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Conference & common room

The magazine for
independent schools



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Editorial

Spring 2018

On the 8th October 2017, pupils and staff at Haileybury College commemorated the 50th anniversary of the death of Clement Attlee. The lives of public figures are nowadays subject to close scrutiny as they unfold in 'real time', and there is a longer and perhaps less prurient tradition of investigation by biographers, but it is not always possible to point to the critical moment when a life may be said to have changed. In Attlee's case, despite him being famously reticent, it may be pin-pointed almost to the day. One night in October 1905, at the suggestion of his younger brother Laurence, he went with him to Haileybury House, the Stepney charity set up by Old Haileyburians. He soon became a regular visitor and in March 1907 he became the resident manager and thus began the process of 'maturing into socialism', as his biographer Vincent Broome described it. The Public Schools and the universities had a laudable record of establishing missions or settlements in deprived areas, and the Attlee family, like many others of their class, had a genuine and abiding interest in alleviating poverty, ignorance and want. Beveridge was not the first to identify the Five Giants and their threat to society, and Haileybury may be proud of the undeniable part it played in shaping the life and work of the man who oversaw the creation of the Welfare State.

It was one of Attlee's cabinet and a successor Labour Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, who became associated with the phrase 'the white heat of technology'. His speech at the Labour Party Annual Conference in October 1963, entitled *Labour's Plan for Science*, made it clear that 'Britain's future for the rest of the century depends to a unique extent on the speed with which we come to terms with the world of change'. Coming to terms with technology is still both a challenge as well as an opportunity, as it becomes clear that 'white heat' can sometimes be too hot to handle. Just as some schools have developed policies to limit pupils' use of mobile phones in school, so the pressure of constant communication is being identified as damaging to the mental health and well-being of staff as well as the children in their care.

Artificial intelligence is a daunting term. Could robots teach history or is this an example of fake news? Are we up to speed with the world of change? Well, we are more likely to be if we use all our human resources. Schools are investing large amounts of time and money in developing STEM subjects as a natural choice for all their pupils, girls as well as boys. Seizing their opportunities are girls at Brentwood, taking their robot to China, and at Alderley Edge, achieving success in regional and national engineering competitions. The way in which what used to be called science buildings are currently being designed to integrate all aspects of STEM, creates spaces for creative thinking as well as practical realisation.

Schools are complex and complicated places. As every new initiative emerges and every new requirement is imposed, keeping control is a constant challenge. Record keeping, for instance, brings to mind both Sisyphus and Atlas as the regulatory demands roll relentlessly on and the burden of information becomes overwhelming. The next challenge in this area, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), comes into effect on 25th May 2018. The requirements are wide-ranging and their significance can perhaps be measured most simply by the severity of the fines proposed for non-compliance. Schools are already well aware that inspections are more concerned with paperwork than people and there is a real danger that this unhealthy prioritisation may distort the true purposes of education.

One of these is the preparation of children for adult life, but another, equally if not more important, is to make childhood fulfilling and happy. This is not always easy. Information overload is just as damaging and pervasive as atmospheric pollution. No news is good news, as the saying has it. Unfortunately, good news is no news, at least in the minds of those for whom disseminating the news is their business. Fake news has taken the place of rumour and it too can travel half way round the world while the truth is putting on its shoes, and sell some advertising while it does so. At present, one of the problems with news, good, bad, fake or genuine, is the sea of uncertainty that surrounds this country's future. It is hard to pin information down when it is universally acknowledged that nobody knows quite what is going to happen next. This is always true for individuals, although we learn to live with it, but, just as it helps children to believe that their parents can look after them, so citizens would like to feel that their government has realistic plans for the future.

Given the amount of time that children spend at school, it is not surprising that teachers are, as it were, honorary parents. This does not always make their interaction with mothers and fathers easy, especially when teachers can see things that are overlooked or ignored at

home. The government conscripts their help in such initiatives as Prevent, but keeps pay rises to a minimum and tinkers obsessively with the curriculum. Inspection sometimes seems like surveillance and it is not surprising that by the time Thursdays come some teachers feel exhausted. Building up the morale and skills of teachers is not just a job for each school's leadership team, it should also be a national priority, as the Chartered College of Teaching recognises. The recent report from Barnardo's on the shocking number of young carers in the UK reveals an example of the challenges teachers face. With an average age of 12, these children manifestly need all the help they can get. Schools and teachers do their best to provide some support, but the report suggests that 40% of teachers are not confident that they would recognise young carers in their class – and if they cannot identify them, who will?

These are gloomy thoughts, but, as every teacher knows, the resilience and optimism of their pupils will always buoy them up. As Thomas Wolsey, Master of Magdalen College School, wrote over five hundred years ago, 'pleasure is to mingle with

study that the child may think learning an amusement rather than a toil'. If children can remain engaged in a caring and stimulating school community, they can enjoy their preparation for adult life. But a good school and good teachers can give them more than that. In the words of Clement Attlee at another Labour Party Annual Conference, this time in May 1948,

'It has been said that one of the greatest dangers of civilisation today is that man's conquests in the realms of science have outstripped his moral progress. It is the greatest task which lies ahead of us all to see to it that the citizen's sense of obligation to the community keeps pace with the changes effected in the structure of society. We need to stress duties as well as rights'.

It may be that teachers are best placed to put this message across, not just to pupils but also to parents. Fortunately, since teaching is a vocation as well as a profession, there will always be men and women in schools willing and able to lay the foundations of a better society and provide a moral as well as an academic education for the citizens of the future.

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Leading women

Frances King explores women's leadership roles within the independent sector

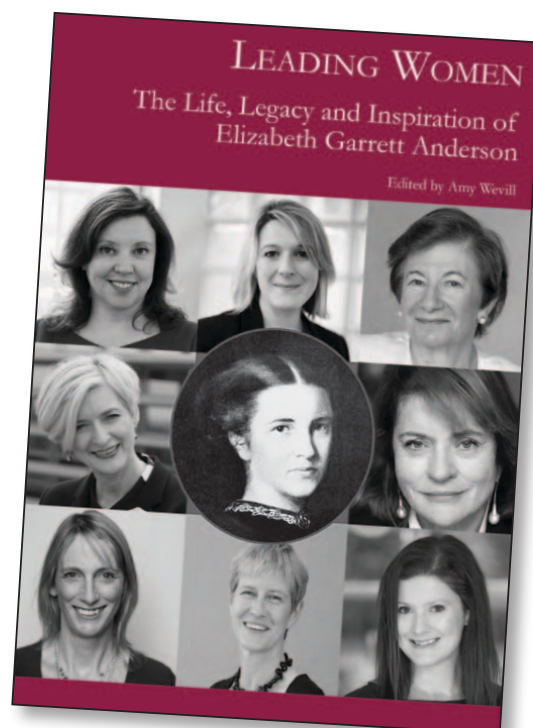
Executive search firm, Wild Search, who advise a wide range of schools and colleges on board and executive appointments, have brought together women in leadership positions in the education sector for their latest collection of essays, **Leading Women**. The contributors reveal the barriers they have faced in building their careers and offer some important advice to those looking to break through them. **Leading Women** marks the centenary of the death of Elizabeth Garrett Anderson, the first Englishwoman to become a qualified doctor, and co-founder and later dean of the first medical school in this country to admit women.

Ultimately, the conclusion that may be drawn from these essays is that despite considerable progress since Elizabeth Garrett Anderson's days, significant gender-based challenges remain in women's careers, and more needs to be done institutionally, personally and socially for these to be overcome. As Anne Milton, Minister for Women and Minister of State for Apprenticeships and Skills, writes, 'outdated stereotypes and persistent social barriers are stifling the ambition and talent of many women in all sectors of British society'.

It is generally acknowledged that women, just as men, can make great leaders. This argument has been taken further by McKinsey & Co which, since 2005, has commissioned global research to inform its annual report, **Women Matter**, to investigate the place of women in the workplace. Year on year this report confirms that diversity within the workplace can, in fact, improve the performance of companies. Given the challenges that face independent schools over the coming years, governing bodies would do well to take note of this research when they look to appoint new head teachers. With statistics from the top independent schools' professional organisation, the Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference (HMC), indicating that 22 per cent of their members are now female, there is a long way to go.

I was appointed as the first woman Headteacher and CEO of the Mill Hill School Foundation in 2016. Since my appointment, things seem to be going well: our numbers have increased; our exam grades have gone up; and the pupils and parents appear to be happy. A good time, therefore, to ask me to comment on the issue of female leadership within the independent school sector!

My past history means that I have a strong interest in the role of female leadership as I previously held the headship of Roedean, one of the schools that led the way in pressing for equal educational opportunities for girls within the independent sector. Roedean was established in 1885 to prepare girls for entrance to the newly opened Cambridge women's colleges of Girton and Newnham. Its establishment was clearly inspired by that of the pioneer girls' schools of Cheltenham Ladies' College and North London Collegiate School just a few decades previously. The success of Elizabeth Garrett Anderson in establishing her medical career by the 1880s, together with the growing voices of the suffragettes, would have added to the arguments of the girls of Roedean on their need for a good education.



As society changed, women got the vote, and opportunities for women's careers gradually took off, so the number of girls' schools grew. With this came the golden period for women to take on the leadership roles of running these establishments. Whilst women's careers were still restricted until the 1975 Equal Opportunities Act, the accepted norm was for single sex education, thus providing women with the chance to run their own schools.

After 1975 things start to change. The financial pressures that came about following the abolition of the direct grant, together with the Sex Discrimination Act of 1975, led to some boys' schools opening their doors to girls. Whether this was to ease their financial pressures, raise the academic standards, or to better manage the boisterous behaviour of boys, girls were welcomed into more and more formerly all boys' schools.

The rise of the co-educational school has had a distinct impact on opportunities for women leaders within independent education. Given that it was boys' schools that more often went co-educational and proved to be attractive due to their history, reputation, superior facilities and more influential alumni, the market for girls' only schools diminished. However strongly they have stressed the significance of girls in their schools, it has taken a long time for these formerly male institutions to contemplate a woman as head. On a rough count, once the girls' only schools are removed from the HMC figures in the UK, there are 242 schools left of which 25 are run by women – just over 10 per cent. Throughout its history since 1869 there has been only one female chairman of the HMC – in 2005.

Is the issue simply down to the sexist views of the governing bodies of these schools who are reluctant to appoint women

Leading women

leaders due to unconscious bias and homophily – the tendency to hire and interact with people like yourself? Are they worried about the break in tradition, the perception of what the old boys might think or the concern that women cannot manage to discipline boys effectively? How much time is given to the needs of the girls within these co-educational schools when so often tradition is easier to manage than innovation?

Thankfully, the mood is changing gradually within the appointment boards of HMC schools and a few key schools within the organisation have appointed women as heads. However now the challenge for the headhunters is to find enough credible women candidates who are willing to put themselves forward. The issues raised over the last decade within the McKinsey reports are cited by the recruiting agents: many women lack confidence; do not put themselves forward; are anxious about not fitting with the dominant culture; and worried about the impact such a role will have on their already challenging work/life balance. And for those women who do put themselves forward, there are still a good many hurdles to get through in order to win that leadership role.

Part of the challenge lying behind this issue is the task of changing the views of 235 individual and independent governing bodies within the HMC schools in England alone. The independence of the sector means exactly that: each board will act as it chooses. It must be simpler, surely, in a large organisation when the CEO can set a directive from the top and all schools follow this. This was, indeed, the action taken by the CEO of my former company, a multi-national for-profit educational business. When I joined the company, only 4 out of the 24 school heads were women – 16 per cent. With a clear

directive from the top to encourage more women leaders, this has now significantly improved, so that there are now 11 women heads out of 46 schools, or 23 per cent.

If women are to be encouraged to take the step of applying for headship and to present themselves as credible candidates, the work has to begin early. During 2017, Mill Hill School worked with the Institute of Physics and King's College London on *Opening Doors*, a project which seeks to address the social issues which shape pupils' concepts of self and gender, and subsequently their subject and then life choices. Caroline Dinene MP, then Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Women, Equalities and Family Justice, wrote within the foreword for this project, 'I hope that this guide will stimulate debate, encourage action and that it will encourage schools to continue to create an environment in which all students have the confidence, opportunity and encouragement to go as far as they can.'

These words clearly hand back to the schools the challenge of recognising their role in helping to prepare the leaders of the future. More girls must be encouraged to believe that they have worthwhile skills and, indeed, the duty to use these skills for the benefit of others. Women bring a different perspective to leadership and, from the McKinsey report, those companies that have recognised this have flourished. Independent schools as a whole would do well to note such advice.

Frances King is the Head of Mill Hill School and CEO of Mill Hill Schools Foundation

*To download the publication **Leading Women** in full, please visit the **Wild Research** page on the **Wild Search** website: www.wildsearch.org*

HERE & THERE

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

Spanish immersion

In the first week of the October half term, a group of eleven Oundle School Sixth form Spanish students travelled to Salamanca for a week of cultural and linguistic immersion. The trip was designed by Head of Spanish, Marta Viruete Navarro, to boost pupils' their language skills in the setting of this historic town.

Every day started with a few hours of Spanish lessons in Salamanca's language school. Younger pupils were launched head-first into complex grammatical structures that they would not encounter at school for another year, and the older pupils were given the opportunity to help the younger ones and consolidate the basics. Grammar lessons were always followed by lessons covering the traditional features of Spanish culture as well as more topical and recent issues such as Catalan Independence and the increase in CCTV surveillance in Spain.

Pupil Ed Hodgson commented, 'These issues encouraged rich discussion and, occasionally, fierce debate. We were only allowed to speak in Spanish, thereby improving our ability to talk naturally and think on our feet in order to make our viewpoints clear in another language.'

In the afternoons, pupils visited some of the many sites that Salamanca has to offer including the Cathedral, the ancient university building, and the stunning *Casa Lis*, now an Art-Deco museum. They also learned more about everyday Spanish culture through a visit to the cinema, a paella-cooking lesson, and dinners at restaurants in which they tried the local cuisine.





WISE up to engineering as a career for girls

Helen Jeys wants girls and their families to challenge STEM gender stereotyping

I have always been passionate about girls' education and encouraging girls to know that they can achieve their goals in whichever area they choose. Interestingly, given the current news stories circulating about sexual harassment in so many areas of public life, the importance of women being willing to speak out and having the confidence to do so has never been more important. And, as a Head of a girls' school, the current media interest in harassment has made me think about the message that I want to give to the girls in my own school. I want them to leave school with self-esteem and self-confidence, two characteristics that are vitally important if they are to succeed and flourish in the professional workplace. Indeed, instead of responding to questions about their future with such sentiments as 'do you think I can do that?', I want them to hold the view 'well why not?'. And I feel that this message is really

getting through. I spoke to one of my Year 12 girls after her Year 11 parents' evening last year. The answer to my question, 'so what are you aiming for after A levels?' was quite simple and without hesitation, 'I want to be a quantum cosmologist'. And indeed, why not? As schools, we have a responsibility to encourage girls to know that there is nothing that need stand in their way of success. But is it always this easy?

The issue of gender balance is something about which all educators should be concerned. For instance, there has been very little change in the proportion of girls studying physics post-16. Only around 20% of students progressing onto A level are girls and only around 15-25% of the current STEM workforce is made up of women. Indeed, the UK needs 100,000 new graduates in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics subjects every year until 2020 just to maintain



Leading women

the current employment numbers. However, the percentage of females who make up the current registered engineering workforce in the UK is only around 6%. Most shocking of all is that research in 2014 showed that just 1% of parents would pick Engineering as a career option for their daughter.

The girls in my school are definitely taking up the challenge, though. As in many schools, they are part of the Engineering Education Scheme and – in partnership with Siemens – are having the most amazing time creating and designing projects that are having real life impact on both Siemens factories and on the lives of children in our local community. Just this year, the sixth form engineering girls have won the Steve Nash Award for Innovation; the Amaze Award for Digital Excellence; and, as The Big Bang Competition North West ‘Young Engineers of the Year 2017’ they have got to the national finals of the Big Bang Competition. We were also shortlisted for the ISA’s national award for Innovation in STEM. Just last Tuesday, the girls were invited to Parliament to speak to industry leaders and Members of Parliament about their work and it was a sheer joy to see the girls speak with confidence and professionalism about their work in this incredibly important area.

When I spoke to the girls themselves about what they felt that their work in STEM had given them, they talked about learning skills for life, problem solving, team-work and also developing a sense of real personal determination. Interested, particularly in the latter, I asked them why they felt that their engineering work had helped them in this way. The girls talked about feeling that they had to work even harder than their male counterparts because they felt that they were not taken seriously, that others perceived them as not being able to stand a chance in a competition full of boys. These experiences had given them an inner steel, an understanding of the importance of preparation, determination and individuality. They talked about not being shy about what they know they are good at. They talked about wanting to be judged by their skills and not their gender. What inspirational young women they are!

However, I do fear that the work we are doing with girls in engineering in the sixth form and in Year 9 is far too late. Indeed, Anne-Marie Imafidon, the co-founder of ‘Stemettes’, a social enterprise working across the UK and Ireland to inspire and support young girls into STEM, has said that girls as young as five need to know that careers in STEM are a viable career option for them. She talks about challenging perceptions from a very young age, avoiding the stereotype that science is ‘only for boys’ and encouraging girls to feel confident and safe in a STEM environment. I agree. Encouraging young girls to speak to role models who already work in this area and providing them with enjoyable activities and workshops to get involved in when young is vital, but there also needs to be a sizeable shift in society’s perceptions. As parents, we need to encourage children to enjoy spending time outdoors, to observe the natural world, to play with construction toys, bricks, Lego and such like.

Most importantly, I agree with the findings of the WISE campaign that girls need to be able to self-identify that ‘science is for people like me’. Girls do not lack ambition, but we have to accept that there are “more female undergraduates studying languages than are studying engineering, computing, physical sciences and mathematics combined.” Moreover, as hinted at above, most children who enter secondary school have already made up their mind that a science career is not suited for them. Even worse, a report by Ofsted in 2013 noted that from Year



3, girls’ views regarding future careers tend to conform to traditional notions of *girls’ jobs* and *boys’ jobs* and these notions are reinforced by parents’ views.

So, despite the specific success in my own school, I and others across the country still have a long way to go, and this is not only an issue for us in the secondary school system. This is an issue for girls, encouraging them to reconcile self-identity with careers in science; and for families, who are the most important influencers of girls to achieve success in science based careers. As Professor Louise Archer, Director of ASPIRES said: “Our research shows that it is harder for girls to balance, or reconcile their interest in science with femininity. The solution won’t lie in trying to change girls. The causes are rooted in, and perpetuated by, wider societal attitudes and social structures.”

I have no doubt that the girls in my school will continue to fight their corner and to work with others to change these attitudes and structures. It is our duty to support them.

