

Summer Term 2011 • Issue 71

# Prep School

Reflecting the best in the prep and junior school world



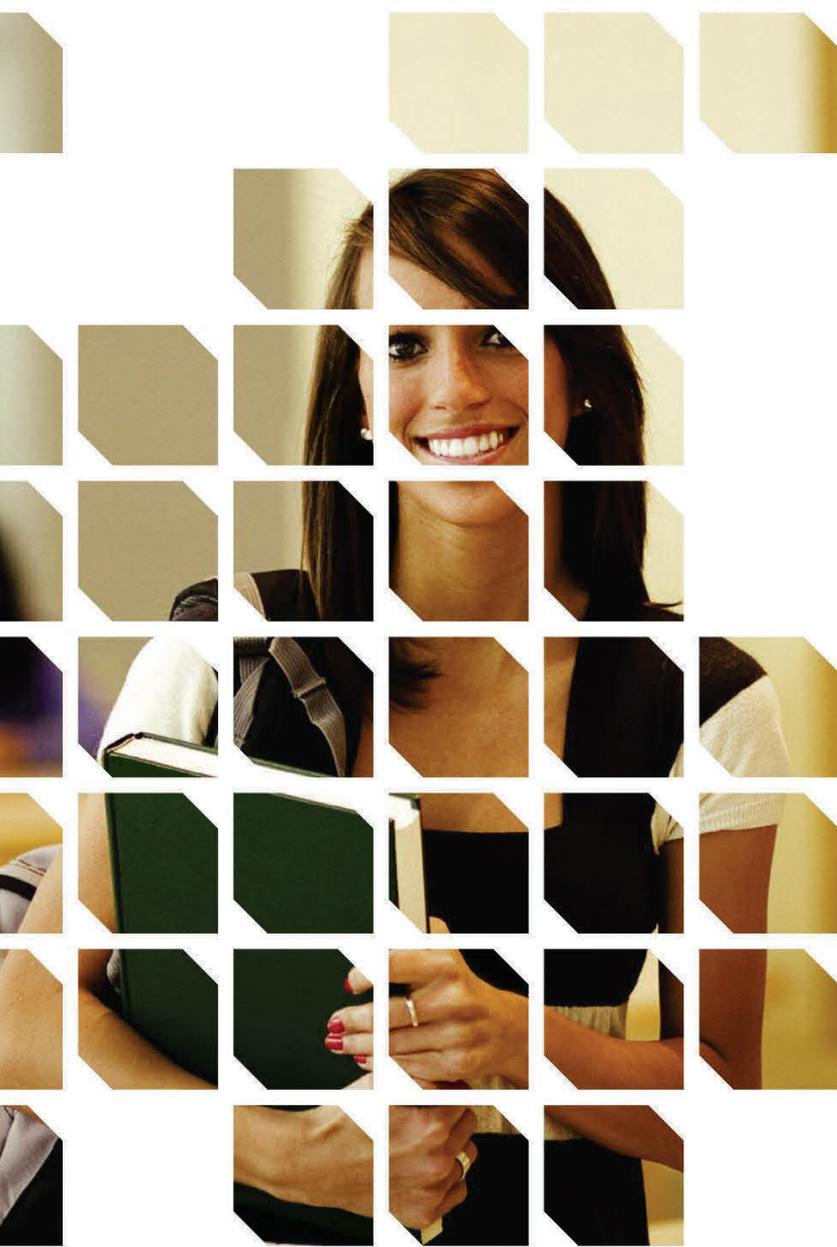
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Front cover photograph: Ted Blackbrow, Orwell Park School, see page 11

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## From the editor

As the weather gets warmer and another term begins, I hope you will be tempted outdoors for some of your teaching and learning. School trips are one way to do this but why not consider moving some of your everyday lessons outside too? Poetry under an apple tree, science in the school garden, maths in the playground: new surroundings add spice to familiar topics; and your pupils won't be the only ones reaping the rewards.

The school where I teach has just been through a full inspection. The reporting inspector started by saying that the next three days should be more 'show-and-tell' than 'hide-and-peek'. This was an important reminder: what they don't see, they won't know. Your teaching may be wonderful on paper but the real picture is created by pupils in the classroom.

Your students are your real advocates and your true assets. The way they conduct themselves and respond to questioning, their enthusiasm for learning, these will tell the inspectors more about core values and governing principles than any school prospectus or carefully compiled portfolio. You can't rehearse any of this but if your aims and values are embedded in all aspects of school life then you will certainly come out on top.

On the subject of 'show-and-tell', please do share this publication with governors, bursars, administrative staff, teaching assistants – anyone who plays a part in the daily life of your school. Please also tell us about your achievements, projects and plans. We'd be delighted to hear from you, whether you send a quick email to me (address below) or a full article for publication (our website [www.prepschoolmag.co.uk](http://www.prepschoolmag.co.uk) gives information about how to go about this).

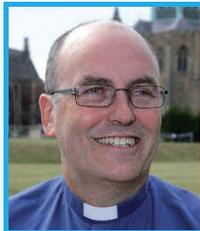
*Prep School* is aimed at you rather than the parent body. We want to reflect your professional lives and meet your teaching needs. We hope to inspire and inform everyone involved in the education of children between 2 and 13 years-of-age while celebrating everything that makes independent education the choice of so many families.

Enjoy the summer and all that this term has to offer: the growing up, the ripening ... the fruitfulness.

*Michèle Claire Kitto*

If you have an idea for an article or viewpoint for the next issue of *Prep School*, or any news from your school, please don't hesitate! Email me at [editor@prepschoolmag.co.uk](mailto:editor@prepschoolmag.co.uk)

## A thought for the term



*The Revd Kim Taplin is an Anglican priest and is the Chaplain of Clifton College, Bristol. He has taught religious studies and games in four independent and maintained schools.*

### Pastoral care

The term *Pastoral care*, as it is used in our schools, clearly borrows from the traditional Christian model of ministry inspired by the Biblical image of the Good Shepherd caring for his sheep. Educational pastoral care exhibits many genetic similarities to its ecclesiastical parent. However, one significant difference is that we rarely use the word 'love'. By contrast, Christian pastoral care is not afraid to use the word *love*; indeed *love* and moral duty are absolutely fundamental to it. This kind of caring has been defined as 'the activity, motivated by love for God and neighbour, which aims to foster personal wholeness and social justice.'

The reason for the reluctance of educationalists to use the word *love* is obvious. In our culture, when *love* is mentioned, our minds are programmed to default to sex and consequently we are terrified of opening Pandora's

Box. However, the language of the New Testament can guide us when it comes to understanding *love*. It has a word for sexual love (*eros*), but, far more helpfully, it also speaks of love as 'profound friendship' (*philia*) and 'self-sacrificial service' (*agape*). These are the *loves* of authentic Christian pastoral care and they merit a place within any school's pastoral curriculum.

Love always involves risk, and in a culture that is becoming neurotically risk-averse, I fear that over-regulation will parch the soil of wholesome human relationships. With prophetic foresight and insight, TS Eliot asked:

*Where is the Life we have lost in living?*

*Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge?*

*Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?*

(Choruses from *The Rock*, 1934)

During recent INSET on pastoral care, I found myself reflecting upon Jesus' *Parable of the Lost Sheep* (St. Luke 15). If there were 'systems in place' or policies, procedures and codes of practice to safeguard the sheep, would the shepherd have dared to risk leaving the ninety-nine sheep to go in search of the one that was lost? Thank God that *love* motivated him so to do.

[Clifton College's Chaplain, Kim Taplin](#)

# Going the extra mile

Richard Mace, head of boarding at S. Anselm's Preparatory School in the Peak District, reflects on the benefits of education beyond the classroom



When William Storrs-Fox established S. Anselm's Preparatory School in 1888 there is little doubt that this was a rather harsh environment for young children. Latin, Greek and algebra were taught for several hours a day with chalk boards and slates. Punishments ranged from rolling the Headmaster's lawn and chopping logs to a straightforward flogging in front of the whole school. Fagging was *de rigueur* and if boys did not behave in the dormitories at night they would be stood in the corridor with their nose pressed against the Headmaster's front door knocker for hours on end. Not an auspicious start for a school one might think and certainly not a blueprint for 21st century education.

Nevertheless, as archaic and draconian as school masters may have been across the country at that time, the staff at S. Anselm's truly understood one vital concept: the need to educate the whole child. From its birth, the school has sought to provide an education that is diverse and varied. For decades pupils at the school assisted with the farmers' harvests, went fossil hunting in the local limestone quarries, went shooting and built dens. The Headmaster's own study contained antiquities in glass cabinets and the

boys all collected something – flowers, stamps, coins and butterflies. There was a dark-room for developing photographs and the boys also learnt to climb trees, orienteer and identify birds. Badger watching was also a favourite as was tobogganing. Indeed, the boys were given great freedom to roam and there are stories of lads wandering the country lanes for hours unattended but having the time of their lives. Expected extras like cricket, chess, music, drama and the workshop were all big hits too.

With such a wealth of wonderful experiences, they put up with the Spartan dormitories and forbidding matrons because they knew adventures were to be had. The school allowed the children a colourful childhood rich in diverse experiences that challenged them and forced them to get to grips with the world around them. As a consequence, these boys grew up with a fascination of the natural environment around them and an enormous energy and *joie de vivre*. The Peak District was a playground for them to explore and perhaps they learnt as much getting their hands dirty as they did within the confines of the classroom. They learnt about ornithology, anthropology, archaeology, physiology and biology. They also learnt less tangible but equally

important skills such as team work, how to build friendships, the importance of planning and organising, how to lead, how to make decisions and how to use their hands and minds in concert.

### Health and safety constraints

The children of our country need this all-round education more today than ever before and it is one of the greatest failures of past Governments that many schools neglect the extracurricular. Some schools open their doors at 9am and close them at 3pm and this is a crying shame. The teachers' strikes of the 1970s reduced the expectations on teachers in the state sector to provide extracurricular activities and the administrative pressure on teachers has led to a decline in the number of hours that teachers are prepared to put in beyond the classroom. The final nail in the coffin has been the strict health and safety constraints that have burdened schools. This would be acceptable if the Government had invested enough in local clubs and activities after school hours but there are still thousands of youngsters whose minds could be actively engaged who instead are lured towards substance abuse, gang culture and crime.

Children need risk and they need to test the boundaries – if these natural instincts are not steered in the right direction and channelled into productive and life-enhancing activities, children will naturally divert their energies into reckless or destructive pursuits. Tranquilising children with Xboxes and TV is no answer either. Thankfully, there is a greater national acknowledgement of the need to educate the whole child and increasingly all schools, both state and private, are starting to invest more in education beyond the school gate thanks to the energy and commitment of teachers and Headteachers who recognise the inherent wisdom in such an educational philosophy. However, it is an uphill battle, the movement is slow and Government cuts threaten to undermine the progress before it has taken root.

### 360-degree education

Many prep schools, so often pigeonholed as exclusive establishments that remain rooted in traditional practices, actually stand as models of what might be achieved if schools invested in holistic education. Schools like S. Anselm's are mindful that young people deserve and need continual stimulation and that they learn rapidly when asked to do things that do not just involve pen and paper. They need to feel the wind in their hair and the dirt beneath their fingernails too. This is something that is not lost on Simon Northcott, current Headmaster at S. Anselm's, who has enhanced the already proud tradition of extracurricular excellence at the school. He feels strongly that it is simply not enough to teach a child in the classroom alone. Quite rightly, parents expect a host of



extras that ensure their child is thrilled by the world around them and that they want to engage with that world, take risks and go on journeys of discovery.

At S. Anselm's the pupils get what the Headmaster describes as a '360-degree education' that challenges them and helps tap their relentless energy. Northcott believes that this holistic view of education is sacrosanct and that no child will engage with their school and their lessons if school is not also a place where adventure and excitement happens daily. Extracurricular activities ensure that the great effervescence of young people is channelled productively. As a result the school has one of the most extensive extracurricular programmes of any school in the country. Horse riding, exploring, climbing, gorge walking, fashion design, cookery, archery and fencing are just a few of the fabulous opportunities open to children at the school. There is a debating club, pupils do some stargazing through the school telescope, there are a myriad of visiting speakers invited to the school and all pupils perform in



A 360-degree education helps tap children's relentless energy

## Beyond the classroom

plays and most play musical instruments. First XV rugby players are found in the choir, the chess club is full and most pupils have been involved in public speaking.

### Dedicated staff required

All this is enhanced by the fact that the school has a strong boarding element with the boarders at the school getting still more stimulation in the evenings and at weekends. Evenings see the children playing parlour games, engaging in murder mystery quizzes, playing Cornish Longball and much else. Sundays are packed with excitement and adventure with pupils often going abseiling, camping, orienteering, canoeing and so on. Northcott is convinced that as a result of this intensive all-round education, the pupils perform better academically, are happier and more confident and have a fabulous rapport with their teachers. "When your science teacher is also your rugby coach and takes you rock climbing at the weekend, how can you not fail but be inspired by the guy and thus engaged in the subject he teaches?"

