

Volume 3 Number 2 Spring 2014

Academy magazine



Learning for life



What's going on in academies and free schools



WE ARE MORE THAN BRICKS AND MORTAR ACADEMY INSURANCE BUILT FOR YOU

- Bupa key staff
- Motor
- Liability
- Legal expenses
- Travel
- Property
- Staff absence
- Personal accident

Marsh is the specialist insurance broker of choice to over 800 academies. To find out how we may improve your current insurance cover or assist in the development of an insurance programme as part of your preparations to secure academy status, please contact us (quoting AM0114):

 01444 313100  enquiries.schools@marsh.com  uk.marsh.com

Marsh Ltd is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. Copyright © 2013 Marsh Ltd. All rights reserved.

Academy magazine contents

Volume3 Number2 Spring 2014

AUTONOMY AND GOVERNANCE

- 7 | FASNA MEETS LORD NASH Tom Clark
- 12 | FREEDOM MEANS DIFFERENT THINGS TO DIFFERENT PEOPLE Mike Griffiths
- 44 | "JUST ONE MORE YEAR..." Richard Barnard

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT AND CURRICULUM

- 18 | SUCCESS FROM HARD FEDERATION PARTNERSHIPS Alun Williams
- 22 | ON AN UPWARDS CURVE Tim Hughes
- 28 | CREATING A CULTURE OF ACHIEVEMENT IN MILTON KEYNES Dara Carroll
- 31 | COLLABORATION AT THE HEART OF AN ORGANISATION Dana Ross-Wawrzyni
- 34 | ENGAGING IN RESEARCH Anna Riggall and Alex Elwick
- 60 | TO BYOD OR NOT TO BYOD? Nathan Evans
- 73 | THE GREAT EDUCATION DEBATE Brian Lightman
- 77 | SCHOOLS ARE NOT ISLANDS Tim Coulson

SPECIAL NEEDS

- 50 | ARE WE READY? Jean Gross
- 53 | DEVELOPING TEACHER EXPERTISE IN SEN David Bartram

FAIR FUNDING, FINANCE AND STAFF

- 16 | IS FAIR FUNDING FINALLY ON THE CARDS? Doug Allen
- 48 | THE CHALLENGES OF PERFORMANCE-RELATED PAY Jean Boyle
- 62 | MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS AND REPORTS TO GOVERNORS Henry Briggs
- 64 | THE ACADEMIES FINANCIAL HANDBOOK David Whittington

TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

- 42 | NIPT Peter Beaven
- 26 | TAKING THE DIRECT ROUTE Charlie Taylor

DEVELOPING PERSONAL SKILLS

- 54 | REDEFINING WORK EXPERIENCE Penny Tysoe
- 56 | BUILDING ON A FRAMEWORK Sonia Blandford
- 67 | USING STEM TO REDUCE YOUTH AND GRADUATE UNEMPLOYMENT Neil Robertson
- 69 | UNDERSTANDING THE VALUE OF OUTDOOR PLAY Trevethick Academy

FASNA

- 37 | FASNA AUTUMN CONFERENCE
- 40 | YOUR FASNA MEMBERSHIP

AND FINALLY...

- 80 | EDUCATION: THE ROCK AND ROLL YEARS Les Walton



Cover photographs courtesy of Nunthorpe Academy
From story on page 22

Give your students the best start at Secondary School with...



helps children communicate

Moving On!

Moving On! is a supportive Student Activity Pack for students getting ready to move on to Secondary School and an invaluable Teacher Guide for year six teachers.

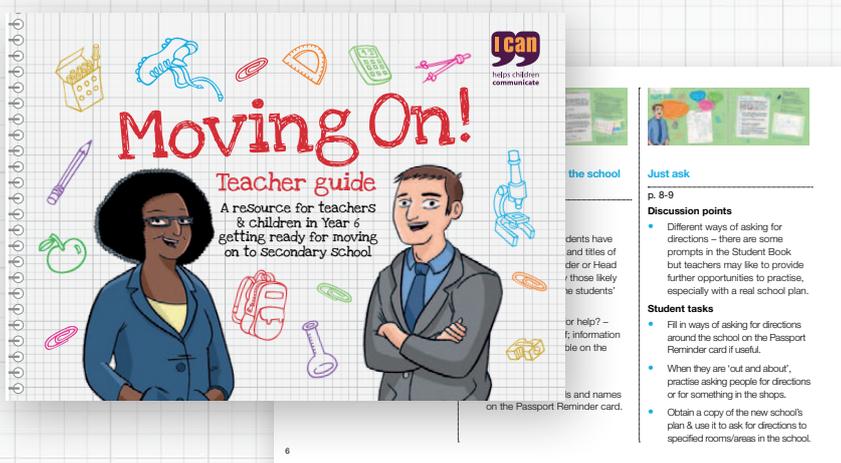
An additional 15% discount is applied to all orders in excess of £250



Student Activity Pack

Can be used either on its own, or in conjunction with the *Teacher Guide*. This fun activity pack guides the student through key information, top tips and activities including getting to know the school, timetables, transport, friendships, concerns and key words and phrases.

£7.99



Teacher Guide

To support individuals and whole classes. This guide is packed with information, ideas and activities for Year 6 teachers. Included are suggested discussion topics and activities to be used alongside the relevant section in the *Student Activity Pack*.

£4.99

Save **£25** by ordering 10 **Student Activity Packs** with one **Teacher Guide** for only **£60**. Until 31st January 2013, save an additional **£10** off each bundle with discount code **movingbundle**

Find out more, visit www.ican.org.uk/shop or call 0845 225 4073


Editor

Peter Beaven

Steering group

Tom Clark
(Executive Chairman, FASNA)
Alex Sharratt (JCEL)
Andrew Fielder
(Sandy Hill Academy)
Andrew Johnson
(Springwood High School)
Dianne Marshall
(Violet Way Academy)

Published by
John Catt Educational Ltd,
12 Deben Mill Business Centre,
Old Maltings Approach, Melton,
Woodbridge,
Suffolk IP12 1BL.
Tel: (01394) 389850
Fax: (01394) 386893

Opinions expressed in *Academy*
are not necessarily endorsed
by FASNA or JCEL; likewise
advertisements are printed in
good faith. Their inclusion
does not imply endorsement by
FASNA or JCEL.

Editorial contributions
should be sent to
editor@academymag.co.uk.
Submissions for the Summer
edition should arrive no later
than 12th March 2014.

Academy is published three
times a year, in Spring,
Summer and Autumn.
£25 for a two-year subscription,
post paid; discounts for bulk
orders are available.

Subscriptions:

Sara Rogers,
srogers@johncatt.com

Advertising:

Madeleine Anderson,
manderson@johncatt.com

Printed by Charlesworth Press,
Wakefield, WF2 9LP

Copyright wholly owned by
John Catt Educational
www.academymag.co.uk
ISSN (print) 2049-1492
ISSN (online) 2049 1506



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

The stealthy assault

There is a stealthy but continued assault on the success of converter academies and the impact they are having on the schools they support. This attack began with the flawed Academies Commission Report (see Summer 2013 Editorial) and continues, by insinuation, with comments from a number of politicians and other bodies. This questioning of success needs to be addressed before it becomes part of established wisdom.

Of course it is relatively early days for converter academies to demonstrate one way or the other. The oldest have only been going for three years and the floodgates only really opened 18 months ago. However, if this myth is to be dispelled, and it is important it is, Heads of converter academies need to follow the lead shown in Alun Williams' article (see page 16) and demonstrate the impact they have made by working with other schools. If support for converter academies is going to prevail, Heads need to show improvements in outcomes, not just describe joint activity, no matter how beneficial. We fail to do this at our peril. The prize of hard-won autonomy is at stake and may yet slip through our fingers. I hope we can devote much of the next issue to this topic. If you can evidence this in your school please contact me and offer to write it up.

Finding the middle ground

The results of the latest PISA Tests are clearly of concern to politicians and educators alike. The UK's ability to compete in the global economy is of vital importance and Mr Gove will use these results to justify his beefing up of the curriculum and assessment system. There is no doubt that some of this is required as we had allowed both to become rather limp and undemanding. Yet there is a danger of valuing only what we can measure. We must ask, 'what is education for?' Is it merely about inculcating a narrow range of functional skills and knowledge recall, which can be readily tested? Or do we also want less tangible outcomes such as creativity and the development of a range of personal and social qualities which enable young people to get on in life and which employers so desire? The South Koreans have high test scores and high suicide rates – we must find a middle way.

Fair funding

As the purse strings remain tightened for the foreseeable future the issue of fair funding becomes ever more relevant. As Doug Allen eloquently points out (page 14), if our school system is nationally funded can we justify such huge local differences? He informs us that the highest per-pupil funding is almost double that of the lowest. In a democratic society, which supposedly values citizens equally, this is a national scandal. It will need addressing as the impact of continued cuts in real terms begins to bite.

In this issue I am delighted to have so many articles about good practice. Raising standards for all pupils, school to school support, the developments in SEN, ways of developing personal skills – all feature here. Here is evidence of 'closing the gap' in many and varied ways. Schools are finding ways of using their freedoms –

Cont...

We must ask,
'what is education
for?' Is it merely about
inculcating a narrow
range of functional
skills and knowledge
recall, which can be
readily tested?

Peter Beaven, editor of *Academy*, retired in August 2012 as Headteacher of Norton Hill and Somervale Schools in Midsomer Norton. He had been Headteacher at Norton Hill for 18 years and during the last three years was also Head of Somervale. He can be contacted via editor@academymag.co.uk



Only
£7.80[◇]
per staff member
per month

Affordable healthcare for your staff

benenden health believe a healthy, happy and energetic team is one of the most important success factors for any organisation. So we've made it easy for you to reward and help take good care of the health and wellbeing of your teachers and support workers by making our healthcare services simple, transparent and surprisingly affordable.

Every member of your staff can request our discretionary healthcare services including prompt diagnosis and treatment, 24/7 GP and Stress Counselling Helplines and much more to help get them back to work quickly. There are no exclusions for pre-existing medical conditions and our price doesn't rise with age or service use. We use our discretion to assess every case individually to offer your staff the right care when they need it most.

Like 250 other organisations, set up a benenden health business scheme today for only £7.80 per staff member per month and put the health of your staff in safe hands.

Find out more about benenden health



0800 414 8179*

quoting academy



www.benenden.co.uk/academy



VOTED THE
MOST TRUSTED
HEALTHCARE
PROVIDER
2011, 2012 & 2013

*From 1st April 2014 the price will increase to £8.19 per person, per month.

*Calls to 0800 numbers are free from BT landlines however charges may apply from other providers. Calls from mobile phones may also incur charges. Please note that your call may be recorded for our mutual security and also for training and quality purposes.

Membership is available to anyone over the age of 16 who is normally resident in the UK. Members can add family and friends to their membership regardless of their age. Some services have a six month qualifying period. benenden health is a trading name of The Benenden Healthcare Society Limited which is an incorporated friendly society, registered under the Friendly Societies Act 1992, registered number 480F. The Society's contractual business (the provision of tuberculosis benefit) is authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and the Prudential Regulation Authority. The remainder of the Society's business is undertaken on a discretionary basis. The Society is subject to Prudential Regulation Authority requirements for prudential management. No advice has been given. If in doubt as to the suitability of this product, you should seek independent advice. Registered Office: The Benenden Healthcare Society Limited, Holgate Park Drive, York, YO26 4GG.

AD/ACADEMY/SP6761/11.13/V1



benendenhealth
because life is precious

with budgets, staffing and structures – to benefit all their pupils. The range of exciting developments is staggering and a contrast to the more constrained days when such things failed to permeate beyond the able minority.

Of course, politicians are right to place an emphasis on providing equality of opportunity for all, and they are right to point out that some disadvantaged groups of children do not make the progress their more advantaged peers make. However, whilst their desire to address this quickly is appreciated, politicians should be willing to recognise how much is being done already. They should also recognise the degree of hypocrisy when they fail to ‘close the gap’ in funding.

School Direct and ITT

Finally, we look at the quality of teaching and of teachers. There has long been a concern about ITT being dominated by the need for universities and colleges to fill their places – at times with scant regard to suitability. School Direct (see Charlie Taylor’s article on page 26) will address some of the issues around the quality of entrants into ITT. If schools are recruiting they may turn away unsuitable applicants. However, this has a downside as it may produce a shortage of applicants next year. The second issue has been the flaccid approach to NQT Induction taken by many Local Authorities who have not wanted to face the difficulties of failing an inadequate NQT. The newly formed National Induction Panel for Teachers (NIPT) is taking steps to inject some quality into this area (see page 42). By providing clear systems and processes, extensive support, and by underpinning this extensive quality assurance checks, this new scheme will provide a more rigorous system of NQT Induction. This will raise the standard required to pass Induction and weed out those who should not be teaching. These initiatives in the long term should bite into the issue raised by HMCI’s Chris Woodhead and Sir Michael Wilshaw – that of too many inadequate teachers in the profession.

There has long been a concern about ITT being dominated by the need for universities and colleges to fill their places – at times with scant regard to suitability

Opinions expressed by the editor are his alone and may not reflect FASNA policy
Academy magazine is sent free to all FASNA members.
 Additional copies can be ordered using the form below.



SUBSCRIPTION ORDER FORM

Academy magazine is published three times a year, in Autumn, Spring and Summer. Rates quoted are inclusive of UK postage

		<i>No. of subscriptions required</i>	<i>Total amount</i>
1-4	two-year subscriptions @	£25.00 each	£
5-9	two-year subscriptions @	£22.20 each	£
10-19	two-year subscriptions @	£20.28 each	£
20 or more	two-year subscriptions @	£18.48 each	£

Cheques should be made payable to **John Catt Educational Limited** and sent to: John Catt Educational, 12 Deben Mill Business Centre, Melton, Woodbridge, Suffolk, IP12 1BL

Cheque for £ enclosed Signed Date

Name
 (Block Capitals please)

Address

..... Postcode.....

*They say wisdom comes
with age, we say it comes
with insight.*

Luckily, we have both.



**With over 150 years
delivering legal support and
practical solutions to the
education sector, it's safe to
say we know your business**

**Over 250 Academy
Projects since 2010**

LBMW acts for education clients across England and Wales, advising maintained and independent schools, academies and higher education institutions. We have successfully completed over 250 academy conversion projects, representing church schools, community schools, primary and secondary schools and independent groups and sponsors.

LBMW's close links with the DfE's policy team allow us to make the whole process of conversion swift, efficient and smooth for a school, at a competitive price. Our experience of over 150 years in education law enables our lawyers and consultants to support clients on the whole range of legal and strategic issues, including:

- Constitutions
- Governance
- Compliance
- Funding
- Property
- Commercial matters
- Trading companies
- Charity Law and Trusts
- Continuing obligations
- Employment and pensions
- Child safeguarding
- Admissions
- Intellectual property
- Freedom of information

**“Excellent...
Outstanding”**

Legal 500



FASNA meets Lord Nash

The Autumn Conference gave members the chance to question Under Secretary of State for Schools Lord Nash. Chair Tom Clark reports on the matters arising

Following the success of the question-and-answer format used at the 2013 FASNA Summer Conference at the British Library, Under Secretary of Schools Lord Nash was invited to the Grand Connaught Rooms in London to give his response to six key propositions of crucial importance.

Proposition One: Converter academies can sometimes feel that they are undervalued despite the contribution they are making to the transformation of the educational landscape. Although 75 percent of some 3500 academies are 'converters', the focus tends to be on type 1 sponsored academies.

Lord Nash was clear that converter academies can and do make a huge difference. For instance, 260 converter academies

have applied to sponsor other schools. Lord Nash would welcome more converter sponsors, particularly working in local clusters which he sees as being the more sustainable model and the most effective medium for effective school-to-school support. Lord Nash felt that the cluster approach was particularly pertinent to primary schools. Early data around the progress of students in converter academies, all high-performing schools at the time of conversion, is encouraging and should be celebrated. He added that where sponsorship of schools by converter academies is being considered, early dialogue with the DfE is recommended if the school to be sponsored is failing. In other circumstances his advice was to be proactive locally, and to approach schools directly.

Cont...

Proposition Two: When converter academies were set up in May 2010, the funding agreement required only that converter academies supported other schools. A great deal of good school support is being offered, often discreetly because of local sensitivities – is this recognised?

Lord Nash accepted that the range and depth of school support offered by converter academies may not be fully appreciated and he agreed with FASNA that together we should do more to showcase the support offered to schools by converters.

Lord Nash made clear that he would welcome the narratives of converter academies supporting other schools and he would like to hear about the improved outcomes for students this support has facilitated.

Proposition Three: Converter academies are often blocked from sponsoring other schools.

Lord Nash was interested to hear that there are too many cases where converter academies want to sponsor other schools but can't find schools to sponsor; are blocked from sponsorship by LAs/dioceses; or are held back when the Department struggles to find a partner school to sponsor.

This presents would-be sponsor converter academies with



particular challenges. As was made clear by Jenny Bexon-Smith (Tudor Grange), schools have to build capacity ahead of sponsoring other schools and capacity has to be maintained and kept on hold until a partner school is found.

Andy Johnson, from Springwood High School, made it clear that despite the excellent efforts of the DfE to facilitate arrangements at his school there was a two-term delay caused by a 'failing' LA who first wanted to set up an 'achievement board' to facilitate the sponsorship. This created a vacuum that made possible some mischief by failed stakeholders.

FASNA feels that it would be immensely helpful if IEBs could be used with schools other than those deemed to be 'failing' in order to effect sponsorship speedily and efficiently and so they could get on with the business of improving the opportunities for students in sometimes poor or coasting schools. The idea that schools in category three might be subject to an independent review of governance could help.

Several members highlighted the opportunities provided by sponsorship, and school support in general, as 'perfect' staff development for leadership teams including Headteachers and some staff who may be disinclined to change jobs perhaps because of relocation. They described the benefits to sponsoring schools where their own staff are challenged and re-energised whilst keeping continuity and capacity in the sponsoring school sometimes in areas where it is difficult to recruit staff.

Proposition Four: Headteachers are made to feel that 'you are only a good person' if you respond to the plea that 'your country needs you' by sponsoring other schools.

Roger Hale of Caistor Grammar School wanted to make it clear that some schools don't want to sponsor other schools, not least because they haven't the capacity, including

He referenced President Obama, who linked education to economic performance in a global economy: if education standards are poor then economic performance will be poor

at governor level, to do this well. He asked they should, nevertheless, be valued for what they do.

Lord Nash made it clear that ‘your country does need you’. OECD figures show us that for 16- to 24-year-old ‘leavers’, England is ranked joint-bottom out of 24 countries for literacy and 21st for numeracy. There is, he said, no hiding from this and this is why the government has to ask the best schools to do more. He referenced President Obama, who linked education to economic performance in a global economy: if education standards are poor then economic performance will be poor.

It is FASNA’s observation that since the publication in 2010 of the White Paper, *The Importance of Teaching* (Chapter 4), very little attention has been paid to the need to drive up benchmark standards in England to those of international comparators.

Proposition Five: Schools need to provide system leadership.

FASNA was supported by Lord Nash in its strategic view of the educational landscape now and as it develops until the general election of 2015. Welcome or otherwise the landscape has been transformed – there is a ‘market’ of different types of schools. Governance has changed in a way that constitutes a paradigm shift, the significance of which is too little recognised – rather in the same way that LMS ‘slipped’ into the system in the late 1980s and changed things forever.

Welcome or otherwise there are the beginnings of a market in what was the ‘middle tier’. There are providers other than the LA with better skill-sets and greater capacity and this includes schools, schools in clusters, and chains of schools as well as National Leaders of Education, Local Leaders of Education and National Leaders of Governance. There are also commercial organisations which offer advice around legal matters, audit, HR, capacity, procurement and so on.

In FASNA’s view the test and sustainability of autonomy lies in evidencing that autonomy works and that schools can provide system leadership.

Proposition Six: Governance needs to look and feel very different.

In Lord Nash’s view governing bodies should be smaller with six, eight or ten governors at most, each with specific skill-sets. Larger numbers are unsustainable and inefficient. Governors

should have the professional skill-sets needed by the school and these skills should not be confused with notions of being representatives of the community. Governors need to be good at being governors. Joan Binder reminded the conference that this required a rather more robust audit of governors’ skills than a simplistic self-assessment exercise.

In answer to a query about tensions where schools are being left with the ‘wrong people’ and having to ‘carry’ them, Lord Nash said governance was too important for that tension to be around. The ‘wrong people’ shouldn’t be there. The scale of task makes it impossible to carry passengers – governance

Cont...



INTERNATIONAL MIDDLE YEARS CURRICULUM

A curriculum for 11-14 year-olds

The **International Middle Years Curriculum (IMYC)** meets the specific learning and developmental needs of 11-14 year olds by focusing on a combination of academic, personal and international learning designed to engage and inspire. The **IMYC** encourages learning that helps students to make connections between the subjects they study, their own lives, and the world around them. Through **IMYC** learning, students develop the knowledge, skills and understanding necessary to be successful now and in their future. The **IMYC** provides the opportunity to differentiate your school from those around you, making it an increasingly popular curriculum option amongst Academies.

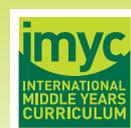
For more information and to receive an Information Pack please go to www.greatlearning.com/AM114

Or contact us quoting reference **AM114**
email: info@greatlearning.com or call: **0207 531 9696**

MAKING MEANING, CONNECTING LEARNING, DEVELOPING MINDS



- The International Middle Years Curriculum (IMYC)
- The International Primary Curriculum (IPC)
- The Looking for Learning Toolkit
- Professional Development



From Fieldwork Education, a part of the Nord Anglia Education family © WCL Group Limited. All rights reserved.

In FASNA's view the test and sustainability of autonomy lies in evidencing that autonomy works and that schools can provide system leadership



carries important moral, social and economic imperatives essential for the good of this country. 'Being a governor is one of the most important contributions people can make.'

In answer to Anne McCormack, Queens Park, Bedford, there was a shared view that governance needs to be part of the professional lives of governors and this needs to be accepted by employers. Governor activities should not be seen as a voluntary add-on. Governors need to be available during the day as well as after the working day has finished.

Lord Nash said that 98 percent of the time the Headteacher is 'king' operationally but governors have to ensure the strategic vision of the school; they have to understand the elements and measures of pupil progress; they must understand the budget. They are responsible for the performance management of the Head and the Head is effectively performance managing his or her staff. In Lord Nash's view the incentive for reluctant Headteachers is that this model will work and help them and their school. It should also mean that Headteachers will not have to waste time trying to manage governors.

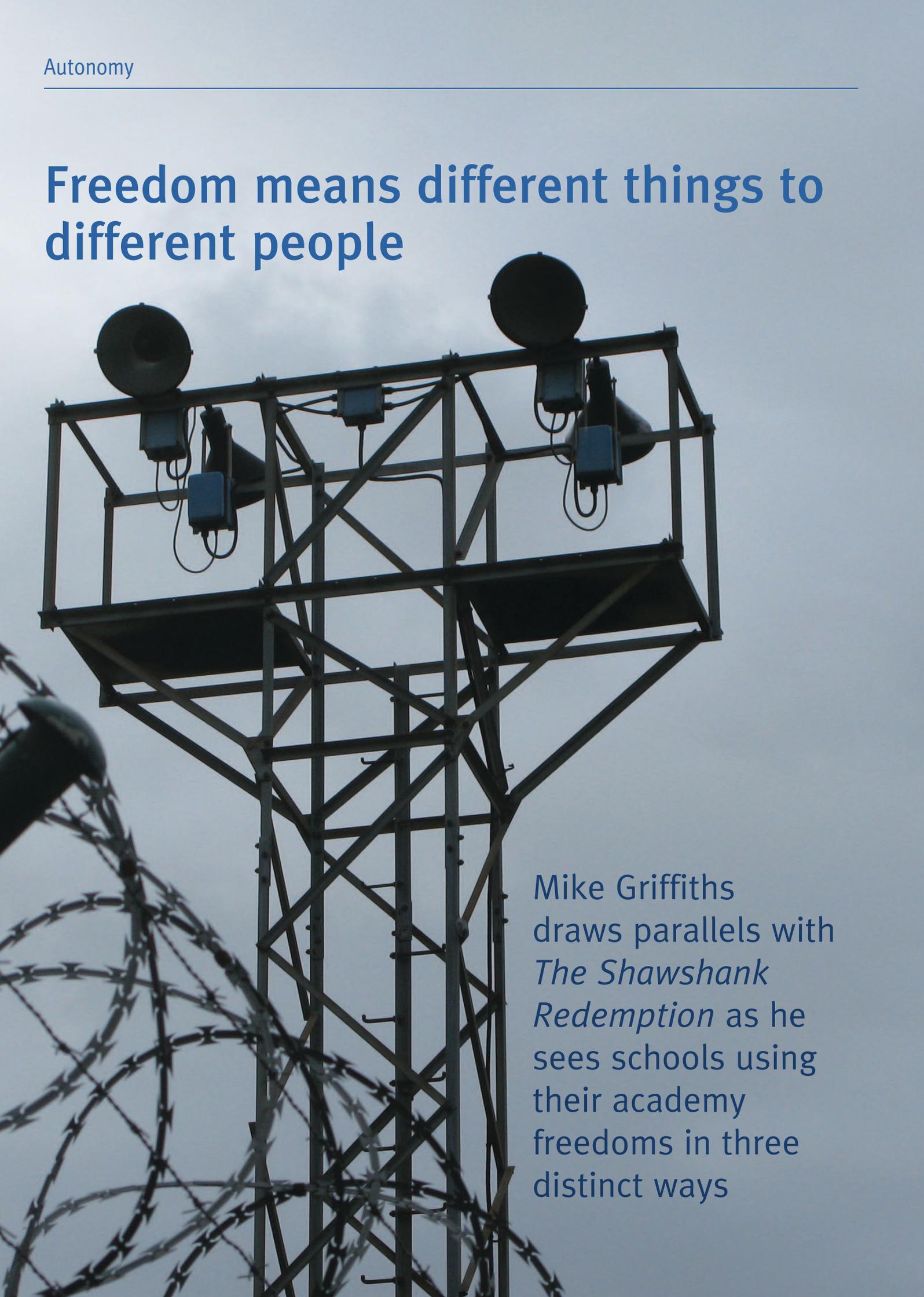
Other issues raised

- There were concerns raised by Matthew Laban from Kingfisher Hall about Ofsted being behind the curve in their work and not knowing the difference between local governing bodies and members and trustees in multi academy trusts.

