

Autumn Term 2011 • Issue 72

# Prep School

*Reflecting the best in the prep and junior school world*

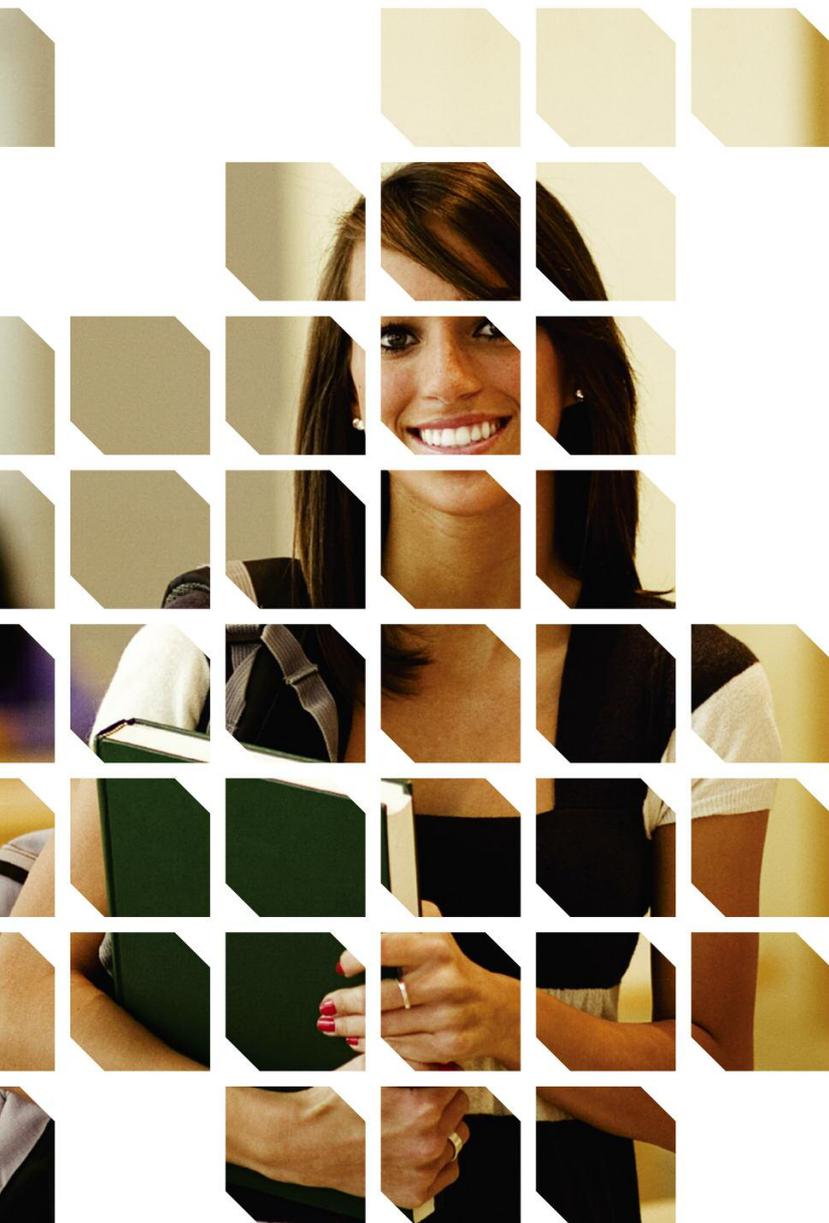


**Photographer  
of the year 2011**

**The sexualisation of our youth  
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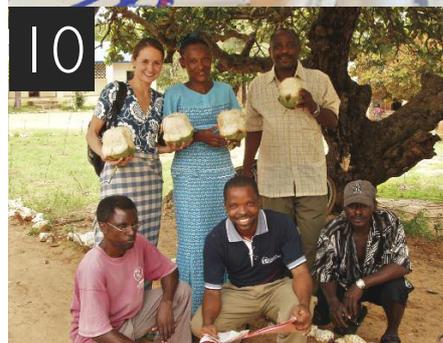
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# Contents autumn 2011