Helen Jays has been Headmistress of Alderley Edge School for Girls since September 2016



Building up a head of steam for Arts subjects

Antonia Berry looks beyond STEM

Every school in the United Kingdom acknowledges the central importance of STEM in the preparation of young people for the world of work. Increasingly squeezed and side-lined, however, are the arts. In the last month it was reported that the number of Scottish school pupils taking social sciences and the arts has fallen. Inevitably this raises concerns about a narrowing curriculum and as the curriculum contracts so does the world that is accessible to our young people.

At St Columba's, a co-educational school on the outskirts of Glasgow, we believe schools neglect the arts at their peril. In order to truly innovate, to create something original, to see how a space might be filled, to genuinely succeed in the world, pupils must be encouraged to develop a sense of themselves. It is our job as educators to teach pupils how to trust and challenge their own ideas, to nurture creativity and imagination.

It is, of course, essential that the foundations are strong – that literacy and numeracy are mastered – which is why at St Columba's each young person receives 8 hours a week minimum of English and Maths combined. But if we are blinkered in our approach, if we focus on Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths in isolation and neglect the A in STEAM we limit children's futures. Those at the forefront of innovation, those

carving out new spaces in the world, combine arts and science. If we are to produce the next Vint Cerf, the 'Father of the Internet', let alone another Da Vinci, we must embrace multi-disciplinary learning that champions the arts as much as it does the sciences.

This weekend St Columba's School welcomed award winning graphic artist Metaphrog who delivered a comic book workshop for 7 to 12 year olds. In another area of the School, acclaimed fine artist Ian Murphy worked with teachers inspiring them to 'improve their visual language'. On the same day two of St Columba's pupils were selected to represent Scotland in a team of just five at the World Debating Championships in Croatia next year. And on the Sunday, it was confirmed that based on examination performance in 2017, St Columba's was amongst the highest achieving schools in Scotland.

Investment in the arts does not mean a reduction in A grades, but quite the contrary. With 82% A grades at National 5 and 84% A-B at Higher, it is difficult to argue that our approach is flawed.

Antonia Berry is Depute Rector, St Columba's School, Kilmacolm

HERE & THERE

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Time flies

For the second consecutive year, Our Lady's Convent School is celebrating the national achievements of its artists. Melanie Lamb has been recognised not only as the Winner of the ISA Midlands Region annual art competition with her piece 'Time Flies' but also nationally. Melanie's drawing was submitted for the Key Stage 5 drawing category at the end of the last academic year when she was in her final year at the School. Now at university reading History of Art, Melanie was delighted to hear the news of her win this week.

Mrs Anna Schofield, Head of Art at the school said, "We have a long history of enabling pupils' creativity to flourish and this is evident in the frequency with which they achieve regional and national awards. The standard of all the work submitted in this competition was very high and we are always delighted when our pupils' hard work is recognised."



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All-girl student robotics team is proud of EXPULSION

Thomas Walland celebrates some high achieving Brentwood School pupils whose success in Robot Wars has transformed their career aspirations



Members of the Brentwood School Roboteers, the only all-girls robotics team to compete in the BBC's Robot Wars in the UK, as well as in the King of Bots competition in China last year, have all changed their planned career paths as a result of the experience, including the youngest member of the team, who had planned to be a doctor and now has her sights set on biomedical engineering.

The Roboteers' experience saw them both knocked out and winning in equal measure as they competed in hotly contested heats in Shanghai and London. In China, an electrical fault brought their robotic clash to an end and in the UK they were knocked out twice and won twice, finally finishing in third place during their episode, qualifying them to compete in the 10-way challenge to claim the wild card in the final, held on Sunday 3rd December 2017.

In the UK, only 9% of engineers are women, so to have an all-girl team representing the school in these competitions was truly exciting. As well as gaining valuable technical skills, the experience has significantly developed the students' confidence – they've learned that they are always going to fail at some point and that by failing they are learning and can come back stronger each time. Taking part in these competitions also

requires the students to problem solve, think strategically and creatively, and to be able to outwit their opponents, all of whom are trying to sabotage their attempts. Students have to put themselves in the other team's shoes and pre-empt their actions – it's like high-speed chess on wheels!

The team, all members of Brentwood School's Robot Club, embarked on their international adventure when they featured on the BBC's Robot Wars with their robot, EXPULSION. The 110kg robot, a new and improved model from one that appeared with another Brentwood School team on a previous series of Robot Wars, had a 3 horsepower pushing power, three times stronger than anything the team had built before. It was built out of military grade steel and designed to compete in a series of knock-out rounds, aiming to immobilise their opponents' creations.

I must confess I am very proud of our students – the team had only built their first robot less than a year before! Prior to this, they knew nothing about robotics and had to research the subject before they were able to start building a fighting robot. The students all showed enormous dedication to the Robot Club, spending as much time as they could at the weekends and during their holidays designing and building robots. They put in huge efforts to improve the overall structure of the

Leading women

robot EXPLUSION and ended up with an active weapon with a much wider base, meaning that it had more leverage against opponents to force them into corners.

Fresh from competing in the Robot Wars, the team was the only all-female and UK school team to be invited to compete in the brand new Chinese robot fighting television show 'King of Bots', which was hosted by international martial arts celebrity, Jet Li. Producers of the Chinese TV competition approached the school after seeing their appearance on the BBC show in Spring 2017, which featured another team made up of Robot Club members.

Dubbed the world cup of robot fighting shows, King of Bots was the first televised programme of its kind in China and was broadcast at the end of 2017 on the Chinese version of Netflix: Zhejiang Satellite Television Network.

The team of four girls, aged 15 – 18, with their robot called SUSPENSION, was one of a hundred teams that took part in the television show, battling against teams of professional robotic engineers and experts. Just one other school team took part, from Japan. The team, captained by Upper Sixth Former Sabrina Skilling and featuring robot designer Rebecca Ashcroft (Upper Sixth), chief engineer Juliette Skilling from Year 11, and design engineer Mary Hirst, (Upper Sixth Former and Head of School), travelled to China in October to take part in the filming and represent the larger team back at the school.

Sabrina Skilling is delighted with the experience. 'By competing in Robot Wars and King of Bots we have shown the world that we can be Queen of Bots! Across the world there is a

shortage of women in the engineering industry and we hope to encourage more girls to take an interest by showing that anyone can build robots.'

Returning from their fight in Shanghai, Brentwood School Roboteers competed in the Robot Wars 10-way wildcard competition, which aired on TV screens in December. The team was up against nine of the UK's best competitors and, knowing that they were unlikely to win, they tried the unusual tactic of camouflaging their robot by painting it the same colour as the floor. The camouflage was so good that three people tripped over their robot when arming up. In the end though, the camouflage worked against the students – although they managed to avoid flipping over, their gyroscopic forces made control difficult, and the robot was so well camouflaged the team accidentally drove it into the pit!

The experience of watching Robot Wars on television and actually participating in it is, of course, very different. It's not until you participate that you realise what goes on behind the scenes. It's like going into another world with the lights, cameras, smoke machines and noise, but, while impressed by all the glamour, our students weren't distracted from the important job in hand – making their robot the best it could be. This, in itself, was a very useful skill which they'll carry with them into the workplace. We hope that our Roboteers' experience will further inspire students around the world to get into robotics – especially girls.

Thomas Walland is STEM coordinator at Brentwood School

HERE & THERE

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

Green meets Grey

Acting on the words of Robin Sharma, 'Dream big, start small, act now', 60 Sixth Formers from Leighton Park, UTC, Kendrick School and John Madejski Academy came to the CISCO Offices on Green Park on the 9th and 10th November for a two-day IT solutions challenge. 'Green Meets Grey' was masterminded by Cisco in Reading for technologically minded teens to solve real problems for a range of organisations, such as water irrigation or mapping systems.

"This impressive initiative, the brain child of Mark Mason (Director of Design Thinking) and Louize Clarke (Connect TVT), focussed the creative minds of our students on team building challenges and combining technology and business skills to solve real industry related problems," commented Karen Gracie-Langrick (Deputy Head, Academic at Leighton Park). "It was heartening to hear the key skills required in today's workplace echo many of our Quaker values, particularly the notion of an equal voice."

Each team worked with a representative from a local organisation with a real world problem to solve, using IoT (Internet of Things) technologies. The groups brainstormed and refined their ideas before splitting into technical and business teams. The business teams developed marketing and financial plans around a client profile. The technical teams used Python controlled sensor boards to measure elements such as temperature, rotation and moisture, using computational thinking skills such as debugging and decomposition to edit existing libraries and transmit the output from the sensor readings.

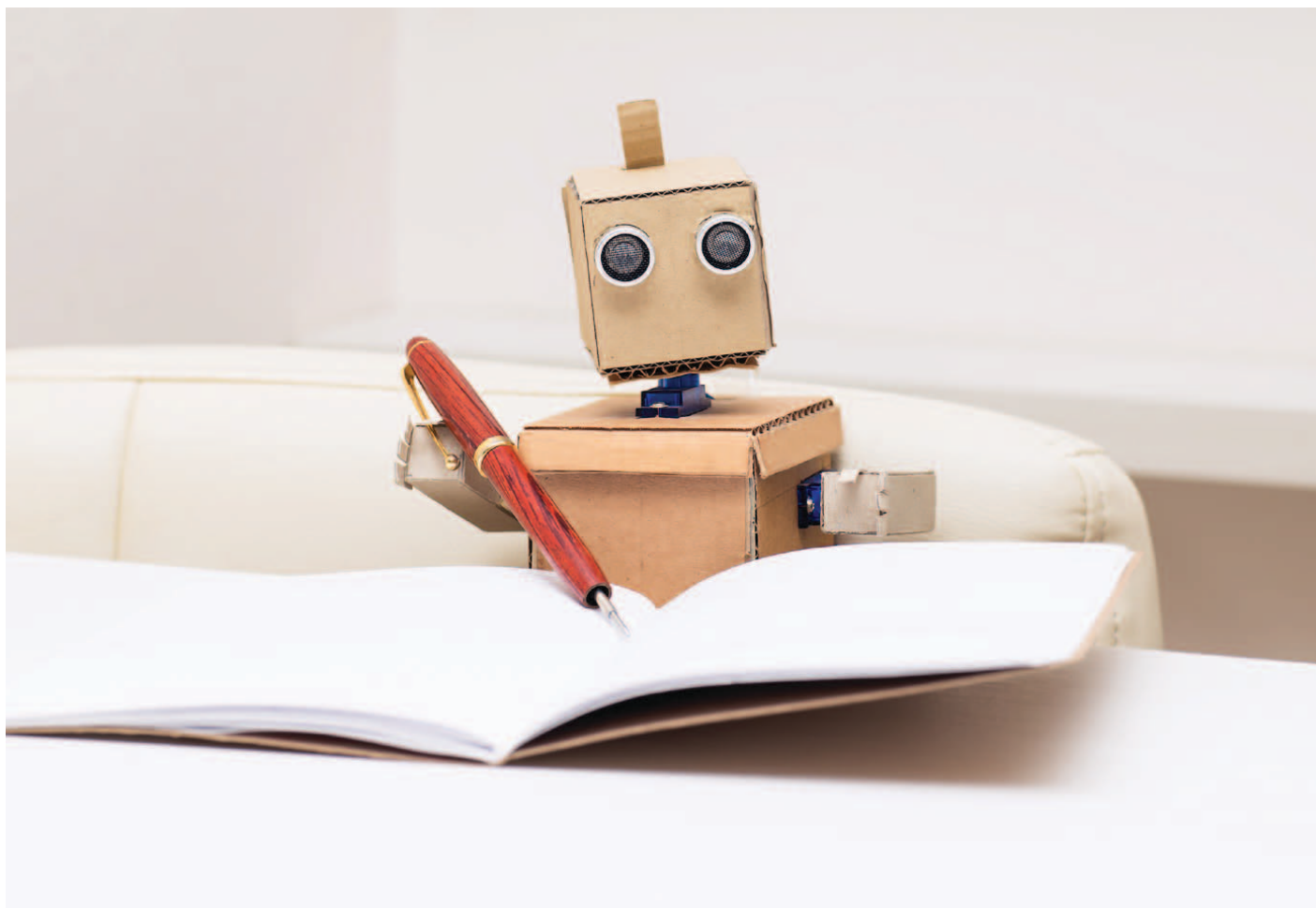
On the second day, the teams made further developments to their prototypes and undertook strategic testing to demonstrate their solutions with a pitch communicating the full business solution to all participants. The winning team, which included Leighton Park student Wallance Chen, developed a solution to help Thames Water solve household water supply problems. Smart sensors with cameras placed in water pipes could be linked to a smartphone app displaying data which a customer could then view to identify a problem before it occurred.





Could a robot teach history?

Ruth Corderoy examines the educational potential of Artificial Intelligence



I was pleased to see that, according to a BBC website, secondary school teachers are unlikely to be replaced by a robot in the next decade (357th out of 366 occupations, since you ask). Apparently they possess certain skills that AIs cannot yet replicate very successfully and since I'm involved with teacher-training it looks as if C3PO won't pinch my job just yet. But should I be complacent?

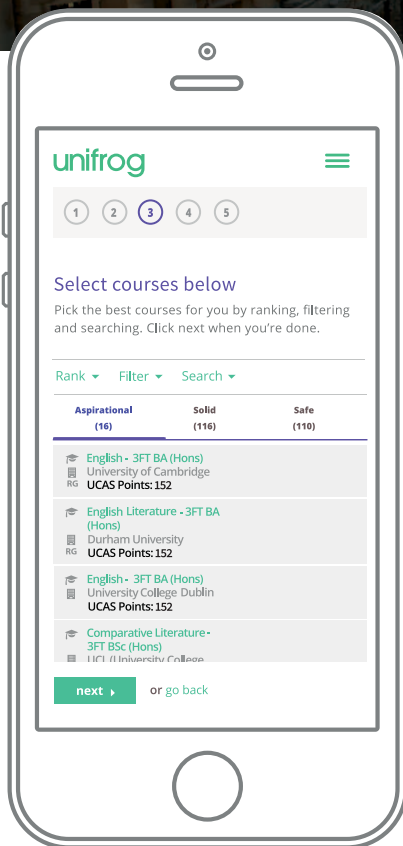
Teaching is, like all professions, a conglomeration of tasks. Let's take marking; we can already use computers to mark multiple-choice tests, but since some computer programmes are able to learn and adapt, is there any reason why all marking could not be done by AI? Presumably this could produce a report highlighting the students who need help on particular aspects or spit out the rare gems written by the brilliant but original mind that require a bit more thought to assess. But this doesn't replace teachers, it just helps with one aspect of the job.

What about the act of teaching? The best teachers have usually possessed huge amounts of specialised knowledge, the






skill to apply this to particular cases and the ability to pass on such knowledge and skills. As Hector says in Alan Bennett's *The History Boys*, teaching is a game of pass the parcel and he urges them to 'pass it on boys, pass it on'. As computers have advanced, so they have become capable not just of storing and sorting but of selecting and applying information to specific situations and learning from past outcomes. In other words, a machine can perform some of the skills of the teacher, at least in reasonably straightforward cases. Pupils can already use a software package to write short answers to basic questions and can be tutored fairly successfully in standard essay-writing skills. So if teaching is simply passing on a body of knowledge and some skills, then teachers probably can be replaced by AI. Incidentally, it doesn't really matter where you stand on the knowledge acquisition/skills debate, the software can help pupils do both.

What about the child-minding aspects of teaching? Left only with computers and no human supervision, would Y8

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study or riot? Even if the answer is 'riot', that doesn't necessarily mean they need a teacher – someone with good crowd control technique would do.

But is that all there is to it? Is teaching just a matter of imparting knowledge and skills and crowd control or is there something else? What was it about the job of teacher that made it only 357/366? According to the website it was three factors:

1. Sympathy and empathy skills
2. The ability to think on one's feet and come up with creative and original ideas
3. A high degree of social intelligence and negotiating skills

But these are vague and some of them can already be simulated by AI.

Let's take the motivational aspects of teaching which use all three of the above skills? Could a robot motivate a de-motivated child as successfully as a human teacher? Well, with short-term task completion, a form of AI is currently being trialled that seems to be quite good at stimulating interest and working out 'rewards' for successful completion of tasks. It is also moving on to programmes that interpret student feedback and adjust content and style accordingly. In other words AI is showing signs of basic creativity. AI is also being developed that simulates a sympathetic response. OK, it's not a genuine feeling, but then are all the sympathetic noises that come out of human teachers totally genuine? Does that matter? The three skills are not evenly distributed amongst teachers and perhaps AI would be an improvement upon those who have started to 'phone it in' or just teach to the test.

We need to ask a bigger question – what is the point of education? Let's take history as an example: often described as a 'humanity', it is one of the courses of study supposed to help us discover what it means to be human. When they are immersed in the murky waters of mid-Tudor politics, pupils

understand that the prizes of wealth and prestige do not always go to the brave or the good or even the brightest, but to those who know how to play the game. When they read of Martin Luther wrestling with his conscience and the corruption he saw all around him and feared was within him, they are able to contemplate their own humanity, their own decisions. What principle or idea, if any, would they be prepared to argue for? Is there any point at which they might say 'Here I stand I can do no other'?

Now, on one level they could discover this by reading the right books or by interacting with AI, but to teach a humanity fully, surely we need a human being. To return to Hector's parcel, Hector is not simply passing on facts and skills and he is certainly not teaching to any mark scheme; he is, in effect, passing on something of the great mystery, beauty and tragedy of being human. He inspires thought and creativity despite not being an inspirational man; he is no-one's role model and yet the boys learn about humanity from him. Education should help pupils to understand what it means to be human as well as to acquire knowledge and skills.

AI clearly has considerable applications in education, but, at its best, there is and there must be something essentially human in teaching. In the end we are not just turning out a skilled workforce with good grades, we are shaping people. If we take the love, sympathy, humour, joy and care, or even the occasional rattiness, mistakes, exasperation and general humanity in all its flawed glory, out of the job, then we really will be in trouble.

Ruth Corderoy is a Senior Lecturer in the Theory and Practice of Education at the University of Buckingham School of Education, having previously taught in maintained and independent schools in the UK and at the William Wilson School in Chile

BBC link: www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-34066941

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Classrooms of the future

Meryl Townley describes how independent schools are leading the way in STEM school design

As technology evolves, so does society, and curriculum and pedagogy with it. Digital and scientific advancement is progressing at an astounding rate, and our children have educational needs and expectations never encountered before. Students no longer expect or desire to be passive observers, preferring instead to be fully involved, integrated and connected. Their surroundings, therefore, must also be integrated. This rapid change requires a unique response, an inventive modernisation of the traditional 'classroom plus specialist space' format.

Pupils of STEM subjects require the physical ability to link to and connect with the spaces they work and learn in. Wireless/digital/integrated tech are therefore key considerations when designing STEM facilities, and the way in which these elements are combined with analytical space planning is integral to how a building can have a lasting impact. Inspired children will go on to become the next generation of innovators in a global market, so preparing them for the modern competitive workplace is crucial. Work environments are changing too: problem solving in groups is used by leading companies to create a community of learning, opening up shared information streams; whilst open collaborative areas, especially between disciplines, foster a critical cross-pollination of ideas.