- One delegate quoted the view of her diocese that the only skill-sets required of governors in a Roman Catholic school was that the governors were good Roman Catholics. Lord Nash observed that this was disappointing but that current arrangements offered the Churches the best opportunity to support education since the 1944 Act.
- Lord Nash advised that a good way to get businesses engaged with schools was to invite business leaders into schools to talk to students; to use such invitations to showcase the school to business; and from there to seek engagement, perhaps as governors or for work experience.

The FASNA Spring Conference will be held at the Grand Connaught Rooms in London on Tuesday 11th March 2014. Confirmed speakers include Chris Wormald, Permanent Secretary for the Department of Education and The Rt Hon Lord Baker of Dorking CH, Chairman of Baker Dearing Educational Trust, Former Secretary of State for Education and Science

Freedom means different things to different people



Mike Griffiths
draws parallels with
*The Shawshank
Redemption* as he
sees schools using
their academy
freedoms in three
distinct ways

Many of us will be used to speculative conversations. Boxing fans will often discuss ‘who is the greatest boxer of all time?’ Football fans will do the same thing. (As a matter of interest, I would go for Sugar Ray Robinson and Pele.) For those who are not interested in sport the conversation may focus on other activities; most of us will have had a discussion with someone about their favourite film of all time.

When having those discussions a lot of people will cite *The Shawshank Redemption*. While not my favourite film of all time, *The Shawshank Redemption* would still rank highly. Essentially the film is about freedom and corruption. As a positive person, I think it is worth focussing on the freedom element of that film. When thinking about that I am naturally drawn to three characters Andy, Red and Brooks.

Andy is the main character and he is absolutely committed to securing his freedom. By the end of the film it is clear that he is prepared to go to great lengths to secure for himself, the advantages that he sees in being a free man.

At the other extreme there is Brooks, a much more insecure character who does not welcome the freedom that is given to him and cannot cope with it either. The outcome is, rather sadly, that he commits suicide when he gains his freedom from prison.

Red, played by Morgan Freeman, finds himself somewhere between those two extremes and after a period of insecurity it is the encouragement and inspiration of Andy that leads him to

develop the confidence that is necessary to take full advantage of being a free human being.

In recent years, and in particular since May 2010, many state schools have got much more freedom. I cannot call it freedom in absolute terms because there is still a long way to go. A key factor will be the development of a national funding formula, this will be very important in securing real financial freedom. At the moment in the worst scenarios it can feel that the Local Authority funding formula is a mechanism for distributing pocket money. However, my purpose in this article is to consider freedom, not national funding mechanisms. So, although I would argue that schools have not been given absolute freedoms, and the situation is more analogous in some cases to being on parole, it is interesting to see the different reactions to the freedoms that have been afforded.

Andy, Red and Brooks

Just like *The Shawshank Redemption*, I see three main groups. The first group is the schools that have welcomed the freedom and sought it out with a real clarity of why they were doing it and what they wanted to achieve. There is another group of schools who have only sought more freedom because they saw others were doing it and/or they were only seeking a relatively short-term financial advantage. Brooks was the type of victim character who sadly finds it difficult to welcome or see anything different to the world they know. There always have been and probably always will be school leaders in this mode. Then we come to

the middle of those extremes. This is a large group of schools who understand the advantages of freedom but probably need the encouragement of others and a little more time to develop the confidence and skills to use those freedoms to make a better future for their schools, and most importantly of all for the students they serve. It is the type of people who are like Red who are really important, they need to be encouraged and supported. They also need a better environment to develop that confidence. Abolishing national pay and conditions and introducing a national funding formula would be a great step forward.

The first group of schools that I referred to have often moved very quickly. They have often done and achieved a number of things as they were very, very clear as to what they wanted to achieve. Examples would include:

- significant curriculum modification;
- restructuring school day and terms dates;
- developing their own contracts and performance related pay strategies;
- modifying outdated admission arrangements, including changing planned admission arrangements including over subscription criteria;
- successfully changing age ranges, for example developing new sixth form provision or extending junior or middle school provision by taking on older or younger year groups;
- developing and enhancing accommodation;
- taking greater responsibility for facilities management, eg catering, ICT support and premises support.

Who delivers Senior Finance Staff of the highest quality to Academies?



Farrer Barnes Ltd Education Finance Division

Search & Selection
Executive Recruitment
Success only flat fee structure
Permanent & Temporary Services

Full Advertising Service
Response Management
Full Reference Procedure
One point of contact for all roles



01227 863 900
www.farrer-barnes.com

Cultural issues

I am sure many readers of this magazine could help me to create a much longer list but for some schools it is simply a cultural issue. They want to take total responsibility for how their school develops, and just as importantly, they welcome and thrive upon the inevitable accountability that comes with that responsibility. At the other extreme, there are some schools who have actually committed themselves to no change or minimal change. They may have come to agreements with trade unions about never moving away from national conditions for teachers. They may have no intention whatsoever of significantly reviewing such things as the school day, the curriculum, or term dates. One is tempted to ask the question, what was the point of changing status and securing greater freedom?

When slavery was abolished in the USA in the 19th century there were a significant number of individuals who, despite their new freedom, chose to continue with their existing lives. For example, if they had lived and worked as slaves on a plantation, they stayed on the plantations and effectively conducted their lives in exactly the same way. Of course this analogy is deeply flawed but in some sectors and in some areas, schools have made conscious decisions not to take up the greater freedom that has been offered to them. At a professional level I find this alarming because it is clear that the advantages of greater freedom have either not been understood or not been recognised.

Active support

It is therefore important that those of us who recognise the advantages of autonomy and freedom are prepared to actively support those who are in the middle category, those who understand the issues but who need time to develop the confidence. It is my view that this will then eventually seep deeper into all sectors, but it is only natural that this process will take more time. Indeed there are some who argue that in the deep south

For as long as we have an array of local formula, school forums and the accompanying meetings, discussion and consultation, we will never, ever in my view, have a meaningful structure that supports autonomy and freedom in state education

of America, the residue of slavery is still manifestly obvious.

However, as always I remain optimistic about the future. There are two important developments that I believe will give greater momentum and encouragement to taking on more autonomy. The first of these, paradoxically, is the change to national pay and conditions. Some schools will remain within the status quo by adopting what is in effect the 'no change' policy of the NUT/NASUWT. Others will move forward, and some will innovate. For example, I believe the ideas put forward by Lord Adonis about much higher starting salaries for new teachers with a direct contractual link to performance-related pay increases has much merit for the future of the profession. Indeed some schools are, rightly in my opinion, already moving in this direction. As Headteachers and Principals of schools work their way through these issues it is inevitable that we will see a slow breakdown of national pay and conditions. While the unions will obviously say 'woe is me' at the other extreme others will say 'hallelujah'.

The resourceful entrepreneur

However, the development of a national funding formula and the inevitable de-coupling that will accompany it is crucial. For as long as we have an array

of local formulae, school forums and the accompanying meetings, discussion and consultation, we will never, ever, in my view, have a meaningful structure that supports autonomy and freedom in state education. Andy in *The Shawshank Redemption* was the resourceful entrepreneurial individual who was always going to secure his own freedom. Regulations and structures have never inhibited such leaders. However, the journey of freedom and autonomy in state-funded schools is a long way from being finished. De-regulation and structures are important. These are the locked and bolted doors that stand in the way of greater freedom and autonomy. Tony Blair's labour government recognised there was a locked door and had a key cut for the lock. Some would argue that Mr Cameron's government has undone some bolts and put the key in the lock. Going further is crucial to the future of state-funded education. A key question now is who has the political and professional courage to turn the lock and open the doors.

Mike Griffiths is an executive board member of FASNA. He is Principal of The Samworth Church Academy in Nottinghamshire

Is fair funding finally on the cards?

Doug Allen tells the story of f40: a group of schools that have been campaigning hard for fair funding



Sixteen years ago I attended my first 'fair funding for schools' meeting in Staffordshire. At that time I worked for a company that had been asked to give secretarial support to a newly named group of dedicated individuals from just eight Local Authority areas, who were fed up with the way in some schools were funded, particularly those at the bottom of the funding league table.

From small acorns grow large oak trees, as they say. Following a recruitment campaign, many more poorly funded Local Authorities, of all political persuasions, joined up and added their voice to the call for fair funding.

And that's how f40 was born. The 'f' stands for funding and '40' is roughly the number of authorities in the bottom quartile of the total number of education authorities. It is these authorities that have maintained the fight over nearly two decades for a more equitable formula for the distribution of funding to schools.

In the time that f40 has been campaigning, we have seen the children of f40 executive committee members pass through primary and secondary school, on to university and into work. Now the grandchildren of some of our founding members are starting school, and the system continues to be inequitable. But our commitment has not diminished, rather we have become even more determined to fight on to achieve a better deal for the poorest-funded children in our schools.

Despite the injection of massive amounts of new money in to education in the last ten years, and recently introduced changes to the funding system which helped to harmonise arrangements

between academies and maintained schools, the gap between the 'haves' and 'have nots' has widened. The same authorities, and their schools, have continued to be the poor relations.

League tables showing the funding of all education authorities in England clearly demonstrate how disadvantaged are the poorest funded authorities compared with those which are better funded. In 2013-14 the per pupil funding, in terms of the total Dedicated Support Grant, in different parts of the country ranged from £4829 in Leicestershire, the lowest funded authority, to £9268 in Hackney, the highest (excluding the City of London). That's a huge difference of £4439 per pupil. In a school of 1000 pupils that can mean an incredible extra £4.5 million a year. Can it be justified that a pupil in one school is funded at almost double the amount of a similar pupil in another school? Can our society justify that one child's experience can be so enriched compared with another?

F40 has always been sufficiently savvy to understand that not every school could receive this amount of funding, but it is clear that a differential of 90 percent per pupil is too great.

Our first real break-through came in 2010 when this government launched its Schools' White Paper which acknowledged for the first time the injustice of the existing arrangement. It stated:

"We want all schools to be funded transparently, logically and equitably, in contrast to the opaque, anomalous and unfair school funding system which reflects the historic circumstances of local authorities rather than the specific needs of individual schools and pupils; and leads to similar schools, facing similar challenges, receiving very different levels of funding."



Then in June 2013, as part his Annual Spending Review, Chancellor George Osborne, provided the icing on the cake by announcing that: “Schools spending will be allocated in a fairer way than ever before. School funding across the country is not equally distributed but distributed on an historical basis with no logical reason. The result is that some schools get much more than others in the same circumstances. It’s unfair and we’re going to put it right.”

Wow! Were we finally going to achieve what we had been seeking for nearly two decades? Well, it certainly seemed that things were taking a positive turn.

Ivan Ould, lead member for Children & Young Persons Services at Leicestershire County Council and Chair of f40, said at that time: “I am delighted that the Chancellor has made a firm commitment to fairer funding and to a new national formula that will no longer discriminate against many Local Authorities.

“It has taken decades of campaigning by the lowest funded local authorities to get recognition of this problem. The Chancellor’s clear statement of intent will be a huge relief to those who have been encouraged by winning the argument but frustrated by the progress in actually changing the system.”

Of course, this was by no means the end of the story and f40 has had to continue to push to ensure that the promised reform would materialise and to influence the proposals in the new formula. We had been disappointed that in 2010 the government had recognised the inequity of the present system, but were not

prepared to do anything about it until after the 2015 election. We thought that was very unfair and unacceptable. We urged Michael Gove, the Secretary of State for Education, to do all that he could to ensure that a fairer national formula is introduced as quickly as possible, but we also knew we had to be realistic.

f40 believes that it has been patient and realistic and that the many years of campaigning might finally be about to pay off. During the last six months we have had a number of very constructive meetings with Schools’ Minister, David Laws, and also with Department for Education officials charged with developing a new, fairer national school funding formula.

The government has now launched a three month consultation which presents detailed proposals for a new funding regime. As this article was prepared in advance of the launch, I can only hope that the proposals presented for discussion reflect the needs of f40 authorities and will lead to fairer funding for all. Certainly all the indications are that it could.

Pupils in low-funded f40 areas have had a raw deal on funding for far too long. At long last it looks as though change is on the way and fair funding is on the cards. If we win a fairer deal this coalition government will get well-deserved credit.

But perhaps more deserving of recognition are the Local Authorities that have supported f40 over the years. More importantly, a big thank you is owed to the many ‘volunteers’ – councillors, officers, governors, Heads, trade union reps and parents – who have freely given up their time to fight for justice for schools and children in poorly funded areas of England.

Success from hard federation partnerships

Alun Williams, Headteacher of the Midsomer Norton Schools Partnership, tells the story of a fruitful partnership between contrasting high schools

The Midsomer Norton Schools Partnership was established in 2009. Since that time Norton Hill and Somervale Schools have worked together to improve education for all young people in Midsomer Norton, Radstock and surrounding areas. In the early days, Norton Hill, as an 'outstanding' school, took the lead in supporting rapid improvement at Somervale, which in 2009 was given a notice to improve.

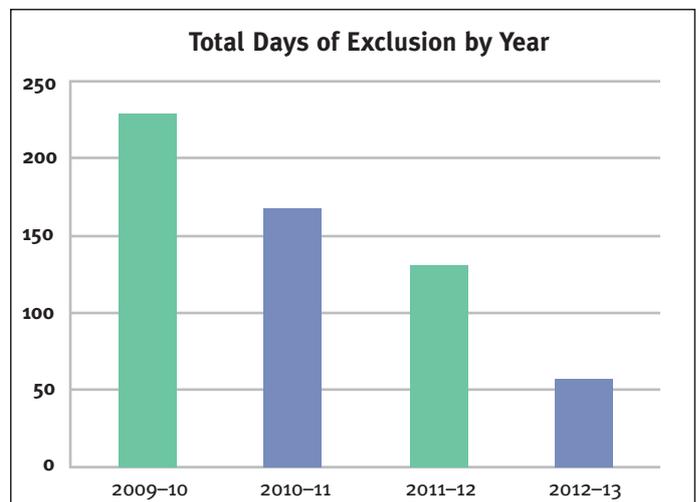
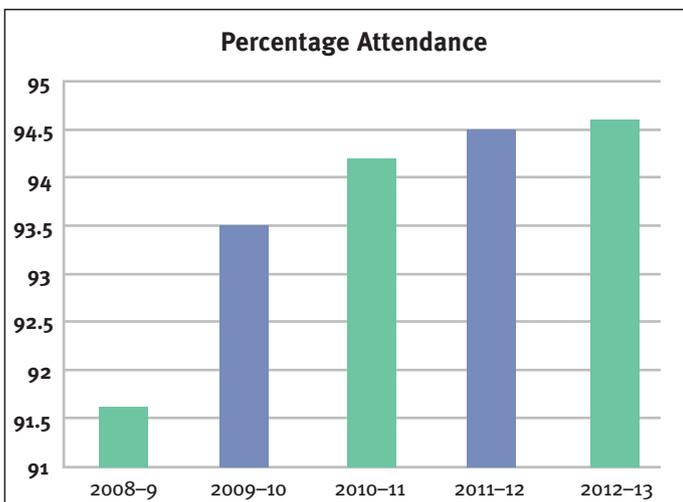
The schools themselves are very different in character. Norton Hill is an oversubscribed 11 to 19 school with 1550 children on roll, while Somervale is a small 11 to 19 school with 515 on roll. Both serve the same communities with Norton Hill having a high profile and good reputation and Somervale often seen as the underdog.

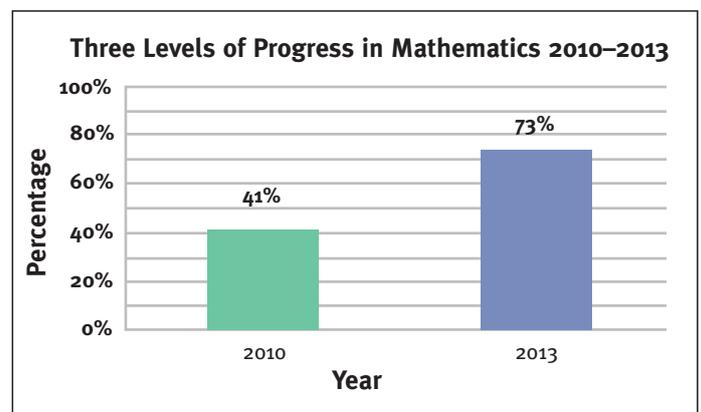
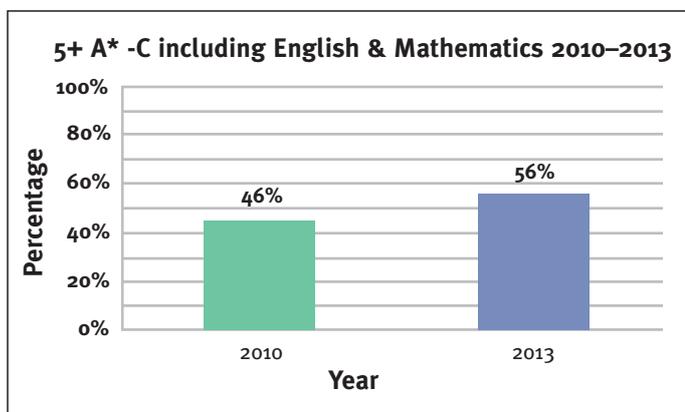
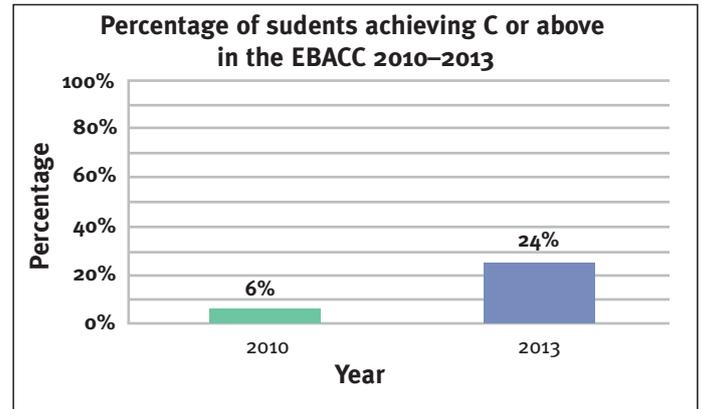
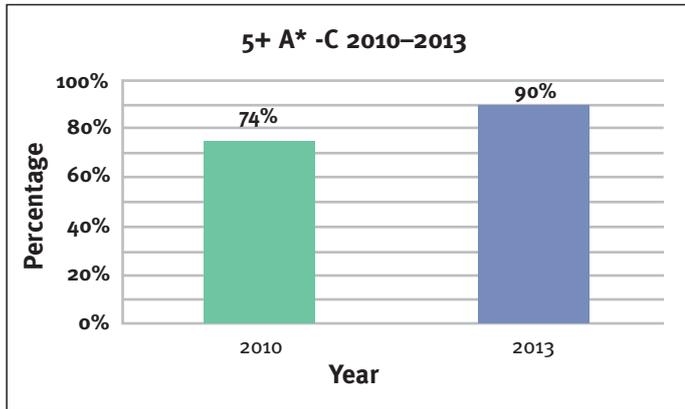
Since 2009 there has been a transformation in the fortunes of Somervale, largely the result of outstanding leadership and support from Norton Hill, but also from the strength gained by two schools working together for the benefit of all children in a tightly defined geographical area. The result of the partnership for Somervale was a 'good' judgement in a recent Ofsted inspection (January 2013), but more importantly, better GCSE outcomes (as shown in the graphs below) and wider opportunities for all children at the school. In fact, Somervale was recently identified as one of the most improved schools

nationally where outcomes have moved from being some way below expectation to being in some cases, considerably above national averages.

The set up that works exceptionally well at the school relies on a hard federation, one governing body, one Headteacher, one business manager and one site manager. Some teams go across the schools too, for example finance. These structural changes put in place in 2009 and have helped lay the foundation for success at Somervale. They have also ensured that real change and improvement could be initiated.

The transformation seen at Somervale was the result of astute leadership from governors, the Headteacher and other key staff at Norton Hill. This gave much-needed capacity and enabled senior and middle leaders at Somervale to begin the improvement process. In short, the capacity created by Norton Hill and the expertise it could share enabled the senior team at Somervale to be more effective in their roles. Those leading teaching and learning for example, now had time to support colleagues in improving their practice, the pastoral lead had time to work with students and staff on behaviour for learning and intervention could be well-planned and have a real impact. This reduced exclusions and rapidly improved attendance (which had been a cause for concern at the DfE) as shown below.





At the time of federation and later conversion to academy status, Peter Beaven, now the editor of this magazine, was Headteacher of Norton Hill. He brought order and structure to Somervale at a time when it was struggling. He also modelled excellence in leadership, something that, as his successor, I hope I have continued since 2012. The Federation also allowed other aspects of expertise from Norton Hill to be transferred to Somervale. The hard federation that exists allowed this expertise to have a meaningful impact that has been sustained. Curriculum planning and timetabling for example have been improved considerably at Somervale following the partnership with Norton Hill. This has been the result of best practice being brought from Norton Hill to Somervale, but also because some shared staffing has allowed greater flexibility and therefore improved opportunities for children at the school.

The power and impact of two schools working together have also brought about significant benefits beyond the classroom. Improvements to facilities at Somervale have been possible because of better financial management. The deficit inherited at Somervale is now a healthy surplus and much modernisation has taken place so that children from Somervale and indeed some from Norton Hill, can benefit. Somervale now has a designated sixth form area, built in 2011/12; there is a stage for drama and music productions; and refurbishment of most classrooms and IT have also occurred so that children are learning in modern, fit-for-purpose learning environments. Extracurricular provision

has also been enhanced through the partnership with Norton Hill. Children interested in dance for example join the Norton Hill dance group that meets after school. Activities week at the end of the academic year involves both schools in a wide range of enrichment activities, the Duke of Edinburgh award is run across both schools with 250 children now involved and healthy numbers from both schools engage in other outdoor education activities such as Ten Tors, school camp and so on.

One of the most considerable benefits of the hard federation that exists between Norton Hill and Somervale relates to staffing and recruitment. In my previous role as a Headteacher of one fairly large secondary school in South Gloucestershire, it was often difficult to set staffing at the right level and more importantly to recruit quality teachers and support staff. Across the partnership we have in excess of 330 employees, 150 of which are teachers. The opportunity and exciting prospects that we can offer both newly qualified and experienced staff is impressive and as a result means we recruit high quality staff at Somervale, a school that has struggled in the past to recruit and retain the best teachers. Interestingly, there has also been increased interest in posts at Norton Hill. Additionally we have been able to use the federation to help staff gain valuable experience in preparation for promotion both inside and outside of the academy, including staff swaps from one school to another.

In 2011 the two sixth forms merged to create the Midsomer Norton Sixth Form. This is approximately 350 students and



“As a complete package iSAMS ticks every single box. It is great value for money, it’s intuitive and it’s easy to use. It’s the perfect solution.”

Dr Rona Mackenzie,
Principal,
Lincoln University Technical
College (UTC)

“The transition over to iSAMS was very efficient and seamless. iSAMS is a very intuitive system and it has been very well received by all staff members.”

Harry Plumtree,
ICT Network Manager,
The Samworth
Enterprise Academy



An MIS that ticks every box

A Management Information Service designed exclusively for Schools
Visit www.isams.co.uk for more information



Desktop



Tablet



Mobile



has helped preserve sixth-form teaching at Somervale. On its own, Somervale would not have been able to sustain post-16 education, its size would have made the offer too limited. Working together has ensured the survival of Key Stage 5 at Somervale and it has also allowed over 40 subjects to be offered to youngsters across both schools, something Norton Hill children have benefited from too. At Key Stage 4 there are some additional shared options. Drama GCSE, dance GCSE, creative and media, and certain technology options are open to both groups of students and it is a pleasure to see the black uniforms of Norton Hill in the same room with the burgundy uniforms of Somervale – children working together with the same teacher on one of the school sites and experiencing great success because of the partnership between the two schools.