The 100 percent Common Entrance pass rate and 27 major scholarships awarded to S. Anselm's pupils last year seem to bear this out. Northcott does not deny that his dedicated staff have to go the extra mile, ploughing through risk assessments, booking forms and health and safety policies. Furthermore, the activities do come at a price but Northcott firmly believes that children deserve these opportunities and that they are well worth it educationally.

### What's the end product?

S. Anselm's is not alone and many prep schools across the country aim to set a gold standard outside the classroom as well as within. Latin grammar scrawled on a slate board might well be consigned to the past but the traditional expectations that a young person's mind and spirit cannot be fuelled solely by book and pen has not been forgotten and thankfully is experiencing something of a renaissance with many of the country's greatest prep schools leading the way.

What is the end product? Young men and women who have the confidence to stand up and articulate their views, people who are able to lead others and inspire those around them, people who have experienced failure and success and are scared of neither. In short, such schools ensure that experiences gained in youth forge lives that are happy, successful and contribute enormously to society. One would hope, with all the Government cuts being made, that this area of state education might be ring-fenced and protected just as it begins to grow. I fear this might not be the case and prep schools will therefore continue to champion the '360-degree education'.

So, in the coming months Michael Gove must tread lightly or risk trampling the acorns sprouting at his feet. Meanwhile a prep school education becomes ever more enticing.

Children are happier and more confident



# Opportunities: make them, take them and use them

## Paul Jackson encourages schools to share and share alike

Our schools pride themselves on the opportunities they offer their pupils – quite rightly. Trips to the ski resorts, sports tours to the southern hemisphere, music and choral excursions, art appreciation societies to the centres of radical thinking – the list is endless. And our pupils get the ultimate educational, cultural and social experiences that lead to unforgettable memories and friendships.

Sadly, in the present economic climate, schools who wish to provide these opportunities may not get the numbers to make the trips financially viable – and a cohort of children may miss out as a result.

There is, however, an easy solution. Allow other schools to join you and numbers then become not only viable, but a further layer of social interaction between our schools will be added. Thus, if there is a shortfall, may I suggest that schools post details of the trip they have in mind within this magazine and our schools can respond accordingly. The wonderful work we do can then continue. The pupils will benefit, of course, but there will also be considerable benefits to all involved with the twinning between schools.

This symbiotic relationship is already coming to fruition in the two schools where I teach in the East Midlands. It is important to state that the schools in question do not ingress in any way upon each others' catchment area. With this pressure removed, all sorts of opportunities are possible. On the games field, the schools can play each other at the all important 'appropriate' level. This means that a mix-and-match game can be arranged so that every pupil experiences being selected to represent the school and enjoys all the important things that come with it, which we must not underestimate, namely their name on a team sheet, being on the bus to an away fixture and enjoying the hospitality of another school. Mix-and-match musical events, plays, art displays and the like, as well as the trips and tours, are also on the agenda.

Equally important, teaching staff get the opportunity to talk, see and appreciate each others' work – so important at the moment as we all have become rather too insular as we are all so busy – and conferences do not always meet this particular need that all best-practice teachers have.

Talking of opportunities, some of you may already be familiar with the name Frank Drewett, without realising it. His name appears on the bottom of your school's bone china mug (just make sure you have finished your coffee before you look!)

Frank was head of PE at Rugby School but once he had finished schoolmastering, he was able to let his creative juices flow. Suffice to say, he came up with an invention, took it to the *Dragons' Den* and secured both the money and the backing of Peter Jones.

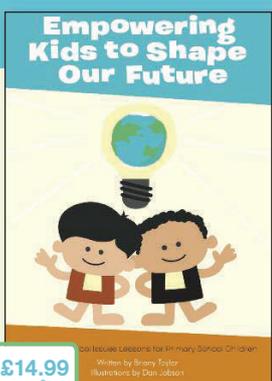
As you can imagine, Frank is a very entertaining, inspirational and educational speaker and would be delighted to visit your school and talk to your senior pupils about inventions, entrepreneurialism, business and, of course, being on the TV. He can be contacted on:

frankdrewett@btinternet.com

Paul Jackson is head of geography at Grosvenor, Nottingham, and Brooke House, Cosby.

He is a *satips* Council member and was the PE and games co-ordinator for IAPS, having been Curriculum Committee Chair for HMC.

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By Briony Taylor, a primary science teacher at the Collège Du Léman International School in Geneva, Switzerland.

# Bringing fun back into the curriculum

Jenifer Hillman, Head of Pre-Prep at Orwell Park, explains how imaginative subject days have embodied rich learning experiences in the early years

It has always been my belief, and has many times over been proven, that children learn more when they are interested, enthused and excited by the subject matter of their learning.

At Orwell Park Pre-Prep our main 'signature dishes' are our 'theme days'. Each term, a different theme is explored in the course of a day and it is probably fair to say that the children's love of learning and enthusiasm for the current topic is always plain to see.

Some theme days consolidate work that we have already covered in the classroom. Last year we did the Victorians, so for a day the children dressed up in Victorian clothes, experienced a real Victorian classroom with myself as the strict Victorian teacher, equipped with dunce's hat and book of psalms. We had a visit from our deputy head who became the school inspector and inspected their hands and fingernails and made them answer spelling questions. The children, surprisingly, responded well



to the discipline of the day – particularly the girls, who behaved beautifully!

In previous terms we have held a Tudor Day where the company History Off the Page gave the children the opportunity to experience Tudor shopping and trades. Visits to the apothecary for love potions and

healing ointments were on offer, as well as candle making and miniature portrait painting. Whilst all this went on, we indulged in a lot of gossip about King Henry and Queen Anne Boleyn.

Other theme days focus on a particular subject – each term is given over to either a Numeracy Day, Book Day or Science Day. The children love the changes to the routine. Book Day usually involves dressing up as our favourite book characters; in Numeracy Day we focus for the day on either shape, money or time and we once had a 100 Day when every activity focused on the numbers 1 to 100.

## Stolen cake

Our Science Day this year was a particular success, when we participated in all sorts of experiments both in our classes and then led by older children in Year 7. What



excitement when we went down to the school's science laboratory to see copper sulphate crystals, to look at pollen and leaves under microscopes and to test food for starch. The highlight of the day was a simulated crime scene, led by SOCCO Officer Beth Cowham, where the head chef set the ball rolling by complaining that someone had stolen a piece of the Headmaster's chocolate cake. The children enthusiastically set about checking fingerprints, trainer treads and types of ink to catch the culprit. What excitement to find out that the culprit was one of the teachers!

The reception children had a different Science Day, led by the Suffolk Wildlife Trust. We have a wonderful woodland area within our grounds and the children went exploring here, looking for minibeasts and making camps and artistic creations using the natural world around them.

As a teacher, the value of these days is unequalled. How do we measure their worth? We listen to the children talking, discuss with them their understanding and question their findings. We identify the small pieces of knowledge that they have picked up during the day and are now applying and linking with other areas of their learning, and we read the pages of detailed reports that they have written



about what they did and learned. We observe how the children who do not always shine academically are able to participate in a focused manner in this active and investigative learning environment. The days are successful whatever your ability, strength or weakness. For the teacher this is the true testament to their value.

### Photo opportunities

I always go to one of these days armed with a camera to capture the excitement in the children's faces and many of my favourite photographs depict evidence of those early

formative years where education is so much fun and learning has been brought alive by a few simple activities. The children love to see the resulting slideshow where they remember different aspects of the day.

Have academic standards been affected by these days? Absolutely. They inspire the children to want to learn more, they create forums for discussion and debate, they encourage social grouping and teamwork and they create opportunities for problem solving and thinking skills. And what about the basics – reading, writing and numeracy? Well, if you had been in my class after our latest Science Day, you would have understood why I support this break from formal teaching every now and then. The pages of descriptive writing and details on every experiment have left even me astounded – and I am well known for claiming that every class I teach is the 'best ever'. And if you talk to the children further up the school, those 'special' days are the days they remember with so much affection and enthusiasm. It is lovely to talk to them about them and find that they were the highlight of their time in the Pre-Prep.

Oh no! Must go! A minotaur has just entered the building and my army of Greek warriors, gods and goddesses need my help! Now where's my golden apple?





# A journey into Headship

Sue Riley, Head of Inglefield House, reveals her thoughts and experiences of taking over as a new Head

The family of Haberdashers' Monmouth Schools dates back to 1614 when William Jones, a prominent merchant in the cloth trade gave the Worshipful Company of Haberdashers £6000, driven by a desire to provide a good education for residents of Monmouth. Initially these fortunate children were all boys, but by the early 19th century it was recognised that girls were as deserving of a good education as boys and Haberdashers' Monmouth School for Girls was founded.

Known locally as HMSG, the school building is situated at a commanding position overlooking the picturesque town of Monmouth, nestling among the hills of the Welsh borders. I arrived in Monmouth in September 2010, knowing very little about the family of schools located in and around the town.

There are in fact five Haberdashers' Schools in Monmouth, all linked to the original benefactor. The family of schools is placed at the heart of the Wye Valley, a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. As new Head of Inglefield House, the prep school of HMSG, I soon found myself immersed in the history of the foundation and it has been fascinating learning more about the strong educational links within the Haberdashers' Livery Company.

My own personal route to Monmouth had been nothing but circuitous, having my first taste of prep school teaching at the Banda School in Nairobi, where I arrived for a two year contract, but eventually stayed for 14 happy years. Leaving Kenya in 2000 was something of a wrench for the

whole family, but moving to Oxford and the delights of The Dragon School set me on a different course and a whole new adventure.

## Reaching for the stars

I took my lead from the mottoes of both these fine schools, 'to reach for the stars' in Nairobi and 'to reach for the sun' in Oxford. So here I am at Haberdashers' Monmouth now prepared to 'serve and obey' as a new Head and ready for a new challenge.

Inglefield House is situated on the same site at HMSG, which has many advantages, not least the use of the senior school's excellent facilities. Currently there are 125 girls, aged 7 to 11 and ten full-time staff, in addition to specialist teachers from the senior school. Working in a girls' school is so rewarding, as the children are interested in everything, eager to learn and respond in such a positive way. There is a relaxed, warm relationship between children and staff, which is certainly one of the key strengths of the school.

Building an identity for Inglefield House has been one of my first tasks, retaining our connection to the senior school, but raising our profile as a preparatory school. Securing membership of IAPS has provided a link with other prep schools, as has our recent membership of *satips*. Attending district meetings and receiving support from former teaching colleagues has been invaluable.

Simple changes can often make a big difference and this was shown recently by the purchase of new games shirts,

by the 'Friends of HMSG' with the school name prominent across the back. This not only heightened our image but, I like to think, raised our team spirit, as wearing their new kit for the first time the girls won all their netball matches. No doubt, our Haberdashers' sports psychologist would be able to offer an explanation for this welcome success.

## Uphill climb

Being a new Head can be something of an uphill climb, both physically as well as mentally. Within the first week of term, I was being dragged up the Kymin Hill by my Year 3 girls, along with the boys from The Grange Preparatory School, Monmouth, our 'brother' school in the Haberdashers' Monmouth family. The girls led the way of course and the view





The tradition involved in the Company remains a link with the past

from the top is spectacular. Working with Elaine Thomas, the Head of the Grange, has provided much appreciated support and advice.

The town of Monmouth sits just inside the Welsh border and Inglefield House comes under the auspices of ESTYN (Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales), funded by the Welsh Assembly. The girls celebrate the National Eisteddfod, with a day devoted to music, dance, poetry and homage to our Welsh heritage. The rivalry between the four houses on this important day is highly competitive and infectious, culminating in the presentation of the Bard.

The Haberdashers' Company, which uses the motto 'Serve and Obey', play an active role in the governance of all their 11 schools which range from independent day, boarding, state and academies. As a new Head, I was invited to Haberdashers' Hall, tucked away in the Smithfield area of London, to attend the Publication Dinner, where the new Master of the Company is presented. The tradition and ceremony involved in the Company remains a link with the past, but the close relationship with the schools is maintained by frequent visits or 'deputations' from the Master and his elected wardens.

Inglefield girls will no doubt charm all these visitors. The school aims to maximise potential, to cultivate confidence and enthuse a passion for learning. It is this belief, founded all those years ago, which lies at the heart of the school and which drives all those involved in the Haberdashers' Monmouth family of schools forward into the future.

### Rewarding legacy

I may be the newest member of the family, but I like to think that William Jones would approve of Inglefield House and be impressed by these very lucky girls, who continue to be rewarded by his legacy. There is much to learn in my new role and I may still be reaching high for those stars, but the prospect to 'serve' as part of this particular family is something quite special.



# Don't drop citizenship!

Author Ruth Vidler makes the case for retaining personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) and citizenship in the National Curriculum



The UK Government is considering dropping citizenship from the National Curriculum. As a parent of three children, aged 10, 8 and 6, this fills me with concern.

