school, this is a diversion from the real debate about grammar schools. It is virtually impossible to tutor-proof tests of any kind and the reality is that other testing systems do not receive the same level of criticism. For example, GCSEs and A levels are the primary measures used by universities in relation to the admission of more than 400,000 students per year to higher education, compared to the 15,000 students that are admitted to grammar schools, yet A levels are seen by the majority as part of a fair selection mechanism at age 18.

As a society, there is a real and constant dilemma in relation to supporting our most able young people using public money.

On the one hand, we argue that they will do well anyway, so why should we waste resources that might be better spent on those with the greatest needs. On the other hand, we argue that supporting our most able young people is an investment in the future that we will all ultimately benefit from. Furthermore, if the aim is for all children to reach their full potential, should that not include our most able?

In many ways, high quality teaching already caters for our most able, through effective differentiation in the classroom and systems such as setting and streaming. However, one could argue that having grammar schools as part of the state system allows for streaming at a macro-scale, so that teaching is better targeted at narrower ability ranges with a more fine-tuned approach to differentiation.

Ultimately, whether you are an advocate or a critic of grammar schools, the reality is that many parents aspire for their children to attend them and the grammar schools we have are heavily oversubscribed with 100,000 applicants for 15,000 places. Grammar schools are here to stay, but only we as a society can determine whether they become a funded alternative to private education or an essential part of an inclusive state education system.

Dr Adam Boddison is the director of the Centre for Professional Education at the University of Warwick. He is the author of The Maths behind the Magic and is also a qualified clinical hypnotherapist.

HERE & THERE

If you have news of topical interest, however brief, for 'Here and There', please email it to Tom Wheare at postmaster@dunbry.plus.com. Items should not exceed 150 words. Good colour photographs are also welcome.

Don't mention the Rugby World Cup!

The word 'Japan' may have been taboo, but four South African students had the last laugh as they enjoyed a three-week exchange studying at Trent College.

The visit was part of a new cultural exchange programme between Trent College and Crawford College, La Lucia in Durban, for participating students to sample school life and education in another country while experiencing differences and similarities in family life, language, lifestyle, surroundings and, of course, World Cup rugby teasing!

Trent College pupils Will Garner, Rudi Reed, Pip Ryder, Romani Kakad and teacher Keri Price spent three weeks at Crawford La Lucia in the summer holidays, staying with families and experiencing local life around Durban on South Africa's east coast in 'winter' weather (never colder than an English summer!).

Their in-school highlights included trying languages such as Zulu and Afrikaans and discovering new literature, like South African playwright and novelist Athol Fugard's *Hello and Goodbye*.

While boarding was something new to the South African students, Georgia Fritsch, Kiera Lander, Gillian Muller and Roxanne Rowland, the young visitors experienced other significant differences too, not just in the respective histories of the two countries but also in the subjects studied, such as psychology and Spanish; sports played, like badminton; and the local wildlife, with pigeons in contrast to lions! Paul Taylor, deputy head (academic) at Trent College, established the exchange. He believes it has shown real value in its first year. "I hope 2015 marks the beginning of a strong and long-lasting relationship with our new friends at Crawford College. The chance to live and study in a different culture can be life changing for pupils on both sides. We look forward to selecting our 2016 exchange pupils shortly," he said.

From A* grades to *Star Wars*

Reaching for the stars in Hertfordshire's Tring Park School



Bishop's Stortford and Tring are about as far from each other as it is possible to be in the county of Hertfordshire and they can each boast a remarkable 'favourite son'. Cecil Rhodes was born the son of a clergyman in Bishop's Stortford and suffered delicate health as child. He was therefore sent to live with his brother in Natal and in the short course of the rest of his life he left an indelible impression on South Africa.

He also left a large endowment to his old university, Oxford, to found and maintain the Rhodes Scholarship programme. This has amply fulfilled his intention to cement bonds between the UK, the Commonwealth and the United States, bringing young men who became Prime Ministers of Pakistan, Canada and Australia to the university, as well as US President Bill Clinton.

Rhodes was a determined and often impulsive man who said: 'If you have an idea, and it is a good idea, if you only stick to it you will come out all right'. The big idea in the life of Walter Rothschild, Tring's most remarkable resident, was to run a zoological museum and, despite being only seven when he had it, it lasted him the rest of his life and produced a collection that forms a large part of the Natural History Museum in London.

He built a private museum in the grounds of his family mansion, where a huge collection of mammals, birds, reptiles and insects can still be found managed by the Natural History Museum at Tring. The mansion itself now houses a remarkable educational institution, Tring Park School for the Performing Arts, where today some highly talented young people, inspired by their 'good idea', are following the 'reach for the stars' examples of Walter Rothschild and Cecil Rhodes.

Tring Park has been one of the UK's leading schools for young people with a talent for performing arts for almost 100 years. It traces its roots back to the two schools founded by Grace Cone in 1919 and Olive Ripman in 1922, which became first the Cone Ripman School and then the Arts Educational Schools. Famous students such as Margaret Lockwood, Julie Andrews and Darcy Bussell personify the remarkably wide range of training and professional development on offer.

After cutting its ties with Arts Ed, the school relocated to the country, set up home in the extraordinary former Rothschild mansion, and renamed itself Tring Park. The school moved with the times, adding commercial music to its performance courses, and opening its own theatre, as well as building a hugely impressive dance studio wing. It has certainly always been one of the go-to schools for parents whose offspring have aspirations to dance and to act.

Many visit the school's Markova Theatre to see the stars of the future in action, as the school regularly provides its students with performing opportunities while they are training. In February 2016 the musical theatre production will be *Cabaret*, and the show is sure to run to packed houses and showcase some incredible young talent.

But the school is fast becoming a favourite for other reasons. One of the chief reasons why property prices are so high in Hertfordshire is the fact that many London parents with children approaching school age move to be closer to the academic centres of excellence in places such as St Albans, Harpenden and Berkhamsted.

Residents of the county are spoilt for choice, with many excellent state schools achieving academic results to rival the



independent sector, so Hertfordshire's private schools have to be at their very best in order to fill their classrooms – and they are and they do! The stellar potential of the pupils and alumni of Tring Park School is increasingly matched by a solid record of academic achievement.

Parents know that the course of a career in the theatre or film can never be guaranteed to run smoothly, and so they are keen not only to nurture their sons' and daughters' thespian talent, but also to ensure that they leave with a clutch of high grades academically. They have some of the most impressive traditional independent schools on their doorstep, but, according to the published school league tables (which, it has to be said, do not include all schools in the county), Tring Park is in the top ten independent schools in Hertfordshire for A level results, with almost 32% of its A level students achieving an A* or A grade, and 64% achieving A*, A or B grades.

These strong academic results are even more creditable given the fact that the school does not have any form of academic admission selection process, since students are awarded places at the school on the basis of performance auditions only.

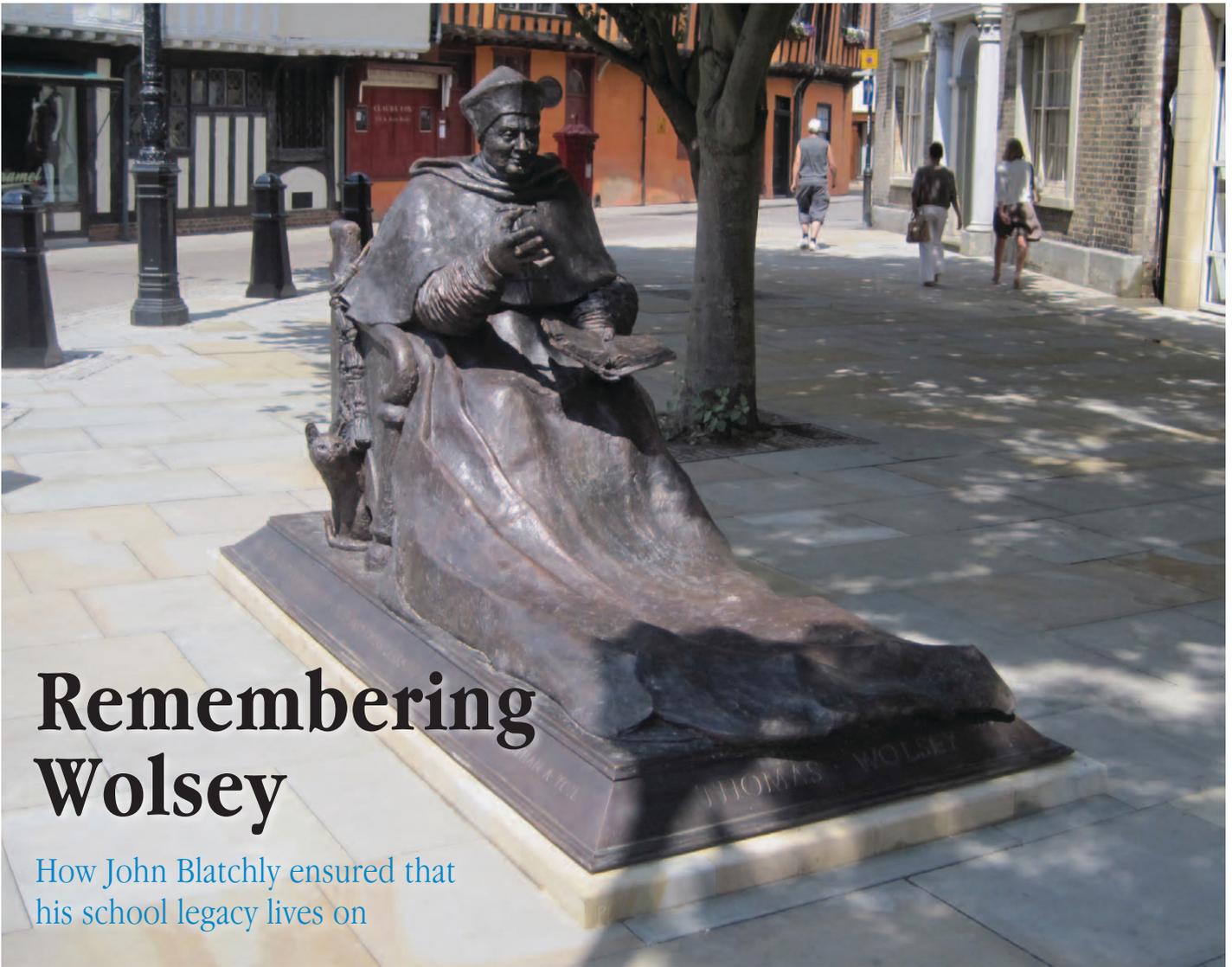
But the school is determined to establish and maintain high academic standards because an increasing number of its students are choosing to pursue vocations such as medicine and law when they leave the school. At a recent Open Day, prospective parents were impressed by a speech made by the head boy, Will, in which he said that he had learned while at Tring Park that his vocation was to be a doctor and not a dancer after all, and he was going off to pursue a different dream to the one he had when he started at the school as a small child. "Perhaps the most remarkable thing about going to Tring Park School," he said, "is the fact that it can deliver, to such a high standard, the vocational and academic performance that it does."