- 5 From the editor
- 5 A thought for the term
- 7 You have one chance to get it right! Maxine Shaw
- 10 Making links with Kenya, Jaany Ravenscroft
- 12 Enduring excellence, Trevor Lee
- 14 Does the Independent Curriculum pass the test? Nicholas Oulton
- 16 The National *satips* Art Exhibition, Loren Fenwick
- 19 Reflections, Kevin Nicholls
- 20 Working smarter not harder, Matt Mockridge
- 22 Montaigne and the prep school world, Dr Matthew Jenkinson
- 26 Prep School Photographer of the Year
- 29 IAPS National Chess Championships 2011, David Archer
- 31 The sexualisation of our youth, Dr Helen Wright
- 33 Sources of inspiration: Ely Cathedral, Rowland Constantine
- 35 Meeting the challenge of our able, gifted and talented, Fil Came
- 37 Outdoor education and risk taking, Patrick Papougnot
- 40 *satips* National Handwriting Competition 2011, Patricia Lovett
- 43 *satips* maths course
- 47 News
- 49 Prep school courses and events
- 50 *satips* directory



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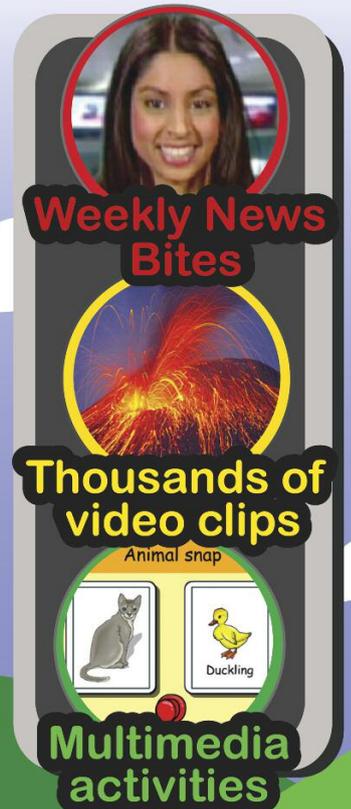
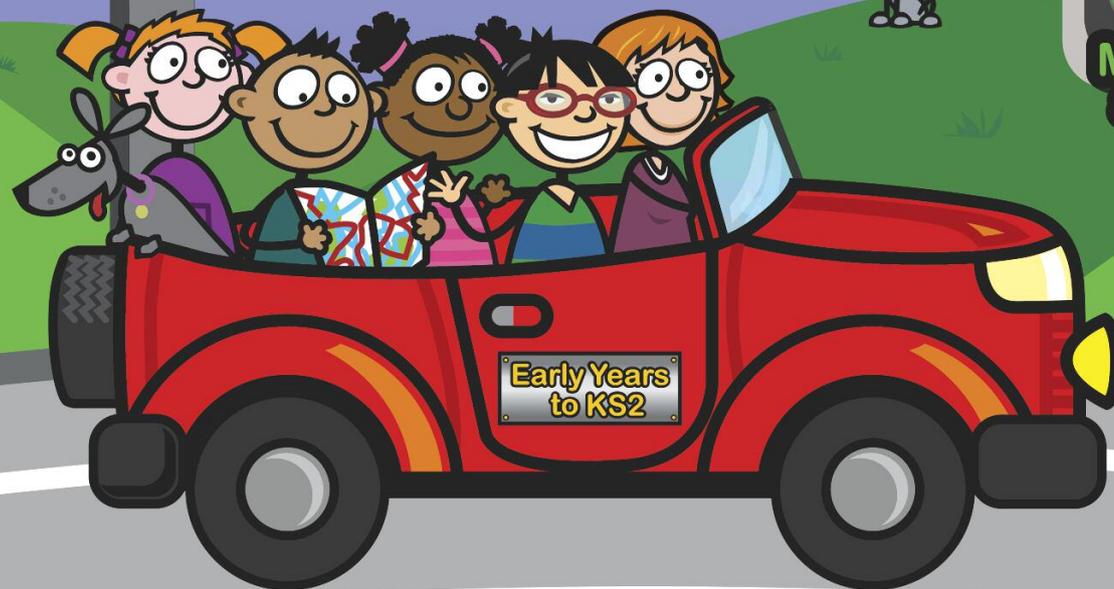
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## From the editor

This issue of *Prep School* looks at some of the challenges we face in an ever-changing and increasingly media-aware education system. Although we may hope that our prep- and junior-school pupils are protected from many of these complexities, in reality we can see that they must still deal with challenges that were never imagined a decade or so ago. Our job is to prepare them to face, with confidence, what is thrown at them and to surmount any problems with panache. They need to develop protective, effective armour and who better to help than wise old owls such as Montaigne (page 22) whose insight is as valuable today as it was in the 16th century?