I want my children to blossom into considerate, loving and confident adults, and their education matters. In my opinion PSHE (personal, social, health and economic education) and citizenship has been playing its valuable role in teaching this future generation how to cope with today's demands at home, in the classroom and in social environments. The lessons aim to build and boost self-esteem, teach children how to interact responsibly with and react to their peers, families, authority and strangers, and take responsibility for themselves and their actions. They contribute to the teaching of good health, safety, and the welfare of our little ones, and promote a positive style of thinking and self belief.

For a time I worked in a primary school library, and felt there was a distinct lack of fun books specifically geared towards the subjects tackled by PSHE and listed in the Key Stage 1 and 2 SEAL (Social Emotional Aspects of Learning) themes, such as getting on and falling out, good to be me, relationships, changes, new beginnings, say no to bullying and going for goals. After conducting my own opinion poll amongst local school teachers, TAs and Headteachers, I concluded with a list of the most popular topics that were deemed to be 'missing' from the literary resource pile.

As I have always had an interest in writing, and some would generously say, a 'flair for it', I set to work. *Primary Series 1* sprang to life in late 2009, and is a set of 28 books covering *all* of the Key Stage 1 SEAL themes, and a lot of the objectives from the Primary Literacy Framework.

The feedback that I have received from the teaching fraternity, parents and carers has been fantastic. I hope that my books aim to help children feel positive about who they are and encourage them to take responsibility for their choices and behaviour, understand the differences between themselves, their peers and others – and embrace them – and if nothing else, they do certainly seem to sit still, listen and enjoy the stories.

With education constantly in mind, I chose all of my illustrators from a website for students hoping to work in their breaks from college and gain valuable experience. Fifteen of the 16 chosen for my books were in full-time further education and will now receive royalty payments from the sale of each of their books and will hopefully benefit from their first professional job, and maybe a helping hand up the occupational ladder.

We introduced amusing characters and situations, and presented some important morals in the books, which hopefully reflect the aims of the PSHE and citizenship lessons. Our innovative, fun stories in rhyming verse have now also been brought to life using animation for a DVD box set, and have proved to be perfect for the whiteboard – for golden time, one-to-one, class tuition or circle time. Page-by-page options allow the reader to pause for discussion, and a narration option frees the teacher to observe the class. (In fact I think some of the teachers enjoy the DVDs just as much as, if not more than, the pupils!)

So, my message to the Government and Heads: PSHE and citizenship *is* important, it *should* be part of the National Curriculum and therefore *does* need funding and representation in schools – just ask the teachers, parents and carers of tomorrow's future.

Ruth Vidler is the author of *Primary Series 1*, a set of 28 books covering Key Stage 1 SEAL themes.

[www.littleangelcreative.com](http://www.littleangelcreative.com)

Photos with kind permission from Heyhouses CofE Primary School



# A tree for all seasons

Gillian Bathe describes the story of the creation of an altar front made from felt by all the children at Salisbury Cathedral School. It was inspired by the work of the Victorian poet Gerard Manley Hopkins and came about through a rich collaboration with the school's English department

*All things counter, original, spare,  
strange;*

*Whatever is fickle, freckled (who  
knows how?)*

*From 'Pied Beauty' by G M Hopkins  
(1844–89)*

At the heart of the creative activities at Salisbury Cathedral School is the quest for first-hand information. As we were working upon close observation of seasonal material I became aware of the Chaplain's need for a new altar cloth. The old idea of the tree of life developed: an apple tree in felt following the seasons in an ancient orchard with plants and animals thriving and participating around it.

This piece took about a month to make and it is informed by drawings and paintings that the children have made during other seasons. These include the speckled Devon apples from autumn and the snowflakes and snowdrops from January. June brings dog roses just too late for this project but we have our visual and sensory experiences recorded in our books. So here is a proper example of the use of good sketchbook practice.

Photographs would deliver form and colour but only partial memory. The activity of personal drawing encapsulates feelings and senses beyond the visual.

Paper patterns for cutting the felt were made by nine and ten-year-olds from their drawings. These shapes were cut from partially-felted colour samples that had been prepared by eight-year-olds.

We had to avoid intermediary drying out and storing of the vast sheet of

laid-out fleece (it was three metres by 1.75 metres) as we were worried that this would risk disturbing the felt picture as it developed. The schedule became important.

## Wednesday

Working on low tables that allowed the smallest children to reach to the middle, our seven-year-olds were entrusted with the construction of the foundation felt from white merino tops. They laid out (roof-tile-wise) crossing, cobweb-thin layers of merino tips. At last they dampened the whole down to a thin, partially felted, base layer. This was carefully rolled up in a candlewick bedspread and carried,

dripping, on a board to the art-room tables, where it was unrolled and gently laid flat again.

## Thursday

This was the day the nine-year-olds laid out the sky and grass. They also made further colour sheets for cutting, using plants for reference. Patterns of flowers drawn and cut out in coloured felt.

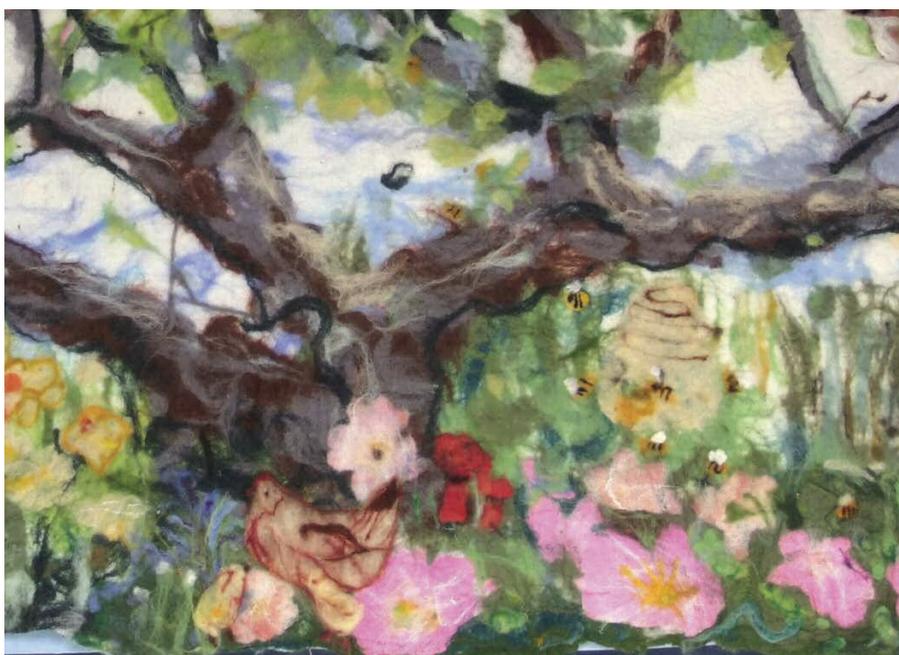
## Friday

Today we made the structure of the apple tree and arranged additional plants according to season.

A breathless space between lessons ensued when the work waited like a bride swathed in curtain net.



"Felt making and the use of fleece are ideal activities for young children"



### Wednesday

The elf-like pre-preparatory class crept in on this day and gently pressed the whole warm, wet fleece into place. Their delicacy and control preserved the design and deliberation of the older children. What trustworthy people!

Then came the crescendo of activity by the same seven-year-old thistledown managers as the previous week. By now they had a great deal of energy

and excitement to release and this was the ideal employment. They chanted and pummelled like true waulking Hebridean women. The hot water and soap flew and they resorted to giggles. They emerged soaked and reeling to meet their mothers at four o'clock ... and the teachers joined in too.

After the excitement of the felting process, the whole vast piece was rinsed and spun and ironed-out flat on

dry towels overnight. It had shrunk by about 30 per cent and was firm with clear images still in place (luckily). Further shrinking might have been achieved but this would have also caused more wrinkling of the surface, which would have spoiled the picture.

Over the next days the detail of the picture was needle felted into place. Older children worked with sharp, brittle harpoons, piercing through the

whole thickness of the fabric into a sponge beneath. They locked fine strands of further colours into the basic shapes; in essence they were drawing with wool. I wanted to avoid stylization and so during this stage of our work we maintained the principle of direct reference by having sketches and fresh material to hand. I had planned to use embroidery on the altar cloth too but it was clearly unnecessary.

Interested parents were able to contribute alongside their offspring but the children were doing all the design work very effectively by this stage. The 11-year-olds went on to prepare animals as separate units to be added later. It kept everyone occupied and gave the cloth-workers more elbow room. (A class of about 16 smallish people were involved.)

In this way we have arrived at a strongly ornate piece that has rapidly been completed. The Bishop visited on the 14th of June for his retirement service and blessed our new altar front. The 12-year-olds prepared a leather-bound album set with embossed copper Celtic motifs including a never-ending cross. A couple of boys have used pyrography to tool fern crosiers around the medallions. In the album we will stick photographs and pieces of writing about the making both of our altar front and the Archangel Michael, which we constructed for Michaelmas last year and exhibited at the *satips* annual art exhibition.

Felt-making and the use of fleece are ideal activities for young children. A huge array of coloured merino tips are available from Wingham Wools or

Forest Fibres. Silk fibres can be incorporated to reflect light and to give a sheen to petals and wings. It is economical and easily transported and stored. Lavender bags and cedar wood can also be incorporated to repel moths. We are producing a panoramic postcard of the piece to sell and pay for the materials (the total cost of which was £90). The piece will be backed with cotton sheeting and attached to the altar canopy with velcro. We would like to take it to the New Forest Show where they celebrate trees.

*And, for all this, nature is never spent;  
There lives the dearest freshness deep  
down things;*

*From 'God's Grandeur' by G M Hopkins*

Gillian Bathe is head of art at Salisbury Cathedral School.



# Fighting against the clock

Many teachers are constantly searching for anything that can magically create some more time amidst the hurly burly of term time. Our friends seem to have opportunities for a rich social life in the evening or at the weekend when we are often marking another set of exercise books, planning lessons, reading and writing papers or attending a governors' meeting. I am no exception and have read many time management books looking for a mystical solution to pursue my role more effectively, complete tasks more quickly and deliver more time. With the advent of two small children this search for my holy grail has become more urgent.

A colleague once approached me and said she wanted to be like me. I viewed this sophisticated well-dressed woman in surprise; what could she mean? Her response, she wanted to be as calm as me. I felt a fraud thinking of the papers falling off my desk onto my colleague's and said maybe I was a swan, serene on the surface but paddling like crazy underneath. I had fallen into the trap of only completing school paperwork when it was requested a second time. It was time to put that reading into practice.

## Getting organised

I ordered my paperwork and made it my mission to work through it during free lessons. By the end of the week, I felt I had worked even harder than usual and the piles on my desk were back out of control again. Next I considered tasks I had to do on a weekly basis – mark books, plan lessons, regular meetings and sort post – and made a daily timetable of them. This worked but any type of incident or additional task completely threw the system and the notebook became scruffy before being lost under the paper mountains. I needed a more sophisticated system and bought a Filofax. I prioritised tasks according to urgency using the (a), (b) and (c) system. Initially all was well, until I noticed the same tasks, those without deadlines such as re-writing schemes of work, stayed on my to-do list. My enthusiasm crumbled and soon the Filofax remained unopened, a visual reminder of being thwarted again.

My office became untidier and I kept completing tasks in the nick of time but was haunted by other people's immaculate Filofaxes, diaries or simple A4 hardbacked notepads. I had acquired senior management responsibilities and found I had more development tasks that were not strictly time-related. Weeks slipped by and those tasks remained incomplete. I was bought *First Things First* by Stephen Covey (the author of *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*). Covey suggested tasks are separated into four quadrants;

important/urgent, not-important/urgent, not-urgent/not important or important/not urgent. I tended to complete tasks from the first two quadrants; tasks from the third quadrant became a work avoidance tactic, and I often never began important but not-urgent tasks. Covey described identifying a future vision built from your personal values by considering your life as a mixture of different roles, *eg* husband, father, teacher, head of department *etc*. In each role identify an important but not-urgent task and complete it during the week. The link to your vision should give the impetus to fulfil these defined tasks. I purchased the fancy Filofax and became a Covey evangelist, quoting elements everywhere from the pub to job interview room. I moved to a new job and the Covey system seemed in tune with this greater amount of non-contact time and personal autonomy. Colleagues without these luxuries were less positive about the system, stating that without that freedom the weekly tasks would become just another millstone.

## Getting things done

A different role beckoned and I began to write Covey tasks just for the sake of completing them. Taking a metaphorical step back I looked at my untidy desk and realised I did not have a problem getting work done; my issue was organisation. I began to use Outlook on my laptop to schedule and operate a to-do list and read *Getting things done* by David Allan, which a reviewer said was worth buying for a single-page flowchart. I expected a complex diagram like a chemical plant's flow scheme but instead simplicity faced me. Basically if a task takes less than two minutes do it immediately; if not defer it or delegate. If a task does not need doing, bin it, have a some day/maybe file or a reference file. The flowchart is now laminated on my much tidier desk.