Crucially, the majority of teaching is dictated by the syllabus and this does not allow much scope for overlap between

departments. Collaborative learning, therefore, mainly happens through Project Work or Extended Project Qualification. Although many schools are striving to encourage more of this type of learning, there is no specific hub for this type of activity. This is in part why STEM buildings can become such great assets to schools, as they provide a unique, dedicated space for cross-curriculum teaching and project-based learning.

An award-winning design-led practice, van Heyningen and Haward Architects (vHH) has over 35 years of specialist experience in the Education sector. As the national curriculum and pedagogic approaches have developed, it has become more and more evident that an essential element of the design of a STEM building is recognising that the circulation, social and foyer spaces, and congenial outside spaces, are key for cross-fertilisation and informal learning. These shared, informal, social spaces are where conversations and debate take place, ideas are sparked and participation encouraged. The non-technical spaces are just as important for learning and the sharing of ideas and allow the expensive technical spaces to be timetabled more heavily.

At Latymer Upper School, we were appointed in 2013 to build our third building for the school, a new Science and Library Building with 3 floors of labs and a ground floor library and resource centre. Their constrained campus meant that the full STEM approach was not available, and so the focus was





instead on creating high-spec specialist Science facilities as an independent faculty. However, the generous circulation areas are designed to provide places for those moments of interaction.

Since then we have delivered specialist Science and Technology buildings for a number of prestigious independent schools. Our projects at Luckley House and St Benedict's School included both specialist labs and technology workshops as additional teaching space. Above all, our recently completed STEM facility for Oundle School, SciTec, shows the full potential of what a unified STEM approach can achieve. The STEM disciplines at Oundle had previously been disparate and independent, but with stand-out teaching from the Head of Science and Head of Design & Technology, the school was keen to provide more innovative facilities in which the staff and students could explore new technologies and ways of learning.

We always stress to clients that engagement of all stakeholders at an early stage in the briefing and design process is essential. The early engagement of staff and students allows the brief to be questioned and tested by the architect and the SMT so that everyone is clear about the aspirations, objectives and constraints of the project. This is particularly important for collaborative environments which involve several disciplines, and our STEM projects have really benefitted from an open and collaborative briefing process. We manage the process carefully with our clients, so that the 'wish lists' which are normal outcomes from the early engagement are refined into realistic and deliverable briefs.

At Oundle, this worked impeccably: each department had specific needs and it was crucial that they could give detailed feedback at the initial briefing stage of the project. We documented inputs and feedback, consolidating the information into a detailed brief – bespoke to SciTec – which then formed the foundation for the project's success thereafter.

A key concern for our clients is how they can future-proof their buildings, and our advice in the first instance is to design spaces that are flexible enough to allow for that space to adapt with new technologies. At Oundle, we focused on integration – of discipline, students, and technology. All four STEM subjects were brought together under one department, with the highest-spec specialist facilities and with cross-curricular learning in mind. This approach has led to Oundle being described by School House Magazine online as one of 'the best schools for STEM subjects', and the school's view is equally positive. As the Head, Mrs Sarah Kerr-Dineen, commented, 'SciTec has been an extraordinary success. Its architecture appeals to all who encounter it, especially young people, and the physical alliance of intellectually cognate subjects is inspiring exciting developments. The team at vHH understood the vision and worked brilliantly with the School in bringing it to life.'

As architects we strongly believe in the ethos of STEM learning and its importance, and have witnessed first-hand the benefits of building this type of facility in schools. Creating dedicated spaces for innovation and focusing on the concept of cross-fertilisation within school subjects is incredibly interesting. We are excited by the future it holds for teaching, learning – and architecture. We are currently working at Ardingly College, where we are remodelling the existing science and DT departments, using a mixture of intelligent refurbishment and extension, to create an integrated STEM facility that will be more than the sum of its parts.

Meryl Townley is a partner at van Heyningen and Haward Architects

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UK's future workforce failed by careers advice

Charlie Taylor focuses on some of the flaws in careers advice and the non-appearance of the government's 'comprehensive careers strategy'

A careers advice report published by Debut, the award-winning student and graduate careers app, has revealed that more than three in every five people aged 16-25 in the UK (67%) think they have been failed by the government's careers advice framework, with 46 percent of all respondents claiming not to have received any advice before making important educational choices such as A-levels and degrees, and almost a quarter (22%) claiming that their careers advice made them make the wrong career decisions.

The report, which is based on a study of 500 UK-based people aged 16-25, has revealed shocking findings around the shortfall in quality careers advice in schools, resulting in 79 percent of people aged 16-25 feeling unsure about what they should do, and when, to secure the best career for them.

Out of those who claim to have received careers advice at school (54%), only 32 percent said that the advice they received was helpful and had positively impacted their education and career choices. 39% of 16-25s who did receive careers advice didn't trust that it was relevant and up-to-date, and 22 percent of them said that it had made them make the wrong educational choices which had impacted negatively on their career.

Lack of trust and relevance

From the groups of students that did receive careers advice, 35 percent say that they trusted that the careers advice they received at school was relevant and up-to-date, but 26 percent completely disagreed. 67 percent of all respondents said that they think the government is failing at providing an effective careers advice framework in schools.

What needs to change?

The majority of 16-25s (76%) say that they would have found it useful to seek careers advice from a recent graduate or someone in the early stages of their career. Taking into consideration that 92 percent of this age group agree that the concept of a career has changed since their parents' generation, it is clear that reforms are required.

Charlie Taylor, Founder and CEO of Debut, comments on the issues the report has revealed. "The reality around career evolution appears yet to be addressed by careers advice in the UK. Gone are the days when a career was for life. We asked 16-25-year olds how many job roles they expect to have and the most common answer was three to four. We know that

well over half of 16-25s would not be happy staying in one job for their entire life (58%). Career mobility is positive today, and the ability to transfer skills from one sector to another is incredibly important for innovation, but careers advice today seems to disregard cross-sector pollination."

The report findings prompted Charlie Taylor to send an open letter to the Secretary of State for Education, Justine Greening, asking why the Government's 'comprehensive careers strategy' as promised back in January 2017, is now almost a year late. The open letter also lists the following suggestions for positive change, based on the report findings.

Out of touch advisors

Those responsible for careers advice are often at a mid to late stage of their own career, and their own higher education/early careers experience is no longer relevant to what students experience today. A reverse-mentoring scheme for careers advisors who could be teamed up with third year students or recent graduates would be effective.

Putting the future workforce at the core

The Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC) board members are also at the mid to late stage of their careers, understandably so, as they have valuable industry experience. However, this means that there is no representation for the needs of young people. Inviting a new, younger member to the CEC board would be effective.

Make it relevant

Considering that 92 percent of 16-25s think that the concept of a career has changed since their parents' generation, it is unclear why careers advice hasn't progressed at the same rate.

Practical tools

Advice is great, but practical tools are important too. Out of the thousands of students I speak to each year, the one thing that they always ask about is the career timeline. This means that before today no-one has advised them on when to create a CV, when to apply for work experience, when to apply for internships. A simple timeline would make a major impact.

Innovation and future-gazing

The World Economic Forum estimates that 65 per cent of children today will end up in careers that don't even exist yet. We need someone within the Careers and Enterprise

Learning

Company who is responsible for making sure that the UK's careers advice framework is future-gazing enough to impact the competitiveness of our country in terms of innovation.

Charlie Taylor, frustrated graduate-cum-award-winning tech entrepreneur, founded Debut in 2015 and was named one of the Forbes 30 Under 30 in Technology in January 2017.

Methodology – Debut's careers advice study – was powered by OnePulse, the UK's fastest app for gathering public opinion.

On 26.09.17 Debut asked 500 UK-based 16-25 year olds about their careers advice experiences.

Debut's latest careers advice report is part of 'The Careers Conversation' – a series of guides, reports and information published throughout 2017-2018 that will assist the workforce of tomorrow to make a smooth transition from education into work.

HERE & THERE

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Ban on single-use plastic bottles at St Mary's



Keen not to contribute any further to the high volumes of plastic waste produced locally and globally, students at St Mary's School, Colchester have decided to replace single-use plastic water bottles with more environmentally-friendly re-usable containers.

Members of the school's student-led Eco Team have promoted this initiative partly to reduce the number of plastic water bottles reaching landfill, but also to ensure that students are not harmed by chemicals from over-used bottles that can leak into drinking water.

St Mary's is one of a handful of schools in the UK with Ambassador Eco School status and has a real commitment to sustainability. Sarah Wilding, St Mary's Eco Schools Co-ordinator said, 'After reading the Guardian article *A million bottles a minute: world's plastic binge 'as dangerous as climate change'* our Eco Team felt compelled to act. The ban on single-use water bottles and our Eco Week events give us the opportunity to send the message to the rest of the school community. The students presented their research and ideas about how the whole school can get involved during a special assembly.'

The school recycles as many materials as possible and initiatives are in place across the school to 'reduce or re-use', including:

- recycling all packaging and re-using for art projects
- making good use of the local Freecycle in order to obtain items for school use such as water butts and plants or seeds for the school Gardening Club as well as offering items the school no longer needs
- supporting Bras for Breast Cancer
- being part of the organisation Virtual Skip
- uniform recycling for cash to re-invest in Eco Projects
- considering environmentally sound options, such as timed lighting and installation of photovoltaic solar panels, when carrying out refurbishment at the school

St Mary's works very closely with Colchester Borough Council in promoting Eco Schools and sharing knowledge and experience of eco-friendly school initiatives, and also has an association with Essex Wildlife Trust to protect and enhance the biodiversity of the school grounds.



How can schools help parents support a child's learning at home?

Deborah Fisher shares some top tips from schools for helping parents to be more involved in school life

It's no surprise that schools take the time to place so much emphasis on engaging parents and involving them in their child's education. The research is clear – children with parents who support their learning from home tend to achieve more, as well as having higher levels of motivation and self-esteem. However, it can be a challenge for some parents to get the balance right when there are so many calls on their time. Work and other commitments can mean that coming into school is not always easy and for families living in different time zones, communicating with their child's school regularly can be difficult. What then can schools do to make it easier for parents to get involved in their child's schooling?

Meeting the needs of families

Most schools are familiar with the different communication styles of parents they can come into contact with. There are those who will frequently pick up the phone or come in to school to talk about their child's progress in maths or ask questions about how they can best support them if they've clinched a place on the school hockey or debating team. Then, there are those who are reluctant to contact their child's school unless they have a specific concern, holding the view that they should 'leave the school to do its job'. And finally there will also be a handful of parents whose work and family commitments make it extremely hard to engage with the school community at all.

I thought I'd share some great examples from schools I've visited that are successfully engaging parents in school life and strengthening those vitally important home/school links.

Have an open door policy

The vast majority of heads I come into contact with champion an open door policy in school. This can work extremely well for encouraging parents to get more involved in the school community. Having set times when key staff are visible in the playground, or days when the head can chat to parents at the school gate after the last bell, also works well. It means parents can quickly and conveniently mention something they otherwise might not want to 'waste your time' with.

When parents know they can approach the school with any concerns, they are less likely to wait until there is a deeper issue that needs to be addressed. Working together to provide support from school and at home is essential for ensuring that children make good progress in their learning.

Address the issues that might prevent parents from asking for help

Many parents are keen to play a part in boosting their child's achievement but do not feel confident about their current knowledge or their understanding of an increasingly sophisticated curriculum. Schools can help by taking the time to ensure that parents have the information they need to make a difference. Schools are increasingly making details of the topics the class is currently working on available to parents and offering online advice about the key learning objectives. Whether it's tips on effective ways to help children research a history project, or a reminder to help children learn their lines for a performance in assembly, most parents appreciate being pointed in the right direction about how they can best help. It's a good idea to plan in advance how you can help parents to help their children at key points in the academic year. For instance, it won't be long before parents of children approaching GCSE and A-levels will be thinking about how they can help them choose their subject options.

Offer real-time information

Families can lead busy lives and schools can help by making it as easy as possible to stay up to date. Many schools address this by offering a range of channels of communication to keep parents in the loop. Some give online access to real-time information on their website. Others 'push' information directly to parents, either via text or email, or through an app on their mobile phone. For parents, seeing your child's most recent test scores or their teachers' comments can be a great way to encourage their progress. And being able to congratulate them for getting top marks in the geography quiz as they walk through the door, or start a conversation about a falling out with a friend as soon as they get home, makes parents feel much more a part of what is going on in their child's life.

The vital home-school link

Making it easier for parents to get involved in their child's education brings many benefits. In one school I know, parents were kept so up to date with how their children were doing that the head was able to turn the traditional parents' evening into an informal wine and cheese night. Instead of rushing around to see every teacher, parents spent time relaxing and getting to know their child's teachers – and each other – in a much more social setting. This can form the bedrock of a great home/school partnership.

Deborah Fisher is Head of SIMS Independent



'Chance favours the prepared mind'

Imogen Vickers celebrates the benefits of regrouping

When visiting artist Douglas White spoke recently to our pupils about his working process he triggered a conversation about the *value of failure*. Describing how he set out to make a series of small figurative sculptures using wax, he explained to the pupils how he was frustrated because they were not working. Discarding them into a slop bucket of warm water, he left the studio in a huff and went for lunch early. When he returned he discovered the wax had formed a beautiful crust on the surface of the bucket. This then became the basis for a successful series of abstract pieces, and later a work currently on show at the Saatchi Gallery, London. Ultimately he was successful because he recognised that he had an idea superior to his initial intentions.

The concept of accidental discoveries is not new. Alexander Fleming's ability to recognise what had occurred whilst he was away from his messy laboratory over the Summer holidays, resulted in the discovery of penicillin. He prepared a set of petri dishes to grow staphylococci in order to investigate influenza. However, whilst he was away from his laboratory, a mould had accidentally developed with a bacteria-free circle around it. Recognising that this was something worth exploring, he

experimented further and this became known as penicillin. As he describes it, "When I woke up just after dawn on September 28, 1928, I certainly didn't plan to revolutionize all medicine by discovering the world's first antibiotic, or bacteria killer. But I guess that was exactly what I did."

It was the company Kutol, specialising in cleaning products, which saved itself from bankruptcy by realising that its failing wallpaper cleaner paste was in fact being used by schoolchildren to make arts and craft projects. This became known as Play-Doh. In a similar story, the pharmaceutical company Upjohn created a product called Minoxidil to treat ulcers, which proved to be unsuccessful. Further tests revealed that it could be used to treat patients with high blood pressure, and the company approached Charles A. Chidsey MD to carry out the research. However, an unexpected side effect was that patients started to grow unwanted hair. It was at this stage in development that Chidsey consulted Guinter Kahn who, with a colleague Paul J. Grant MD, recognised the potential for hair-loss prevention. Minoxidil is now used as a generic medication for the treatment of hair loss in men and women.

These stories of how discoveries were made by accident are





fascinating. As psychology professor Kevin Dunbar has shown in his research of scientific laboratories, those which had failed and then turned their mistakes into new theories tended to be the more diverse and ground-breaking. He has stated that between 30% and 50% of all scientific discoveries are accidental in some sense.

This is a good reminder of the importance of reconsidering and reassessing our initial ideas. What turns an idea from good to genius is recognising the opportunity to adapt and evolve. As Picasso stated, "I begin with an idea and then it becomes something else." Leonardo da Vinci recognised the inspiration gained from accidental marks, stains, or chance marks: "Out of this confused mass of objects, the mind will be furnished with an abundance of designs and subjects perfectly new." Similarly, the English watercolourist Alexander Cozens discussed how the dirty stains on his sketchbook page, "appeared upon revisal to have influenced me in expressing the general appearance of landscape."

Accidents, chance, failure: being lead down one route and then succeeding despite, or because of, those mistakes. Had it not been for the rivalry between the Renaissance artists

Michelangelo, Raphael and Bramante, the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel would arguably look very different today. According to Giorgio Vasari in his *Lives of the Artists*, Bramante suggested Michelangelo to the Pope, hoping that Michelangelo would fail with the commission since he was highly regarded as a sculptor and had not shown his abilities in paint.

It seems a popular notion to encourage schoolchildren to 'embrace failure' which sounds in itself ludicrous. No one sets out to fail; no one wants to fail: as human beings we do not enjoy failing and we do not seek it out. However, when faced with something not going as one initially intended, rather than be overwhelmed or disheartened, we are embracing the ability to react in a positive way which leads to a better outcome. Rather than being held back by feelings of self-doubt and failure, we should recognise the chance for something new. As Louis Pasteur stated, "Chance favours the prepared mind." So have confidence to embrace opportunities and let your ideas evolve into something far greater than you could have thought possible.

Imogen Vickers is Head of Art at Ipswich High School



Struggling hard

Gary Glasspool agrees with Arthur Clough – say not the struggle naught availeth

I'm not sure whether the overall plight of teenagers has become harder or easier over time. Sure, the pressures that teenagers face continue to evolve – digital living, global peer groups and increasingly odd recreational activities – but to say that times are tougher now would be to forget the difficulties of the past. There is little doubt, however, that the educational landscape has changed. The proliferation of available 'knowledge', and the few simple clicks it takes to access it, means that students nowadays have to navigate truth, fact and opinion in a more sophisticated and nuanced way than ever before. Guiding students through these murky waters is an article for another time, but, by way of a starter, we should perhaps focus on the benefits of making an effort, of struggling, and even struggling hard.

With every attempt by commercial organisations to make young people's lives easier through some new piece of hard or software, students lose an opportunity to experience sufficient levels of challenge. If they don't know something, within two or three taps Google tells them or YouTube shows them. This, in itself, is not necessarily a bad thing – we have all used such tools and found them useful – but the incredible immediacy of response means that our young people have become accustomed to getting the answer too quickly and too easily. They have forgotten how to be challenged and the importance of struggling.

Describing pupils as strugglers carries with it all sorts of negative connotations within education nowadays, which is a great shame. Struggling and struggling hard through

difficult conceptual issues is the mark of a committed student and one who, in the end, will most likely have a better understanding because of the struggle. Through her seminal work on mindsets, Carol Dweck has brought the idea of facing challenge in education into the pedagogical limelight, but in reality these ideas are far from new. There is little scientific research needed to validate the concept that determination is the bedrock of success. I do worry, however, that students think our constant mantra of 'effort = reward' is hollow and 'just something teachers say', though that is all the more reason to reinvigorate the message. We should allow students to struggle, to need determination, to see the reward of effort: we should not be too quick to provide the answer. It might be gratifying in the short term to sense their relief, but until you allow them to 'struggle hard' through problems and come out the other side, they will not be equipping themselves with the skills they'll need in the big wide world. Teachers should, and always will, be there to support their students, but we must take a moment to think what that support looks like. If a child falls off their bike, we should pick them up, dust them off and give them the confidence and advice to have another go. We shouldn't end up riding the bike for them, or, worse still, show them a YouTube clip of Chris Froome!

