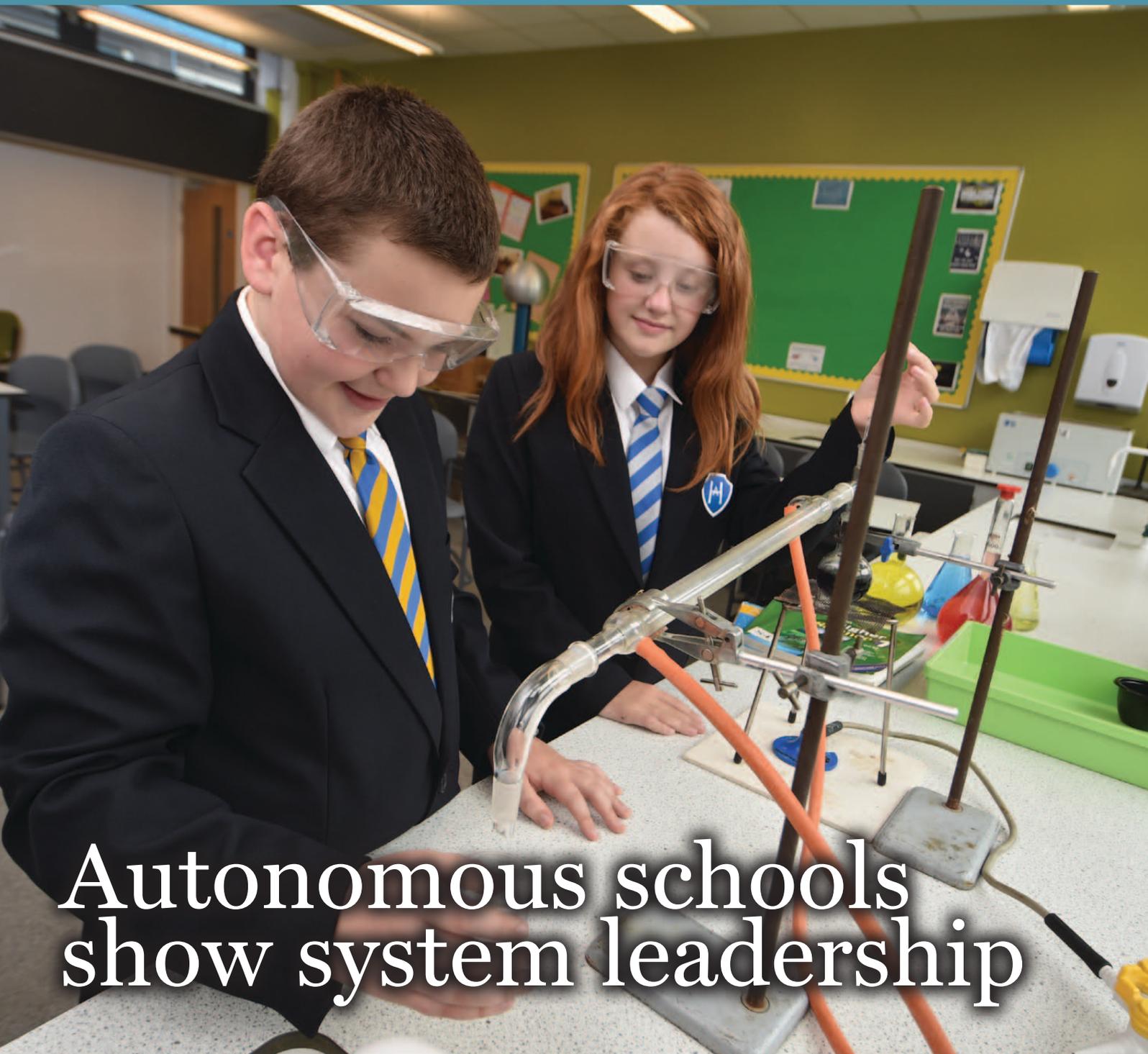


# Academy magazine

Volume 4 Number 3 Summer 2015



## Autonomous schools show system leadership

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# From the editor



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By the time this edition reaches your desk the election will almost be upon us. The outcome is uncertain and will decide the direction of education policy in the medium term. FASNA has worked hard to tease out policy aims from the main parties, but this has been no easy task. FASNA's November Conference (as reported in the last issue) was designed to give key organisations the chance to express their hopes for education once the election has been decided. This was followed by FASNA outlining its own hopes in a series of articles in the last issue of this magazine.

In order to try and galvanise the political parties into supporting the freedoms enjoyed by autonomous schools FASNA ran a campaign in the press putting a series of questions to the political leaders. Tom Clark outlines this in his article on page 14.

This process moved on to the FASNA Conference at the British Library in March when the three major parties presented their case to a packed conference (see Conference Report on page 7) and concludes with this edition of the *Academy Magazine*.

It was hoped that this process would provide members with clarity – what the parties stood for, what their policies were and what the differences between them were. It was also to be hoped that FASNA would be able to influence those policies and protect those things which FASNA has fought so long and hard for.

Has this been achieved? Well, in truth, only partially.

As one would anticipate, it is easier for the **Conservatives** to be consistent and clear about the onward march of the policies introduced when in government. Nicky Morgan has become enthusiastic and forceful as she has grown into the role. She is clear about protecting *all* the freedoms currently enjoyed by academies and other autonomous schools. The Conservatives would continue to drive academisation and the establishment of free schools; they would consolidate their curriculum reforms and have a period of curriculum stability; they would encourage the establishment of an independent Royal College of Teaching; they would guarantee per-pupil funding in cash terms (*ie* not inflation-proofed) but which would provide extra funding for the growth in extra pupils; and they would

move towards a National Fair Funding formula within the life of the next Parliament.

The **Liberal Democrats** have found it harder to establish policies which are different to their coalition partners. After all, they have had an influential voice in education policy during this parliament. The search for this position has led to an occasional lack of consistency amongst their education team. Whilst they are clear that most of the freedoms enjoyed by autonomous schools will be protected there are some caveats in this. For example, they will expect all teachers to have Qualified Teacher Status, thus ending the ability of academy heads to emulate their independent school counterparts and employ teaching staff who are gifted but unqualified. One might ask, if it is good enough for the independent sector, and presumably Nick Clegg and David Laws benefitted from this at their private schools, then why not good enough for independent state schools? However, they appear committed to continuing the academy and free school programmes.

They would also curtail the curriculum freedoms enjoyed by academies by imposing a slimmed down national core curriculum for all schools. An independent Education Standards Authority would decide upon the curriculum. This may not be meaningful in practice, as schools already follow a basic core curriculum – but it depends on the definition of ‘slimmed down national curriculum’ and ‘core’. It could mean that maintained schools have their curriculum flexibility increased over non-core subjects. Whatever it is, there would be the risk of continued curriculum turbulence for schools.

The Liberal Democrats would also seek to return some of the powers stripped away from Local Authorities to monitor and intervene in schools. At the FASNA Conference Lord Storey was clear that his party did not believe in a system of commissioners but wanted more local control.

On the education budget the Liberal Democrats would appear to offer the most by offering to protect the *whole* schools budget, including Sixth Forms and Early Years, which the other parties have not offered to protect. However, they do not offer to fund any increases in pupil numbers. They would also want to move towards a National Fair Funding Formula, although they were reticent to offer any time scales.

The logo for TRUSTnet, featuring the word "TRUST" in a large, blue, sans-serif font, followed by "net" in a smaller, white, sans-serif font inside a blue square. To the right of the logo is a small, square inset image showing three young girls in school uniforms smiling and talking.A red circular badge with a white border containing the text "Designed for Schools" in white, sans-serif font.

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# This is a ‘perfect financial storm’ on the horizon and it will come to dominate debate in the first year of the new Parliament

Then there is the confusion on the questions of National Pay and Conditions. At the FASNA Conference Lord Storey said his party wanted to retain these, whilst David Laws has said his party wants pay flexibility. Who knows? However, this could be a key issue for autonomous schools at a time when budget constraint coincides with teacher shortage.

What then of **Labour**? Their response to FASNA’s campaign seemed supportive, the only caveat being that Labour would want to intervene with coasting schools as well as failing schools. However, public utterances appear contradictory and lack consistency. They would not protect *all* current freedoms as they want all teachers to have QTS and to retain National Pay and Conditions.

Whilst Oona King spoke strongly about a National Fair Funding Formula at the FASNA Conference, Tristram Hunt raised lots of caveats about this at the ASCL Conference. Do they support his or not? It would seem supremely ironic that a party so wedded to fairness and equality would fail to put right the unfair system that values some children more highly than others, when they have exactly the same needs, just because of what Oona King called “*a postcode lottery of funding*”.

On the curriculum Labour have promised stability in the primary and secondary curriculum for a few years, which will allow teachers a sigh of relief. However, they have committed to overturning reforms at A’ Level as soon as possible.

Their promises on the education budget, when analysed, are not significantly different from the Conservatives. Labour will inflation-proof the schools budget. However, this does not account for increased numbers of pupils. The Tories will not inflation-proof but will increase funding in line with pupil numbers. The actual difference is slight (under 0.2%) – although the Conservatives try to make it sound a lot by saying it is half a billion over the five years of the next Parliament!

Labour would want to see a larger Middle Tier with the expansion of the Conservatives eight Regional Schools Commissioners to a total of forty-one. They would call them something different too (Directors of School Standards). Oona King’s unequivocal statement that these would be responsible directly to the Secretary of State is at odds with Tristram Hunt’s

views to date, which favour an independent directorate.

The big unanswered question for Labour is what approach they will take to schools wanting to convert to academy status. They have said they will end the free school programme, but does this mean that the creation of new schools will just revert back to Local Authorities? Will they stop all academy conversions? If not, will they stop the grants to support conversion? At times Tristram Hunt seems to want to encourage primary schools to sign up to formal clusters. All of this is, as yet unclear.

I trust that the publication of the party manifestos may address some of these uncertainties – only time will tell.

What none of the politicians are addressing, and something schools thus far are surprisingly quiet about, is the impending crisis in school funding. With school budgets being capped in cash terms the increase in pay, in employers National Insurance Contributions and in Employers pension contributions (all of which apply to both teachers and support staff) schools are facing increases in costs. We estimate this to be in the order of 9% by 2016. Schools will not be able to fund these increases without recourse to cutting staff. **This is a ‘perfect financial storm’** on the horizon and it will come to dominate debate in the first year of the new Parliament. The article on Staff Restructuring by Nick Watson of Stone King will be of interest here.

*Note: FASNA is speaking on this subject at the Academies Show on 29th April and will also run some seminars on “Staff restructuring in light of budget cuts” in the autumn (watch the FASNA website for details)*

Thankfully, not all our thinking has to be dominated by politics. This issue features some articles on key issues of interest. Carl Ward’s article on Executive Headship and System Leadership tries to explore how this role is different from traditional Headship and begs the question of how we prepare our leaders for this. Emma Yates, writing on Performance Related pay indicates ways to tie this in to the school improvement plan as well as achieving staff buy-in. With articles on the effective use of the Pupil Premium, entrepreneurship and social enterprise we continue to show examples of good practice in our schools.

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](mailto:editor@academymag.co.uk)



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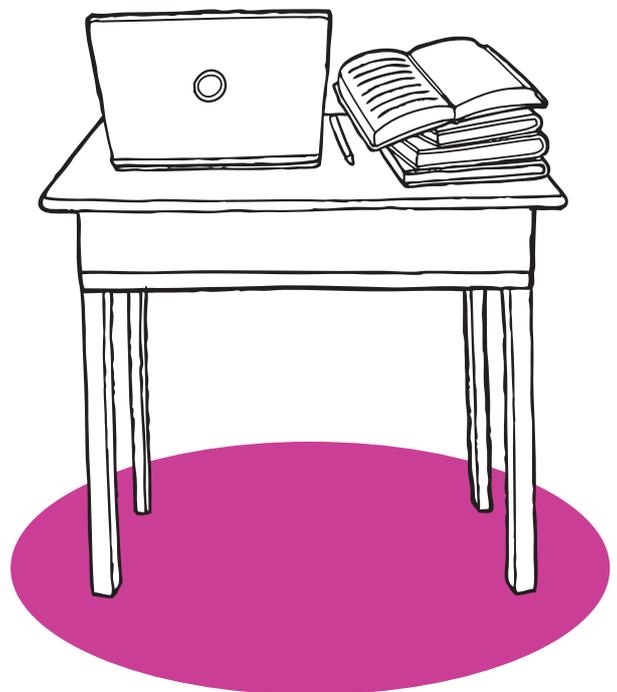
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# FASNA's Spring Conference

FASNA's Spring Conference at the British Library was the final piece in FASNA's pre-election strategy. The strategy started with our Autumn Conference giving a platform for ASCL, NAHT, IAA and NASBM to outline what they would like to see from a new government. This was followed by the last issue of this magazine outlining FASNA's views on a range of key issues. FASNA then ran a campaign to try to persuade the political parties to protect school autonomy. This received wide coverage in the Times and TES, as well as the regional press. The Conference in the British Library was to give the main parties the opportunity to respond and to outline their educational policies and to be questioned by delegates.

The Conference was dogged by constant changes in line-up from Labour and the Liberal Democrats. However, a strong line-up was eventually secured (but only by late the day before!) and the sold-out Conference (with 50 people on the waiting list) was treated to some robust questioning of our speakers.

The first speaker was **Baroness Oona King**, the Labour Education Minister in the Lords. FASNA was really grateful for Baroness King coming to speak at the Conference at very late notice as Tristram Hunt, Shadow Education Secretary withdrew late in the day. Baroness King had not only been willing to be briefed by FASNA but also had clearly prepared for the occasion.

Baroness King continued by explaining why she feels politics matters. When she was elected to Parliament in 1997 she was given the number 200 – she was the 200th female MP – 200 in over 600 years! This brought home to her how long it takes institutions to change. However, sometimes we don't have time to wait for change, as in education we can't afford to wait as a generation of children pass through. She argued that it is up to politicians to set the direction of travel and for schools to set the path.

On **Freedom and Autonomy** she congratulated FASNA for helping forge a new national consensus. The Labour Party wanted all schools to have academy

freedoms but she did not want to place too much value on school type. She reminded delegates that it was Labour and Andrew Adonis who created sponsored academies. Whatever happens at general election Autonomy and freedom are vital but Labour is not happy about increasing free schools in the way the current government have done.

If autonomy and freedom are important, leadership, in whatever structures there are, is vital as leadership delivers success. At this point, Baroness King spoke of the letter FASNA had sent to the Times and to political leaders and said that her party had signed up in support of all aspects of the letter. "We want you to use these freedoms," she said. However, "Where leadership is failing we won't stand by and let the market take over, the Director of School Standards would intervene".

Baroness King was emphatic that this was not a return to Local Authority control. However, she argued, like all successful school systems, there has to be a **Middle Tier** to identify problems and to intervene with failing schools. At this point she referenced the article "*The Vexed Question of the Middle Tier*" by Peter Beaven and Tom Clark in the last edition of the Academy Magazine (**this proves the politicians read the magazine – Ed**) Directors of School Standards will work across Local Authority areas. She said that we can't allow failure or failing schools to go unchecked. Local Authorities will have a role in commissioning new schools and have oversight of school places. She gave the example of secondary schools struggling to get the best from children as they do not have the groundwork in place before starting Year 7. Whilst improvements at GCSE are to be welcomed we must not forget that almost half the pupils aged 16 do not achieve five good GCSE's including



Baroness Oona King

English and maths. She said, “The forgotten 50% is important to us”.

Finally, Baroness King turned to the education budget, pointing out that Labour is the only party pledging to protect entire DfE budget, including Early Years and post-16 – “and this should be important to you.”

Joan Binder, Vice Chair of FASNA, then questioned Baroness King on autonomy. Baroness King repeated that there was no going back to Local Authorities running schools. However, we must not wait longer than necessary to improve schools when children’s futures are at stake. Evidence has shown that we can replace under-aspiration and counteract poverty quickly. In this she gave the example of what had happened in Tower Hamlets.

Baroness King said that Labour supported a move towards a **National Fair Funding Formula**, as they needed to end the post-code lottery of school funding. Having said that she was not in a position to indicate how quickly this might be addressed. However, Labour feels that a national framework for Pay and Conditions is best, and schools should then be free to operate within it.

Parminter’s School said they feared upheaval after the election but after hearing Oona King they felt that this might not happen under Labour. Baroness King said Labour would not interfere with good or outstanding schools and that they agreed with FASNA that intervention should be with weak and failing schools.

Leora Cruddas from ASCL asked who would employ the Directors of Schools Standards and was told it would be the Secretary of State. This is the same as the current Regional Schools Commissioners.

When Neville Coles from Priory Community asked about the use on unqualified teachers. Baroness King said Labour wanted all teachers to be fully qualified and would provide easy ways for people to qualify.

Finally, when asked why there should be 41 regional commissioners rather than



the current eight she said that there were not enough to do the job properly.

**Tom Clark**, FASNA chairman, then spoke about FASNA’s key issues. He outlined FASNA’s campaign to protect autonomy (which is dealt with in his article). In this he argued cogently for all current autonomies and freedoms to be protected and extended.

He repeated FASNA’s argument that there needs to be a National Fair Funding Formula. The current system is indefensible but it would appear that, although all parties recognise this, it is too difficult to do politically. There are generations of pupils who have been underfunded and FASNA will continue to press for national fair funding as it has for the last 20 years.

Tom put forward the view that if system leadership is a significant part of the way forward, and there seems to be a consensus on this, then there must be a financial incentive for leaders to build capacity to be able to do this.

Finally he outlined FASNA’s view that good Governance is vital, especially in light of the new Ofsted framework. None of the parties have said they disagree yet there are no clear plans to work for this or to have processes at Ofsted which fully understand what good governance looks like.

The next speaker was **Lord Mike Storey**, the Liberal-Democrat Education Minister in the Lords. Conference was grateful that he had stepped in at the last minute. Lord Storey read his speech which started by praising FASNA and the gains made via **Autonomy** saying “*The freedom that free schools and academies can afford parents, teachers and pupils alike is a great thing. However, it would be misguided to oppose certain boundaries within which free schools and*



Nicky Morgan



was a ripple of dissent throughout the auditorium.

Another key area for the Liberal Democrats is to ensure that PSHE, especially Sex and Relationships education, is taught in all schools, including academies and free schools.

As for **School Improvement**, the Lord Storey said that his party wants to “move further towards a system where successful schools support each other to improve, building on our work within this coalition government. We will help broker support between weaker schools and leading schools; recruit many more leading practitioners, and designate up to 2,500 good and outstanding schools as “System Leaders” with a National Leadership Institute grant to support their work.” Lord Storey envisaged more free schools and academies being approved. He also envisaged growing numbers of schools working together in formal collaborations.

On **Accountability**, he said that, “The bottom line where free schools and academies are concerned is that they benefit from public funding. To this end, they should be held to the same scrutiny, and their teacher/leaders held to the same high standards as Local Authority schools.” Thus Ofsted should be brought in to inspect

*academies can exercise their autonomy.”*

He went on to outline the boundaries the Liberal-Democrats would want to impose. These included all teachers having Qualified Teacher Status and a minimum curriculum entitlement (a slimmed down national curriculum) to be taught in all state-funded schools. An Independent Educational Standards Authority, comprising subject experts and the teaching profession, would set this curriculum. However, the Liberal

Democrats would also want maximum flexibility outside this curriculum entitlement.

One area the Liberal Democrats would want to improve is the provision of independent careers advice. Lord Storey argued that, as school funding was based on numbers, this discourages “many schools from informing pupils of the chances to perhaps study BTEC subjects, apply for apprenticeships, or move on to further education colleges.” At this point there

The Panel





Multi-academy Trusts. In addition Ofsted needs to be free from political control

His penultimate point was that we must ensure *“the implementation of free schools does not lead to the social fragmentation of the education system”* – which seemed to contradict an earlier point when he said, *“free schools are an asset to the education system.”*

He finished by saying *“Supporters of education like ourselves are like a large family - although we may bicker about technicalities within policy, our central aims are similar and we must therefore remain focused on improving standards. We need to do this so that pupils can be guided towards success by high quality teachers, for schools to work together to secure an all-rounded education for all, and for school leaders to be held to account to deliver the important, holistic education that young people deserve. I congratulate you once again on your*

*tireless work on education, and urge you to always keep those united goals in mind.”*

Peter Beaven, CEO Designate of FASNA, questioned Lord Storey. His first question was about **Autonomy**. Would the Liberal Democrats protect all the freedoms currently enjoyed by autonomous schools? Lord Storey answered that his party supported National Pay and Conditions and then apologized that David Laws could not attend and he *“was nervous about saying something different to David’s views”*. However, he claimed to be a supporter of free schools, to believe in National Pay and Conditions but that teachers should be able to be paid more, and that the political system should not dictate how schools are run.

On the **Middle Tier**, Lord Storey seemed not to understand the current landscape. He was concerned that schools

would not have access to support as used to be provided by Local Authorities. He said he could see chains providing such support, but what about stand-alone academies. Peter said we are talking about successful schools being free from interference from a middle tier. Lord Storey’s response was *“We do not believe in system of commissioners, there must be high levels of collaboration, we would give time and resources to do that”*

On the **National Fair Funding Formula** he said this was something the Liberal Democrats believed in but could not give any details on the progress this party would make towards this. He said the Liberal Democrats would not cut budgets but when he quoted that academies have £2.6 billion in reserves, which they could use, delegates were furious. It was pointed out that academies cannot go into deficit so they must have

reserves; also that they needed to save to fund building projects and these often carried from one year into the next so the money was committed but not spent. It was also pointed out that hard times are ahead and that to have unfunded increases in NI and pension contributions makes a mockery of saying budgets are protected. Schools must *plan* to meet these cost pressures, which was what prudent schools were doing. Lord Storey was unsympathetic to this saying that we are all in difficult times.

On **Teachers**, he argued that all teachers should be good and have QTS. When questioned about parents wanting 'good' teachers and being less interested in 'qualified' status he implied that QTS ensured the teacher was high quality. Once again, there was disquiet amongst delegates about these comments.

The final politician to speak was **Nicky Morgan**, Secretary of State for Education. She began by saying that the questions of autonomy and accountability were central to the next phase of education reform and she congratulated FASNA for playing a central role in bringing them to the attention of politicians over the last twenty years. She quoted Peter Beaven from the last issue of this magazine saying he was right to say: *"the value of diversity and self-determination in shaping outstanding educational provision – and the importance of clear accountability within this – is now widely accepted ... none of these facets of how we understand education today would have been as clearly understood without FASNA"*. **(Once again this shows our magazine is read at the highest levels – Ed)**

On **Autonomy** she attacked Ed Milliband's criticism of the current "alphabet soup" of different schools. She sees diversity, innovation and choice. She said *"As a Party, we have been very clear that the reform agenda that has produced this diversity will continue; the commitment to greater freedom and autonomy for schools lives on; and any school that wants to take advantage of these freedoms should be able to do so."* She was clear that international

evidence demonstrated the need for school autonomy and that increases in the number of autonomous schools was delivering results. Thus 4% more primary academies were judged good or better by Ofsted than LA maintained schools. At secondary level it is 14% more.

However, schools need **Accountability** too. Nicky Morgan believes that schools should be given freedom but then account for their performance. Thus she said: *"Certainly, all failing schools will continue to be subject to the sponsored academies programme, but we want to go further. Where a school is coasting – where a school is not 'good' or 'outstanding' but nor is it in the lowest Ofsted band – it too will have to change. Where Ofsted finds a school to "require improvement" – and where it cannot demonstrate that it has the capacity to deliver that change – under a Conservative government it will have to become a sponsored academy – because as the Prime Minister has repeatedly said, for us an 'ok' school is not good enough."*

The Conservatives are the only party committed to expanding the number of free schools. She said *"And let's not lose sight of what that means. It means any group of parents or teachers, or any existing good school, can apply to open their own new school when they are not happy with*

*the existing provision in their local area. It's not just about responding to the duty to fulfil basic need – though that is important – but responding to parental demand for high-quality school places too."*

In holding schools to account, the new Progress 8 measure will ensure that **all** pupils are focused on, not just the C/D borderline. With the publication of Destinations data school performance will be better identified. With shorter but more frequent inspections of good schools, parents will have greater confidence in information about schools. Oversight of academies falls to the Regional Schools Commissioners and Headteacher Boards. This is relatively new but early signs are that they are being effective.