Revisiting Montaigne's brand of basic educational philosophy can lead us to re-address and re-examine our own roots in the process. The start of a new academic year is just the time to take a calm, disinterested look at why we do the things we do. If we look again at what has become over-familiar we have the chance to re-evaluate and re-formulate our fundamental academic goals.

So, at this time of year, as we are returning to school, why not revisit your core values and refresh the way staff, pupils, and senior management respond to them? My son's school motto is 'Manners Makyth Man' and this simple statement informs everything the school does. It is a very modest phrase but it makes a big difference. After all, if we acknowledge the effort and energies of our pupils and our staff – even in quite mundane things – the whole school really does benefit. A quick thank you, or praise for a job well done, builds self-esteem not only in pupils but also among staff. I am not suggesting that you introduce a staff room star chart system with merit stickers for the best performers, but a metaphysical version would work well: some staff wait years to hear that positive comment!

Whatever the new term holds for you, please enjoy reading – as I have – the wise words in this issue of *Prep School*. I am honoured to have such fantastic practitioners contributing to the magazine, sharing their expertise, challenges and thinking. Do also continue to send in your own ideas, news, points of view and photos. Our own motto here could be said to be: 'It's your magazine.' And it really is. We look forward to hearing from you.

*Michèle Claire Kitto*  
editor@prepschoolmag.co.uk

### A thought for the term



#### WHO AM I?

The first book of the Bible, Genesis, contains two accounts of the creation of man.

'God created man in his own image ... male and female he created them.' (1: 27)

'The Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.' (2:7)

**THE CREATION OF ADAM**, a fresco (c.1510) painted by Michelangelo on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican [www.wga.hu] illustrates aspects of both accounts.

Michelangelo painted physical similarities to symbolise the invisible image and likeness.

- Adam is a younger image of God. There are similarities: the position of their bodies, particularly the torsos and right legs; their heads, turned to each other; their arms stretched out to each other.
- His full nudity suggests that all humanity, the fruit of Adam's loins, is potentially present in him; thus he represents us all.

- However he seems weak. His creation is incomplete. With an arm resting on a knee, and a limp hand, the body requires life. His head inclines to God, and his eyes yearn for that life.

In Genesis, Chapter 2, the life comes from God's breath. Here, God, with hair blown back, surges across in a billowing cape to impart to Adam the spark of divine life. The two hands almost meet in a charged atmosphere akin to that of an electric field.

It indicates that the spiritual power of God's life is essential to man's being.

- God's left arm brings Eve, who (yet to be created) exists in God's foreknowledge and eternal plan, as the 'helper fit for man.' (2: 18)
- Eve looks to Adam for whom she is to be created. The similarity of their eyes indicates their common human nature and their need for each other.
- The heavenly mantle is crowded with God, Eve and eleven angels. This highlights the loneliness of Adam, lying on a bare landscape: Man, a relational being, is incomplete without God, Eve and the love that unites him to them.

This suggests that to be human does not mean being a clever individual but rather existing in the image of God as a loving being. Do our schools reflect this insight?

*The author is chaplain of a prep school.*

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# You have one chance to get it right!

Maxine Shaw, Head of Hazelwood Prep, reflects on her experience of leading early years and how a whole school can benefit from creative and imaginative practice...

How has this year's curriculum been planned for the children in schools around the country? Sadly there are far too many schools who are still following the Quite Clearly Awful schemes of work that were produced for uninspired teachers following the introduction of the National Curriculum; incredible when you consider that in the independent sector we have never been required to follow it. However the QCA schemes do allow teachers to ignore the key reason why they chose to become teacher:, the children they are educating.

The introduction of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) was

statutory and unlike the QCA offerings it was, quite simply, brilliant. For the first time ever staff in independent schools were required to follow statutory requirements concerning the way in which they educated the youngest children in their schools. And how they protested! But ask them now what they think and the overwhelming majority will talk with enthusiasm and real positivity about the impact the EYFS guidance had upon their schools and, most importantly, the way in which the children now learn.