Five years on, and both schools are doing well. Norton Hill is also benefiting more from the partnership with another, now successful, school. Somervale is becoming a real school of choice for parents who would like a smaller school setting for their children but still want high expectations, excellent GCSE and A level results and great opportunities. Cross federation appointments are being made to enhance teaching and learning in core subjects and further post-16 ventures are being pursued. Both schools are also working more closely with local primary feeders and planning to extend the federation.

As a relative newcomer to the organisation, I am still able to stand back and see the impact of the converter academy programme. Put simply, I doubt if Somervale School on its own would have survived without the fruitful partnership that now exists between it and Norton Hill. The improvement that has taken place at Somervale was summed up recently in a

conversation I was having with a member of the pastoral support team: “This school is the best it has ever been in the last 15 years since I have been here. Children are well-behaved, teaching is fantastic, results are so much better and the school feels like it has a future that is a bright one.”

What better evidence of success can there be – a great school has been saved, improved and young people are getting high quality education where once they were not.

On its own,
Somervale would not
have been able to sustain
post-16 education, its
size would have made
the offer too limited



On an upwards curve

Tim Hughes, associate principal, explains how Nunthorpe Academy have gone from satisfactory to outstanding in all aspects in three years

“How have you done it?” That’s the question our lead inspector asked at the end of the initial briefing with SLT on the first morning of our Ofsted inspection back in April 2013.

I presumed she was referring to how we had secured a significant rise in key measures over the last three years, such as 5 A*-C (including English and maths) up by 22 percent - not that inspections are data driven of course! My response was: “How long have you got?” I didn’t know what else to say.

So there we were, day one of our two days in the spotlight, with all our fingers and toes crossed, hoping that the

superhuman efforts we’d all put in since our dreadful 2010 inspection would at last pay off.

We’ve all been there. We know the call is due. There is that inevitability about it, isn’t there? We all try to ‘read the tea leaves’ to predict the day, like some sort of educational equivalent of Mystic Meg, and we hope, if nothing else, it’s at a good time of the year and not when there’s three feet of snow on the ground, several staff off with a mystery viral infection or following a flurry of ‘moans’ on parent view. But like it or not, with only a few hours of notice, you’re ‘being done’ and inspection fever kicks in.

With the backdrop of a frequently changing Inspection Framework I’m sure we’ve all had difficulties preparing staff for when an inspector calls. Do comments such as, “how on earth do I teach a grade 1 now” ring any bells? And spare a thought for even the hardest of our SEF writers. Having said that, I’m sure that none of us as academy leaders would argue that ‘satisfactory’ is somehow good enough, or that we are all competitors in a race to the bottom. Whilst no doubt most of us agree that external accountability is a good thing I’m sure that we would also like to see the inspection goalposts stay in one place

for a while; if for no other reason than to allow staff, our parents and our students to compare like with like.

So, to answer our lead inspector's question, how have we done it?

Achievement

Our students are bright, very bright. Attainment on entry in each year group is always Sig+. Attainment by the end of KS4 is also expected to be Sig+ and that has never been our issue. Adding value to our already super-bright cohort has been the biggest challenge we've faced. Like many schools and academies we introduced a two-year KS3 and a three-year KS4 in core subjects but we also introduced single-year GCSEs in foundation subjects, where all students select two options in Year 10 then a further two in Year 11, with all options being completed in one year. This structure has many advantages, but also some disadvantages. However, it did lead to a 13 percent rise in our 5A*-C (including English and maths) figure in its first year and a further nine percent rise in the following two years.

Like many schools and academies we have used early entry to maximise student outcomes. However, once students have achieved their grade C in, for example, maths, they spend their Year 11 either studying for the higher paper or, for those who achieve their A* in Year 10, the IGCSE. Inspectors were impressed with this and commented that achievement at the higher grades was not being impeded as a result of early-entry. Nationally of course, we have entered new territory now and I suspect the days of early entry are numbered.

Our processes for tracking achievement are exceptional; 'the Rolls-Royce of tracking' as an inspector commented. We have experimented with the frequency of data-captures over the last few years but have settled on four captures as our academic year now starts in the middle of June. When grading students we use fine levelling across KS3 to KS5 so intervention is targeted precisely. Our student achievement profiling received much praise and is very popular with all parents.

Each member of the SLT shadows specific students selected to cover each group or sub-group. Following each data-capture a whole day is spent visiting lessons, talking to staff, students and parents to build up a picture of achievement over time, or in our case an academic year. A profile is created that contains records of observations, work scrutinies and conversations with staff, students and parents, together with examples of a student's work, to demonstrate how assessment is securing progress over time.

Inspectors were convinced that achievement would be sustained and graded us 'outstanding'.

Quality of teaching

Perhaps our shared biggest challenge of all. With only 50 percent of lessons graded good or better in our 2010 inspection things had to change. We had to improve how we used data to inform planning (that old chestnut), improve pace in lessons and move away from our largely didactic pedagogy to an independent learning style.

We began by scrapping our established lesson plan proforma and introduced a learner plan that focused on what students had to learn in order to make good or outstanding progress. The word 'satisfactory' was abolished, as was FFTD, and the 'levels of progress' era began. Running alongside our lesson planning revolution was our new approach to all things CPD. We had fallen into the trap of focusing CPD on 'what to do' to deliver an outstanding lesson. Staff lacked confidence, felt reluctant to try out new things and were left feeling stuck in a rut. We shifted the emphasis of CPD from the 'what to' to the 'how to' and encouraged sharing of good practice through our MOT (Moving on Together) sessions, with teachers taking control. This is the breakthrough we needed and since then teachers and the quality of teaching has flourished.

In 2013 80 percent of all lessons were graded good or better, with 20 percent being judged outstanding, so the quality of teaching was graded outstanding overall.



Introducing YPO Procurement Services for Academies

YPO, the UK's largest public sector professional buying organisation, is launching a new procurement service to support all academy status schools (existing and converting).

Our free service includes a dedicated team of expert advisors to guide your academy through the procurement process, whether it's renewing a lease for a multi-functional device (MFD), switching insurance, electricity and gas contracts, or conducting a procurement exercise for a bespoke requirement.

Benefits of the **free service** include:

- **Dedicated helpline**
- **Account management**
- **Category specialists**
- **Compliance with procurement regulations**
- **Access to contracts**
- **Best value**
- **Monthly updates**
- **Best practice**
- **Online resources**

In addition, we also offer a paid subscription service which includes:

- **Procurement health checks**
- **Bespoke procurement activity**
- **Additional support**
- **Newsletters**
- **Training**

*This offer is valid for a limited time only, book before 31 March 2014.



Academy Magazine Special Offer

Call our team today on **01924 836 999** and quote **'ACADEMY MAGAZINE'** to book your **FREE** basic procurement health check*

Meet our team at the Academies Show on 30 April 2014 at ExCel London

Behaviour and safety

Our children are a delight to work with but we are not complacent and expectations are high. We are famous for making the national headlines a few years ago for excluding 65 students in one day for various infringements of our dress code, but we weathered the stormy waters. We also introduced a daily two minutes silence, turned the school bell off and introduced our ‘behaviour for learning’ system where senior and middle leaders patrol the buildings all day visiting lessons (starting with cover) to support staff, praise students and help with incidents. Our students are now immaculate, wear their uniform with pride, and are ready for learning. Poor behaviour is not tolerated and incidents are investigated thoroughly by two retired police officers we employ on a job share basis. Their work with students is exceptional.

Unsurprisingly the inspectors were astounded at how well behaved and safe our children are and graded us outstanding in this area.

Leadership and management

This one’s personal. For us it’s all been about planning and making academy improvement everyone’s issue. Our detailed improvement plan is 35 pages long (gulp) but at least everyone’s signed up to it. I based it on Ofsted’s twelve outstanding schools report and we use it as our improvement ‘sat nav’ in that it puts ‘meat on the bones’ of our strategic plan and facilitates self-evaluation. Speaking of self-evaluation, ours is a pithy fifteen pages long but we found our eight-page summary more scrutinised by our inspection team.

I think it is true to say though that our Area Improvement Process (AIP) has been the single most important improvement strategy we have used to develop every leader in the academy. Our AIP, which I introduced in 2008, involves every ‘area’ (eg subjects) in an internal process that uses Ofsted’s framework to review performance and set improvement targets. The process has evolved in line with the changing framework, ie numerous times, and has involved every senior and middle

leader in the academy as both review leader and receiver. Our current process involves four days of observations and interviews with a fifth day set aside for the review leader to write a report (this also mimics a typical Ofsted format). Accountability for the quality of each area is not only secured through the AIP and through the line management process, but each middle leader is questioned directly by our board of directors via our student achievement committee.

All of this is in addition to our relentless leadership CPD focus on servant leadership, learning-centred leadership and Blanchard’s situational leadership has transformed the capacity of all our leaders and secured the long-term future of our academy.

Inspectors commented on how leaders at all levels were securing improvement and graded us outstanding in this area.

It’s a difficult journey to put into words, there are so many pieces to the jigsaw, but I hope it gives you an idea of our path to ‘outstanding’. Now, on with moving beyond outstanding ...



Taking the direct route

Charlie Taylor, chief executive of the National College for Teaching and Leadership, explains how School Direct can help you attract the best staff



Nothing matters more in raising standards than the quality of teaching and leadership in our schools.

The NCTL's role is to support the transition to a school-led system with schools taking greater ownership of teacher and leadership training, CPD and school-to-school support.

School Direct – one of the routes into teaching that gives trainees the opportunity to work in a school from day one – was introduced in response to demand from schools for more control over the way new teachers are trained.

The programme is proving popular and growing fast. Last year three candidates applied for every School Direct place and requests from schools for places have shot up from 9600 to 17,700 this year.

This demonstrates the enthusiasm for more school-led training and it's great to see more and more schools and academies starting to attract the best talent and grow their own staff.

Working in partnership with a teacher training provider of your choice, you can recruit the trainees that you want to employ, and shape their training to suit your school and pupils.

Having young, dynamic people coming in with new ideas is a real benefit and experienced teachers tell me that delivering training or mentoring can help them develop their own practice.

School Direct works best when a group of schools work together – it gives you far more flexibility in terms of placements and employment expectations, as well as capacity to organise and run the training. Many have recognised this and NCTL is encouraging more schools to work in partnerships led by outstanding schools, teaching schools or through academy chains.

Well over 900 lead schools representing partnerships involving thousands of schools, are already involved. Over time these numbers will rise as schools wishing to participate in 2015/16 can register their interest from next month (February).

Some teaching schools and academies chains are moving one step beyond School Direct by applying to become accredited school-led and school-centred ITT providers (SCITTs). This

Having young, dynamic people coming in with new ideas is a real benefit and experienced teachers tell me that delivering training or mentoring can help them develop their own practice

puts you in control of all aspects of the training programme. I would encourage the very best schools to consider the benefits that accreditation affords – from developing a strategic approach to training and recruitment across the chain through to having a 'branded' ITT programme that attracts the very best talent.

All these developments will help to further raise standards and ensure all children are given the education they deserve.

What is School Direct?

The School Direct programme allows top graduates, or those who have been working in a career, to combine teacher training with learning on the job in some of the best schools and academies across England.

There are two types of training places. The first is a fee-based programme. This is open to well qualified graduates and is funded by tuition fees paid by the trainee, who may,

if eligible, receive a bursary from NCTL. The second is the salaried, employment-based route for graduates with three or more years' work experience. The trainee is employed as an unqualified teacher by a school and most of the costs of the training are covered by the NCTL.

For information on the funding and financial incentives associated with School Direct go to: <http://bit.ly/1adUTO4>

How does it work?

School Direct places are usually given to partnerships of schools, so you can share responsibility for the training and employment of recruits.

Each partnership has a lead school, and submits a request for places on its behalf to the NCTL based on an assessment of future employment needs; the lead school receives the allocation of places and is responsible for ensuring that the criteria for School Direct places are met.

The partnership chooses which accredited provider to work with, negotiates how the training is structured and agrees how

the funding will be divided between the school and the provider.

Schools can recruit locally through their own recruitment processes, work with their ITT provider to use its marketing and recruitment processes, or use a combination of the two. Candidates must meet the accredited provider's standard entry requirements.

Schools are required to use the UCAS Teacher Training single application system to advertise vacancies and manage their applications.

How can schools apply?

Those interested in participating in School Direct in 2015 to 2016, can register their interest from February 2014. Meanwhile, schools wishing to receive communications on School Direct can email: School.DIRECT@education.gsi.gov.uk. For more information visit: www.education.gov.uk/schooldirect

Case study:

The Greenwood Dale Foundation Trust

The Greenwood Dale Foundation Trust is currently working with four providers to offer places in 10 of its academies, starting in September 2014.

Chief executive Barry Day said: "Training with the Greenwood Dale Foundation Trust is a particularly appealing option for many trainees because we have developed an outstanding CPD programme and have a proven track record in supporting trainee teachers on PGCE and GTP courses over many years.

"School Direct enables us to have more influence over the way that new teachers are trained, gives us the freedom to work with a number of teacher training providers and ultimately allows us to recruit the highest calibre trainees.

"At the end of the one year programme, we hope that successful trainees will go on to work in one of our academies. We focus on 'growing our own' and provide opportunities for talented and ambitious teachers to work across a number of our academies to gain experience and prepare themselves for promoted posts. The School Direct programme is therefore a way for us to meet our future staffing needs as we continue to grow."

Violet Lewis, who is training to teach chemistry at the Weston Favell Academy, said: "The School Direct route is quite hectic at the start as there is so much to take in. However the lectures are enlightening and the seminars engaging. The experience of training and being in school is practical as you can see quite easily how the theories of learning fit in."

Case study:

The Cabot Learning Federation

The Cabot Learning Federation (CLF) consists of 11 academies in Bristol, Bath, South Gloucestershire and Weston-super-Mare, educating around 6000 children.

The CLF Teaching School works in partnership with the University of the West of England to provide School Direct and is now working with its second cohort of trainees. This year's programme has grown to 18 secondary and seven primary trainees covering English, maths, science, history, geography, computing, MFL, PE, early years and primary maths.

Sir David Carter, chief executive officer, said: "School Direct has been an excellent route for high-quality graduates entering the teaching profession. The Federation has produced 11 teachers who are now employed in our academies, all of whom were judged to be at least good and often 'outstanding' during their training year with us. A third of our cohort last year and this are career changers and the experiences they bring from outside the teaching profession add value to their contribution."

Nick Grudgings, maths student at Bath Community Academy said: "I've enjoyed the School Direct route especially the opportunity to link classroom experience with the academic aspects of the PGCE. In other words I can get colleagues from school to give a real critique of my assignments."

Rebecca Ayling, physics student at King's Oak Academy said: "The staff have been incredibly welcoming and helpful during my placement. My experience so far has confirmed that taking the plunge into a new career has been the right decision for me. Although the course requires significant commitment, I have learnt so many useful classroom techniques and I am already practising them in my lessons. The School Direct route has really helped me engage with pupils right from the start."

Creating a culture of achievement in Milton Keynes

Dara Carroll, Principal of The Milton Keynes Academy, shares some of the highlights of his school's inspiring journey to higher pupil achievement

At the Milton Keynes Academy, our motto is 'Everyone Achieves'. And when you look around our school and feel the buzz of energy and purpose, it is clear that we are living up to this ideal. What started as a vision has now become a reality for our school, and achievement is something we all strive for every single day.

However, this was not always the case. Just two years ago, only 20 percent of students at the school gained five or more GCSEs graded A* to C, including English and maths. But by 2012 things were starting to change and 38 percent of our students reached this standard. When in 2013, this figure rose to 53 percent, we knew that the school was on its way to a brighter future.

So what is the story behind the Milton Keynes Academy's astonishing rise in achievement?

Opening doors

The academy is attended by 1200 students aged between 11 and 19 years. Like every school we have our own challenges to face, and being situated in an area of socio-economic deprivation means that some of our students live in low-income households and nearly half of them receive free school meals (FSM).

We believe, however, that no child should be disadvantaged by their background or circumstances. To offer every student the life chances they deserve, we have introduced a range of initiatives to help support them in their learning.

One of these is to encourage students to stay on in school in the evening by providing a supportive space in which they can complete homework, take part in extracurricular activities and get help with their studies. Since this scheme was introduced we have noticed that our students have really started to take responsibility for their own future, and it has been great to see them responding positively to the opportunities we are offering.

We find that when young people have a goal to aim for, all the hard work starts to make sense. This is certainly true of many of our students who are benefiting from the support of local businesses in pursuing their own ventures. When a group of

our sixth formers recently took first place in the Milton Keynes Young Enterprise Competition for their fashion business it was a proud moment for the academy.

Getting students into the classroom

To make the most of these opportunities though, we had to go back to basics and get our students into school, on time, every day. Persistent absence had been a major issue at The Milton Keynes Academy and so we started to put measures into place to address the problem. Attendance was already being recorded electronically in each lesson, but our SIMS management information system (MIS) gave us the reporting tools to track persistent absentees and latecomers.

Once we could see which students were arriving late or not arriving at all, we were able to focus our efforts on encouraging them back into school. To support this approach, we send text messages to parents of students who are absent from class with no explanation.

Taking a stand against unauthorised absences has meant that our attendance rates have increased and students who were missing valuable lesson time are now back in the classroom and ready to learn.

Working together to improve behaviour

The next step in our quest for improvement was to tackle the poor behaviour that was affecting overall levels of progress. Fixed-term exclusion rates were higher than average at the school and there were frequent lesson disruptions caused by the poor behaviour of small groups and individual students. Far too much time was being wasted dealing with all types of bad behaviour from low-level disruption to more serious incidents.

For a new approach to succeed it was important for us to get our facts right, and we needed to start by building a complete record of each student's behaviour. We got teachers to record details of all incidents electronically on SIMS. Once this information was entered, we were able to track student

behaviour much more easily, helping us to identify any patterns that were emerging, and allowing us to take action more quickly following an incident.

As time moved on, our staff found that by joining forces on tackling behaviour issues, they could really make a difference. Sharing information across the school helps us to work together so that if a student is disruptive in a maths lesson, for example, this is recorded on the system so that a colleague teaching the same student later in the day can be alerted to the fact and keep a closer eye on them in class.

We have also harnessed the power of positive reinforcement when it comes to behaviour. All positive incidents are recorded on our MIS too, and as soon as a student achieves a specified number of good conduct points, they receive a reward certificate. This scheme has gone a long way towards highlighting student achievement and has proved itself to be a motivating force for change when it comes to tackling poor behaviour at the school.

Making progress

With effective strategies in place to improve attendance and behaviour, staff at the academy have been able to focus on raising standards of academic achievement. There is a wide range of abilities at the Milton Keynes Academy and about one third of our students have special education needs. We have a duty to work towards improving the performance of every child regardless of ability and to do this we needed to revisit our assessment strategies.

In the same way that sharing information helped us to address behaviour, a joined-up approach is the key to boosting progress.

Using electronic marksheets in our MIS, teachers record students' attainment, and then this data is made available to individual tutors, subject leaders and the senior leadership team. We work together to see if we can detect any significant trends in performance among defined groups of students.

Being able to focus on the achievement of student groups means we can also keep a check on how each child is performing against their peers. This is particularly important for measuring and encouraging the progress of vulnerable groups, such as SEND and FSM students.

Having an up-to-date picture of how individual students are progressing has been enormously helpful to us in our target setting and in monitoring achievement against these targets. Our staff are now much more confident in planning interventions that meet the needs of students because they can see what strategies work best. And with more information on each child, we can continuously look at what needs to be done to help a student move from a D to a C grade, or from a B to an A*.

The shared vision and commitment of both staff and students enabled us to celebrate our 33 percent increase over two years in the number of students gaining five A* to C grade GCSEs, including maths and English.

So although there is still a way to go along the road to school improvement, we have taken the first all-important steps and we are now the fastest improving school in Milton Keynes. Our students' belief in themselves and their success reflects our motto, 'Everyone Achieves'.



Are your students ready for financial independence?

Financial Capability is an essential life skill and will be part of the National Curriculum from 2014

ifs University College offers a series of qualifications that develop a genuine understanding of personal finance and the skills to make informed financial decisions.

- *ifs* Level 1 Award in Personal Finance (APF1)
- *ifs* Level 2 Certificate in Personal Finance (CPF2)
- *ifs* Level 2 Certificate in Financial Education (CeFE)
- *ifs* Level 3 Certificate in Financial Studies (CeFS)
- *ifs* Level 3 Diploma in Financial Studies (DipFS)

Together CeFS and DipFS can carry up to 140 UCAS points and provide a pathway into higher education and employment.

ifs University College provides an extensive support package for tutors and students including:

- **up-to-date and comprehensive resources to enable flexible delivery**
- **tutor development days**
- **extensive access to *ifs* e-library, databases and relevant journals**

www.financialcapability.co.uk

To find out more, contact us on:

T +44 (0)1227 818609 (option 3)

E fcexams@ifslearning.ac.uk

Collaboration at the heart of an organisation

Dame Dana Ross-Wawrzynski DBE, chief executive Officer, explains how Bright Futures Educational Trust is bringing expertise from all areas of education to its schools

When Michael Gove talked about the successes of Bright Futures Educational Trust in his last *Academy* magazine article, I wanted to revisit our story to remind ourselves what we set out to achieve in becoming a leader in driving school improvement.

Bright Futures Educational Trust (BFET) is a multi-academy and school-led organisation, with our core aim being to improve and raise attainment in schools across the North West to ensure that all young people have real choices inside and outside the classroom.

Bright Futures is committed to sharing outstanding teaching methods from staff across the Trust and to facilitating quality training for all of our teachers. We are unique in that we work collaboratively – this way we have greater impact and influence to ensure our young people are getting the best quality education.

There are currently seven schools in two hubs in Manchester and Blackpool within our Trust which all bring their own unique expertise to the table: secondary schools Altrincham Grammar School for Girls, Cedar Mount Academy and South Shore Academy; Gorton Mount and Stanley Grove primary academies; special educational needs school Melland High School; and the recently-opened Connell Sixth Form College.

Having a mix of primary, secondary and special educational needs schools in the trust enables us to bring knowledge from all areas so that we can work together to improve the education we are providing for our young people. It is also helping to smooth the transition for our students who start at our primaries, move onto our secondary schools and then into further education at Connell Sixth Form College.

At a trust level, we are able to use our expert business acumen to ensure that at a strategic level, we are meeting our objectives and targets as an organisation. This allows our teaching staff to do what they do best: teach.

Collaborative working, special educational needs expertise, improvement in maths attainment and training through our teaching school are all key focuses for our organisation.

Working collaboratively

Each of our trust schools brings its own strengths to share with colleagues as best educational practice. We combine each of these strengths during our trust INSET training days for staff, when insights into successful practice are shared and celebrated.

Altrincham Grammar School for Girls is one of the top five state schools in the country – its staff work closely with our network of schools to share outstanding teaching methods, with head of mathematics Simon Mazumder as the schools' advocate for best practice in education. Simon is bringing his expertise in mathematics to our primary academies Stanley Grove and Gorton Mount, leading a 'reflective inquiry' into current teaching practices to improve attainment in mathematics in those children who are currently underachieving.

The primaries are also working on a project with Cedar Mount Academy and the Hallé Orchestra to inspire underachieving primary school children across Greater Manchester to improve their grades in numeracy and literacy.

Gillian Winter, who was previously head of sixth form at Altrincham Grammar School for Girls, opened Connell Sixth Form College to its first student cohort in September. As a new college in East Manchester for 16 to 19 year olds, it is bringing academic expertise and a prestigious partnership with Oxford University to its students who may not otherwise have had such opportunities so readily available.

Special educational needs expertise

Having our special educational needs and disability school, Melland High School, within our Trust has been extremely valuable. Our principal child and educational psychologist (CEP), Dr Jude Joughin, works closely at a systemic level across the Trust. Typically work involves identifying priorities for development and intervention to improve staff confidence and competence in providing for pupils with special educational needs and disability (SEND). Regular network meetings with Trust schools' strategic SEND leads and coordinators are co-

hosted by Melland High and Dr Joughin to share best practice and collaboratively discuss and plan new developments in relation to SEND.

Dr Joughin's role is focused on identification, assessment, intervention and liaison with families and working with key members of staff to underpin the importance of CEP practice. This year, we have introduced two additional child and educational psychologists to create a wider team to work alongside Dr Joughin and the trust schools.

Traditionally the vast majority of CEPs have worked indirectly with schools, and therefore this role, at the heart of the trust, is an exciting and progressive opportunity within the spheres of educational psychology and education. The CEP role is not just exclusively allied with SEND but reaches out to all pupils, particularly our most vulnerable.

Over the past year, colleagues from Melland High School, including director of education Judith O'Kane OBE, have visited all the trust schools to carry out local research using a SEND diagnostic tool. The tool explores how well current provision and systems support pupils with SEND and informs

next steps in our journey towards 'outstanding'. It is hoped that we will also be able to tune into what individuals value and want from the CEP role to ensure effective outcomes for all pupils. We firmly believe that true inclusion equals support for trust personnel and support for pupils.