## Conclusion

I recognise that the novelty of a new approach gives me the energy to use it, whether a system like Covey or hardware like a Filofax, PDA or piece of software. Whether I'm still using GTD this time next year does not matter but the invigoration of a new method has made me effective. The important thing is to try different systems, read a new book, buy another piece of kit and not to worry if you do not stick with them. The enthusiasm when finding another approach can increase work rate and efficiency.

Paul Ainsworth is vice principal of Belvoir High School and author of *Developing a self-evaluating school - a practical guide*.

# A worldwide tour of languages and cultures

Sarah Menegaz, director of studies at Taverham Hall, believes enriching the curriculum can only benefit, rather than take over, curriculum time



Pupils introduce their annual 'French breakfast'

Although the demands of Common Entrance and scholarships may occupy a lot of our time with key topics and grammar at the core of our French and Latin Schemes of Work, we at Taverham Hall feel strongly that it is our duty to open our pupils' eyes to the richness and variety of languages and cultures that pervade not only our own school community, but also the entire human race.

In an increasingly globalised world, learning about other people's linguistic and cultural backgrounds can only help to develop more tolerance and understanding. After all, shouldn't this be a key element to the

well-rounded education we pride ourselves on providing in our prep schools? Widening our pupils' horizons from an early age and providing them with windows onto the world is at the heart of our curriculum at Taverham Hall. As a result, over the last few years, we have organised a myriad of events to promote the importance of languages and different cultures.

After celebrating the European Day of Languages for several years, we decided to extend our celebrations to a worldwide mix of cultures, which reflects the origins of a number of our pupils. Involving parents from

different cultural backgrounds and our gap students, we organised a carousel of workshops that enabled the pupils to discover and explore the languages and cultures of Cuba, Ukraine, the Netherlands, Thailand, Mexico and Australia through activities involving costumes, food tasting, musical instruments, quizzes, games, regalia and special assemblies.

In addition, a great variety of termly extracurricular clubs and hobbies offer the chance for pupils to enhance their learning experience. For example, African drumming, pétanque tournaments, Japan Club, Spanish Club, Around the World Club and

Ciné-Club (showing foreign cartoons and films in the target language with English subtitles).

### Authentic opportunities

Educational trips are organised regularly, providing our children with authentic opportunities to practise their linguistic skills in real life situations and also helping to broaden their cultural awareness. In recent years, a skiing trip to Switzerland, two breaks in France (one on the Opal Coast and one in Paris), and a trip to Pompeii and the Bay of Naples as well as visiting a local synagogue, cathedrals and museums offered pupils hands-on learning and lots of fun.

Two professional language theatre companies have visited the school to perform plays in French in front of our younger learners. Dragons in Europe engaged our prep school pupils with a highly informative and entertaining school assembly focusing on the particulars of the Chinese Mandarin language and Chinese customs. This was followed by various workshops including 'kanji' calligraphy, how to use chopsticks, the significance of the Chinese New Year, *etc.*

Our Year 2 children (dressed up in berets and stripy t-shirts) host a French breakfast every year at the school for their parents, serving them croissants and pains au chocolat while communicating exclusively in simple French. The morning's highlight always is a musical treat of traditional French songs performed by the children and their music teacher.

### Learning Chichewa

We always encourage our pupils to take part in the annual Eurotalk Junior Language Challenge. This academic year, four of our pupils reached the semi-final having studied and competed in this national competition in the languages of Italian and Japanese. One of our pupils then reached the grand final in London and finished 15th out of the 40 finalists having had to learn Chichewa in less than a month!



In English, one of our nine-year-old pupils also won the national short story competition and was one of the 22 winners out of 3000 entries who competed in the World Book Day Short Story competition organised by Evans Books in 2009. This winning story was published in an anthology, which was launched on World Book Day. Schools were allocated different first lines, which the children had to build into their own stories. The winners were selected by best-selling author Stewart Ross who judged the competition.

In 2010, after entering the Young Writers' Creative Writing Competition, the work of 22 Taverham Hall School pupils has since appeared in a book titled *Tiny Treasures Norfolk and Suffolk*.

Art and music continuously offer various opportunities and our pupils have worked with Egyptian, Mexican, African, Aboriginal and Chinese themes. In spring 2010, the Taverham Hall School African Drum Ensemble was awarded 'Outstanding Performance' by the judges at the Norfolk Music Festival.

### New educational link

Our latest cultures and languages project means that Taverham Hall School is currently embarking on an exciting new educational link with a school in Malawi. This is in conjunction with the Norwich-Dedza Partnership, which promotes links

between various organisations within the city area to aid the development of the District of Dedza. Some of our pupils have already embarked on an ICT project based on Malawi and have also received letters from children at Mcheneka School. Our pupils will have their curriculum enriched with references to Malawi through as many subject areas as possible and as a result will be able to come to understand more about the way of life in Dedza whilst enjoying the exchange of work and letters.

At Taverham Hall School we strongly believe that by offering our pupils a platform to other languages and cultures it empowers them to become responsible, tolerant and informed citizens of the world.



# The 'S' word – sustainability

**Antonia Lee, head of sustainability, Maltman's Green School and IAPS sustainability co-ordinator, argues the case for an area of the curriculum that is becoming increasingly more acknowledged**

Sustainability, I think, is now something that most teachers are aware they 'should' be doing something about. However, there seems to be a lot of fear surrounding sustainability issues: Will we have to fill in our swimming pool? Will pupils spend their time gardening instead of doing maths? How much curriculum time will it take up? Who will lead it?

At Maltman's Green Prep School in Buckinghamshire the Head, Joanna Pardon, grasped the nettle and we have found ways of really moving forward with this agenda and have witnessed huge benefits for the girls and the school. I would like to share some of our reasoning, successes and challenges.

Maltman's Green is a non-selective, girls' prep school. It is a school that celebrates success in every form and we are particularly well known for our academic curriculum, sport (particularly gymnastics and swimming) and music (particularly choral). There are about 420 girls aged from 3 to 11 in the school, which is situated on the edge of a town in a semi-rural area of commuter-belt Chiltern Hills. We are lucky enough to have approximately ten acres of land and when the governors appointed a new Head in 2005 one of her priorities was to look at moving the sustainability agenda forward.

## Nurturing the role

To this end, in the academic year 2008-9 I was appointed as the new head of geography and sustainability. Neither the Head nor I quite knew what that meant but we were both willing to nurture and develop the role. This makes the first point in developing the sustainability agenda in a school. It needs one person who has a personal interest in the area to be given time and support to spearhead this project. Like most other leaders of sustainability I get time freed up to the same level, or a little more, as a head of department in a core subject. And like many areas of change just giving an issue priority makes change easy.

An example is our wonderful indoor swimming pool. Being aware of its carbon footprint we thought of ways to reduce it. From this came an invitation from us to the state primary within walking distance of us. They now use our pool one afternoon a week thereby cutting their costs and impact (coach and council pool) but also increasing our number of users and therefore decreasing the swimming pool's impact while also contributing to our Public Benefit. A win-win situation and a lesson for our girls about sharing and local community.

So what is sustainability about? Many that I speak to in schools are

comfortable that it has something to do with being more environmentally responsible. I believe that it is a little wider than that. As a global population we are currently each using approximately one and a half 'planet's-worth' of resources each year. In the UK we use about three 'planet's-worth' per person per year. This is clearly 'unsustainable' and therefore sustainability is anything that reduces this per-capita use now or in the future.

## Understanding fairness

At prep school level children have a great inner understanding of 'fairness' and this is where I start. It is not 'fair' that we have more than other people in our community and world and it is not 'fair' that we are using up things or environment that will be needed by people in the future. We are using more than our 'fair share' of the World. This is always something that they can relate to and understand even at a very young age.

That is the macro reason for teaching about sustainability in schools but there are so many wider benefits individual to children. Children are well aware of environmental problems and scared – understanding and empowerment reduces the fear. It also responds to many pupils' passion. I am aware at Maltman's that in Year 4 in geography when I ask pupils to monitor family recycling at home during our 'Waste' unit, they are evangelical and much more driven than their parents.

The community and responsibility angle of sustainability also links well with the Every Child Matters programme and can be useful in





"Anyone can grow a cabbage..."

giving those children who find it difficult to 'shine' in any particular thing at school an area of expertise – anyone can grow a cabbage! Pupils also love much of what sustainability has to offer – outside action, practical and creative learning and the ability to take part in 'real' projects not role play. There are opportunities to create leadership roles through ideas such as an eco-council and lots of PR opportunities and ways of involving parents and the local community, which is always good for marketing and growth of the school.

The ideas within a sustainability agenda fit well with prep school ethos – it is often about quality not quantity. Rather than eating a large amount of battery-reared, poor quality meat, eat a smaller amount of responsibly (both environmentally and ethically) reared meat that is better in quality. In prep school ethos, rather than educating a large number of pupils in a battery-style system, have smaller classes with personal attention and a personalised curriculum. There is a great deal of cross-over here – not that I am likening our pupils to chickens!

**Don't be scared**

Sustainability is not something to be scared of – it can be incorporated into

the existing curriculum; is a process not an end point; is motivating for pupils and staff and can save the school a great deal of money. There is one prep school that has taken 14% off its electricity use in three years by teaching and encouraging basic housekeeping such as closing doors, switching off lights and screens, and insulating. At Maltman's our paper budget has been much reduced by switching to an email-to-parents system. This reduces paper use, makes letters more likely to get to the recipient rather than becoming padding in a school bag and is simpler for parents and staff to use.



So what are some examples of Maltman's Green successfully incorporating sustainability ideas into our curriculum?

In Nursery the girls spent a morning harvesting and eating sweetcorn cobs. They pulled them up in the garden, opened up the cob to reveal with wonder the food they recognised and put the waste plant material into our wormery. The corn had been grown by one of our five gardening clubs. In the traditional curriculum they covered learning outcomes of naming parts of plants (stem, leaf, root, with extension words of cob, silk and husk). They also counted the cobs and put them in size order, creatively covering some numeracy. It also encouraged healthy eating at snack time – for several of the girls this was the first time they had eaten corn off the cob. At a sustainability level girls experienced harvesting and eating fresh food with low food miles and learnt how rich compost can be made easily. They also had a lovely time outside, prodding the soil and finding the odd worm!

On a larger scale the building of our discovery garden has been a real success for the girls and a selling point for the school. Rather than going on a field trip to pond-dip the science

department can just 'nip out' to the discovery garden. This reduces cost, curriculum disruption and increases flexibility.

### Gardening clubs

Our five gardening clubs do the practical work (including delivery to the kitchens) and planning. The challenge is planning crops that will harvest inside school terms. I have found going for first early potatoes and very late cropping beans and tomatoes most successful. These can be forced to be summer term (potatoes) and autumn term (beans and tomatoes). I can't find a way of harvesting cucumbers outside the summer holidays (any ideas out there?). We grew salads, broad beans, runner beans, peas (used by Reception for looking at twisting and turning), beetroot, tomatoes, chillies, aubergines, peppers, carrots, courgettes, onions, purple sprouting broccoli, raspberries, Swiss chard, pumpkins, squashes, gourds (used in art for still life drawing), sweetcorn, herbs (useful for a Reception smell trail) and strawberries last year.

All this produce (except the strawberries, which never make it out of gardening club!) is delivered to our kitchens and eaten the next day by the girls. Some co-ordination with the chef is required here as there is never enough to feed 420 so he supplements and therefore needs to know the week before what we will harvest. On the menu for the day it then says 'gardening club carrots' or similar. The 'loaves and fish' effect of the produce feeding so many girls has not yet been noticed. Gardening club also grow a variety of bedding and hanging basket flowers, which improve the general school environment. The RSPB explorers club use the gardening club sunflower seeds in their bird cakes once the art department have drawn the sunflower heads in a range of levels of decay for added interest.

We have also worked hard to increase the biodiversity of our grounds. We have planted native species trees and



pond plants; built and put up bird boxes; planted a wild flower meadow on a bank that was unused as it was so steep and made a stumpery (pile of rotting logs for mini-beasts). Our grounds team now only use herbicides on the athletics field (grass gives the safest flat surface without tussocks). All this work has been done by the gardening clubs, explorers club and the maintenance team over five years.

This year's project is building our bog-garden to further increase the eco-systems that we offer to creatures within our grounds. In Year 6 in geography the issues involved in biodiversity are studied and as part of this the girls undertake biodiversity monitoring of the grounds. This covers all ideas of biodiversity in geography and also involves higher level mapping skills and maths work in sampling and data manipulation and display.

### Sustainability as art

In art another highly successful project has been the living willow and willow sculpture projects. Year 3 and 4 in various years have built a living willow house and willow creatures that inhabit our sensory garden area. This year they are going to do some figures that will migrate beyond the sensory garden area. For art this covers learning objectives such as 3D sculpture work; art installation work

and working with natural materials. However, it is also an important part of our sustainability work. Girls experience the joy of working with natural materials in a team, are using the grounds, discover about using sustainable, local materials that are very low impact and contribute to reducing our carbon footprint by planting growing trees. The willow house also provides a great place to play and picnic!