The EYFS gave schools the opportunity to improve early years practice and to

explain the changes to parents as being beyond their control. Children had to play, to explore and to develop in an environment that encouraged child initiated creativity and positively discouraged worksheets and whole class teaching. Did standards plummet? Have children failed? Of course not. What the change has achieved is a growing awareness in Key Stage 1 of the issues of transition from a play-based learning environment to one that is still very formal in many schools. In excellent schools the Key Stage 1 teams have grasped the opportunity to reshape the way in which they facilitate learning. →



Changing the way in which we teach children in Key Stage 1 requires courage and conviction. You need a staff team who recognise the need for evolution. You need a leadership team who are passionate about making learning as exciting and interactive as possible and who are willing to embrace the change wholeheartedly, especially when explaining the vision to the parent body.

My first headship was in a large pre-prep that fed into four academically selective 7-18 schools. I inherited a traditional teaching timetable that resembled that of a Year 11 pupil preparing for 10 GCSEs. One hour blocks of teaching time for children as young as four. English, maths, science, geography, history, art, RS... all timetabled for set blocks of time.

Children simply don't learn in one hour blocks. Staff need the flexibility to make their teaching work for their children rather than being constrained by a secondary style timetable.

The children in the pre-prep were doing fairly well academically, they were passing the entrance exams, but as a leadership team we were convinced we could make our curriculum truly inspiring. The first and biggest battle was won; we had an enthusiastic team of staff who wanted to evolve. They were excited about change and had no desire to open the dreaded QCA schemes of work.

We threw out the literacy hour and embraced Excellence and Enjoyment. We threw out schemes of work and introduced the core skills we wanted the children to have acquired by the



No pressure to teach pre-planned lessons

end of each year. We threw out the timetable. There was no pressure to teach pre-planned lessons. Each term started with an opportunity for the children to share with the staff team what they already knew and what they wanted to learn about the topics we were covering. The staff had broad outlines for the content they intended to cover but they were truly flexible.

A topic on houses and homes evolved to become a major design technology project. The Year 1 children worked with a bricklayer, a carpenter and a thatcher to build three permanent houses on the school field, one of straw, one of wood and one of brick. This didn't happen in a one hour DT lesson.

A trip to the Roald Dahl museum inspired a class to raise money to purchase a writing hut. Once they had

the funds they researched wooden sheds, purchased one online and had it delivered to school. The planned DT for the term was abandoned as the children worked with the site agent to build the 'writing hut'. They measured, hammered, glued and painted. They cut carpet to fit and one child made a baize writing slope at home. For the rest of the year the writing hut was stocked with paper, pencils and KitKats and the children were inspired to write.

It would have been easy to maintain the hut the following year but the teacher responded to the new group of children joining the class who were definitely Alan Titchmarsh rather than Roald Dahl. Money was raised for large wooden planters, research was carried out into which plants would bloom before the end of term and the hut became a potting shed. The class faced a problem though. They had a week long residential visit planned for the summer term and the weather was blisteringly hot. For three days the children worked outside on irrigation systems. They experimented with guttering, hosepipes and plastic bottles. Each group devised its own system through trial and error. The learning was incredible. It was purposeful and focused and it left the children buzzing. It would have been

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**'It is important that students bring a certain ragamuffin barefoot irreverence to their studies. They are not here to worship what is known, but to question it.'**

**Jacob Bronowski**  
***The Ascent of Man***

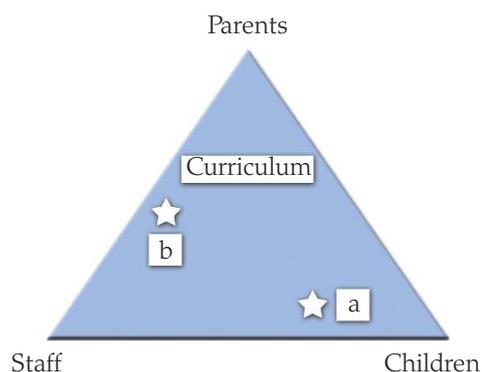
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impossible for us to pin the work down to subjects. It was truly cross curricular. Science, design technology, problem solving, teamwork and research skills.

Let us return to the first question posed. How has the curriculum in classrooms around the country been designed? Did the teachers pick up last year's planning? Have they designed the curriculum using external influences such as QCA? Are they planning to meet their needs, the expectations of the parents or to capture the enthusiasm and natural curiosity of the children they are teaching? As a staff we have played with the ideal position to put the star on our planning triangle. Each corner represents the external influences that impact upon the way in which we design our curriculum.