CEP 'drop-ins' have also been launched in three of the trust schools. The intention of the drop-in is to provide staff with a regular and confidential space to discuss any queries or problems that are acting as a barrier in helping them teach and/or meet the needs of a student with additional needs.

Our junior members of the CEP team have also started a PhD study into the effectiveness of mindfulness. Chief operating officer Amanda Bailey is a mindfulness practitioner and has brought in the technique to help staff and students across the trust improve skills such as increasing concentration and building resilience.

Focus on maths attainment

Mathematics is a key focus for us this academic year. Simon Mazumder is a specialist leader of education, and as head of



mathematics at Altrincham Grammar School for Girls, he is not only helping our primaries but has also brought his expertise and experience to Cedar Mount Academy to help to boost achievement in GCSE mathematics.

The reflective inquiry that Simon is working on with our primary schools and with Stanley Grove vice principal Angela Worthington, is providing training and guidance for staff to improve attainment in pupils. It has also led to a mathematics toolkit, enabling parents to work with their children on numeracy so they continue their learning beyond the classroom.

Teaching School

Sarah Boyse is the Head of Teaching School which is based at Altrincham Grammar School for Girls and is leading the way in ensuring quality training for teaching staff both within our schools and across Manchester.

As one of the first Teaching Schools in the country, we have already built strong networks with organisations such as Challenge Partners, Future Leaders, Teaching Leaders and the Prince's Teaching Institute. Our training staff have been

extensively and successfully engaged in school improvement for many years, working with colleagues in schools in a wide variety of contexts. Of those who have participated in training at our teaching school, every member of staff previously rated as 'satisfactory' during lesson observations is now rated as at least 'good', and the majority have been rated 'outstanding'.

The future

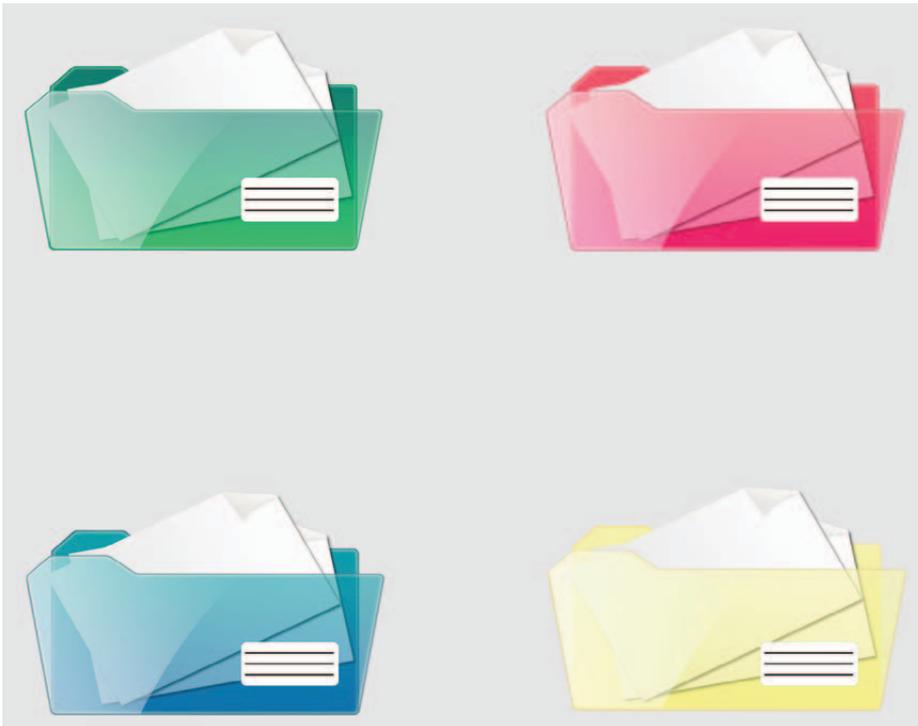
Bright Futures is truly making an impact and we are confident we will achieve what we set out to do back in 2011 when we were formed. We know that we are giving our young people real choices so they can reach their full potential – this vision is at the core of our trust.

As an organisation, we are still relatively early on in our journey but we are already seeing the benefits that are being brought to both staff and students. We look forward to welcoming more new schools to our trust and seeing what benefits they can bring to our staff and our young people.



Engaging in research

Anna Riggall and Alex Elwick reveal how the CfBT Education Trust research team are helping improve standards in schools in the UK and beyond



Each CfBT school is on a different journey and as such is able to engage with action research to a greater or lesser extent. Our role is to promote the benefits of creating a research culture and to support our schools in both establishing and maintaining such a culture

CfBT Education Trust is an international non-profit provider of education services; managing 20 academies and free schools in the UK. Research plays an integral part in everything that we do as we strive to build our work upon evidence: improving education practice on the ground while widening access to research in the UK and overseas.

Our research programme is relatively unique amongst academy chains, largely comprising two basic forms. Firstly we have a programme of wider research, working with partners and institutions across the world to tackle some of the key challenges and issues in education. Secondly we promote and support a strong vein of practitioner research within our academies and free schools, encouraging our teachers to be engaged in research and active.

In the case of the wider research, we have published numerous research reports and reviews over the past decade, covering a huge variety of areas including English and foreign language teaching; school inspection and review; support for subject teaching; and education in fragile and conflict-affected states. While this research has a global outlook we nonetheless dedicate a considerable amount of our resources towards the UK sector and it is our belief that our research should be of practical value to both policymakers and practitioners. We aim to influence policy so that it is based upon the best available evidence, as well as enabling teaching staff and school leaders to base their own practice upon evidence which is just as rigorous.

Our more recent range of research projects includes a large-scale survey of chairs of school governing bodies, working with one of the leaders in his field – Professor Chris James from the University of Bath – which identified best practice in this critical role; an investigation into the digital divide with the Institute of Education in London, which shed new light on just how widespread access to the internet is for students today – and also highlighted that poorer students are much less likely to use this access for their schoolwork; and the publication of our annual ‘Language Trends’ survey – the most comprehensive survey of foreign language learning in English schools.

Action research

Action research – research undertaken by participants which is explicitly self-reflective – has to be embedded in order to be successful; it will have little value if undertaken superficially or as a one-off exercise. Each CfBT school is on a different journey and as such is able to engage with action research to a greater or lesser extent. Our role, as the research team, is to promote the benefits of creating a research culture and to support our schools in both establishing and maintaining such a culture.

St Mark’s Church of England Academy in Mitcham, Surrey, was the first school opened by CfBT in 2006 and is an exemplary model of just what can be achieved with a little support and a lot of teacher-led enthusiasm and drive. For three years teachers at the school have been working, with senior members of



staff and with their students, to investigate topics as broad as assessment for learning; what makes a good cover lesson; student leadership; teaching Christian values through sport; and the impact of local fieldwork in geography lessons. This research has not been imposed from above, but has emerged from the staff themselves. That is not to say leadership does not have a crucial role to play – the culture at St Mark’s is one which promotes experimentation – the teachers are not afraid to fail, so long as they are able to use their research projects to improve and reflect on their own practice.

Inspired by the work at St Mark’s we have encouraged our other schools to follow suit. To support them we offer research training, advice and support, either on the end of a phone line or by visiting the schools ourselves and running workshops and clinics for interested teachers and staff. Such an approach does not have to be overly expensive but is reliant on those involved understanding why they are doing what they are doing and, critically, what they (and their students) will get out of it.

To provide additional encouragement

we offer a bursary scheme to staff in our schools to undertake international research visits and have supported people taking trips to Brunei, Malaysia, Finland and New York to identify best practice and bring that back to their own classrooms.

Inspiring teachers

As well as research which emerges from our academies and free schools themselves, we have also looked to make the best possible use of the incredible resources we have available in the breadth of our organisation. Holding one of the three Ofsted contracts means that we employ a large number of inspectors in the North of England, and we have used that to conduct a research project which aims to discover what makes an inspiring teacher.

We asked Heads to nominate teachers in their schools who they see as ‘inspiring’. Then we identified a pool of teachers and, in an innovative move, we asked four of our inspectors to take on the role of researcher and to visit these teachers. We wanted them to interview and observe them, to try and work out just what ‘inspiring’ looks like. In conjunction



Research has the power to inform and improve practice and policy – providing teachers with evidence about what they do and giving them the opportunity to reflect on the way that they teach

with this approach we have worked with a team led by Professor Pam Sammons, from Oxford University Department of Education, to focus on pupil voice (still centred on our pool of inspiring teachers) so that we can start to build a picture of what an inspiring teacher is, and what inspiring teaching looks like, from every angle. We plan to launch this ‘Inspiring Teachers’ research in early 2014.

School improvement

One of our key aims and areas of expertise is school improvement. As well as rooting our approach in what we know works from years of experience, we also look to expand our knowledge base through our research. We have recently published a series of five reviews in partnership with a number of leading experts from the Universities of Oxford, Manchester, Nottingham and Glasgow and the Hong Kong Institute of Education. These

reviews are on some of the most relevant topics in school improvement today, covering effective teaching; school self-evaluation; successful leadership; special educational needs; and assessment for learning. As well as promoting their use in our own schools these reviews are all freely available online and we welcome their adoption by anyone working in education across the globe.

We are also concerned with some of the key topics of interest that drive debate and policy in this country. We are currently finalising an extensive piece of research conducted in partnership with the Education and Employers Taskforce which will focus on employer engagement in schools and will aim to isolate what best practice is for both employers and students. This responds to recent legislation which obliges schools to provide careers guidance by highlighting the best ways to give young people the

experience and information they need.

Centre for London are another of our partners and together we will be exploring the perception that London schools do so much better than those elsewhere in the country – asking if this is truly the case across the capital and, if so, how can this improvement be explained and, perhaps most importantly, how can this be replicated elsewhere?

Research has the power to inform and improve practice and policy – providing teachers with evidence about what they do and giving them the opportunity to reflect on the way that they teach. The value of research at CfBT cannot be underestimated and one of our ultimate aims is to ground everything that we do in evidence about why it works, whether that is influencing policy on primary assessment or helping a teacher to investigate ways of improving grammar in a Year 7 French class.

“The battle for the autonomy of our profession is only just beginning”

Open forum and lively debate at the FASNA Autumn Conference

The FASNA Autumn Conference, chaired by *Academy* editor Peter Beaven, opened with ‘An Audience with Lord Nash’, reported in full on pages 7-11 of this issue.

This was followed by a presentation by Jon Coles, director of United Learning, about the establishment of a Royal College of Teaching. Jon argued in favour of freedom and autonomy for schools saying, “The people who know best are the people who know most”. He pointed out that Heads and governors know their schools best and can account for their effective performance. He said that the move towards autonomy, from local management of schools – the key reform starting the move towards autonomy – to the academies movement today, is now

entrenched and is unlikely to be reversed.

However, Jon felt that there was still unfinished business, and that the next question is about how things are taught. He argued that the best people to decide this are the teaching professionals, and not politicians. Whilst politicians need to be involved in education, pedagogy should be driven by professionals.

The problem, he argued, is that people don’t believe that education requires professional expertise, whereas they do believe this of other professions, for example medicine. Jon argued that the fact that some hold this opinion is a major problem and will ultimately undermine the case for high levels of funding in education. But, he went on, the teaching profession itself is partly to blame. He

cited as examples the “faddish” initiatives such as ‘brain gym’ and ‘VAK learning styles’ which have been adopted by our schools but have no basis in evidence.

He argued that teaching and education must become a serious evidence-based profession and needs a Royal Teaching College. The College would connect the leading practitioners and the leading researchers, ensuring that each informs the other. It would use an evidence-based approach to set the standards for entry to the profession and would set out requirements for ongoing professional development, informed by current developments in research and practice.

Jon finished with: “The battle for autonomy for schools is won and is cannot be undone by any future government.





But the battle for the autonomy of our profession and our professional standards is only just beginning.”

Jon was followed by members’ business. Peter Beaven reminded members of the good work being done by the National Induction Panel for Teachers (see article on pages 42-43).

Janet Aldridge, FASNA’s chief operating officer, outlined developments in the offer to members. These can be seen on pages 40-41 and quite clearly there have been significant additions to FASNA membership benefits, making the already low membership fees even more worthwhile.

Next, Tom Clark (FASNA chair) told

members that it was vital that converter academies publicised what they are doing to support other schools and the impact they are having. This is needed if we are to counter the impression that converter academies add nothing to the educational landscape. If we cannot demonstrate that converter academies add value, autonomy may well be rolled back.

Tom also explained how governance needs to move from a stakeholder model (the idea that all groups need to be represented) to a skills-based model, ensuring that a governing body has the ability to provide the challenge needed to move a school forward.

Next, ‘An Audience with Peter Lauener’, the chief executive of the Education Funding Agency, chaired by Debbie Clinton (Principal of Nunthorpe Academy and soon to be a HMI).

Debbie asked Peter about progress towards a National Funding Formula. Praising Michael Gove for being so determined to pursue a National Funding Formula, Peter felt that progress has been made. Local Fair Funding has been implemented, including a reduction in the number of factors (from an average of 33 to a maximum of 13). He said he wanted a “single, hard national formula” across the country – but this will not happen before 2016 and we have to protect those who lose in this process. Peter indicated that, regardless of the result of the General Election in 2015, politicians would have to embrace the logic of a move towards a National Funding Formula and no government would roll back on the progress made to date.

When asked about the ‘lump sum’ element of funding, he said that this had to be continually assessed. With reference to the duplication of retaining lump sums and introducing a sparsity factor he recognized the situation and said it was being examined closely by the EFA in terms of its impact and fairness.

Members asked about post-16 funding and he agreed that the EFA would be:



looking at funding for less common programmes, such as elements of the IB; establishing greater clarity over guided learning hours; looking at protection for non-core elements (eg enrichment) as this was repeatedly raised as a concern.

Debbie then asked about the effectiveness and role of School Forums. He said that the ‘beefed up guidance’ for School Forums is better. Over 50 percent of School Forums have been visited by the EFA and there is by much better web-based guidance from the EFA. Over 30 percent of School Forums are now chaired by academy Heads and School Forum members are now much more challenging of the Local Authority.

Peter said that local Headteachers had to accept responsibility for the policing of School Forums – they had the ability to scrutinize the work of their Forum and should do so. He was clear that School Forums were a necessary evil for the moment, at least for a few years until there was a National Funding Formula.

Finally, Debbie asked how the EFA could continue to support FASNA’s mission to promote school autonomy. Peter stated that he was committed to the



FASNA agenda and that the EFA supports this by:

1. Making funding systems fair, clear and transparent – as much as possible.
2. Making information clear and much more freely available and working successfully with member organisations such as FASNA to enable them to produce good guidance, for example, FASNA’s *Effective Governance* publication.

3. EFA will ‘keep out of your hair’ as far as possible. Peter believes that we must be allowed to ‘get on with it’ for as long as we are delivering the goods for children and students.

The conference ended with Roger Inman of Stone King Solicitors giving a legal update, something that is always valued by members. Stone King’s contribution features in FASNA’s regular newsletter.





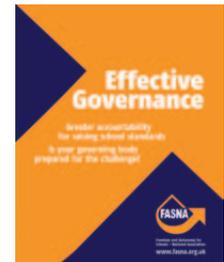
Freedom and Autonomy for Schools - National Association
www.fasna.org.uk

Membership benefits include:

Free copy of our publication, *Effective Governance* (usual retail price £10)

- Support and guidance in undertaking the responsibilities of governance
- A practical approach, supported by case studies of good practice from a wide variety of schools
- Links to the new Ofsted criteria

Order additional copies by visiting www.fasna.org.uk/publications



Free access to online legal resources through our legal partner, Stone King LLP

- Comprehensive up to date policy and procedure tools and templates for schools
- Detailed guidance notes on legal topics



Free half day Net Capacity Consultation from School Property Matters (usual price of £475) including the following benefits:

- Well presented data as evidence to challenge the LA's PAN
- A Net Capacity figure calculated from the point of view of the school
- Accurate capacity data to save time during admissions appeals
- Accurate space use data which can be used to support bids for capital funding



Access to discounted membership rates for support from the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA)

- RoSPA's Information Helpline and email with access to RoSPA's InfoCentre and its 30,000 safety information resources
- Up to three hours telephone health and safety consultancy per annum
- Termly *Safety in Education* journal which includes the latest updates on safety legislation, case studies and best practice
- Email safety bulletin
- Discounts on RoSPA's extensive portfolio of safety training and advice service



Other benefits of membership include:

- Copies of *Academy* magazine each term (worth £25)
- High quality professional development (at reduced rates)
- Regular FASNA Newsletters with policy updates
- Support in responding to consultations to make your voice heard
- A commitment to support member schools to make their own links and networks



FASNA Spring Conference

Tuesday 11 March 2014, Grand Connaught Rooms, London



'An audience with...' Chris Wormald, Permanent Secretary for the Department of Education

Governments change and politicians move: Permanent Secretaries are permanent. Join us to comment on DfE strategies and its performance indicators.



The Rt Hon Lord Baker of Dorking CH, Chairman of Baker Dearing Educational Trust, former Secretary of State for Education and Science

Lord Baker revolutionised education through the National Curriculum, City Technology Colleges and grant-maintained status. He now leads the University Technical Colleges initiative, a unique bringing together of schools, universities and business to develop the future skills that will be needed in industry.



Peter Lauener, Chief Executive of the Education Funding Agency

Peter will hold a funding surgery for all members.



Tristram Hunt MP, Shadow Secretary of State for Education

Book your place at www.fasna.org.uk

Join FASNA today!

Visit www.fasna.org.uk or contact admin@fasna.org.uk or call 0115 917 0142
FASNA membership rates remain inexpensive and competitive

Primary & Special Schools
£100 + VAT (£120) Direct Debit
or
£150 + VAT (£180) BACS or cheque

Secondary Schools
£250 + VAT (£300) Direct Debit
or
£300 + VAT (£360) BACS or cheque



NIPT gets off to a flying start

Peter Beaven on the successful launch of the National Induction Panel for Teachers



National Induction Panel for Teachers

The National Induction Panel for Teachers was established by IAA and FASNA at the request of the DfE as an alternative to Local Authority provision.

It provides robust, high-quality support for the induction of NQTs. Despite only starting in September 2013 the scheme has attracted over 240 NQTs from 73 schools across the country with many more indicating they want to join once their agreements for this academic year come to an end.

NIPT offers the chance for schools and academies to access training and support online and avoid the costs and disruption caused by staff being out of school. Too often schools have had to send staff out on NQT induction courses only to experience poor quality at great expense. Also, there are no hidden extras, such as additional payments when an NQT is struggling. The cost paid by schools is the final cost and will not be inflated by subsequent add-ons.

Members have been impressed by the quality of the scheme. The training courses run for induction coordinators in September were attended by a third of our schools. They rated the courses as excellent (84 percent) and good (16 percent).

Similarly, the online bank of documents and training videos have been well received.

“Thank you for sending though these resources,” we were told by Anne Macdonald, Assistant Head at Queen Elizabeth’s Boys School, Barnet. “I have now had time to review them all - they are very helpful and it is refreshing to see NQT induction and assessment being taken so seriously.”

Deborah Barakat, ITT coordinator, Excelsior Academy in Newcastle, said: “I have found the paperwork and notes very beneficial and feel the NQTs are well supported and ‘secure’.”

And Ian Fidler, Training Manager at The West Bridgford School, Nottingham wrote: “The level and speed of support has been exceptional. The training offered is flexible and of high quality and the resources that are provided have made the administration of the process far more incisive and streamlined. Highly recommended.”

The use of online resources means that academies have a more cost-effective alternative to traditional training. These resources can be used by academies and integrated into their own training schedule. It is this cost-effective, personalized approach that led to the Gulf English School in Qatar commissioning NIPT to support the induction of their newly-qualified staff.

Assessments are completed online and there is a direct link to the National Database. All assessments are read by the Quality Assurance Team and feedback provided. In addition, 30 percent of academies receive a Quality Assurance visit, to ensure that systems and processes are in place to support the decisions academies make about their NQT. The first of these, at University Academy in Liverpool was welcomed “... as it provided the guidelines, support and advice as to how to improve our induction process. Strengths of our practice were also highlighted which was appreciated. It was done in a thorough and professional manner with the outcomes clearly defined and shared with all participants.”

NIPT is determined to ensure the scheme provides the best structure for quality induction so that schools are able to be confident that NQTs are meeting their high expectations. Di Marshall of Violet Way Primary Academy writes that NIPT “expects a lot from NQTs. It is better than the LA if you want outstanding teachers. NIPT is rigorous and expects NQTs to reflect on their own practice on a weekly basis. This increases rigour, but maintains focus on improvement throughout, rather than being end-loaded’.

As many Local Authorities cut back on their support, and schools see the actual cost of NQT Induction exceed the initial cost of buying the LA service, NIPT will seem an obvious choice for NQT Induction in the future.

For more details of the scheme see www.nqtinduction.co.uk. We welcome any schools and academies who wish to join our scheme.



Case study:
Ormiston Maritime Academy, Grimsby

A great start for our NQTs this term and this is partly due to the systems and support we have received from NIPT. We have four NQTs: three beginning their induction year and one about to complete term two. They all have differing strengths and needs and the personalised support we have received from NIPT has ensured that these needs are met.

The support we received started with the materials that were available as soon as we had registered and logged on to their online system. These materials supported not only the NQTs but also their tutors and the NQT coordinator. It certainly made my job, as the coordinator, so much easier, especially as this was a new role for me.

A coordinators' training day, early on in the term, was timed perfectly so that an opportunity to discuss any concerns with the programme, the systems or the paperwork happened

after being given time to go through the online resources but also early enough for key actions to take place so that the programme ran smoothly.

Newsletters, emails and one-to-one discussions with Peter Beaven, chief executive officer, have ensured that we have been fully informed of the processes, deadlines and options available to us to ensure that we have supported our NQTs fully and enabled them to progress and develop as individuals.

It has been a pleasure working with this scheme and I am sure that success will continue for it and for our NQTs.

**Donna MacDonald, Assistant Principal,
Ormiston Maritime Academy**

“Just one more year...”

Governor Richard Barnard takes you on a long educational journey of autonomy – one that shows no signs of stopping any time soon ...

It all began 32 years ago in the Headteacher's office in the junior school. “I have only one application for the parent governor – the secretary of the PTA. I can't have her on the body: she is too bossy and has only her own children's interest at heart.”

So I agreed I would stand. I was amazed to win 15 votes to 10. My eldest boy played rugby for the under nines and the team had all made their dads vote for me. I planned to be a governor at the longest until my youngest, then aged one, left the

school. I'm still there now and it has been 'autonomy' that has kept me going and enjoying every minute of it.

The chair of the governing body was our local county councillor and there were at least four other local politicians, of various colours, on the governing body. Most meetings ended in debates on issues such as the merits of comprehensive education and local road safety issues.

Words such as 'teaching', 'learning', or even 'pupils' were rarely uttered. I was elected vice-chair after a year and

then our chair had the misfortune to pass away. She had been inspirational in raising the awareness of the needs of our community, a large council estate with very high levels of deprivation, and was a hard act to follow.

She had started the process of amalgamating the junior school with our feeder infant school and my first task was to complete the job. Negotiations were not easy but the process enabled me to get to know the school and especially the teachers and other members of staff.

It gave me, thanks to an inspirational Headteacher, an awareness of the vital importance of vision and strategic direction and the key role governors play in leadership. We achieved our goal and the conversion to a primary school was probably the most important change I led to benefit our pupils' education.

Our next and continuing challenge was funding. When the school was still a junior school, the Headteacher and I had a meeting with the then chair of the LA education committee. She had listened to our evidence of how the LA formula favoured small, rural schools at the expense of large urban schools. She promised us that when extra funding became available it would be allocated to larger schools in areas of high deprivation.

A year later that promise was broken, when extra funding was allocated to the small school lump sum. We looked at the option of becoming a grant maintained school. Our LA had let us down on funding. We also had established the need for nursery provision in our area but our LA again let us down: their sole nursery provision was in a leafy Cotswold town. In spite of both of us having political reservations we went to consultation on the proposal. Three of our LA governors resigned and staff had some concerns, but we addressed these. We went to a ballot of parents. In a strong Labour ward and with considerable lobbying from the politicians to vote 'no', our parents were almost unanimous in supporting the Headteacher and governors. We became autonomous.

My youngest son was then entering Year 6 and I said I would stay as chair, if elected, for a further year after his departure to embed grant maintained status. But I am still there. GM was exciting, challenging and, most importantly, beneficial to our pupils. We used our powers as an employer, land-

Surely that would be the end? No. Another new housing development and the requirement for a new primary school arose. My Headteacher saw an opportunity for a multi-academy trust

owner and our charitable status to their benefit. The leadership was exciting and rewarding, even though it caused me to fall out with my employer, the LA.