I hope that these three featured projects show that sustainability is not scary. I hope that when reading what Maltman's Green is doing you are heartened that much of what is sustainability you are already teaching in the curriculum – it is often just a change of emphasis.

Sustainability takes someone being given the freedom in school to develop the ideas, a desire to empower, inspire and inform our pupils and an understanding that this is an important part of their education as the future leaders.

For further support I recommend the **IAPS sustainability area** ([www.iapsonline.co.uk/](http://www.iapsonline.co.uk/)); **Eco-schools** website ([www.eco-schools.org.uk/](http://www.eco-schools.org.uk/)); **RHS School Gardening** (<http://apps.rhs.org.uk/schoolgardening/default.aspx>) and **Fairtrade** ([www.traidcraft.co.uk/](http://www.traidcraft.co.uk/)). Search away – there is loads of good stuff on the web.



# A jewel in the crown

Glenn Smart, head of art, and Michael Barr, artist in residence, at Dulwich College Prep School details why art is such an important facet to any school

Art is fundamental to learning and we lead our lives through art. It exists all around us in nature and in the man-made world. Art impacts on all our lives. It has existed since the beginning of man's time on earth. If we did not teach art it would still exist, so why do we teach it and what purpose does art serve?

Art is a tool through which children can learn, investigate, assimilate, make decisions independently or as a team, communicate ideas and is at the core of expression, reflection and the dissemination of ideas. Art also encompasses the ethereal, spiritual side of our being, adds purpose to our lives and is crucial to the developing child's self-esteem.

Industry, commerce and all that we do at work and play require such important skills, so why is it that art is not always taken seriously or given the gravitas it deserves in schools? Is it because many adults are frightened of art, do not understand art, or appreciate the efficacy of art? (The same goes for so called educationalists and governments.) Adults know what they like and like what they know. Well, they think they do.



## Rousing the emotions

Art is challenging and is not necessarily straightforward or easy to read, nor just there to please or to be comforting. Why should it be? Art should rouse the emotions, whether it is with pleasure or horror, delight or sadness. Art should make us think and question. And art will not always give us the right answers.

Great civilisations going back thousands of years are known as much, if not more, for their art and treasures as for their sport and mathematics. Their artistic output was as durable and important as their mathematical, scientific and sporting output, yet in schools so much more emphasis is placed on these areas. You only have to look at the allocation of time on the timetable in comparison to the time given to art to appreciate that. How can this be so? What about the pupils who are artistic and not sporting or mathematical?

One of the great criticisms levelled at artists or art education is that there is too much of it, that there are too many artists or art students. But art is what humans do; being creative is at the core of the human experience; a creative ability which can find expression in maths or science or any other discipline, but which can be actively and explicitly taught through art education.



### Unselfish teachers

Some of the most exciting art today is created by the children we teach, in what amounts to very little time given to the arts in the curriculum. What is often the case is that the thriving art departments open their doors for the pupils to be able to engage in the arts whenever they like out of school time, at lunchtime or after school. Creative people want others to be creative too, which is why many art teachers are unselfish with their time. How is this recognised? Quite simply, in the work our pupils do, which under our guidance, is often above their chronological years.

Children intrinsically enjoy art. It is innate from birth. All children want to make a mark even before they realise what they are doing. Young children do not feel inhibited. Every child is an artist; the problem is how to remain an artist once he or she grows up.

Skills from a good art education can be used in all areas of the curriculum. Original thought, investigation and taking risks, critical evaluation of the child's own work and that of other

artists are integral to sound practice.

To make this effective in art education, good planning and sequence in learning needs to take place. Also dedicated and enthusiastic teaching staff, who inspire young people, are unquestionably at the core of the excellence to which our students aspire.

At Dulwich College Preparatory School, the art is taken seriously and is nurtured in the young pupils from the Nursery years right up to when the boys leave us at Year 8 to go on to their respective senior schools.

At DCPS we are highly fortunate to have a designated art specialist in each section of the school, who coordinates the art for that age group. In the middle and upper school the boys' art is taught by four specialist teachers in the department.

We have a well-equipped, spacious teaching studio and one also for ceramics and three-dimensional studies and a resource area with a comprehensive art library, four computers and three scanners, an interactive whiteboard and overhead projector.

### Open all hours

The art department is open all day and always has a member of staff available to guide the boys with their studies. This is a strength, as pupils can be extended in their own projects or have the opportunity to pursue their own studies, and work alongside one another in vertical groupings where they can exchange good practice and ideas.

Projects are devised to develop new skills, which satisfy the need for the continuity of technical development in the student. For example: Year 6 work on fossils began with observational drawing, before being developed through digital imaging, printmaking and ceramic work, whereby designs were embossed and coloured using oxides; Year 7 work includes a large-scale drawing project from still life, using various media such as charcoal and chalk to explore form, tone and scale through mark-making; and pupils in Year 8 have the opportunity to work with a specialist animator, who oversees projects in which students learn the skills of stop-motion animation to produce their own short films.





Projects are diverse, offering each child the opportunity to excel and succeed in one or more areas of study, even if his drawing and painting skills are limited. This is crucial for the development of the child's self-esteem, irrespective of his or her age.

### Originality of approach

The skills and techniques that we aim to foster become valuable in a deeper sense when they can be harnessed to give visual expression to creative and original ideas. Accordingly, projects also seek to develop an originality of approach, as well as the critical skills that enable young artists to evaluate and develop their work effectively.

To cite three examples: five Year 8 video installation projects originated from a common, thematic starting point, but open-ended processes, with critical reflection integral at every stage, led to five very different outcomes; ceramic projects teach not only technique, but also encourage the development of visual ideas from diverse starting points, such as historical studies (in the case of the collaborative project that developed into a Terracotta Army), literary investigations (in the case of clay figures, which developed from readings of Shakespearean characters), or explorations of the physical environment (as with ceramic vessels that grew out of research into the textures and surfaces that surround us all); and projects that have used a

research process encompassing guided walks, drawing and sculptural explorations have developed outcomes which combine sculpture with photography, engaging students in a process that encourages critical reflection on unexpected developments to produce exciting, original outcomes.

All projects are linked to the work of historical or contemporary artists, and boys use computer programmes, scanners, and digital photography to further their understanding and enhance their forms of expression. They are heavily involved in resourcing their projects; visits to galleries and museums reinforce this and add to the breadth of the pupils' enrichment and understanding.

The clearest point at which technical skill, originality of thought and depth of critical reflection intersect is with the scholarship work of the most able students. For instance, consider the two canvasses by a Year 8 student in a project based on conflict. He completed montage paintings on canvas in mixed media based on the Hiroshima bombing and the Auschwitz concentration camp. Both paintings were entered for the Saatchi Gallery International Art Prize for Schools in conjunction with the *Sunday Telegraph*. The canvasses won the top award out of 19,000 entries, where Harry was awarded £2000 and the art department was awarded £10,000. Perhaps Harry's

success would not have happened if he had not been driven by his scholarship studies.

Display is important as it celebrates the pupils' achievements. Work is displayed in a caring and sympathetic way in the department and also around the school. Two exhibitions are held annually with the second one late in the summer term, where pieces of work are framed and are bought by parents and friends of the school to raise money for charity. In the past eight years over £20,000 has been raised for the Sparrow Foundation, which supports deprived pupils in a school in Johannesburg.

### A creative haven

Nothing lifts the spirit of a school more than a thriving and exciting art department. It is a haven, a sanctuary within the school, where the pupils can go to be stimulated, challenged, reflect, discuss and relax in an environment that is very much part of their enrichment programme. Long may this continue in our schools. Long may we have young people who are inspired and who are actively involved in the arts, who at the end of the day are our future and who will have a great impact on the arts and the direction that society might take. We need creative thinkers in all walks of life – as engineers, as business people, as policy-makers. Art education in schools can produce great artists, but perhaps its greatest gift is that of creativity itself.

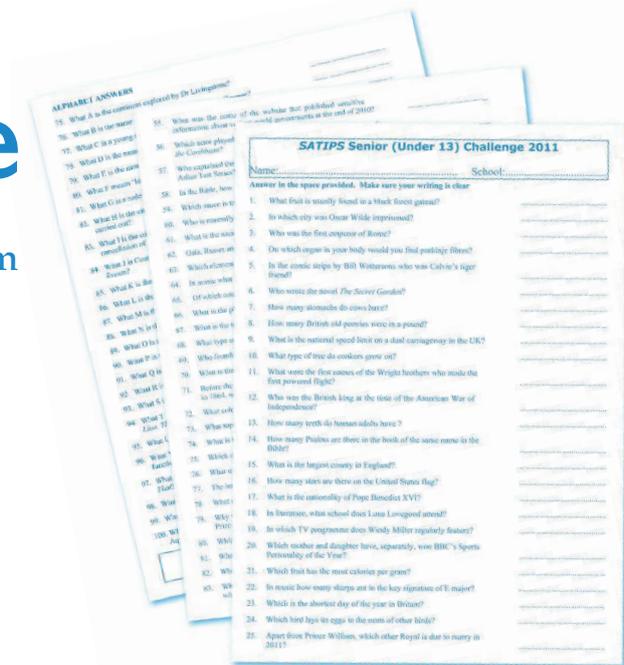
# satips Challenge

Michael Denton, director of ICT at Cheam School, organises the *satips* Challenge.

*satips* has been organising an annual General Knowledge Challenge for many years. Each year around 2000 Under 11s and 1000 Under 13s take part from about 150 different schools. They pit their knowledge of the world around them against each other. The Challenge is taken like an exam on the first Thursday each February and then contestants bite their nails while waiting for the marks to be published. There are school prizes, but also up to 50 individual prizes for the top scorers.

This year, like previous years, the markers have worked hard scoring the papers and having a smile at some of the answers. In the pressure of the moment many a correct answer evades the child's mind and they put down the first thing they think of. In answer to the question: Apart from Prince William, which other royal is due to marry this year? The answers included The Queen, Prince Philip (to each other one presumes!) and the late Princess Margaret. Another child decided that Liu Xiaobo, the imprisoned Chinese Nobel Peace Prize winner, could not collect his prize in person as he missed his flight. Others who, if they had received a Kindle (an electronic book reader) for Christmas would have burnt it. Parents and teachers will be pleased to know that virtually all the children knew that the part of Jack Sparrow in the film *Pirates of the Caribbean* was played by Johnny Depp and they all knew the toppings on a Margherita pizza.

The questions cover many categories and continually prove to exercise the minds of the young people taking the Challenge. The organisers hope that they, and their teachers appreciate the experience. In 2011 the questions certainly proved to be a challenge for the children, though there were some very good results. It is nice to know that not all children are 'wired for sound' and that most of our pupils have a very good general knowledge. The prize-winners should be proud of their achievements and they deserve our congratulations on their awards. Many congratulations to all those who took part and, especially, to the senior winner, Jack Palmer (St John's College School) and to the junior winner, Alicia Symes (Oakwood School). The winning schools were The Pilgrims' School (Senior) and Oakwood School (Junior). We had 69 schools entering over 1000 pupils in the Senior Challenge and 118 schools with more than 2100 entries in the Junior section. I am very grateful to both Gill Heather and Lynne Moore for their hard work marking the papers. I would also like to thank Alyson Cowlshaw for her administrative help and getting



papers into the post on time. A number of schools entered the Challenge very late this year. It is held annually on the first Thursday in February with entry forms being sent out in November. We hope your pupils enjoyed taking part and that you felt it was a worthwhile exercise. Next year's Challenge will be on 2nd February 2012. Details will be posted on the website nearer the time.

## satips Challenge 2011 winners

### Winning Junior Schools

1. Oakwood School
2. Westminster Under School
3. Magdalen College Junior School

### Individual Junior Winners

1. Alicia Symes (Oakwood)
2. Ona Ojo (Oakwood)
3. Joshua Grey (Oakwood)

### Winning Senior Schools

1. The Pilgrims' School
2. St John's College School
3. Northbourne Park

### Individual Senior Winners

1. Jack Palmer (St John's College School)
2. Dominic Brind (Westminster Under School)
3. Louis Goulding (The Pilgrims' School)  
Oliver Lloyd (Sussex House)  
Angus Robinson (The Pilgrims' School)

# Uncovering good ideas

**Stephen Lockyer, deputy head and director of studies at The Mead School, suggests advice on getting the best out of your staff and making your meetings meaningful and productive**

What makes your school unique? What makes your teachers different to others? Much as they say you only really learn to drive once you've passed your test, the same can be said for teaching, with careful skills, techniques, habits and nuances that build up over the years. These ideas make a teacher's lesson different to another with matching resources, lesson plans and even children, and provide enormous variety for those children.

One difficulty with some ideas is that they are sometimes so small, simple and obvious that they are hardly recognised as ideas at all. That is certainly the case in teaching, where individual teachers create systems, initiate changes and adjust aspects of their teaching so often that they don't recognise the constant innovation they are producing. The downside of all this innovation is that it often stays trapped within the confines of the classroom, only ever seeing the light of day through peer review, team teaching or chance. Teaching is by its nature very insular, and it is tricky for staff to identify these ideas, let alone pass them on.