Beneath this in the accountability ladder are the Governors. This important role is being supported by clear documentation in the Governors' Handbook, as well as training and support.

On the **Education Budget**, the Conservatives have pledged to maintain the same level of funding for each pupil, thus accounting for the increase in numbers of pupils. Nicky Morgan claimed that this meant they would spend more than the other parties as Labour would not fund increase in numbers of pupils. She estimated this to be £500 million over the course of the next parliament. Additionally, the Conservatives would move towards a National Fair Funding Formula over the course of the next parliament.

She finished by saying that *"As we look to the future, our focus must genuinely be to build on this success and keep pushing forward with policies that we know work – not throwing everything up in the air, pulling on the handbrake or turning back now just as the tipping point has been reached."* She then gave some pledges about the things FASNA feared, and had been laid out in the last edition of this magazine:

- "The return of any degree of local control with its costs and bureaucracy – not under the Conservatives."



## A Case Study – Leigh Academies Trust

When Leigh Academies Trust (LAT), the Dartford based Trust which has gone from strength to strength since its creation in 2008, approached Farrer Barnes to assist with the next phase of its recruitment growth, we were delighted to assist.

Providing the educational vision and direction for the Trust, the CEO, Simon Beamish and the Deputy CEO, Neil Willis, decided in line with the strategy, to recruit a HR Director, new Finance Director, Cluster Finance Controller and Business Controller, to prepare effectively for the future.

The steady and successful progress that has been made since 2008 is apparent with all of their current academies judged ‘Good’ or better by Ofsted, and their mission is to achieve ‘Outstanding’ in all of their schools.

*‘As a successful multi-academy trust, we are being encouraged by the Department for Education to grow further, but will never do so at the expense of the communities we already serve. We have no intention of expanding beyond the South East of England’.*

**Simon Beamish, CEO,  
December 2014.**

Given the importance of recruiting the right people to enable them to drive their

vision, LAT chose to use a recruitment company not just to access the expertise a specialist recruiter can bring, but also to tap into a known source of candidates with the specific skills and experience required for such a drive.

LAT approached Farrer Barnes, a national specialist within the academy world and with over 20 years’ experience of senior leadership recruitment. Farrer Barnes was chosen due to their reputation as one of the ‘finance and HR leaders’ within this specialist sector and holders of the Independent Academies Assured Service Quality Mark.

Working closely with LAT, branded advertising in relevant trade journals and online sites combined with Farrer Barnes’ extensive database of Academy candidates were used to establish an initial list of suitable candidates for each separate position. Farrer Barnes’ team of Peter Newey (MD) and Sarah Ottley (Head of Education Recruitment) then held detailed discussions with each of the prospective candidates around Dartford to enable them to present final shortlists to LAT.

The deadlines for the positions were arranged to match LAT’s timelines and to ensure that resources were available for the interview process with minimal disruption.

Farrer Barnes were on hand to offer further insight and background information on each of the chosen interviewees, and provide candidate feedback afterwards.

The interview processes went smoothly and the four successful individuals were delighted to join this exciting Trust, Richard Taylor and Jonathan Shaw below being two of them.



**HR Director  
Richard  
Taylor**



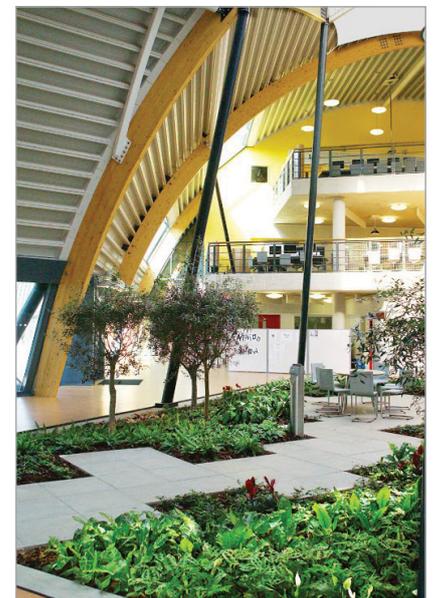
**Jonathan  
Shaw, BC**

.....

In describing the interview process and its subsequent outcome, Neil Willis commented; ‘We were delighted with the quality and range of applicants that Farrer Barnes was able to attract for each post, and the assistance that we received throughout the recruitment process. As a consequence we have added further outstanding leadership to the Finance and HR functions of the Trust, ensuring exceptional support in these key areas to all senior leaders in each of our academies’

.....

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- “A reduction in the scope and range of school freedoms and autonomy – not under us, we want them to grow.”
- “Any increase in the politicisation of assessment and accountability – I hope that will never be a charge you might level at a Conservative government.”
- “Further delays in the fair funding of schools - as I say, the commitment to a National Fair Funding formula is there.”
- “And a narrow concentration only on the contribution of type one ‘sponsored’ academies – I hope I have shown that our ambitions are far more expansive than that.”

Her final shot was that we share the same objectives – a good school for every child – and to say that she enjoyed her first FASNA Conference as we gave her solutions not just problems!

In answer to questions from the floor about funding Nicky Morgan said that schools will have to do more with not much more funding. She said she noted the dissatisfaction with school forums

and agreed that they would not be needed if there was a National Fair Funding Formula.

In answer to David Spencer from the Wyvern School in Kent who asked why not make all schools into academies she said her party would not force good or outstanding schools to become academies. She gave a similar answer to Leora Cruddas from ASCL when asked why not give Regional Schools Commissioners the powers to intervene in LA maintained schools.

When Toby Salt of Ormiston Academies Trust asked if academy chains could be allowed to borrow funds, in the same way that FE and HE can do, to invest in their schools she said she would look at this issue.

Delegates expressed concern about teacher recruitment. Nicky Morgan explained what the government had done about this and gave the example of extra funding for maths and science teachers. However, she felt workload was a key issue too and they were consulting on reductions to workload. Similarly, bringing Ofsted inspections in-house and increasing the number of inspectors who were practitioners would decrease the pressure of inspection. Her aim was for schools to lead a self-improving system. In reply Tom Clark said schools that are leading the system need funding to do this. There needs to be flex within the budget, so they can be incentivised.

After lunch, delegates heard from **the Panel** of Brian Lightman (ASCL), Russell Hobby (NAHT), Tom Clark and Peter Beaven (FASNA). There was support for the Royal College of Teaching but Brian indicated that there is a great danger if we don’t get it right, as the opportunity will not come along again. School leaders need to be getting their teachers to sign up to it and we must help to shape it. Whilst agreeing, Tom warned against it being over complicated and bureaucratic.

There was a lot of debate on the use of unqualified teachers. Peter argued that perhaps we should agree that these could be used as long as they were working

towards the teacher qualification. This seemed to get general support as a middle way.

Rob McDonough of West Bridgford School said it would be good if FASNA, ASCL and NAHT would campaign together for a National Fair Funding Formula as it appeared that there was consensus on this issue.

**Stone King** gave their round-up of legal and employment issues. Schools need to watch out for shared parental leave, which may be difficult to manage.

The day finished with three workshops.

**A Perfect Financial Storm** was delivered by Simon Oxenham from NASBM. He outlined the reasons for current financial difficulties caused by increased staff costs and the difficulties in paying for redundancies. He outlined the steps schools need to take to cost their curriculum and staff structure. For example he pointed out that a Headteacher may cost £800 per day (including on-costs) so if they work for the RSC Headteacher Board at £500 per day the school is subsidising the RSC!

**Executive Headship and System Leadership** was delivered by Carl Ward of Haywood Academy in Stoke. **Performance Related Pay** was delivered by Emma Yates of Hayesfield School in Bath. You can read about these workshops in their articles in this issue.



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# INK Conferences Summer Term 2015

## Boys will be Brilliant

Breaking through the barriers to boys' achievement and turning out decent young men

**Speaker: Gary Wilson**

Tuesday, May 19

Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, LONDON

Friday, June 12

National Railway Museum, YORK

Thursday, June 25

SS Great Britain, BRISTOL

## Character Development in Schools

A structured programme for building character *and* raising academic standards

**Speaker: Andrew Hammond**

Friday, May 22

SS Great Britain, BRISTOL

Tuesday, June 9

The RSA, LONDON

Thursday, June 11

National Railway Museum, YORK

## Making Space for Creativity

Planning for creativity and independent thinking across the curriculum

**Speaker: Andrew Hammond**

Tuesday, June 16

Cinderella Bar, Palladium, LONDON

Friday, June 19

National Railway Museum, YORK

Wednesday, June 24

SS Great Britain, BRISTOL

## Making Maths Magical

Building enjoyment and success into Primary Maths

**Speaker: Andrew Jeffrey**

Wednesday, May 20

Cinderella Bar, Palladium, LONDON

Thursday, May 21

SS Great Britain, BRISTOL

Thursday, June 18

Botanical Gardens, BIRMINGHAM

## Autumn term 2015 – Dates and venues now being added

Speakers include:

**Max Coates** (MA Leadership Programme Leader at UCL Institute of Education);

**Martin Robinson** (author of *Trivium 21c*);

**David Horton** (IAPS subject leader for ICT);

**Geoff Barton** (headteacher of King Edward VI School, Suffolk)

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## INK Conference Speakers



### Gary Wilson

Gary Wilson is widely regarded as the country's leading expert on raising boys' achievement with 40 years' experience in education and author of several books on boys and achievement. He regularly speaks at conferences and delivers training in schools all over the world. Gary is the author of several books, including *Breaking through the Barriers to Boys' Achievement*.



### Andrew Jeffrey

Having taught for 20 years, Andrew set up Magic Message Ltd in 2007. Andrew now travels the world offering consultancy services to schools seeking to improve and enrich the teaching and learning of mathematics. He is the author of several books for teachers, including the best-selling *Always, Sometimes, Never*, and is a regular keynote speaker at conferences in the UK and abroad.



### Andrew Hammond

Educational author and trainer, Andrew is a former Head, Deputy Head, Director of Studies and Head of English. Andrew has written numerous textbooks for a range of educational publishers. Andrew holds a BA (Hons) QTS and an MA in Creativity in Education. Andrew regularly speaks at conferences, festivals and schools across the UK.

**To book your place, email [andie@ink-ed.com](mailto:andie@ink-ed.com) or call 01394 389866**



## FASNA's campaign to protect autonomy

Tom Clark asks, are school freedoms really safe after the election?

For over 25 years FASNA has campaigned for freedom and autonomy for schools. This has helped build a consensus which recognises that diversity and self-determination helps shape outstanding schools. All political parties are now broadly supportive of this and part of that consensus. Obviously, with greater freedom comes the need for robust autonomy and FASNA has always made it clear that autonomy and accountability is not a case of 'either/ or'.

We are firmly committed to the maintenance of all current academy freedoms. International evidence shows that the most successful education systems benefit from schools with academy-style

freedoms. In England 'converter' primary and secondary schools are doing better than maintained schools. They are more likely to be graded good or outstanding by Ofsted than Local Authority maintained schools; and their pupils generally make better progress.

Despite the broad consensus around autonomous schools FASNA was concerned that not all aspects of autonomy currently enjoyed by schools would be supported by a new government and that some freedoms might be eroded after the election. To this end FASNA wrote in March to all party leaders and their education teams asking for their answer to four questions. The questions were:

1. Will your party ensure a level playing field with maintained schools having access to revenue and capital funding?
2. Will your party commit to supporting successful autonomous schools working to improve standards in less successful schools and that this work will be allowed to continue unimpeded from outside interference and intervention?
3. Will your party ensure that any 'local' intelligence and structure used to identify potential failure will concentrate its resources, energy and only focus on failing schools, thus avoiding the creation of new and unnecessary bureaucracies and their



associated cost at a time of stringency in public finances?

- Will your party protect all the freedoms currently enjoyed by academies and other autonomous schools including freedom over the curriculum and how to deliver it, and freedom over pay and conditions for school staff?

This campaign was picked up by *The Times* and *The Times Education Supplement* and subsequently by local press and *The Daily Telegraph*.

Responses from the political parties were broadly supportive. Tristram Hunt responded via his adviser offering support for the first three questions but adding in answer to the fourth question:

“We will focus on schools that are under-performing, not just those that are ‘failing’. Coasting schools will not be able to continue to coast. Underperformance will not be allowed to go unchallenged – irrespective of the school type.”

David Laws wrote in broad support but had caveats about the need for Qualified Teacher Status and wanting to impose a “minimum curriculum entitlement” on all schools which would be set by “an independent Education Standards Authority”. Also, whilst saying that good and outstanding schools should not be subject to intervention, he said that the Liberal Democrats “wanted to see more local work to identify and support weak schools”, implying an expanded role for Local Authorities.

Recent statements by Labour and the Liberal Democrats have heightened our concerns about the potential erosion of autonomy. Their statements suggest that they might not protect all the freedoms which schools now enjoy and which are helping to drive up standards.

Though Tristram Hunt said that Labour would not “go back to the old days of the Local Authority running all the schools”,

Ed Miliband has said Labour would “have a proper Local Authority framework for all schools”. We don’t know what this means.

At our “Election Special” Conference in March the Liberal Democrat spokesman, Lord Storey, said schools needed some form of local control. For FASNA it is clear that any erosion of school freedoms through LA or government regulation or overbearing ‘middle tier’ structures will reduce the capacity of schools to perform well in the future.

Lord Storey was troubled about the freedom to vary national pay and condition and less than clear in being able to support variations to the curriculum. Baroness King, the Labour spokesperson, was broadly supportive of FASNA’s position if a little wary of the freedom to vary to national pay and conditions.

In light of these comments we feel that we must continue with our campaign and keep asking these questions.



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# Bringing ‘California weather’ to the UK education system

Carl Ward, Chief Executive of the City Learning Trust in Stoke, looks at the challenges of system leadership in the development of the self-improving system

Has the education system ever been through such interesting, eventful and demanding times? Has leadership of schools ever been more challenging? Equally, has the education system ever had such an opportunity?

Despite popular press to the contrary, the education system in England is arguably in the best state it has even been – Ofsted says that over 70% of schools are judged as good or above; the teaching profession is the best trained with the most talented teaching generation ever; our education leaders are rising to the challenge of becoming ‘change makers’ and ‘system leaders’; Pearson international league tables (one could argue broader and more balanced than PISA) place the UK in the top six performing nations in the world.

So, against this backdrop we are seeing the biggest change in the English education system that we have ever seen, with academies taking the lead as the drive for a self-improving system is moved forward at pace. The phrase ‘autonomy to unleash greatness’ is becoming an enabling factor in the journey move from a ‘good’ to ‘great’ system of education.

What are the challenges for the growth of multi academy Trusts (MATs) and their success?

With over 2500 academies in approaching 1000 MATs nationally, ranging from two schools to 40 plus in size, with local, regional and national perspectives, the system is developing collaborative partnerships at pace. However, how sustainable and successful these will be is open to debate. Examples of triumph and disaster in this new landscape are all around us. So are there any pointers to success and what are the challenges faced?

- The evidence would suggest that MATs start to operate most productively when student numbers across schools is anything between 3000 and 5000. MATs that are smaller in size, may struggle to have longevity of finances and the economies of scale to survive and prosper if a financial storm hits.
- With the plethora of small MATs growing, they should consider collaborating to share services with other MATs so they can maintain autonomy and face the challenges ahead with confidence.

- To do this leaders of MATs should develop leadership behaviours that are focused on sustainable growth with strategic partnerships becoming common place between MATs.
- Schools that are part of national MATs which are not in close geographical proximity to other member-schools in those MATs should have partner schools in their own locality so that they can share best practice and resources (including human resources) in order to better face the challenges ahead of them.
- Schools that are in difficulty should partner up with a local ‘successful’ school to share staff and resources. MATs should collaborate across the country to ensure that these partnerships develop so that resources can be employed more effectively.
- MATs should grow MATs as one of the natural conclusions of the self-improving system. As more and more schools become ‘successful’ they must be encouraged to help other schools by collaboration. Government should encourage a tiered approach for smaller MATs to be allowed to become autonomously connected to successful MATs and share resources, systems and governance procedures.

How do we manage competition so that it does not stifle collaboration?

The story of Silicon Valley in America provides an interesting insight into this question. Since the 1970s it has been the driving force of technological development in the world. At about the same time that the San Francisco Bay Valley was set up, another less well known ‘Silicon Valley’ was set up on the other side of America – which failed. The reason apparently was simple – the weather. At the end of a given working day, the weather is so temperate that employees from different companies socialise with each other and share developments. This has led to the development of an outward facing culture – no secrets kept, which helped create a virtual circle of further development, where everyone kept improving because knowledge was freely shared.

Although the above is a little simplified, it has clear parallels



with the culture developed between schools in the London Challenge. Creating an outward facing culture in these examples was paramount to the further development of the self-improving system, so how do we help bring ‘California weather’ metaphorically speaking, to our education system?

It has been said that the model of free market competition cannot be applied to the education of young people because it is counter-productive to the needs of the self-improving system. The crux of this issue is that league tables discourage collaboration between clubs. Nowhere is this more evident than in football. One can hardly imagine Liverpool collaborating with Manchester United to support their mutual competitive progress in the league. Yet, in education while it cannot be denied that league table data encourages focus and improvement within schools, the question is whether they are too dominant and whether they provide too narrow a set of results-based improvements.

One question to be posed here is how can we reform the league table mentality and system so that we can help set the conditions within which the self-improving system can flourish? The answer lies in the way Ofsted uses league table data, how government publishes such data and how schools react.

Progress 8 will undoubtedly further impact on these conditions and continue to extend the league table flux encountered this year (generated by too quick a change in the exam and qualification system). The volatility of these changes may render any comparisons (and hence the league table system

over the coming years) unreliable. In Silicon Valley terms, we need to create weather that encourages collaboration rather than competition. Indeed, would it not be preferable to consider a suspension of these systems until we have settled data trends? Would this not afford a breathing space for the self-improving system to take root in ‘weather’ conditions that encourage an eco-system for cultural growth?

An Ecosystem for Growth of the Self-improving System?

The answer must be by working together. To do this, we need to develop new mind-sets and behaviours to allow the growth of collaboration and sustainable partnerships across the country. The challenge, of course, is managing change, or rather our, reaction to such change. Consensus is forming and during the last year much has been achieved structurally to develop the self-improving system.

What needs to be done in the coming years is to set the conditions for the growth of a great system of education in this country?

1. Have change that is systematic, managed, and planned with the profession. A new government in May must think very carefully about introducing further change without a ‘true’ partnership between policy makers and education professionals.
2. The education system must engage meaningfully with parents on the changes that are taking place. No serious attempt has been made to do this hither to and we must have one that is

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## In New Zealand, the government is considering suspending elements of their external assessment system for two years to allow the self-improving system to develop in an environment where the educational ‘weather’ is favourable

coordinated between the profession and politicians if parents are to continue to have faith in the system.

3. Leaders of schools must not be possessive about traditional boundaries in education (nursery, primary, secondary, tertiary). From a parent and child perspective, some of the most stressful times come at transition points in education between age ranges. An outcome of the self-improving system must be a greater confidence for parents that schools work so closely together in their locality partnerships that their children will be confident in the process of change. This is evident in many groups of schools that have got this process right, but too many have not.
4. Leaders of schools must be encouraged to trust each other more. To do this they must exhibit leadership behaviours that engender trust between each other. In sustainable partnerships, these behaviours will develop quickly as barriers are removed. Collaboration will flourish better where values are shared and decisions promote inclusivity.
5. Leaders must understand that shared resources and programmes between schools and MATs will have to develop further in the challenging economic times that lie ahead of us. Government will need to meet schools half way on funding, but schools and MATs must move closer to financial reality with government.
6. An urgent national review of the financial challenges facing schools in recent cost changes must take place following the general election where a fair and equitable way forward must be agreed jointly between, the profession and government. There must be give and take – we are in it together.
7. We need a new understanding of accountability measures that allows all schools to be seen as great. If we continue with our current system, which is essentially norm-referenced, will this not by definition work against achieving ‘greatness’, as many schools will be labelled below average?
8. Ofsted must continue on its path of redesign and become more balanced in its approach. It should work with the profession and government to understand its new role in the self-improving system. However, schools and MATs should assume responsibility for their own rigorous, candid and robust peer review processes. Ofsted should provide quality assurance for MATs’ standards.

The further development of leadership behaviours and systems in the new connected landscape.

A fresh mind set is required which forges new motives and transcends competition between local schools, and disestablishes a ‘league table mentality’. Structures that foster the development of a connected culture between all organisations must be quickly established if the system is to move from good to great. In short, a new construct is required with a different architecture and new architects.

However, there will be vested interests to overcome as schools seek to protect their status quo rather than move to the new ‘connected autonomy’

In New Zealand, the government is considering suspending elements of their external assessment system for two years to allow the self-improving system to develop in an environment where the educational ‘weather’ is favourable. Funding has been placed into their system to create 250 school clusters of ten institutions, led by an executive Headteacher. New key roles have been developed that include expert teacher, lead teacher and change principals to help build the architecture of the new landscape.

In 2015, in England, there will be a new leadership development programme for MAT Chief Executives. The pilot of this course will take place between March and July 2015, with a view to being offered more widely to all MATs from autumn 2015. This will provide an opportunity to promote elements discussed within this article in order to take the system forward.

Finally, one must imagine beyond our current structures into the educational landscape of 2020, where successful MATs are designated as Teaching MATs. This has increased the overall capacity in the system and generated momentum towards world class outcomes. Our system has become world class within five years because of the bold and brave vision and decisions taken by its leaders who realised that ‘every school is a great school’ can be achieved.

**The City Learning Trust is a 3-19 partnership of academies covering approximately 3000 students in Stoke on Trent, Staffordshire.**

# National Induction Panel for Teachers

## Operating at a time of growing teacher shortages

The National Induction Panel for Teachers (NIPT) is now part way through its second year of operation. We now have almost 450 NQTs and 150 schools are members.

This second year has been marked by a large increase in the number of NQTs who are struggling during their Induction. This has been pointed out by a report from ATL which also comments on the numbers leaving teaching during Induction. ATL General Secretary Mary Boustead has said: "This is a crisis of Teacher Supply".

Schools are telling NIPT that they are having to recruit from shrinking pools of applicants, and hence sometimes take a gamble on a weaker recruit rather than carry a vacancy. Obviously, it is imperative that the support provided through NQT Induction is high quality, thorough and robust. This is even more important at a time of teacher shortage leading to the need to support weaker entrants to the profession.

One of the major reasons for schools using NIPT for their NQT Induction is that their experience of their local Appropriate Body is unsatisfactory. They find support is poor, and difficult decisions are not supported. This latter point is crucial. Schools need to be sure that, if the NQT they have taken a gamble on, does not live up to required expectations despite being exhaustively supported, they can be judged to have failed Induction and therefore not remain at the school. In too many cases schools have come to NIPT because they have not been supported when needing to fail an NQT.

Schools who have chosen to use NIPT for their NQT Induction are clear that they have made the right choice. Thus Emma Cooling, Induction Coordinator at Ormiston Maritime Academy writes:

*"This is our second year of using NIPT. We use NIPT as we needed a high quality organisation that would provide quality assurance and support our NQTs and their mentors. We were unable to source this service locally."*

NIPT can provide consistency across groups of schools in MATs and Chains. Often these groups cross LA boundaries and consistency is hard to achieve. Laura Knight, Deputy Vice-Principal of Rudheath Primary Academy, which is part of the Focus Academy Trust in Cheshire points this out:

*"There was some dissatisfaction with existing local providers and as part of an Academy Trust there was a need for a provider that could work across different Local Authorities and a wide range of primary schools. As an online resource NIPT could be used by all of the schools across the Trust. In addition the Trust was able to run*

*complementary training for our NQTs creating a bespoke induction package for our newest teachers."*

Once on board, satisfaction levels are consistently high. Geraldine Davis, Headteacher of UCL Academy in London says:

*"The level of support from NIPT is excellent. We have found it easy to navigate the NIPT online platform and use the multitude of documents to create an NQT programme that easily satisfies the needs of developing NQTs. The documents are highly useful as they cater for all times of the NQT year and offer guidance when additional support is needed. The telephone support is immediate and allows for any questions to be dealt with quickly and efficiently."*

NIPT is determined to continue to develop its scheme. It now has over 420 NQTs on its books from 150 registered schools. Expansion is largely down to word of mouth recommendation and our recommendations could not be stronger. When asked if she would recommend NIPT, Deborah Barakat, Induction Coordinator at Excelsior Academy in Newcastle said:

*"Absolutely! NIPT has spring-boarded trainees to the role of outstanding classroom practitioners through a network of support, mentoring and individual target setting through the NQT Development Plan. The formal programme is enhanced by the constant professional dialogue."*

*"The programme is Teaching Standards driven and the level of flexibility is fabulous. It allows each colleague to identify and address weaknesses with the support of their mentor. The assessments are reviewed and feedback given so that all concerned are able to set further targets for future assessment periods and ultimately future performance management targets."*

At Excelsior NIPT has rejuvenated the ITT Programme."