Two new classrooms, a theatre and performing arts were key to us in developing self-esteem. We retained our caretaker's bungalow (the LA was selling them off to help repair roads) and a nursery unit. We became more efficient, devising our own budgetary and financial control systems, paying suppliers more promptly and getting best value. We employed our own cook who introduced healthy eating long before Mr Oliver was even out of short trousers. We still produce our own meals and charge less than the LA, even though we pay our excellent cook at above LA rates. This was just one example of how we have developed a culture of excellence and of achieving the best in all we do based on valuing every member of the school community.

On a personal front I was thrilled to be elected as a primary governor representative on to the Grant Maintained Schools Advisory Committee (GMSAC), an organisation that has metamorphosed almost as many times as Dr Who and now is FASNA. This enhanced my interest in and understanding of education on a wider front as well keeping my finger on

the pulse, to my school's benefit. Visiting many schools to promote the benefits of autonomy was also most rewarding.

A general election and the retirement of a Headteacher were the next two challenges. A new government and the move to foundation status was seamless, but how to replace an exceptional Headteacher whose vision and drive had been key to our success was a crucial step in maintaining and building on our progress. I again agreed to stay for another year. We were lucky. Through an exhaustive process and knowing what we were looking for, we found the right person for the school. Fifteen years later we are still here, although I am now repeating the process to find his successor. We have enhanced and extended our success in all we do.

The next structural change to improve provision was to move to a trust school status. Again we were one of the first primaries in the country to do this. Our new partners brought expertise and advice into areas where support was needed. For example, we asked Barnardo's to help in supporting pre-school provision and family work, and the Human Givens Institute to give everyone in the school community a fresh approach to counselling and support.

1300 UK schools now teach Cambridge

963 state schools teach Cambridge IGCSE. Cambridge IGCSEs count towards the Ebac and 21 subjects are approved by Ofqual.

150 schools teach Cambridge Pre-U. Available in 26 subjects, Cambridge Pre-U offers a tried and tested alternative to A Levels with a rewarding UCAS tariff.

Take control of your curriculum



www.cie.org.uk/igcseuk
www.cie.org.uk/cambridgepreu
Call 01223 553554



Excellence in education



Most important was everyone signing up to our 'core beliefs' as detailed in our trust deeds. This has been crucial in providing consistency from everyone but also in creating 'ownership' of what we believe in. As a governor I felt even more part of what we were and the role even more rewarding.

As a trust we were approached by a parents group who were looking for support in their bid to win the contract to build and run a primary school on their new and expanding housing development. Our trust deeds allowed us a wider educational brief and the Headteacher and I could see mutual benefits so we agreed. We won the bid and six years later I am proud to be a trustee and governor of a new primary school in a stunning building which has been rated as 'good' by Ofsted within a year of opening.

The only areas of our work where we were not able to be autonomous were the curriculum and the monies being held by LAs for central services. We looked enviously at the freedoms being given to type one academies. Through my membership of FASNA I was aware of

the drive to allow 'outstanding' primaries to have academy status. Following another change of government and an 'outstanding' Ofsted outcome, we became an academy. The freedoms have allowed us to provide a stimulating curriculum matched to the particular needs of our pupils in line with our core beliefs, which have now been incorporated in our academy trust deeds. We have saved on central costs with more resources directed into the classroom. As governors we sharpened up our procedures with even more focus on school improvement based on effective self-evaluation (see the case study in FASNA's book *Effective Governance*).

Surely that would be the end? No. Another new housing development and the requirement for a new primary school arose. My Headteacher saw an opportunity for a multi-academy trust. "Why?" It was my usual question back to him. "Where does it fit in with our trust objectives?" His answer about staff development and succession planning convinced me. My enthusiasm and drive had been captured again. The new school opened this term with an

Executive Headteacher and we have pooled resources by having only one business manager, SENCO, etc, allowing for promotion for our promising middle managers.

The ever-increasing opportunities to use the benefits of autonomy to improve outcomes for pupils has kept me enthused and rewarded. I am now chairman of the board of a MAT. I guess I may stay a year to make sure the new Executive Head is settled in...

Richard Barnard is chair of governors and trustees of Robinswood Primary Academy and a governor and trustee of Coopers Edge trust school, both in Gloucester. He was an Ofsted inspector for 17 years and is now a national leader of governance. He has been a member of FASNA for over 20 years

FASNA's *Effective Governance* book is available now, to both members and non-members See below for more details and for further professional development opportunities

Effective Governance

This new guide takes a practical approach, with key questions, key actions and key information supported by case studies of good practice from a wide variety of schools. It provides support and guidance in undertaking the responsibilities of governance.

Each section links to the new Ofsted criteria, provides an understanding of 'effectiveness' and a framework of questions and actions which can be used to review current practice and focus professional development as a governing body.

To order your print copy, please email admin@fasna.org.uk or call 0115 917 0142. Print version cost £10, e-reader version via Amazon, cost £7.50.

www.fasna.org.uk/publications



Professional development

FASNA also offer high-quality professional development at reduced rates.

Our seminars address the distinct responsibilities of academies, foundation and VA schools. The delivery team includes governors, headteachers and representatives of the Stone King legal team, bringing a unique breadth of expertise to all events and an extensive experience for delegates to draw upon.

The range of seminars includes: admissions, admission appeals, thinking about academy status?, effective governance, HR management and employment law, the role of the academy company secretary. They are aimed at professionals, including governors, in all phases of school and provide depth and breadth of knowledge, a full pack of supporting paperwork and opportunities for discussion.

We also offer bespoke training packages in schools.

Contact our team to discuss your needs in more detail email: admin@fasna.org.uk or call 0115 917 0142.

www.fasna.org.uk/events

The challenges of performance-related pay

Jean Boyle of Stone King pinpoints the potential hazards and pitfalls post-September 2014



Unless you have been living in a cave for the last two years (which, when faced with reading yet another set of regulations, is not entirely unappealing) you will undoubtedly be aware that September 2013 saw the last round of incremental pay increases for teaching staff based purely on length of service. Pay decisions to take effect in September 2014 will be based on the teacher's performance and will need to be supported by robust evidence that the teacher has achieved the required standards throughout the year.

Most schools should already have an effective appraisal process in place. However, schools will need to review this procedure to ensure that it is fit for purpose in the new regime. In particular, schools will need to ensure that there are clear processes in place for setting and standardising objectives. This is certainly a challenge for schools and senior leaders in particular. In order to ensure that objectives are fair and reasonable across the organisation, Headteachers are likely to take an active role in ensuring consistency by moderating those objectives. This is inevitably going to place a significant administrative burden on already overstretched Heads.

That said, although this is a likely scenario in 2014 and possibly 2015, the natural progression of the decision-making process on pay is to involve middle leaders in taking on some of the administrative burden. This is particularly likely to be the case in larger schools. Senior leaders could moderate objectives on a departmental level as well as carrying out appraisals and making initial recommendations regarding pay. Schools should be conscious that middle leaders may require some training to prepare them for this particular level of responsibility. Inevitably in some schools the dynamic of the leader/teacher relationship is likely to alter as a consequence of this change and schools should be conscious of this and prepare those in leadership roles for the resulting challenges. Furthermore, middle leaders should be made aware that one of their own performance measures will be how well they have performed in carrying out this role.

The DfE guidance which accompanies the most recent version

of the School Teachers Pay and Conditions Document (2013) indicates the type of performance measures it expects schools to use in assessing teachers' performance to fuel discussions about pay. It suggests that schools could use either 'absolute performance measures', 'relative performance measures' or a combination of both. Absolute measures indicate how well a teacher has performed against set targets. For example, have x percent of the teacher's class achieved GCSE A to C? Relative performance measures look at how well individual teachers have done to meet their targets based on the performance of other teachers at the school. The DfE suggests that if schools are using relative performance measures they could carry out a kind of ranking exercise and award additional pay progression to the top-performing teachers. In our experience, although Headteachers think that this would be a pleasing and distracting exercise to undertake, they also appreciate that should news of the approach reach the staffroom, civil war may ensue.

It is likely that when setting objectives school leaders will take into account lesson observations, Ofsted inspection reports, feedback from parents and students as well as pupil performance, amongst others. The DfE advice suggests similar benchmarks against which to measure objectives and also suggests considering a teacher's wider contribution to the work of the school and taking improvements in practice into account, such as improvements in behaviour management or lesson planning.

In addition to adopting and amending appropriate policies and setting suitable objectives, schools will need to ensure that the individuals who have been asked to monitor performance (again likely in due course to be middle leaders) are set clear markers and understand how to measure performance fairly against these.

One of the key challenges for schools is likely to be how it deals with teachers who are failing to meet clear and fair objectives that have been set for them. Any issues should be raised as soon as they arise to avoid situations where teachers are refused pay progression that had been expected. It is for this

reason that schools should be undertaking mid-term appraisals (usually scheduled for January/February) whilst addressing key capability issues throughout the year. It is evident that the move away from incremental pay progression towards performance related pay will put more pressure on schools to deal with capability issues. However, schools will need to consider carefully how they define 'capability issues'. There is much debate amongst school leaders as to when to deal with capability on a formal footing. A key question in this context is whether an average performance is good enough to warrant pay progression or should result in commencing capability proceedings. Inevitably schools will vary their approach to this but it is clear that the present government's agenda is to deal with underperformance in teachers in a rigorous manner.

Schools should be aware that Ofsted has committed to reviewing pay decisions as part of their analysis of the school and want to see clear evidence that a decision to give a pay increase is supported.

With the increased discretion afforded to schools in the new regime comes increased risk. Schools need to be aware of the potential pitfalls in determining pay progression. In particular, lawyers are sounding loud warning bells about the risk of discriminatory decisions concerning pay. Thankfully in 2013 schools are not widely renowned for behaving in a discriminatory manner towards their staff. However, in the context of determining pay awards there is the potential to unwittingly get into difficulties in relation to discrimination, particularly when considering what pay progression to award to teachers who have been absent from work for the majority or all of the school year on maternity or sickness leave.

It is the nuances within these scenarios that are a potential danger for schools. It is generally known that teachers who are genuinely absent on long-term sick leave (for example, because they are undergoing cancer treatment) are disabled and therefore should not be treated less favourably due to their absence.

However, when faced with the a teacher who has had capability issues (but the school has not dealt with these formally) and who begins a period of sick leave due to work-related stress, the school may be less sympathetic, and decisions on pay may be fuelled by this. This is a potential risk area, as the individual may be afforded the same protection from less favourable treatment as the teacher suffering with cancer. In examples like this, it is easy to see a situation where schools are acting intuitively on decisions regarding pay progression, but are inadvertently leaving the school exposed to significant discrimination complaints.

The regime of performance-related pay implemented by the new School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document is likely to prove to be the most significant change to date as to how teachers' pay is determined. However, it is also clear that the impact goes further than merely how pay awards are made. There is cultural shift towards teachers being held to account for their performance and more involvement of senior leaders in schools in constant support of teaching staff to strive to deliver the required standards. Schools need to adapt quickly to this cultural shift in anticipation that there will be further significant changes on the horizon.

For further information please contact
 Jean Boyle at Stone King on
 01225 326745 or
jeanboyle@stoneking.co.uk



One of the key challenges for schools is likely to be how it deals with teachers who are failing to meet clear and fair objectives that have been set for them. Any issues should be raised as soon as they arise to avoid situations where teachers are refused pay progression that had been expected

Are we ready?

Jean Gross looks at the new Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs, to be implemented from September 2014



In the spring the new special educational needs Code of Practice will be published, ready for implementation in September 2014.

I will summarise the new requirements affecting schools and more importantly the key shifts in 'thinking' we are seeing in successive iterations of the draft Code. These shifts are twofold. First, families are being given more control over decision-making. Second, responsibility for children and young people with SEN is being moved away from SENCOs to class and subject teachers.

The key changes

- School Action and School Action Plus are being replaced with one stage: SEN Support in schools.
- Social, mental and emotional health needs are replacing the categories of behavioural, emotional and social difficulties category.
- Education, Health and Care plans (EHCPs) will replace Statements and take the young person from birth to the age of 25.
- Option of a personal budget for families and young people with an EHCP
- Health and Local Authorities will jointly commission services.
- Schools must work with local authorities to agree a 'Local Offer' of SEN services.

What's not changing

In an era of constant upheaval in education, it is reassuring to know that some things are not changing. The definition of SEN remains the same in the new legislation, as do the rules on admission. Schools, including academies, cannot refuse admission to a pupil with SEN but without a statement or education, health and care plan because they feel unable to meet the pupil's needs. The general principle remains that learners with SEN should be educated in mainstream schools unless this is incompatible with the family's wishes, or incompatible with the efficient education of other pupils. Another unchanging requirement, somewhat surprising in view of the loosening of rules on qualified teacher status in other parts of the system, is

that schools must have a SENCO who must be a qualified teacher working at the school; if they are new to the role they must achieve the National SENCO Award within three years.

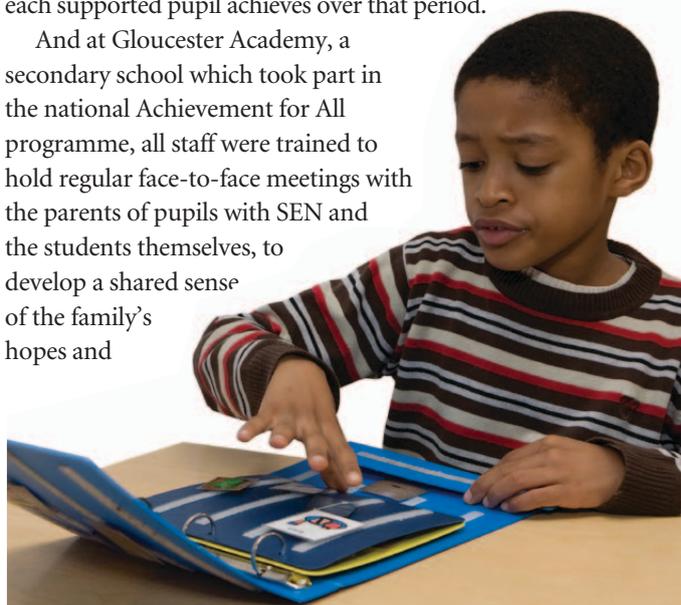
The shift in responsibility

The draft Code replaces previous guidance on Individual Education Plans with a simple assess/plan/do/review cycle and emphasises that class and subject teachers should be responsible for the doing and reviewing stages, with support from the SENCO.

This represents a major challenge for schools, where staff have often become accustomed to handing over responsibility for pupils with SEN to the SENCO and to teaching assistants assigned to individuals or groups. But it is possible to meet the challenge.

At Netherfield Primary school in Nottinghamshire, for example, teachers identify pupils who are making less than expected progress every half term. They then make bids to the SENCO for a short-term allocation of TA time to work with these pupils. The class teacher is responsible for planning, monitoring and evaluating the work of the TA over a six-week period, and he or she is also responsible for the average points score gains that each supported pupil achieves over that period.

And at Gloucester Academy, a secondary school which took part in the national Achievement for All programme, all staff were trained to hold regular face-to-face meetings with the parents of pupils with SEN and the students themselves, to develop a shared sense of the family's hopes and



aspirations for the student, the barriers to achieving them, and the key goals for the student which everyone would work to achieve over the next term.

Targets and strategies

Class and subject teachers and form tutors have often been sidelined from taking ownership of the progress of pupils with SEN by Individual Education Plans (IEPs) – written for more pupils, and with more targets on them, than they can possibly remember. There are better alternatives to IEPs. I've detailed them in my book *Beating Bureaucracy In Special Educational Needs*.

Class and subject teachers, for example, should set appropriately differentiated curricular targets for all pupils, and monitor progress against them. On top of this, with additional training, class teachers and form tutors can work with the pupil to develop personal, social and emotional targets for aspects not covered by the academic curriculum.

Once targets have been set, strategies for achieving them should be part of class and subject teachers' everyday planning. My *Beating Bureaucracy* book contains strategy banks for every type of SEN, which can be electronically highlighted by the SENCO to indicate a small number of classroom strategies particularly relevant for an individual pupil, for teachers to cut and paste into their own planning.

Engagement with parents

Greater engagement with parents, and greater control for parents in decisions about their child, is a key theme in the new SEN legislation and guidance. This means having different sorts of conversations with them, conversations that are more about listening than telling. The Achievement for All termly 'structured conversation' with families, undertaken by class teachers and form tutors, models this shift. The aim of these conversations is to listen to the parent's point of view, to understand what they see as the key barriers to their child's learning, to what they think has worked well in the past, their hopes or their child and the provision they would like to see in place.

The approach has been highly successful. External evaluation found that the percentage of Achievement for All schools reporting excellent relationships with parents rose from 12 percent to 48 percent. Pupils make outstanding academic progress. Last year, an average APS gain of 4.2 compared to 2.8 for all pupils with SEN nationally in English, and 3.8 APS compared to 2.5 in maths.

The approach is one way of meeting the new draft code of practice requirement that: 'Schools should meet parents at least termly to set clear goals, discuss the activities and support that will help achieve them, review progress and identify responsibilities of parent, pupil and school. The meeting should usually be led by a class teacher or form tutor, supported by the SENCO.'

Freeing up teachers to hold termly one-hour meetings with

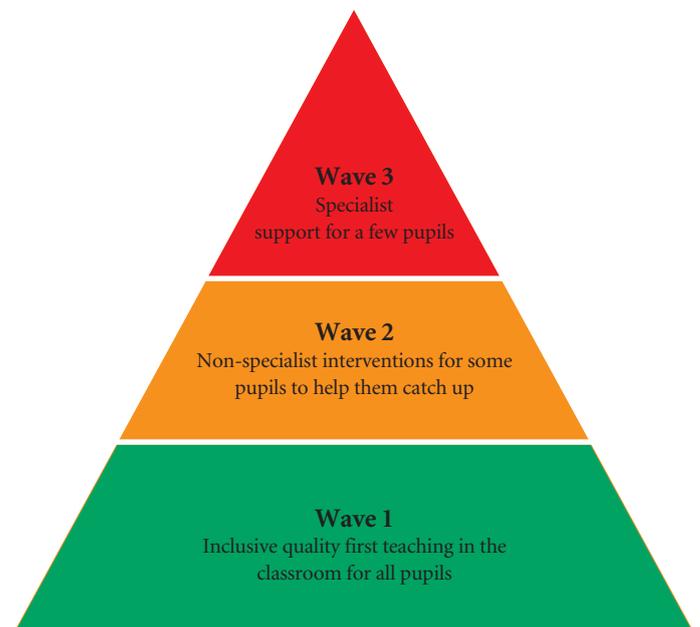
parents is clearly a management challenge, but schools have found creative solutions. Many secondary schools have found that they fit well with academic tutoring days. At Cotgrave Candleby Lane Primary Academy, teachers were freed up from writing end of year reports, which are now produced using an IT programme, in exchange for holding more face-to-face meetings with parents.

Who really has SEN?

The ideas embodied in the new SEN systems are clearly only feasible in most schools if we identify a rather smaller number of pupils as having SEN than we have in the past. Gone are the days, I think, when we can say (as teachers did in the 2013 schools census) that almost a quarter of boys have SEN, or identify SEN in such high numbers in summer-born pupils. As the Lamb Enquiry pointed out, SEN is sometimes 'unhelpfully collated' with falling behind.

For me, the way forward is to make good use of the 'three-wave' model of provision (see below) and to identify only those children needing Wave 3 support as having SEN. This will help differentiate between those children who need help to catch up with their peers (better Wave 1 classroom teaching and/or Wave 2 intervention programmes) and those who need, in the words of the draft Code, 'a more tailored approach to address a specific SEN'.

Jean Gross CBE is an independent SEN expert. She is the former government communication champion for children. She is a founding trustee of The Early Intervention Foundation. Her book, *Beating Bureaucracy in Special Educational Needs*, is published by Routledge/nasen





Outstanding catering for extraordinary schools



As an independent, family-owned company with 20 years of experience, Harrison Catering Services understands that every school is unique. Working in partnership, we create a food service that meets your needs and aspirations.

Our catering teams are skilled in the art of transforming fresh, seasonal, responsibly-sourced ingredients into nutritious home-cooked meals that help pupils achieve in the classroom, on the sports field and in life.

For more information, contact academies@harrisoncatering.co.uk or visit our website.

www.harrisoncatering.co.uk

HARRISON
food with thought



Developing teacher expertise in SEN

David Bartram says teachers and school staff need to drive improvement around special educational needs and disabilities



Since 2009 I have visited over 100 SEN departments in schools at all stages of the school improvement journey, from ‘outstanding’ Teaching Schools to those that have been placed in special measures.

Teacher expertise in SEN varies enormously across schools and it is no coincidence that many of the most successful schools prioritise teacher development in this area. There also appears to be a correlation between the quality of a school’s SEN provision and the expertise of its teachers; the better the provision, the more developed the teacher expertise.

‘Outstanding’ schools understand the importance of developing teacher expertise in SEN. Excellent provision for pupils with additional needs begins in the classroom. Empowering teachers with the appropriate knowledge, skills and resource is fundamental to ensuring that all pupils make good progress. Additionally, developing teacher knowledge in SEN has a positive impact on whole school behaviour and can often improve how a school communicates with parents and carers.

Few schools would deny that SEN is a whole-school responsibility and that developing effective provision requires a whole school approach (SEN CoP 1994). The Indicative Code of Practice goes further by reinforcing the strategic role of the SENCO and placing the responsibility for SEN pupils firmly in the hands of the classroom teacher. The NASEN ‘Every Teacher’ campaign highlights the important message that every teacher is accountable for every pupil’s progress.

Yet, for a large number of schools, establishing whole-school accountability for all pupils is some way from reality. There are however, several characteristics of schools where teachers readily embrace strategies and techniques to support the learning of pupils with SEN.

Schools with ‘outstanding’ SEN provision ensure that leaders of SEN are credible. These leaders have a track record of success, often in mainstream teaching, and they understand the realities of teaching challenging mainstream classes. ‘Outstanding’ SEN provision is seen as a partnership between mainstream and specialist staff and this credibility frequently leads to collaboration, joint planning and sharing of knowledge.

Leaders of SEN in these schools are invariably approachable, knowledgeable and communicate the needs of pupils with SEN effectively. They use pupil data and information from observations and learning walks to identify teachers that would benefit from support from the SEN department. They share relevant and practical strategies and they are careful with their use of language. They use language that empowers teachers, rather than suggesting that teachers are not sufficiently expert to meet the needs of pupils with SEN in their classrooms.

Schools with a high degree of teacher expertise in SEN ensure that SEN has a high profile in the school and that provision is not perceived as a ‘bolt-on’ extra. There are high expectations of both pupils and staff. Provision is placed at the heart of the school and the work of the SEN department is transparent for all to see.

Successful schools invest in teacher development. They ensure that the SEN department takes a central role in the training and induction for new staff and they use external expertise where appropriate. The SEN department also plays a key role in CPD for current staff. It is crucial that this training is of high quality, and schools with ‘outstanding’ SEN provision often develop on-site SEN expertise, if necessary pooling their resources to develop provision with other local schools (including special schools) rather than relying on external consultants. This helps to increase the level of SEN expertise within the school, allowing teachers to access information and strategies quickly.

Developing teacher expertise in SEN is the responsibility of all school leaders. Where this is being done successfully, it is clear that the benefits are being felt by all pupils, including those with SEN.

David Bartram is director of SEN for London Leadership Strategy and assistant Headteacher at Lampton School, a Teaching School in Hounslow, London.

London Leadership Strategy is a not-for-profit organisation run by experienced Headteachers to empower schools to take forward school-to-school improvement

Redefining work experience

The Industrial Cadets programme helps provide students with the skills and motivation to seize employment opportunities

In January 2013, Prince Charles launched the national roll-out of Industrial Cadets, managed by educational charity EDT. This initiative is designed for secondary school students to give them an understanding of industry in their local area and the careers opportunities that those industries offer. Industrial Cadets also aims to raise young people's aspirations and to help them develop key skills valued by potential employers.

Industrial Cadets had been conceived two years previously on a visit by the Prince to a Tata Steel works on Teeside. Prince Charles observed that the facilities and personnel available at the works could be used to make local children more aware of industry and this led to further discussions and the piloting of Industrial Cadets (a name suggested by the Prince) by Tata Steel with schools in the North East. The national roll-out has been supported by the Department for Communities and Local Government.

A year after the national rollout, Industrial Cadets has now been established with many of the country's largest industrial companies such as Airbus, GSK, BAE Systems, Nissan and Müller and is the fastest growing initiative aiming to provide students with the skills development and work experience they need for careers in industry. Indeed, Industrial Cadets can be described as a redefinition of work experience, with students tackling a much wider range of activities than traditional work experience often allows, still within tightly defined time periods and a structured engagement framework.

What are Industrial Cadets?

Industrial Cadets engages students with local companies for a series of activities and experiences. A Cadetship is accessible at bronze, silver or gold level, representing 20, 30 or 50 hours of activity respectively. The structure of Industrial Cadets is flexible and designed to fit in with the needs of the schools and companies involved. The activity must comply with a framework of competencies and skills and the different levels of awards will involve a different mix of components in the time available. Programme components will include company visits, project and

problem solving work, sector research, presentations and the opportunity to interact with industry role models. Skills and competencies that are developed include creativity and innovation, communication and collaboration, critical thinking, careers awareness and motivation, digital skills and personal and interpersonal skills.