## The hidden tools of teaching

The uniqueness of a teacher's role can be broken down into organisation, interpretation and presence. The way that a classroom is organised (or not!) reflects deeply the way in which a teacher operates. Some teachers for example prefer every item to be correctly labelled and placed in a specific location, while others may have a more fluid structure with resources grouped according to topic.

Interpretation is the manner in which a teacher might approach the same topic as a colleague, but in a completely different format. I have seen the Battle of Hastings taught in many different ways, and all ways offered progression and achievement for the pupil; if this is the case, who is to say whether one format of delivery is 'better' than another?

Presence is the intangible delivery



techniques that a teacher develops and builds during their career. We all know of the softly-spoken teacher who has absolute control and focus of their class, where others might flounder by using that technique.

It is a combination of these three that provides such a healthy diversity within a school environment, and yet these often aren't the central focus when being appraised, assessed or observed. With the attention paid to the destination, often the more involved and exciting part for both the teacher and children, the journey of learning itself, ends up taking a back seat. Sadly for the teacher, this is where all the good ideas either stay put or are lost.

## How to change this attitude

In a healthy school environment where change is embraced and risk is celebrated, the challenge is how to get these good ideas to be recognised and used elsewhere. There are various ways to do these, from a peer review system where staff are actively encouraged to identify one GIFT (Great Initiative For Teaching) in an informal lesson observation, to sharing good practice in curriculum meetings. One keen deputy is known to introduce a new website or tool each week in his staff meetings.

This was the challenge that we explored at The Mead School. It was clear from parents' views, informal observations, and a growing display of 'Inspirational Work' that there were brilliant things happening in our classrooms that didn't exist on paper. We thought it would be worthwhile in looking to uncover these bright lights in teaching, in a way that benefited the whole school. Our analogy was that each teacher shone brightly, but the light

they produced was only seen in their own classroom.

From this, the BrightLights programme was developed. Designed to be simple, fun and completely non-intrusive, its aim was to encourage teachers to examine areas of their practice that wouldn't normally be recognised, and share these with others.

It operated as an afternoon INSET, where staff were split into groups and supported in discussing the finer details of their teaching day; how they mark, how they line the class up, how they set up their classroom in the morning. These are the mechanics of a class that often are overlooked in a formal observation, but are intrinsic to the dynamic of the children, and embed the learning.

To help them with this, they were split into groups, and given a range of questions to answer in a discussion format. These questions were written to examine how a class really works 'under the bonnet' – how do teachers hand out their books, or collect them in? How do they ask a class to be quiet, or provoke more interest? How do they line their children up?

The staff were then asked to select just five ideas from all those shown and shared, and to write them down, pledging to introduce the ideas into their classroom over the following five weeks. This exploited a psychological technique called the Hawthorne Effect, whereby having a focus on something actually breeds a more positive effect; if you were to monitor how many glasses of water you drank each day, you would invariably drink more! These pledges were then publicly displayed in the classroom, as an *aide memoire* to the programme.

### Incredibly positive impact

It was fascinating to hear the different things that the staff spoke about and chose to select to trial in their own



classrooms in the following five weeks. Some chose purely academic changes, others decided to re-introduce an idea that they had used before, but which had fallen by the wayside. All teachers found something to trial in their classrooms for the following day.

The initial impact has been incredibly positive. Classrooms have changed in atmosphere for some, while a greater grip on the volume of marking has been taken by others. While the long term impact of the programme has yet to be fully assessed, the opportunity to share good practice with the teachers who work alongside each other, combined with a supportive recognition that teachers are natural innovators, has been enormously worthwhile.

A junior version of the BrightLights programme is now being developed for primary-aged children, which will encourage the focus of sharing good practice among pupils, enabling them to be more organised and effective as learners.

Stephen Lockyer is happy to answer any questions on the BrightLights programme: [mr.lockyer@gmail.com](mailto:mr.lockyer@gmail.com) or on Twitter at [@mrlockyer](https://twitter.com/mrlockyer).

These are questions that can kickstart a staff meeting, fulfil a peer review observation, or simply be built up when the odd opportunities to visit other classes occur:

- How do you register your children?
- How do you line children up?
- How do you sit your class down?
- How do you collect books in?
- How do you give books out?
- How do you plan a lesson?
- How do you plan a prep?
- How do you quieten a class?
- How do you liven up a class?
- How do you reinforce presentation standards?
- How do you choose children to speak?
- How do you hear reading?
- How do you check children are working?
- How do you introduce a new topic?
- How do you pass on the lesson objective to the children?
- How do you lower the volume in your classroom?
- How do you encourage quieter members to speak more?
- How do you encourage noisier pupils to speak less?
- How do you speed up marking?

# Skills, skills, skills!

Dr Anne Punter, vice-chair of governors at Beechwood Park School, offers practical insight into the ever-changing and challenging role of an independent school governor



Beechwood Park School, where governor appointments are 'mostly based on skills'

'Skills, skills, skills!' was the plea from Headteachers in the maintained sector in a recent national research study<sup>1</sup> concerning the attributes that were the most desirable in their governors.

How lucky are we in the independent sector that our school governing bodies usually comprise people with just those skills. We are often able to identify the members of the wider school community who can be cherry-picked for appointment. Certainly at Beechwood Park we are lucky to have most bases covered: accountancy, estates management, finance, education, management training, PR and legal, along with benefiting from a fistful of secondary Head Teachers to contribute their wisdom and expertise. This is a 'board' of 'non-executive directors' that is fully able to question, verify and support the much respected Head Master (the 'chief executive officer').

There are rarely governor vacancies on independent school governing bodies

as all those involved with the school have numerous links with skilled professionals and it is still a compliment to be invited to stand for appointment. This is a very different picture from that of many English maintained school governing bodies, where vacancies total approximately 40,000 at any one time: around 11%. Factors that contribute to this deficit are first, that state schools are bound by a long list of stakeholder representational requirements for governing body composition<sup>2</sup>. Secondly, some state schools have catchment areas that are not localities where professional men and women choose to live, so there may be few people able to share their expertise, or willing to carry the responsibilities and accountabilities of being a governor.

Since September 2009 the Framework for Inspection has focused on some alarming accountabilities for governors, applicable both to independent schools, which are termed '162a' and inspected by Ofsted, and also those schools

whose Head Teachers have Independent Schools Council (ISC) membership and are inspected by the Independent School Inspectorate (ISI). Governing bodies are now graded 'Excellent', 'Good', 'Satisfactory' or 'Unsatisfactory', based, amongst other things, on whether the governing body has ensured and verified that:

- School policies are in place, implemented and reviewed regularly;
- The school fulfils all the regulatory requirements, including CRB checks on all staff and governors, special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), health and safety, equal opportunities and Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) requirements;
- Governing body policies, including risk assessments, are in place and implemented;
- Governors and staff have undertaken training, particularly in child protection/safeguarding and safer recruitment;
- Appropriate staff have undertaken training, particularly in SEND and first aid.

The Head of ISI, Christine Ryan, in excellent briefings to independent school governors at Association of Governing Bodies of Independent Schools (AGBIS) conferences, has left governors in no doubt about their accountabilities.

It is no wonder that in the White Paper, 2010, state school policy makers stipulate that 'governing bodies with the right skills are able to be more decisive, supporting the head teacher and championing high standards. We will legislate in the forthcoming Education Bill so that all schools can

establish smaller governing bodies with appointments primarily focused on skills. From early 2012 we will allow all schools to adopt this more flexible model of school governance if they choose'.<sup>3</sup>

Hence, we in the independent sector are fortunate to have already modelled the best practice for governance and are, arguably, already much better placed than our state school colleagues to cope with the workload and responsibilities settled squarely on our shoulders. Is the independent school governing body a possible blueprint for the governance of, not only maintained state schools *per se*, but particularly academies and free schools?

If, however, any governors are still basking in the glory of being appointed and think that the role only requires attendance at a few meetings, speech day, the carol service, plays and concerts, then wake up now!

So, possible action points that emerge from these musings could be:

- Audit your governing body and keep a register of governors' skills and experience.
- From the audit, identify gaps in skill-sets and look to finding suitable appointees.

- Keep a register of people who might be able to offer a desirable skill, as positions become available. Volunteers who offer themselves can be added to the register, although be aware that someone who lobbies to be a governor may have an agenda or crusade that could become contentious in meetings and unbalancing for the school as a whole.
- Make sure that governors are aware of their roles and responsibilities with regard to legalities, charitable status, conflicts of interest, compliance-checking and inspection requirements.
- Governors should attend AGBIS inspection updates on the preparation and monitoring steps needed from governors in the event of an inspection, as well as their specific accountabilities (see some of the main things in the bullet points above). Note that the framework is probably about to undergo additional small revisions, meaning that a 2011 update will be necessary in due course.
- The audit of governors should list all the training they have undertaken and allow identification of gaps to be filled or updated.
- Child Protection training is now

recommended for all governors and safer recruitment training for those sitting on appointment panels.

As a last word, just as important as being a skilled and responsibly engaged governor, is to remember that your Headteacher needs your support, encouragement and trust. In this frenzy of challenging, monitoring, verifying and evaluating, governors must avoid over-stepping the mark by trying to manage the school, to the detriment of the Head Teacher who runs the place on a day-to-day basis. We are there to help, not to interfere!

## References

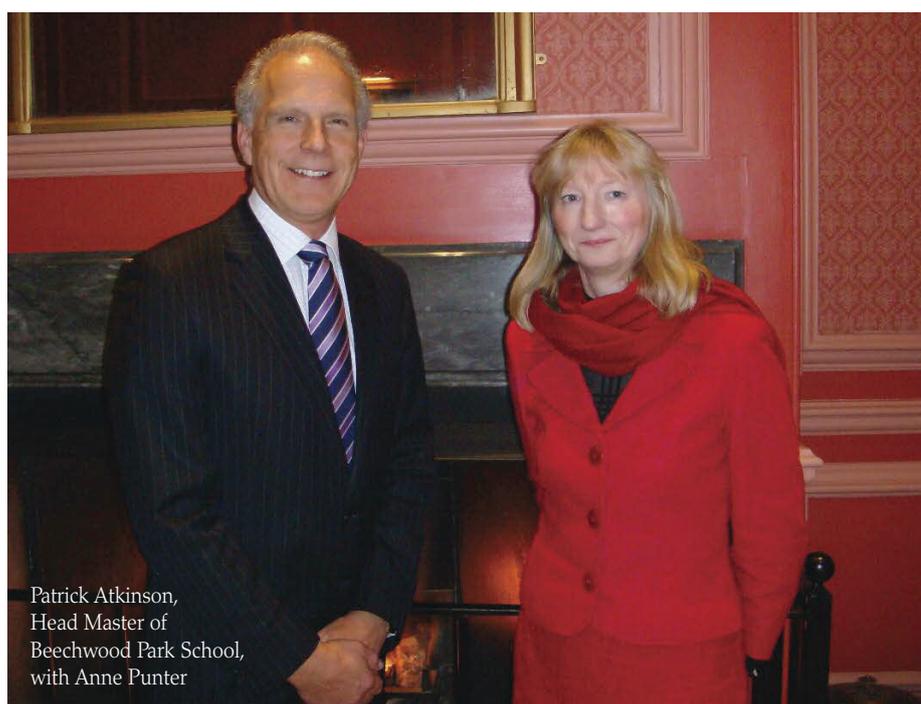
<sup>1</sup> Punter, A. and Adams, J. 2010, *Governors Mean Business*, commissioned by the School Governors' One-Stop-Shop (SGOSS).

<sup>2</sup> Maintained state schools currently have representative and proportional specifications for the composition of their Governing Bodies, including:

- Parents elected by the parent body;
- Foundation/Church-appointed governors, depending upon the designation of the school;
- Local Authority representatives appointed by the Council from the prevailing political party, which will change when/if the political party dominance on the Council changes\*;
- Paid members of staff elected by the school staff\*;
- Community and Sponsor governors, depending upon the designation of the school\*.

\*Current governor categories that will be appointed at the discretion of the governing body from September 2012 under the *Education Bill 2011*, assuming that it completes its Parliamentary process and receives Royal Assent.

<sup>3</sup> White Paper, *The Importance of Teaching*, 2010, Department for Education, Section 6.30, page 71.



Patrick Atkinson,  
Head Master of  
Beechwood Park School,  
with Anne Punter

# How to aim for the high notes

Gareth Hughes, Head of the Royal Grammar School, The Grange, describes why music is such an integral part of the school and with such celebrated success



Musical education begins at a very early age at RGS The Grange. The Grange Acorns club welcomes parents, babies and toddlers to an enjoyable session of singing, movement and percussion playing. When the toddlers join the school officially, they are well-armed with a wide repertoire of songs and are practised in responding to a variety of musical stimuli.

Singing is the main vehicle for musical expression at RGS The Grange. Reception children are encouraged to find their voice in an atmosphere of

fun and high expectation. They soon become accustomed to singing on their own as part of being valued as individuals. The whole school gathers each week to expand the repertoire of hymns and communal singing.