If you would like to find out more go to  
[www.nqtinduction.co.uk](http://www.nqtinduction.co.uk)  
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National Induction  
Panel for Teachers

## Reflections and experiences from Staff at Canary Wharf College on the National Induction Panel for Teachers by the Executive Principal, Sarah Counter

Canary Wharf College was the first free school to open in the East End of London and is situated in the heart of the Docklands (a deprived area of East London). The second primary school in the trust opened in September 2014, and is currently housed in the spare capacity of the new building of the original school. Staff growth has been rapid and securing quality training and mentoring for our Newly Qualified Teachers has been an essential part of our growth strategy.

The training for mentors was held towards the end of the summer term. A member of our Leadership Team attended this and found it stimulating to have the course designers actually present; it was good to be able to speak to them directly and ask questions and receive an immediate response. It was very well organised with a high level of professionalism in all that was presented. It was clear that the founders were striving for top quality and trying to create a programme whereby only the best standards were good enough, and weak teachers would not slip through the net.

The documentation was clear, with logical steps to their paperwork which was evidently based on in depth research. All Leadership Team members who were mentors felt that it was very, very thorough. The NIPT team were very keen to provide a supportive element and it was refreshing to find that they were 'academy' and particularly 'free school' friendly!

For the other Leadership Team members who had not been able to attend the course they appreciated the clear guidance given for the initial NQT induction meeting and the strong supportive materials. Useful prompt sheets were provided for initial meetings, so that a new mentor was able to ask the right questions to get the ball rolling (even though the answers from the NQTs's were not always correct!).

At Canary Wharf College we found the process was one that the NQTs were also comfortable with. If they were not struggling, it was straight forward, and for those who were finding teaching a challenge there were opportunities given to go into greater depth.





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There is a funnel approach to NIPT; weekly meetings feed into the half termly assessments, which in turn feed into the end of term assessments. As the first term progressed the mid-point assessments provided a good insight into how the NQT's were progressing. There is an excellent tracker system into which the NQTs can contribute. It encourages them to reflect on their own progress and practice, and to note down where they feel they are meeting the teaching standards. The tracker system is a co-operative process which demands a certain level of independence for the NQTs from the beginning. This less prescriptive approach means they have to take the initiative and they have to also show progress towards the standard; it is not just a tick box exercise.

The specific personalisation of CPD courses can support individuals in their precise weaknesses rather than a series of blanket courses which may not be appropriate or necessary for every NQT.

Organization at the end of the first term is a key period to gather information and write up the reports. NIPT were quick to respond to a clarification email and the response was thorough and helpful.

The reports require you to be very honest and specific! There are opportunities available from the NIPT team for further support for NQTs and their mentors where the NQT has been identified as struggling.

In the second term NQTs have been encouraged to fill in their own forms with their successes, reflections and improvement. They also have to document how they are using additional noncontact time. At this point there is flexibility available to go to alternate weeks mentoring meetings which is good where this is appropriate.

I would warmly recommend any school thinking of taking on NQT's to buy into this programme which has been well developed with a clear structure for both Mentors and NQTs. Here are few reflections from our NQT staff on their experience of the NIPT programme.

*“Overall, the NIPT programme has involved a lot less paperwork than I had been expecting for my NQT experience. A number of my PGCE peers had warned me about mountains of extra admin and I was pleasantly surprised that this was not the case at Canary Wharf College. All the NIPT forms have been straightforward to access and I have received regular communication by email when necessary.*

*The NIPT site provides useful resources such as comprehensive QTS standards information, observation sheets to print and use and advice for completing assignments. All forms are clear and jargon-free, making them not feel like a chore to complete.”*

**NQT 1**

*“I think the scheme is well structured and encourages reflective teaching and allows me to analyse my pedagogy weekly, which I may not find the time to do otherwise! I find the meetings very useful and always come away feeling positive with targets in mind for the week.*

*I find all the forms simple to access and use, particularly the self-evaluations, they have a non-time consuming format that still encourages me to reflect on what I have achieved and what I could work on. I have found the mentoring exceptionally helpful, the advice and support I receive is really fantastic and all targets I am set are well thought through and broken down into manageable chunks.”*

**NQT 2**

*“Overall I have found the experience of being on the NIPT programme very helpful. The website and registration process was straightforward, and included lots of supportive resources to get started. It was good to be able to find examples of the paperwork I would be completing online before I started at the school, and copies of the Teachers' Standards.”*

**NQT 3**

*“The NIPT NQT programme seems very simple to use, from an NQT's perspective. The end of term evaluation is lengthy, but worthwhile and targets are set regarding the information I provided. All forms are easy to use and understand and are for my progression, rather than simply evidence of meeting standards.*

**NQT 4**

Great support from all the Leadership Team at Canary Wharf College! You have a very content and enthusiastic NQT!”

# “Schools are intensely human, almost tribal, in nature...”

Dame Sally Coates, author of the best-selling new book *Headstrong*, insists that in outstanding schools, parents, teachers and students seek the stability of a strong leader

I called my new book *Headstrong* because it's my belief that a school is only as strong as its Headteacher.

Such a view is easy to criticise. It could be argued that it promotes an outdated organisational model, where corporate structures are linear and hierarchical, with disempowered staff expected to follow instructions from above rather than think for themselves.

It could be argued that it underplays social factors and encourages 'superheads' to seek short-term gains and easy wins. Perhaps it ignores the myriad levers that contribute to school success, focusing instead on the most obvious one.

Indeed it's rather unfashionable to suggest that leadership still matters. It would be easier to write a model for school success which didn't depend on

the strength of the Headteacher; where schools flourished due to the integrity and coherence of the systems followed.

Yet the fact that there is no global formula for school success is an indication of the fact that leadership still matters in schools. I think there are two reasons for this.

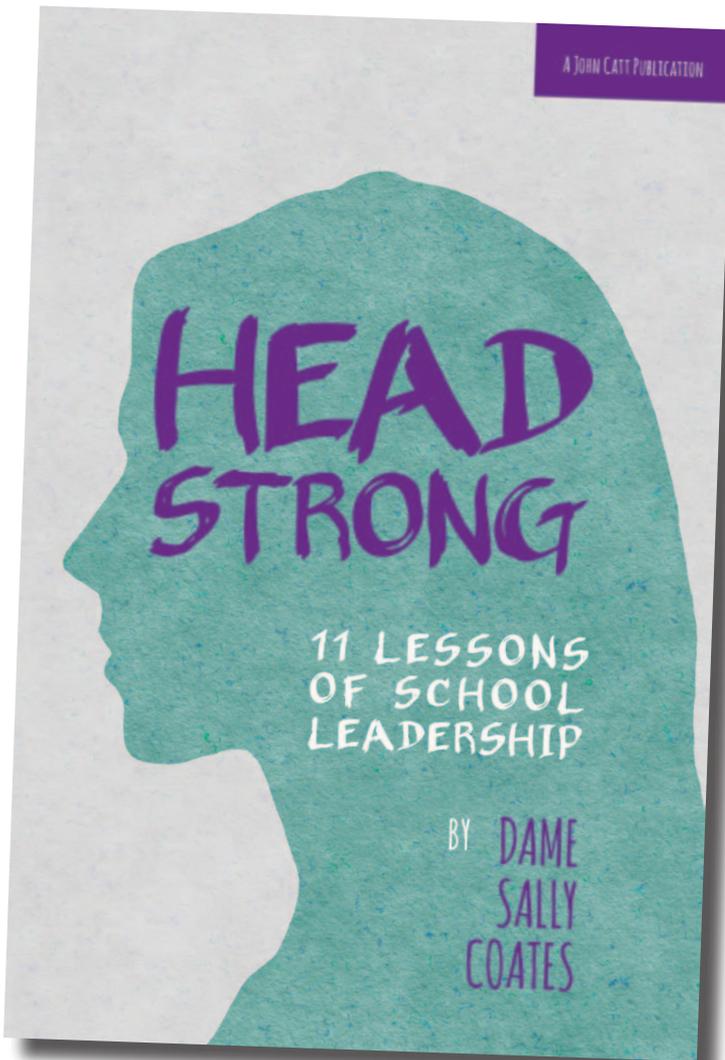
The first is that no two schools are the same, and the leader of the school must therefore adapt the standard ingredients of school success to the local context. And this local context is a complex animal, made up of the history of the school (both recent and more distant), the culture of the staff room, the values of the playground, the demography of the local area, the strengths and weaknesses of the staff, the interests of the students, the facilities and resources, the quality of other schools in

the area, recent exam results, local job prospects, the governing body.

Headteachers must account for all these factors when they take on the mantle of school leadership, then constantly review them in order to pull the appropriate levers and flick the required switches.

*Headstrong* maintains that leaders must adapt their schools to the local context. But any good school will require a sprinkling of the following ingredients:

1. High expectations: actively believe and expect every student to make significant progress. Treat the bottom set like the top set
2. Great teachers who enjoy autonomy in the classroom
3. A Headteacher who plays to her/his strengths



4. A coherent curriculum which develops students' knowledge over time
5. A programme of assessment which accurately measures student progress
6. Transparent data revealing student (and staff) performance
7. Positive and caring ethos, developed through assemblies and student/staff interaction
8. Meticulous personalised intervention: support for weaker students; challenge for more able students
9. Robust organisational structure, giving staff clear roles and responsibilities
10. A programme of teacher development, nurturing the talent within
11. Decent facilities and resources; stimulating physical environment
12. Clubs and trips which develop the whole child
13. A pastoral system which ensures that every child is known
14. Clear and confident communication with parents and other partners
15. Strong community relations, embedding the school within the local context
16. Careers/university programme
17. Student council or similar system for harnessing views of young people
18. Clear and quick rewards and sanctions
19. Support and scrutiny from governing body/sponsor
20. Norms and rituals which provide familiarity and belonging

The second reason why leadership matters in schools relates to a recurring theme of this book: schools are intensely human organisations, almost tribal in their nature. By this I mean that schools are engaged in the fundamental exchange of knowledge and skills from adults to children, creating an environment of human intensity and vitality. In such an environment people seek the stability provided by a strong leader. Such a leader provides reassurance to students, teachers and parents. Almost everything that happens in a school is based on human interaction which is why schools are different to other organisations and rely more on human direction than systematic processes. At John Lewis, for example, the final link in the chain of their provision involves interaction between shop



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assistant and customer, but that's the tip of the iceberg, propped up by hidden systems and processes which are more formulaic than human. Buyers will consult historical pricing data to judge the optimal price of their wares, the logistical team will run algorithms to get these goods on the shelves. Yet in schools people are never far from the action, and this creates a delicate organisational dynamic which requires careful cultivation from a leader.

In defending this 'headstrong' model I should also recognise that school leaders, like teachers, must play to their own strengths. Probably my most effective attribute is the ability to galvanise an

organisation towards a common goal through establishing positive working relationships and a purposeful collective spirit. I set high expectations for students and staff and shine a light on the performance of the organisation through the transparent handling of data and rigorous attention to detail. Praise and recognition reinforce the achievements made by staff, and – before long – momentum builds and success becomes the norm. I acknowledge that there are other models of school leadership which don't rely so much on a strong figurehead, hence the importance of playing to one's own strengths and style.

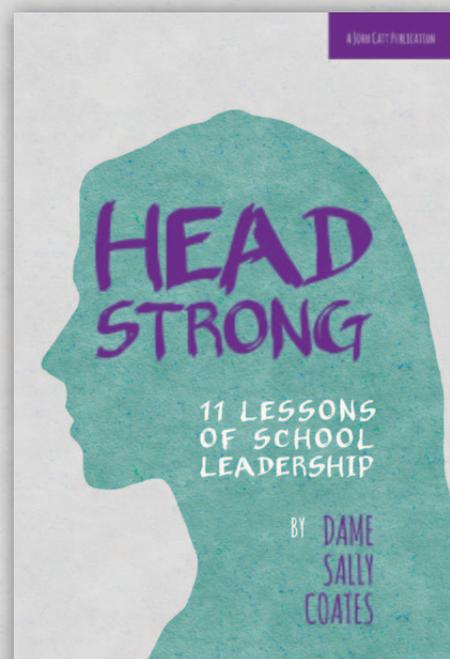
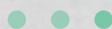
So it's my view, after nearly 40 years in education, that the Headteacher makes the difference between success and failure in school, particularly in challenging urban schools. It's the job of the Head to be the shockabsorber: a source of stability, direction and reassurance in what can be a volatile environment. I'm yet to encounter a challenging school which is successful in spite of the Headteacher: if the Head is not good enough then the whole organisation is tempered by that.

*Headstrong*, by Dame Sally Coates, is published by John Catt Educational

Probably my most effective attribute is the ability to galvanise an organisation towards a common goal through establishing positive working relationships and a purposeful collective spirit

# HEAD STRONG

Buy *Headstrong: 11 Lessons of School Leadership* from [www.johncattbookshop.com](http://www.johncattbookshop.com) using the discount code **DSC15** to get your copy for only **£10** including p&p



# Using the Pupil Premium to address the basics

Pupil Premium is really helping children to succeed at Frederick Nattrass Primary School: this is their story

Research undertaken on behalf of the government by Ofsted and published in 2012, reported that the most common use of the Pupil Premium funding was to pay for teaching assistants with over two fifths of school leaders saying they used it to fund existing or new teachers. Proportionally, this was higher in primary schools.

The average amount of Pupil Premium funding received by all schools nationally in 2011-12, at the time of the study, was

£30,940 and the median figure was £19,520. An average sized primary school with the average proportion of eligible pupils would have received around £23,000.

At Frederick Nattrass Primary Academy in Norton, Stockton-on-Tees, Pupil Premium funding accounts for 138 out of the school's 200 pupils. This academic year the school's £180,000 of Pupil Premium funding equates to 20% of its budget.

This clearly demonstrates the level of deprivation at Frederick Nattrass when compared to other schools.

## Context

Caroline Reed took up her role as Headteacher (now principal) at Frederick Nattrass Primary School in 2007. Situated in an area of high deprivation, the school had continued to experience a number of difficulties, so one of the first things she did was to identify the problems that were



working against it becoming successful. She discovered:

- High exclusion rate (predominantly white FSM boys in Key Stage 2)
- Low attendance (92.5% in 2008)
- Very low Foundation Stage Profile (22% achieving NI72)
- Poor parental engagement (a significant minority of families isolated from professionals)
- High numbers of children leaving to access specialist behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD) provision in Key Stage 2
- Key Stage 2 results well below floor target

The school had real extremes of deprivation. At Foundation Stage many children arrived on their first day with the profile of a 12-month child. They were unable to speak in sentences, were not toilet-trained and would not share – some did not know how to play. Higher up the school increasing numbers of ten and 11 year olds were beginning to come into conflict with the authorities.

These were pupils who had not benefited from the kind of emotional, social and educational support that Caroline has more recently provided through the Pupil Premium initiatives she has established.

### First steps

She decided on a two-pronged approach.

- To rapidly raise levels of attainment in Year 6
- To address school readiness for the youngest pupils

Her thinking was clear: She decided to put most of her Pupil Premium into Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1,



directing it towards the under sevens because she also wanted to improve the school readiness of children before they start school at age four, and also because she realised that unless the basics were addressed early it would be harder for children to make progress.

Nurture classes were created for children who had been assessed on entry

as being in need of additional support to provide the building blocks necessary for accessing the school curriculum effectively and thereby, accelerating progress.

Caroline explains: *“Many parents will not go to professionals if they need help, but are more willing to come into the school, so the nurture classes are a great opportunity for both parents and pupils.*

### Current pupil profile

- 200 pupils and 26 place nursery
- 69% Free School Meals
- 23% on SEND Register
- 7% EAL /New to English
- Judged to be ‘good’ by Ofsted October 2012 (Notice to improve October 2009, Satisfactory January 2011)

### The evidence of an improving picture

- Attendance was 95.3% for 2013-14
- Foundation Stage profile 2013 45% reached average (comparable to N172)
- 2013 results – 62% CRWM Level 4+ 90% 2+ levels of progress
- 2014 results – 67% CRWM Level 4+ 93% 2+ levels progress, 20% 3 levels progress
- All special educational needs promptly diagnosed and appropriate provision secured for all children



# The logical Solution

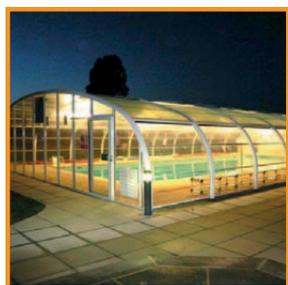


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## The school had real extremes of deprivation. At Foundation Stage many children arrived on their first day with the profile of a 12-month child

*“We adopt a multi-agency approach to identify and address social and family problems that may affect a child’s readiness to learn on day one.*

*“The children in greatest need are taken out of class each day to work in a small group, where they can talk to one another and build relationships with adults. They spend one to two terms in nurture class and on the whole, 90% of children are able to join the normal class after their time there and go on to make full progress.*

*“Assessment continues every seven weeks using the tried and tested Boxall Profile to pinpoint the child’s emotional and social development. Counselling services are offered to all pupils who display emotional or behavioural problems in order to address their mental health.*

*“We now also offer a class for three and four-year-olds who cannot cope with being in a large nursery.*

*“Alongside the nurture classes, we also employ a speech therapist in school and allocate funding from our Pupil Premium pot to fund this. In this way, we can provide swift access to speech and language therapy for all the pupils who need it. It is also on-site which means that appointments are not missed.*

*“We also employ a full-time family support officer to work with parents. The increase in Pupil Premium made this full-time appointment possible as well as allowing me to release key staff from class to provide pastoral support and give the children one-to-one tuition.”*

### All welcome

Caroline’s team also works with SEN children. She says:

*“We also cater for children who should really be in a specialist SEN environment, but the parents bring them to Frederick Nattrass because it is an inclusive school.*

*“Traditionally, children who had been categorised as having a Special Educational Need had a one-to-one teaching assistant but this approach does not encourage children to progress and become independent. If removed however, children can develop their social skills and become ready to learn.”*

### Cross-clustering support

Some Pupil Premium funding is being used in cross-clustering to promote good will and raise aspiration. For example, children were recently taken to France which really pushed beyond the boundaries of their everyday lives in Norton.

Caroline says: *“We use the Pupil Premium funding to benefit all*



*pupils. If there is a school trip we will subsidise it so those who do not qualify are not left out.*

*“We also generate income by selling places in our nurture classes to other schools at a weekly rate – children can stay with us for up to two terms.*

*“Because so many of our own children have improved and moved on, we are able to advertise this facility. As schools are increasingly taking on the role of social services – cases of neglect and emotional abuse are passed on to schools at a lower level – so the family support advisers are playing a hugely important role, which is a lifeline for many.”*

**Northern Education Trust is a multi-academy, not for profit charity which was established in 2012 and sponsors 18 academies in the northeast and northwest of England**

# Improving outcomes for children with SEND

There are 9000 children on the SEND registers in Academies Enterprise Trust (AET) academies. Malcolm Reeve, AET's Director for SEND, explores the huge challenge of improving outcomes for those children and their families

## AET's SEND model

AET supports 70 primary, secondary and special academies across the UK and across the senior leadership team we share a deep commitment to ensuring that children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities receive the best support possible so they can learn and thrive.

Following the SEND Reforms implementation, which came into force from September last year, we have developed a SEND model that comprises five core elements:

- Prioritising Leadership (Getting the ethos and culture right)
- Accurate Identification (Knowing who the children are)
- Effective Progress Tracking (Knowing how they are doing)
- Intervening with Impact (Ensuring any intervention impacts on progress)
- Provision Improvement (Improving what's on offer)

The model supports SENCOs in their transition to a strategic leadership role and is also underpinned by a self-audit tool and strategic reports that explore SEND data and school trends; thus

giving schools the best possible picture of the needs of their pupils.

## Exploring the SEND elements

### Element 1: Prioritising Leadership

At AET academies, it is not all about the SENCO having all the responsibility for SEND. Leadership starts at the top of the organisation.

Responsibility for leadership of SEND rests with the whole of the leadership team and it should be a shared high priority aspect of school improvement plans.

The SENCO should play an important role on the leadership team. But it doesn't stop there and faculty/subject leaders in secondary schools and phase leaders in primary schools, and indeed all teachers, have leadership responsibilities in respect of SEND.

Where this happens well, it creates an ethos and culture, which pervades the school and assists with rapid improvement.

A leadership section from AET's secondary review tool can be seen below:

Leadership	Not Evident	Developing	Secure
The SENCO is a member of the Senior Leadership Team			
The SENCO regularly informs SLT on current SEND policy and practice			
The SENCO has a clear vision for SEN provision and outcomes in the academy			
The SEN Information Report meets the legal requirements and is published on the academy website			
The SENCO has received appropriate training and is knowledgeable on policy and practice			
As part of the academy improvement plan there is a SEN development plan in place with clear aims and objectives			
The SENCO is involved in making decisions about staff deployment and use of resources for SEN (including funding and the use of Pupil Premium)			
A lead governor for SEN has been identified and is briefed regularly by the SENCO			
The lead SEN governor systematically challenges leaders about the learning and progress of pupils with SEN and the efficient use of resources.			
SEN provision (including roles of staff) is clearly articulated and understood by all			
Staff CPD needs in regard to SEN are accurately identified; relevant and ongoing training is in place (including for Teaching Assistants and support staff)			
The performance management system is used to improve outcomes for pupils with SEN			

**Element 2: Accurate Identification**

Not only do we over-identify children with SEND in our school system, we grossly misidentify them. If we are to bring the right resources to bear and to impact on progress, we really need to get this right.

Additionally a strategic overview of children on SEN Support (formerly the SEN register) assists in asking the key questions:

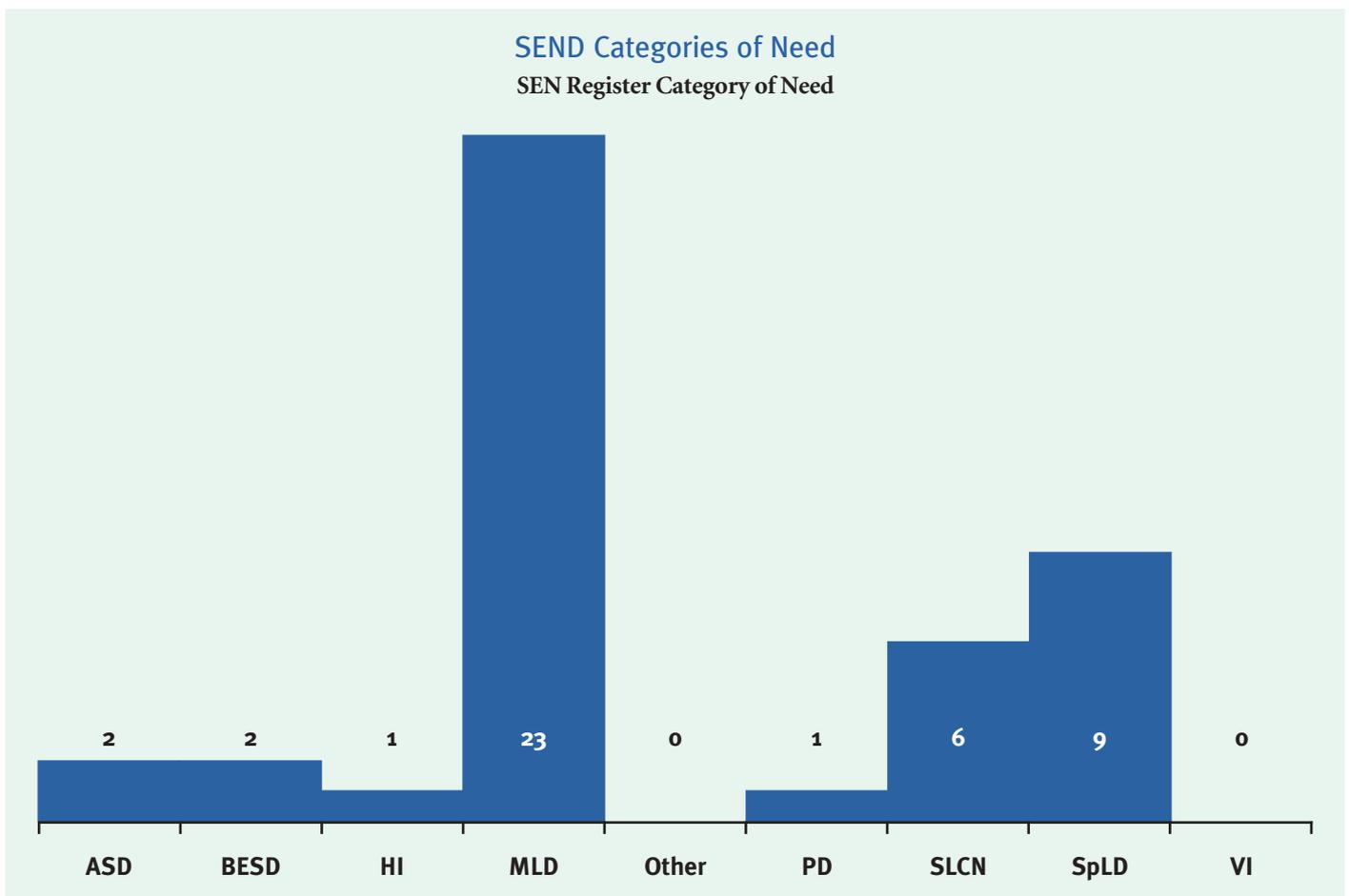
- What does the information tell us?
- What does the information mean?