And even for the majority of its students, who still opt for performing arts colleges for their higher education, that high academic performance is necessary, since the performing arts colleges are setting increasingly tough academic entrance requirements. “It is a highly competitive industry, and students always need something to fall back on,” says Stefan Anderson at the school’s crowded open days. “We are very proud of our successful students who are starring in Hollywood movies, but we are also extremely proud of those who are going on to study medicine at university.”

And so Tring Park goes from strength to strength, with its heady mix of stars and scholars studying in an environment that could be a film location itself. In fact the Tring Park Rothschild mansion is a location, having been used for the latest Avengers film, *Age of Ultron*, as a Russian dance school! It is a unique educational establishment, offering an education like no other.

At the next open day in March 2016, alumna Daisy Ridley will be known across the globe as the star of the new Star Wars film, *The Force Awakens*, in which she plays the key central character, Rey. But at the same time, a young man will be gearing up to leave school and start his medical degree as he pursues his ‘good idea’.





Remembering Wolsey

How John Blatchly ensured that his school legacy lives on



John Blatchly

Between 1862 and 1961, six out of the eight Archbishops of Canterbury were former Headmasters – Charles Longley (Harrow), Archibald Tait (Rugby), Edward Benson (Wellington College), Frederick Temple (Rugby again), William Temple (Repton) and Geoffrey Fisher (Repton too). It is often and wrongly said that Basil Hume had been Headmaster of Ampleforth

where he was Abbot for 13 years before he became Archbishop of Westminster, but one of his predecessors, Cardinal Hinsley, had been a Headmaster, founding and then leading St Bede's Grammar School in Bradford at the turn of the 20th century.

By far the most famous Englishman to be a Headmaster and an Archbishop was, of course, Thomas, Cardinal Wolsey. He was a major European statesman and his fame went beyond this island in his lifetime and thereafter. 'KING'S MOLL RENO'D IN WOLSEY'S HOME TOWN' bawled the *Chicago Sun Times* when Mrs Wallis Simpson was granted

a *decree nisi* in Ipswich in October 1936. Although it was historically a little tactless to mention Wolsey, royalty and a divorce in the same line of print, it nevertheless remains the remarkable fact that the newspaper assumed that its readers would know who Wolsey was and where he had been born.

John Blatchly, editor of *Conference & Common Room* from 1987 to 1992, who died in September 2015, was a major figure in East Anglian historical circles. Headmaster of Ipswich School from 1972 to 1993, he enjoyed more than 21 of extraordinarily fulfilling retirement in the town. School archivist, chairman of the Suffolk Records Society and Ipswich Historic Churches, he was also honorary Wolsey Professor at University Campus Suffolk (UCS), a fitting title for a man who, like Wolsey, saw education in its widest context.

UCS may perhaps be seen as the modern heir of Wolsey's great plans for his birthplace and John Blatchly was a polymath who would have been entirely at home in Wolsey's company. A distinguished scientist and musician, John wrote many publications about the local history of Ipswich and Suffolk and one of his late books was the delightfully quirky *Booke of Divers Devices and Sorts of Pictures* compiled by Thomas Fella between 1592 and 1598. His efforts were by no means confined to the literary. His dynamic commitment carried two marvellous projects to fruition in the town – the statue of Thomas Wolsey and the restoration of the bells of St Lawrence.

Wolsey's statue now stands on the corner of Silent Street in Curson Plain, Ipswich, bearing the quotation 'Pleasure is to mingle with study that the child may think learning an amusement rather than a toil'. How much more fortunate were the boys of Magdalen College School in the last years of the 15th century to have such a Master, compared with the first generation of Wellingtonians under the relentlessly high-minded Benson. For John Blatchly, study and learning were indeed sources of infinite pleasure.

But of all John's projects, surely his finest memorial was the restoration of the bells of St Lawrence Church. Four were cast in 1450 and a fifth added about 30 years later. Their sound is unchanged, since they have not had to be retuned

and they still have their original clappers. It is, of course, well worth celebrating the fact that these bells are not only still there but are still being rung, and admiring the civic pride that generated the money to fund the project.

But church bells convey all sorts of messages and tap into our deeper levels of consciousness and feeling. They ring for marriages and deaths, for joy and sorrow, for the present and the past. The sound is uniquely rich, carrying as it does so many acoustic overtones, messages of great complexity that echo the human condition and spread far and wide. Wolsey heard exactly the sound that 500 years later we hear too, thanks to the skill of the mediaeval founders and the dedication of John Blatchly.

HERE & THERE

If you have news of topical interest, however brief, for 'Here and There', please email it to Tom Wheare at postmaster@dunbry.plus.com. Items should not exceed 150 words. Good colour photographs are also welcome.

Abingdon School staff hold their nerve

Abingdon School's 'Be The Best You Can Be' programme was launched at the end of September in spectacular fashion with the visit of Mike Mullen, former World Champion and 2014 UK Champion in BMX halfpipe. In his talk Mike encouraged the first and second year boys to realise that 'the biggest challenges will teach you the best lessons' and that self-reflection and never giving up on yourself are crucial if you want to succeed.

Staff found themselves more fully involved in things than they had expected: volunteering to be jumped over in an outdoor demonstration of Mike's BMX skills! Adam Jenkins, who leads the programme, said, "Mike Mullen's talk got the programme off to a great start this year. His message about persevering when things don't go to plan and how failing at something can sometimes be a good lesson was inspirational, particularly for the first year boys who are just starting out on their time at secondary school."

George Vinton, aged 12: "I was stunned watching Mike Mullen jump over the teachers with ease on his BMX bike. It was unbelievable."



Staff members line up for the big jump.

Bon appétit!

But if you can't read the small print stay out of the kitchen

The *Jamie's School Dinners* series was a TV campaign that achieved a very positive public response. School dinners have not always had a good culinary reputation and food is something that almost everyone is interested in. Since one of the most important things that schools teach is how to get along with other people, eating together should be high on the life skills curriculum.

Just as it is said that 'the family that eats together stays together', so schools can reckon that what happens when and where the pupils eat is significant and important. Independent boarding schools traditionally valued house feeding very highly as it gave the housemaster or housemistress, the matron and the members of the house themselves a very accurate guide as to how things were going individually and collectively. Bursars have largely put a stop to this civilized practice, but central feeding does allow a far wider range of meals to be served to the choosier contemporary clientele.

What happens in the dining hall or canteen is still important in terms of a good education, one that encourages pupils to share and enjoy 'down' time together and even to become aware of the skills and enthusiasms of the catering staff. Gone are the days when a prep school matron could distribute the breakfast cornflakes by the bare fistful from the giant communal vessel to the individual bowls of the pupils as they passed before her.

Schools now have free-standing counters where food is cooked on demand, most have salad options and all have vegetarian provision. The concept of unappealing and sometimes positively indigestible school food is an increasingly outdated trope that gave rise to a Japanese Rock group called School Food Punishment which flourished from 2004 to 2012. But even their debut album proclaimed that 'school food is good food'! Jamie Oliver disagreed and school dinners became, for better or worse, a cause célèbre.

Food provided in schools is often brought in and not prepared on the spot, and that approach is now, of course, a huge slice of the food industry. Take-away lunches and ready-made meals are part of the staple diet of individuals and households, providing supposedly 'world' cuisine and a riot of mouth-watering copy promoting every package. People have also become thoroughly accustomed to labels providing detailed information about what is and is not inside the packet and how many calories can be counted.

Just as eating habits have changed over the last 20 years, so have eating problems, and all those concerned with making, supplying and endorsing what people eat have to take immense care in the preparation of food, in maintaining the highest standards of cleanliness and in the avoidance of allergens.

How does this affect the major catering companies? Jerry Brand explains.

This is a very topical question right now, particularly as we are more than a year on from the date when the new allergens legislation came into force in December 2014. There has been much debate and hysteria this year around the impact that these new laws are having on the catering and supplier industry in terms of daily management and the consequent impact that this is having on resource.

We've seen celebrity chefs signing petitions regarding the suggestion that the new legislation is hampering innovation and chef creativity, and we also uncovered some interesting statistics ourselves in a recent independent survey we commissioned across the catering sector. We asked how managers are coping and adapting and found that a whopping 98% admit to having concerns about managing the new legislation.

We also found that almost one third of catering managers said that one of their biggest concerns is that staff may give out incorrect allergens information to customers which could

result in serious consequences. This was matched by a further third who say their main current concern is keeping on top of allergens advice on a daily basis.

Making mistakes and being fined is another concern for 25% of businesses and ensuring that suppliers provide the correct information on allergens is also a worry for 11%. Only 2% were able to say confidently that they don't have any concerns at all regarding how these regulations are managed moving forward, which shows how much uncertainty there is in the sector.

At one level, school catering teams, suppliers and manufacturers are having to adapt to the changes unless they want to face some pretty hefty fines. Last year it was all about getting ready for the impending deadline; now it's about keeping your head above the water and your eye on a rising tide of information and requirements. Ensuring that people get the correct allergens information is vital and can be literally a matter of life and death, so it's understandable that this is



a concern for many servicing the education catering sector, especially those who manage their catering services in-house.

Equally, keeping on top of allergen advice daily can be a huge drain on resource and this is where the real ongoing worries lie for catering teams and their suppliers. But having the right processes and plans in place in the first instance is a good starting point.

School catering teams need to start to build a bank of recipes on their systems and to keep an allergen directory that contains all the necessary information easily to hand for any pupils who wish to know. Creating peace of mind through initial compliance will ensure that creativity and innovation is allowed to thrive in the school kitchen, but in a sensible and controlled way that is safe for the consumer.

Benefiting from the intervention of fit-for-purpose technology will also clarify the detail involved in managing allergens legislation and reduce the time that takes on a daily

basis. Thankfully, technology has progressed to a point where it is now entirely possible for schools to manage the burden of these new regulations without having a direct impact on the catering team in terms of the level of the time and resource needed to find a way through existing requirements and to keep on top of any future changes.