Dr. Gary M. Glasspool is Head of Teaching and Learning at Churcher's College





Looking to the East

John Hutchison offers some guidance for schools considering China

The UK office for national statistics reported that there were more than 70,000 Chinese students who went to the UK to study between June 2015 and June 2016 (valued at 200 billion RMB). As the Chinese 'Study Abroad' market continues to grow steadily, it is a logical place for schools to go to for new recruits. But with a market crammed full of local and international agents of varying quality, how do you get the most out of your marketing efforts?

Making a marketing/recruitment trip to China has become a very popular and exciting choice among British schools in recent years. But travelling around China on your own and making various arrangements can be quite difficult, hence many schools have chosen to work with Chinese partners to ease the arrangements and maximise results. Unfortunately, however, we are aware that a number of schools are being over-promised by partners or agents in China. It is therefore quite important for the schools to make a careful choice about who they work with to avoid any disappointment or, potentially, a trip disaster.

The key things schools should look for when choosing a partner are:

- Is the partner an organisation with a focus on UK school placements? Many agents might come up with big numbers of students they place every year, but 99% of these students are applicants to universities rather than schools.
- Does the partner mainly focus on British education? A lot of Chinese agents focus on all the English speaking countries such as the United States, Australia, Canada and Singapore.
- How many offices has the partner got and where are these offices located?

Gabbitas Education currently has 3 offices in China – Shanghai, Beijing and Guangzhou – covering the major first tier cities and the provinces around these cities, where the highest national GDP % growths are. We provide tailor-made services to very high end Chinese families and our staff have been working closely with British schools on their China visits since 2009. We have arranged large events where the school gives speeches, presentations and shows school videos, as well as smaller seminars where school representatives can meet the potential families. The schools can also interview the students and see whether they would be suitable candidates. We arrange for UK schools to meet with Chinese bilingual or international schools to discuss potential co-operation and help the schools with their visa invitation letters, transport and accommodation arrangements, as well as providing an interpreting service.

By way of example, let's take the visit of Windlesham House School to China in May 2017. Lucy Thornton from the school's marketing and admissions department visited Guangzhou on the 17th of May 2017, where she and her colleagues made a presentation at an event attended by 500 people. Afterwards they interviewed 12 potential students and three of them were



offered a chance to visit the school for potential enrolment. The school also attended two seminars in Shanghai and Beijing, and met over 20 families. Lucy comments, 'Our visit to China was extremely productive for Windlesham and working with Gabbitas was very much part of the experience. We had the opportunity to explain what a prep school education is about and its benefits, and also built a stronger relationship with Gabbitas which was one of our objectives. We met some lovely families and several have been over to Windlesham.'

*John Hutchison is CEO of Gabbitas
For more information on Gabbitas Education in China,
please contact Sofie.Liao@gabbitas.com*



Professional recognition of excellence in teaching

Dame Alison Peacock outlines what the new Chartered Teacher Status means for the teaching profession

At the beginning of last year, a new professional body for teachers was launched, founded on the principles of collegiality, shared values and respect. I know that excellent teaching transforms the lives of children and young people and, at the Chartered College of Teaching, we believe the way to achieve excellent teaching is by supporting teachers to be the very best they can be.

Providing opportunities for professional development and access to research and evidence to enhance teaching practice is central to the Chartered College's goals. Therefore, the development of a programme to support teachers to achieve Chartered Teacher Status has been a major focus for us. In September, we announced details of this programme and opened applications to join the pilot cohort. Around 150 teachers have been confirmed to participate in the first year of the programme, which commences this month.

Chartered Teacher Status recognises the knowledge, skills and behaviours of excellent teachers, highlighting the importance of their expertise in supporting the learning of children and young people. This represents the first step in the development of a career pathway focused on effective classroom practice, not just leadership. It will also bring teaching in line with other professions, where recognition of expertise and expectation of career-long professional learning are well-established.

We are aiming high with this programme because we believe that teachers deserve greater recognition of their value to society and should be entrusted with responsibility for the future development of teaching. We want to create a professional development programme for teachers that is transformative, engaging, responsive and relevant to classroom practice. It also aims to raise the profile of the teaching profession and celebrate teachers' professionalism, hard work and achievements.

The programme takes 14 months to complete and, to achieve Chartered Teacher Status, participants will undertake a range of different assessments. These assessments will allow them to showcase their knowledge and skills against the areas set out in the Chartered College's Professional Principles. These principles highlight the importance of deep subject knowledge, understanding of pedagogy and assessment, excellent classroom practice, as well as critical evaluation, engagement with research evidence and a desire to contribute to the profession.

In developing our set of Professional Principles, we have drawn on a wide research base about what makes effective teaching, considering all of those things that really have an impact on the progress of children and young people in

our schools, colleges and other settings. These principles have been further refined with input from our Professional Pathways Advisory Group and from surveys, focus groups and individual interviews with teachers, school leaders, teacher educators, sector experts and the wider teaching profession. The Chartered Teacher programme will support teachers' personal, professional and career development and will acknowledge and celebrate the fantastic work that happens in classrooms across the country every day.

The assessments include rigorous written and oral assignments, completion of a professional development plan, participation in debate activities, a small-scale research or improvement project, and submission of a portfolio of videos of practice, work samples and reflections. During the course of the programme, participants will also attend face to face sessions, including a presentation and award event. Participants will be supported in developing their teaching practice throughout the programme. This support includes the allocation of an experienced mentor, workshops, training, reading lists and supporting materials to help develop practice in key areas; an interview with an expert in the field of their research-based improvement project; an online platform to collaborate with other participants; and formative feedback on assessments as they are completed.

Alongside this programme, we are bringing together our many thousands of members and encouraging them to share practice and contribute to an ever expanding body of knowledge about teaching and learning. We believe that this will help to lay the foundation for a professional culture of effectiveness and continual improvement. Our ultimate goal is to ensure that each and every child fulfils their potential through having access to an excellent education.

Teachers need access to a broad range of skills and knowledge that can be adapted and fine-tuned to meet the needs of their widely varying education contexts and pupil needs. The value of evidence is not just in the rigour of the content and its potential impact, but also lies in its relevance and accessibility for educational practice. Membership of the Chartered College provides access to a database including more than 2,000 journals, articles and research.

High-quality, peer reviewed, research papers and articles from teachers, school leaders, researchers and academics, across a variety of settings, are also published in *Impact*, our termly journal. This journal connects research findings to classroom practice, with a focus on the interests and voices of teachers and educators. It supports the teaching community by promoting discussion around evidence within the classroom, and enabling

teachers to share and reflect on their own use of research. Each issue is themed around a key topic for practitioners with a guest editor who is a specialist in the field. The last issue, published in September, focused on assessment and was guest edited by Dylan Wiliam. Our next issue, available in February, is edited by Professor Sarah-Jayne Blakemore and explores the science of learning.

For me, teaching has always meant lifelong learning and I want to bring teachers, school leaders, academics and others together, to encourage more collaboration and to try and make their professional lives a little easier. The Chartered College of

Teaching is still a fairly new organisation and I believe that what we are beginning to achieve is very exciting for the teaching profession. Chartered Teacher Status marks the start of our work in supporting the professional development of teachers and, through this programme, teachers will be recognised for their depth of knowledge, expertise and the impact that it has on the children and young people in their care.

Dame Alison Peacock is Chief Executive of the Chartered College of Teaching and a Trustee of Teach First

HERE & THERE

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

Felsted making a global difference with colour

Felsted School have raised over £9,000 to make a difference across the world by holding a whole school charity colour run. The event involved the Felsted School community running a seven-lap water relay, signifying the seven miles the average Sub-Saharan African walks to reach clean water. Runners were painted a different neon colour on each lap. Participants then arranged themselves into a giant human infinity symbol, first introduced by Old Felstedian, John Wallis in 1655, symbolising that Felsted are forever making a difference to the lives of others.

The money raised will be used to support Felsted's four main charities in the following ways: fund 20 pupils through their A Levels in Uganda (Volunteer Uganda); build the volunteer programme in Malawi (Sparkle Malawi); equip the Felsted Mission night shelter to help the homeless this winter; and support Round Square international service projects in Nepal and Tanzania.

Hamlet Mbabazi, the founder of Great Lakes High School and Nyakabungo Primary School in Uganda, participated in the event and commented, 'We are so grateful for all the support. Every penny goes to where it is most needed to educate a child, feed a child, give them fresh water and make it possible for them to study so they can achieve their highest potential. With the help of partnerships such as this, we seek to break the cycle of poverty. Felsted's help makes a huge difference for ever.'

Felsted Charity Events Organiser, Revd Nigel Little added, 'The day was a lot of fun, the rain made the colours really fly and I am so pleased that everyone took part with such enthusiasm. Our Water Relay really helped us to consider just how precious fresh clean water is for our friends in Uganda, Malawi and sub-Saharan Africa. We would like to thank everyone for the generous support that inspires new futures.'



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Bringing world music to the whole class

Andy Gleadhill describes the transforming benefits of African Drumming, Samba and Indonesian Gamelan on whole class music

African Drumming has always been popular in schools as a one-off workshop option and it has also been shown to transfer very well into whole class weekly ensemble lessons. The same can be said for Brazilian Samba and Indonesian Gamelan. These styles cover the main requirements of the music curriculum at KS2 and KS3, including controlling sounds, creating and developing musical ideas, appraising skills as well as listening, and applying knowledge and understanding; and they also cover all the key 'musicianship' skills. Moreover, they have two distinct advantages over most types of 'classical' instrument tuition: the young people are able to start making music together almost immediately; and, because these are truly inclusive group music making activities, they allow every member of the class to participate, whatever their musical ability, academic level or cultural background.

Some young people look at more complicated western instruments and immediately think 'I'll never be able to play that', and it's a fortunate school that has more than a quarter of their pupils involved in regular classical ensemble playing. However, because most world musical instruments are quite simple in their construction and not technically difficult to play, they're a much more inviting prospect and almost all pupils are able to master the basics in a lesson or two. This accessibility also helps pupils who have physical or learning difficulties that normally present a barrier to playing a musical instrument, and it means that an ensemble of beginners can quickly produce good musical sounds. Nothing succeeds like success, and the speed with which pupils discover that they can play fully developed pieces of world music as part of an ensemble helps to enhance their sense of achievement and their enjoyment of the lessons. Last but not least, most world musical styles are naturally differentiated and have easier and more difficult parts. This enables the teacher to ensure that all pupils can play together at the same time and that all are engaged throughout the whole music lesson. No one need be left out or left behind and the whole class can be up to performance standard after just eight or ten lessons.

An ensemble form perfectly suited to the classroom is the Indonesian Gamelan. This mainly features percussion instruments, some struck with mallets and some played by hand, whilst xylophones, flutes, singers and even stringed instruments can be added.

Accessibility is not a word that is often heard when discussing large musical ensembles, but the Gamelan's beautifully simple pentatonic tunes and flowing rhythmic structures are really well suited to whole class learning. As such, Gamelan is a wonderful way of introducing melody and rhythm to a class of young people as well as introducing them to an exotic soundscape and a fascinating culture. Affordable chamber Gamelans that are within the budget of schools and which can be easily stored are now being specially imported from Indonesia, allowing many more pupils to enjoy this form of music making.



The infectious rhythms of African Drumming and Brazilian Samba help to instil a real feeling of pulse in the players. They cover all the elements of music and also improve pupils' musical awareness by developing their listening skills and their perception of how individual parts fit within the larger ensemble. As with Gamelan, high quality instruments and teaching support are now readily available in the UK and, like Gamelan, the music makes for exciting performances both in school and in the community.

There are other, non-musical advantages to learning music through a world musical style as it supports a range of cross-curricular activities throughout the school. Apart from the obvious historical, cultural and geographic elements that are involved in the study of world music, many schools have followed up whole class instrumental lessons with performances, both formal and informal, in and outside of school and with the recording, design and production of CDs that help to celebrate their achievements. Some schools have gone on to develop contacts with schools in Africa and beyond.

There is currently a very wide range of whole class world music activities running in schools across the country. As well as African Drumming, Samba and Gamelan, these include Steel Pans, Indian Music, Ukulele (from Portugal via Hawaii), Singing (hugely important of course), Mexican Marimba, African Balafon, Eastern European Accordion and Japanese Taiko Drumming – to name just a few.

The best advocates for learning World Music through this learning by playing approach are, of course, the young people themselves, whose enjoyment and achievement is evident in their enthusiasm. As one Head Teacher said to me, 'the only time this class has full attendance is when it's African Drumming day!'

Although I am not suggesting that music education should be exclusively delivered through whole class World Musical styles, as a way of giving every pupil a sound understanding of music and of the world around us, it's certainly hard to beat.

Andy Gleadhill, an international expert on music education, was for many years head of the Bristol Arts and Music Service and is the author of best-selling World Music teaching guides. Further information can be found at www.andygleadhill.co.uk and www.drumsforschools.com



School rules, conventions and practical wisdom

Pip Bennett offers a minority report

So far, I have taught in all manner of girls' independent schools, prep, secondary and boarding. The gender balance in the staff common rooms has afforded an interesting perspective, since there are still not that many male staff. That of itself would be interesting to write about, and I have also found that talking to alumnae over the years has provided much food for thought, especially for a man in a senior leadership role in a girls only school. When talking to old girls about their time at school, there are a few topics which can be counted on to draw extreme, visibly visceral responses. These include rules, uniform, games, food and ... maths. As a teacher of maths, it is disheartening that the subject I love is so often singled out, though I do know all too well that clenched feeling in one's chest in the face of a seemingly intractable problem and hence can appreciate why the subject elicits such a response. But tempting though it is to produce an irrefutable proof of the essential simplicity of the world of numbers, concluding with a triumphant QED, I will explore instead the first item on the list, rules. In order to preserve anonymity, I shall be accompanied by a fictional schoolgirl, Flossie, who is a composite of the many girls I have taught and old girls who have been interviewed.

Rules and school are, for most people, inextricably intertwined. It feels difficult to countenance educational institutions without rules prescribing, and undoubtedly proscribing, all manner of behaviour. Throughout their history, and in contemporary society, it is the girls' independent schools that have been at the top of the leader board in terms of the extent to which they expect to be able to regulate behaviour. Given the rule-bound nature of our schools, I offer some brief commentary on the relationship of our communities to these long-standing and ever-present guidelines. Exploring some of these rules may perhaps be enlightening.

When many of the girls' schools were founded, one genuine objective was to prevent those attending them from indulging in the kind of poor behaviour that might render them unmarriageable. School then as now was a preparation for life, so it is hardly surprising that comportment, deportment and etiquette featured to the extent they did. Well within living memory, girls at many a school were not allowed to talk when moving from lesson to lesson, nor, because their hands were neatly behind their back, might they even place a hand on the bannister when walking up stairs. What might health and safety make of that now? At mealtimes in the 1960s one had to sit with hands in lap and woe betide the girl who asked for something from across the table. One could, though, offer the bread, for example, in the hope that someone would take the hint and realise that you were in fact hoping for some yourself. Although it could reasonably be argued that the girls were

merely being taught to be polite, the imposition of rules that created a tension between politeness and practicality was surely counter-productive.

Even in the current decade, younger girls would not have wanted to be caught on the staircase reserved for the Sixth Form lest they end up doing a great deal of washing up for that exalted group. This example illustrates the pervasive culture of both control and hierarchy which has long been a feature of girls' schools. One former pupil I interviewed told of how she had started at a school in the Spring term and therefore, even at the end of the academic year, she was not considered to be a full member of the community because she had not yet completed three terms, through no fault of her own. This 1960s example of exclusion was entirely supported and in fact promulgated by the housemistresses.

If members of staff feel that a particular rule is not of good service to the community, they can always make their case to the powers that be. But staff have a professional duty to uphold the rules, not least because there is no point in a rule existing on the books, as it were, if it is routinely flouted. Educational psychologists tell us that children and especially teenagers are far happier if they know where they stand. Uncertainty about how an adult is going to react in a given situation does not provide this stability and pupils tend to react badly when rules are inconsistently applied. Fairness is everything and senior staff would do well to have words with their colleagues who, wilfully or otherwise, ignore the rules or are lax one moment and overdo it in another.

On the other hand, there are those times when a teacher is simply unaware that a transgression has taken place. I suppose it is touching that the loyalty of some girls is to the teacher and the school rather than to their peers, but it is not conducive to positive relationships within a class if Flossie points out that her class mate is sporting an 'illegal' bracelet which so far has gone unnoticed. The girl is likely to be found out before the end of the lesson anyway and Flossie would do better to keep quiet. Getting the message across that teachers do need to know who set fire to the Chemistry lab but not who has so far got away with minor rule flouting is a lesson in itself.

It would not be sensible or practical to propose that we abandon systems of rules in educational establishments, not least because they form part of the feeling of security and stability of the student body. They also provide something to push against, react to and, in some circumstances, rebel over, with essentially trivial misdemeanours often acting as a safety valve and pre-empting a serious explosion. I would far rather a pupil appear with glossy nails from a salon and be required to report to the school office than be caught shop-lifting. On

the prescribing and proscribing of behaviours, I would favour guidelines that are as much as possible tested in terms of what kind of behaviour is in accordance with the culture of the institution, rather than lists of rules, not least because these are never exhaustive. Far better a common culture than a list of precisely what behaviour is acceptable at tea time and on the way to school. If the culture is not clear to all, then the community has other matters to worry about. The crucial thing is that Flossie should acquire the practical wisdom of knowing how to behave and when. She must understand that either we act in accordance with the rules or we should seek to change

them. If she breaks them and is caught, she should take her punishment with dignity, knowing that she could have acted otherwise. If she flouts them without getting caught, she should remember that sooner or later the eagle eyes of certain members of staff will probably find her out.

Pip Bennett taught Maths at Broomwood Hall School then Francis Holland, Sloane Square where he became Assistant Head before moving to his present post as Deputy Head of Badminton School in 2016

HERE & THERE

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The new Alan Megahey Centre – Peterhouse, Zimbabwe



The recent Speech Day at Peterhouse was no ordinary occasion – it marked the opening of the school's new Learning Resource Centre – the Alan Megahey Centre.

Named after the 3rd Rector of Peterhouse, the late Alan Megahey, and built at a cost of \$1.5million, donated to the school by an anonymous benefactor based in the UK, the new LRC is a vibrant interactive complex with both formal seating for pupils of all ages to access the internet and do online research, as well as more comfortable and relaxed seating areas for them to enjoy reading and studying. The centre has a large suite of PCs, installed with the online version of Encyclopaedia Britannica; 4 Apple Macs; two glass study rooms; an impressive internal amphitheatre for presentations; a careers' centre; and 10,000 books, the vast majority of which are brand new, and periodicals. The LRC also has impressive multimedia facilities, state of the art sound equipment and a huge screen strategically placed for watching presentations. Opened by Chris Paterson, governor and lifelong supporter of Peterhouse, the new building designed by Geoff Fox from *Architectural Planning Studio* is not only a magnificent new facility but it also finishes off the Great Court at the centre of the school.