- What are we doing about it?

It's about each and every child but it is also about knowing how many children and what types of special need are identified in the school.

At AET, the improvement tool provides for a SEN Support Strategic Report, which easily converts into a ready-made improvement plan.

Here is an anonymised example from a report for a primary setting and the actions:



*Exploring the data*

**What does this information tell us?**

- Of the 44 pupils with SEN 32 (72.7%) are identified as Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD) or Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD)
- The biggest group is MLD.
- The other significant groups are SpLD and Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN).

**What does this information mean?**

- We need to audit the criteria for identification of learning difficulties.
- We need to be clear how those categorised as MLD

are performing in maths and literacy and ensure the interventions are focussed.

- We need to audit whether SpLD and SLCN pupils are getting the support they need in each case and the level of expertise in the school.

**What are we doing about it?**

- Audit MLD pupils in subject areas and be clear about precise interventions.
- Develop expertise further and external support for pupils with communication needs.

**Element 3: Effective Progress Tracking**

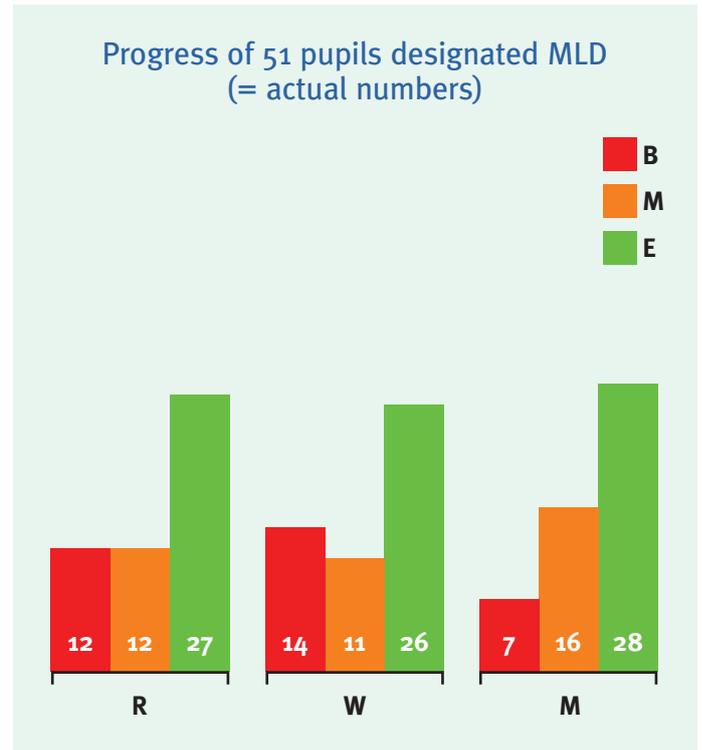
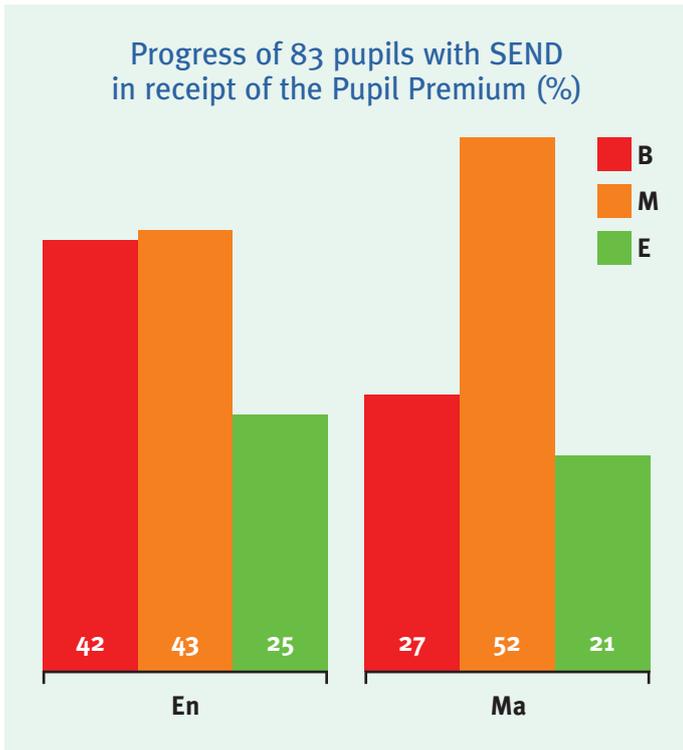
Regular and structured tracking of the progress of all children and young people in SEND groups is fundamental to success. For the SEND community this should involve the usual tracking of boys, girls, looked after children *etc.*

However, it should also involve reports on the progress of those on

SEN Support and in receipt of the Pupil Premium and developing a structured breakdown of progress in terms of SEN need.

We need to know whether pupils are making progress **B**elow, **M**eeting or **E**xceeding national expectations.

Here are two examples from the AET improvement plan which exemplify this using the coding **B,M,E**:



**Element 4: Intervening with Impact**

The key point about any successful intervention is that it has to be targeted and focused, with clear outcomes and expectations regarding impact. If it doesn't impact on progress then the intervention cannot be regarded as effective.

All interventions should be developed, organised and deployed based upon data and progress. This is why we focus on

identification and progress tracking at AET.

Additionally the Pupil Premium should be used in a targeted way to improve outcomes. I regularly ask SENCOs when reviewing the progress of a child 'Where is X's £1300 (primary) or £935? (secondary)'.

In the table below, you can see the primary identification section from the AET review tool:

Identification	Not Evident	Developing	Secure
Class teachers work effectively with the SENCO to support accurate and early identification			
The SENCO liaises with parents, schools and outside agencies to ensure accurate and early identification			
Teaching assistants and additional staff are used to support the identification process			
The SENCO uses specialists such as the EP to support the identification process			
The effectiveness of high quality classroom teaching is taken into account before assuming a pupil has SEN			
CoP and DfE Census guidance is used when categorising a pupil's SEN			
The SEN register is accurate and reviewed regularly			
The SENCO has confidence in recognising when a pupil may need to be assessed for SEN			
A range of diagnostic assessments are available to support accurate screening for SEN			
Parents / carers are involved at the start of the identification process			
The SEN Register Strategic Overview (supported by AET) is in place, is accurate and informs provision planning			

### Element 5: Improving the Provision

There are two main facets to provision improvement - developing school-based and external expertise. The key to unlocking them both is partnership working.

Developing school-based expertise in understanding SEN in detail, screening, pedagogy and strategies is a must. In the earlier example on identification it can be seen how a strategic overview of the SEN Support population can assist in this.

The development of school-based expertise needs to go hand in hand with developing external support. Two of the key areas are in the fields of communication and mental health, which is why AET works closely with national organisations such as The Communication Trust, the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists and NASEN.

Partnerships with external organisations at local, regional and national level can support provision improvement and the sharing of expertise in what has become known as ‘system-led’ improvement is something each setting should invest in.

Section of the AET improvement model focuses on how well a school is working ‘in partnership’ because in partnership there is strength.

### Spotlight on support in practice

Meadstead Primary Academy in Barnsley, South Yorkshire is an AET academy since June 2013. Of its 196 pupils, 22% are SEND pupils (43 pupils, 28 of those being Pupil Premium pupils).

Seventeen have been diagnosed with ASD, 12 with social, emotional and mental health needs, five with moderate learning difficulties, eight with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) and one with physical difficulties.

Before AET’s involvement with Meadstead Primary Academy, Deputy Headteacher and SENCO, Nichola Smith, had enough time to dedicate half a day a week to SEND.

Her role is now completely dedicated to her SEN pupils and ensuring the school can do everything within their power to help and support the children they teach.

Before AET’s SEND team supported the school, SEN children were mainly segregated from the other children.

With a simple but solid procedure in place to help identify SEND pupils, Meadstead Primary Academy has embraced a more inclusive ethos and does everything it can to keep those children in the classroom.

The procedure starts with teachers highlighting any concerns they may have with a pupil. Nichola then reviews the child in the classroom and after discussion with the pupil’s teacher, takes forward bespoke plans of support.

Using a Learning Journey Journal, the school tracks the child’s progress and holds regular meetings with the pupil’s teacher and parents. Following this, it is then identified if any external intervention is needed to ensure that the pupil receives the teaching they require.

Nichola says: “We always create plans for our children before



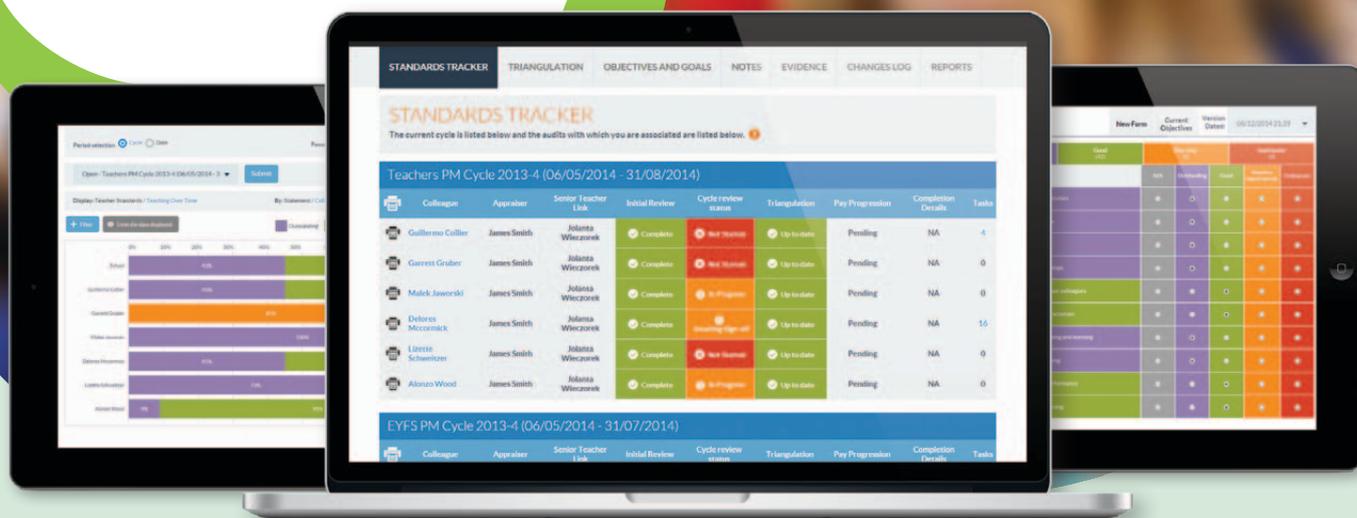
bringing in any external interventions. We constantly review what we have done, what we need to change and potentially what we need to stop doing. As we have a large number of children with different SEN, we often need to use a number of different interventions to ensure our children are receiving the right help and support.”

Nichola is now encouraged to constantly share ideas and best practice with teachers. She meets with a cluster of schools in Barnsley every half term, attends Local Authority and National cluster SEND meetings and is regularly building relationships with different agencies such as MIND so she can learn how to support and help the families of her SEND pupils.

In addition to the procedures and external brokering that the school has benefitted from, the SEND team supports Nichola through regular reviews, target setting, highlighting areas where they are doing well and where they can improve whilst continuously pushing the teachers forward, and encouraging progress.

Nichola continued: “Since becoming part of AET, school progress has improved rapidly. The school has seen a positive shift and teacher perceptions have improved. We recently had our Ofsted inspection and I was able to explain in a clear way what the school has been achieving and how our provision for SEND pupils is good, if not better. I believe from that it placed us in a more favourable light.”

**Malcolm Reeve is Executive Director for SEND & Inclusion at Academies Enterprise Trust (AET) and a National Leader of Education**



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# A school-led system

Fraser Mitchell, Principal at George Spencer Academy, calls for even more freedom

One of FASNA's favourite quotations from William Gibson is that "The future is already here – it's just not very evenly distributed". In 2010 with the current coalition came into government, few of us truly could have understood how quickly distributed the school led system would be by the end of that term.

As a proportion of all schools in England, academies now constitute 13% of primaries and 60% of secondaries. However, it's interesting to note that the number of primary schools which are academies (2,299) now exceeds the number of secondaries (1,884). There are 557 academy sponsors; the majority are outstanding converted academy schools. There are 192 chains of three or more academies with a single sponsor. The largest academy chain has 74 schools meaning it manages more schools than some local authorities ever did. The majority of multi-academy trusts and umbrella trusts are very small (fewer than five schools) but well over half the academies in multi-academy trusts are in chains of more than five schools. And by October 2014 there were 252 open free schools with a further 111 opening in 2015 and beyond (source: Academies and Free Schools, HC258)

The freedoms promised by the 2010 white paper created a blank canvas for the new self-improving system to design itself. And so we can see a wealth of different system architectures have taken root – from academy chains and trusts, to teaching schools, to free schools to commercial interest groups – each grabbing the opportunities and challenges that the new landscape has afforded them. Schools are improving,

**“It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change”**

even by tougher Ofsted accountability frameworks. Autonomy appears to be winning out, with academies improving faster than LA schools – 12.5% compared to 5% over three years. But some new players have also proved as unwieldy and ineffective as some of their Local Authority predecessors. And these have been well documented in the media, similarly, competition and collaboration co-exist, but not always harmoniously and sometimes it has been at the expense of children and parents. So sure, the future's unevenly distributed.

But this should not be the argument for a return to a new middle tier. Taking more limited resource out of the system to help regulate it is counter-productive. We already have too many outstanding leaders and educators being sucked out of the schools, and ministers of any political persuasion too often want to fish out of the same shallow pool for the best people taking them away from children.

And resources look to set diminish further in the term ahead – so instead we need to offer greater freedoms, along with accountability, for those who are successful to spread their excellence

further. Outwood Grange, for example, are finding a balance between spread and success, competition and collaboration, offering resources and ideas to fledgling and emerging trusts and sponsors, without seeing it as a threat to their expansion. They want the DNA of successful system leadership to be shared.

Surely this offers hope to those who describe themselves, like David Crossley, as 'pragmatopians'. The new, system-led world is sometimes written off as Darwinian - where 'dog eats dog' and encapsulates the fear that only the strong and large will survive. And sometimes these fears have been well-founded. Nevertheless, we can also seek solace from the more reasoned reflections of Darwin that "It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change." We, as system leaders, need the space, the faith and the support of whomever gains power in May, to continue to be responsive and responsible to the change we have been entrusted with for the next five years and beyond. All the international research tells us that this works. And because the future is already here.

# Genuine entrepreneurs at the ripe old age of 11

Andrew Collins, teacher at Shireland Collegiate Academy in the West Midlands, reveals how his school is encouraging the development of entrepreneurial skills

The digital skills charity GO ON UK recently found that three in ten small businesses lack basic digital skills; and in the IT-centric world we live in, it means that these businesses are at a definite disadvantage. Today, as well as a good business acumen, successful entrepreneurs need to be IT literate and savvy in digital marketing, social media, web design and management. Realising that it's never too early to develop IT or business skills, Andrew Collins, teacher at Shireland Collegiate Academy in the West Midlands, discusses how his school is encouraging the development of these skills by introducing a number of free initiatives.

Shireland Collegiate Academy serves an area of social deprivation, in a highly diverse and mobile population that come to us often with quite low starting points. Despite this fact, however, we believe that all young people should have access to a fully rounded and whole education. As such, we strive to provide our students with an education that develops a range of competencies and qualities, makes learning relevant and engaging, uses technology to enable students to make greater progress, and recognises that learning takes place in various settings and not just the classroom.

Encouraging entrepreneurialism among our learners ranks high on our priority list because it actually encompasses all of these key objectives.

## 'Literacy for Life' Curriculum

We've developed a competency driven, theme-based curriculum called Literacy for Life at Shireland, which we run in Years 7, 8 and 9. It's an approach that focuses on project-based learning and creating engaging learning experiences that use new technologies which are personalised and responsive to meet the individual requirements of our learners. One of the competency strands that we have within that curriculum is called 'Professional Development and Personal Learning', which embodies our philosophy of encouraging entrepreneurship by promoting skills such as goal planning, risk taking, financial management and so on.

## Entrepreneurial initiatives

We feel it's vital to provide our learners with the opportunity to be enthused by the idea that they can make things happen for themselves, and technology provides the perfect vehicle by which to do this. We're teaching our learners the skills to do jobs that don't currently exist; if we didn't embed components of entrepreneurship within our curriculum, we'd be doing them a disservice. Our aim is to build resilience, and the following initiatives have really supported us in doing that:

## Apps for Good

Apps for Good is an educational technology charity, helping young people aged ten to 18 become confident digital

makers, problem-solvers and technology entrepreneurs. The Apps for Good course is ideal because it simultaneously builds digital and business skills. We've been running the course for the past four years, and it's really given entrepreneurship education a new, 'real life' context; students identify an everyday issue or problem they care about, and use technology to design, build and market a mobile, social or web app to solve it.

We don't embed the course into our IT classes, instead we run it with a hundred of our Year 9 learners during 'Focus Days', which are days when the curriculum collapses and learners have the opportunity to focus intensively on one experience. During the programme, we've seen all our students develop into genuine entrepreneurs, carrying out market research and product development, and thinking about issues such as technical feasibility and financial viability.

In fact, one of our student groups has done so well that they actually won an Apps for Good Award in June and developed their app for market launch in February. Their app, SafeNav, was born of the idea of reclaiming the streets from undesirables. After a number of tweaks and redrafts, students came up with an idea of having a SatNav that would guide users around unsafe areas by connecting to the Police's UKPI and using GPS. Via the app, and in real-time, users are sent the crime statistics for any area they are in, and this information updates as they move.



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The course encourages students to realise that anyone can be an entrepreneur, and highlights the fact that sometimes your first idea won't work, and that's nothing to be ashamed of or feel disheartened by; it's all part of the entrepreneurial process. The course takes away the fear of making mistakes from students, which in my opinion, is one of the most valuable lessons they take away from the course.

## iDea: Inspiring Digital Enterprise Award

HRH, The Duke of York and Nominet Trust recently launched iDEA, an initiative that supports 14-25 year olds in developing their greatest ideas into a successful digital business venture. ([www.onemillionyoungideas.org.uk](http://www.onemillionyoungideas.org.uk))

Entrants gain essential digital enterprise and entrepreneurial skills through the competition and can further develop these skills through the online library of industry endorsed badges. Musician, producer and technology pioneer, Will.I.Am, is an iDEA board member, so naturally lots of our students were keen to get on board with this initiative even before they knew what it entailed! Our Year 10 students have entered 40 projects for this competition so hopefully we'll have some good news back from that in the New Year.

## 'Tycoon In School'

Over the past two years, we have also been involved in 'Tycoon In Schools', a free national enterprise competition spearheaded by Peter Jones CBE, entrepreneur and star of Dragons' Den, which gives young people the chance to run their own business. Last year, one of our students, Aadil Din, developed his own cake baking and delivery service called Din Din Cakes through the initiative and went on to win a 'Young Entrepreneur' Award. ([www.tycooninschools.com](http://www.tycooninschools.com))

## Digital Dragons' Den

I've also introduced clips from popular entrepreneurial TV shows, such as Dragons' Den and The Apprentice

into the classroom for discussion and inspiration. Asking students what they might do differently on a task set for the Apprentice candidates, or if they can identify any pitfalls in a contestant's business pitch on Dragons' Den always sparks a lively debate; it's great to see the students so enthused about a topic and often their ideas and suggestions are incredibly insightful and promising.

In fact, we run a summer school for Year 7 students before they start with us in September called 'Digital Dragons' Den', that is centred around creating digital products. Our students then pitch and present their ideas to a board of national experts; last year Gi Fernando,

CEO of Freeformers and Mark Riches, CEO of Open Badges were on the board, as well as some of the top managers from Barclays, so it's something we, and the students, take really seriously.

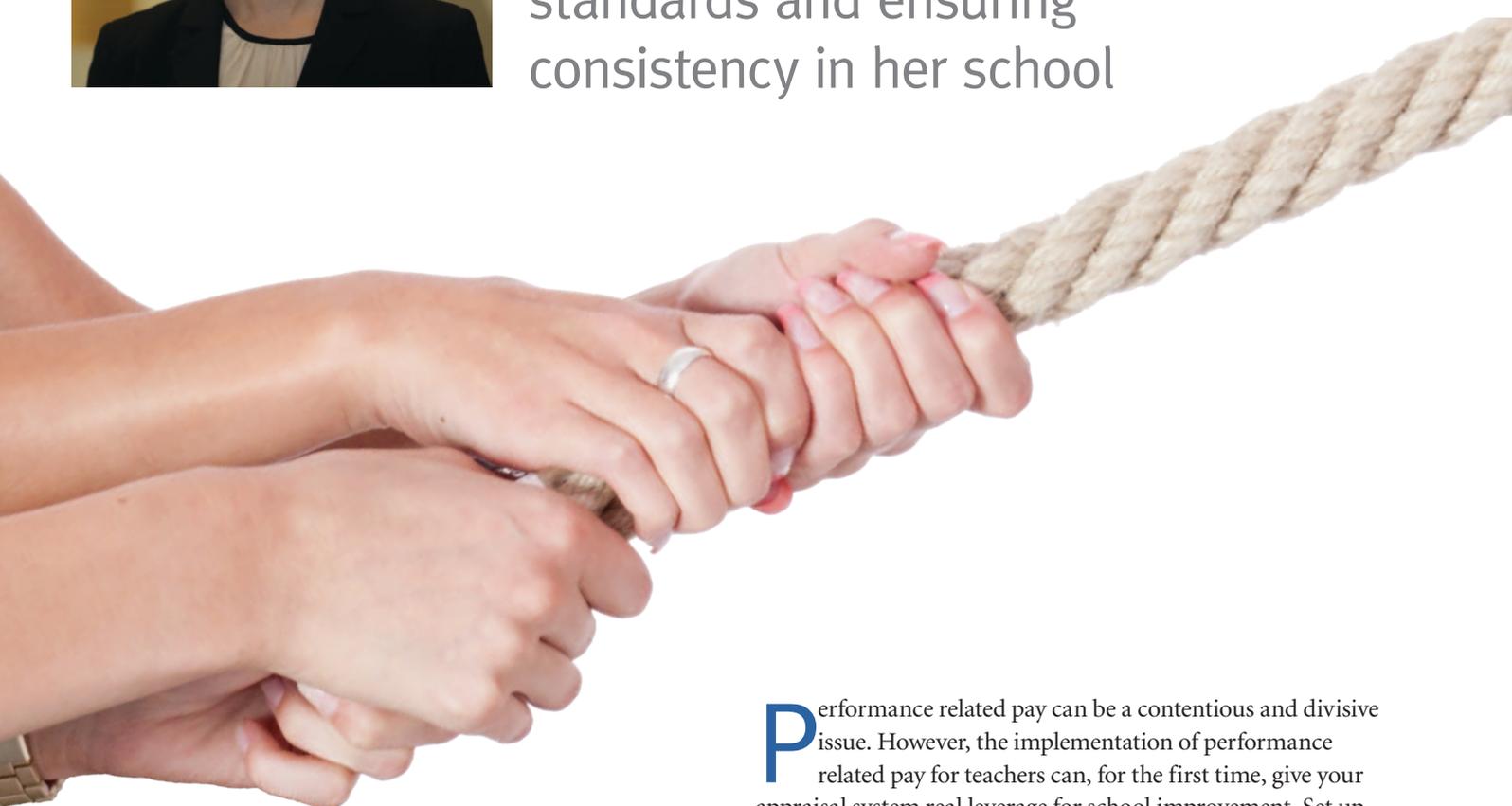
Activities like these are really important for getting students to think about their future careers a little more. Increasingly, I'm seeing our students question where their experience could lead them in terms of future job roles. They are also increasingly looking into creating their own business and/or IT roles, rather than conforming to a specified job role, which for a teacher, is a joy to watch; and in an era where building resilience is incredibly important, this is key.