The Industrial Cadet activities that have been undertaken in 2013 have all been at bronze level and have involved a range of different methods of delivery. Some organisations, such as Müller, have modified existing STEM



inspiration activity to meet the Industrial Cadets framework, while others, such as tableware manufacturer Steelite International in Stoke, have established an eight-week programme from a blank sheet of paper (see case study below). Others such as AkzoNobel, and Nissan have established more intensive five-day programmes, enhancing existing work experience practice.

What is involved for the school and what are the benefits?

Schools that join the Industrial Cadets network commit to providing one or more link teacher whose responsibilities including selecting students, supervising and supporting students during the programme and evaluation their progress.

A school's existing links with local companies can be brought within the flexible Industrial Cadets structure by engaging with the framework approach.

The benefits for the school are numerous as Industrial Cadets can help the school to create and maintain partnerships with industry as part of a recognised national programme while at the same time:

- providing personal development opportunities for students;
- enriching the STEM curriculum;
- changing perceptions about industry and manufacturing;
- helping students make informed

decisions about study and career pathways;

- boosting employability skills and CVs;
- delivering continuing professional development and accreditation for teachers.

Andrew Stanier, Principal of the Co-operative Academy of Stoke on Trent says:

“By taking part in Industrial Cadets the students gain experience of applying the learning that has taken place in the Academy in real life situations. They also have an understanding of the wide range of opportunities that are available within local companies, rather than the limited view that a company just has one employment opportunity. The programme helps to improve students' skills and raises students' aspirations by placing them in situations where they work with students from another school, and with representatives of the companies. By engaging Year 9 students in the project it provides a motivational impetus as they prepare for their GCSE courses.”

Where now for Industrial Cadets?

Guided by a Leadership Group of senior managers from the major participating companies Industrials Cadets is positioned to become the leading business/education linking initiative in the UK. It raises students' aspirations, providing them with vital insights into their local industry and

enabling companies to help inspire and motivate students into studying the subjects which will help them to secure the jobs that are available in their local industries.

Rapid acceleration of the national roll-out is planned and it is intended that in a short time having 'Industrial Cadet' on a student's CV will be as well recognised by potential employers as the Duke of Edinburgh Award. The tiered bronze, silver, gold structure allows schools and companies to offer students either a progression of experience or a single programme suitable for their age and academic stage.

A considerable skills gap is forecast in STEM industries in the UK, the very industries that are earmarked as providing future growth and employment. Industrial Cadets provides a method by which companies and schools can work together to help students gain the skills and motivation that will enable them to seize the employment opportunities which will continue to be available in the industries on their doorstep.

Penny Tysoe is project director for education charity EDT. More information is available at www.industrialcadets.org.uk or telephone 01707 871 520

Case study: Steelite International

Twelve Industrial Cadets from Stoke schools worked on an eight-week project with Steelite International, a manufacturer of award-winning tabletop products for the international hospitality and catering industry. The students were set a project to develop a mural that would decorate a large, plain, outside wall within the Steelite works. The artwork was to reflect the company, past and present, and provide a positive visual experience for the workforce and for visitors to the site.

The students' project, which became known as 'Art on a Plate', involved many stages which enabled them to understand the practical aspects of devising and fulfilling any creative project. The project also linked learning about healthy eating with tableware design and production.

In and around working on their project, the students had the opportunity to learn more about Steelite and its operations. This included a presentation about the company, a factory tour and meeting the manager of key areas of the business to gain a better understanding of aspects such as production, creative decoration and marketing communications.

Initial teambuilding exercises enabled students from different schools to learn how to work together in teams, a skill which proved very necessary as the project developed.

The project continued over the ensuing weeks with the students using brainstorming to scope the project and discussing their ideas with company mentors before putting together a formal report and presenting their conclusions to senior Steelite management.

Building on a framework

Achievement for All is a national and international transferable and replicable model for parent and carer engagement, writes Professor Sonia Blandford



All teachers, leaders and support professionals need to conspire to provide a system where the importance of education is understood and valued by all pupils and their parents

In October 2013, Achievement for All 3As was one of seven organisations selected to present at the prestigious Parent and Community Engagement Conference in New York.

Shortlisted from 80, it was the only non-American organisation to make the list. Organised by the New York Office of the Public Advocate, the conference was presided over by current Mayor elect Bill de Blasio. It coincided with the mayoral election campaign and de Blasio's promise of greater 'parental voice' in the New York public (state) school system. The 'No Child Left Behind' Act (2001) had given greater choice to parents across America, but partnerships or collaborative approaches between schools and parents has been largely piecemeal. As Public Advocate and mayor elect, Bill de Blasio promised, New York parents will have greater involvement in their schools.

The conference aimed to present a set of effective, evidence-based parent/family engagement programmes which could be adapted to improve both family and community engagement. As founder and CEO of Achievement for All 3As, myself and Melanie Warnes, school principal and trustee of the charity, presented Achievement for All, the flagship schools programme of the charity, to representatives from government, universities and the voluntary sector, including de Blasio.

Our focus – Parent and Carer Engagement: increasing results in reading, writing and maths – addressed the centrality of the programme to the reform of special education needs in England within the context of the Lamb Inquiry (DCSF, 2009) and wider UK government policy.

We considered the impact of the programme in schools in England and key facts leading into broader social impact assessment and its transferability. Other presenters, from across America, addressed parent teacher home visits; community organising; community learning centres; meeting immigrant needs and funding provided to parent/family engagement. The evidence-based programmes and other outcomes from the conference have been presented to the Mayor's office and will inform the Public Education Agenda going forward.

Profound impact

Achievement for All is based on the belief that teachers and school leaders can have a profound impact on all pupils and young people by developing their achievement, access and aspirations. This means having high expectations of what pupils can achieve, working in partnership with parents to set targets for learning and track progress, and increasing the range of learning opportunities available to them. While an effective teacher increases

access and raises aspirations as a means to improving achievement, an inspirational teacher improves achievement in a way that changes pupils' aspirations, and in doing so improves their life chances by securing access to continued achievement and self-fulfilment.

In England, against a backdrop of low aspirations, poor access to learning and a bleak future for the 20 percent who leave school without basic literacy and numeracy, Achievement for All has shown outcomes beyond expectations when aspiration, access and achievement are applied to all learners. The charity has transformed the lives of vulnerable children, young people and their families. All teachers, leaders and support professionals need to conspire to provide a system where the importance of education is understood and valued by all pupils and their parents.

Since its inception in 2011, Achievement for All 3As, primarily through its Achievement for All schools programme, has had a profound impact on the way schools in England engage with pupils with special educational needs and disabilities and other vulnerable and disadvantaged learners, including those in receipt of free school meals and looked-after children through Pupil Premium funding.

Currently in around 2000 schools (primary, secondary, special schools

SPORTING NATION

FREE CPD
place with every subscription

Sporting Nation is a cloud based tool which helps organise all school sports and other activities, and assess PE classes. It integrates seamlessly with your school MIS and VLE. **Have you signed up yet?**

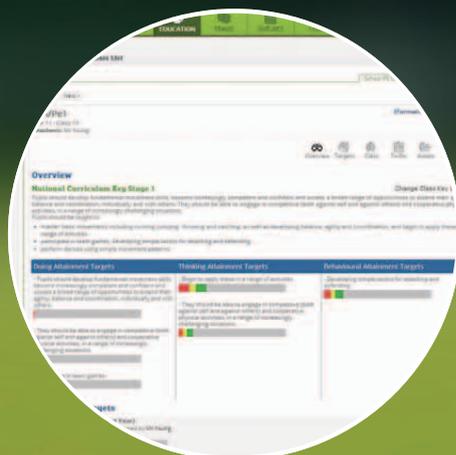
PLAN, MANAGE TEAM & PERSONAL FIXTURES



SET-UP, MANAGE LEAGUES & LADDERS



NEW *WITHOUT LEVELS* PE ASSESSMENT APP



BUILD A LIFE RECORD OF SPORTING ACHIEVEMENTS



Visit SportingNation.com/free-trial to start your free trial now!

Use this code:

SPORT-88

In partnership with:



and academies and pupil referral units), its 2012/2013 outcomes validated by PwC, the programme's independent evaluators, showed that the majority of the targeted pupils working with Achievement for All exceeded progress in reading writing and maths than national outcomes for all SEND pupils by 50 percent. The programme's top-performing schools completing the first year of the programme achieved 230 percent to 325 percent higher than national results for special education needs pupils (for 2011/12 between 6.50 and 9.15 Average Point Scores in English and maths). Overall, schools reported a 17% improvement in parent and carer engagement with teachers and with parent and carer engagement in children's learning. In addition there were also improvements in pupil attendance of nine percent and in pupil behaviour of eight percent. To date, the Achievement for All programme, a key part of government educational Special Educational Needs reform through the Children and Families Bill and Draft Code of Practice has reached over 77,000 targeted pupils', 69,000 parents and carers, 9000 school leaders and 25,000 teachers.

'Structure, clarity and direction'

The programme provides a framework for schools to focus on aspirations, access and achievement. Its effectiveness lies in the particular way the four interdependent elements of the programme (leadership, teaching and learning, structured conversations between parents/carers and teachers and wider opportunities) come together in the context of the school supported by an external coach. One school principal has commented that it is the 'structure, clarity and direction' of the programme that has enabled them to narrow the gap for their pupils with SEND. Parent and carer engagement through structured conversations continue to be an outstanding success. A principal of a primary school believes that the planning and the way structured conversations supported and delivered

There has been a real impact with parents. One pupil increased 5APS this term since the involvement of parents

enabled their teachers to develop more personalised approaches to teaching and learning. This type of action has also strengthened parent-school involvement, as reflected in the following comment made by a parent: 'My child is really inspired by school at the moment. I know particular activities have been set up with him in mind. I am truly grateful for this and the hard work which has been put in place to make this happen.'

The impact is profound, as the Headteacher of one primary school commented: 'There has been a real impact with parents. One pupil increased 5APS this term since the involvement of parents. The whole scheme is tied into work on teaching and learning developments with whole staff.'

The charity Achievement for All 3As, with its vision of a more equitable educational field for vulnerable and disadvantaged children and young people, has developed a number of partnerships. Through its focus on the vulnerable and disadvantaged the programme has had a significant impact on whole school improvement increasing outcomes in primary schools by two points above national outcomes (8 to 6) and by 27 percent in GCSE outcomes. Achievement for All 3As was recently awarded the Education Investor 'School Improvement Service' Award.

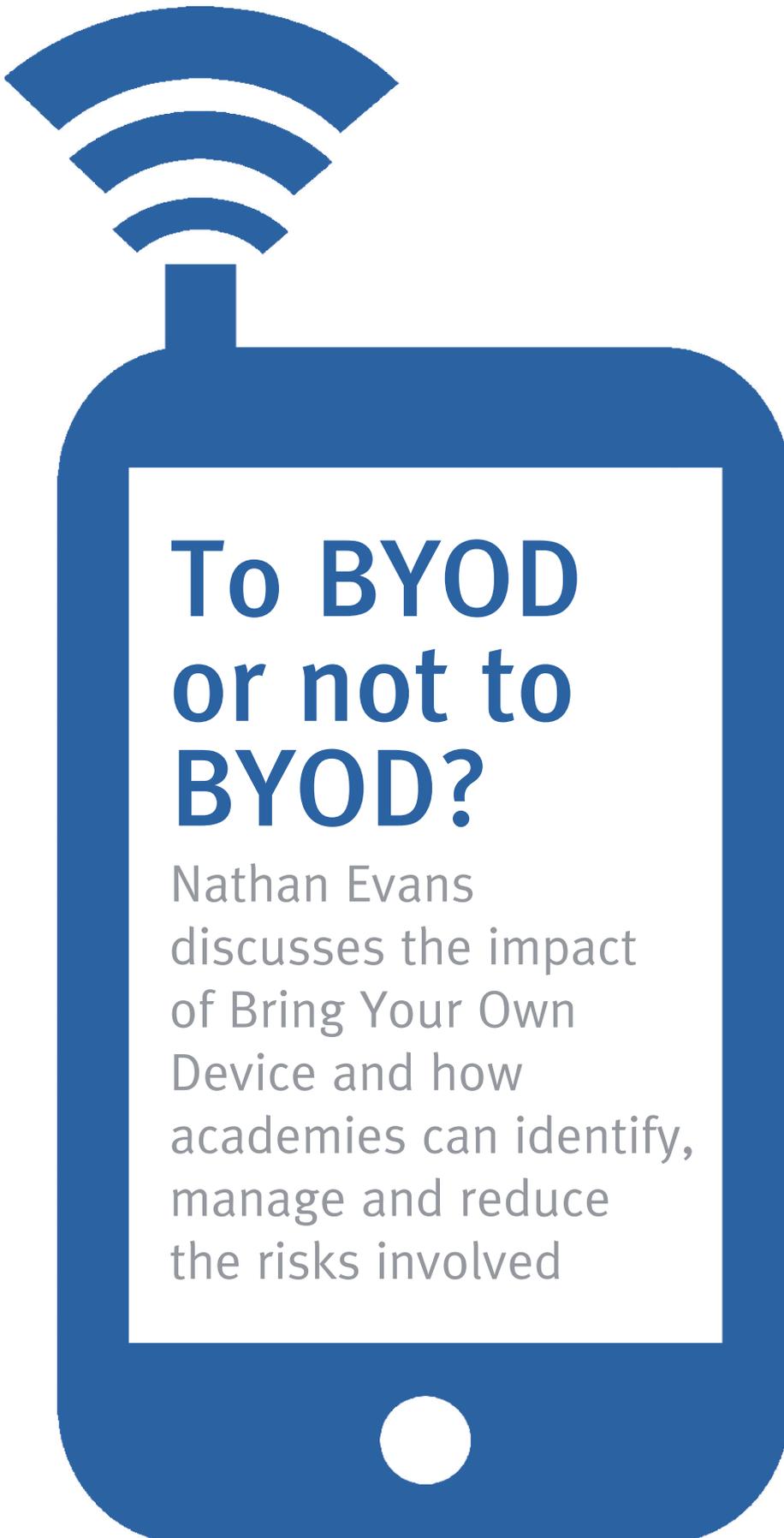
Internationally Achievement for All 3As has developed educational partnerships in Norway, Lithuania, Latvia and America. In America, the Parental Engagement Partnership Programme (PEPP) developed in partnership with GEMS Education and launched earlier in

the year, is making inroads in enabling schools to improve their engagement with parents. The New York City Department of Education is encouraging PEPP in their City schools. The 18-month PEPP Pilot, involving 50 schools within a number of states, has a particular focus on parent carer engagement set against previous experiences and has had demonstrable impact as reported by John Hopkins University.

Working in partnership with schools to deliver the Achievement for All framework is proven to have an impact of teaching and learning on pupils irrespective of a school's governance, structure, funding source or admissions policy. Since 2011, Achievement for All 3As has succeeded in implementing programmes in national and international settings. The charity invites Local Authorities, academy chains and schools to work with them.

References

- Blandford S. and Knowles, C. (2013) *Achievement for All: Raising Aspirations, Access and Achievement*, London: Bloomsbury
- John Hopkins Report (2013) cited in *Achievement for All 3As: Raising Aspirations, Access and Achievement, Impact Report 2012/13*, Newbury: Achievement for All 3As (available at: www.afa3as.org.uk)
- Lamb, B. (2009) *Lamb Inquiry: Special educational needs and parental confidence*, Nottingham: DCSF
- PwC (2013) *Impact Analysis Report*, London: PwC
- US Government (2001) *No Child Left Behind Act*



To BYOD or not to BYOD?

Nathan Evans
discusses the impact
of Bring Your Own
Device and how
academies can identify,
manage and reduce
the risks involved

A matter appearing on most, if not all, school agendas at the moment is the ICT budget. The tide of technological change is relentless, as old devices are swept away and instantly replaced with the next generation. To put the scale of this change into perspective, a market-leading technology giant recently hosted an event where it was said that '90 percent of all the world's data has been created in the last two years alone'.

Keeping pace with such unprecedented levels of technological advancement has to be one of the greatest challenges facing our schools now and in the foreseeable future.

As the proliferation of personal devices (such as tablets, mobile phones, laptops and wearable devices) continues to grow, young people can be forgiven for feeling that they have stepped back in time when being asked to use their school's resources. Those resources may be adequate or fit for purpose, but unless they are current, students are unlikely to agree.

Maintaining that currency poses a difficult challenge for all schools, as it can only be achieved by spending more money, time and resources. Some of which may simply not be available. Schools are also beginning to see the costs associated with the seemingly never-ending cycle of desktop refreshes, licence fees and network upgrades as unsustainable. So, it is unsurprising that many schools are now investigating the possibility of relieving some of these pressures by allowing students to use their own personal devices, rather than continuing to upgrade their existing technology.

The case for ...

The school may be able to take advantage of some of the savings associated with a move to a BYOD environment, such as reduced overheads for hardware support and maintenance. Added to which, banning students from using their own personal devices in school may already be nearly impossible to monitor or achieve. Students no doubt see the benefits of using the most current technology available to them and expect their school to be open to a certain level of change.

Caution required?

BYOD is a hotly debated topic among many IT professionals, with many arguing that any savings made are more likely than not to be immediately negated by the need to upgrade the school's existing infrastructure (including, for example, networking equipment and data servers). Much of the rationale for this view is that the sheer number of new devices added to the school's IT environment will quickly overwhelm it. In these circumstances, the school would potentially need to invest in upgrades to the entire network in order to meet the increased traffic.

Resources

Some also suggest that the school would need to invest a disproportionate amount of time and effort into monitoring and restricting the use of the student's devices. I certainly agree that any school adopting a measure of BYOD (regardless of the extent) will need to carefully consider its cyber security and rights management processes (eg controlling, through an

active directory, which specific devices may access school data and from which location). The school will also need to manage its firewall effectively and apply web-filters to restrict students from surfing inappropriate material.

Cyber security and protection

Data management is a full-time role in many organisations and it is something that is unlikely to change, given the fact that regulatory minimum standards may increase in light of the European Commission's recent proposed revisions to the Data Protection regime. Schools are subject to the full range of legislation governing data protection and whether they are dealing with data or implementing BYOD, they would be well advised to remember:

- Fair Processing: let pupils and staff know what the school does with the personal information recorded about them, such as device details, and make sure that access to that personal information is restricted to those who need it.
- Security: keep confidential information secure when storing it.
- Policies: have clear, practical policies and procedures in place, dealing with information governance for staff and students to monitor their operation.

Websites

Security breaches can easily happen if protection is inadequate. For example, students may access school systems via their own devices and inadvertently transfer and store data, allowing sensitive school and personal data to be lost,

misused or fall into the wrong hands. Likewise, students could inadvertently transfer malware (such as malicious codes, trojans, worms and viruses) to the school's IT environment through unprotected personal devices, again causing disruption and data loss.

What can our school do to limit the risks of BYOD? A good starting point is to read the Government's *10 Steps to Cyber Security*, the ICO Guidance and work with the school's IT supplier to set up incident management systems. An effective BYOD policy is likely to include:

- data transfer
- loss and theft
- malware protection
- media controls
- monitoring
- password protection
- remote access
- user privileges

Schools that manage their risk well will have robust BYOD and incident management policies in place. They will also take proactive steps to raise awareness within the school of its security policies through targeted lessons for all students, staff and governors.

**Nathan Evans is a
technology and data
solicitor for Sharpe
Pritchard LLP**

Management accounts and reports to governors

Henry Briggs looks at practical ways for academies to comply with the new Academies Financial Handbook requirement to prepare management accounts

“The Academy Trust’s internal control framework must have regard to ... the preparation of timely monthly management accounts, including income and expenditure reports on an accruals basis, cashflow forecasts and balance sheets as appropriate.” *The Academies Financial Handbook*

They may be just a few words but they detail a requirement that is presenting something of a challenge to most academy finance and business managers (FBMs) who are already struggling with the presentation and format of their year-end accounts, let alone complying with the need to prepare interim ones.

So why has the Education Funding Agency introduced this requirement?

Academies, as independently governed schools, need to cross the bridge from full LA support to being masters of their own destiny. As for other independent schools and organisations that have responsibility for their own finances, regular management accounts quite simply enable good management. Regular reports on a school’s financial position are essential to good governance.

My own experience, and this is shared by my colleagues across the country, is that academies are preparing financial reports for governors but some are falling well short of the new EFA requirements.

So what kind of report is needed and what format is meaningful to those it is helping to manage and govern?

It is, of course, important that a summary of key performance indicators, such as shown in table A, are produced for a quick check of how things are. The overall cash position and performance against budget are the two most common and two of the most important. But simple reporting of this kind can fall well short of the requirement – in that it may lack in-built controls to ensure that the figures being reported are correct. No FBM would wish to find that the ‘acid test’ reports given during the year were significantly different to the year end accounts.

The format of reporting will vary from school to school and depends on two things: what information can be easily and readily extracted from the records - and what information

An example of an academy KPIs

Quick view

- cash is king - a reconciled bank balance and summary of cash resources
- performance against budget – a year-to-date variance statement of operations against the budgeted figures
- operating margin – GAG income less teaching costs as a percentage of income
- overheads – In total, or categorised
- capital expenditure – against budget and effect on cash flow
- contingencies and Reserves

Long view

- income per pupil
- staff costs per pupil
- other costs per pupil – broken down into categories

users of the accounts require. The former will be affected by the software used for accounts and the latter will be driven by the academy head and the governors.

To produce actual figures, it will be necessary to extract the information from the accounting records, but they will need to be formatted in a way that is understandable and brings out the KPIs. The year-end formats for accounts, in the Charities Statement of Recommended Practice layout, are not particularly helpful for interim management accounts purposes - but the walk from management reports to the year-end financials is an important one and should be made as easy as possible for all to understand.

Most organisations produce management accounts based on a monthly or quarterly reporting cycle. Independent schools usually report on a termly or four monthly basis. This is because their income is received termly and for academies, who receive

their General Annual Grant (GAG) income monthly, accounts based on the monthly figures since the last meeting, would seem to be the logical way to report.

So which format is best?

Governors will differ in their needs – and financial aptitudes – and it will be necessary to cater for the different levels of understanding.

But there is a basic principle required by the Handbook, that accounts include income and expenditure, cashflow and a balance sheet.

This triumvirate of reporting gives an automatic control over the accuracy of the figures. Just using one as a report (most commonly the income and expenditure account) could easily lead to inaccuracies if postings in the records were incorrect. The balance sheet provides this control and includes the all-important cash figure. Cash flow forecasts are prepared before the start of the accounting period and should be updated in the light of historical information, so that variances from budgeted outcomes are translated into cash.

The change in culture from LA reporting, where schools had no assets or balance sheets, is the area which is giving most headaches to FBMs. It requires an understanding of double entry bookkeeping and some will benefit from training. The items that are giving most grief are the two words 'depreciation' and 'accruals'.

You will note that the requirement is for accounts to be prepared on an accruals basis (matching income and expenditure to the period to which it relates, rather than when it is paid).

Depreciation (the writing down of asset values over their useful lives) is a non-cash item and it can be placed 'below the line' in the I & E account, so all can follow its effect on the balance sheet and the year-end financials.

These new requirements may lead to academies reviewing their committee structure. Multi-academy trusts and umbrella trusts will have audit committees in place. A finance committee in some guise, or combined with general purposes or buildings, could comprise a smaller group of governors who review the more detailed accounts and report to full governors' meetings on the KPIs, for example.

Basic management information that is accurate must always be a pre-requisite of any independent organisation's ability to be managed. Without it, financial problems and possible failure are never far away.

Good information systems and reporting will always give management and governors the tools to manage and govern the school well.

Henry Briggs is senior partner of the Birmingham office of Haines Watts Chartered Accountants and a former school governor



The Academies Financial Handbook 2013

David Whittington of Lee Bolton Monier Williams asks: are you using the most up-to-date version?



It is getting increasingly necessary to check that you are using the latest version of important DfE or EFA guidance. Having extensively revised the *Academies Financial Handbook* for 2012, the EFA has revised it again for 2013 and then revised the revision. For reasons that will be clear below, it is very likely that a revision of the revision of the revision will be put in place shortly. So go onto the DfE website and make sure you are using the latest version.

All the 2013 versions give you a list of the changes from 2012 and most are minor. This article just focuses on the major changes that may still change again in the future.

First, paragraph 2.1.1 of the *Handbook* has been re-written to require that: “The board of trustees must appoint a principal or chief executive who will act as an ex-officio trustee”. Paragraph 2.1.2 then goes on to say that the principal or chief executive should also be the accounting officer.

So what is the issue?