Rector Howard Blackett said, 'the new Megahey Centre is a truly wonderful addition to Peterhouse. Not only is it a top class and very modern facility which will support and promote the academic aspirations of the school, it is also a wonderful dynamic building which, whilst being bold, bright and new, manages to complement the existing buildings. It really does have the wow factor!'



Student progress the Wynberg way

Ben Thompson discusses the mix of time-honoured and more modern ways in which his school supports, challenges and boosts every student's performance

At Wynberg Boys' High School in Cape Town, South Africa, we pride ourselves on really knowing and understanding our students. We've had a lot of experience having just celebrated our 175th anniversary, making us the second oldest school in South Africa. While we've grown since opening our doors to sixteen students in 1841, we've always valued our heritage and traditions. But we also embrace new technology, ideas and innovative ways to help each of our boys achieve their full potential. Blending the old and new helps us keep expectations of both behaviour and achievement high, with a central focus always on motivating all our students to strive for excellence.

Here's how we do it.

We aim high...

In South Africa, the government pass level is at 30% or 40%, depending on the subject, before a child can progress in grades 10 to 12. However, we've introduced a 'Wynberg Pass' of 55%. This is the minimum level we encourage students to work towards on any test, examination, project or assignment – it exceeds what is expected as a baseline to apply for university too.

...but we also give our students autonomy

We recognise that our students have a variety of abilities and

potential routes they wish to follow after school. So, we have a unique approach to target setting. At the start of his high school career, each student selects an individual Minimum Performance Level (MPL) for themselves. Boys are held to account for achieving this as they move through the school, although it can be adjusted at set points during the year. Certain privileges are awarded for consistently achieving an MPL. These are influenced by a boy's willingness to risk setting a high standard, as well as for achieving the necessary level, which adds aspiration to the mix.

We encourage teachers to share information...

Teachers have always talked to each other about their students, and these conversations can often be hugely beneficial. A quick chat in the staff room about a boy struggling in maths might reveal difficulties in other subjects, for instance. Teachers can then work together to put interventions in place that boost the child's achievement across the curriculum.

...but we also push student information to staff.

It's not enough for key information such as details of a student's attendance, homework marks or test scores to sit in a filing cabinet or on the school's computer system. Our staff have





an electronic dashboard where data on students' attendance and achievement is pushed out to them from our SIMS management information system. They don't need to seek it out for themselves – if they are authorised to see it, it goes straight into their hands.

With the latest information in front of them on the progress a child is making – or not, as the case may be – issues are uncovered that a teacher otherwise might not be aware of. Staff across the school can then work more effectively together to address them.

We celebrate academic success...

We are keen to encourage academic success, so the moment a teacher awards a merit to a boy in the class, other staff are automatically notified in real-time. For example, we have eight house heads whose primary role is to manage students' wellbeing. From the dashboards on their computer screens, they can see which of their students have been awarded merits or demerits, and how each student has performed in their academic studies. So, a head of house could walk down the corridor and say to one of his boys, 'You had a bad history lesson, everything alright? Or 'Great improvement on your maths exam, up 22% from last term!' The look on a student's face when we praise them for a piece of work, or offer encouragement after a difficult lesson, says it all.

...but not to the exclusion of the boys' other achievements.

Drama and music play a huge part in life at Wynberg and we're also very serious about competitive sport. Teamwork and sportsmanship are lessons for life and great emphasis is placed on our motto *Supera Moras* – Never Give Up.

Service to others is also prioritised at our school. From collecting food, blankets and books for orphanages and refugees, to caring for abused animals, boys are encouraged to be of assistance wherever possible. It's wonderful to see boys give their time willingly and generously, and we monitor these achievements alongside their academic ones.

We communicate with parents regularly...

We send home student reports regularly, but, to give them real impact, colourful graphs not only chart their progress towards

learning targets but they also show the remaining time period that they have with us. Boys and their parents can see at a glance how they have performed in the past and what they are capable of in the future. It means the widely referred to and intangible concept of a student's 'potential' is framed in a very visual way for parents and the boys.

...but we also want to involve them on a day-by-day basis.

To keep families informed of how their child is faring on a more frequent basis, we've launched an online parent portal, which has been welcomed by families.

Linked to our main system, all relevant information about a student is accessible online. With details of achievements and behavioural incidents uploaded as they happen, it's so straightforward – two clicks from the teacher and every boy in the school with a merit or demerit that day will be having a conversation with their parents over dinner. That's a very powerful motivator.

We keep our students front and centre of all we do.

In our experience, if a subject is proving difficult, or a student is struggling to keep up with their homework, knowing that the subject teacher, department leader or head of house is aware of the situation helps. Students are much more inclined to open up about any concerns and more willing to work with us to identify what support is needed. They are more engaged when we provide it too.

From tracking the boys' achievements to putting key information into the hands of staff, students and their parents, our management information system is the engine behind school life at Wynberg and helps us to support our boys in developing a sense of accountability towards their learning. Along with the other values we instil of friendliness, manners and a pride in all they do, we know we are doing all we can to prepare them to make a positive contribution to South African society and beyond after they leave our school.

Ben Thompson is Vice Principal: Academics at Wynberg Boys' High School, South Africa

A pensive rolling maul after coffee in the common room

Thoughts from a Master in charge



So it's Thursday afternoon. The sun is high in the Autumn sky and as I stare out of my office window, I see hundreds of tie-clad ants scurrying from doorway to doorway and across the hallowed playing fields trying to elude the wrath of the head groundsman, perched like a starving osprey upon his tractor.

Thursday afternoon ... and therefore sports practice. With it being the Autumn, the majority of the insects in their distinctive blazers scoot past the squash courts, the pool and the AstroTurf and head for the changing rooms. For the lovers of the oval ball the time has come.

Each week across the country, thousands of players don their boots and gum shields to embrace the unique brand of muscular Christianity that is Rugby. The RFU are working tirelessly to attract more people into the game in a number of roles, and those numbers, from toddlers to the women's and men's game are increasing. Sunday morning clubs are overrun with tiny beardless gnomes in colourful kits that are too big but keep them warm as they get muddy before devouring a hot dog ahead of Sunday roast. The RFU are rolling out a hugely successful schools' programme which is clearly having an impact. There are better coaching courses, better refereeing courses and, with the world wide web, access to coaching principles and ideas has never been so easy. The touch and 7s formats of the game are gaining popularity with extra tournaments being staged by the week.

We know that in all its formats rugby is a beautiful game, with something for everyone, whether that be the high speed professional animal we see on our screens, or the school 16C team looking as if they have just returned home from The Somme.

We know that, unlike certain other sports, rugby, if taught

properly, enjoys a code, a code of respect, self-discipline, teamwork and integrity, that fosters the right attitudes in young people for life. It offers mental and physical challenges that can lead to the development of resilience as well as the opportunity to be physically active and stave off those tell-tale cases of 'Nintendo wrists' that can be so prevalent in the young today.

We are also realistic that, of course, a contact sport brings a risk of injury. Injuries in the professional game are making headlines once again, and the tackling debate will continue. As schools, it is our clear duty to examine the measures we can take to avoid or minimise injuries, by providing better coaching and physical preparation, as well as by making sure that the best possible medical provision is available pitch-side and thereafter for any injuries that may happen.

As in all aspects of school life, pupil welfare is the number one priority. However, as the blazer-clad ants have now all but vanished from view, I find myself wondering what constitutes the *second* priority in the minds of those who run Rugby in their school. If you examine some of the current practices in schools, the answer is, perhaps, not entirely straightforward. Surely one of the most important features of school life has to be the F word – FUN. Isn't it about time that, as schools, we genuinely reflect on whether our great game is fun for all our players?

What takes away the fun? It's not the weather, it's not the long bus journeys (which, after all, develop the camaraderie) and, bizarrely, on the whole, it's not the injuries from which many boys bounce back into competition. It's not even the losing, it's the one-sided contests, the total spankings, the humiliations on the scoreboard that some boys are needlessly subjected to. There is nothing wrong with losing. It is one of

life's great character tests and even elite sports psychologists and high performance coaches point towards the importance of psychological trauma (*aka* losing) in developing winners and successful sports people.

(The blazers and cocoons have gone and tiny butterflies are now emerging flying across the green carpets outside.)

But, my coaching colleagues, have you ever cast an eye over the websites and notice boards that display the weekly results of the gladiatorial exploits of all the boys? I urge you to take a second look and count how many B, C and D team matches have meaningless score lines after encounters that neither foster skill nor development nor resilience and are the opposite of the enjoyment factor we claim to provide. 40-0, 50-0, 60-0 the list goes on and on.

Other countries are clearly aware of match results like these and their impact on the F word. They have introduced such revolutionary ideas as swapping the best players over at half time, or lending the opposition a player when they are weakened by injury. Some schools are very proactive, happy to look at playing Bs vs Cs with a view to making better and closer games. Forward thinking Directors of Rugby see the greater value in the closer game and its importance in developing skills and generating fun irrespective of their win/loss stats.

Is part of the problem the desire to meet the Headmaster's targets of wins and losses? Or is it to appease the demands of fee-paying parents who want sons who are 'winners'? How important are the bragging rights at a dinner party when, between swigging the Pouilly Fume and swallowing the smoked salmon, you can boast that your son's team beat their local rivals by 76 points to nil?

We have a C team who are a great group of young men with real futures in whatever they choose to do. However, All Blacks they are not. Mother Nature was not kind and they struggle with the contact element, which is never a recipe for success in a contact sport. But they love playing, or at least they did until this season. We have played 5 games so far against similar prestigious rugby-playing schools, and every week, when confirming the fixtures, I have begged our illustrious opponents to modify the match and maybe put out a D side against this year's keen but, frankly, weak C team. I have made every effort to get the message across, but, despite assurances, the boys have lost every game by margins of between 60 and 80 points. Needless to say, the F word has eluded them, and what was a passion became at first a chore and then pretty much soul destroying. Despite all the talk of resilience and some genuinely enjoyable team building sessions, I fear they will soon be lost to rugby and will be suffering from 'Nintendo thumb' by Christmas.

What is stopping us from really concentrating on what is best for the majority of the players? When will we look beyond the academy super stars? Are we waiting for the RFU to enforce 'game changing' laws or conditions, or should HMC take the lead in looking at innovative strategies to try to prevent the pointless fun-killing matches that occur in our schools every week? And it is, alas, increasingly the same in hockey, football and cricket.

My espresso has now gone cold, the sun is a little lower in the sky and there are now literally hundreds of those colourful gnomes now hammering around in totally different directions, having FUN! I grab the whistle and head out, reminding myself that it is my job to ensure that the fun continues.

The author is Head of Rugby at, say, St Andoff's College

HERE & THERE

Marching band's half-time show

On Friday 1 December, Oundle School CCF's Marching Band had the honour of playing during the half time interval of the match between Northampton Saints and Newcastle Falcons at Franklin Gardens. The Band, now forty eight strong and under the direction of Band Mistress and Head of Brass, Adele Hudson, Band Captain Juliette Carmichael (17), and Drum Major James Gaby (17), performed a short marching display before halting in the centre of the pitch to play a special arrangement of 'When the Saints Go Marching In' much to the 13,000 strong home crowd's delight.

The marching routine included a new manoeuvre where the Band counter marched as two separate divisions before reforming on the half way line – the product of WO2 Wayne Palmer's hard work with the Band on the preceding Wednesday afternoons.

The evening was another high point in the Band's year, which included performances at the Menin Gate in Ypres and the Thiepval Memorial on the Somme. It is hoped that they will be invited to perform at Franklin Gardens next season. Their next performance will be on the day of the Contingent's Annual Inspection on the School's parade ground in May.

The Contingent Commander, Major Andrew Mansergh RM said, "It is an honour to have been invited to play at this premiership match and the Band has worked tremendously hard to reach the standard required to do so; every Cadet should be very proud of the performance that they gave."

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



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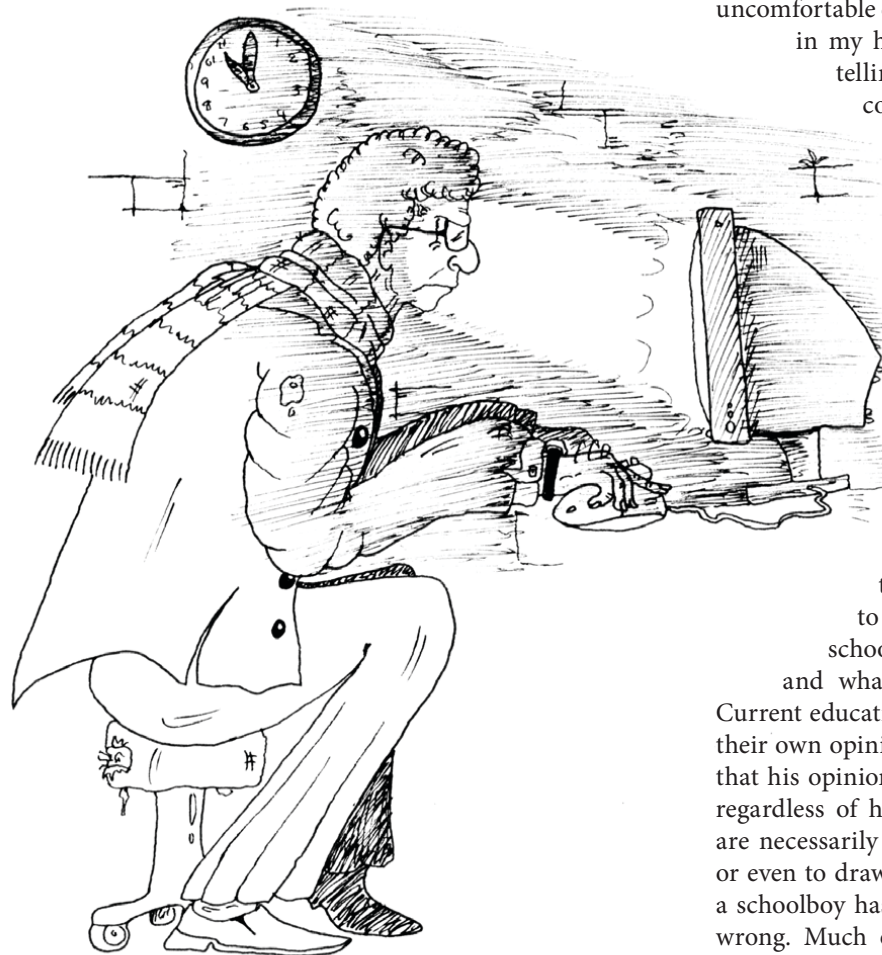


independents
by *sodexo*



Schoolboy language

OR Houseman explores a labyrinth of meaning and obfuscation



Even the inherently honest schoolboy has a complicated relationship with truth and the language he needs to express it. This is often driven by an essentially generous desire to give the answer he thinks we want to hear. At least, this desire is partly generous: the boy may wish to make his apparently unhappy interlocutor happier; but he is chiefly motivated by a desire to make his own life easier in the short term by bringing an undesirable conversation to a speedier conclusion.

Often the schoolboy cannot quite see exactly why his teacher or housemaster is cross with him. "I am sorry I offended you" a pupil once said, when I berated him for not handing in any work. I considered trying to explain that he slightly misjudged the significance of his work by assuming that a lack of it caused me personal offence, but realised that his original statement meant he was unlikely to follow that argument. On another occasion I received a letter of apology from a boy whom I had stopped treating some younger boys unfairly. Did he also write a letter of apology to the boys he was trying to bully? It is possible, of course, that he was genuinely sorry for giving me an hour of administrative duties recording the incident, but I think this unlikely. The schoolboy can also be creative in his use of

tenses in order to give the answer which he thinks will bring an uncomfortable discussion to an end. I recently confronted a boy in my house after listening to an exasperated teacher telling me at length that he had missed several coursework deadlines:

"Have you finished that history coursework yet?"

"Yes. I am going to do it this evening."

"If you are going to finish it this evening you cannot say 'yes' in answer to my first question."

"But I am going to finish it this evening."

Inspectors and, increasingly, Senior Management Teams, like to trust schoolboys and to accept their statements. They ask them direct questions about their lessons and their teachers. "Do you receive effective feedback from your teacher?" Of course a good teacher must do this, and the inspector needs to know, but he rather overlooks the fact that the schoolboy is rarely able to assess his own progress and what a teacher has done to help him progress. Current educational theories strongly encourage pupils to give their own opinions. Thus enfranchised, the schoolboy believes that his opinion holds the same validity as that of the expert, regardless of his own level of ignorance. Not all schoolboys are necessarily dishonest all the time, but it is foolish to act, or even to draw a conclusion, solely on the basis of something a schoolboy has said. If a boy is not lying, he is probably just wrong. Much of this stems from the fact that he does not understand a high proportion of the words his teachers use when talking to him. I was discussing a boy's reports at the end of last term. Things had not gone very well in maths.

"What is your reaction to this report from your maths teacher?"

"I think it is unfair."

"Oh really? Why is that?"

"I don't like where he says I am not meticulous."

"Do you know what 'meticulous' means?"

"No."

When I explained the term, he conceded that perhaps this was a valid criticism. Our discussion had taken longer than I had originally intended, but I had probably managed to prevent a phone call beginning with the words "my son's maths report is unfair."

Just before the Christmas holidays last year, I asked a colleague what he felt had been the most time-consuming aspect of the job in his first term in his house.

"I seemed to spend hours on the phone to parents trying to explain the reality behind stories they had heard from their son. Is this normal?" he asked. "Do you have any advice?"

"Anticipate the news which is going to prompt parental



Misinformation can be troublesome

involvement, and make sure you deliver it first, accurately, before the boy does so inaccurately. He might want to tell his parents what he thinks they want to hear; he almost certainly wants to shift the blame elsewhere if he feels some is coming his way. If he has been dropped from a team, tell his parents that they may be hearing from a disappointed son, but that you are really impressed with the way he responded to the disappointment. If they hear from him first, you could hear a complaint about outrageously cruel treatment potentially causing lasting psychological damage. If you have put him in detention, let his parents know before he does. Tell them you were disappointed by his error of judgement, but impressed with the way he acknowledged he was wrong, and that you are confident he has learned from his mistake."

"Interesting. But I have been told to give them more independence and responsibility for themselves and their communication. And I have had enough phone conversations; now you are suggesting I initiate more."

"Believe me, it saves a lot of time in the long term."