# Pulling in the s



Emma Yates has no doubt at all that, performance-related pay has had significant impact on raising standards and ensuring consistency in her school



Performance related pay can be a contentious and divisive issue. However, the implementation of performance related pay for teachers can, for the first time, give your appraisal system real leverage for school improvement. Set up properly, the appraisal system can ensure that all staff pull in the same direction. At the same time, it also means that it has never been more important to operate transparent and secure systems. All decisions related to pay must be backed by secure evidence and made robust to scrutiny.

I am the Headteacher of Hayesfield Girls' School and Mixed Sixth Form in Bath. I am a recently appointed Headteacher and joined the school in January 2014. Hayesfield is my first Headteacher post.

# same direction

Hayesfield Girls' School is a fully subscribed state school with a role of around 1100 students and over 80 qualified teachers. Being a city school, staff turnover is reasonably high but we don't have any issues with securing high quality teaching appointments. Hayesfield's motto is 'achieving ambitions' and a lot of staff are ambitious, both for themselves, and for the students they teach. However, there is also a strong union presence across the city and staff are continually being made aware of teachers' workload issues and employee rights. As Headteacher, it's my duty to ensure that performance related pay is applied fairly, consistently and with minimal administrative burden. Planning and policies are key.

## The School Improvement Plan

It's not rocket science – school improvement starts with the School Improvement Plan! At Hayesfield, we have a set of seven strategic intents (set following the process detailed in David Brent's book, *Leading the Strategically Focused School*), which act as the corner stones of all decisions. For each strategic intent, the yearly School Improvement Plan details SMART targets. Faculties then write their own Improvement Plans, using the same template and targets.

Having a school improvement plan with a clear set of targets is essential. These targets can then be used as the focus of all teachers' appraisal targets.

## Setting Targets

At Hayesfield we have tried to establish a uniform level of target-setting for teachers in the course of the appraisal target-setting process. In previous years, targets had been agreed between the reviewer and the reviewee, resulting in great variances in the degree of challenge and the range and type of targets.

We now use the school improvement plan to select the school targets to which all teachers will contribute, and allocate these as appraisal targets for all teachers. The school Ofsted report in May

2013 highlighted feedback as an area for improvement, due to the inconsistency of marking and the lack of student engagement with feedback. Thus, improving the quality of feedback is key to our school improvement. Consequently, this year, all staff have a SMART target focussed on feedback.

We are now over half way through the academic year and we have seen a dramatic change in the quality of marking. I do feel that the appraisal process has been central to this change. Setting SMART targets means that you can be very clear about your expectations, and at the end of the process it is very easy to gather evidence that shows if that target has been successfully met.

The target on student progress data has caused concern for some staff. I cannot over emphasise the importance of having accurate data and taking time to show staff how these targets are created. We have chosen to create two sets of target data:

- Expected Progress Target Grades (used to create targets for teachers' student performance targets)

These targets are taken from the FFT D data set. We are nationally in the top 30% of schools for progress, so, for us, these are the best fit targets against which to measure teachers' performance. However, as a school we like to add extra challenge for our students, so we have another set of targets that are shared with students.

- Target Grades (shared with students)

We select the next grade up from the FFT D data set and share this with students as their target grade. We call this process, 'adding the Hayesfield challenge'! It would be unfair to withhold pay for teachers not meeting these challenging targets but it is great to acknowledge those who do!

In previous years, in-house data was used to create this data-driven target and staff were not happy that the process was set at the right standard. By being very clear about how the two sets of target data are created and used, we still share very challenging targets with students but use a fairer and more realistic set of targets to judge teacher performance.

Improving the quality of feedback is key to our school improvement. Consequently, this year, all staff have a SMART target focussed on feedback

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We also allocate additional targets to middle leaders, focussing on a key area for development across the school. This year we have chosen to focus on faculty quality assurance processes. The middle leaders have a clear set of expectations to follow, which include attendance at whole school work monitoring; carrying out termly learning walks (set focus across the school) both with their leadership team link and on their own; carrying out Faculty work monitoring; and collecting lesson observation data.

Staff on the upper pay spine select a set of contributions from a menu for their whole-school contributions; these are cumulative, depending on the member of staff's UPS level.

### Policies and Procedures

Decisions made that affect teachers' pay need to be fair and transparent. Teachers no longer have the right to automatic progression up the pay scale and this has directly affected the pay of less experienced staff – they have a set of hurdles that more experienced colleagues have not had to jump over. Performance related pay decisions can ultimately affect staff morale so policies and procedures ensure staff know that decision are based on evidence and not subjective. All our policies are shared with staff and carefully explain the changes that have happened nationally to teachers' pay. It is essential that the following policies are in place and

that they detail clear processes, including the appeals processes:

- Appraisal Policy
- Pay Policy
- Capability Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Grievance Policy

### Training

Most reviewers are middle leaders and consistency is key. Last summer, we trained our middle leaders on holding others to account and holding challenging conversations. We took the middle leaders to an external conference venue and bought in an ASCL trainer to lead the appraisal training. Having an external voice was pivotal to success.

### A Smoother Appraisal Process

Two years ago, Hayesfield bought the Bluesky package to manage the appraisal process. It's a big database, where all appraisal review records, lesson observations and CPD records are stored. There is also a section on self evaluation, which allows all leaders to access data easily (from work sampling, learning walks and lessons observations) and create reports. There are many other IT packages to support the appraisal process and I would thoroughly recommend making this investment. Gone are the days of trying to read scruffy handwriting to find judgements! These IT packages allow the leadership team to see results

across all faculties and results can even be manipulated according to groups of staff (NQT, UPS, *etc*). It is a great way of sharing data, which historically has been held in isolated faculties, and this data can be gathered easily to make judgements on pay as well as whole-school judgements on the SEF.

We are still learning how to use Bluesky to its full effect and I have to be honest, it has been a challenge to ensure all staff are on board with the use of IT. However, I'm starting to see the impact and it has definitely been instrumental in engaging middle leaders with data and quality assurance processes. We are certainly a school that is much richer in data!

### In conclusion

Performance related pay means that teachers are under more pressure than ever before to prove their worth. It has also highlighted the importance of school leaders operating a transparent, equitable and positive appraisal process. In this new age of challenging targets and non-automatic pay progression, the culture and mind-set of schools has changed. However, I have no doubt at all that, performance related pay has had significant impact on raising standards and ensuring consistency in my school. Performance related pay has its detractors, but, properly and fairly applied, it is potentially a powerful ally in the battle to raise standards and achieve ambitions. It certainly gets my vote!"

# Budget cuts and staffing costs

Nick Watson of Stone King urges caution when redundancies seem the only option



A School's most important asset is its staff. However with staff costs accounting for approximately 80% of your School's budget a perfect storm is brewing for schools.

Budgets for 2015-2016 are "cash flat" but teaching and support staff are to get a 1% pay rise. Schools' contributions to teacher pensions are up by 2.3% from September 2015 and 1.4% from April 2015 for support staff.

FASNA has calculated that for an average Secondary School this means £99,000 for teachers and £37,000 for support staff for 2015-2016, *ie.* a total extra cost of £136,000.

When times are difficult employers often immediately think of redundancy. However, it is important all options are considered and that consultation

takes place before any decision is made. Do not immediately think in terms of redundancy. Are there other alternatives available to your School? Is support staff overtime necessary? What about a recruitment freeze? What about the possibility of voluntary redundancy at the discretion of the school?

If it appears redundancies may be the only option how do you avoid successful unfair dismissal claims?

You need to ensure you adopt a fair process.

## Identifying the pool

The first thing that you are likely to undertake is identifying what the appropriate pool of staff is. It may be just one person if it is a stand-alone position. You should consult in relation to the pool because you may find some of those initially identified as being in the pool, for example, state that another department that they work closely with should also be within the pool of staff. You do not have to agree but you need to show that you carefully considered what was proposed before you reached your decision.

## Selection criteria

Assuming there is a pool of more than one person you will require a selection criteria. That criteria should as far as

possible be objective. Again you should consult upon the selection criteria.

Typically you might have say, five criteria and mark them between one and ten to avoid the risk of having two people on the same score. In addition, you may choose to weight certain of the criteria if they are particularly important for what the School requires going forward.

The criteria should be capable of being verified, *eg.* by reference to appraisals and disciplinary records. You should avoid discriminatory criteria and the criteria should be marked fairly. With regard to marking, it is a good idea to have two line managers who mark each individual's scores so as to minimise the risk that it is alleged that one particular line manager has unfairly marked an individual.

## Alternative employment

As part of the process you should consider whether there is any alternative employment and if there is a suitable alternative offer that to an employee who is likely to be made redundant. There is no obligation upon an employee to accept alternative employment but if they unreasonably refuse suitable alternative employment they may lose the right to a statutory redundancy payment.

An offer of alternative employment should be subject to a trial period.



Typically staff at schools will receive pay protection in relation to offers of alternative employment but that will not necessarily mean that that employment amounts to suitable alternative employment. Rather an analysis would need to be undertaken as to whether it was sufficiently similar to the old employment to amount to suitable alternative employment.

### Example of a procedure that might be adopted

Initially the matter is likely to be put to the governing body to decide whether the process should be instigated. It is important that at no time until consultation has been completed, *eg* it is suggested that a decision has already been made. Consequently, it should be no more than a proposal setting out the business

case and it should be made clear that the proposal will be subject to consultation.

In the event that the School or MAT recognise trade unions it is often helpful to notify them at the outset of the process stressing no decision has yet been made. Consultation with staff can then commence.

That consultation will typically be an initial explanation to the staff concerned

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with age, we say it comes  
with insight.*

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## Bear in mind that where a member of staff's employment is terminated for business efficiency reasons including redundancy and they are aged 55 or over, it will affect their pension position

explaining the business case of why the School/MAT consider that the process must commence and giving staff a copy of the consultation document with details of the business case. The document should again emphasise that no decision has yet been made.

Individual and staff representative consultations should then take place with a view to considering whether there are any alternative steps that can be taken to avoid the risk of compulsory redundancy. Consultation should take place with a view to identifying the correct pools. That might involve several pools across departments within the school. One should also consult in relation to the proposed criteria to be adopted. Of course that criteria might differ depending upon the particular pools and the work required within that particular department.

The criteria should then be scored as set out above which will identify those individuals who are at risk of being chosen for redundancy by reason of having the lowest score. Those individuals should be notified and given the opportunity to consider their score and indeed any other relevant matters with a view to having an individual consultation meeting to allow them to respond and comment upon their scoring and generally. At that meeting you should also identify whether there is any alternative employment or suitable alternative employment.

Having considered the response from the employee if the position remains they are likely to be made redundant, invite

them to a further meeting at which they should have the right to be accompanied by their trade union representative or a fellow colleague and the letter should warn them that following the completion of the consultation period they are at risk of dismissal. At that further meeting assuming nothing further is said which alters the position then they will be notified that they are being dismissed by reason of redundancy and will be given a letter confirming that.

If your School has its own redundancy procedure it should be considered and followed as appropriate. Anyone dismissed should be given the right of appeal.

### Collective consultation

Where a school or a multi academy trust proposes making 20 or more employees redundant over a period of 90 days or less then there is an obligation to undertake collective consultation with the employees' representatives, *ie* typically the recognised trade unions. That consultation must start at least 30 days before the first dismissal unless there are 100 or more redundancies, in which case it must begin at least 45 days before the first dismissal.

You must also file a Form HR1 with the Department for Business Innovation and Skills within the same time limits referred to above.

A failure to consult collectively in such circumstances is likely to result in protected awards of up to 90 days' pay in relation to each member of staff.

### Staff aged 55 or over

Bear in mind that where a member of staff's employment is terminated for business efficiency reasons including redundancy and they are aged 55 or over, it will affect their pension position. In relation to teachers the additional cost is addressed by the TPS. In relation to support staff the school would be obliged to make an additional payment which can be very significant and could wipe out one or two years' salary saving.

### MATS

#### 1. Collective consultation

Whilst the law is in a state of flux at present, it is best to proceed on the basis that in calculating the number of employees in a MAT who are at risk of redundancy you take into account all the schools within that MAT, *ie* if 20 or more employees are at risk of redundancy within a 90 day period across the MAT then address it under the collective consultation obligations.

#### 2. Alternative employment

The MAT as a single employer should consider alternative roles across all the schools of which it is the employer.

For further information  
and if you require specific  
advice please contact  
Nick Watson at  
nw@stoneking.co.uk,  
telephone 01225 324435.

# The FASNA experience

FASNA has existed for 23 years and some members recall the journey of freedom that schools have travelled since then, whilst others arrived into headship with autonomy and look to make the most of it. During the 2014 Autumn Conference a film crew talked to members about what they gained from FASNA, and this can now be viewed on the new FASNA website. It gives an insight into the variety of leaders who are members, some at the start of headship and others with years of experience taking a consultative role to mentor colleagues. Members are based in the whole range of educational structures, from small primary foundation schools to large MATs with thousands of pupils. What they all have in common is that they believe that leaders should be free to lead their schools and be accountable for their organisations.

During our consultation, members said they wanted more training and networking opportunities in their region, so FASNA has joined with NASBM to offer a one day training workshop on the tough issue of staff management and restructuring. This is being held in London on 2 June and the cost is £80 per person and £60 for a second person from the same organisation. Members also wanted up-to-date news in regular bite size chunks. Time is a valuable commodity, so in May FASNA and NASBM are launching a new interactive and informative 'School Leaders Hub', which links them to TheSchoolBus and all that it offers leaders to drive school leadership.

Steve Dunning Principal at Olney Infant Academy joined FASNA in 2010, when he used their guidance resources to become a foundation school and then an academy. "The information was fantastic and gave us a step by step guide, so we didn't need to pay lawyers or project managers." For Steve the national conferences are a must in his diary - "I prioritise the conferences because they offer me information, debate and an opportunity to meet like-minded leaders." He finds the workshop speakers are well chosen and provide practical evidence of good practice. For him and his staff the chance to hear top national speakers who respect their audience and are willing to enter into debate is a significant member benefit. "Working through FASNA is a great way to network and learn from others." Steve is a keen supporter of FASNA's current campaign to Ministers, to maintain autonomy for school leaders. "FASNA, is a body that has clout, and has more power than we do as individuals."

Headteacher at St Laurence Primary School, Caroline Owen joined FASNA in 2014 when her governing body was exploring academy status and wanted to gain impartial and practical advice, so they attended a Lifting the Lid workshop. Her

governors were apprehensive about leaving the LA but learnt that it wasn't a question of what they were leaving, it was what they were gaining. Her school went into special measures a month after she started her first headship in 2011 and, after a restructure of the governing body and staff, standards have dramatically improved and they are now joining Derby Diocese MAT.

Caroline says this marks a further step of freedom for her to lead, which is why FASNA's ideology appeals to her.

Andy Johnson is Executive Head at Springwood High School and came to FASNA because other leaders recommended it.

"From FASNA I learn about the national picture and take this learning into my own and other schools. Whatever position I have been in school, FASNA has helped me to keep focused on the value of autonomy." His governors and senior leaders all use the school's membership to their advantage, it helps them to lift their eyes to look at the broader picture and so to be able to engage with it and contribute at a national level. Andy works more closely with his LA than he has ever done before, and speaks positively about how Norfolk is making strides through working with all their schools, both maintained and academy. To him, it's all about raising standards and he does this by working with the Regional Schools Commissioner, Tim Coulson and other school leaders.

Like many FASNA members, Carl Ward, Chief Executive at City Learning Trust became familiar with FASNA through their conferences and termly *Academy Magazine*. "The more involved I have got, the more that I and my schools have gained from membership and, as a leader, autonomy is vitally important to me." For Carl, FASNA's voice into government is indispensable. Practically he and his staff have used FASNA to improve operational as well as strategic activity in their school, and he has represented FASNA through DfE consultations. He rates their governor workshops as practical for new and experienced governors, the next one is on 21 May in London. "I have shared the FASNA guides with my team and all our governors have a copy of the *Effective Governance* publication."

All those interviewed like the fact that the termly conferences provide informal access to high level speakers, politicians and senior ministers with a significant and like-minded audience. The Spring FASNA conference sold all 250 places months before the event, and the Autumn conference is on Thursday 12 November in London. "FASNA encourages you to be outward facing, and the more outward facing you are, the more successful one's school becomes."

[www.fasna.org.uk](http://www.fasna.org.uk)  
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# FASNA seminars 2015

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**Tuesday 2 June 2015 – Central London**

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£80 per delegate, £60 for second person from same school

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## Join FASNA at the Academies Show at Excel, London on Wednesday 29 April 2015

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*FASNA was established by successful school leaders to promote autonomy with accountability and evidence its success. Membership benefits include:*

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- *Online legal resources through our legal partner, Stone King LLP*
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# The importance of the National Standards of Excellence for Headteachers

The National Standards of Excellence for Headteachers (DfE, 2015) have recently been published. Roy Blatchford was the lead author of the Standards, produced for the DfE by an independent review group. Here he writes about their importance in training future leaders: an extract from his book *A Practical Guide to the National Standards*, just published by John Catt Educational.

Roy Blatchford is Director of the National Education Trust.

## Why be a Headteacher?

*Because it's a super job! As with all fulfilling work, being a Headteacher has autonomy, complexity and an obvious link between effort and reward.*

Over the past decade I have worked with many thousands of middle and senior leaders in schools, at conferences, invitation seminars, and on training courses. We have explored the grit of middle leadership and the unenviable task of holding colleagues to account when they are in your team and you have lunch with them each day. We have explored that step from middle to senior leader. We have debated the frustrations that being a member of a diverse senior team can bring. We have looked at how good schools become great, and the constituent features of dynamic leadership teams. We have studied leadership styles and the canny leader who knows how to pace him/herself and the school community.

When conversations turn to preparing for headship, they can run in a number of fascinating directions:

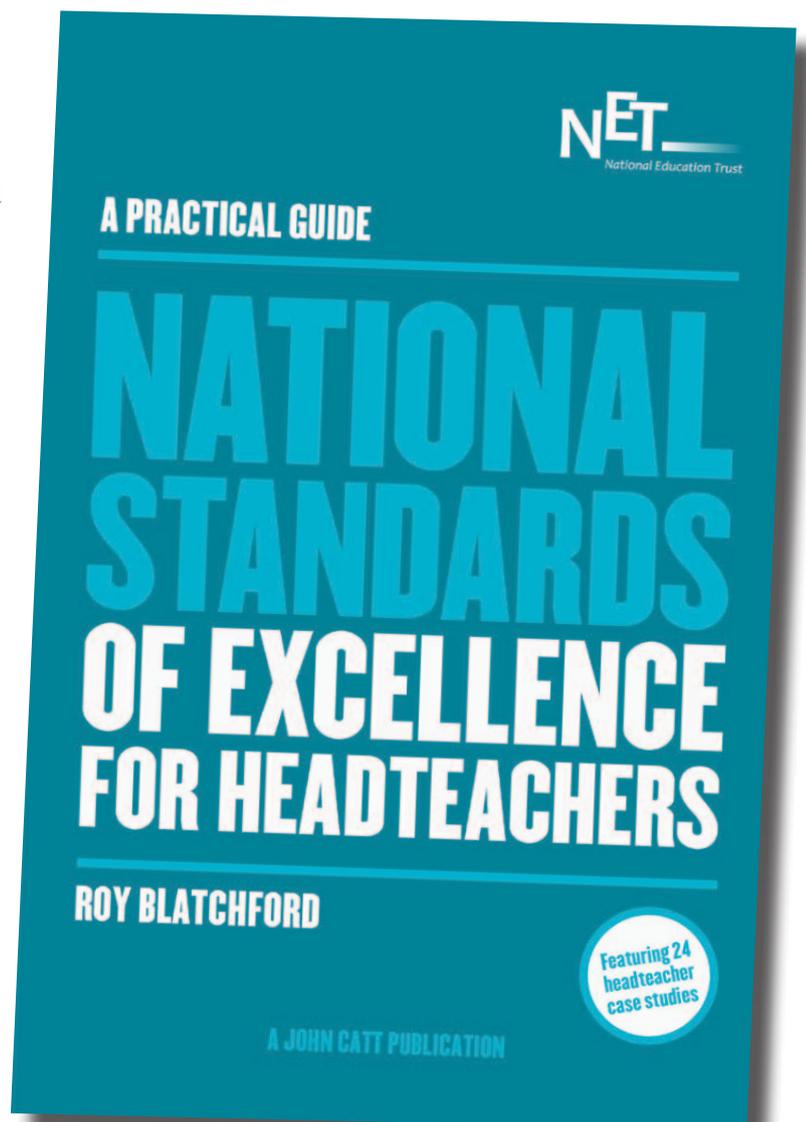
*I watch my Head and don't want to do the hours she does.*

*I'm really happy doing what I do now.*

*The extra pay from what I can see really isn't worth it.*

*I think I'm a natural deputy rather than the boss.*

*The time isn't right personally.*



# ‘Graveyards are full of indispensable people ... you’ll find a replacement’

I could continue this set of predictable and quite understandable comments. Part of preparing for headship is watching great role models, and sorting out in one’s mind the answers to these and other doubts. When personally and professionally the time is right, colleagues will decide a particular post may be for them and apply accordingly. An appointment may not follow instantly but it will come for good candidates. The self-improving school system - an underlying thread in the Headteachers’ Standards - needs great future leaders, and it demands that current heads are nurturing talent spotters.

Experience in one Local Authority taught me recently that giving colleagues the chance to be acting heads put the fire in their bellies to do the job full-time, very successfully. In another large Local Authority, clued in to succession planning, we identified 15 outstanding middle/senior leaders and coached many of them to headship over the period of a year. They learned what kinds of schools they wanted to lead and in which contexts they felt most at ease with themselves as leaders.

Where I have encountered less successful heads it has often been the case that there is nothing wrong with their knowledge and skills, and indeed preparedness for headship. It’s just that they got appointed in the wrong school or at the wrong time for them. That happens occasionally amongst the 24,000+ schools in England, however rigorous the recruitment process, however well briefed and meticulous the appointment board are.

One of the key purposes of the Headteachers’ Standards is for them to serve as a *framework* for training middle and senior leaders, encouraging them to dip their toes into the arena of headship. Having worked assiduously with colleague heads on drafting the Standards, I believe this is where they can have a notable impact. The imperative language of the Domains (‘ensure’, ‘distribute’, ‘demand’, ‘model’) is not about commanding anyone; rather, the active verbs give a creative energy which can be motivational and conducive to productive debate, interpretation and indeed healthy disagreement with the exact words used.

I worked with a tremendous chair of governors for ten years. Whenever one of our best teachers moved on, irreplaceable in my view, he would shake them warmly by the hand and offer sincere congratulations. To me he would say nicely: ‘graveyards are full of indispensable people Roy – you’ll find a replacement’. He was right about most things.

No leader is indispensable, we know that. But excellent leaders are not readily found; they need identifying and investing in. Primary, special and secondary schools across the country too often find themselves advertising Headteacher vacancies a number of times. Research and evidence on the ground tells us we are getting better at growing the next generation of heads; we must ensure that these Headteachers’ Standards are used positively to motivate current heads and compellingly whet the appetites of aspiring heads.

## Preparing for headship

What might aspiring heads do by way of short and mid-term preparation for headship, harnessing the language and framework of the Headteachers’ Standards? Here are twelve starters, linked to each of the Domains, drafted partly with interviews for headship in mind.