The issue is as follows: academy articles do not require the principal to be a director/trustee and MAT articles do not require there to be a chief executive at all! Hence the wording in the *Handbook* goes further than the articles and removes discretions which the articles deliberately leave open. It surely cannot be right for the articles of a company that is a charity to be over-riden in such a way by the *Handbook*, which is (after all) only an extension of the funding agreement which is in turn only a contract. We understand that the Charity Commission is similarly not happy with such a unilateral imposition through a contract. It is also commonplace in charities for chief executives not to be directors – for very sound good-governance and accountability reasons. We have ourselves commented that to make the most senior member of staff a director and accounting officer (let alone, as is sometimes suggested, a member of the academy company) leaves the headteacher of a school in such an all-powerful position that there is a real danger that no governing body (or other agency) could hold him/her to account in any effective way. Ourselves, we value the accountability structure of

There is a particular problem too for church academies or academies in chains, where some services may be being provided for them by a diocesan body or chain body that is not the MAT itself

academies from senior staff, through directors to members and then the Secretary of State. So we hope that the DfE/EFA will decide to remove this requirement.

Not for profit

Secondly, the government clearly believes that it needs to be able to say (presumably in the lead-up to the next general election) that “no-one can make a profit out of academies”. Consequently paragraph 2.6 in the *Handbook* inserts a number of detailed requirements as to how individuals (or their associated companies and families) who are members or directors of academy trusts can provide paid services or sell supplies to their academy. These requirements go beyond the normal charity position: declare your interest; your colleagues must be sure the trust is getting value from you; take no part in the decision. Instead all services and supplies must now be provided “at cost” (defined as full costs including overheads but not to include any profit element) and in addition all must be ‘properly procured’ – whatever that is supposed to mean.

Of course the Public Contracts Regulations must be obeyed and a procedure must be followed that enables the directors to be confident that they are getting value for money and any possible conflicts of interest have been dealt with. But we do not ourselves see that anything else can be required. We have suggested that rather than use the phrase ‘properly procured’ the EFA should spell out what they mean or remove it entirely.

But supposing they leave it as it stands, where does this leave professionals (like lawyers or accountants) who sit as directors on academy trusts when occasionally their firms get asked to do a piece of work for the AT? Our view is that they if they or their relatives are the owners or partners in a firm undertaking such work then they must be extremely careful to avoid it being alleged that they are gaining work without a proper procurement process or making a profit. It might be safest if they were not directors. Is this really what the DfE wants?

There is a particular problem too for church academies or academies in chains, where some services may be being provided

for them by a diocesan body or chain body that is not the MAT itself. We presume that charging ‘at cost’ would not be a problem for these bodies since they do not exist to make a profit. However the requirement for ‘proper’ procurement raises questions. The DfE assures us that the *Handbook* is not intended to prevent such bodies provided services without them having been put out in some way to public advertisement. Our view is that you can rely on that provided that there is no profit element, that conflicts of interest have been declared and dealt with and that the academy trust has enough evidence to convince itself that it is getting value for money.

‘Open minded’

The DfE is having a further look at these two issues and we hope will soon decide whether or not to revise further. We rather hope they will. They tell us that they are ‘open minded’ about principals and chief executives as directors/trustees but that their policy position is firm in respect of ‘not for profit’. In our view, if they stick to the wording in respect of principals and chief executives the conflict with the articles is serious and would have to be resolved in some way after consultation with interested bodies. The ‘not for profit’ issue can perhaps be resolved by careful wording but it seems in principle wrong to go beyond what is required by charity law and the extensive requirements already present in all versions of the model articles.

If either sets of wording are retained, academies would in principle have to comply. The funding agreement binds them to do so. That would leave unresolved clashes with the articles that the DfE/EFA must surely sort out. So look out for more revisions somewhere.

David Whittington is an adviser on education law at LBMW. He was previously head of school development for the Church of England nationally



International Baccalaureate®
Baccalauréat International
Bachillerato Internacional

Improving Educational Practice: A Global Perspective

An International Baccalaureate (IB) one day conference bringing together thought-leaders from the leading educational systems in the world

- What can we learn from state school experiences such as in Finland?
- What is the impact of IB on national education systems?
- What is a principled education system and should 'global' matter?
- Expert panel on "What should a school curriculum look like?"
- The IB is a leader in international education
- Founded in 1968, we currently work with 3,676 schools, both state and private, in 146 countries
- The IB is a non-profit educational foundation, motivated by its mission and focused on the student
- IB offers four challenging programmes to over 1,139,000 students aged 3 to 19 years

Monday 10th February 2014
Skinners' Hall
8½ Dowgate Hill, London, EC4R 2SP

Hosted by



For more information and to register visit www.ibo.org/ibaem or email: ibaemevents@ibo.org

© International Baccalaureate Organization 2013
International Baccalaureate® | Baccalauréat International® | Bachillerato Internacional®



Knowledge.
Understanding.
Response.
Turnaround.

Is what we have delivered to state schools for over 30 years.

We can provide you with specialist quality legal advice from people who understand the education sector, delivered quickly and in plain English.

To try us out call Roger Inman now on 07946 181235 to organise your free one hour school legal health check.

www.stoneking.co.uk

BATH | LONDON | CAMBRIDGE

Stone King solicitors

Using STEM to reduce youth and graduate unemployment

Energy & Utility Skills chief executive Neil Robertson says STEM subjects open doors

Despite positive news on the resurgence of the UK economy, youth employment remains a nagging issue, leaving the education system facing the difficult task of preparing its pupils for an employable future.

And while graduates undoubtedly face stronger prospects in terms of pay throughout the entirety of their careers, the role of schools has never been more vital in helping to prepare pupils for the right path, whether through to higher education, apprenticeships or the immediate world of work.

Science, technology, engineering and maths subjects have an important part to play in the economy of the future, so the challenge for academies is to nurture pupils' talents in these areas. Here, futures are likely to be bright due to the wealth of opportunities available in related careers.

With the number of apprenticeships and traineeships on the rise and world universities focusing on STEM climbing up the rankings, prospects for students choosing these subjects are good.

Energy & Utility Skills (EU Skills) – the employer-led organisation responsible for benchmarking and developing skills and standards in the sector – is seeing a broadening of the educational options open to students choosing STEM subjects. In addition, through the emergence of more apprenticeships and traineeships, educational establishments have more realistic opportunities that will encourage pupils to consider careers in water, waste management, energy, renewables and gas. Crucially, they also have routes to get there.

Recently, the Government announced its apprenticeship reform programme, which is set to revamp the way the qualifications are developed and delivered. It is focusing on fostering the skills that employers need from recruits. At the heart of these plans is the Energy and Efficiency Industrial Partnership (EEIP), which was awarded funding by Government. Employer-led, it comprises 67 key sector employers, with support from National Grid, EU Skills, the National Skills Academy for Power and Asset Skills.

Employers from the EEIP have also been put at the helm of Government plans, leading apprenticeship reforms in the energy sector. Named as one of eight Apprenticeship Trailblazers, the group's related occupations are built around STEM subjects. Each has been tasked with developing new occupational standards for apprenticeships, as well as an approach to assessing capability and

competence of students. Their aim is to improve quality, simplify the system and ensure the system is tailored to the on-the-job skills that are really needed.

After all, the gas, power, waste, water and renewables industries are currently facing a skills and recruitment gap that, if left in its current state, will leave it requiring 208,000 employees by 2025.

Education is part of the solution to plugging this gap. And academies have a role where they can ignite passions for subjects that have, of late, fallen by the wayside in terms of their appeal.

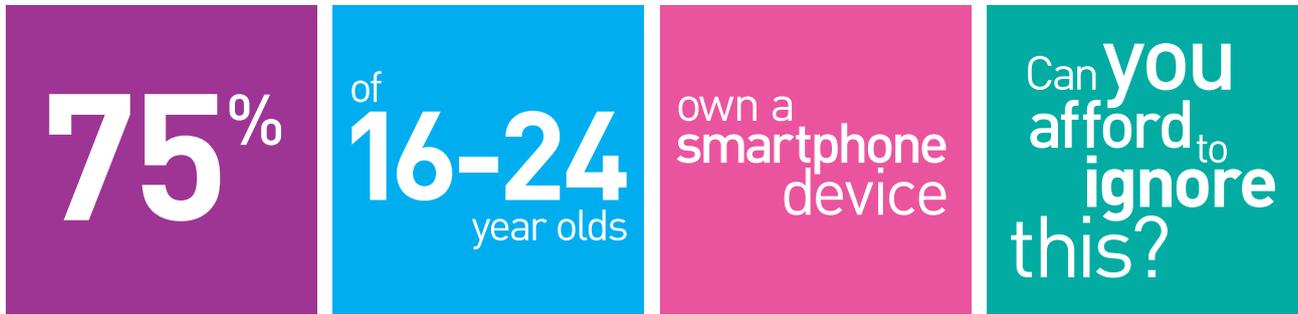
EU Skills believes that developing home-grown talent in STEM-related careers is the key to solving some of the youth unemployment issues the UK is now facing. GreenSTEM is designed to assist in that. It is a free careers resource for employers, educators and learners that offers advice, events and job opportunities with the aim of making a career in the sector tangible and reachable.

An increase in popularity of these subjects, in turn, could also take us closer to meeting the needs of a lower carbon economy and Government 2020 targets that state that 15 percent of energy should be derived from renewable sources.

By the end of 2014, it is expected that the first raft of energy apprenticeships will be delivered under the new standards set by the EEIP – something today's academy pupils will be able to take advantage of. By 2015 and 2016, standards and assessments will be agreed and implemented, with old arrangements phased out. By September 2017 the system will have a very different look and feel, with the Government aiming for all apprentices to be beginning programmes under the new standards.

However, the fundamental outcome of these new arrangements is a recognition of the absolute need for STEM skills in the UK, and for educational establishments to play their part in spotting those with a spark for the subjects. With employers at the helm of new apprenticeships, recruits can now be sure that if they choose this route, they will be enrolling on a system that prepares them with knowledge and experience that align with business practices and fit real-life job vacancies.

For more information about EU Skills and the EEIP, visit www.euskills.co.uk, for GreenSTEM, visit www.greenstem.org.uk



*Ofcom 2013

Exceptional award-winning content from the experts in mobile learning

Preferred supplier



Whatever your mobile policy, GCSEPod can work for you – Ask us about our case studies.
Call **0191 2111 999** or visit www.gcsepod.com

**We understand academies.
We understand the process.
We understand your needs.**



Haines Watts is a firm of accountants with many years of extensive specialist experience in education.

Our network of Centres of Excellence specialise in meeting the accounting and financial needs of schools that either wish to become academies – or have already done so.



We've done it before.

Your school or academy will benefit from our detailed knowledge of the systems, processes and responsibilities that are needed. And the fact that we've already helped many along the way.

Plus you have the reassurance of our commitment to delivering what you need, when you need it - and on budget.

Give anyone of us a call or drop us an email. You will find all of us speak your language.



www.hwca.com/academies

Altrincham
Steve Parker
E: sparker@hwca.com
T: 0161-926-8558

Birmingham
Henry Briggs
E: hbriggs@hwca.com
T: 0121-456-1613

East Anglia
Paul Sumpter
E: pdsupter@hwca.com
T: 01379-640555

Farnborough
Roz McFarlane
E: rmcfarlane@hwca.com
T: 01252-510333

Northampton
Gavin Parsons
E: gparsons@hwca.com
T: 01604-746760

Sheffield
Philip Eardley
E: peardley@hwca.com
T: 0114-267-1172



Understanding the value of outdoor play

Trevithick Learning Academy did not rest on their laurels after an ‘outstanding’ Ofsted report

Trevithick Learning Academy was awarded academy status in 2011. One of the first areas prioritised for the new academy was to develop the outdoor environment for the foundation stage. Graded ‘outstanding’ by Ofsted, Trevithick Learning Academy was keen to create an outdoor space that reflected the values and aspirations that Ofsted had observed.

Bethan Sullivan, foundation stage co-ordinator comments on this development:

“We have long championed the outdoors as a rich learning resource and have promoted continuous provision for many years now. Although we made the best of our existing area

with learning resources and activities, we were keen to create a space that had more integral educational play and learning experiences. This rich environment then presents multiple levels of play value and challenge and can be enhanced further with the addition of resources.

“The essence of continuous provision relies on the outdoor space having sufficient appeal for children and staff. The lure of a pleasant and interesting environment makes continuous provision significantly more successful.”

The play area is exclusively for the use of nursery and reception children. The different abilities of this age group are

Join the leaders

More than 17,000 secondary school and college leaders have made the move to ASCL – shouldn't you?



**Subscription rates joining
1 January 2014**

**Assistant head/Senior post holder
£13***

**Business manager/Bursar
£12***

**Deputy head/Vice principal
£15.60***

**Head/Principal
£17.50***

*Terms and conditions apply:
See www.ascl.org.uk/offers for details

The **ONLY** trade union
specifically for secondary
school and college leaders

TIME TO CHOOSE THE TEACHERS' UNION ALTERNATIVE?

Edapt is a subscription based service providing independent employment support and legal advice to education professionals in any type of school in England or Wales including state, independent, academy and free schools.

SUBSCRIBE TODAY
www.edapt.org.uk

*your first choice for education
legal advice and HR services*



Browne Jacobson is 'ahead of the curve in terms of knowledge of the education sector, and able to translate changed policy and law into practical legal advice'

Legal 500 directory, 2012

0870 270 6000

www.education-advisors.com

profound, so the space needed to serve as a suitable transition area for the youngest pupils at aged three right through to those at the end of reception aged five. In total 90 children use the space, in different groups at different times.

Trevithick Learning Academy knew what they wanted to achieve, they understood the value of outdoor play and wanted to create a space that could be used to support learning outcomes, as well as providing a creative and low-maintenance space perfect for free play. To meet their objectives they called upon play design and build specialists, Playgarden to help them create an action plan and overall design. As the area targeted was developed specifically for three-to-five year-olds, Playgarden were best placed to provide the advice they needed. A specialist landscape architect visited the school to discuss their requirements and subsequently created workable play designs which would be used to develop the new play space.

The school wanted to create distinct zones that were multifunctional and could be adapted to meet the needs of individual pupils.

The value of sand and water as an educational resource are well documented. In fact, sand is unlike any other material for the different experiences it can deliver. Wet sand behaves very differently to dry sand, as is evident when moulding, lifting, transporting, and so on. The ideal scenario is a space which has both wet and dry sand side by side, so children can compare the properties of both materials. Consequently the school went for a design which had wet and dry sand areas, separated by a railway-sleeper bridge. Now children can have fun moving from one space to the other by way of the bridge, balancing and developing their physical needs whilst also working on their communication and negotiation skills, in order to share the use of the equipment.

The promotion of shared use and consideration for other users was a central theme of the design. Bethan continues:

“A lot of the equipment and the areas we have created rely on effective sharing, negotiation and consideration: essential skills for taking forward beyond reception. Some children initially struggle with these concepts but the activities and the equipment reinforce the importance of sharing. Some pieces of kit, for example the water pump, really come into their own when used by two or more children. One needs to pump for the others to play with and manipulate the water.

“Similarly, the new bike track promotes considerate use of the play-space, slowing for the roundabout and giving way to other users. Children quickly grasped this junior Highway Code and as well as improving their physical development they are now enhancing their social skills as they use the outdoor area.”

The school was particularly keen to provide opportunities for quieter and reflective communication and play experiences. To address this a story-telling space was created, perfect for staff to read books, or for pupils to tell their own stories to their peers. This now enhances the school’s storytelling status. Similarly the



concrete den tube is perfect for small groups or pairs to have more private discussions.

The learning environment also features a mud kitchen, created with pots and pans to replicate the kitchen at home, but with the intention of giving children the opportunity to engage in the mucky fun that mud provides so well.

“We were keen to create many smaller areas for small group free play. This gives staff the opportunity to engage in dialogue with pupils,” says Bethan, “but, moreover, it’s given us a wonderful opportunity to observe the children as they interact independently. We learn a lot by interacting with and observing the children as they create their mud pies.”

Consideration for the future is also a key element within the play space. The sensory planting around the playgarden has already changed the atmosphere, but as the planting becomes more established it will climb up the walls and billow out like clouds.

The playspace is designed to be used come rain or shine with surfaces that can withstand daily use.

The area opened April 2013 to great excitement. Since then the pupils’ interest has been sustained as the space changes with the seasons and is adapted by staff to meet their changing needs. The possibilities for future use are limitless.

ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND
ARTSMARK AWARD

Gain national recognition with Artsmark

Achieving Artsmark is a sign of commitment to high quality arts and cultural education. If you value arts and culture through a broad and balanced curriculum and want to raise your school's profile, apply for Artsmark.

Find out more at www.artsmark.org.uk/schools

020 7820 6178 arts@trinitycollege.co.uk

Artsmark is delivered by Trinity College London on behalf of Arts Council England

TRINITY
COLLEGE LONDON

Supported using public funding by **ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND**
LOTTERY FUNDED

Walton le Dale Arts College and High School photo Andy Bulmer

SHARPE PRITCHARD
Solicitors and Parliamentary Agents

Sharpe minds

Sharpe Pritchard provides specialist legal advice on educational infrastructure projects and is expert in advising on the effective procurement of the full range of contracts relating to the construction and operation of schools, including the procurement of ICT solutions.

For further information contact
Annie Moy on 0207 405 4600

E academies@sharpepritchard.co.uk
W www.sharpepritchard.co.uk

Elizabeth House Fulwood Place London WC1V 6HG

AFTER A BUSY SEASON, TREAT YOUR PITCH TO A FREE HEALTH CHECK

If your artificial cricket pitch is starting to suffer from the effects of old age, you can call in the experts at Notts Sport to give it the once over – completely free of charge.

A free, no-obligation Notts Sport condition check will tell you all you need to know about the true state of your surface. And if the time has come for your pitch to be replaced, you'll be reassured to know Notts Sport has 29 years of experience as a non-turf cricket pitch supplier, and will assist you every step of the way.

To find out more:
call: +44 (0) 1455 883 730
email: info@nottssport.com
or visit: www.nottssport.com

nottssport Synthetic Surfacing

Reeves
Re: business, tax and wealth

Think Reeves... Get Results

All your financial needs covered by one firm...

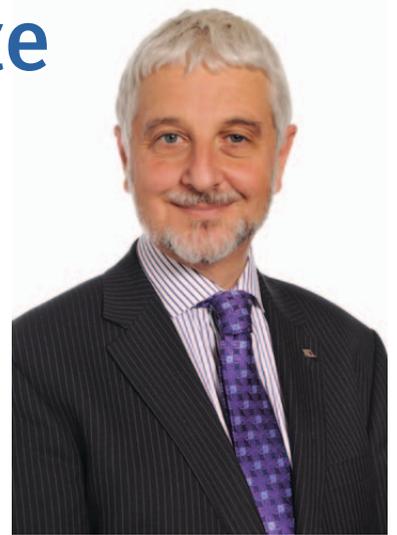
- Audit and assurance
- Statutory accounts
- Internal audit and RO services
- HR consultancy
- VAT and other taxation
- Teacher's pension scheme audits
- Payroll

For award winning accountancy, tax and financial advice please contact Peter Manser on:
Tel: 0845 450 7575 **Email:** peter.manser@reeves.co

www.reeves.co

The Great Education Debate

ASCL's Great Education Debate is an opportunity for school leaders to bring their experience to bear on the future shape of the education system. Brian Lightman explains why this initiative is so important



The last few academic years have undoubtedly been immensely challenging for school leaders, both in academies and LA maintained schools. The days when Prime Minister Jim Callaghan caused uproar by asserting the government's right to influence what happens in the classroom are a far cry from today, when something as fundamental as the National Curriculum can be driven and even written by politicians without involving the profession.

In spite of the fantastic work going on in academies up and down the country, we know that changes to the qualifications system, the inspection framework, and accountability measures have been hugely frustrating and create a national context that feels adversarial and negative.

But I know that academy leaders also believe in 'positive leadership' and being optimistic for the future. I know you want to be in the driving seat, rising to the challenges, celebrating success, inspiring and motivating your staff. Leadership is about offering solutions.

Through ASCL and other networks, school leaders have begun to seize back the agenda and reassert their ownership of the professional ground that they inhabit. Of course, we recognise that politicians have a role to play, but our young people and our education service are dependent on the expertise of teachers and leaders if we are going to achieve that Holy Grail of being 'world-class'.

Rather than having politicians of all parties treating education policy as a political football, fundamental questions need to be asked about the future of our education system. We need to identify areas of consensus and understand where there will be disagreement and contention. Above all, we need to do what other high-performing countries have done and England, astonishingly, has not: namely, to put in place a strategic, long-term plan for education that outlasts any government or

secretary of state.

The Great Education Debate is therefore directed at two different audiences. One is external to ASCL and involves all of the stakeholders in education – the policy makers, organisations, academic institutions and individuals who have a rightful say in the future of education and whose ideas must be heard. I have written to them and invited them to participate.

The other audience is, of course, professionals working in schools: you and your colleagues. You are the frontline. We are asking all of you to join in this debate with all members of your communities – staff, governors, parents and, of course, the students.

Ultimately, we want to identify those points of consensus in the debate that need to be in place for our education system to compete with the best in the world. Then we want all political parties to agree that these are non-negotiables that will be enshrined in any education policy and initiative going forward. The aim is to achieve a vision that all parties agree to and that brings stability and focus to our education system.

The debate has been organised around three topics. The first topic – the purpose of education – was the focus of debate in the first half of this term. It is a question that is absolutely fundamental, and a paper introducing some of the issues can be found at www.greateducationdebate.org.uk

This debate looked at a number of issues: should we adopt a national statement on the purpose of education? If so what may it say? What do we mean when we talk about a 'good education'? What is the correct balance between education as an end in its own right and a more utilitarian approach geared to the needs of our economy and future workforce?

During the second half of the autumn term we have shifted the focus to the next topic: how best to improve the quality of teaching and learning and the leadership of learning. Again there

At Ellisons Solicitors we are dedicated to **ensuring you get the best legal support** in a wide range of areas that will affect your academy.



Graeme Wallington is the Head of Academies at Ellisons and will be pleased to meet with you for an initial consultation.



Please call
01206 764477

or email
academy@ellisonssolicitors.com

www.ellisonssolicitors.com

Ellisons
Headgate Court
Head Street
Colchester
Essex CO1 1NP

We also have offices in: Clacton-on-Sea, Dovercourt/Harwich and Frinton



Looking for a different approach to school maintenance?

Committed to ethical and socially responsible ways of working

Complete facilities management packages available nationally



Your property is our priority

For a free consultation, please contact us on:

01905 335155

or email us at

maintenance@sanctuary-housing.co.uk

www.sanctuary-maintenance.co.uk

NEW THINKING, NEW
POSSIBILITIES



From Eco Playgrounds to Sports Pitches



CONSULTATION . DESIGN . CONSTRUCTION

0800 783 5090

For more info and great playground equipment visit our website

www.timotayplayscapes.co.uk

SHOWING
YOU THE
WAY



Established Academy Specialists

Conversion Advice, Audit, VAT, Regularity Reporting,
Accounting, SORP Financial Statements, Internal Audit,
Pensions Audit, Academies Financial Handbook Compliance,
Corporate Governance, Charity Regulation, Computer Systems.

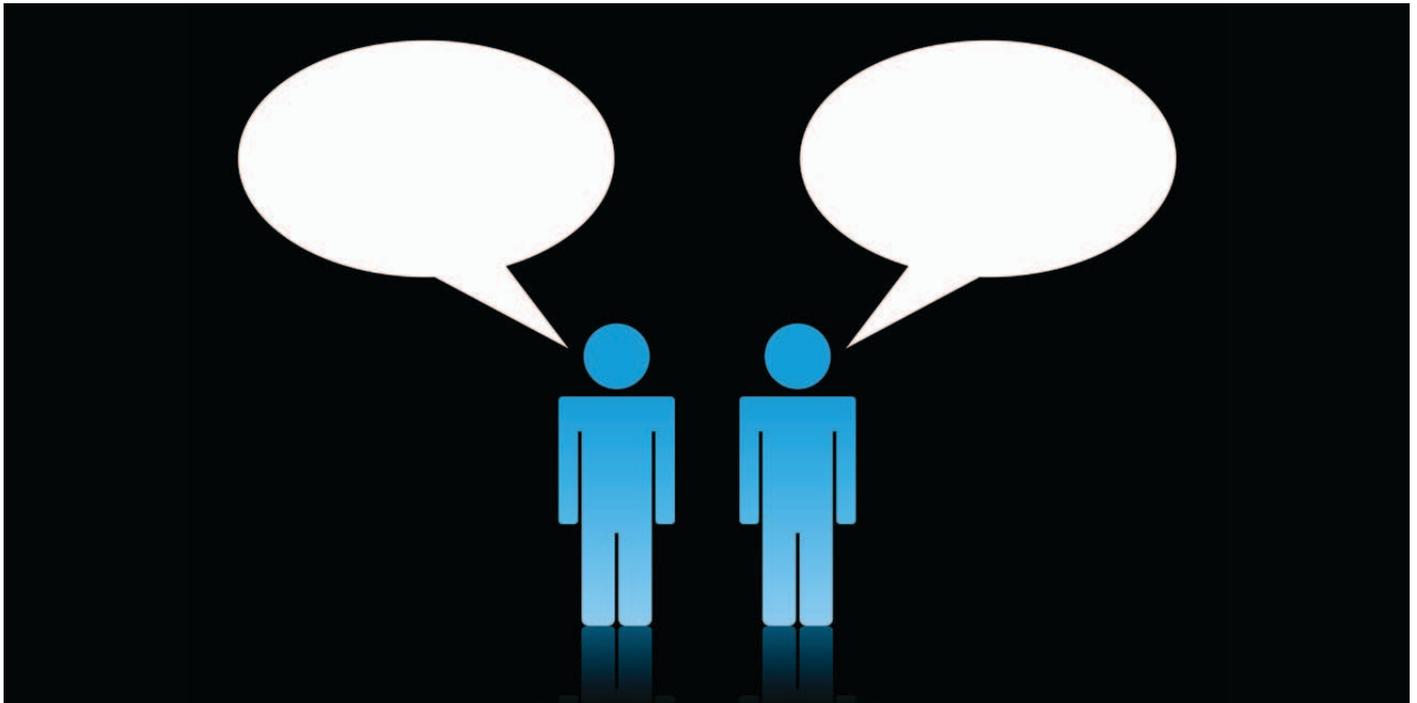


WILLIAMS GILES
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS

Email: alyson.howard@williamsgiles.co.uk

Web: www.williamsgiles.co.uk

Tel: 01795 478044



is a briefing paper on the website to stimulate debate.