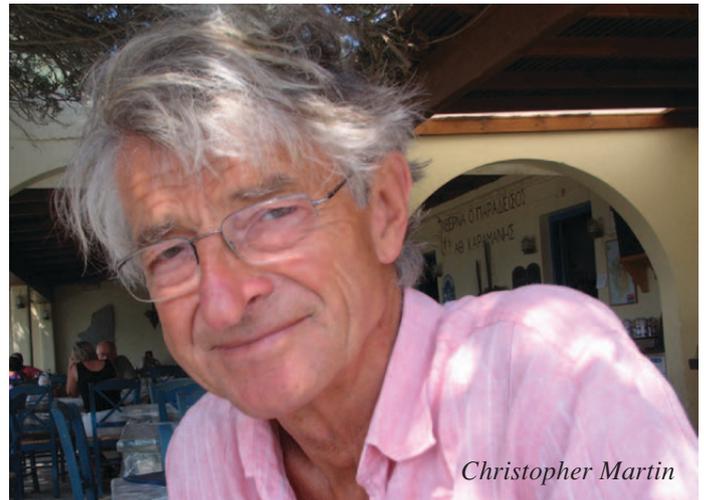
Schools can also keep costs down by using a technology system that incorporates live supplier pricing and online eProcurement. That way, the product updates, recipe and stock costing is all automatic. The key is to recognise the impact that allergens legislation will have on your school, deal with it and then plan around it.

Jerry Brand is the managing director of Caternet (www.caternet.co.uk).

Source: Independent research conducted by Censuswide Ltd and commissioned by Caternet Ltd.

Teaching – the great performing art

Christopher Martin applauds the stars
and spear-carriers in the classroom



Christopher Martin

Society as a whole lays an almost impossible task on the shoulders of teachers. They are required to perform a miracle every day in their classrooms, demonstrating hour by hour a level of leadership unequalled in any other profession. By the sheer force of their personality, they either win consent or they don't. A new prep school teacher once noticed an uncharacteristic hush in the chaotic row that was normal in the next door classroom. In it a plaintiff voice could be heard proclaiming "The next boy who talks, I'll kill!" The pandemonium resumed.

Nothing elsewhere prepares children to accept this example. Not on the streets, nor in many homes, nor in the media will they encounter any comparable situation where a single adult has to try to persuade them that their own interests are served best by working with others to achieve ends which initially often seem beyond them or opaque or both.

Perhaps more than any other profession, teachers are easily caricatured. Kenneth Tynan set out his views with characteristic pugnacity:

In the theatre, there are three kinds of schoolmaster; the breezy young sportsman, the thin lipped sadist and the genial bumbler. Swots are always known as Crump or Pilkington.

Such esoteric figures occurred more frequently in the past than is the case today, when greatly improved professionalism characterises teachers as a species. The pick of the *TES*'s 'No Comment' column in 1982 gives a flavour of the then prevailing educational ethos. For instance, here's the chairman of the Durham education committee:

Personally, I agree with the use of the cane, but I don't like to refer to it as corporal punishment. That makes it sound brutal.

Or a London comprehensive Head, quoted in *The Times* on the use of the cane:

We use it mainly for trivial offences such as swearing, petty extortion, smoking, deliberate disobedience, bullying and vandalism.

This does sound over the top, rather like ironing your shirt with a steamroller. And who could blame pupils for indulging in all these vices simultaneously when they were patronised by an examination system which could come up with a

question such as this in a CSE biology paper: 'State three things that a living rabbit can do that a toy rabbit cannot do.'

Backed by military discipline, of course, things become easier. Company Sergeant Major Blood of the Coldstream Guards used to say to officer cadets, "When you've inspected the men's feet, you've learnt something about leadership." The subtle relationship between him and his charges was nevertheless significantly less subtle than that between a teacher and a class, being of the "I call you Sir, and you call me Sir. The difference is, you mean it" kind. He reduced this relationship to its raw ingredients when confronting one poor cadet at full volume at a distance of about two inches. "You are the worst example of a 'uman being in the history of the 'uman race – Sir."

Something that all schools purport to provide for their charges is cultural awareness, though a preoccupation with sports results, being comfortingly enveloped in statistics, can obscure this objective. Most school assemblies are aware that not all is going well on the games field when the Head spends an unusual amount of time praising the U14 C team's plucky draw.

If there's not even that consolation, they may be treated to a discursus on the life lessons they can learn by engaging whole-heartedly in competition. The rules of the Eton Field Game state that a player is offside unless in 'hot pursuit of the ball' and the Harrow School song resounds to the energising cry 'Follow up!' One thinks of the 'earnest looking forward' to be found in the hymn *'Through the night of doubt and sorrow'*, whilst the Eton Boating Song candidly admits that 'Rugby may be more clever'.

However, if one were searching for evidence of the true ethos of a school, one might not turn initially to a study of the school song, a genre seldom cherished for its musical or literary quality. Wykehamists sing mournfully of their longing for home, sweet home, whilst the first two lines of a reputable girls' school song used to be – though probably no longer are – 'When Mrs Digby first conceived A school was sorely needed...'

Indeed even the Army lays claim to involvement in the promotion of culture. The story is told of one battalion commander who summoned his Sergeant Major one day to tell him to fall the troops in for a cultural exposition on poetry, starting with Keats. This he did, with the instruction:

Right you lot. Get fell in. Today you're going to 'ave a

lecture on Keats. I bet some of you ignorant beggars don't even know what a keat is.

Perhaps the officer had his mind on extending the lifespan of his soldiers, realising the enrichment that comes from immersion in the arts. A life devoted to them frequently leads to longevity, which, come to think of it, should not come as a surprise. Pierre Monteux, interviewed on the BBC on his 90th birthday, was reminded that he listed his hobbies in *Who's Who* as model railways and women. He pointed out that at 90 he was unfortunately too old for model railways.

Sam Goldwyn reminded us that it is always dangerous to prophesy, especially about the future. Nevertheless, given the vertiginous speed at which knowledge itself and access to it are increasing, it is probably not invidious to assume that we will all continue for the foreseeable future to seek improving routes into knowledge, rather than merely its retention, as we struggle to help new generations prepare themselves for whatever lies ahead.

Until very recently, the curriculum has evolved at a snail's pace, as did society's perceived needs. At Bristol Cathedral

School, for example, in 1878, the Headmaster, the Rev Henry Pate, described his school's programme as follows, subjects listed in priority order:

Religious Knowledge, Latin, French, Euclid, Book keeping and Mensuration, Elements of the Physical Sciences and Drilling.

By 1907, all of 30 years down the track, this had been increased by the addition of English literature, hygiene and shorthand. The last paragraph of a document explaining the school's ambitions for its pupils at that time reads:

Military drilling, taught by Mr Morrie Tyrell, forms part of the school course. All boys who are not physically incapacitated are expected to take part.

What would Morrie have made of today's curriculum with sex education, health and beauty or equine studies?

Christopher Martin, former Headmaster of Bristol Cathedral School and Millfield, received his cultural education in the 10th Gurkha Rifles.

HERE & THERE

If you have news of topical interest, however brief, for 'Here and There', please email it to Tom Wheare at postmaster@dunbry.plus.com. Items should not exceed 150 words. Good colour photographs are also welcome.

Oundle pupils stage Waiting for Godot

When *Waiting for Godot* first opened at the Arts Theatre Club on 5th January, 1953, it was not met with universal acclaim. Some were bored, some confused, some left at the interval, some before, but *Irish Times* critic Vivian Mercier described it as 'a play where nothing happens twice and yet it keeps the audience glued to its seats.'

Oundle pupil Charlie Rogers' production not only battled the at times bewildering vagaries of Beckett's most significant work, but also the challenges of outdoor performance. Staged in the round with the lonely tree of the School Cloisters as its centre point, a tremendously able cast managed to pull off a remarkable version of the play. Nothing did happen twice and yet, despite the autumn chill in the air and the chiming bells of St Peter's Church, the audience remained glued to their seats whilst two Charlie Chaplin-like tramps waited ... and waited.

Director Charlie Rogers and Assistant Director Tom Younger, who are both 17, took the two central roles of Vladimir and Estragon. Together they made a compelling tragic-comic duo whose onstage relationship, with all its twists and turns, gave real heart to this elusive piece.

Oundle's Stahl Theatre Director Naomi Jones commented, "Their Laurel and Hardy-esque physical comedy showed great skill and precision; impressive for professionals, let alone two boys of just 17."

Coco Brown was a strangely beguiling but none the less brutal slave master Pozzo alongside Axi Hobil's much abused Lucky. His tender portrayal of this character engendered genuine sympathy from the audience whilst Ed Hodgson as the boy communicated an innocence and fragility which gave the play depth and variety.

Naomi concluded, "Charlie Rogers and his impressive cast should be applauded for pulling off such an ambitious production. Staging a Beckett play is a task which most professional directors would be daunted by, but to do this outside with an all-pupil cast is hugely admirable."



Catching up

Cat Scutt asks what teachers can learn from digital games?

Whether we consider it positive or not, the majority of today's schoolchildren have grown up surrounded by and reliant on digital technology, be it in the form of tablets, games consoles, smartphones or PCs. While Marc Prensky's claim that the brains of 'digital natives' have developed so that they actually think differently from previous generations has been widely questioned, the idea that students are used to working – and learning – in different ways is compelling and valuable in terms of understanding how to motivate and develop them in the classroom and beyond.

The way that young people (and the not-so-young) learn through playing digital games is a crucial part of this. As well as developing key dispositions such as problem-solving and collaboration, players can learn subject content through playing historical strategy, business and sports games. The learning that takes place in digital games, whether dispositions or content based, is neither the primary nor the explicit goal of the games being played, unless they are concerned with times table or spelling. Nor, however, is it completely incidental to the game, but rather it is the outcome of carefully crafted game experiences.

As we look for new ways to engage our students in learning curriculum content and developing thinking skills, as well as leadership, empathy and other personal qualities as part of their educational experience, it is worth exploring how games can be used or can at least inform our practice to this end.

One option, of course, is to make use of digital games in the classroom. This has a number of advantages, particularly where there is game content that maps to what we want our students to learn, as they can simultaneously develop valuable dispositions and build knowledge and understanding of curriculum content.

Where, historically, there were barriers to using games designed for entertainment as opposed to education, an influx of online games with lower licence costs and shorter play time, combined with greater availability of devices, means that using digital games in lessons or as homework tasks is now a viable proposition. Games can also be used as jumping-off points to activities outside the game itself. Sci-fi titles such as *Star Wars*, for example, could be used to inspire students to explore aspects of space travel and ignite a passion that takes them far beyond the game itself.