### Domain One: qualities and knowledge

- Be clear with yourself about the set of personal and professional values which underpin your work in schools. Which wise parents, community leaders, thinkers or writers have influenced your thinking, and can you talk about them succinctly at an interview?
- Share your own scholarship and expertise with others on the staff in a way that others see you as a ‘go-to’ colleague. Lead a staff seminar on a topic of your choice related to that area of expertise. Write an article for an educational journal/website.
- Conduct a short piece of research into how a couple of school systems globally prepare their future leaders. Present the findings to colleagues, with recommendations for your own school.

### Domain Two: pupils and staff

- Reflect on your own practice and how you are successful in making a difference with disadvantaged pupils. If asked at a headship interview what you would do in a new school to ‘close the achievement gap’, what would you be saying?
- Write yourself a short paper on different models of curriculum and extra-curricular design: special, primary, secondary – as suits. At an interview, what do you say are

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# The invisible lifeblood of learning

Andrew Hammond's new *Invisible Ink* series sheds light on the invisible elements of school life – those human capacities that are seemingly immeasurable and difficult to report on, but no less important in the world outside. Book one is *Teaching for Character*

Before the 20th Century, a classical view of science held that the description of the nature of an object and the measurement of that object were the *same thing*. Reality was as you measured it to be. If you could identify what an object is made from then you could accurately describe its state, its existence in the universe. We now find that such a theory fails spectacularly at the subatomic level. When inquisitive scientists discovered that particles of mass can behave like a particle *and* a wave (with no mass) at the same time, then everything changed forever and the modern, technology-rich world as we know it today, but unimaginable a century ago, was born. The concept of accurate measurement was challenged by the invisible concepts of potential and probability. As Jim Baggott (2011) tells us 'we began with the certainties of

knowledge and ended with the knowledge of absolute uncertainty'. The scientific revolution had begun.

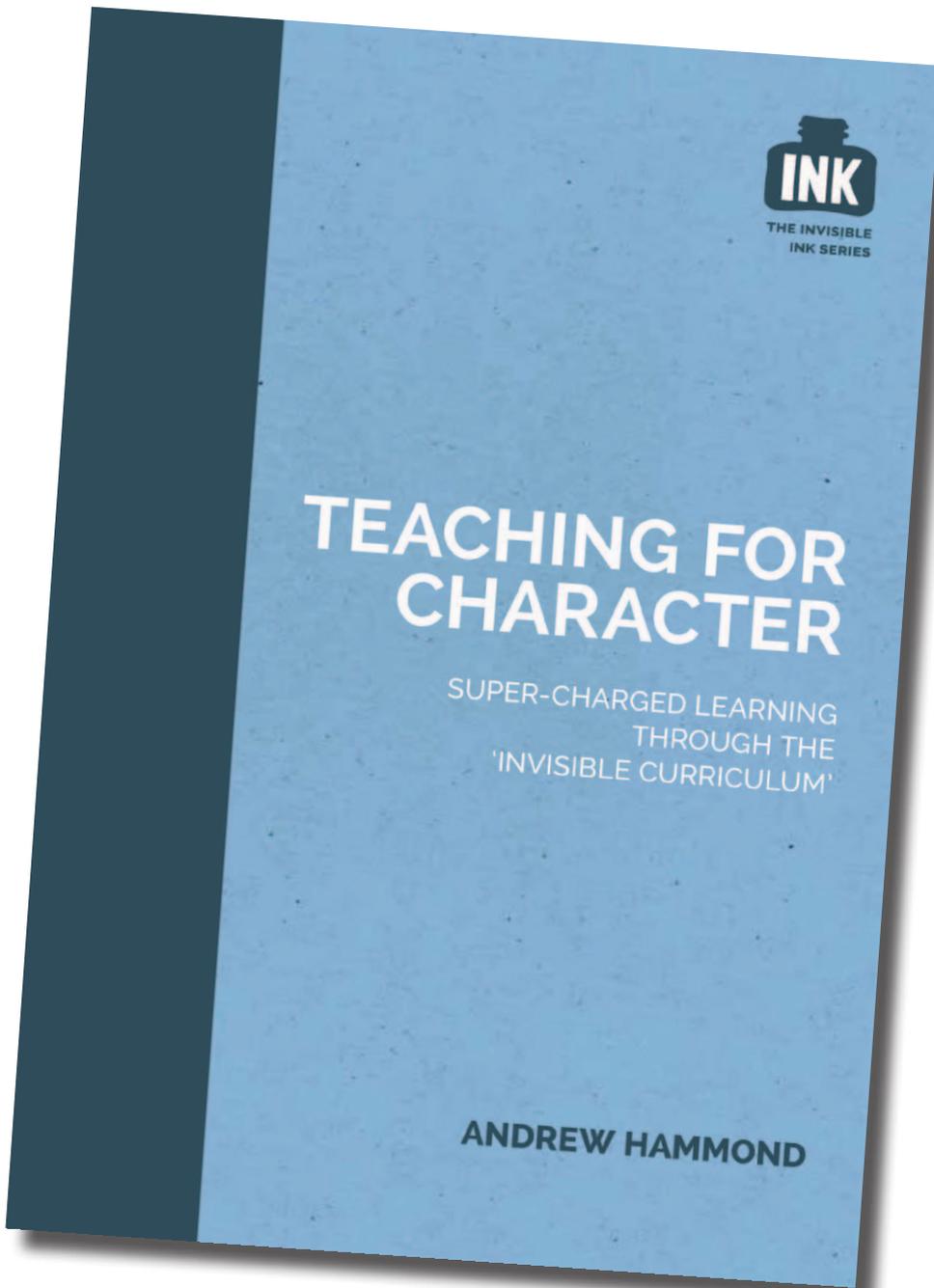
Quantum Mechanics is taxing because it is describing something that is entirely hidden from view and, in many respects, counter-intuitive to our classical view of the world around us. Secondly, it is often explained in language that belongs to the era of classical science – it's like using English to describe the English language to an alien, or lighting a stadium with a pocket torch.

And so it is with education, where a similar revolution is long overdue. There are many elements of teaching and learning that remain hidden from view, and the language we use to try to describe these invisible elements belongs to an era in which only the visible counted. The measurements we take must not be misinterpreted as the only truth, or

else the law of self-fulfilling prophecies applies.

To suggest that a child's actual ability and potential can be encapsulated in his predicted grades for GCSE, or his Common Entrance results, or his row of A\*s at A' level is as absurd as suggesting that the state of an object can be defined and described with certainty through classical measurement. Or that your torch can light every seat in the stadium.

There is an invisible quality to the existence of things: a relationship between mass and energy, and a reaction to the environment in which things exists, that means, in theory, anything and everything can happen. We cannot perceive reality as it really is, only as it seems in response to the questions we ask of it and the measurements we take. And as QM tells us, the very act of taking measurements can alter the state of that



to communicate his ideas, his willingness to join in and work with others. It is these invisible elements that combine to create *immeasurable potential* in the child – and whether we know it, or like it, or not, they form part of an invisible curriculum that is being taught and learned in schools everyday.

The Invisible Ink series sheds light on these invisible elements of school life – those human capacities that are seemingly immeasurable and difficult to report on, but no less important in the world outside school: our character, curiosity, creativity and our intrinsic motivation; the way we think; the way we communicate with each other; how we work together and depend on others to succeed. These qualities are the lifeblood of learning, our energy, so let's call them *invisible ink*.

Such qualities are equally important inside school too. They are essential if children are to reach their academic potential whilst preserving their emotional well-being and self-esteem. Schooling can be an arduous voyage, and it requires far more than academic competence to stay afloat, after all.

One cannot separate the visible curriculum from the invisible one; they are interconnected and interdependent. But progress in the invisible curriculum cannot be encapsulated in a grade nearly so easily as for the visible curriculum. Neither can it be articulated in level descriptors or attainment targets. How can one give a student a B- for curiosity or a D+ for self-motivation? How can one child's creativity be graded higher than another's? At best, such measurements only give us a glimpse of the child's ability on assessment day and at worst they become self-fulfilling prophecies – grades perpetuate a fixed mindset after all, not a growth mindset.

But the invisible curriculum can and should be recognised and even 'taught' in schools. How? By addressing the *learning environment* in which the invisible learning takes place. Each title in this new series takes one aspect of the invisible curriculum (character,

which we're measuring.

And so it is with education, again.

What lies behind an A grade in French, after all? Or a B in history? How was it achieved? This is only the visible element – the physical examination paper with etchings on it – the downloading from a term spent genning-up. But the grade itself can all too often become the accepted description of the child's ability: you're a B or a D or 120 VR or a 96 NVR.

There is much more behind an academic grade than the child's

computational capacity or his mastery of the 3Rs (to receive, remember and regurgitate) on a given day. The results of an exam cannot, unfortunately, be attributed solely to the extent to which the pupil listened and worked hard in class or crammed the night before. There is an infinite number of variables at play, an infinite number of observables: his character traits and attitudes to learning, his creativity, his motivation, his levels of curiosity, his thinking skills, his rapport with the teacher and his ability



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To suggest that a child's actual ability and potential can be encapsulated in his predicted grades for GCSE, or his Common Entrance results, or his row of A\*s at A' level is as absurd as suggesting that the state of an object can be defined and described with certainty through classical measurement. Or that your torch can light every seat in the stadium

creativity, motivation, curiosity, thinking, communication and collaboration) and considers how the learning environment in a school can be re-designed to allow it to flourish – rather than disappear in the race to deliver those visible, academic grades.

Six key features of the learning environment are addressed in every book in the Invisible Ink series, in the context of each element of the invisible curriculum, and these features are: teacher as model learner; the language of learning; group dynamics; choices and challenges; the element of doubt; observation.

In Book 1, *Teaching for Character*, I consider the difference between moral character and performance character. Some of the character traits and attitudes (CTAs) that lead to an effective learning

performance are profiled, including: grit, adaptability, optimism, self-control, empathy, discernment and trust. The author offers practical advice and suggestions for how these CTAs can flourish when the learning environment is right. Arguably, this is better than pouring them into a scheme of work and teaching them discretely in a separate subject, divorced from anything else. Having a separate lesson called 'character education' is no more beneficial than learning how to be a good citizen only on a Thursday, period four, between English and geography; a whole-school, cross-curricular approach is needed.

The learning environment in schools, compartmentalised and carefully timetabled, has for too long been dominated by the need to show academic progress via academic certification.

Important though this is, few teachers would argue it is the sole purpose of education. When we consider the invisible curriculum, other important functions of school come into view: teaching children how to learn, how to think, how to live and work with others, and how to gain a greater sense of their own identity and potential.

*Teaching for Character*, the first book in the *Invisible Ink* series by Andrew Hammond, is published by John Catt Educational. Andrew is Managing Director of INK Education Ltd: [www.ink-ed.com](http://www.ink-ed.com)

# Dispatches from the front line

*Changing Schools* is a new collection of essays by teachers, researchers and administrators who have been on the front line of the revolutionary changes taking place in state education over the last five years. Editor Robert Peal assesses the UK's education revolution

One aspect of Michael Gove on which supporters and detractors alike can agree is that he made education reform central to the national agenda.

Gove is the fourth-longest serving Education Secretary since 1945. Prior to him, five Labour ministers held the role of education secretary for an average of just under two years – hardly enough time to get to grips with the department, let alone undertake significant reform. When one includes his time from 2007 as Shadow Secretary of State for Education, Gove spent over seven years with the education brief.

For many of Gove's predecessors, Education Secretary was a short-lived stepping-stone towards greater cabinet roles. However, according to *The Economist*, in the six months to February 2014 Gove generated more newspaper articles than any other cabinet minister, aside from the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister and Chancellor. However, aside from generating media attention, what did Michael Gove actually achieve as Education Secretary? In brief, I would argue his achievements were threefold.

Firstly, he ushered in a new wave of school autonomy. In a forthcoming collection of essays that I have edited for John Catt entitled *Changing Schools*, David Cameron's former Director of Policy James O'Shaughnessy explains how Gove took the nascent Labour reform of City Academies, which had produced 203 state schools independent of Local Authority control, and rolled it out nationwide. Five years later, 60% of all English secondary schools and 14% of primary schools are academies. He explains how new Academy chains are providing economies of scale, the dispersal of pedagogical practice, and peer-to-peer collaboration on an exciting new scale.

In addition, new academies known as 'free schools' can now be set up from scratch. This has heralded an unprecedented opportunity for innovation in state schooling. One of the most exciting new free schools has been founded in Wembley by Katherine Birbalsingh. She has contributed a chapter to *Changing Schools* explaining how she is using her newfound freedoms to liberate her staff to set remarkably high expectations for their pupils.

Secondly, Michael Gove began an overhaul of the qualifications regime. Years of unchecked grade inflation, denied by schools and politicians alike, coupled with small scale cheating in controlled assessment, have come to an end. GCSE and A-level examinations are being reformed to become more challenging, and the perverse incentives created by performance measures such as 5 A\* to C – which encouraged schools to focus their attentions overwhelmingly on 'borderline pupils' – are being curtailed. The Ebacc, along with the upcoming 'Progress eight', are new accountability measures that encourage schools to focus on the achievement of all pupils across a broad range of academic subjects.

These widespread qualification reforms are only just getting underway, and the qualifications expert Tina Isaacs breaks down their significance and rationale in her chapter for *Changing Schools*. In addition, schools are now able to rework their internal assessment thanks to the removal of the obligation to use National Curriculum levels. If schools leaders hope to design sound new assessment procedures, they would do well to read Daisy Christodoulou's chapter on the principles of assessment.

Lastly, and perhaps most controversially, Gove launched an intellectual attack on some of the most cherished notions of the

## It was his attack on the education establishment's 'thoughtworld' that, I believe, earned Gove his unusual level hatred as Secretary of State

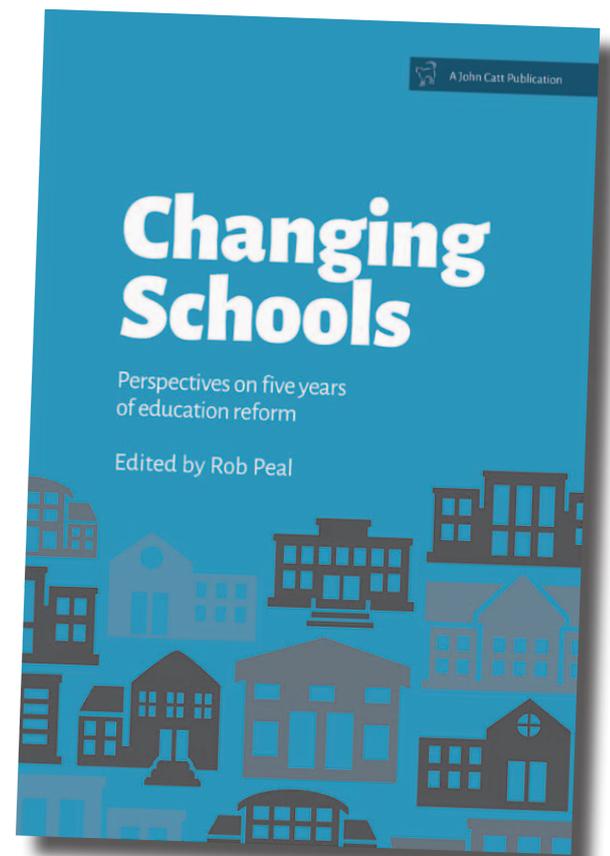
education establishment. From whole word reading instruction, to play based learning; from 'relevance' in history lessons to second-rate novels in English literature, no shibboleth of progressive education was left safe from Gove's speeches.

However, Gove was not a lone voice in making such criticisms. The secondary school maths teacher and prolific blogger Andrew Old has received over one million hits since 2006 on his blog 'Scenes from the Battleground', and has been a trenchant critic of the ideas within the education establishment. His ongoing scrutiny of Ofsted's endorsement of particular teaching methods came to influence government policy on the school's inspectorate. He explains in his chapter the growing use of social media amongst classroom teachers, and the significance this has.

It was this attack on the education establishment's 'thoughtworld' that, I believe, earned Gove his unusual level hatred as Secretary of State. At union conferences, delegates competed to compose florid comparisons between Gove and Satan; over the internet, a Gove voodoo doll, and a spoof book of blank pages entitled *Everything I Know about teaching by Mr Michael Gove* became available; and celebrities from Simon Schama to Michael Morpurgo lined up to join the communal hate. I not surprised when, in late 2013, I went to the toilet in the British Library and saw some anti-Gove graffiti on the cubicle door.

However, by challenging the education establishment, government reforms have allowed normal classroom teachers to gain a greater voice within education debates. The extent to which they are taking ownership of their profession is explained by ResearchEd founder Tom Bennett in his chapter on teacher autonomy who, though judicial in his judgements, offers some reasons for hope.

Central to the collation government's education reforms has been what seems like a paradox: they have simultaneously attempted to drive up standards from central government, whilst also granting significant new levels of autonomy to schools. In his chapter, policy expert Jonathan Simons attempts



to unpick this, and various other policy challenges for future governments. In addition, the American school reformers Doug Lemov and Joaquin Hernandez from the charter school network Uncommon Schools offer a few choice lessons from across the Atlantic for reformers in England.

To my mind, this paradox can be explained as follows. The centralising reforms of the current government have been aimed at raising expectations, through measures such as the phonics check, the end of controlled assessment, and more challenging GCSEs and A-levels. However, the means by which schools meet this new, higher bar of academic achievement has become – to an unprecedented extent – down to them. Schools can now train their own staff; devise their own form of assessment; elect how to support disadvantaged pupils through the pupil premium; and (if the inspectorate are to be believed) use whatever teaching methods they see fit.

These reforms reflect an awareness that a grass roots culture change, not a top down political change, is what is needed for English schools to improve. As the Schools Minister Nick Gibb concluded in a speech in November 2014, 'good government does not improve public services. It enables public services to improve themselves.'

**Robert Peal is a history teacher at the West London Free School, and the editor of *Changing Schools*, published by John Catt Educational, £10**

# Planning for the worst

Philip West explains how schools can draw up effective business continuity plans

**W**hen I retired as a police inspector four years ago - having specialised in the policing of major incidents - I set up my own consultancy in business continuity and crisis management. As vice chair of governors at two federated secondary schools, I've become increasingly engaged in the field of business continuity for schools.

Four years ago my two schools were the first in our area to obtain academy status. Three years ago both schools had their first financial audit, in which they were marked down, as neither had a business continuity plan. In the past the Local Authority would have looked after this, but as independent businesses both academies now needed their own plans. As a fully certified member of the Business Continuity Institute, there was no one else in the schools better able to produce these than me.

The usual business continuity approach - carrying out a business impact analysis, followed by long investigations on maximum disruption times and so on - works well for large global corporations, but is too unwieldy and expensive for a school. I needed to find a different method.

My approach was to spend a year getting to know what plans the schools already had for various situations, and gradually put together a product that would not only satisfy the auditors but, more importantly, give the schools a tool that would work in a major incident and allow managers to resolve a situation as quickly and painlessly as possible.

## What should a school's plan include?

Business continuity planning is about thinking through all the different kinds of adverse events that could affect a business, and having strategies in place to deal with them so that the business can keep operating. For a school, adverse events could mean things like a building burning down, a fatal attack on a member of staff, or a coach crash on a school trip. Unfortunately these grim scenarios do occasionally happen, and it's far better to be prepared as it makes dealing with the situation much easier.

The title 'business continuity plan' is a little misleading, as the whole document is more than just one plan. It's a one-stop shop containing everything needed to resolve a major incident, within a timespan that won't cause the business (school) to suffer irreversible damage to its product (the welfare and education of children) or organisational reputation.

In order to do all of this, the document should contain:

- Somewhere to record the initial details so everyone can see what has happened.
- Contact lists for the major incident team, staff, parents, stakeholders, hospitals, emergency services and service providers.
- Strategic plans designed to look past the immediate event and consider the future in light of what is happening.
- Tactical plans designed to guide the senior managers who are dealing with resolving the immediate problem.
- Operational plans that drill down to the specific actions individuals must carry out at the 'coal face' in order to address the problem.
- Meeting agendas for strategic and tactical teams.
- Any documents that will assist in dealing with the situation, such as media advice, IT recovery plans, location of emergency shut-off valves *etc.*
- Somewhere to record all decisions and actions (to protect against litigation post-incident).

## How did we do this for my two schools?

Keeping a hard copy of all this information is unwieldy, inaccessible and difficult to update. To overcome this we built a simple computer programme containing everything in one easy-to-use format, with quick links from one place to another. This means that everyone can see everything that everyone else is doing, and at the conclusion of the event it can be saved as a record of who did what and when, which is vital in protecting against litigation. It's also much easier to keep up-to-date, as there's only one copy that can be quickly altered.

Given the small number of senior managers in most schools we combined the strategic and tactical plans, so the same team can work on both. This is achieved by making the focus of the meeting agendas strategic, and the main tasks tactical.

Once this was completed we tested the plans - and the programme - with a small exercise that also provided the senior management team with an opportunity to practise dealing with a major incident. This was done using mock inputs such as PowerPoint feeds, press cuttings, Local Authority reports, phone feeds and local radio bulletins.

Having tested and improved our programme, we are now making it cloud-based so it can be accessed by anyone, anywhere (as long as they have internet access), and is also



accessible if the school servers are down. Everyone can work on it simultaneously; it enables collaboration and co-ordination.

### What can we do to help other schools?

We can easily tailor our programme to other schools. The strategic and tactical plans are those common tasks that must be considered whatever the situation, and can be transferred to any school without alteration. However, the operational plans are generic to an individual school as they reflect its geography and staffing set-up; these need to be adjusted for each school.

With regards to multi-academy trusts, we recommend a master system with strategic and tactical plans set at trust level with sub-systems in each school set at operational level. The trust has access to all plans so they can monitor what is being done at school level.

As well as helping to set the plans up, we can provide a range of other services, such as running exercises and carrying out annual health checks. Through another partner we can also provide 24/7 cover, whereby you can access an expert who will work with you continuously through the crisis, for example

giving media advice or providing security if the school is being besieged. Our packages can be tailored to your needs, including any combination of the above services.

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# Bringing language and culture alive in your school

Figures show that the lack of language skills in the UK harms our economy and hampers employment prospects. Indeed, the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills estimates an economic cost of £48 billion a year as companies look to recruit multi-lingual people to enable them to compete in a globalised marketplace. There is no better statistic to illustrate the importance of languages to the school pupils of today and no better reason to prioritise language learning in schools.

The British Council recognises the need for young people to develop language skills and gain an international perspective through their learning. Through our work we can see that encouraging global citizenship adds value to the curriculum, makes a positive impact on the ethos of a school and is an effective way to bring the wider world into the classroom. When practised well, global citizenship sees pupils engaging with other cultures and learning to appreciate the fact that they are part of a wider international community. It is our belief in the power and potential of global citizenship that underpins the Language Assistants programme.

## Language Assistants: an overview

The Language Assistants programme launched in 1965 and since then over 125,000 assistants have been placed into UK primary and secondary schools. Today a typical British Council Language Assistant will be a young and enthusiastic native speaker of either French, Spanish, German, Italian, Chinese, Russian or Irish. They will have a good command of English, either learning or teaching the language in their home country, and will be looking to gain work experience in a UK school, while furthering their

knowledge of our culture. This differs slightly for Chinese Language Assistants, who will all be trained and qualified teachers.

Because of their backgrounds and skills, a British Council Language Assistant offers benefits that simply cannot be gained with a local alternative. Our Language Assistants are native speakers, coming to your school direct from their home country. This means that their language, knowledge of trends, topical issues and cultural references will be entirely up to date and relevant to today's world. Also, they will bring with them brand new teaching resources and materials.

Whilst with you a Language Assistant will support teachers with lesson planning and delivery, raise standards, help to implement government policy and prepare students for exams. They will become integral and valued members of your school family, forming bonds with pupils and bringing the world into the classroom.

Hosting a Language Assistant instils that all important international focus in a school. And in many cases hosting can lead on to further international work, through school partnerships, funding for teachers' professional development and the highly valued International School Award.

## What the schools say

The British Council is proud to have spoken with many schools about their positive experiences with our Language Assistants. Indeed, many primary and secondary schools across the UK have consistently renewed their commitment to language learning by applying to host a Language Assistant on a yearly basis.

'Marianne brings youth, enthusiasm, motivation and tremendous support for the teachers,' said Catherine Mackenzie, a modern languages teacher at Currie Community High School. 'She brings an up to date view of the foreign country, whether it's the media, current affairs,





new language. She is an invaluable asset in our team.'