Musical skills are developed systematically throughout the school. The making of a CD each year indicates clearly the vocal progression achieved from Nursery through to Year 6, and the standard of performance is very high. Every child is encouraged to perform at regular informal concerts, assemblies and musical and dramatic productions.

## Steady stream of eager children

The provision of vocal and instrumental music lessons raises the standard of musical output due to the hard work and dedication of a team of excellent peripatetic musicians. The school has small but comfortable and pleasant practice rooms for the purpose and a constant stream of children arrive to sing or play the piano, violin, guitar, brass or woodwind instruments. Small group ensembles, strings, brass and wind, practise regularly and are very popular. A whole host of after-school clubs are

offered to expand the musical opportunities available and an interesting range of percussion instruments is on hand to enhance creative expression.

The provision, finally, of an interactive whiteboard for the use of the music department, has transformed the quality of music teaching. Some of the resources available are excellent and children appear far more focused when participating in unusual visual concepts that supplement teacher input.

Proof of the pudding is in performance and the school is very proud of the fact that 12 children have been successfully auditioned to join the highly prestigious National Children's Choir of Great Britain. Lissa Gray, NCCGB Musical Director, spoke of the pupils' accomplishment:

"We are delighted to welcome the new members from RGS The Grange into our choir. Twelve is one of the highest numbers of applicants we have had from a single school. As members of the National Children's Choir of Great

Britain they will be meeting children from all over the country, and this will be an opportunity for them to be part of a highly talented group of singers."

### Entertaining the elderly

Excellent vocal teaching at the school ensures a high standard in performance technique and the school's choirs are asked to perform at various venues in the city including The Guildhall and Worcester Cathedral. A small vocal group entertains the elderly in a local nursing home. This is very much appreciated, especially at Christmas when seasonal music always has an emotional and nostalgic impact.

The senior choir has also been a winner for the last seven years in their category in the Worcestershire Competitive Arts Festival held at the senior school. This year the choir will come together with the senior school (RGS Worcester) to participate in a performance of Haydn's *Nelson Mass* and last year took part in Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana*, a challenge for adults

let alone children. Christmas has provided us with the opportunity to sing in the Cathedral each year, a great honour for us.

The Grange enters children for the ABRSM music exams each term and the LCM tests for three to six-year-olds, results are very good.

### "A full, satisfying and creative life..."

Michelle Corrie, Head of Music, said: "We hope that at RGS The Grange the music department produces children who are musically energised, confident, dedicated, co-operative and freely expressive and that these skills will equip them for a full, satisfying and creative life."

I've known for some time that our music is of the highest calibre, but for a nationally recognised organisation to support that is a real credit to the pupils. Michelle Corrie, our head of music, is a real inspiration to our children and she deserves a great deal of credit for motivating young children to sing from the earliest age.



Photography by Bruce Foster of NextGen School Photography

# Why colour really does matter

**Kathryn Albany-Ward, founder of Colour Blind Awareness, has worked with many independent schools and shares her advice on this often underlooked condition**

Did you know that there is probably more than one colour blind child in every class in your school? Do you know how to adequately support them? Until now you might even have thought that colour blindness was a bit of a joke. But for colour blind children in school today their condition is no laughing matter.

One of the very first things we teach young children are the colours of the world around them. They learn that grass is green and the sky is blue, but what if the colours we see and describe aren't the same for the children we are teaching?

Colour blindness affects 1 in 12 boys (8%) and 1 in 200 girls to varying degrees. This means there are approximately 400,000 colour blind children in school today and about a quarter (95,000) are severely colour blind.

## What is colour blindness?

Colour blindness is (usually) a hereditary condition that affects ability to perceive colours. It is currently thought that colour blind people have a 'faulty' connection between

one of the three types of cone cells in their eyes (which are responsible for perceiving colour – either blue, green or red light) and the brain (where the information from the eye is converted into the images we see).

Generally speaking, people with red or green colour blindness have difficulty distinguishing between reds, greens, browns, oranges, yellows and greys. All of these colours appear to be varying shades of murky green. Blue and yellow can be seen, but shades of blue and purple are confused because purple contains an element of red. Blue blindness and monochromacy (no colour vision at all) are very rare but red/green colour blindness is quite common and can range from a mild form to a severe condition.

Colour blindness can be readily identified using a simple test (the Ishihara Plate test).

## Why colour matters?

When children start school we ask them to pick up the red brick and describe the big brown dog. We ask them to fill



Main image: As someone suffering severe colour blindness (deuteranopia) would see.  
Inset: Normal colour vision

in colouring sheets and sing songs about the colours of the rainbow. If children don't understand some of what we are saying, they are not learning to full capacity. This is a problem that can not only undermine their confidence but provide a faulty foundation for future learning.

But there is much more to being colour blind than this. As pupils progress through school they are encouraged to interpret coloured maps and graphs; colour is used to highlight material; it is used in the science lab, the art room, in mathematics, food technology, IT and even history. On the football pitch, players might pass a ball to the opposition because they mistake the colour of their strip. Balls are often coloured to stand out on the grass, but may not.

While colour blind children can learn to identify colours through their hue and saturation they still cannot actually see them. So, colour blindness is a disability, even if it remains largely unrecognized.

### The impact

For colour blind students, colour is not a useful tool: it can be a nightmare – undermining confidence and their ability to learn, encouraging basic errors in the simplest work, making them slower to follow instructions and causing frustration and even anger.

Most textbooks take no account of the needs of the colour blind so most subjects can cause problems.

In maths, for example, pie charts and graphs can be impossible to follow. Science is a minefield of potential problems too, as colour blind students are unable to:

- read litmus paper accurately
- tell the colours of different chemical solutions
- identify metals by the colour of the flame produced when the metal is burnt
- accurately read stained slides under a microscope
- accurately carry out dissections in biology
- fully understand coloured diagrams in textbooks, particularly in biology
- use coloured wiring, prisms *etc* in physics

The list of potential problems at school is extremely long.

### The Colour Blind Awareness Organisation

The Colour Blind Awareness Organisation was founded after I discovered by chance that our seven-year-old son is colour blind. Like 25% of colour blind boys he has a severe condition.

Having realised the extent of his problems and subsequently researched the condition, I was aghast to discover that not only is colour blindness no longer routinely screened for at school entry, but that the condition is not considered to be a Special Educational Need. There is no formal training in colour blindness for teachers and no clear understanding of

its implications within the education system, even though 8% of boys are affected. So I was compelled to increase awareness, particularly in the education sector.

### Schools taking action

Some schools are already aware of the importance of taking colour blindness seriously as Anne Greenwood, matron at Magdalen College School, confirms: "At MCS we recognise colour-blindness as a medical condition so that boys can be given extra help. We screen everyone joining the junior school. On average, we pick up one or two in each class of 20."

Suzanne Kennedy, deputy head at Aylesbury Grammar School says: "We were surprised to find that statistically one in 12 males is colour blind. As we are a boys' school we have decided to screen the boys; in a school of 1275 boys we may find approximately 100 with the condition.

"For boys who are identified, we will notify parents and put an Individual Education Plan (IEP) in place so that teaching staff are aware of how to modify resources to support the student. We will also consider exam access arrangements."

### What can you do?

1. Visit [www.colourblindawareness.org](http://www.colourblindawareness.org) to gain a better understanding of the condition and 'see' it for yourself.
2. Consider screening children as they enter school. Your school nurse should be able to do this, otherwise contact us via the website.
3. Download the Guidance Notes for Teachers from the website which gives detailed information on what schools can do.
4. Talk to parents about how they can support their children at home and direct them to the Colour Blind Awareness website.

### Simple steps to improve your classroom

- Label felt tips, paints, pencils *etc*
- Colour-code boxes of toys, art materials and books
- Check computer-based teaching aids, web pages, computer settings
- Use strong contrast on white or chalkboards.
- Use patterns and labels rather than colours for maps, pie charts, diagrams
- In sports and games ensure that children can see who is on his or her 'team'
- Group and label beads, bricks and colouring material according to colour
- Organise 'buddies' for science experiments, art and DT projects *etc*

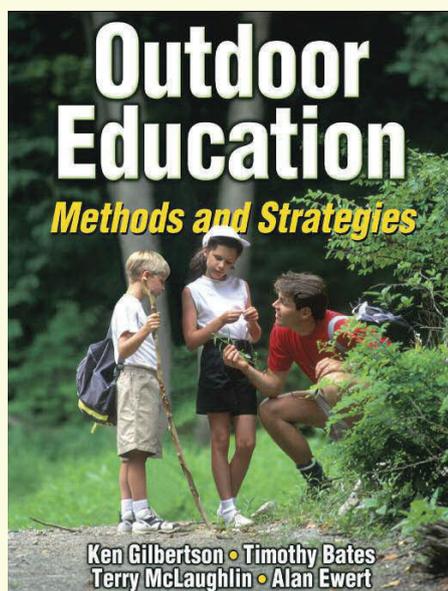
# A window on the outdoors

Patrick Papougnot, deputy head at Northbourne Park School, reviews some resources designed to inspire outdoor learning

At a time when European nations are looking forward to rebuilding a positive attitude towards risk, adventure and self-sufficiency (after all, they are basic human needs), Outdoor Education (OED) is becoming increasingly important to balance out our ever more urbanized and technological world. Teaching happiness is the pinnacle of the great building of life, the cornerstone of which is

independence. Three very different and complementary books are reviewed here with the hope that you will be able to access them with an open mind.

Let yourself be guided through the arcane world of outdoor programmes, delivery, *y tutti quanti*, knowing that our prep schools need educators who know how to teach in and about the outdoors.



## Outdoor Education: Methods and Strategies,

by Ken Gilbertson, Timothy Bates, Terry McLaughlin and Alan Ewert.  
Human Kinetics.

ISBN: 978-0-7360-4709-8

This American book is very useful for understanding the theoretical foundations of the choices for appropriate OED methods and progression to meet a variety of pupil outcomes. It offers a wide basis of examples and references in terms of training and skills for educators who use the outdoors to teach. In a clear and concise pedagogical format divided into three parts, the reader will discover the foundations of OED, the preparation that is necessary to teach an outdoor lesson and last but not least, the detailed instructional methods and examples for delivering great outdoor lessons. The three instructional approaches such as hands, head, and heart (physical, cognitive, and emotional) are particularly interesting and efficient. It is definitely a book for educators with prior knowledge of outdoor education.

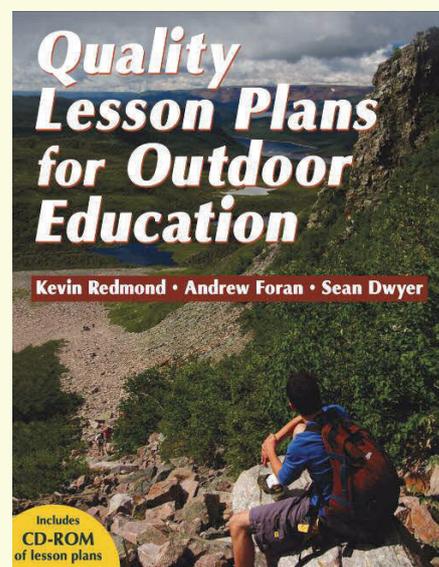
## Quality Lesson Plans for Outdoor Education,

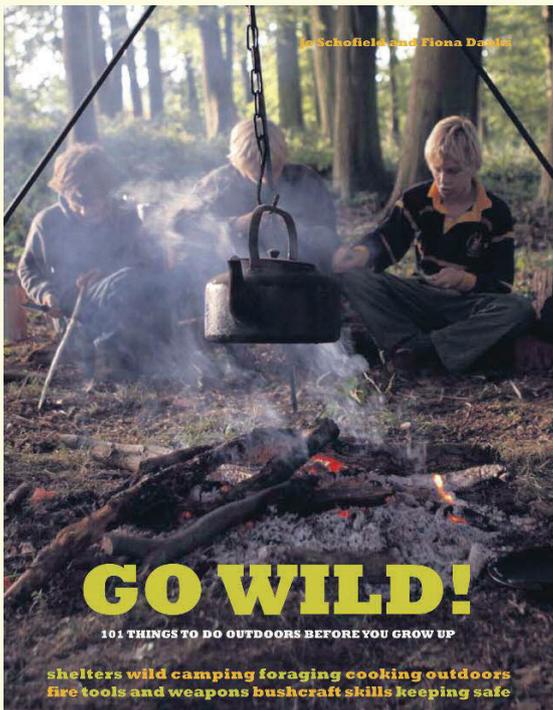
by Kevin Redmond, Andrew Foran and Sean Dwyer.  
Human Kinetics.

ISBN: 978-0-7360-7131-4

This book is written for OED practitioners who are looking for practical support in terms of curriculum and lesson plans, from core camping skills and mountain biking to Nordic skiing, snowshoeing and fly fishing. It is a wide-ranging resource, packaged into 13 book units and eight CD-ROM units (the most useful item here) that covers all the major OED activities (140 lesson plans freely available). This book is full of great tips.