Clearly we should be aiming for curriculum A, which is planned for the children, using the expertise of the staff and their understanding of what the children need in order to succeed. Unfortunately, all too often, we try too hard to please the parents with curriculum B rather than meet the needs of their children. How many of

us take stock at the beginning of each year and look at the fresh faces in front of us and plan the content for them as a class? Parents can expect exercise books packed with neat handwriting, copious weekly comprehension tasks, and their child to be able to analyse *War and Peace* before the end of Reception. I have heard of Head Teachers who are



pleased with inspection criticism of their EYFS, which comment on an overly formal approach, with too strong an emphasis on literacy and numeracy. They feel that parents will be pleased with such criticism.

I am now in a school where we prepare children for 11+ and CE but we are pushing creative approaches to learning beyond pre-prep and into Key Stages 2 and 3. As part of a research project into preferred learning styles our pupils told us they wanted to learn collaboratively, they wanted the opportunity to discuss their ideas and thoughts with their peers and they wanted to take their learning outdoors. Not rocket science I know, but how often do we really listen to our pupils and then enable their ideas to grow?

The staff I work with are dynamic, enthusiastic and determined. This year we have enacted the Battle of Hastings on our hilly school fields. We have produced Andy Goldsworthy art on the Head's lawn with a living picture frame made of pupils. We have explored the principles of friction with different sledges on different gradients during the snow.

Next year promises to be even more inspirational as the staff embrace the opportunity to throw out the old to embrace evolution and to offer the pupils even better opportunities for learning. We will keep the baby but add some fresh water. Staff have changed year groups, planning has been 'filed' and new ideas embraced. Primary specialists will be teaching the majority of the timetable to all of the children up to Year 5. More school visits and residentials are being planned to inspire and motivate the children. The quiet revolution that started in the EYFS is spreading upwards and with it is coming best practice.

We need our best teachers in the EYFS. If we don't get it right in the Early Years then the whole basis of a child's education can be compromised. I visited a school recently where the nursery teacher had truly embraced the opportunities that the EYFS was designed to encourage. The children were climbing all over a huge tractor that one of the fathers had brought in. They were animated as they explained 'horse power'. They flowed happily indoors and outside, they dug in the dirt where their dinosaurs were buried and drew letters in the shaving foam, discovering CDs hidden in the bottom of the tray. They loved every moment of their day and so did their teacher.

The biggest barrier to change is the attitude of the staff team. Hazelwood was built on a stunning site, overlooking the South Downs. The site was chosen by the founders Edward and Ruth Bailly because it would offer its pupils 'lungfuls of fresh air and inspiration'. Education may be evolving but the principles behind choosing our school site, nearly 125 years ago, have not. Our job is to inspire children with a passion for learning. The prep school years should be a springboard to the rest of their lives. It should equip them with skills, enthusiasm, determination and positive memories not a heavy box, full of exercise books.



# Making links with Kenya

Jaany Ravenscroft, link coordinator from Abingdon Prep School, Oxfordshire, explains how an initial visit has become a long-lasting friendship for pupils, staff and parents in both Oxfordshire and Kenya

Over the October half term holiday in 2007, I ventured out to Kenya to establish a school link with a school, set in a rural location near the village of Watamu on the east coast of Africa. Through 'Turtle Watch', an environmental project based near the school, I was put in touch with Jimba Gede Primary School. This exciting project evolved over the year and culminated in a very productive and positive visit. The purpose of the link was to create a learning partnership between the schools, which involved curriculum-based work and the nurturing of global citizenship. We aimed to build a long-lasting friendship with Jimba Gede and for the pupils at both schools to benefit from the possibilities this project offered.

There are, of course, obvious differences between our schools – there are 1200 boys and girls at Jimba Gede; it is not unusual to have 50 to 150 pupils in one class and many children and staff walk up to 9km to attend school. Amongst the similarities are the importance of



sport, music and drama; the subjects that are taught; and having the interests of the pupils at the heart of both schools.

Jimba Gede's school motto 'Education is the key for life' backs the complete commitment shown by pupils and parents to improving standards of living through attending school and achieving good grades at the end-of-year assessments.