Kettlethorpe High School's deputy headteacher, Lisa Fox, echoed these positive sentiments, saying, 'I think what's been most impressive for us as a school is the amount of confidence it's given our GCSE students. They are very much under pressure to prepare a lot of topics for their exams and I think because they get to speak to a native speaker they get to find out about all the little bits that make themselves sound more natural. That really helps them get through some of the difficult barriers they find.'

And it is not only the teachers who are experiencing the benefits of working with a Language Assistant.

'She is quite young and I think that's why we feel more confident in class,' said Rebecca, a pupil at Currie Community High School. 'I'm very shy in class, but she gets everyone involved. It's really good having her.'

If you want to hear more testimonials about working with a Language Assistant, please visit us at [www.britishcouncil.org/](http://www.britishcouncil.org/)

language-assistants, where you will find a selection of videos and stories.

### How do I apply for a Language Assistant?

If you feel that your school could gain from having a native speaker in the classroom, full details on how to apply are online. The British Council is keen to encourage a flexible approach to hosting a Language Assistant. As such, in order to limit costs, a Language Assistant can be shared by up to three nearby schools, both primary and secondary. There are standard costs for hosting a Language Assistant, however there are variations that will apply to schools in and around London, and subsidies available for hosting a Chinese Language Assistant. To find out more about this, contact Vicky Gough at the British Council via [Vicky.Gough@britishcouncil.org](mailto:Vicky.Gough@britishcouncil.org).

In addition to providing trained native speakers, the advantages of hosting a Language Assistant through the British Council include full administrative support and advice throughout the period

of employment. An information booklet for all employers is available online, along with procedural advice and VISA and work permits details. In the case of Chinese Language Assistants we will also provide a three day induction course on their arrival in the UK.

### Bring language and culture alive

Hosting a Language Assistant is a unique opportunity to give your school an international dimension and your staff a level of support that will enable them to teach languages better than ever before. But most importantly a Language Assistant will prepare your pupils for life as global citizens. Whatever their next steps after leaving your school, the experience of working with a Language Assistant will stand them in good stead in a diverse, competitive and globally-minded working and educational environment.

To find out more visit us at [www.britishcouncil.org/language-assistants](http://www.britishcouncil.org/language-assistants)

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# Stating our case

Andy Johnson asks how the post-election school system can best engage and influence changes in the areas of curriculum and assessment



The UK school curriculum and how it is assessed provides the very heart of the education system. There have been many bold and ideologically driven decisions made by the current coalition government regarding this important issue, with many of the key changes being implemented in the next parliament. How would FASNA advise the next government?

## The role of politicians in curriculum and assessment approaches

The UK leads the world in Business, Industry and Academia; it could even be argued that many countries look to the UK to benchmark education too. Schools are wholly aware that the curriculum that we teach and how that is assessed must withstand close scrutiny and be robust enough to prepare our future adults for the 21st Century. Our elected politicians have a right and duty to hold the education system to account. However, there is a need to ask the question whether politicians should be directly involved in the design and set up of the countries curriculum and assessment frameworks?

***Surely what is taught and how it is assessed needs an independent body at a distance from the Secretary of State for education, in a similar vein to Ofsted?***

Change is a powerful weapon for all political parties. The desire to impact on

the education system within a relatively short electoral cycle is challenging particularly with regard to changes to curriculum and assessment issues. The education system is currently seeing the greatest change in decades with significant changes in every age range occurring simultaneously. The impact of these changes will push through several electoral cycles before yielding a defined impact.

***Political parties may differ over educational systems but could they not garner cross party agreement for the curriculum studied to provide long term (at least 10 years) stability for schools around an agreed curriculum and assessment blueprint?***

**FASNA recognises the need for a common core, something all schools must deliver. This is essential for our young people and, in mobile society, protects those who have to change schools. However, the non-core curriculum should be decided by schools themselves.**

## School led curriculum and assessment

School led system leadership has developed significantly in recent years. National leaders of Education, Teaching schools, school based Ofsted inspectors and most recently, Headteacher Boards within the Regional School Commissioner structure have provided increased opportunities for a self-improving school

system. How can the school system best engage and influence changes in the areas of curriculum and assessment?

***Consultation processes around agreed areas are all well and good, but where are the structures to allow schools to directly influence curriculum and assessment changes? How best could the profession be engaged?***

## Reforming A levels

Some schools have welcomed the removal of modular teaching and the 're-sit' culture it encouraged. Sixth forms across the country are now making individual local decisions on the best sixth for curriculum and assessment structures for next year. Some A levels will remain within the old approach of AS and A2 whilst others will switch to stand alone AS and A level content. Some subjects will enable AS and A' level content to be taught together easily, whilst some will be distinctly different. Oxford and Cambridge universities have made it clear that they believe that AS grades provide an important indicator for university selection, other universities have yet to say. Parents will quite rightly, look to schools to provide excellent advice and guidance on this important issue.

***It is time to pause and evaluate the method of delivery and assessment of A levels***

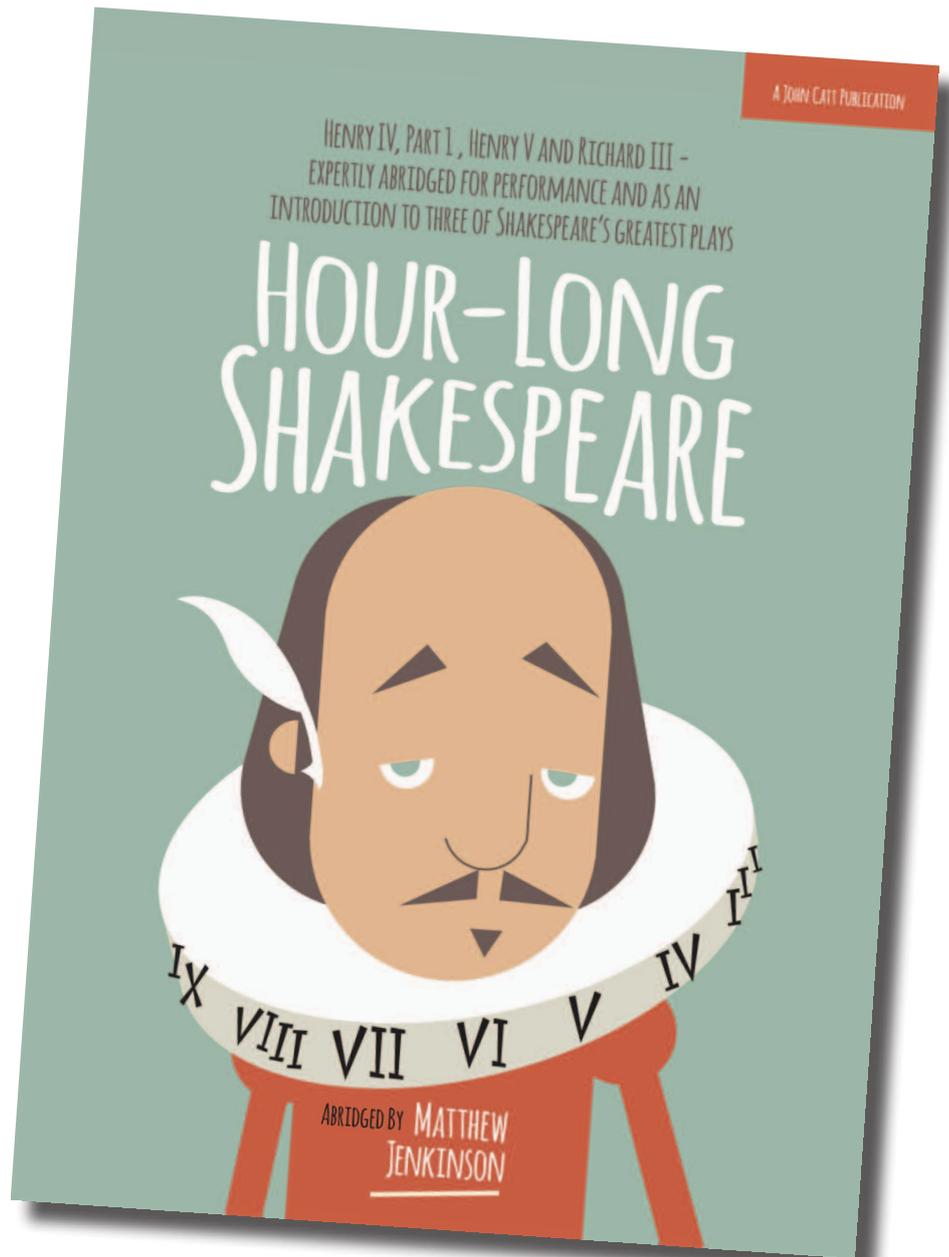
# Reducing Shakespeare

Shakespeare is back, says Matthew Jenkinson

Not that he ever went away, clearly. But he is back on the Key Stage 3 radar, with the new National Curriculum requiring all pupils between 11 and 14 to study two Shakespeare plays in full. This added rigour has won plaudits from some areas, but not all. Dr Tim Hands, Master of Magdalen College School, has argued that too much Shakespeare, too early, will put pupils off Shakespeare for life. It will, Hands claims, ‘hold back pupils, not liberate them’.

As with any topic in any subject, the extent to which pupils will be put off or held back depends on the way these plays are taught. Or it could be argued that Shakespeare’s genius will transcend the mangling they are given through bad teaching. I vividly remember reading *Romeo and Juliet* at the age of thirteen, even though my teacher was not blessed in the inspiration department. But what debates about the new National Curriculum requirements rarely countenance, oddly, is the value of *performing* Shakespeare. I suspect that most of us imagine unwilling pupils sitting at their desks, each being given a role – ‘Freddy, you be third servingman!’ – and killing Shakespeare’s language with a deadening adolescent inflection.

Before the nation’s armchair educational commentators start shaking their *Telegraphs* or *Guardians*, sneering that Key Stage 3 pupils are too young to perform Shakespeare plays, I will beg to differ. Indeed, as with many of my colleagues around the country – and one hopes the world – each autumn I direct a Shakespeare play that remains true to the original language. As far as I have noticed, these plays have not yet put anyone off Shakespeare for life, nor held them back. Quite the opposite: abridged and



produced in the correct way, Shakespeare plays can be ‘differentiated’ to allow pupils to access them at many different levels.

I should clarify that we do not perform *complete* plays. The logistics of trying to get a cast of 11 to 14-year-olds to learn

three hours’ worth of lines are boggling, especially when they are also trying to do their classwork and homework, play football, practise the French horn, and surf YouTube. Our performances tend to be about an hour in length, with the original text abridged to preserve the

overall plot and principal characters. This 'reduced Shakespeare' has little in common with the Reduced Shakespeare Company's excellent stage show, aside from an appreciation that Shakespeare plays can be distilled without corrupting their essence.

It appears that such an approach has some high-profile supporters. Simon Russell Beale, who has just become Cameron Mackintosh Visiting Professor of Contemporary Theatre at the University of Oxford, argues that Shakespeare is 'big enough' to survive some editing. 'You can do what you like with it,' he says, 'as long as you make coherent, emotional sense'. Deborah Warner, former director of the Royal Shakespeare Company and twice-recipient of a Laurence Olivier Award, has argued that 'you must cut to create new work'.

Three of these abridged Shakespeare plays are being published by John Catt in 2015: *Hour-Long Shakespeare* features performance texts of three of Shakespeare's greatest 'History' plays: *Henry IV, Part 1*; *Henry V*; and *Richard III*. It is not a book for purists, nor for those seeking a study text. It is, instead, for those who wish to perform (or read) a Shakespeare play, but do not have the time or resources to stage (or read) a full-length version. Naturally, cutting out almost two-thirds of each original play means that many speeches are shorter than in the original, some sections of plot have been removed, and whole characters sometimes have been excised altogether. But the integrity of Shakespeare's original language has been preserved. The lines are, in general, as printed in the first folio of 1623, with, where appropriate, some modernized spellings, and capitals replaced with lowercase letters. The words of the original plays have not been changed; there are just fewer of them.

The casting of the plays has been engineered for the greatest flexibility. There are usually approximately 20 named parts, each with different levels of difficulty. If someone wishes to be involved in a Shakespeare production,

It is not a book for purists, nor for those seeking a study text. It is, instead, for those who wish to perform (or read) a Shakespeare play, but do not have the time or resources to stage (or read) a full-length version

but is not confident about learning lots of lines or being on the stage for too long, there is a part for them. Equally, if someone wishes to take on a much larger role like Henry V or Richard III, there is a part for them too. And, of course, there are plenty of medium-engagement roles for those in the middle.

The Chorus device is used throughout the plays. While Shakespeare wrote a Chorus part for *Henry V*, this same narrator-style method has also been adopted in *Hour-Long Shakespeare* for *Henry IV, Part 1* and *Richard III*. This enables the Chorus to provide excerpts from otherwise-excised sections of the plays, or to provide a commentary on the unfolding drama. The Chorus device also aids flexibility in casting. It is possible to have just one individual narrating the Chorus part, or several actors can take the Chorus lines in turn. When these hour-long versions were originally staged, between 15 and 20 Chorus members were used, sitting behind the audience 'in the round', taking each line in turn around a giant circle. In addition to enhancing the atmosphere of the performance, this also enables the Chorus to have the script in front of them, catering for those who wish to engage with Shakespeare's language

and the production as a whole, but who do not yet feel confident enough to learn lines or perform on the main stage.

There is also great flexibility in the age range of those who can be involved in the hour-long productions. The original cast members were between 11 and 13 years old. They demonstrated that this age group really can engage with, act in, and enjoy, Shakespeare's plays. While it would probably be rare for younger children to attempt these edited versions, there is of course no upper age limit. One of the best ways to learn about Shakespeare is to perform one of his plays. Even if you only have a couple of lines, you become immersed in the language and begin to encounter and understand core themes and plots. These scripts will hopefully help in that learning process, genuinely liberating them through manageable exposure to Shakespeare's language.

Matthew Jenkinson is  
Director of Studies at New  
College School, Oxford.  
*Hour-Long Shakespeare*  
is published by John  
Catt Educational, £10.  
Discounts available for  
multiple copies

# Understanding 'computational thinking'

Simon Hill, Managing Director of YPO, considers how the right resources and training will help schools to deliver the new computer science curriculum

The information technology sector in the UK is growing rapidly. However, many believe that there remains a contrast between the UK's education system and the industry's requirements.

Following the introduction of the new curriculum in schools across the country last September, computer science and coding now has a firm place in the classroom, with a shift in emphasis from how to use a computer to explaining and demonstrating how it actually works.

The introduction of this new subject area was closely followed by an announcement from David Cameron that the focus on computer science is set to expand, with the introduction of a new computer science GCSE, brought into schools by 2016. This new qualification will focus on writing code, designing applications and exploring some of the ethical and legal issues that surround technology.

So what does this mean for teachers? The new computing curriculum sets an expectation that pupils will understand and apply the fundamental principles and concepts of computer science, including abstraction, logic, algorithms and data representations. There is also a requirement to analyse problems in computational terms and have repeated practical experience of writing computer programs in order to solve such problems.

Understandably, some staff are concerned about teaching the new computing curriculum, and the new computer science GCSE is likely to increase these worries. Teachers are well aware that it will be challenging for many schools to provide the level of expertise required to teach children to use code. Indeed, there are relatively few schools that have a history of teaching computing. Teachers, already under considerable pressure to deliver results, may feel they currently do not have the right skills, time or resources to adopt the new way of teaching.

Certainly, more subject specific training is required to support staff to develop the necessary skills to teach computer science. At YPO, we've identified a need to develop training that will help teachers understand the processes and approaches of 'computational thinking', which forms the basis of the new curriculum.

Schools and teachers must also have a reasonable understanding of the fundamental terminology of computer science. For example, algorithms and logical reasoning are crucial elements which young people will need to grasp. The KS2 national curriculum states that logical reasoning should be used to explain how some simple algorithms work and to detect and correct errors in algorithms and programs.

In addition, an understanding of 'scratch' will give teachers more confidence in the classroom. 'Scratch' is a programming language and online community where children can program and share interactive media such as stories, games and animation. Statements, conditions and loops are just a few examples of 'scratch' language that will help to teach elements such as programming and logical reasoning.

Alongside the need for more training and support around the subject areas being taught, schools will need to ensure they have the right tools and equipment to deliver the new aspects of the curriculum. In many cases, schools will be required to make considerable investment in new resources and materials, so it is crucial that attention is paid to factors such as value for money, quality and delivery.

Investment in resources may well mean buying items such as tablets, programming tools, software, computers, and the newest technologies such as the Raspberry Pi. Whilst some of these items may not have traditionally been on a school's shopping list, they certainly will be appearing. Teachers will also need training on how to use them.

The Raspberry Pi is an excellent resource to help teach the basics of computer science in schools. It is a credit-card-sized single-board computer developed in the UK by the Raspberry Pi Foundation. The resource can be used like a desktop computer to browse the web, play HD video and improve computer programming skills.

To help teachers get to grips with computer science, our Raspberry Pi starter kit provides a good introduction. The kit contains a bespoke pack for teachers, containing handy tips, guidance and all the elements required to help them deliver computer science lessons.



There are lots of other products that can help teachers bring lessons to life, including the MaKey MaKey Kit. This invention kit turns everyday objects into input devices, making interesting interactive displays, toys, games and entertainment, and helping pupils to understand how technology relates to real-life objects and situations.

There are also some excellent materials available to support the planning and teaching of the new curriculum. For example, 'One Hundred Computing Lessons' is a series of books containing all the lessons and activities for years 1-6. The books are accompanied by a CD that is packed with interactive activities and tools.

There is no doubt that implementing the new computer

science curriculum will be a daunting prospect for some schools. However, they should be reassured that there are resources and support available to guide them through, and help them meet, the new requirements.

**YPO has a selection of new products available to help schools teach the new computer science curriculum. In addition, YPO's new CPD programme includes a course on 'Essential Primary Computing'. For more information visit [www.ypo.co.uk](http://www.ypo.co.uk)**

# Is accountability getting in the way of real school improvement?

Getting every professional in a school to contribute to improvement will deliver real gains for pupils but significant barriers, such as accountability pressures, need to be overcome. Keith Wright gathered education leaders together for a round table discussion to explore the issue

**W**ith all the fevered debate about a high stakes accountability culture, ‘football manager syndrome’ and ‘do or die’ inspections, school leaders would be forgiven for avoiding a risk-taking approach in the running of their schools.

The temptation for many leaders, especially those in schools in the early stages of an improvement journey, will be to keep an all-seeing eye on everything that goes on in their school, and to ensure that everything that is measured by Ofsted gets done – and gets done well.

The problem with this approach is that it is hard to sustain. Lone leadership, or leadership driven solely with the leadership team, will eventually run out of steam, while the focus on feeding the accountability machine might restrict opportunities for other professionals to make a meaningful contribution. In order for momentum to be developed, and for improvement

to be ingrained in the fabric of a school, ways have to be found to give every professional within the school a role in that improvement.

Just how schools do this was the subject of a round table event I hosted at the UCL Institute of Education. The discussion is detailed in a new white paper.

Schools that empower every professional to make a contribution to school improvement display a range of characteristics. For example they give teachers freedom to learn from and with each other, use performance management systems focused on personal professional growth, and develop structures and systems that allow every member of staff to make a direct contribution to school improvement.

But there are many barriers to overcome before this ideal can be achieved. And the current accountability regime is perhaps the most prominent.





Louis Coiffait, CEO of the NAHT's association for middle leaders, NAHT Edge, referred to research carried out with Edge members in which some said "the spectre of Ofsted" put them off becoming a Headteacher. "When we asked them what CPD they needed they said that they wanted to be able to help staff look good for Ofsted," he said. "I think that neatly summed up the incentives driving the system at the moment."

Peter Earley, Professor of Education Leadership and Management, UCL Institute of Education, University College London, said Ofsted had driven schools to a situation in which whatever got inspected got done, with no emphasis within schools on the improvement of pedagogy. "The College of Teachers might help here and give schools some strength to be able to say that they are not prepared to be as dominated by Ofsted as they are," he said.

He added: "Tim Brighouse (former London Schools Commissioner) wanted schools to have a balanced scorecard that measured if schools were preparing people for society. We could change those key performance indicators so that we measure what we value. Some education systems like Singapore do try to measure pupil well-being."

Jon Boyes, Deputy Headteacher of Sandwich Technology School in Kent, suggested that in order for schools to create a culture that was not driven by the current accountability agenda they needed to create their own metrics. "You can't

get away from metrics being used to measure people," he said. "These drive the direction your school goes on. You have to change a school to fit policy or you fail. But the metrics have to change. The only schools that are brave enough to do this are outstanding schools. One school did not do a SEF, but they had the license to do that because they were outstanding."

The independent sector could provide models for these new metrics. Denise Willis, Head of Collegiate Management at Queen Ethelburga College, an independent 3-19 school in North Yorkshire, said the school was judged by independent schools inspectorate HMC on extra-curricular activities and pastoral care, as well as attainment.

Headteacher performance management was an area ripe for change, said Nigel Ashley, Headteacher of Meadowside Community Primary in North Yorkshire. "At the moment the Headteacher is given one objective – to raise standards. But we can do things with this process now. We can see that it includes other measures as well such as pupil voice, enjoyment and resilience. We Headteachers have in some ways got to make ourselves more accountable, but in the right way."

As well as schools establishing new accountability metrics, we considered other actions that would enable schools to achieve the ideal of empowering every professional in a school. A greater commitment to meaningful reflection and development for all leaders and teachers was one.

**You have to change a school to fit policy or you fail. But the metrics have to change. The only schools that are brave enough to do this are outstanding schools**

# CHARLES LAWRENCE

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“CPD is an important ingredient, but what works best is professional learning,” said Philippa Cordingley, Chief Executive of CUREE (Centre for the Use of Research and Evidence in Education). “We should be thinking about work based professional learning, not CPD, and provide this through collaboration between schools. When teachers take risks together that is when they build up trust.

“Schools have rarely shared their understanding of what constitutes professional learning. Pupils are given increasing responsibility for their own learning but this hasn’t been pursued in the same way for teachers.”

Louis Coiffait said it was for the government to ensure that all school professionals had access to national, recognised qualifications that would help their professional development and allow them to play a full part in school improvement. “If we have this more fragmented system it is harder as a teacher to know who the good training providers are,” he said.

“We recently responded to the consultation on NPQML (National Professional Qualification for Middle Leadership) - 500 people have done this programme in the past two years but there are 200,000 middle leaders across the country. Giving people good quality, accredited development and qualifications and ratcheting up the volume of people going through them is a role for government.”

We also agreed that structured, systematic approaches to spotting and nurturing future leaders and talent should be embedded in all schools.

Philippa Cordingley said allowing teachers to be fully involved in the design of curriculum would be an early, positive

step towards more empowered schools. “We need to look at reconfiguring teaching and leadership as curriculum design,” she suggested. “One of the features of the old system was that we pulled teachers out of schools and they joined bodies like QCDA or the Local Authority. We removed a lot of creative talent from the profession.”

Schools needed to look creatively at the way they organise training and professional development, added Peter Earley. “We need to drive towards personalised professional development. Instead of five INSET days a year we should be emulating what high performing systems do, such as 150 hours (over three years) as they do in Singapore. I think we have to grasp the nettle and be prepared to legislate for that,” he said.

We agreed that although all professionals within a school should be empowered to play a part in improvement, that schools could not achieve this without collaborating and communicating with other schools in ever closer ways.

Carol Jones, Specialist for Leadership and Teacher Professionalism at ASCL, said collaboration networks for all schools were needed, pointing out that ‘struggling’ schools found they had less opportunity to get involved in networks and school to school support if they received a ‘requires improvement’ judgement from Ofsted. “There needs to be a national network to enable schools to collaborate if they are able to,” she said.

Keith Wright is managing director of school information management business Bluewave ([www.bluewaveeducation.com](http://www.bluewaveeducation.com)). The new white paper is available as a free download at <http://bluewaveeducation.com/empower-whole-school-improvement-white-paper-2015/>

# Social enterprise – curriculum freedoms and Trust partners

By Richard Barnard, Chair of Governors at the Robinswood Academy Trust

The Robinswood Academy Trust is a MAT with two primary schools:

- Robinswood - a 2FE set in an area of high social deprivation and
- Waterwells a new 2FE school in an expanding area of new housing.