The alternative, though, is to examine what it is about games that make them so effective as learning environments, and emulate that in our teaching practice. The idea of applying game elements to non-game situations – known as 'gamification' – has been explored extensively over the last few years, with countless attempts to 'gamify' everything from education to finance and healthcare.

The problem, though, is that such gamification has typically been focused on the overt and rather superficial features of games, such as levels, badges and scoreboards. While these may be effective to some extent, they do not really harness the true power of digital games as learning environments.

What is it about the way that games are designed, then, that can actually provide us with a useful basis for gamifying our lessons, schemes of work and indeed whole schools?

The most useful starting point for understanding the power of games as educators is the concept of 'flow', the brainchild of psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi¹, who defines it as the mental state of a person who is so immersed in what they are doing that they are aware of nothing except the activity itself. It is common to see this level of total absorption when we watch children playing games, whether in the playground or on a computer, and it is also the sign of a truly powerful learning activity.

According to Csikszentmihalyi, the eight conditions required in order to achieve a state of flow are: clear goals; immediate feedback; no sense of ego and no sense of time; being able to concentrate entirely on the task; feeling fully in control and fully immersed in the task; and the task itself being challenging but achievable. If we begin to explore how games ensure that players enter the state of flow, it quickly becomes clear that there are two main design features of digital games that are important in creating these eight conditions.

The first is the idea of designing a game experience that is truly tailored and personalised to the player's current capability, play style and aims. Games typically provide an overall goal or 'win state' towards which a player aims. This might be completing the highest level or scoring the highest number of points, but there is almost always a range of other smaller goals within a game, incorporating short-term, medium-term and long-term challenges.

These overlap to maintain the player's interest and focus and take differing lengths of times, from two minutes up to two days. Players receive instant feedback on their success through a variety of means, from a simple 'pass or fail' mechanism, to the use of scores, 'lives', health levels and other metrics, giving them a clear sense of their progress and the steps that they should take to improve. More than this, though, the best games are constantly adapting to the player, to ensure that the goals they are set and the difficulty of achieving them is always matched to their current level of skill, ensuring that tasks remain challenging but achievable.

The second key design feature is the way in which games allow players to leave their own world behind and invest in a new experience. Digital games often involve players taking on a role, whether real or fantastical, which offers opportunities for players to engage in activities from a new perspective and work with others without a sense of their own ego: for example allowing a player who is typically shy to take on a leadership role in an online game.

In a sense, this role-play is easily comparable with the kind of dressing-up activities that are commonly undertaken by children in the physical world in order to explore other identities. Alongside this, players are able to immerse themselves in an unfamiliar environment, fully in control of their own actions, and can learn through exploration, trial and

'Today's children have grown up with computers.'



error, and interaction. Players rarely read the full instructions for a digital game before beginning. Instead, they develop their gameplay intuitively and in interaction with the feedback they receive from the system.

In terms of the first design feature, the parallels with what we strive to achieve in the classroom are obvious: the idea of personalised learning is nothing new. Setting differentiated tasks according to students' current skill level and learning preferences is a core feature of most teachers' practice in the classroom, although, at a more macro level, the idea of 'stage-not-age' progress through learning is perhaps less common, in the UK at least.

The idea of designing tasks of different lengths is also hardly original, but explicit planning of different levels of challenge that overlap is worth some consideration. Equally, an 'adaptive classroom', where all learning activities are constantly adjusting based on progress, is probably what most teachers aim for, even though the reality of creating one is a challenge. However, as we gather more and more data on our students, this becomes increasingly possible, and there is something to think about here when we consider how and why we collect data through summative and formative assessment.

The second design feature, of role-play and exploratory learning, is probably more familiar to junior or prep school

teachers, particularly Early Years practitioners. In the senior school, it may be commonplace in certain areas as a time-bound, stand alone activity, but students are rarely given the time and space to develop themselves and their knowledge in an unfamiliar world or an assumed persona for any extended period.

There is no 'silver bullet' here, of course. Much of the pedagogy of gaming merely stands to reinforce what we already know about how students learn best, and yet struggle to replicate with large groups of students in a time-bound, high-stakes, examination-driven environment. However, by thinking about these elements of learning in an integrated way, and looking for effective opportunities to gamify our classroom, (those interested in a truly gamified school will find much of use in Jane McGonigal's excellent *Reality is Broken*²), we can at least begin to develop classroom learning experiences that are tailored to today's students' ways of learning and can help to bring them into the elusive state of 'flow'.

Cat Scutt is head of learning technology at the Girls' Day School Trust.

References

1. Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1990). *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*. New York: Harper.
2. McGonigal, J. (2011). *Reality is Broken*. London: Jonathan Cape.

Making the best and avoiding the worst of the internet

Senior pastoral staff at King Edward's Witley are well aware of the downside of the infinite possibilities of the web and are educating pupils and parents in identifying and handling potential risks. They are also making the most of modern systems of communication to improve management systems within the school

Parents frequently despair that their children seem to have limited interest in the art of good conversation, yet the current younger generation cannot be accused of not communicating. Far from it; they are inundated with opportunities to communicate via the plethora of social media channels now available to them.

E-safety is the buzzword used to raise awareness of the appropriate protocols that should be followed to safeguard young people during their online experiences. Not a day goes by without a report about the potential dangers of the internet, but while these are undoubtedly of grave concern, they should be balanced by an appreciation of the wealth of information and opportunities that the digital environment provides.

Andrew Day, chair of the e-safety working group at King Edward's Witley, is well aware of the concerns many parents have about the internet which is, for some of them, an unfamiliar environment. The school takes pride in its outstanding commitment to pastoral care, and although it already has a strong e-security policy in place, it invited independent e-safety expert Karl Hopwood to the school to speak to pupils and staff and improve awareness of the steps that need to be taken to ensure a safe and responsible approach to internet usage.

According to Mr Hopwood, e-safety is not about enforcing bans on access to the internet, since that is all too likely to drive increased usage. Rather it is about empowering children and young people to keep themselves safe when online and encouraging them to be responsible users of the technology that is so appealing to them.

Cyberbullying, sexting, accessing inappropriate content, engaging in conversations with paedophiles or extremists, or developing an addiction to gaming or online activity – these are all challenging issues associated with the online community that the majority of young people are familiar with. But they are not necessarily equipped with the appropriate knowledge to understand how to protect themselves from falling victim to any of these digital dangers.

In addition to this, school-aged children are regularly warned about the increasing number of accidents or tragedies caused by young people failing to 'switch off' from social media when they need to pay attention to their physical safety in the real world. 'Divided attention' or 'inattentive blindness', as psychologists call it, can be responsible for children failing to hear cars or trains or even noticing the edge of a cliff top, because they are too wrapped up in a social media dialogue.

According to Mr Hopwood, the risks our children are less

familiar with relate to the unintentional supply of personal information and the implications of this; and the failure to recognise the potential long term effects that inappropriate online behaviour can cause, resulting in a tarnished reputation for life.

A child's reputation can be harmed not just by what they post, but also by what others share about them online, such as friends tagging them in inappropriate posts, photographs or videos. And while schools are charged with a growing responsibility to recognise the risks for the pupils in their care, Mr Hopwood believes that some schools are not entirely up to speed with all the critical safeguarding measures that need to be taken.

"There needs to be an ongoing awareness campaign to alert teaching staff to the potential dangers that the internet can introduce their pupils to; and this should include regular refresher training as technology evolves and new risks emerge within the digital landscape. It is not just teachers associated with technology-based subjects who need to be kept up to date; all teachers have a duty to embrace current technology and modern methods of communication so that they are able to effectively monitor the behaviour of children in their care," he says.

Andrew Day agrees. "At King Edward's, we take e-safety seriously and completely agree with Karl's view that e-safety is not about technically blocking websites but far more about educating our pupils to use sound judgment when deciding what to access, and to consider future implications when posting content online. Although e-safety, as a topic, is covered and revisited throughout years 7, 8 and 9 within the computing curriculum, simply featuring the lesson within our curriculum is not enough. We are looking to shift thinking across the school.

"Pupils spend more time on social media each day than they do with any individual teacher. Pupils are the masters of their online destiny and we, as a school community, have a joint responsibility to look after each other 'online', as much as we do 'offline'. Inviting Karl to King Edward's each year for his thought-provoking whole school training significantly enriches our e-safety campaign and brings it to the forefront of minds. We do not believe that the sudden spike in access to Facebook privacy settings across the school network in the 20 minutes that follow each talk is a coincidence." But what advice is there for parents of the current new media savvy generation? As statistics show that children are going online at an increasingly younger age, what steps should

parents take? Mr Hopwood suggests the following top five e-security tips.

Lead by example

According to a recent report, children now worry more about their parents spending too much time on their mobiles or computers than parents worry about their children. Almost 70% of children think their parents spend too much time on their mobile phone, iPad or similar device, a poll of families found.

Right time, right place

Many children have their mobile phone or a tablet in their bedroom at night, which can cause a number of problems. Not only does it encourage unlimited access to the internet at a time when the child should be sleeping, it can also trigger health problems. According to a report in *The Daily Telegraph*,

smart phones emit 'blue light' which is known to hinder melatonin, a chemical in the body that promotes sleep. The night-time use of smart phones appears to have both psychological and physiological effects on people's ability to sleep and on sleep's essential recovery functions.

Suggest your child has a 'technology amnesty' from an agreed time every evening and keep the phones and tablets away from the bedroom.

Look out for warning signs

A marked change in behaviour, a defensiveness or obsessiveness around use of an internet-enabled device or, equally, a total withdrawal from the technology, can all be indicators that a young person is experiencing problems as a result of their online activity. Try to maintain an open dialogue with your child and, by listening sympathetically, create a supportive environment in which to discuss online issues.

Work in partnership

If you have concerns about a particular site or about your child's online activity in general, raise this first with your child and then with the school. Schools and parents need to work together in partnership to establish an agreement regarding the appropriate boundaries and protocols for children and, where necessary, to provide the required support and guidance when children become troubled as a result of online experiences. At King Edward's Witley, staff are always on hand to respond to any issues that a parent may have. Initially, the parent should



Science and technology

contact their child's tutor or housemaster or housemistress to discuss the matter.

Do your homework

If you class yourself as something of a technophobe, you need to do your homework and improve your understanding of the risks that your child could be exposed to online. Visit www.saferinternet.org.uk for access to a wide range of guidance and details on how to apply parental controls to the various devices that your child might be using.

But, like the internet, Andrew Day has many facets! Together with his fellow housemaster, Nick Rendall, he has developed an innovative and pioneering new software package that is revolutionising the way in which housemasters and housemistresses manage their boarding houses. The new software, 'Badger', is designed to maximise the time invested in pastoral care by drastically reducing the hours traditionally spent on the administrative tasks associated with safeguarding a large group of pupils.