We know that improving the quality of teaching and learning and the leadership of learning is crucial to realising the ambition of making every school a good school, the question is how. Some of the questions posed in this debate include: what are the characteristics of an excellent teacher? What needs to be done in order to attract, develop, recruit and support the next generation of school leaders? How could the government build greater ownership of an agreed school improvement strategy?

The final topic, in the early spring term, will be around structures, admissions and accountability.

Numerous organisations and individuals have already been involved in the Great Education Debate through hosting seminars, publishing articles and contributing think pieces to the website. These include Andreas Schleicher of the OECD, Chris Husbands of the Institute of Education, John Dunford of Whole Education, Professor Tim Brighouse, the National Governors Association, Teaching Leaders, CfBT Education Trust, the National Education Trust and many more.

Hundreds of school leaders also have become involved in the debate in a variety of ways. On the website you will find a framing document that tells you more about the project, think pieces on which you can comment and discussion forums in which we invite you to participate. You can suggest topics as well as commenting on those already listed.

The Twitter feed is @GreatEdDebate and there is a hashtag #GEDebate if you wish to get involve in the Twitter debate. If you want to submit an article or blog we will welcome that.

Many schools around the country are holding their own discussions with staff, the leadership team or governing body, or with students. I hope that you might consider doing the

same. This could be an hour or two at a training day, some time in a staff meeting, or a debate at the school council or with sixth formers. Middle leaders in your school have a key role, as they are the next generation of assistant and deputy heads, and headteachers. We hope that you will involve them, too.

Why should you bother to host an event or discussion? Quite apart from the wider benefits for our education service, many school leaders agree that this could inspire their staff at a time when it is all too easy to become bogged down in the here and now of the current reform agenda. Before we rush into the detail of curriculum change we need to take stock of what works and what we want to achieve. Again there are resources on the website to facilitate discussions with staff, governors and students.

It is crucial that school leaders get back into the driving seat. So often in recent times we have had to listen to the opinions of policy makers who have no experience or qualifications as educators. We, on the other hand, have a duty to bring that experience and evidence into the debate.

One final point: This project is not about promoting the policies of ASCL or any other organisation. It is about hearing all of the different points of view and finding a way forward. We are not seeking commercial sponsorship for this project because we believe that could compromise its objectivity. All of the organisations that have offered to help by hosting events are doing so on a *pro bono* basis.

If you want to take part, submit an article or host an event please visit the website at www.greateducationdebate.org.uk or email us at info@greateducationdebate.org.uk We would also be very pleased to receive any suggestions you may have for this debate.

Effective Governance

Greater accountability
for raising school standards
Is your governing body
prepared for the challenge?



Freedom and Autonomy for
Schools - National Association
www.fasna.org.uk

£10

Do you know how school inspectors will be judging effectiveness?

Have you considered how you can demonstrate the effectiveness of your governing body?

This new guide takes a practical approach, with key questions, key actions and key information supported by case studies of good practice from a wide variety of schools. It will provide you with support and guidance in undertaking the responsibilities of governance.

Each section links to the new Ofsted criteria, provides you with an understanding of 'effectiveness' and a framework of questions and actions which you can use to review your current practice and focus your professional development as a governing body.

The case studies are centred on a key question from the relevant section and provide you with a 'live' example of how a school is demonstrating effectiveness.

FASNA are the only national forum for Primary, Secondary, Special Schools for leaders and governors seeking and using greater autonomy in order to raise standards. Our aim is to promote and secure autonomy for schools and evidence its success.

All FASNA member schools receive a free copy of this publication.

For more details about all the benefits and opportunities of FASNA membership visit www.fasna.org.uk or contact us via email on admin@fasna.org.uk or call 0115 917 0142



ISBN: 978 1 908095 89 3 Order your copies via
www.johncattbookshop.com

**Theoria is Greek for contemplation
(literally, to view or witness,
to behold something as a spectator)**

Introducing John Catt Educational's
new in-house design collective, Theoria.

Offering beautiful design, print-work,
and innovative branding solutions,
Theoria is a complete creative service.

Have a little look at theoriadesign.com
and see what we can do for you, or call
us to talk through your ideas.

websites ; stationery ; prospectuses
posters ; leaflets ; annual reports
ePublications ; exhibition graphics
newsletters and journals ; signage

theoria
design

www.theoriadesign.com
info@theoriadesign.com
01394 389858
[@theoriadesign](https://www.facebook.com/theoriadesign)
[facebook.com/theoriadesign](https://www.facebook.com/theoriadesign)

KEEPING YOU OFF THE ROCKS

Payroll for Academies and Schools

Dedicated schools payroll specialist,
Cost effective and responsive service,
Secure web portal for data transfer,
Bespoke reports for management and audit requirements.



WILLIAMS GILES
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS

Email: diane.allen@williamsgiles.co.uk

Web: www.williamsgiles.co.uk

Tel: 01795 478044

Schools are not islands

In this extract from *Taking Forward the Primary Curriculum*, Tim Coulson, Director of Education for Essex County Council, says that strong relationships are at the heart of an effective primary school

The best schools embrace being part of the unique community that is their local area and the area from which children come to the school. The best schools understand that they share the privilege of educating children with many others, but principally the children's families.

For many schools, this is not easy. Schools' neighbours and members of the community do not always see life or ways of working in exactly the same way. Teachers have the dilemma of both preparing children to succeed as members of their communities and also provide an oasis from the trials of life which all children face, and some face in abundance.

As I have the privilege of visiting so many schools across the most interesting county in the country, I am struck by the diversity of the challenges faced by schools – far more complex than the divide marked by the extent of economic disadvantage, and understood best by those who have given their entire working lives to serve specific communities. So often I hear the Head who explains to me that moving ten miles to a different school has felt like moving to a completely different cultural outlook.

Although schools are not islands, the pressures of the day to day operation of a primary school, especially a small one, pose significant challenges in how to make the time and effort to look over the turrets of the safety of the school environment. The best primary schools have always seen themselves as serving the community rather than just expecting the community to meet the school's demands and expectations.

Soon after moving to my present job, a great joy was joining a school and its families in its celebrations of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee – a celebration that will have taken place in most schools across the country. This one was special, not just because of the school history projects the Jubilee had prompted, including a display of the log books (still maintained), and the great fun being had by all, but because the school clearly had the balance right: children are part of the school family, as well as their own families.

More recently, a fiftieth anniversary of a school was marked

by a garden party. As well as children performing in many different ways and lots of other entertainments, it was marked by me hearing adults showing their children around and telling them what they remembered of their own time at the school. These two schools, both with high standards of achievement and very focused on maximizing pupil progress across the board, knew that to be really successful for their children, they needed to invest time and energy to contributing to their local community.

From my perspective of visiting many, many primary schools, a positive curriculum should meet the objective of both preparing children to succeed as members of their communities, and also providing an oasis which enable children to:

- attend to relationships;
- articulate feelings;
- develop resilience.

For those who taught before the expectations of a National Curriculum, we were both blessed and cursed by working in a much more instinctive rather than prescribed manner. Where schools plan, rather than relying on instinct, to include attending to relationships, feelings and resilience as outcomes, they will be looking to make one nod more towards recognising that there is life beyond the school gate.

Relationships

Who do you want to parent, meet or employ? A student with a first class honours degree but no 'people skills', or a student with a more ordinary level of achievement with charm, ability to make and keep friends, and an empathy for others? Do we answer the question differently as a parent or a teacher or an employer?

Curriculum is often described as knowledge, understanding and skills. There is no programme of study for relationships but we all know that some people are much better at developing and sustaining relationships than others. Successful relationships not only bring happiness and security, but the confidence to address the everyday, and occasional very serious, challenges that we all face.

Crucially, the education process at its best not only enables children to learn from their experiences of relationships but to learn about relationships, what makes them work and what causes them to break down

School is a wonderful environment to experience great relationships. Children can observe adults who model courtesy, respect and compassion. They can develop their skills of building relationships under the expert eye of discerning adults who don't interfere in friendship building but offer a gentle prod when relationships strain and risk splintering. Crucially, the education process at its best not only enables children to learn from their experiences of relationships but to learn about relationships, what makes them work and what causes them to break down.

Effective schools are all about strong relationships, where everyone knows what is expected, but also is given the confidence by there being a belief that they can live up to these expectations.

I have the pleasure of often being shown around schools, sometimes by Heads and sometimes by children. Both types of guide are great but you learn different information about the school. Only children tell you who are the best teachers!

As you see around the school, some impressions come over strongly, in particular the engagement levels of the children to whatever it is that the teacher has in mind for that lesson. What is very clear is the quality of relationships and the extent to which this is a factor that drives the quest for greater progress. I often leave humbled by the ambition that school leaders demonstrate to see success for particular children.

Articulating feelings

The opportunity for pupils to articulate feelings plays a strong part in many teachers' literacy lessons, as they play out the skilful blending of work across reading, speaking and writing. Some of the most engaging, and memorable, lessons touch teachers and children emotionally and spiritually as well as mentally.

The ability to articulate is one of those skills where schools have the opportunity to even up the life chances that children have by birth and parentage. Through focused and hard work, schools can help make up the gap for those not born with a silver spoon.

However, hardest of all to articulate for many are feelings, often particularly for boys. We all know the difficulties this unhelpful reserve can cause and the tragedies that can result from the lack of an outlet. Across a county with 550 schools, there are sadly always a few where tragedies are taking place, well above even the difficulties most schools know, and are the worst event in teachers' careers. We all look to ensure that we have worked as closely as possible with other agencies, but at the end of the day why people do terrible things often lies unanswered.

We have, particularly through inspection frameworks, well defined expectations of what 'Outstanding' practice looks like in achievement, behaviour and leadership. The kind of practice I have enjoyed coming across is where teachers create an atmosphere of trust and acceptance, where it is safe to experiment with the way children express their feelings and crucially can do so in a range of ways, including in art, music, writing and drama.

However, one of the simplest divides between schools appears to me the extent to which singing is given the priority it deserves within the curriculum. Many faithful teachers have sustained annual town-wide music festivals that have lasted decades (heightening how transient so many versions of the National Curriculum have been). Where singing is given sufficient priority, children have the opportunity to work together. Further, they can lose themselves in the emotion of music, and experience the articulation of feelings as composed by others, leading to subsequent expression of their own feelings.

Clear expression by children of their learning doesn't just happen but needs curriculum planning. Articulating feelings needs particular care and the fostering of a 'safe' environment in which children can feel comfortable and secure in what they say.

Developing resilience

What is it all about? Famously, the answer to the universe is 42. I spent several workshops with a wide group of people

looking to agree the top priorities that would drive our work as a local authority, schools and other agencies. After analysis, provocative contributions from invited guests, we simplified our priorities to: achieving for every child that they would be safe, happy and go to a good school. The first and third, whilst challenging, were felt to be easily understandable. The second caused much debate and led to the conclusion that were we to be able to stiffen children's resilience, the likelihood of their lives being economically and emotionally successful would be much enhanced.

One of the more geekish parts of my work is to read each week the many inspection reports generated across the county. I am constantly surprised that although many common features appear, they have remarkable differences. Some inspectors capture the heart of a school, and when the school clearly captured the inspector's heart the description can come to life. My favourite section in a recently published inspection report runs as follows:

Pupils have outstanding attitudes to learning. For their age, they demonstrate high levels of perseverance, especially when working outside. Pupils know that their efforts and ideas are valued by all staff. As a result, they are confident to voice their opinions and offer sensible suggestions about their work. Behaviour around the school is outstanding. As a result, the school is a very harmonious community. Pupils are polite and friendly to those they know and are welcoming to visitors. Dinner times are very social occasions which pupils enjoy, although many say they would like bigger dinners! For their age, pupils develop strong values and a high level of respect for others. They have a well-developed sense of empathy. They are well aware that some of their classmates have particular needs and that they learn differently. They are kind and patient.

Pupils are very proud of their school and their many accomplishments, especially their artwork. Pupils of all ages have a leadership role in the school, such as class councillors or school councillors. They take these responsibilities seriously. All pupils have a strong voice in decisions relating to their learning.

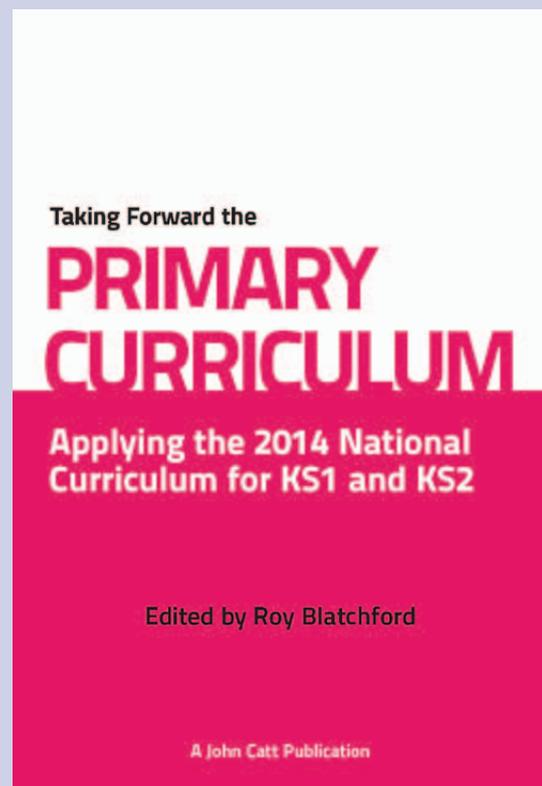
I know that all of the above has been achieved through a close attention to the curriculum in this infant school and close attention to how the curriculum is not just planned and delivered, but how it is achieved.

For children and young people to thrive, it is vital that any curriculum promotes learners' resilience through:

- attention being paid in a school to developing resilience of both pupils and staff
- children taking responsibilities
- coping with not always being right, particularly for the very able child
- clear procedures, eg when bullying is alleged
- fostering ambition to improve on previous best.

I welcome less prescription about how schools provide their curriculum. This in turn liberates schools to do it the way they know best for their children in their particular community. It also lays even greater responsibility on schools to devise a curriculum with rigour and challenge. My contention is that, important as it is to address sufficiently the content of different subject areas, these are insufficient unless the same attention is paid to the vital outcomes for children which will equip them for life as active, healthy and happy citizens.

Tim Coulson has taught in London primary schools and was Headteacher of William Tyndale Primary School in Islington. He has worked for national and local government in a number of roles, including as national director of the National Numeracy Strategy. He has since 2012 been director of education for Essex County Council



Taking Forward the Primary Curriculum is published by John Catt Educational. It comes with a free copy of The National Curriculum Framework KS1 and KS2 document. £12.99, www.johncattbookshop.com

Education: the rock and roll years

Ageing rocker Les Walton reminisces

1963: Clean hands

In 1963 I arrived at a College. All my father wanted was for me to have a job with clean hands. I was halfway there. Talk about culture shock. We lived in Hall for the first year. There was a curfew at 10 or 11 pm each evening with limited visiting hours for friends and family. I still have a photograph of the student common room. It shows studious characters wearing tweed jackets and ties. The first social event I attended could best be described as a 'tea dance'. An old record player plus cakes.

At that time I was playing with a band called the Hustlers. We had the same impact as the Beatles. Whenever we sang, girls screamed – to be let out. However the club scene in Newcastle was, I believe, the best in the UK. Regularly we would go to see American artists such as Chuck Berry and Jerry Lee Lewis. I was standing by the piano when Jerry Lee played the Club AGOGO in February 1963. He actually asked ME to plug the lead into his piano. The resident band was of course the Animals and *House of the Rising Sun*, the revolutionary first folk-rock hit, had just made number one in 1964.

As president of the social union I did a very simple thing. Using my contacts through the various entertainment agencies, (Jack Wright in Newcastle, Terry Blood in London, and of course Brian Epstein in Liverpool) I began to book my favourite bands. The Big Three, Heinz and the Tornados, the Foremost, Tony Rivers and the Castaways and of course the band which still has the reputation for producing the best UK rock and roll record ever, *Shaking all Over*, Johnny Kidd and the Pirates.

These bands charged about £90 for their appearances. We would also book great local bands such as the Junco Partners and the Silver Dollars. We would make a heavy profit on the local bands and just clear even with the nationally known groups. So by the end of college we had created a healthy profit which my committee blew on the final event. We booked all three dance halls in the local Locarno Ballroom. We hired Tony Rivers and the Castaways, the Don Smith Big Band and a jazz combo. The event was free for regulars. Like the 60s, we came in with a whimper and went out with a bang. To be a student during these seismic shifts in culture and music was incredible.

1989

In 1989 I became Head of a community high school in Tyneside. This was two years before my school was caught up in the Meadow Well Estate riots on 9th September 1991, where it was estimated that, at its height, 400 local residents were involved.

As a Deputy Head I had been on a training programme on 'Visionary Leadership'. The problem was that on my first day as a Head I didn't have a vision. My first year as a student in 1963 coincided with Martin Luther King's 'I have a Dream' speech. My first year in teaching coincided with *Daydream Believer* by the Monkees. So I had always been up for having my own dream.

Right from the start I tried to work up a vision, continually testing it out on my unfortunate staff and pupils. I wanted a school full of 'caring, confident and capable children', we wished to develop their 'potential and improve their prospects by working in partnership'. All good stuff.

One day a boy was 'sent to me'. I went through the usual routine.

"Why have you been sent?"

"I don't know," was the usual reply.

Just at that point one of my Heads of Year popped her head in my office and announced. "He has a metal pipe down his trousers." After denying this obvious fact, I looked more closely and he admitted having the pipe down his trousers. He proclaimed it had fallen into his trousers from a shelf in the technology department.

I sent him home to bring back his father. When his father arrived he was completely covered in tattoos and sporting a rather chic Mohican haircut. He was also around ten feet tall.

I explained my concerns regarding the theft and, after leaning forward 45 degrees with close eye contact and oozing with empathy, I described my vision, my dream for the school. It was a place in which there was complete trust and pupils and staff could leave items around always knowing that they would never be tampered with or stolen. Demonstrating my street cred, I reinforced the point by saying that pipes like these were being used to *twok** Sierra cars by forcing the ignition and hotwiring the motor.

I have never forgotten his reply.

"You're a dreaming nugget. If you think people will not take things if they are left lying around climb off your cloud and join reality."

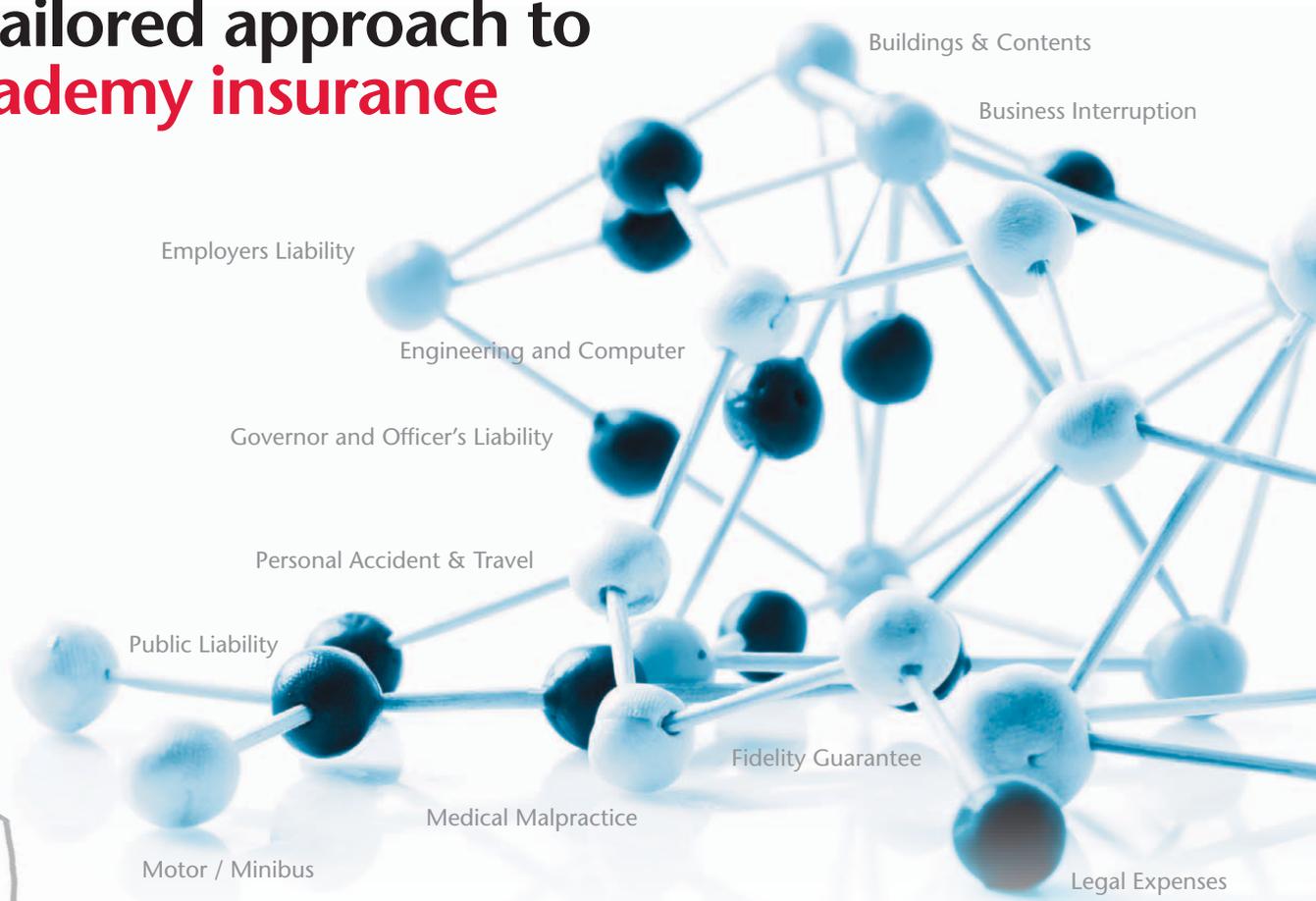
He then asked to examine the stolen pipe.

"And another thing – this pipe is the wrong size for twoking Sierra cars".

In the future I realised that vision must be shared. However, in the childhood of Headship, dreams are a reality.

*Note: *Twok* means 'taken without consent' – not 'that would be OK', as used by our more trendy online colleagues.

A tailored approach to **Academy insurance**



Voted National
Broker of the
Year at the
Insurance Times
Awards 2013

Aon is a leading advisor to many of the UK's most prestigious Academic institutions. With broad experience in dealing with Academies, we help institutions manage the insurance process when moving from Local Authority control.

Aon are at the forefront of developing new products and insurance markets for Academies. Our comprehensive insurance solution will be tailored to meet your needs and help reduce your risk exposures.

Everything we do at Aon is focused on partnering with clients to bring distinctive value to their organisation by offering insight and solutions to the management of their risks.

Learn
more...

Contact us to find out how we can help your Academy.

Aon in a class of our own

Bob Eakins
Senior Client Technician

t 44 (0)141 222 3387
e bob.eakins@aon.co.uk

academies.aon.co.uk

Maximise your new found **freedom** with our 'best in class' risk solutions

Being an Academy is all about being free to go your own way.

Taking away the hassle of insurance and risk management: Zurich's experts can offer guidance on the protection you need, leaving you free to maximise your independence and fulfil your ambitions.

- Benefit from our industry leading experience in working with Academies
- Deal directly with insurance experts who understand the risks that you face and how to address them
- Get an insurance package tailored to your Academy's needs
- Enjoy free access to our dedicated risk website, riskcurriculum.co.uk, packed with specific risk guidance on the key risks that Academies face
- Work with dedicated Claims experts who can get you back on track quickly, when it matters most.

Free yourself from the complexities of Academy insurance and risk management. Call us today on 0845 602 3895 (option 2) or email ZM_enquiries@zurich.com

Zurich Municipal is a panel member of the Crescent Purchasing Consortium (CPC) framework for Academy insurance.



ZURICH[®]
MUNICIPAL