The success of Robinswood over many years, not just in the recent past, has been due to a clarity of thought around what is important, what we believe in, and an ability to articulate this and demonstrate it in all we do. Two of the characteristics the school teaches its pupils are:

- developing children's ability to think – creatively, problem-solve and apply into all they do.
- the development of self-esteem in any way possible – this may be through sport, performing arts *etc.* but specifically we have found that the adoption of this social enterprise approach in many areas of the curriculum offers our pupils a huge range of opportunities.

Through individualised curriculum experiences, we design high quality teaching and enrichment provision to meet the needs of our diverse intake and to ensure they make progress and succeed. Social enterprise has been a developing and key element in helping us to meet the outcomes we are looking to achieve.

The Headteacher, Martin Latham, who retired in August 2014, initially developed this approach and outlined how this could enhance what the children could achieve. However, he also showed social enterprise offered staff the opportunity to make the most of their own skills and develop their careers. This was done by introducing staff within our partner businesses to provide real life examples of how what they learned in school has had application in the adult world. For example, if you want to see how the graphics you are using on an iPad in class is relevant, spend time with a graphic designer; if you want to understand the value of some aspects of classroom science spend time with an engineer.

This has provided learning opportunities for many of our staff and in particular one of our HLTAs, Trish Harding, who has played the leading role in its development and alongside members of our new Social Enterprise team continues to make this area a success. Our partnership with RIO (Real Ideas Organisation) has been of great benefit and the presence on our board of one of their Directors plus Mrs Harding indicates the importance we place on this approach.

What do we mean by Social Enterprise Learning? It is learning that is real and purposeful, based around a community

or enterprise challenge that drives the learning experience. The challenge will consider the environmental, social, and financial impact. The challenge provides the context and allows for the application and development of a set of skills to help prepare young people for their adult life. One of the more obvious positive impacts has been the confidence very evident amongst our pupils in making presentations to a range of business companies and our partners around the work they do.

Social Enterprise has been interwoven within the curriculum for four years creating real and purposeful learning opportunities for many of the Trust's young people.

The following are some successful examples of our activities and evaluation of their impact and success.

- **Show Home.** Children visit a new housing development and then design a leaflet to be displayed in show homes that communicates the benefits of the new home from a child's point of view. Four classes visited the housing development and were taken on a site visit. They all gained real writing and design opportunities. Strong links were established with a local developer and the Robinswood Academy

Social enterprise has been a developing and key element in helping us to meet the outcomes we are looking to achieve

Trust's profile in developing the local community was raised.

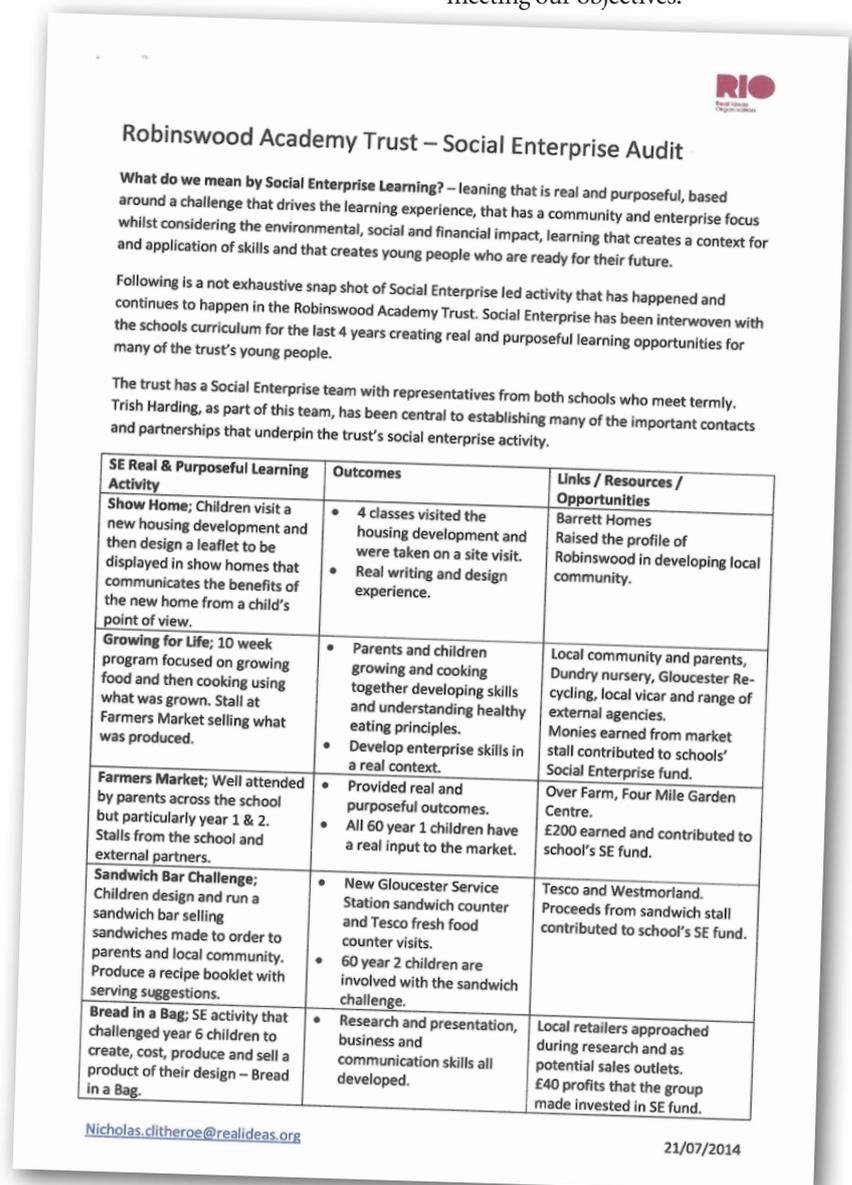
- **Growing for Life.** This was a ten week programme focused on growing food and cooking what was grown and having a stall at a Farmers' Market selling what was produced. Children and parents worked together to grow the food and to cook. Thus they developed their skills together and improved their understanding of healthy eating principles. A wide range of agencies including a local nursery, the recycling centre, the local vicar, and many parents were involved. Monies earned from the market stall contributed to the Social Enterprise fund.
- **Farmers' Market.** This was well attended by parents across the school but particularly those from Years 1 and 2. The school and parents provided stalls. The exercise had real and purposeful outcomes for pupils especially the 60 pupils in Year 1 who had a real input to the market. A large and popular farm shop and a local garden centre were involved. Again profits to the fund!
- **Sandwich Bar Challenge.** Pupils designed and ran a bar selling sandwiches which were made to order for parents and the local community. They also produced a recipe booklet with serving suggestions. All 60 pupils in Year 2 were involved and they all visited the sandwich counter at a brand new local motorway services centre and a fresh food counter at a local supermarket. Again proceeds added to the fund.
- **Bread in a Bag.** Pupils in Year 6 were challenged to create, cost, produce and sell a product of their own design. They came up with 'Bread in a Bag'. Pupils developed skills in research, presentation, business and communication. Local retailers were involved in research as potential outlets.

These are just some examples. More recently this has all moved onto a higher level and we have done much more

with a range of organisations such as the company developing the new local Motorway services, on the M5; an engineering company; a family run coach company and an energy company. Most recently the team established the first of our community markets aimed at providing something for parents and all members of the local community living and working in this area. The initial market was based around skills and crafts whilst future ones will showcase other things such as food and entertainment.

The Academy Board and our School Advisory Groups receive up to date progress reports but the best monitoring and evaluation tool for Trustees was a

business breakfast presented by the pupils. Businesses involved in our projects, as well as potential new business partners, were invited along with Board members and local dignitaries. Pupils not only prepared and served breakfast but also put on a fantastic presentation of their Social Enterprise work. They told us with great confidence and pride in their achievements, successes and experiences. They had clearly learnt a great deal and enjoyed their work but the range of skills demonstrated such as speaking to an audience, recording outcomes both written and using a range of IT skills, and an increasing awareness of many potential career opportunities, were strong evidence that as a trust we were meeting our objectives.



**Robinswood Academy Trust – Social Enterprise Audit**

**What do we mean by Social Enterprise Learning?** – leaning that is real and purposeful, based around a challenge that drives the learning experience, that has a community and enterprise focus whilst considering the environmental, social and financial impact, learning that creates a context for and application of skills and that creates young people who are ready for their future.

Following is a not exhaustive snap shot of Social Enterprise led activity that has happened and continues to happen in the Robinswood Academy Trust. Social Enterprise has been interwoven with the schools curriculum for the last 4 years creating real and purposeful learning opportunities for many of the trust's young people.

The trust has a Social Enterprise team with representatives from both schools who meet termly. Trish Harding, as part of this team, has been central to establishing many of the important contacts and partnerships that underpin the trust's social enterprise activity.

SE Real & Purposeful Learning Activity	Outcomes	Links / Resources / Opportunities
<b>Show Home;</b> Children visit a new housing development and then design a leaflet to be displayed in show homes that communicates the benefits of the new home from a child's point of view.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 classes visited the housing development and were taken on a site visit.</li> <li>• Real writing and design experience.</li> </ul>	Barrett Homes Raised the profile of Robinswood in developing local community.
<b>Growing for Life;</b> 10 week program focused on growing food and then cooking using what was grown. Stall at Farmers Market selling what was produced.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents and children growing and cooking together developing skills and understanding healthy eating principles.</li> <li>• Develop enterprise skills in a real context.</li> </ul>	Local community and parents, Dundry nursery, Gloucester Recycling, local vicar and range of external agencies. Monies earned from market stall contributed to schools' Social Enterprise fund.
<b>Farmers Market;</b> Well attended by parents across the school but particularly year 1 & 2. Stalls from the school and external partners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provided real and purposeful outcomes.</li> <li>• All 60 year 1 children have a real input to the market.</li> </ul>	Over Farm, Four Mile Garden Centre. £200 earned and contributed to school's SE fund.
<b>Sandwich Bar Challenge;</b> Children design and run a sandwich bar selling sandwiches made to order to parents and local community. Produce a recipe booklet with serving suggestions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Gloucester Service Station sandwich counter and Tesco fresh food counter visits.</li> <li>• 60 year 2 children are involved with the sandwich challenge.</li> </ul>	Tesco and Westmorland. Proceeds from sandwich stall contributed to school's SE fund.
<b>Bread in a Bag;</b> SE activity that challenged year 6 children to create, cost, produce and sell a product of their design – Bread in a Bag.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research and presentation, business and communication skills all developed.</li> </ul>	Local retailers approached during research and as potential sales outlets. £40 profits that the group made invested in SE fund.

Nicholas.clitheroe@realideas.org

21/07/2014

# The crucial importance of inspiring CPD

A school needs energised teachers like a pen needs ink, says Andrew Hammond, of INK Education

The prolific author and educationalist, Eric Jensen, tells us, 'How we feel is what's real; it's the link to what we think.'

The emotional well-being of pupils is high on any school's agenda and rightly so. When children are happy they feel self-confident; when they feel self-confident they try their best and when they try their best they reach their potential. All good teachers know that children learn best when they are in a positive disposition; a 'can-do' attitude is the best springboard for curiosity and creativity.

Laughter is important too. It rejuvenates us; it gives our heart a little workout. It puts us in a better disposition to learn something. Many inspirational teachers know that the learning which occurs right after a giggle is understood and retained most effectively. Our brains are more alert and on 'receive' when we've shared a laugh. That's why good teaching is so exhausting.

Another great influence over the learning that takes place in schools is the physical environment. Bright, colourful classrooms, with plenty of light and space are bound to yield better learning experiences than cramped conditions with plain walls and nothing to excite our senses. The physical environment outside our heads has such a significant impact on what goes on inside them, doesn't it. We are, after all, an emotional species, sensitive to atmospheres and ambiances. Good teachers know this, that's why they work hard to create a learning environment that is stimulating and inspiring.

I remember once helping to create a thinking garden at a school where I worked. I thought long and hard about the choice of furniture, plants and statuary. Together we created a garden we were all proud of – a calm but colourful space which seemed conducive to reflection. I'll never forget the words of a colleague at the opening ceremony. 'A thinking garden? Great!' he said, 'At last we have a place where I can send naughty children to go and think about what they've done!' Nevertheless, the garden was a success and I'm sure it pepped up the children when they needed a little boost or a place to recharge.



But aren't we teachers just the same? Aren't we also sensitive to atmospheres, and positive or negative working environments? How we feel is no less real for us as it is for our pupils. We deserve thinking gardens, calm spaces and creative places that will inspire and re-energise us. In fact, one might argue it is imperative that we have the chance, and the space, to re-charge our batteries now and again. Every child deserves a refreshed, energised version of their teacher.

Schools require a flow of energy like a pen needs ink. Energised and enthusiastic teachers instill a 'can do' attitude and a growth mindset in their children. A self-motivated, inspired teacher enables active learning to flow through the school. Energy is the life blood of any school and it needs to be carefully maintained.

But every teacher, no matter how experienced, may feel from

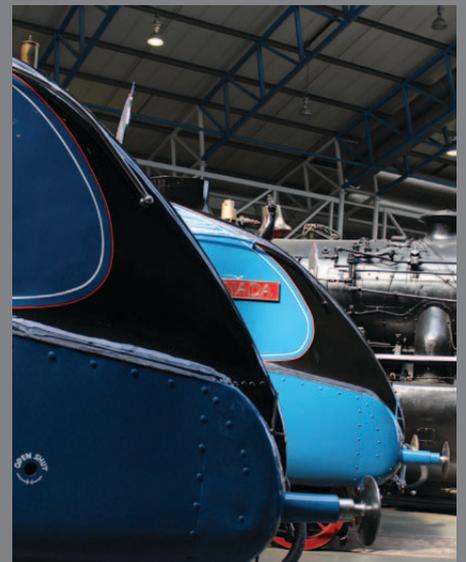
## Schools require a flow of energy like a pen needs ink. Energised and enthusiastic teachers instill a ‘can do’ attitude and a growth mindset in their children. A self-motivated, inspired teacher enables active learning to flow through the school. Energy is the life blood of any school and it needs to be carefully maintained

time to time that their cartridge is running on empty. They need topping up – with tried and tested ideas, suggestions, cathartic anecdotes, learned wisdom and a reassuring reminder of why they went into the profession in the first place. Let’s face it, few of us go into this for the financial incentives; there is something else that drives us to get out of bed in the morning. It’s the hope that we will make a difference to someone’s life today. And with a positive attitude, we usually do.

A good CPD course should have delegates returning to school refreshed and ready to inspire the children in their care, and to enthuse colleagues too. We have all been teased for going ‘on a jolly’ now and again and we all recognise the piles of marking waiting for us the next morning. (Why do covered lessons always seem to produce so much written work?). There is the travel too – the sitting on the M25 or the waiting for a delayed

train. But think back to the time when you’ve attended a course that actually inspired you. It may have been the speaker, with amusing anecdotes or inspirational ideas, or it may have been the break-out session or lunch break, when you could share experiences with like-minded colleagues and pinch those creative ideas you overhear – how to teach abstract nouns or long division for the twentieth time but in a way you’ve never thought of before. It is worth the time and effort to attend.

If how we feel is what’s real, and is the link to what we think, CPD courses must not only be informative, they must be enjoyable experiences too. Enthusiasm and energy are infectious, after all; a teacher returning enthused and confident from a CPD course will increase engagement and interest in the classroom like no one else can. Enthusiasm will always conquer those corrosive forces of cynicism and apathy in a staff room. Positive



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teachers will always succeed – but they need support, and they need a fix of inspiration now and again.

At INK Education, we have recruited an array of charismatic and knowledgeable speakers whose combined experience in the classroom spans many decades. Our speakers will not only offer practical advice and ideas for use in the classroom, they will entertain delegates with amusing anecdotes that will serve to remind them why they went into this profession, and help them to rediscover the creative teacher within.

If the environment in which we learn, even as adults, has a significant impact on what we think and how we feel, then CPD courses should take place in creative spaces. We've chosen some exciting and creative locations in which to hold our INK teacher conferences. Our venues for this year include: Brunel's SS Great Britain in Bristol, the National Railway Museum in York, the Birmingham Botanical Gardens, the Cinderella Bar at the London Palladium, the Durham Street Theatre at the RSA and the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane. At each venue, delegates are given

behind-the-scenes access and tours during the lunch break.

But being passionate about delivering CPD training in energising ways doesn't mean we're not serious about the quality of the content delivered too. We host conferences on issues that really matter in schools and have a real impact on teaching and learning. Just as academic rigour and creative teaching and learning need not be mutually exclusive (it's not either/or, it's 'and'), so too INK conferences are entertaining and intellectually challenging at the same time. One can take the business of education seriously without taking oneself too seriously. But then, as good teachers, we know that there's no better way to instill a disposition for active learning than laughter.

**Andrew Hammond is Managing Director of INK Education Ltd – [www.ink-ed.com](http://www.ink-ed.com) and author of the new Invisible Ink series published by John Catt Educational**



#### INK Conference Speaker – Gary Wilson

Gary Wilson is widely regarded as the country's leading expert on raising boys' achievement with 40 years' experience in education and author of several books on boys and achievement. He regularly speaks at conferences and delivers training in schools all over the world. Gary is the author of several books, including *Breaking through the Barriers to Boys' Achievement*.



#### INK Conference Speaker – Andrew Jeffrey

Having taught for 20 years, Andrew set up Magic Message Ltd in 2007. Andrew now travels the world offering consultancy services to schools seeking to improve and enrich the teaching and learning of mathematics. He is the author of several books for teachers, including the best-selling *Always, Sometimes, Never*, and is a regular keynote speaker at conferences in the UK and abroad.

# Multi-Academy Trusts: Can they offer greater financial stability?

Creating or joining a MAT has a number of advantages and drawbacks, say UK200 Group members

As the government continues to make cuts to the education system a number of academies and Local Authority run schools in the UK are looking at new ways of maximising their limited resources.

One of the most popular forms of increasing a school's resources has been joining or creating a multi-academy trust (MAT). This form of governance requires the creation of a single overarching academy trust whose board is ultimately responsible for running two or more academies, which may include primary and secondary schools, whether academies or free schools.

This trust is considered a single legal entity and is usually made up of three levels of governance – trust members, a trust board of directors and individual school local governing bodies. Each local governing body is responsible for the day-to-day running of each individual academy, whilst the trust board oversees the governance of the MAT.

Schools wishing to become MATs must follow The Department for Education's (DfE's) MAT model articles and memorandum. This states that MATs must have at least three signatory members and that there must be at least two elected parent trustees or representatives, either on the board of the MAT or on each of the local governing bodies. Should a CEO be appointed they themselves should be a trustee, unless they choose not to be.

It also states that the number of trustees that are Local Authority influenced cannot exceed 20 per cent and the number of Local Authority influenced members cannot exceed 19.9 per cent. The Chair of each of the Local Governing Bodies will also be a trustee on the main board. Other than these simple rules any group of schools can choose to collaborate as a MAT.

Commenting on the structure of MATs, Andy Morris, Partner at UK200 Group firm Dains, said: "A point I would draw out from the perspective of individual trustees is that a number of former governors, who are now directors of MATs, seem to have experienced a sharp drop in the level of financial control they feel able to exercise, at the same time as a large increase in the sense of responsibility.

"Particularly for primary schools, there can be a strong sense

of governing bodies surrendering individual decision making in the cause of MAT unity, which they may not feel comfortable with unless there is a strong sense of common purpose to start with. Such primaries can also begrudge the loss of part of their individual funding where this is felt to be 'creamed off' for MAT-wide back-office support and projects."

MATs are funded through a master funding agreement, with an additional supplemental funding agreement for each individual academy. With one off conversion grants for each new school joining the trust and the opportunity to bid for sponsor capacity funding, the potential for increased grant funding offers MATs a distinct advantage over single academy trusts, which provide a short-term advantage.

A more sustainable advantage for MATs is the benefit offered by taking advantage of greater economies of scale, as they are able to centralise services, such as catering and IT support, through a single supplier; often at a reduced rate.

Converting to the MAT model also provides greater flexibility to take advantage of opportunities allowing trusts to withstand ongoing pressures on overhead costs and enhances the ability to operate effectively and efficiently. The collaboration should lead to more flexible staffing resources and a greater ability to focus funds in areas where they are most needed.

Tom Meeks, Partner at UK200 Group firm Price Bailey, said: "MATs are in the government's eyes, very much the answer. The biggest challenge facing school leaders and governors is 'how is it best for them to conform to the changing tides of government thinking' and what are the threats posed by not jumping on the wave before it crashes into shore?"

"The risk of diluting a schools brightest teaching and leadership talent by working with weaker schools should be a concern and there is also the risk of insufficient due diligence on joining schools, potential building dilapidations and repair commitments and cost and taking on other liabilities such as debts and pension costs."

Kevin Hopper, Partner at UK200 Group firm Forrester Boyd, added: "The main advantages of joining a MAT is that schools can share the work that goes into projects and tasks and have a

greater buying power.

“However, there is an extra layer of reporting required by MATs that adds extra work as well. This creates an increased risk for the accounting officer as they are likely to be signing off on schools they have little input in, which is why the reporting up to the group level is important.”

This growing trend for converting to MATs comes after the DfE saw its budget reduced in cash terms by two per cent over the last five years from £58.6 billion in 2010/2011 to £57.4 billion in 2014/2015 – This in real terms, allowing for inflation, is nearer 11.9 per cent.

With a growing focus on value for money the governments’ current thinking is that higher value is achieved through a MAT rather than individual academies where compliance costs in particular can be prohibitive.

Rob Stokes, client director at UK200 Group member firm Randall & Payne, said: “When moving to a MAT the schools need to be confident that the main trust board has the full skill set to enable it to operate properly, that they are open and honest throughout the process to ensure the full picture is gained, make

sure that all parties fully understand the structure, the aims, the functions of each element so that it is transparent and most of all don’t underestimate the task ahead, as it will be complex and time/resource consuming.

“In terms of the future, becoming a MAT will not prevent the schools facing cuts but there will be an element of mitigation by way of economies of scale, more efficient use of resources *etc.* But as the DfE budget shrinks so a MAT’s budget will have to shrink, so it should not be seen as a get out of jail free card.”

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# Education: the rock and roll years

Ageing rocker Les Walton reminisces



In 2000 a highly-critical report on Bradford Local Education Authority by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) was published. Very soon afterwards the bombshell decision to remove control of education services from Bradford Council was made by Schools Standards Minister Estelle Morris.

I was asked by the DFE to write an action plan and was appointed to a new post of Assistant Chief Executive in Bradford. Unusually, my salary was paid by central government. Thus the headline in the *Telegraph and Argus*, “New schools chief on the cheap”.

Over the next two years I was asked to lead the interim management and chair the procurement process which eventually led to the outsourcing of Bradford education services to the private sector.

Whilst this period is well remembered for the major challenge to the role and autonomy of local education by central government it was also a time of significant change. The Bradford *Telegraph and Argus* had reported my desire to develop a ‘new relationship with schools’ based on the approach I had previously developed as a Director of Education. For most people this meant the introduction of ‘School Improvement Partners’, which eventually became a national model.

For me the new relationship was more about building relationships which were based on partnership and trust.

When Estelle Morris first introduced me to the Secondary Headteachers I was extremely nervous, they were a formidable group. The Chair of the Headteachers asked if I supported

the Chief Executive’s proposal to allocate an extra £6m to the secondary budget. (The secondary schools were £6m adrift from the national mean, whilst the primary schools were £3m below). I said I didn’t agree with this imbalanced redistribution and introduced the concept of ‘equal poverty’. Or to put it another way, if the secondary schools would give up some of this extra funding to the primary schools, whilst both would be below the mean at least there would be fairness. This went down like a sponge leg in a flood. I left the meeting feeling embarrassed, particularly as I had been told off by the Head of Bingley Grammar for misquoting Thomas More.

I returned to my hotel wishing I had never taken the job. The next morning a deputation of Headteachers came to the hotel, led by Gareth Dawkins, to say that they had met after the meeting and agreed to the rebalancing of the additional monies to the primary schools.

This was indeed a significant statement of intent to work in a value driven environment and to seek the moral consensus. More than a decade later Gareth would join me on the Board of the Young People’s Learning Agency where again we proved that when values are at the centre of an organisation then remarkable agreements can be achieved.

**Les Walton is chair of the Northern Education Trust**

I left the meeting feeling embarrassed, particularly as I had been told off by the Head of Bingley Grammar for misquoting Thomas More





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