The software, which can be run on both Apple or PC devices, represents an entirely bespoke solution for house staff looking to identify a means of reducing the vast number of hours spent dealing with the paperwork, emails, telephone calls and staff notices that come with their role. The duo that created the software claim that installing the programme (which is customised to meet the requirements of an individual school) can save hours of time in the school day. Andrew and Nick have spent three years developing Badger and the software has been given a trial run in the majority of houses at King Edward's over the last two and half years. Alongside this, since February 2015, Badger has also been tried at Bedales School.

"King Edward's Witley has very high standards of pastoral care. When Nick and I first started as housemasters at the

school in September 2012, we became acutely aware of how much of our time was taken up with the administration that is undoubtedly essential to ensure the children's continued well-being and personal development. As well as maintaining the vital regular dialogue with parents and supporting staff, we wanted to create a means to enable King Edward's Witley to continue to lead the field in the delivery of a pupil centred pastoral service implicit to the role of a Housemaster or Housemistress – and to be less of a slave to the 'filing cabinet'!

"Nick and I have invested a considerable amount of time developing and fine-tuning the Badger concept outside school hours and as part of our continuous professional development. We now have a unique cross platform product that enables house staff to deal quickly and efficiently with a range of data/information requests pertaining to all the day and boarding pupils allocated to their house. The system also represents a valuable monitoring tool, and enables house staff to create a profile which illustrates the progress of a pupil over a given period of time. The feedback we have received to date has been overwhelmingly positive and we now look forward to rolling out the product to schools across the UK," says Andrew Day.

The developers of the system called it 'Badger' because they felt it conjured up the safe storage of vital resources out of sight behind the scenes or even underground, after the example of a badger's sett. The software was launched at the Conference on Boarding – 'Thriving in a changing world' – hosted by Bedales School. Andrew and Nick have set up a company, Meadow House Systems Ltd, with a support team to enable the roll out of the software, allowing them to remain focused on their respective housemaster positions.

For further details about the product, contact Nick Rendall: nrendall@meadowhousesystems.com

STEM knows no gender

Girl power 64 years after Photograph 51

More than 250 students from 13 state and independent schools across the Eastern counties attended a conference on Monday 19 October organised by St Mary's School, Cambridge, in partnership with UTC Cambridge, that aimed to encourage female students aged 15 to 18 to consider a range of scientific careers.

Speakers at the GSA Girl Power: Women in Bio-Technology and Engineering Conference were all women of extraordinary talent and dedication working at the top of their fields. Among them was Dame Mary Archer who spoke about The Science of Good Health, highlighting the 'founding fathers' of modern medicine from X-ray imaging to the 'magic bullet' drug. The students were delighted to hear that Dame Mary carried out her first experiment at the age of ten when she tied an earthworm into a knot to see if it could untie itself! Dr Jasmine Fisher, senior researcher at Microsoft Research Cambridge and a group leader at the Cambridge University Department of Biochemistry, shared her journey to career

fulfilment. Dr Fisher's story demonstrated to the girls that there isn't just one clearly defined path to get to where you want to be.

A panel of women scientists and engineers from CamAWiSE and STEM Team East backed this up by introducing the students to the diverse career paths in STEM, discussing why they enjoy their work, what motivates them and whether they perceive that there are particular issues facing women with careers in STEM.

A break-out session on Nanotechnology enabled the girls to get involved with practical experiments overseen by two second year PhD students of the EPSRC CDT in Nanoscience and Nanotechnology at the University of Cambridge. A hands-on session led by Ewa Luger, a postdoctoral researcher at Microsoft Research Cambridge, looked at human-centred design, where students used ideation cards to think creatively about how digital systems could and should be designed. The girls also heard from Professor Averil Macdonald on the value



Dame Mary Archer

women are still under-represented. We are very grateful to all of our speakers for giving generously of their time and experience to inspire and inform the students about a huge range of career opportunities open to them. A lot of passion, energy and determination was shared with the students by our speakers: developing and refining systems at the cutting edge of science, these ambitious women are all aiming for speed, sensitivity and simplicity which ultimately helps systems become smaller, lighter, faster and ultimately, cheaper,” said Charlotte Avery, Headmistress at St Mary’s School, Cambridge.

“A key driver for so many of these inspirational women has been wanting to make a difference, affecting people’s lives for the better and applying science to everyday life. Our aim for the day was to open the students’ minds to the wonderful array of possibilities available now and in the future regarding scientific careers, and to enable the girls to think and operate confidently as women and as potential scientists.”

Meanwhile, at Trent College, Long Eaton, STEM ambassador and Young Engineers Trustee Ruth Amos inspired students in recognising the number of career opportunities in science and engineering when she visited Trent College Sixth Form. After designing the StairSteady, an aid to enable people with limited mobility to use stairs confidently and safely, as part of her GCSE Resistant Materials Course, she was named Young Engineer for Britain 2006, aged only 16. Ruth, who in 2009 was the youngest person ever to be on *Management Today*’s 35 women under 35 list and was the first ever Women of the Future ‘Young Star’ award winner, remains passionate about education and works on projects to help promote enterprise in school.

She passed on this passion as she addressed students and took part in a Q&A as part of Trent College’s Arts and Speakers Programme last October. The College welcomes inspirational visitors from a wide variety of disciplines and is designed to help students embrace the academic and non-academic challenges of school, university and life beyond.

According to Women in Science and Engineering (WiSE), women make up just 14.4% of the STEM workforce – around one in seven – so sixth form science students, Pheobe Badcock and Rosie Prior were especially interested in what Ms Amos had to say.

Says Rosie: “I did my work experience at a civil and chemical engineering company and was pleasantly surprised to find that actually just as many women worked there as men. Careers such as engineering have always been seen as ‘male roles’ and I think this is finally changing. Some female students may be put off by these careers, but meeting women like Ruth Amos shows that as long as we enjoy what we’re doing and we work hard at it, we can be just as successful as men in these jobs.”

Phoebe added: “I like meeting inspirational women in engineering as it helps me to understand what I need to do, or can do, to get to the position they are in and that I want to be in. It helps me work out the biggest obstacles I will have to overcome in choosing this career path and what I can do now to make it easier to get into. The opportunities for women in STEM careers are increasing as more are getting involved even though it is still male-dominated. But women are almost getting an advantage now, as people seem to want more women in these areas.”



Ruth Amos

of Science in the Sixth Form, by looking at how to use your natural aptitudes to find a job where like-minded people are happy and successful.

Professor Cecilia Mascolo, Professor of Mobile Systems in the Computer Laboratory, University of Cambridge, introduced the girls to the secrets of mobile phone sensing while Dr Hilarie Bateman, admissions tutor, Murray Edwards College, talked to the students about university applications. Further careers presentations included an introduction to opportunities for scientists in drug discovery by Dr Urszula Grabowska, Contract Research Organization and External Collaborations Manager at Medivir.

This inspirational conference enabled the young women who attended to gain a much greater insight into the sheer diversity of roles at the cutting edge of scientific research and implementation. It is hoped that this will inspire more of them to pursue the subject and go on to access a career in science or engineering in the future.

“As the only all through girls’ school in Cambridgeshire, we feel it is extremely important to pay close attention to young women’s future careers and especially in areas where

Kek and Mort, Spells and the Hunt

**City on a Hill: A portrait of
Shrewsbury School**

By David Gee

Published by Greenbank Press

ISBN 9780954063313

Shropshire was 'a land of lost content' for A E Housman and 'the nearest earthly place to paradise' for P G Wodehouse. But, as Wodehouse records, 'to get to the heart of Shropshire takes four hours (or did in my time. No doubt British Railways have cut it down a lot.)' Well, up to a point, but the county is still an appreciable distance from London and is surrounded by some pretty wide open and under-populated spaces.

In terms of Shrewsbury School, the nearest comparable places of learning to the west and north are in Ireland or Scotland, though to the east and south, Rugby and Marlborough are strong competitors. The great day schools in Birmingham and Manchester provide their own metropolitan distinction and so recruitment to the School has always been a matter of high priority. Success in this field is measured partly by numbers and partly by standards and in both the results are spectacular. What is it, then, that makes this such an outstanding school?

Much may be attributed to the Classical tradition of scrupulous syntactical accuracy and immensely wide-ranging literature. Those who studied Latin or Greek at school knew that when it came to the written word there was such a thing as right or wrong, and the skills so often painfully acquired proved to be profitably transferable to writing English. Meanwhile, there was pretty well nothing that the Classical writers deemed out of bounds, and here perhaps is the source of that gimlet-eyed Salopian satirical stream. The Classical side may no longer predominate, but the tradition is in the blood.

A third factor was the New House, a bachelor establishment along the lines of the Eton 'colonies' or the Winchester 'rough house', served by a housekeeper and notorious for parties that loosened the stays of many senior or married colleagues. Such a confraternity could generate an exhilarating intellectual and social dynamic, inspiring the rest of the common room or, at least, keeping them up to the mark. The dedication of the whole Shrewsbury staff was remarkable, but the contribution made by the resident staff created a degree of 'social, twenty-four hour-a-day cooperation' between staff and pupils that amazed a visiting pupil from Manchester Grammar School.

The presence of Dayboys meant that the school was never

as cut off from its parental customer base as some schools undoubtedly were. When a sixth of the school lived locally, reality was bound to check in from time to time. This rich source of talent, carefully nurtured by the author, who was the Dayboys housemaster for 12 years, remains a crucial element of a school that now has a significant and equally stimulating international presence.

The Shrewsbury David Gee describes was not a London school and was therefore relatively free from the worst excesses of the 'chattering classes' and this blessing is still largely the case. A healthy disrespect for London and all its ways is evident in the following exchange of letters.

In 1866, Shrewsbury's captain of cricket, Spencer Phillips, wrote as follows to his opposite number at Westminster.

Sir, I write to ask if a match between Shrewsbury and Westminster can be arranged for this season? The most convenient day would be any day in the week beginning June 17th. We shall be happy to play on any ground which you may select.

The response was both disappointing and disconcerting.

Sir, The Captain of the Westminster Eleven is sorry to disappoint Shrewsbury, but Westminster plays no Schools except Public Schools, and the general feeling of the school quite coincides with that of the Committee of the Public Schools Club, who issue this list of public schools – Charterhouse, Eton, Harrow, Rugby, Westminster and Winchester.

The proud Salopian replied.