The schoolboy spends large portions of his day listening, or at least, being expected to listen. Perhaps the greatest but easiest error which a teacher can make, is to assume that the boy knows and understands something simply because it has been said. At an assembly, in chapel, in the classroom, he is probably listening for a maximum of 75% of the time, much less in many cases. Of the 75% of the content to which he has listened, he probably

understands around 75%, and of that 75% he can remember no more than 75% an hour later. He might be asked to give his own version of the material to which he was supposed to be listening. Or he may try telling his parents what he was told, and if he sensed that what he was being told was in some way critical of him, he may feel the need to defend himself to his parents, and therefore claim that it was unfair. So, having listened to some of an announcement and understood some of that, he then uses some of the words from the parts which he can remember to tell his own story. His mother may listen to this tale of injustice with greater attention than her son originally listened to his lecture, but she then retells that story in her own words. The story has now taken several steps away from its original form.

I put these thoughts to my new colleague. He said he would bear it in mind, but I could sense that he felt I was perhaps denying the boys a voice.

"I'm not saying you shouldn't listen to them. In fact it is extremely important that you do because it is extremely important that we know what they are thinking. And you should also trust them; or at least, let them think you trust them. A boy's statement may tell you the truth about what he believes; it just has very little to do with the truth of what actually happened."

OR Houseman rises each morning a sadder and a wiser man



Technology and teenage mental health

Andrea Saxel explains Cranleigh's new mobile phone policy for Years 9 and 10

At Cranleigh we embrace technology: after all, our pupils will live and work with it all their lives and we would not wish to disadvantage them in any way. This is the reasoning behind our decision to give all our pupils iPads, and to educate them in using them properly so that they can enhance their learning. We will be able to control which apps they have on these iPads and will be able to monitor the nature of their usage too. We are really looking forward to this exciting new phase.

However, as a school, we have watched with growing concern the effect smart phone technology is having on our pupils, in particular on their wellbeing. Much current research is investigating that impact, but in schools, particularly boarding schools where the pupils are with us all day, the evidence of that impact is right in front of our eyes. From what we have observed in recent years, there are some clear areas of concern.

The addictive nature of this technology is an issue and, if we are honest with ourselves, these days most adults fall victim to this addiction to some extent. However, since smart phone technology is a relatively recent phenomenon for us, one we did not grow up with, we are able to have at least some perspective. This generation of young people is not so lucky. There is no doubt that the level of addiction that some of them are starting to experience is harmful, and we need to do something to tackle it. Smartphone technology and social media apps were not designed for children, but they were designed to be addictive. Society imposes age limits on other addictive substances, such as alcohol, for good reason, but although Facebook has an age requirement, it is not enforceable.

Sleep, or a lack of it, is becoming a problem for our children. If they find it difficult to fall asleep, or if they wake up in the night, they will automatically reach for their phone if they have access to it. They are also constantly disturbed by texts and notifications, often through the night, and there is a danger that we are breeding a generation that suffers from sleep difficulties.

Our children have never been under so much pressure to be a certain way, to look a certain way or to have a certain lifestyle, and no matter how much we try to educate them, they are still affected by how 'perfect' everyone's social media presence is. This 'Perfection Issue' cannot be healthy for them at all. The social pressure is overwhelming for our children at times. The sheer number of Snapchats,Whatsapps and Instagram posts that are sent each day is staggering, and the pressure to respond with increasingly witty comments is simply too much.

Pupils' ability to concentrate is being affected. Too often I have witnessed pupils working on something on their own, in their own time, and within a few minutes, they are picking up their phone, either to answer a message or because they get slightly stuck or bored. The impact of this must surely be a negative one. One of the most important skills young people need to develop is the ability to concentrate on a problem or a piece of work for a period of time without constant interruption. In short, the more we looked at the evidence before us, we became certain that a combination of these factors was starting to have an impact on the mental health and wellbeing of some of our pupils, and that we needed to do something to control this.

In the end, after much discussion, we decided that delaying





the age at which we would allow our pupils to have access to their smart phones in school, would be the way forward for us. This would run alongside educating pupils on using technology appropriately and the dangers associated with misusing it. For this year we have banned our Year 9s from bringing phones onto the school premises at all. Year 10s can have them in school but locked away, with access to them for a short period of time after the formal school day. As the majority of our pupils are boarders, this effectively means that our Year 9 boarders do not have access to their phones at all during the week and our Year 10 boarders have very little access. The other year groups have them in school, but are not allowed them during the formal parts of the school day unless they are being used for an educational purpose at a teacher's request.

When we announced this, whilst our parents celebrated almost unanimously, our younger pupils groaned, but the vast majority of them really do not seem to mind, now that they are used to it. Many have said they prefer it and have got to know many more people as a result. They say they do actually chat to each other and have more time for each other. In a world where there is a constant emphasis on being connected globally, there is a clear need to remind our pupils that being connected to the people closest to them is vitally important too, if they are to form lasting and meaningful relationships with one another. So

far all seems to be going well, and we can already see some of the positive impact we were hoping for in terms of how our Year 9s and 10s are relating to and supporting each other.

In all of this, educating pupils, parents and teachers is crucial. With this in mind, Cranleigh will be hosting a conference on 'Technology and Teenage Mental Health' on March 8th, 2018, in partnership with the Charlie Waller Memorial Trust. The conference is aimed at Pastoral Leads, Deputy Heads and Boarding Leads, and features a range of distinguished key note speakers. In addition, the day will involve a number of workshop sessions. This issue is very close to our heart and we aim to host a similar conference for parents in the near future.

We are really happy with the decision we have come to. We feel strongly that we would like our pupils to be children for a little bit longer, whilst providing them with the tools that will enable them to use this technology safely and sensibly when they eventually have full access to it.

Dr Andrea Saxel is Deputy Head, Pastoral at Cranleigh

For further information about the Technology and Teenage Mental Health Conference, please visit: www.cranleigh.org/our-school/academics/resources/cranleigh-training/technology-teenage-mental-health-conference/



Ready for emergencies

Sophie Braybrooke describes how Royal Hospital School pupils are learning how to become medically aware citizens

Increasingly, schools are introducing ways to help young people to develop important life skills. More often than not these are personal development aptitudes such as developing confidence, resilience, perseverance and the ability to work well with other people. More practical elements found on some sixth form curriculums will include well-being and mindfulness, managing your finances, cooking on a budget and safeguarding your digital footprint. All are invaluable in helping young people to navigate their way through the twists and turns of life beyond school and towards happy, successful and independent living.

Beyond personal development, some schools are introducing global awareness and social responsibility. Being a good citizen and having a social conscience is now placed alongside the more traditional success factors instilled during the formative years. One of these schools is the Royal Hospital School in Suffolk which has made developing this attitude an integral part of the enriched co-curricular provision.

The majority of pupils receive some kind of first aid training through various programmes, schemes, initiatives and co-curricular activities. Around 170 pupils receive first aid training as part of their Duke of Edinburgh Award and, through the Combined Cadet Force, more than 50 senior cadets are trained as medics and taught to deal with Casualty

Evacuation, to recognise injury and shock, and to provide medical support using military first aid kits. The School runs a lifeguard training programme that continues throughout the year involving first aid and how to deal with emergencies such as an unconscious person in the water, epileptic fits, strokes, heart attacks and diabetic crises.

Every pupil is encouraged to contribute to the wider community, and activities involve various levels of care and knowledge of health, well-being and medical training. Weekly visits to local care homes where pupils spend time with elderly and infirm residents, assisting with a baby and toddler swimming session and helping out with a sailing for the disabled project at the local reservoir are examples of weekly activities. Post GCSEs, all Year 11 pupils take part in a Disabilities Awareness Training Day followed by assisting as 'games makers' at a large regional sports and activities event for Avenues East, a charity that supports people with long term disability, illness or injury to live the best life possible.

Most recently, Year 12 pupils were trained in CPR and what steps they should take in an emergency, as part of the *Restart a Heart Day* campaign promoted by the Resuscitation Council and British Heart Foundation. Each participant received practical training delivered by a team of paramedics. Sister



Well-being

Deborah Sweeney, the School's Health Centre Nurse said "If you suffer an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest you have less than one in ten chances of survival. These sessions help to give our young people the confidence and skills they might one day need to help save a life".

The school is medically very well provided for, with its own fully staffed 24/7 health centre, including dentist, physiotherapist, counsellor and GP surgeries. A partnership with Sportsmed East, a total sports health service, has provided more than thirty Royal Hospital School sports coaches with training on serious injury and concussion awareness, as well as pitch-side support at matches, physiotherapy, and rehabilitation using the school's new strength and conditioning and fitness suites. Staff with pastoral responsibilities have taken part in a two day Mental Health First Aid course and both pupil and staff well-being is central to the pastoral support system.

A well-established Peer Support Mentor Programme provides all pupils at the Royal Hospital School with a network of suitably trained peers who can provide a listening ear and recognise potential mental health issues at an early stage. Pupils are trained in Years 11 and 12 through a sixth-month programme led by staff who are Mental Health First

Aiders. The training encompasses role play and scenarios, and the peer supporters are taught to understand that their role is to provide advice regarding where to turn for further specialist support. The training also includes sessions on bullying, restorative justice, support with bereavement and relationship issues, as well as a session on safeguarding, to ensure that all Peer Mentors know what to do in the event of a disclosure being made to them.

It is the School's culture of whole-community health, fitness, well-being and service that has taught its young people the importance of looking out for one another and what to do when facing life's inevitable challenges and obstacles. Sarah Godfrey, Deputy Head (Pastoral), explained. "I hope that when our pupils go out into the world it will be a completely natural response to take action, assist where possible and be caring and compassionate citizens. It is not just about giving young people medical knowledge, but about teaching them to take responsibility and know how to get the most appropriate support in an emergency situation – rather than simply walking on by."

Sophie Braybrooke is Director of Communications at the Royal Hospital School



Monday blues or Thursday lows?

Promoting positive mental health for staff and pupils in GDST schools

Back in 2016, Mary Sansom, who manages the staff training and development programme for the GDST, heard Dr Brian Marien speak at a conference. The founder and director of Positive Group, Dr Marien is a doctor of medicine and a health psychologist. He studied cognitive and behavioural psychology at King's College London and wrote his master's thesis on occupational stress and 'burnout'.

Positive Group is a specialist consultancy focusing on the science of sustainable performance through psychological resilience expertise. Their work is informed by research in psychology, neuroscience and the medical sciences. Positive Group has translated the relevant principles of psychology and human behaviour into a programme which introduces participants to relevant theory coupled with practical, versatile tools and techniques that enable individuals, teams and organisations to increase emotional literacy, manage pressure and adapt to change and uncertainty. The programme is designed to help participants to become more emotionally aware and, ultimately, more confident that they can consciously influence how they think, feel and behave. Very simple principles are rooted in an understanding of how the brain processes emotion, and communicated in an accessible format. Positive Group works with leading organisations across the world, including the NHS, the BBC, Google and Oxford University.

Sansom was so impressed with this approach that she asked Dr Marien to talk to senior leaders at the GDST. The schools were keen to access the training programme and use it with their teachers and students. Up to this point the Positive Group had only worked with adults, but they were eager to see if their tools and techniques would be applicable to primary and secondary students, as well as staff.

'We asked schools to register their interest,' said Sansom. 'We expected five or maybe seven schools to opt for training, but in fact schools were so keen that it became a question of how many schools we could accommodate.' In the event, nine GDST schools and academies piloted the programme (now called the Positive Schools Programme or PSP) last year.

The PSP works in two stages: firstly to develop teacher wellbeing, and, following that, to enable teachers to translate the programme into one suitable for their students. Starting with staff is not just a means of reaching pupils; staff wellbeing is critical and has a significant impact on them. In a recent survey conducted by the GDST, nearly 12,000 students responded to the question 'what makes a great teacher?' The results highlighted the importance pupils place on personal qualities such as empathy and approachability, and the significance of pupil-teacher relationships to learning. As staff learn on the PSP, stress will have a direct effect on professional and personal relationships, often without us noticing or appreciating the impact.

The key reasons for teachers' stress are workload, deadlines and frequent changes of policy, curriculum and assessment. It is also well known that constant change and uncertainty are leading risk factors in psychological wellbeing. Emotional

resilience could be an important factor in helping teachers cope with this stress. Resilient teachers perform better under pressure and they have better cognitive function – concentration, memory, decision making, innovation, curiosity and creativity. They also have a greater tolerance of uncertainty, experience better physical health and are more effective at positively influencing and motivating students.

Staff from each school undertaking the programme attend three training days, and are encouraged, once they have absorbed the knowledge and tools for themselves, to share these with their peers and pupils. They are also given the opportunity to use selected tools – including the Positive app – as an aid to reflection. This technological version of some of the Positive tools is perfectly suited to the digital generation, and also aids the important habit forming aspect of the programme.

The Positive app includes an 'emotional barometer' which allows pupils and teachers to monitor their own feelings. The results of the initial pilot of over 3,000 entries from students and staff provided some fascinating data, such as which days of the week had the most negative effect on each group. Whilst students recorded more negative data on Mondays, teachers submitted the highest proportion of negative entries on Thursdays. When presented with these results, the teachers agreed that Thursdays were the most stressful, as they were the most tired with three days of the week already behind them, but one still to come. These outcomes have the potential to influence how teachers structure their work and even their lesson planning, tackling the right tasks at the right time.

Teachers participating in the pilot filled out a Resilience Framework Assessment (RFA), an online questionnaire designed to measure the key individual and work environment factors that impact on resilience and performance. A year later, after attending the course and using the online platform and the app, they re-evaluated their response to stress.

The findings showed that the teachers felt that they were:

- Significantly more likely to find their workload manageable
- Less likely to say that 'self-criticism stopped them from doing things'
- Able to control their worrying and to sleep better.

Following the successful pilot, the GDST is now investing in rolling out the Positive programme to all its schools and academies over the next three years. Chief Executive, Cheryl Giovannoni, said "Having both staff and students following the same programme is mutually reinforcing, and helps to develop a shared language to talk about emotions and mental health in school. Importantly, the approach is specifically aimed at promoting a positive mental health culture, rather than reacting to issues once they have developed."

The Girls' Day School Trust (GDST) is one of the largest charities in the UK, providing education for girls in 23 independent schools and two academies



Appraising appraisal

George Budd describes the introduction of a new and innovative approach to staff development, an appraisal system with staff motivation and development at its heart



For nearly three hundred years, Godolphin has been at the forefront of educational innovation, so when it came to reviewing the staff appraisal process in 2016 we took to our roots and developed an innovative and supportive programme following a thorough staff consultation process. This process was crucial both for both staff buy-in and because no senior management team should be arrogant enough to think that they could possibly have considered everything alone. Since the staff are the people involved in this process, genuine consultation about how it could be further developed, or where any potential pitfalls or problems might lie, is a win-win situation.

We began planning next steps with a discussion at a working party. The staff appraisal systems dealing with teachers' performance that we had all experienced at other schools struck us as being a mixture of 'carrot and stick'. They were often seen as judgmental by colleagues, due partly to the name and partly to the practice of 'rating' staff in lesson observations. The

overwhelming majority of teachers are surely in the profession to do a good job, and the strong value-added factor at A-level and GCSE suggests that this is particularly true at Godolphin. It therefore seemed nonsensical to operate an appraisal system which appeared to be intent on tripping up these wonderful teachers and focusing on what they could and could not do. The appraisal document lived with the appraiser rather than the teacher, and so was very much a top-down approach. Surely the whole point of any performance management system is to allow staff to improve their own teaching practice. In my experience, staff are almost always aware of areas they would like to develop further, which makes a top-down approach at best unhelpful and at worst counter-productive.

The ubiquitous allocation of the line manager as appraiser is another problem with the traditional performance management system. Whilst this may be of use at times, what if the member of staff and the line manager have similar strengths and areas

for development? What if the member of staff wishes to develop an area of their role where there is an expert teacher available in another department who is not a Head of Department? What if one line manager simply has an unwieldy number of people to appraise? Moving away from traditional rigidity to a flexible and tailored approach has the potential to provide some serious benefits in terms of meeting the training needs of staff as well as cross-department links, allowing all staff to develop their coaching skills (as anyone can be a reviewer).

Furthermore, the various systems we had experienced elsewhere often seemed to be about 'checking up' on staff as much as helping them to become better teachers. Whilst there is clearly a place for the monitoring of performance (e.g. through work scrutiny or exam results), this is not an atmosphere that I would want to engender as part of a staff development process. The bottom line is that all schools have systems for addressing under-performance in their capability policies, but staff appraisal systems should exist to deal with the 99.9% of teachers who would never experience such a review in their entire career. Separating the formal procedures from the coaching, training and support aspects of staff performance provides a much more transparent, positive and honest view.

The foundation of our staff development programme is that it is a positive process underpinned by a peer-reviewed support network. Shortly after the start of each academic year, all academic and boarding staff are asked to select three potential 'reviewers', who can be from any department in the school at any level of seniority. Staff are then allocated one of their chosen

three reviewers each year. Recognising that new staff would find this process quite tricky, and also with an eye on our staff induction process, all teachers new to the school are allocated their line manager as their reviewer in their first year. NQTs do not undertake the process in their NQT year, as they have quite enough paperwork to cope with as it is.

Following the allocation of peer-reviewers, staff meet with their reviewer and set goals for the year in three areas – Academic, Pastoral and Wider Responsibilities. For the academic section, staff select one of seven of the Teacher Standards to focus on that year in consultation with their reviewer. These are a great starting point as they are objective and come from outside any school. As ICT is a whole-school focus for us this year, there is also a question asking which specific area of their use of ICT in teaching and learning should be their focus in the coming year. Staff set specific goals related to their chosen standard and use of ICT and outline any training needs they may have in that area. We ask staff to make use of student feedback as part of this process.

We have developed a student feedback form, based on the work of the Gates Foundation which analysed the work of several thousand teachers to come to a view on the characteristics of an effective lesson. From this, in consultation with some senior Heads of Department, we designed carefully worded questions to emphasise that it is the lesson which is being commented on rather than the individual teacher. The specific forms submitted and the precise results of these surveys are confidential to the member of staff and only the overall trends, both in strengths





and areas for development, are discussed with the reviewer. We need to trust our teachers to be honest about this feedback, as it could easily be seen as a 'stick', whereas it is vital that feedback is seen as helpful rather than judgmental. Allowing staff to draw their own conclusions from feedback, and to share the overall pattern of results by keeping the individual forms confidential, goes some way towards achieving this.

One formal lesson observation is conducted using the narrative lesson style. This means that the observer simply records brief non-judgmental notes on what takes place in the lesson and these are used as part of a coaching conversation with the teacher afterwards. The observation is focused on the teacher's chosen teaching standard and follow-up happens quickly, ideally within 24 hours of the lesson. The notes from the observation and the discussion are ultimately filed with the finished staff development form.

The pastoral area covers staff roles as tutors, House Staff and specific areas of need relating to particular year groups, such as the UCAS system. Boarding staff also complete an annual 360 degree appraisal with their teams and parents are asked for their views every two years.

The wider responsibilities section is a catch-all for everything else. It covers those with leadership responsibilities (e.g. Heads of Department, SMT) and asks for a goal related to this aspect of their role as well as a commitment to extra-curricular activities and a simple yes/no question about staff having any serious concerns about the school's arrangements for child protection.