It also facilitates reflection and integrates learning, reminding us that outdoors can be inhabited as a classroom, a valuable learning site. It does what it says on the tin: the book and CD-ROM package is addressed to all those who get outside and embrace the world.





## Go wild! 101 things to do outdoors before you grow up,

by Jo Schofield and Fiona Danks.

Frances Lincoln Ltd.

ISBN 978-0-7112-2939-6

A brilliant and amazing bushcraft book with stunning pictures we all dream of in our prep schools. Forget lounging on the sofa in front of the TV in the comfy living room of the boarding house. Get out there! The idea of this work is elementary although essential: most young people can navigate expertly through two-dimensional virtual worlds but are completely disconnected from the reality of the great outdoors. The authors believe that when children experience a touch of wilderness and learn basic outdoor skills it increases their self-confidence and encourages free thinking and understanding of environmental issues. As we know it, wild places can ease the stresses and strains of modern life, providing a sense of freedom and exuberance. So let's explore the school site or the natural wonders in our local areas with the educators while keeping safe, and 'go wild'. I truly believe that this book should be shown during one of your governors' meetings if you intend to promote outdoor education in your school.

### A final word...

The ideas and information about outdoor education come from many sources, mostly from outdoor enthusiasts who cast their lines into the great unknown of the world. It would be wrong to let the pupils think that we know everything about nature and that (wo)man has a definite

control over it. Recent local events with global consequences tend to prove the contrary and OED teaches us humility as well as an in-depth sense of success in our schools where we prepare our pupils for the challenges of the future to the best of their ability.

### Go Green with FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) Friday 30th September 2011

Schools and pupils alike can Go Green this September 30th with FSC Friday. The day is a great opportunity to help children learn about responsible forestry and why it matters.

As well as playing games and entering competitions, FSC UK is encouraging school children across the country to come to school wearing green.

Every September, FSC Friday celebrates responsible forestry. Schools, businesses, environmental groups and more, hold events all across the country.

Deforestation is still a major problem worldwide. With an area of ancient forest the size of a football pitch lost every two seconds, we must still work hard to save our forests. When people see the FSC logo on products they can be confident that buying it won't mean harming the world's forests.

FSC UK is asking schools to hold events to mark FSC Friday. These can include special sessions in class, assemblies, holding a 'Forest' non-uniform day where children wear green clothes or simply just handing out competition flyers to children. FSC UK will provide a range of resources to make any school event run smoothly. Schools that register will receive a pack including an education pack, guidance for teachers, instructions for games, competition forms and prizes.

Schools can sign up now or find out more at: [www.fsc-uk.org/FSC-Friday](http://www.fsc-uk.org/FSC-Friday)

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## National netball champions!

News



Holy Cross Prep School in Kingston is celebrating after its Under 11 A netball team were crowned national champions in the IAPS netball finals. This latest accolade comes hot on the heels of being crowned Surrey U11 champions in February. The girls' coaches, Shannon Andrew and Jackie Withers, are extremely proud of the girls and their recognition as the national champions. They said: "This is a magnificent achievement for the girls, who played superbly, demonstrating excellent teamwork and dominating their matches." 215 schools took part in the competition, with 36 reaching the finals on Saturday 12th March at Roedean School in Brighton.

## Photographer of the Year 2011

Time is running out for your school to enter the 2011 Prep School Photographer of the Year competition.

Entries must be received by May 31st, 2011 and the winning photographs will be published in the September 2011 issue of *Prep School* magazine. Digital cameras will be presented to the first three prize-winners.

The task: Take a photograph in colour,

or black and white, illustrating life in a prep school. It could be on the sports field, in the classroom, at societies or clubs, showing pupils at work or play. It must be sharp, it must be well composed and, above all, it must show the fun of life in a modern prep school.

The rules: Only pupils at independent prep and junior schools may enter; no more than two photographs per

entrant; files should be 300dpi/ppi. Photographs are only accepted in an electronic format either by posting a CDROM to Michèle Kitto, c/o John Catt Educational, 12 Deben Mill, Business Centre, Melton, Woodbridge, Suffolk, IP12 1BL or by email to: [editor@prepschoolmag.co.uk](mailto:editor@prepschoolmag.co.uk). Label the entries clearly with the names of the entrants and your school details.

### ENTRY FORM

## Prep School Photographer of the Year Competition 2011

Name of Entrant(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Name of School \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Confirming Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

As far as I am aware this photograph is the sole work of the above pupil.

Send entries to Prep School Photographer of the Year 2011, John Catt Educational Ltd, 12 Deben Mill Business Centre,

Old Maltings Approach, Melton, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP12 1BL.

Or email to [editor@prepschoolmag.co.uk](mailto:editor@prepschoolmag.co.uk)

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# World Book Day round-up...

World Book Day is a worldwide celebration of books and reading, and is recognised in over 100 countries around the globe



## Don Quixote and Mary Poppins are top of the form at Sutton Valence

Pupils at Sutton Valence School near Maidstone, Kent were surprised and delighted to discover that their teachers had been transformed into some of the most famous characters from literary fiction. 'Sir' and 'Miss' arrived for classes dressed as characters from some of the most famous books in history – from Don Quixote to Harry Potter, Chaucer's Canterbury pilgrims to Disney's Mary Poppins.



## Abingdon go non-fiction

Non-fiction was the theme at Abingdon Prep, a break with tradition but nothing less than imaginative and exciting, a great way to get boys excited about reading. The winners of each class got to select a new non-fiction book for the school library.



## World Book Day at Oakwood!

Battles between heroes and heroines raged all around Oakwood School on Friday 4th March as pupils dressed as their favourite fictional characters to celebrate World Book Day. Mr Chips and Cinderella struggled to take charge as Miss Trunchbull threatened to wreak havoc in the staff room, Obi-wan Kenobi fought valiantly against Darth Vader and Harry Potter, Hagrid, Hermione and Ginny were victorious, despite the best efforts of Draco Malfoy! The Very Hungry Caterpillar tried to be first in the lunch queue and Toto spent the day looking for a yellow brick road to follow.



## Drop everything and read

The King's School, Chester, celebrated World Book Day with a 'drop everything and read' campaign. For 15 minutes, pupils, teachers and staff stopped what they were doing and read a book. Junior school pupils dressed-up as their favourite literary characters, the Headmaster took a seat in the library alongside senior school pupils and even science experiments came to a halt.

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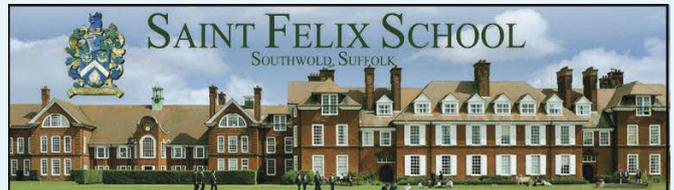
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## Parents go back to school for a maths lesson!

Parents of pupils in Year 5 at The Hawthorns School in Bletchingley were invited to go back to school for a maths lesson. They were able to work with their child on a range of mathematical activities including games and puzzles. One said: "It was a fantastic workshop. It was great to be able to experience and participate first-hand how the children learn in their classroom environment. I was very impressed with the fun techniques used to teach maths; much more enjoyable than when I was at school!"

## Carrots!

Parents of Year 5 pupils at All Hallows School might have been forgiven for thinking they had stepped into a West End theatre last week as the children wowed their audiences with a production of *Carrots* bursting with fine acting, superb singing and stunning costumes.

Set in Victorian England, the storyline gave the children a deeper insight into the plight of orphan children and the period of social reform and supported their history topic learning.

"We are extremely proud of all the children," explained Headmaster Ian Murphy. "They have without exception thrown themselves wholeheartedly into making this production such a spectacle. They are an exceptionally talented and tight knit group bound strongly together by shared interests and genuine friendships. This sense of teamwork and collective achievement is enhanced further through being part of a production and is invaluable for their personal development. The associated memories stay with them forever."



## Seven-year-old pulls out all the stops to become one of the youngest ever members of RCO

A seven-year-old boy from Malvern who has had a passion for pipe organs since he was a toddler has become one of the youngest ever members of the Royal College of Organists. David Bryson joined the prestigious college earlier this year, and this year alone he has already laid his hands on nearly 30 pipe organs around England, from Eton College to Oxford. And now, his feet not yet even reaching the pedals, he dreams of playing the Birmingham Symphony Hall's organ.

His passion for the instrument started when he was just two years old, watching an organist practice. Eyes lighting up, he announced determinedly: "I'm going to be an organ man when I grow up". This was no childish whim: at three he was charming a churchwarden into letting him have his first go while on a family holiday in Norfolk; at six, he was playing organs all over the country and giving recitals to fellow pupils at his prep school, The Downs, Malvern College Preparatory School.





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## satips courses and events

3 May	<b>Sustainable Development - Making Your School Sustainable</b> – Cost: £110 A one-day course for Senior Management Teams and staff responsible for Sustainable Development at Barfield School, Farnham, Surrey, GU10 1PB and led by the Headmaster, Robin Davies. Contact Mrs Pat Harrison: admin@satips.com	Barfield School
14 May	<b>Private view of satips Art Exhibition</b>	Hordle Walhampton
16 May	<b>Deadline for National Schools Handwriting Competition</b>	
24 May	<b>Mathematics: Problem-Solving At KS1</b> – Cost: £100 Lead by Andrew Jeffrey Contact Mrs Sylvia Orme: preprep@cheamschool.co.uk	Edgeborough School
14 June	<b>Children As Creative Writers &amp; Story Tellers</b> - Cost: £125 Lead by Pie Corbett Contact Mrs Sylvia Orme: preprep@cheamschool.co.uk	Bilton Grange School

## DT Courses

21 May	<b>Textiles</b>	Bilton Grange, Rugby
9 June	<b>Health and Safety in the DT department</b>	Abingdon Prep, Oxford
16 June	<b>Resistant materials – project ideas in wood, plastic and metal</b>	Abingdon Prep, Oxford

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9 June	Trainer: David Vinden	Milton Keynes Prep School

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## satips is planning courses on the following subjects:

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## Other Prep school courses

15 June	<b>How to engage and challenge the gifted child (in English)</b> Prep schools are known for their rigorous academic standards and the high expectations they have for all their students. But what of the extra specially gifted children? The ones whose potential is even higher than the average prep school pupil? How do you cater for them? How do you stretch the most able in your classroom? Led by Andrew Hammond	Port Regis Prep School
7 Nov	<b>Texts, Titles and Tips for Common Entrance English at 13+</b> Led by Andrew Hammond	Port Regis Prep School

## ISA courses and events

24 May	<b>Middle Leadership – Practical Routes To Excellence</b> 10.30am to 3.30pm Book online at: <a href="http://www.isaschools.org.uk">www.isaschools.org.uk</a> For every full-paying delegate of £150 you are entitled to a second delegate at £75. Target audience: staff who have or wish to develop leadership roles in their schools. Manager or leader? Clarifying the role; moving from team member to team leader. Middle leaders: vision, innovation, driving change and improvement. Leadership behaviour: developing and getting the best from your team. Challenging under-performance and coaching for improvement –achieving the right balance.	Wilmslow Preparatory School, Cheshire
16 June	<b>Preparing Your School For Inspection</b> 10.30am to 3.30pm Target audience: Heads, Governors, Bursars and other Senior Leaders. This course is designed to enable schools to get the best out of inspection and focus on continuous school improvement. It will review the inspection documentation and practice and will raise awareness of the areas that most frequently cause noncompliance. Delegates will be updated on any recent changes in the inspection process.	Howe Green House School, Bishop's Stortford

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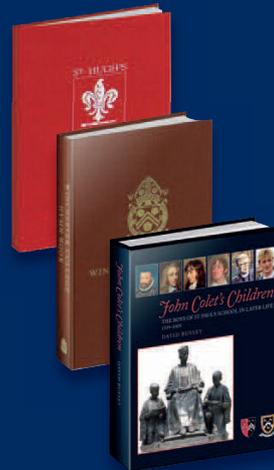


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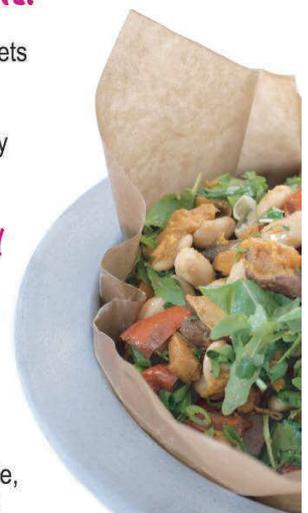
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- Active management for all aspects of the school

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# Tiger



# Timetabling

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- Simple and easy, step by step set up
- Individual lessons can be fixed or placed at any time and for any length
- Import data e.g. pupils, staff and rooms etc.
- Allows reporting by individual pupil, teacher, class, groups and years as well as by day, week, month, term and more
- Find facilities for staff cover, spare rooms based on capacity and specialist equipment
- Interactive placement of lessons once key fixed periods are in place
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