Sir, I cannot allow your answer to my first letter to pass unnoticed. I have only to say that a school, which we have Camden's authority for stating was the most important school in England at a time when Westminster was unknown, which Her Majesty has included in the list of Public Schools by the Royal Commission, and which, according to the report of the commissioners, is more distinctly public than any other school, cannot be deprived of its rights as a Public School by the assertions of a Westminster boy, or by the dictum of the self-styled Public Schools Club. I regret to find from your letter that the Captain of the Westminster Eleven has yet to learn the first lesson of a true public school education, the behaviour due from one gentleman to another.

That Shrewsbury was different is demonstrated by the Bloxham inquiry, set up in 1967, visiting 39 schools and reporting in 1973. This identified 'Hartfield' (the pseudonym the visitors had chosen for Shrewsbury) as the most contented of all the schools they had seen.

There is something about Hartfield – the way it does things, its 'structure', its 'culture', which both releases the best qualities in its masters and also permits those qualities to be seen by the boys.

David Gee has taught at Shrewsbury since 1958 and can tell the story first hand. He has written a loving tribute to the

school – a letter from a truly contented man approaching the diamond jubilee of a completely fulfilling relationship. He has set out to tell the story of the whole tribe and he therefore penetrates some fairly dense jungle in the appendices towards the end of the book. A personal history is properly concerned with the people as well as the place and it is good to name the individuals who sustained such a remarkable array of activities. The writer's innate wit keeps emerging just when readers may think that the description of these worthy undertakings has delighted us long enough. In Salopian parlance, this author is a 'tweak'.

Salopian slang, whilst nothing like as extensive as the notions the author had to learn at Winchester when the time came for him to metamorphose from 'new man' to 'jun man', was nevertheless a feature of the school and also had to be learned for the 'Colour Exam'. Little is left of it nowadays, but it lingers in the mind. The Hunt (the School's ancient cross-country club) gives us the admirable concept of the 'all-up', by which front-runners were made to pause until the stragglers could catch up – not a bad approach to management of the classroom or common room generally.

This kindly attitude to competition meant that housemasters could join in the whole school run – The Tucks – without fear for their athletic reputation, since it was perfectly possible to argue that they were fulfilling their pastoral duties by running with the slowest members of their house. During its season, the Hunt pursues an imaginary fox over regular, named courses *eg* 'The Bog', 'The Bicton' or 'The Bomere Pool' and the winner of each race is therefore said to have 'killed'. This gives rise to the apocryphal telegram sent to parents by an over-enthusiastic housemaster: 'Nigel killed on The Bog. Congratulations!'

Running also provided housemasters the chance to see a good many of their boys in action as they ran a figure of eight course around the School site. Four or five of these short runs, known as 'Benjys' after Benjamin Hall Kennedy, author of the once celebrated Shorter Latin Primer and Headmaster from 1836 to 1866, would take place in an afternoon and simply by standing still in one spot, the housemaster could see that his boys were taking exercise. Headmaster Wolfenden walked a similar course around the school to make sure he was seen by staff and pupils alike after his frequent absences in London on national educational business.

The six headmasters under whom David Gee has served are all treated kindly, as they deserve. A school with such a strong house system which is nevertheless amenable to central direction is one many Heads would envy. Only when the direction seemed to be lacking was there any fraying of the school's innate unity. There were occasionally storms in teacups, such as the great Treasury tags row which enlivened an end of term housemasters' meeting.

David Gee describes the Swiftian dog-fight over the proper application of the Treasury tag to the reports. I was present too, though I can't remember whether I was a 'big endian' or a 'small endian', but afterwards, when people had rediscovered a sense of proportion, it was generally agreed that after lunch on the day the boys went home for the holidays at the end of a long winter term was not a good time to meet.

One reason why leading the school was comparatively easy was the presence of Michael Charlesworth, who stood in as Head or bursar or housemaster or matron, wherever and

whenever he was needed. Another source of harmony was the bursarial tradition inspired by Ron Harrison, who answered almost all proposals with the very unbursarial words, "No problem". He had been trained in the best of all schools – the RAF – where the rule for the extensive support staff was 'if it moves, salute it: if it doesn't, paint it.'

One remarkable member of the common room was Frank McEachran, known as Kek. He had collected a selection of brief passages of prose and poetry and, occasionally, symbols, which his pupils would learn and recite. These were first published under the title *Spells* by Basil Blackwell in hardback in 1953 and have gone through various editions and titles since then. These brief and transforming incantations lift the heart and broaden the mind. If you take nothing else from this review, buy them! For me, they were actually magical.

I met Eric Anderson, then Headmaster of Shrewsbury, at a St Andrew's Day party at Eton, an annual and extremely genial gathering of Scots parents. Whether it was the ambience or my callow self-esteem, but when I remarked to Eric that everyone had a sermon in them somewhere, he invited me to make good this claim in Shrewsbury Chapel the following term.

It was Eton's Half Term, so I could stay the weekend and, on arrival, I was ushered to the sitting room to watch the Calcutta Cup on television. By the bed where I later slept, there were several books and I opened one at random. The first words I read were very familiar to me, since they had been a regular feature of my Cambridge history tutor's famous first year lecture script. Undergraduates from across the university gathered to hear John Saltmarsh say in wistful tones 'and now I have to speak of the beaker people, for they are gone and we shall see their like no more.' But best of all was 'Some things we shall never know. What song the sirens sang; what name Achilles took among the women.'

And there it was in Kek's *Spells*, together with the name of the author – Sir Thomas Browne. I finally put two and two together when writing this review. McEachran's first teaching post had been at Gresham's School, Holt, where and when Saltmarsh was a pupil, so the circle was complete. And the spell worked, for within the year I had joined the Shrewsbury common room.

Most schools can boast of their legendary figures and the longer their history, the longer the roll of honour. David Gee (himself a worthy member of such a list) wisely identifies only four leading characters from his generation. Mark Mortimer is the one who will live longest in the mind, if only because he has left a legacy in the form of his occasional poetry. Where Kek's verse was heroic, Mort's was subversive, above all in the exquisitely constructed quintains through which he deflated pomposity, dissected trendiness and depicted Anglicanism with a brevity and precision Betjeman should have envied.

Mark cannot have been an entirely easy colleague for Headmasters, who, even the best of them, are afflicted with some degree of *amour propre* or, at least, a sense of the dignity of the office. Donald Wright found Mort's running commentary rather too much of a good thing and suggested that he should take a sabbatical. As it turned out, it was Wright who took the sabbatical and then left the field altogether, moving off to be the Archbishops' Appointments Secretary. Eric Anderson, who succeeded him, was and is about as free from this affliction as it is possible to be, and when he was

No big dramas.
No song and dance.

Just really
simple ticketing
for school
performances.

Discover easy event creation and ticketing at

 **trybooking**.co.uk



trybooking.co.uk is the simple to use website where schools stay completely in control of all their event booking and ticketing.

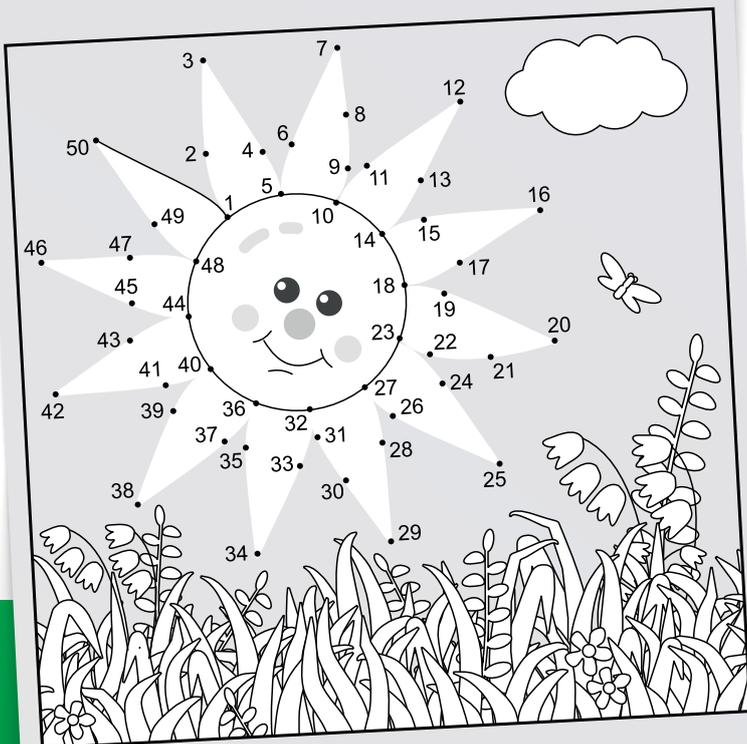
We keep the technology beautifully simple, accessible, manageable and always affordable.

trybooking.co.uk features include:

- Easy event creation - just 15 minutes!
- Customise with your own branding and logos
- General admission or seated events
- Guests can select seats, buy and print tickets
- Create completely secure or public events
- Dedicated customer support and helpline
- It's completely FREE for free events

Prefer to chat? Call us today on **0333 344 3477** and we'll run through a Trybooking test drive with you.

Draw a line from dot number 1 to dot number 2, then from dot number 2 to dot number 3, 3 to 4, and so on. Continue to join the dots until you have connected all the numbered dots. Then color the picture!



iBoarding

**CURIOUS! Come on,
you know you want to!**

*It is time to be a kid again...
Just for a few minutes.*

Whatever number of staff you have in your school, we connect talent and opportunity to bring smiles to your boarding front line.

We believe that everyone has the answers inside them to be successful, they just need the tools. Smiling now?

Just imagine the returns when you spend the day with us.

Check out our list of courses today at **www.simplyboarding.com** or email wecare@simplyboarding.com for more info

*P.S. You now have a choice – emails or colouring in. **TOUGH ONE!***

translated to Eton, Mort found what were, allegedly, feet not so much of clay as of unusual size.

As he ascends to Learning's loftiest seat,
'Great Scot!' we gasp at his prodigious feat.

Although his verse was light, his underlying purpose was serious as may be seen from the introduction he wrote for the published collection of his poems, *Mort*.

Myself I've never felt restrained
From writing what I wanted;

And that's a freedom which we tend,
I think, to take for granted.
But in the world are others who
have lost it, or could lose it.
This book may cost a bob or two
But AMNESTY will use it.

Here is the true *genius loci* and a man who passed the test of that inscrutable motto – *intus si recte*.

Tom Wheare was housemaster of School House, Shrewsbury, from 1976 to 1983.

John Rae's *The Public School Revolution 1964-1979*. It is an apt metaphor of the greater classlessness that has infused the independent sector in the years which have intervened since Rae's book, that such a project has been undertaken so skillfully by someone Rae and his erstwhile Headmaster colleagues might have called an 'assistant master' rather than by a Headmaster grandee.