This section also covers one of the most exciting aspects of our new staff development process – staff research projects.

Every member of staff is expected to be involved in either a group or individual research project of their own choosing. Last year, we had projects about 'A culture of health and fitness', the use of the iDoceo teacher planner app, the Artsmark award, vocal warm-ups in Music and the use of iPads in Science. Our boarding team conducted a large-scale investigation into a range of topics including the integration of international students, the use of mobile devices and wellbeing. The highlight of the year was a whole-staff marketplace feedback session, complete with wine and soft drinks, where everyone could circulate and visit a stand run by each group, learning about what had been researched and discovered.

During the year, the member of staff meets the reviewer regularly to discuss progress and there is a space on the form to note updates and outcomes along the way. The idea is for the form to represent an ongoing conversation during the year, rather than the result of a rushed, judgmental lesson observation at the end of the summer term.

The process concludes in September the following year with a review meeting. The member of staff draws together the progress towards various goals during the year and the reviewer writes a concluding statement. Goals for the following year are drafted, then all paperwork is filed before the process begins again.

We have made some refinements to the process for 2017-18, and the feedback from the staff has been positive. Outcomes are hard to measure quantitatively, but with a significant rise in exam result value-added at Godolphin, things are looking very positive indeed.

George Budd is Academic Deputy Head at Godolphin School



New Year's resolution – review your data protection!

Chris Berry urges independent schools to consider the implications of GDPR

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is new EU legislation that reforms laws regarding the handling of personal data and will come into effect in the UK from 25th May 2018.

The introduction of the GDPR significantly raises the bar for personal data privacy and most organisations, including schools, will have to examine and determine how they collect, store, manage and protect personal data in order to comply with the GDPR. For those that don't comply, the penalties are severe. Fines can be as high as 20 million Euros for serious violations of the GDPR, or 4% of a company's global turnover, whichever is greater. The severity of these fines is a sign of how seriously the GDPR should be taken. Schools will need to review current practices and make necessary changes to the way they handle their workforce data.

With less than six months until the GDPR comes into force, many independent schools have failed to start planning, some believing, wrongly, that the new regulations won't affect them. Where preparations have been undertaken, the effort tends to be limited to the protection of the personal details of parents and pupils. But staff will be very much affected as well. In particular, separate data management for employees, supply, peripatetic staff and volunteers could render independent schools vulnerable under the new regulation.

The management team within independent schools will have an important role to play in protecting the data they hold on their entire workforce. Given the implications, this is not something HR professionals can ignore. The school will be held accountable if things go wrong.

GDPR will fundamentally change how schools handle personnel data. The main changes are around the way staff can access, correct, delete and transfer their details. Key changes will include making sure that permission to process data has, where necessary, been opted-into, and not assumed. Policies will have to communicate clearly what data is being stored, how it will be used and how long it will be held. Schools will also need to ensure that, when consent for storing or processing data is withdrawn, the affected data is deleted unless there is another legal basis for retaining it.

For those in the management of schools, this means a rethink about how personal data is collected, used and kept, from handling recruitment and employer references, to monitoring staff performance and handling safeguarding records. Many schools are running separate data sets for staff, supply teachers, peripatetics and volunteers, which could leave some parties more open to data breaches. So a key move will be to ensure that the same protection is being extended to all team members. Added to this, new accountability measures

will make it important that systems are in place to show that the regulations are being met.

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) provides a best practice recommendation that organisations should try to give individuals remote access to a secure self-service system so that they have direct access to their own information. Self-service functionality provides transparency and enables individuals to ensure data accuracy. Using CIPHR's SaaS HR system, employees, trainees, supply teachers, peripatetic staff, job applicants and volunteers can access and update their own personal information via a secure self-service portal. CIPHR offers tools that will help you to document when consent from employees and volunteers was granted for processing personal data. CIPHR also has integrations with leading School Management Systems to ensure that personnel details are kept up to date and are transferred between the platforms securely.

Here are 9 suggestions, although by no means definitive, of things you can do to prepare for the GDPR before May 2018.

1. Start the Discussion

Regulations are likely to impact several areas of your school and you need to raise awareness not just of the oncoming implementation but also the seriousness of any breaches or non-compliance.

2. Assess your Current Compliance

Use the opportunity to assess and discuss where you are with compliance currently and identify any new requirements from the GDPR that may affect your school. You will need to examine how and where you use the personal data you collect, and audit how you store and track that data.

3. Review Privacy Notices and Policies

Take the time between now and May to review how easily understood your current privacy notices are, and update them to include the additional information and more stringent regulations of the GDPR. Review your current data protection policies and practices including existing employment contracts, staff handbooks and employee policies.

4. Educate Yourself on the Requirements

Make sure you study and fully understand the more detailed regulation, and ensure that the relevant people within your school have received the training they require to understand the new laws.

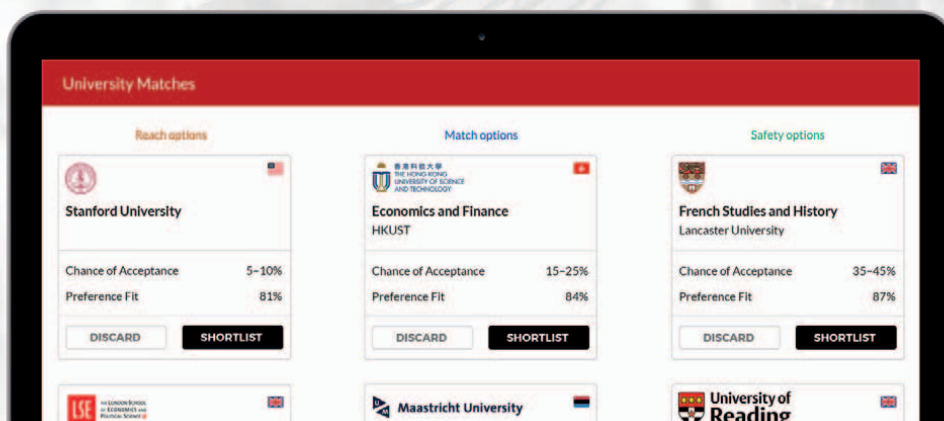
5. Consider Consent

The GDPR states that consent from the individual needs



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to be freely given, specific, informed and unambiguous. It requires some form of affirmative action, so silence or inactivity or pre-ticked boxes do not constitute consent. It also needs to be verifiable, so you need to think about how you will keep records of how and when consent was given.

6. Put Processes in Place

The GDPR accountability principle requires you to show how you comply with the principles. You will need to maintain relevant documentation on processing activities and decide who will do this within your team.

7. Be Prepared to Respond Swiftly

You will need to be ready to respond quickly and you should update your systems and procedures now to make sure you can handle the requests for access to, correction or deletion of personal data within the shorter one month timescale.

8. Develop a Data Breach Response Programme

Data breaches under the GDPR are treated very seriously.

You will need to have a fast-moving internal breach reporting procedure in place. It's a good idea to develop a Data Breach Response Programme to make sure members of your team notify you promptly and that the person responsible notifies the relevant authorities within 72 hours.

9. Consider a Self-Service System

The ICO provides a best practice recommendation that organisations should try to give remote access to a secure self-service system to give the individual direct access to their own information. Self-service functionality provides transparency and enables individuals to ensure data accuracy

Chris Berry is CEO of CIPHR

To see how CIPHR's secure, self-service HR system can help your school to comply with the GDPR call CIPHR on 01628 814 242 or visit www.ciphr.com.

HERE & THERE

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

Abingdon School's Big Band star guests

Special guest soloists Tom Richards and Joe Stilgoe joined Abingdon School's Big Band for a concert in aid of The Abingdon Bridge, a charity that supports local young people who face challenging circumstances. The Band played to a capacity house at the School's Amey Theatre raising £4,500.

The Big Band opened the show and was joined by Tom on the tenor saxophone. Tom, saxophonist and keyboard player for Jamie Cullum and a former student at Abingdon, enjoyed performing alongside the School's Big Band conducted by Simon Currie, his former saxophone teacher. Singer songwriter and pianist Joe Stilgoe then took to the stage, performing a number of original and traditional jazz numbers. The show culminated with Joe and Tom accompanied by the Big Band and music teachers from Abingdon School playing *Alright, Okay, You Win* with a special guest appearance by the Headmaster, Mr Michael Windsor on the bass guitar.

Michael Stinton, Director of Music at Abingdon added, 'I was so pleased that this ambitious concert came together so well. It was fantastic to have Tom Richards back to play with us after all these years. We are so proud of his achievements – he's clearly a player of international stature these days far removed from the eleven year-old who arrived with a treble voice and much promise!'

Talking about the event, the Chair of the Trustees at The Abingdon Bridge, Chris Bryan, said he was overwhelmed by the response. 'We knew that when Joe Stilgoe and Tom Richards arranged to do this gig it would be a popular event, but we were amazed at how quickly tickets sold. The demand for our support work amongst troubled young people in the area is increasing, so we are encouraging local organisations to help us with fund raising events. We have already had great support from Abingdon School and this was another fantastic evening for everyone involved.'



Fake news is bad news

Karen Kimura describes GDST's approach to the word of the year and other news stories



We are often told 'don't believe everything you read'. The alternative news site Vice recently noted that "Ever since a billionaire TV celebrity who cannot seem to say three true things in a row became president, the news has become a parody of itself, with even 100-percent true stories carrying a whiff of unreality." 'Post-truth' was declared word of the year in 2016 by Oxford Dictionaries, reflecting what it called a highly charged political twelve months in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than emotional appeals.

Fake news might seem like a recent phenomenon, given the prominence of the expression in the media and in conversations, but it goes back in time: Holocaust denial, climate change denial, flat-earthers. Even in fiction, Rita Skeeter takes poetic licence to the max, as a reporter for *The Daily Prophet* in the Harry Potter series.

In the past, when you needed information, you consulted an encyclopaedia. You could trust that the information was thoroughly researched, double-checked and true. Now, young people go to social media or news websites to find out what is happening in the world. Many students are shocked to realise that the information hasn't been through the same rigorous process. As Andreas Schleicher, Education Director for the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

(OECD), notes, "Distinguishing what is true from what is not true is a critical judgement."

At the Girls' Day School Trust (GDST), we want to make sure that in today's 'fake news' world, our girls can use critical thinking skills to understand the media, and also understand why this skill is important from a careers and commercial awareness perspective. We have created a workshop on 'understanding the media' as part of our unique CareerStart programme to address this.

The first question we ask students is 'why are we seeing an increased level of misinformation?' Discerning this is a key part of the process. Sometimes it is down to speed. In a 24-hour news environment there is a lot of pressure to be first with key details of breaking news events. Even respected news organisations can get it wrong.

Some outlets are dependent on advertising revenue, writing content or headlines to get clicks or BTL ('below the line') comments. Sensationalism and half-truths can be more effective than thorough research in this context. Students participating in workshops were surprised to discover that the journalist doesn't usually write the headline, and is often frustrated about what the sub-editor picks out as the key point. Journalists at some publications are incentivised or judged by

We might not be able to believe everything we read, and of course everyone hopes that journalists, across print, broadcast and online media, focus on improving standards to boost public trust, but what we can do is ensure that our young people know how to identify stories that lack the integrity they expect.

the number of clicks or BTL comments their article receives. This can encourage them to be more controversial, or bolder with their claims.

Sometimes it is for political gain. Students participating in workshops were very aware of political reasons for publishing inaccurate information. During workshops, the call for independent fact-based reporting is strong, particularly among Sixth Form students. Integrity is an important value for GDST girls, and so misinformation of this kind causes great concern.

Having looked at the reasons why fake news has increased, we then focus on workshop exercises that empower students to judge for themselves what is true. This includes straightforward ideas: look at the news source; Google the journalist; see how the story is reported elsewhere; and consider who is quoted – is it ‘an anonymous source’ ‘a friend of the star’, or ‘witnesses said’? GDST students aren’t distracted by social media ‘likes’. They know that bots and fake accounts can make a story on social media seem more legitimate than it is. They also know that social media users are more likely to engage with people and media sources that share their political beliefs, and to share content that supports their opinions – a phenomenon known as ‘the echo chamber’. Ironically, Facebook has been leading an awareness campaign around this.

Language can also have a big effect on our response to the story. If we read that someone is a ‘traitor’, our reaction is different from what it would be if they were merely described as ‘independently minded’. Look out for language that is designed to get a certain emotional response. Can it be rewritten with a different perspective? This exercise is especially popular with students and lots of fun!

Having spent time considering the why and how of the fake news agenda, students are then thirsty for information on where to find error free, non-biased information. Options such as Fullfact.org, Wikitribune, BBC Reality Check, and Snopes are discussed, but the inevitable question about who checks the fact checkers often arises!

No discussion of fake news can be complete without looking at why all this matters. It goes without saying that the critical analysis skills developed in these workshops are useful in a number of subjects, such as history. From a careers perspective, understanding the news agenda boosts commercial awareness. This is one of the most frequently requested skills by top employers as they look for people with a critical awareness

of the world around them. Applicants need to understand the company they are applying to, understand their challenges, the opportunities, sector trends, and consider how they differ from their competitors. Critical analysis skills developed by GDST girls as part of the CareerStart workshop support this awareness.

We might not be able to believe everything we read, and of course everyone hopes that journalists, across print, broadcast and online media, focus on improving standards to boost public trust, but what we can do is ensure that our young people know how to identify stories that lack the integrity they expect.

It’s always fun to test these analytical skills as part of the workshop. Check your own ability to find the fake news stories with these examples:

1. Donald Trump called his own voters “The dumbest group of voters in the country”

FALSE: Just because something sounds like it could be true, doesn’t mean that it is. What is the source? Why might they say it? For laughs?

2. Prince Philip has died

FALSE: Look out for language such as ‘unconfirmed reports’. In this case The Daily Mail reported a meeting due to take place at Buckingham Palace, a report picked up by European and then US websites, and then reported the next day on The Sun website, citing these sources and adding one and one together to make a billion!

3. 2014 was one of the deadliest years on record for plane crashes

TRUE but false... There were 22 accidents resulting in 992 fatalities. It is true that there were more deaths than in previous years, but there were also more flights taking off, so deaths by number of passengers drastically declined. An example of the infamous aphorism “Lies, damned lies and statistics”.

4. Harambe a dead gorilla, got 15,000 votes in the US presidential election

FALSE: You can add a name to a ballot paper, but the candidate must be human and alive. Such votes are not usually counted separately but are lumped together with the other votes for ‘unofficial’ candidates.

Karen Kimura is Learning and Development manager at GDST

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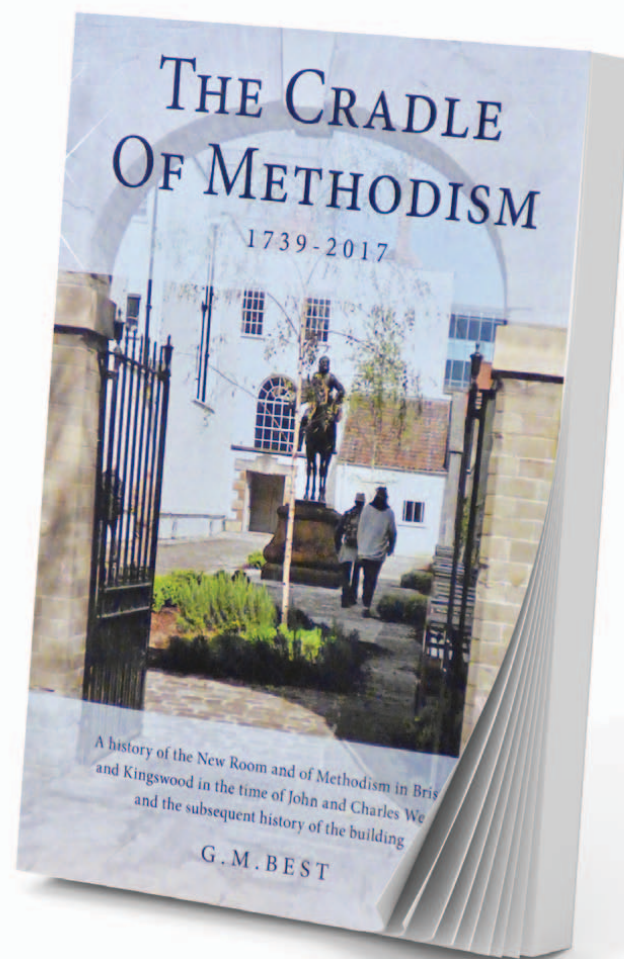
John Wesley's simple, enchanted building



David Warnes reviews....

**The Cradle of Methodism
1739-2017 GM Best**

**New Room Publications
June 2017 978-1910089606**



Many HMC Heads seem not to break stride when retirement comes. Gary Best (Headmaster of Kingswood from 1987 to 2008) almost immediately took on the challenging role of Warden of the New Room, the historic meeting house in Bristol built and later rebuilt at the instigation of John Wesley to accommodate the activities of the religious societies which were flourishing in that city in the early stages of the evangelical revival. His latest book, *The Cradle of Methodism*, is a history of a beautiful building which, as Best writes, has “a tangible sense of calmness”.

The chapel on the ground floor of the building is windowless – the Wesleys had good reason to fear the anger of local mobs – and is illuminated from above by an octagonal lantern which passes through the common room on the upper floor, and which enabled John Wesley to keep an eye on what was happening in the worship space. The chapel, the second building on the site, was equipped with a portable communion table. For many years the Wesleys were careful to ensure that communion services in the New Room did not coincide with those held in local parish churches. To the end of his days, Charles Wesley resisted the idea that there should be any separation between the Methodist movement and the Church of England, and this became one of several causes of tension between him and his brother.

Those tensions are among the many aspects of the early history of Methodism documented in what is a very capacious cradle. This is far more than the story of an historic building. Roughly three quarters of the book are devoted to the lifetime of the Wesleys. The connections between the New Room and

the school which Wesley founded at Kingswood, near Bristol, in 1748 are explored in depth, as are the brothers' early involvement of laymen and women in the revival, including John Cennick and Sarah Perrin, housekeeper at the New Room and later the wife of John Jones, formerly chief master of Kingswood. Of their union John Wesley wrote “I do not know that her marriage increased either her usefulness, or her knowledge and love of God.” Wesley felt that wedlock was a distraction, and disapproved of his brother Charles' marriage to Sarah Gwynne, which turned out very happily. His own marriage to Molly Vazeille proved disastrous. The story that she pulled him round the room by his hair is almost certainly apocryphal but, as Best shows, she found the hardships involved in accompanying him on his preaching journeys unacceptable, and his lengthy absences from home difficult to bear. In 1757 Wesley chose Sarah Ryan, a convert with a very chequered marital history, to be the housekeeper of Kingswood School and also of the New Room. It was, in the words of Wesley's biographer Stanley Ayling, “an extraordinarily incautious appointment”. Molly Wesley made her disapproval clear during a dinner-time gathering of Methodist preachers in Bristol at which Sarah was acting as hostess. “The whore now serving you” she told them “has three husbands living!” Shortly afterwards, Molly went through her husband's pockets and found an unposted letter to Sarah which used language that could be read as bordering on the romantic. The marriage never fully recovered, and effectively ended in 1776.