Peel writes with a remarkable insight, devoting forensic intelligence into an anatomy of current attempts to forge effective partnerships with state schools. It is certainly clear that, compared even to 1999, much on that front has happened. Many leading independent schools, moved by considerations of social responsibility and/or political expediency, have sponsored local academies. In many cases, they and their staff have devoted prodigious amounts of time, as well as the fruits of their considerable expertise, to promote not just the inception of such places, but to contribute to their ongoing wellbeing.

It is too early to pass judgement on whether or not their efforts will bring the kind of success for which they hope. Certain truths shine out, however, not always comfortably. Many independent school leaders are resentful that the government pressurises them to make the huge exertions inevitable in such a large enterprise, and at the same time denies the new schools the kinds of autonomy which, according to most independent Heads, is indispensable to their success.

They are doubly vexed when headline hungry politicians (Labour and the Tories are equally blamed) whinge to the press that the independent sector doesn't do enough. Many of the new schools' leaders, generally hailing from the maintained sector, agree.

The bile between state and private sector teachers is often more diluted than that between both types of school and the venomous orthodoxies of central government. Heads of sponsored academies, just like those of independent schools, are faced with the same old inescapable – running a school day by day is an overwhelming business. This shared experience forges a surprising solidarity, or at least it would do if they could only look up from the challenges of the here and now. There isn't much time for politics, especially not the politics of gesture.

Mark Peel's skill is to update the reality of the independent schools in such a way as to explode myths, not just for the benefit of the reader to whom such places are largely mysterious, but also for those who know them well. It is quite clear, for instance, that the crassest kinds of snobbery and philistinism have been largely exorcised.

Continued overleaf →

After Rae

The New Meritocracy: A History of UK Independent Schools 1979-2015

by Mark Peel

Published by Elliott & Thompson
Ltd, September 2015

ISBN 978-1783961757

Reviewed by David Hargreaves

Back in 1999, I was returning to London by train in the company of the Headmaster of a medium-sized independent school. We had spent the day at Brighton College whose then Headmaster, Anthony Seldon, had hosted a conference for Heads, deputies and one or two others (like myself) who had been delegated to attend.

One of the ideas much extolled by some of those in attendance that day was the practice, then very much in vogue, of inviting pupils from local maintained schools to attend certain A level classes in independent schools. This was an initiative aimed primarily to enable pupils to study subjects such as Latin or history of art in which their own schools lacked provision. Various Heads around the table that day competed in tales of philanthropy and enterprise.

There were no prying ears around us on the train and my travelling companion evidently felt free to unburden himself. "If I tried that" he said, "I'd haemorrhage pupils. Parents would simply say to me 'why should I pay x thousand a year for my daughter to go to your school when a student at the local sixth form college goes there for free?'"

There is a brisk unsentimentality to that kind of *weltanschauung* which is shunned by politicians of most hues. I remembered it again when reading Mark Peel's excellent and extremely timely overview of UK Independent Schools since 1979. The book serves consciously as a sequel to the late Dr

ISEB Independent Schools Examinations Board

Common Pre-Tests online for Year 6 or 7

11+ Common Entrance examinations in English, mathematics and science

13+ Common Entrance examinations in a wide range of subjects

Common Academic Scholarship examinations at 13+

The **single-source solution** from the only examinations board which exists to serve the independent sector.

With strong backing from our three Patron Associations: GSA, HMC, IAPS.

Contact us on: 01425 470555
www.iseb.co.uk



- a choice of three 13+ examination sessions: in November, January and June
- a choice of two 13+ scholarship examination sessions: in February and May
- online, auto-marked tests in Mandarin Chinese which can be taken at any age



Achieve **Outstanding** Results... Our **ILM**

Approved programmes which can balance and build your career

We specialise in working with Independent Schools at all levels, developing Leadership and Management skills from HOYs, HODs, HouseParents and Senior Leadership Teams.

BOOKING NOW on our **ILM Level 7 Certificate in Executive Coaching and Mentoring Course:**

Commencing January 22nd and running on
January 23rd February 12th
March 11th & 12th Until April 22nd



For more information, to book your place or to read our comprehensive course guide for schools visit www.synergiacoaching.co.uk

e: clare.barnett@synergiacoaching.co.uk
t: 07909 962916



UniBox >>

Teachers and Advisers' HE Thought Leadership

eBook
**Guiding your Students
to University**

**FREE
DOWNLOAD**



www.uea.ac.uk

unibox@uea.ac.uk

[@the_UniBox](https://twitter.com/the_UniBox)

[#thinkinsidethebox](https://twitter.com/the_UniBox)

UEA
University of East Anglia

Peel makes clear that their departure is not something lamented by those who work in such places, but rather that this is something which reflects their beliefs and style. Most teachers in independent schools work hard at their subjects, collaborate willingly with their colleagues and strike up deft, comfortable and fruitful relationships with their pupils. The results can often be seen in academic league tables, but are reflected above all in the fact that most independent schools are mature societies – industrious, confident and benevolent.

This more sympathetic environment, as the book makes clear, reflects the closer involvement of families. There is a potential downside here: a tiny minority of parents attempts to expiate their own frustrations by identifying their fortunes way too closely with those of their sons and daughters. When such parents are unboundaried, rich and of a litigious disposition, the consequences can be unpleasant. But the benefits of this close collaboration between school and home far outweigh the pitfalls; and the book is a sensitive window onto radical cultural shifts in the relationship of parents and schools over the past 35 years.

Most independent schools have to compete for every pupil, and most consumers want value for money. As Peel rightly says, they want the best – exams, music and sport; they want happy children with optimistic friends and fond teachers. They want, although usually in an entirely sensible way, their children’s university and career destinations to represent a fair return on their investment.

What this altogether nicer and newer world of the independent school as it exists today has not yet confronted, however, is that the man on the train spoke an unpalatable truth. Dress it up however you like, but independent school users are searching out advantage. There is (quite often unspoken) powerful ambition. These days, ambition isn’t calibrated in a top hat and tails or in cricket colours, but in understated but unmissable self-assurance: assurance of a kind which bowls over strangers and woos interviewing panels.

And, by the way, it’s not just parents who entertain the hope. Staff who teach at independent schools overwhelmingly enjoy that environment, and so do pupils. Some relish it for the opportunity to teach or study their subject at a high level, or to work in splendid surroundings, or for the football and cricket. But what, I think, all feed off is the sheer heady optimism of such places. And that, I am afraid, is inextricably linked to the sense of security that comes from being on an inside track.

Explaining the allure that attaches itself to independent education is something which, however ugly, we each need to confront. Mark Peel’s book is, by a wide margin, the best book I have read in ages that can help us to do so in a way which is informed, fair-minded and continually interesting.

David Hargreaves was a housemaster at Westminster School where he taught history from 1986 to 2014, and now runs the educational consultancy DHC–London.

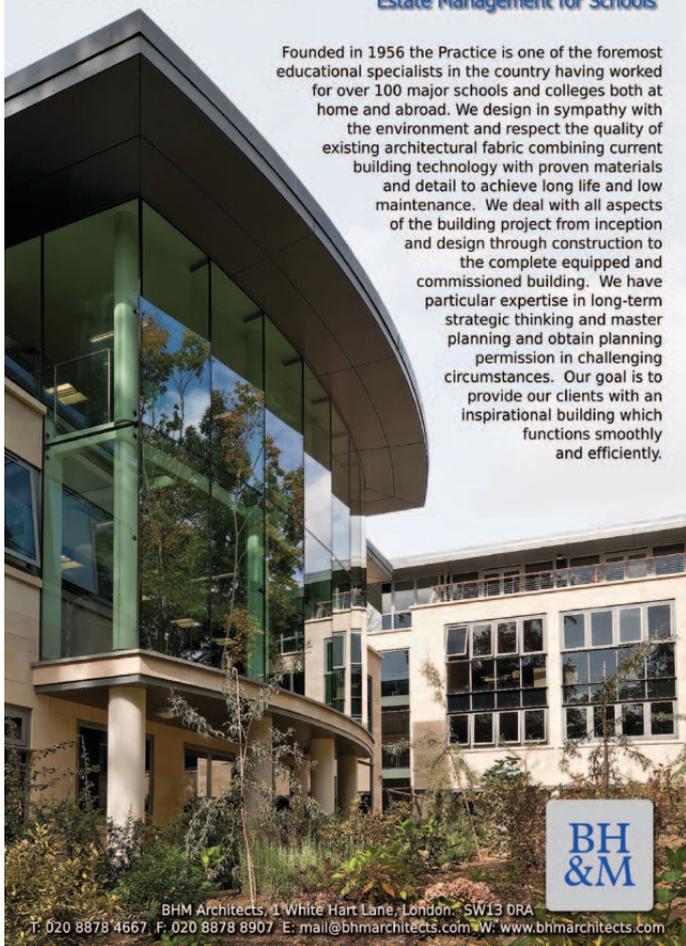


Dean's Yard, Westminster.

BHM Architects

**Specialists in Building Design and
Estate Management for Schools**

Founded in 1956 the Practice is one of the foremost educational specialists in the country having worked for over 100 major schools and colleges both at home and abroad. We design in sympathy with the environment and respect the quality of existing architectural fabric combining current building technology with proven materials and detail to achieve long life and low maintenance. We deal with all aspects of the building project from inception and design through construction to the complete equipped and commissioned building. We have particular expertise in long-term strategic thinking and master planning and obtain planning permission in challenging circumstances. Our goal is to provide our clients with an inspirational building which functions smoothly and efficiently.



**BH
&M**

BHM Architects, 1 White Hart Lane, London, SW13 0RA
T: 020 8878 4667, F: 020 8878 8907, E: mail@bhmarchitects.com, W: www.bhmarchitects.com

Alert students perform best

Aalborg's classroom furniture
WILL enhance your teaching!



aalborg

FURNITURE • FORM • FUNCTION

See us at the
Education Show
NEC, Stand B28
17th-19th March

To find out more, call us on 01509 264112
aalborgdk.com



French language immersion in 'La France Profonde'

Maison Claire Fontaine is a French language and activity trip operator based in the beautiful Burgundian countryside. We specialise in the provision of tailored services for UK independent schools.