He had no patience with either the liberal approach of Rousseau, dismissing *Emile* as “the most empty, silly, injudicious thing that ever a self-conceited infidel wrote” or with the idea of a skills-based education designed to equip children to make their fortunes in the world.

Readers of Best’s book may conclude that Charles Wesley was a more balanced, humane and likeable character than John. Charles encouraged the musical careers of his talented sons Charles and Samuel, despite his brother’s quiet disapproval and the vocal criticism of other Methodists. In 1769 he felt it necessary to issue a public statement in defence of what he was doing, which was read out in the New Room. He reminded his critics that music had made a considerable contribution to the religious revival. “Our hymns have helped to spread the Gospel; God himself has owned and applied them to many of your hearts.”

Yet the author of *Love divine, all loves excelling* could also turn his hand to biting epigrams. When John Wesley ordained Thomas Coke to exercise episcopal authority in the newly-independent United States of America, Charles, who had not been consulted, wrote:

*So easily are Bishops made
By man or woman’s whim?
Wesley his hands on Coke hath laid,
But who laid hands on him?*

When Coke went on to ordain Francis Asbury, Charles dipped his pen in vitriol.

*A Roman emperor, ‘tis said,
His favourite horse a consul made;
But Coke brings other things to pass,
He makes a Bishop of an ass.*

John Wesley’s astonishing energy and single mindedness, the fluency of his preaching and the breadth of and scope of his writings make him one of the most remarkable figures of the eighteenth century. His self-understanding of his calling was, as the American scholar Richard P. Heitzenrater has written, “seldom constrained by humility”, yet he was a powerful force for progress. His interests were broad – he was fascinated by the use of electricity for therapeutic purposes, and wrote a book entitled *Primitive Physic* which is, as Best shows, a mixture of old wives’ tales and wise, forward-looking advice on the benefits of preventive medicine. The New Room functioned as a one of a network of clinics established by Methodists, and these may have been the first free medical dispensaries in Britain. Wesley also had decided views of education, and Best describes how these developed and broadened over time. He had no patience with either the liberal approach of Rousseau, dismissing *Emile*

as “the most empty, silly, injudicious thing that ever a self-conceited infidel wrote” or with the idea of a skills-based education designed to equip children to make their fortunes in the world. He wanted the pupils to have not only the form of religion, but its power. The form and the power were both to be Arminian. Wesley had broken decisively with the Calvinism of his fellow evangelist George Whitefield and moved towards a theology that had more than a little in common with that of the Orthodox churches, with their emphasis on the possibility of *Theosis*, the movement of the believer towards perfection. While Whitefield owned slaves in Georgia and campaigned for the legalisation of slavery in that colony, John and Charles Wesley were both abolitionists. Gary Best documents in detail how the brothers’ activities in Bristol, and Charles’ residence there, brought them into contact with slave traders and slave owners, as well as with slaves. John’s pamphlet *Thoughts upon Slavery* had, as Best shows, an impact which has not previously been fully recognised by historians and his *Arminian Magazine* regularly published articles making the case for abolition.

The final chapters of *The Cradle of Methodism* describe the way in which, during the past forty years, the New Room developed as a heritage centre, with regular opening days, improved facilities for visitors and an exploration of how the building could contribute to the spiritual life of the city of Bristol. Under a succession of distinguished Wardens, it became a place of pilgrimage for Methodists from all over the world and a venue for concerts and exhibitions. The Charles Wesley Heritage Centre was opened in the hymn writer’s former home and an adjacent house in Charles Street, and the Heritage Centre and the New Room were formally registered as museums. Successive Wardens raised money for the renovation of the building and Gary Best has carried this work forward, supervising the construction of a museum, library, archive and café as well as the restoration of the New Room itself. The new facilities enable visitors to understand the chapel in its historic context as well as enjoying what Mike Jenner, the author of *Bristol’s 100 Best Buildings* (2010), rightly describes as “this simple, enchanting building.”

David Warnes taught History at Ipswich School and is now a priest in the Scottish Episcopal Church

The next stage



Kevin Stannard reviews...

A University Education
David Willetts

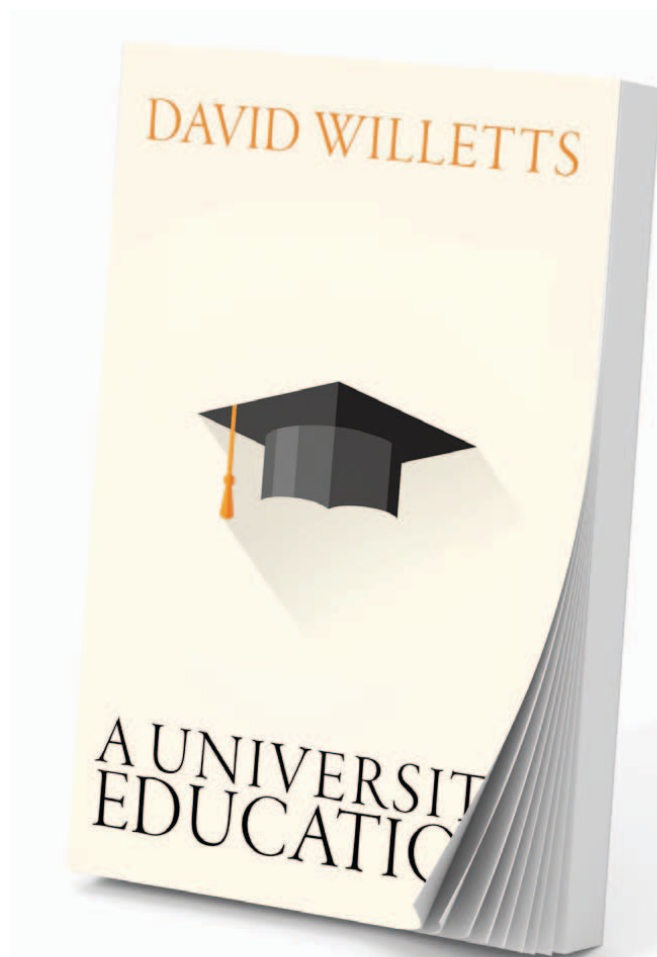
Oxford University Press
November 2017
ISBN 9780198767268

This substantial tome is excellent value because it contains more than one book. Willetts admits that it might feel like a ‘heavily disguised ministerial memoir’ – the university education of the title refers to his experience as minister for universities in the coalition government of 2010 to 2015. But the book is more than a memoir. It effectively anatomises the university sector, but unfortunately he cannot resist the temptation to re-fight old policy battles. The narrative is punctuated by detailed diversions.

Willetts writes with feeling; he clearly loves universities and evidently enjoyed his ministerial brief. His account is peppered with entertaining and enlightening asides and illustrations. He points out that the term ‘university’ is commonly misunderstood as referring to breadth of curriculum; in fact it defines a medieval form of self-governing corporation. He speculates that Professor Martin Luther’s ninety-five theses would have scored very highly in any modern impact assessment exercise. He quotes Clark Kerr’s definition of the (US) university as “a series of individual faculty entrepreneurs held together by a common grievance over parking”.

Willetts punctures some inflated and insular opinions about English universities. One reason why we are so well-represented in world university rankings is that, compared with other countries, a greater share of research is concentrated in universities – as opposed to private sector or national research agencies and institutes.

The history of universities exemplifies English exceptionalism. Willetts shows that the English model has been contingent and consequential. We understand universities in terms of autonomous research-intensive institutions based on competitive admissions and largely residential. But other brands are available: in France, lecturers are civil servants; in Italy most students attend (by right) the local university; in the USA, liberal arts colleges focus on teaching rather than research.



The English system arose from a unique circumstance – the duopolistic dominance of Oxbridge. In 1400 there were twenty-nine universities in Europe. By 1625 Italy had gained seven and Scotland four. In England no new universities were created between 1209 and 1829. This was no accident – Oxford and Cambridge were proactive in preventing proliferation, even as their own institutions languished. The Eighteenth century was the low point – Willetts quotes Gibbon’s description of an Oxford ‘steeped in port and prejudice’. Those excluded from the Anglican ivory twin towers voted with their money and their feet: nine universities were founded in the British American colonies, and at independence more than a third of Harvard’s income was coming from England.

Willetts points out that in contrast to the moribund English system based on endowments and privileges, the superior Scottish model was founded on fees paid direct to tutors, with quality control exercised through market forces. Adam Smith turns out to have been an early advocate of the Cameron/Clegg coalition’s reforms.

The modern concept of the university owes a great deal to Humboldt’s reforms in early nineteenth century Prussia. The new model existed not just to train the elite, but to promote research. Germanic innovations included seminars, laboratories and the PhD. England lagged behind, notwithstanding the establishment of Durham, UCL and KCL, and later the red-bricks. The global dominance of US universities was built with materials largely imported from Germany at the turn of the twentieth century.

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Willetts suggests that the strength of the US model is its diversity of forms and functions. By contrast, every wave of new institutions in England, despite their diverse origins (red-brick, white-tile, ex-polytechnic), essentially ended up aping the Oxbridge template. He advocates a diversity of missions and models, with no single scale for judging what makes a good university.

Willetts's discussion of the spontaneous expansion of the university sector covers the landmark Robbins report, which advocated expansion without a realistic plan on how to fund it. Cue frequent rehearsals and reiterations of the case for fees and student loans. Growth was, and is, desirable and inevitable, but all previous funding formulas were unsustainable. Crisis caught up in the late 1980s and early 1990s, as student numbers doubled but funding per student halved. Governments of both stripes proved happy to preside over increases in student numbers but unwilling to pay for them.

Large chunks of the book revert to detailed disquisitions, footnoted and peer-reviewed, but nonetheless partisan and tendentious. Long sections on fees, funding and quality assurance focus on the need to raise fees and put the burden onto students. Willetts at least convinces himself: 'So we have shown that we have delivered well-funded universities at a time of austerity financed by the generality of taxpayers and graduates in well-paid jobs'. But he lets slip the absolute imperative – university funding simply had to be removed from public spending in order to rescue the national accounts.

Willetts believes in universities and wants more people to have access to them. University expansion benefits everyone: better incomes for graduates, lower crime rates for society, increased productivity in the economy. He argues against Alison Wolfe's assertion that degrees simply confer a 'signalling effect' demonstrating only that those holding them were clever enough to get a place at university, rather than being possessed of any particularly relevant knowledge or skills. But then he retreats from this, arguing that 'employers are selecting on the basis of A level grades as transmitted via university admissions decisions'.

Willetts observes that the loudest opponents of expanding the sector are those representing groups that are already well-represented. He argues for widening access to higher education, pointing to stark geographical and social differences in participation rates. He expresses no surprise that elite universities currently reflect the broader class structure, but worries that the perceived hierarchy of universities reflects not the quality of research or teaching, but rather the social composition of the student body. He thinks universities should do more to diversify their intake.

Willetts rails against the strangle-hold exercised by universities on the school curriculum. University admissions requirements dictate an unusual degree of specialisation in the sixth form, and Willetts argues that this is largely due to the way in which academic departments control admissions. In US universities admissions decisions are made centrally, using broader assessments, but in English universities academic departments make the decisions, and their interest is in getting hold of the best students in their subjects. Instead of asking a physics don how much physics a fresher needs to know, we should ask how much physics a student starting a history degree should know.

Willetts feels that early specialisation inflicts cultural and intellectual damage. He quotes Sir Peter Swinnerton-Dyer: 'Each stage of English education is designed for the benefit of those who will go on to the next stage, however unsuitable it will be for the rest'.

In Willetts's view, premature specialisation is the major weakness of our system. He advocates a requirement for five A level subjects, with everyone doing maths and at least one science and one art. He says this should be the next big educational reform. But wait, the government of which he was a member led us in completely the opposite direction: towards linearity and a reduction to three subjects at A level.

Willetts's prescriptive approach collides with his laissez-faire principles. He makes much of the need for market forces in the university sector, and champions 'consumer' choice. But whenever universities have expanded, the newly included group seems to have made the wrong choices. The author seems disappointed that, given access to higher education, women and the working classes have consistently preferred humanities to STEM subjects.

Willetts wants to see a more open and diverse HE system working better for students, and this means more choice and competition between universities, and lower barriers to entry for new providers. It ought to be possible to move from one place to another using credit transfers, for example from a foundation course at a local university through to a masters in a more specialised institution further away.

Non-traditional providers are already emerging, based on different business models: the private University of Buckingham, the online Arden University, the University of Law, the New College of the Humanities. Willetts welcomes this, but tends to parody critics of marketization by filtering them through characters from novels by Amis, Bradbury and Lodge.

Willetts identifies the global forces facing universities: the scale of the expansion in student numbers; the advent of new technologies; and advances in our knowledge of what works. These interact in offering the possibility of expanding the sector while keeping marginal costs close to zero. It is unclear how this will work without creating problems of quality control, and he admits that the traditional degree course following school will remain the normative route. He suggests that beyond blended learning, other platforms and providers might be more appropriate for lifelong learners. Ironically, part-time provision has been a signal casualty of the recent reforms.

Buy the book and get two free. As an anatomy of the university sector, it is a treasure-house; as a series of tracts defending the last government's reforms it is detailed but occasionally tedious in its self-righteousness; on the university of the future, it simply follows others in suggesting some possible directions.

Kevin Stannard is Director of Innovation and Learning at the GDST

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Manhattan marketing

Jason Morrow contemplates the hard sell

Admissions season is always a fascinating time of year in New York schools although the level of anxiety surrounding the whole process is worryingly high. Like most other schools in the city, we attend many different education fairs and information evenings for prospective parents and students. These range from small, relatively civilised events to huge shows in which the trademark NYC rough and tumble of marketing and competing for attention are very much on display. I think my two favourite moments from this year's cycle came at an event in Brooklyn on an unseasonably hot October Saturday. Forty to fifty schools and other educational service providers were crammed into the cafeteria with a few fans providing the only relief from the increasing humidity. A number of schools had brought their mascots – the first time I had seen this – and it was particularly entertaining to watch a Spartan and wolf literally jostle for prime position over the course of the afternoon. The wolf generally came out on top in these exchanges and I shall be interested to know later in the year if these successes had any impact on that school's recruitment. The school hosting the event had invited several groups of Middle Schoolers to sell drinks and candy to visitors and exhibitors as part of a course they were taking on entrepreneurship. I've spent more than I care to remember over the years buying products I was fairly sure I'd never use from Young Enterprise companies and similar school endeavours, but nothing had quite prepared me for the hard sell techniques of these students. It all started

gently enough with two students approaching the stall with a selection of the drinks, chocolate and other sweets they were selling. My colleague politely asked about the project and then explained that we were fine at present, but would visit their stall later if we wanted to buy anything. Over the course of the next three hours, we had repeated and increasingly assertive visits from their sales teams, which alternated between persuasion and pressure to make some purchases. It culminated towards the end of the day in a return visit from the original students to chastise us for wasting their time by not buying anything and for clearly not appreciating that they didn't even want to be at the fair, but had to be to earn extra credits, so we should have at least supported them by buying a soda. Judging by how little was left on their stall at the end of the fair, I suppose the hard sell must have produced some results for them but it also left me feeling nostalgic about the more gentle and faintly embarrassed Young Enterprise pitches trying to sell me a £2 candle with some glitter and a bow for £10 or some designer paper clip jewellery for equally bargain prices.

The whole school admissions process in New York leaves me with great sympathy for the parents and children trying to navigate a way through it. One of the greatest challenges for these families is trying to determine the real quality of a school's curriculum or programmes amidst the often very polished and compelling sales pitches they encounter. There is also an abundance of curious and often misleading opinions





masquerading as advice. The most bizarre example of this I have encountered this year came in the form of a 'tips to parents' pamphlet on what to look out for in school visits and Open Days. Alongside much of the usual sound advice on taking note of the quality of relationships in the school or evidence of student work in displays etc., there were a few tips which left me and the Admissions Team baffled. Apparently very clean toilets might be an indicator that they are not having an authentic insight into the daily life of the school. There was no helpful advice as to an appropriate and reassuring level of untidiness, so we had to continue to work on the basis that clean toilets are fine in a school setting. Another potential concern could be a comfortable and welcoming staff room, presumably as it might mean teachers spent too long there. The demands on space in New York mean this isn't a 'potential concern' for the school, but it is something I would love to work towards having as an issue. Perhaps the most troubling 'potential concern' was observing teachers leading lessons or activities while on a tour. Inquiry, play, student presentations, group work and research based lessons are all valuable and vital elements of a productive and purposeful learning environment, but so too is an expectation that teachers will spend some of their time teaching or leading the class or groups within it. One of the ways in which we try to respond to the potential for confusion and disinformation that surrounds so much of the admissions cycle in New York is to focus more on the fundamentals of a great education and on keeping things simple – having brilliant teachers providing a curriculum and experiences which value breadth and depth of opportunities for learning and personal development in and beyond the classroom.

This is also the driving motivation in the ongoing preparations for opening our Upper School in September 2018. Working with Cambridge International Examinations on this project has been refreshingly straightforward. The focus has been on offering a genuinely distinct and different option for families in New York and it is already clear that there is considerable interest in the school. It is remarkable that such

a highly regarded and globally recognised programme has not previously been available in New York City. What has impressed and excited me most thus far in working with the CIE team in North America and colleagues at the school is the clarity of focus there has been on the quality of the curriculum and learning we are striving to secure for students. The challenging and well designed Global Perspectives IGCSE and A Level will also help ensure that students continue to engage with topics and opportunities with an outward looking and international mindset, as that is such an important and valuable feature of the IB programmes we follow in the primary and middle schools.

We have just celebrated Thanksgiving in the USA and enjoyed a welcome break after a long and very busy autumn. In the days leading up to this, the school held its annual International Week which has always been a highlight of the calendar. This year it coincided with Remembrance Day (Veterans Day in America) and it seemed particularly significant at this time of year to spend time over the week focussing on learning about, understanding, valuing and respecting different countries, cultures and religions. There are too many examples – historical and contemporary – of the consequences when such understanding and respect breaks down. I have to confess that I struggle to recognise the version of history advocated by some in which encouraging countries to pursue more narrow self-interest and nationalist agendas has resulted in progress, prosperity and peace. It therefore seems more important than ever for schools to create opportunities for students to engage with wider communities which enable and demonstrate the value and power of learning from one another. The high number of British curriculum schools around the world celebrating and promoting such an approach may also become increasingly helpful for the UK in the post-Brexit era. It is certainly a feature of being part of an international school community for which I am thankful this November.

Jason Morrow is the Headmaster of the British International School of New York



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