- * **Exclusive use of our centre for your stay.**
- * **A week personally tailored to the needs of your school including schemes of work and lesson plans.**
- * **Unique opportunities to develop confident speaking skills in real life situations.**
- * **All lessons and activities led by highly qualified French native bilingual speakers.**



**Please visit our website :
www.maisonclairefontaine.com
or contact the owner Alex at
info@maisonclairefontaine.com**

Which School? helps your school stand out from the crowd



The authoritative guide to UK independent schools

First published in 1924, *Which School?* is the oldest and most authoritative guide to independent schools in the UK. It features profiles of leading schools and brings together a wealth of information about boarding and day senior schools, prep and junior schools and selected international schools.

Which School? is aimed at guiding parents and children through the process of choosing the right school. It includes useful and informative editorials and a comprehensive directory, providing a complete overview of the British independent school sector.

Published in a new A4 landscape format with a hardback cover, *Which School?* is designed to do full justice to the quality of your school, your facilities and the education you provide. To reserve your space in *Which School?* please contact our sales team on: 01394 389850 or email sales@johncatt.com



Jason
Morrow

Letter from America

Jason Morrow reports from New York City

A recent tweet by Kevin Stannard (GDST director of education and innovation) caught my eye in which he asserted: ‘Take inspiration from other education systems, but never forget we speak a different language.’ This seemed very apt for me as I embark on leadership in a British international school and seek to understand and articulate what that means in a world city such as New York. Here are some of my initial reflections on life and work in the Big Apple.

Start as you mean to go on

In the midst of all the preparations and the sense of anticipation and potential that characterise the start of the new year in a UK school, it is hard to deny that there is usually also a sense of time pressure or rush from day one. Pupils typically start to return on the second or third day of the new school year and there can be a feeling of having to catch up right from the outset.

When I first received the term dates and calendar for my new school in New York, I was therefore intrigued by the seven full days set aside for training and preparation at the start of the year. The first two days enabled new members of staff to spend time with senior colleagues and begin to familiarise themselves with school systems and the practicalities of life in America – including the Byzantine complexities of the health care system. (*Note to self: try not to get sick!*)

The following week was set aside entirely for whole staff training, department or age-group level collaboration and blocks for individual staff to plan their first units of work and make sure their classrooms were welcoming and engaging spaces in which to learn. Perhaps not surprisingly, the outcome of this dedicated training and planning time was a positive, calm and purposeful start to the year for staff and pupils. The benefit of that lack of stress and time pressure in the opening days undoubtedly continued to contribute to the energy and creativity levels across the school throughout the early weeks of the new year. I have to say that I am therefore an early and convinced convert of the benefits of such an extended pre-term training period and would encourage colleagues in the UK to trial it.

A common language

It may be something of a cliché to observe that the USA and UK are divided by a common language, but it is also a truth of which to be mindful in conversations with parents, staff and students. It took me several conversations with prospective parents to appreciate how many connotations the term ‘rigour’

has in an American educational context. It didn’t initially seem problematic for me to say that I recognised the value and importance of ‘rigour’ in learning until I realised that might give the impression that I didn’t place the same value and importance on breadth, inquiry and creativity.

Although it is not unusual to have discussions around the balance between such elements, I hadn’t previously encountered it in such dichotomous terms as a choice between ‘rigour’ and ‘progressive’. Ironically, the latter has a slightly quaint or retro feel for me, as it seems to evoke an educational debate that I imagine might have happened in the ’70s in the UK, which has since moved on to acknowledge and incorporate notions such as ‘inquiry-based’ and ‘child-centred’ as staples of a balanced educational provision for most schools.

Or perhaps I am guilty of wearing rose tinted spectacles in my perception of this debate in the UK, as the spectre of league tables and the constant focus on grading and categorising schools may suggest the debate is just as fierce and alive in British schools, albeit dressed in different terminology.

There are plenty of other *faux amis* style terms with which to grapple, but the one I find sits most uncomfortably at present is ‘administration’, and a perception among some that the primary focus of the Head is as the ‘school administrator’. There are so many crucial responsibilities and elements to that post, and I don’t underestimate their importance to the success and development of a school, but it is also a potentially hazardous zone in which to operate as the Head.

The greater clarity and collective understanding in the UK that the Head’s primary responsibility in a school is to ensure the quality of educational provision for all students, is perhaps something that has been diluted in the US, and is worth preserving in the face of potentially distracting regulatory excess or fundraising expectations.

Are we there yet?

Thanksgiving is finally on the horizon, and it will certainly arrive as a welcome break for staff and students, especially given the absence of a UK-style half-term holiday in October. I was intrigued to see how my own energy levels, as well as those of the school generally, would fare without that recharge moment at half-term, and I have to confess I have been pleasantly surprised that focus, productivity and attendance have not noticeably dipped, for the school at least. That is partly thanks to the blaze of colour, invention and fun which

Endpiece

have helped to energize the school (and others that I have visited in the city) in recent weeks.

We are all familiar with the emphasis on Halloween as a holiday in the US and it lived up to the billing with a striking array of witty, bold, disturbing and adorable costumes. Probably my most surreal moment as a New York Head, thus far, was waiting in the turning circle for the arrival of the children on 30th October, dressed in a pretty convincing Darth Vader costume, slightly fearful that the youngest children might be scared. That worry quickly proved unfounded as an army of zombies, ghouls, Stormtroopers and vampires swamped the playground, alongside a host of fairies, ninja turtles, super heroes and Disney princesses.

Halloween itself was, however, only one of many days across those weeks in late October and early November, to have a very distinct theme in school. There was a 'crazy hair day', 'silly sock day', 'pyjama day' and a whole week of international performance, with groups visiting the school and working with students, showcasing music and dance from Afghanistan, Mongolia, Mexico, Brazil and Hawaii.

Some schools characterise these as 'School Spirit' weeks, designed to enthuse and engage the school community in wider projects and activities. At The British International School it was Co-opertition Week, designed to help students explore and understand the potential of combining working together with competing to achieve more. The shift in routine and focus of these weeks is presumably based on the belief that 'a change is as good as a rest', an adage with at least some truth, based on the experience of my first half-termless autumn term.

A new network

One aspect of being Head of The British International School of New York which I am finding quite amusing is how other schools often don't know how or where to categorise the school. There is undeniably quite a clear pecking order of schools in New York, and in many ways more of an elitist hierarchy than is the case among leading UK independent schools; but ironically, within this quasi-class structure, The British International School defies easy placement. Not least this is because the school is so youthful – turning ten in this year – and also because it is definitely british with a small 'b' – almost 70% of the students are not British and the curriculum is as strongly shaped and enriched by the IB and international mindedness as it is the English National Curriculum. It makes for a very dynamic and innovative environment for both students and staff, and I am enjoying seeing elements of the typical British curriculum being reinterpreted in ways I hadn't previously considered.

The final element of my first few months in post in New York on which I want to reflect is the first regional Heads' conference I was able to attend. The setting was spectacular at Mohonk Mountain Resort, set along the edge of a lake perched high over upstate New York. Two main impressions have stayed with me from the conference, which are hopefully worth sharing.

The first was the incredible diversity of schools represented: from large, highly selective academic all-through schools to small, non-selective institutions catering for a narrower age range or those with specific needs; as well as fee-paying schools, for profit schools, charter schools and specialist schools for the arts or other disciplines.



'That worry quickly proved unfounded as an army of zombies, ghouls, Stormtroopers and vampires swamped the playground, alongside a host of fairies, ninja turtles, super heroes and Disney princesses.'

The mix produced some dynamic and thought-provoking discussions and insights; and was an interesting counter to the tendency in similar UK conferences towards bringing together practitioners from more similar schools as being most likely to be useful. The second element of the conference that really struck me was that an entire session was dedicated to reflecting on our responsibility as school leaders for diversity, equality and inclusion. The panel discussion ranged over questions on race, gender, sexuality and economic background and was remarkably open, frank and at times challenging.

One of the most memorable and powerful moments was when one of the panellists – a black female Head of another New York school – observed that it was only really in addressing the conference from the platform that she could see how very white we were as a group. Having attended numerous similar conferences in the UK, which were often much less diverse, I don't recall the issue being addressed so honestly or with such a sense that there was a willingness to confront and tackle it.

Race and equality continue to be complex, and at times divisive, issues in US society, but it was impressive and even a little inspiring to see a conference of independent school leaders so directly acknowledge and pledge to address it across their schools and beyond.

Jason Morrow, formerly Head of Norwich High School for Girls (GDST), has been Headmaster of the British International School of New York since September 2015.



The choice of champions.



England cricket star Matthew Hoggard and Olympic hockey player Chloe Rogers know what it takes to be a winner. Skill, hard work, dedication – and sportswear that’s designed to help produce peak performance. That’s why they choose **Squadkit**, the performance range of sports kit from Schoolblazer, the UK’s leading supplier of school uniforms and sportswear to over 100 of the UK’s top schools.

There’s no substitute for young talent. But it helps if the athletes of the future receive the best possible preparation to fulfil their potential. **Squadkit** is dedicated to providing

quality sportswear for ambitious young athletes in schools across the country. Technology, protection, style,

Squadkit’s stylish range comprises advanced fabric technologies, designed to both enhance performance and offer maximum physical and psychological protection for young bodies and determined minds.

Like Chloe and Matthew, your students deserve the best. Help them reach their full potential, with **Squadkit**.

Squadkit exclusively available from Schoolblazer, UK leader in stylish schoolwear and sportswear

Call 01832 280011 info@schoolblazer.com www.schoolblazer.com

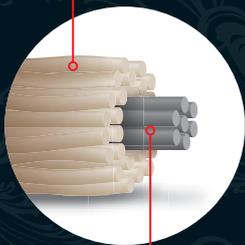


wear it. play it. win it.

Committed to Innovation, Dedicated to style.



60% COTTON
OUTER



POLYESTER
CORE 40%

Bringing Real Innovation to Schoolwear

The Problem

Parents love the non-iron and durability of polyester but want the comfort of cotton.

Our Solution

PerformanceCotton[®] is a unique fibre. Developed by the world's leading mill and exclusively available to **Schoolblazer**. The central polyester strands deliver durability and non-iron properties. The outer cotton strands sit next to the skin for comfort.

Another Solution from Schoolblazer.

Schoolblazer was founded with a simple mission; to bring real innovation in schoolwear through fabric, design and service. Performance Cotton is just one example of what makes us different: A relentless focus on the customers' needs and the drive and ability to deliver a genuine solution.

Schoolblazer ethically sources the best fabrics from across the world. Our designs are fresh, contemporary and smart using bespoke colours patterns and styles. Our revolutionary website allows simple online fitting and sizing choice with individualised name-tapes sewn in free of charge.

Call 01832 280011 info@schoolblazer.com www.schoolblazer.com

schoolblazer
Exclusive uniforms. Bespoke service.