To date, eight teachers from Abingdon Prep School have visited Jimba Gede over the last four years. Each visit has included teaching classes and an educational project such as donated objects from children, which created invaluable teaching resources. One such visit was reported by Lenka Sowter (Year 5 teacher) and Natasha Davies (Year 4 teacher): 'Our arrival at the school was certainly memorable. We were warmly welcomed by Headteacher Raymond Charo and senior teacher and link coordinator James Ziro. Our welcome continued in a whole school assembly, which took place in the school courtyard. We were treated to traditional songs and their national anthem. We then introduced ourselves, our accents causing a lot of hilarity amongst the children!

'Over the course of the week we met all the teachers and children. We had the opportunity to teach and also observe their teaching practices. We never would have thought that one of the most challenging aspects was to make ourselves heard over the rain beating down upon the metal roof of the



classroom! The teachers at Jimba Gede do an amazing job with limited resources and often very large classes. They were very appreciative of the posters received through our Poster Appeal campaign and we were delighted to see them adorning the classroom walls by the end of the week.

'Camera in hand, Natasha took to her new role as film maker very well and captured some lovely moments: including interviews with the children, songs and messages of friendship. The children took absolute delight in watching themselves on camera as Natasha played the clips back for them. This was eagerly awaited and thoroughly enjoyed by our boys at Abingdon.

'Children of Jimba Gede were very excited to receive letters from the children of Abingdon Prep. Many of our children chose to be a pen pal of a Jimba Gede child and wrote to an individual at the school. The Jimba Gede children showed obvious delight from the letters and pictures sent. They wrote back to their English friends eagerly.

'Many wished to send their pen pals a recorded greeting, drawings or presents of bananas, coconuts and limes. We accepted all with thanks but the latter we had to leave behind knowing they wouldn't last the journey and might cause a spot of bother at customs in Heathrow. Instead, we took plenty of pictures of them and passed on their message of friendship and kindness to the children at Abingdon.

'On our last day, all of the staff gathered at break time, where they shared thanks, gifts, hugs and goodbyes. There is a wonderful link between our two schools, which clearly serves to enrich the learning of pupils at both Jimba Gede School and Abingdon Prep School. Children from both schools gain much from such a partnership and I'm sure our link will continue to flourish.'

Over two weeks in April/May 2011 a monumental moment was the

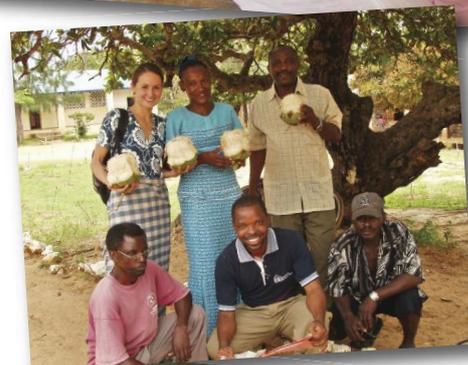
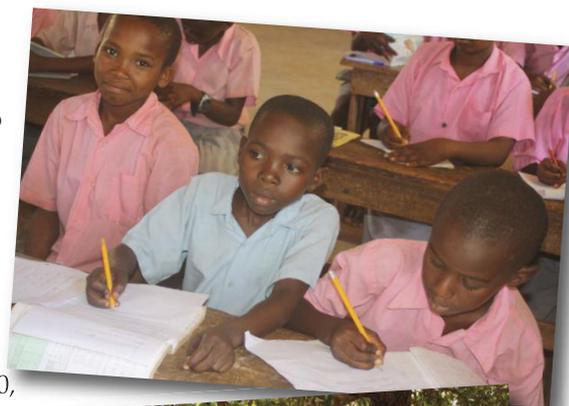
welcome of two very special visitors from our link school Jimba Gede in Kenya. James Ziro and Joyce Kerubo were the first teachers from Jimba Gede to travel to the UK and it took over two years to organise this visit. Vital funding for the flights, library and electricity projects were raised by our ever supportive parents association (JPA), including an African themed Summer Ball of 2010, which donated a large amount to the funds from a charity auction.

Joyce and James took part in lessons throughout the school, question and answer sessions for each year group and even joined the Year 4 trip to Sulgrave Manor. The children also had the opportunity to share ideas and conversations with James and Joyce on a more informal basis. All boys were thoroughly excited and interested in our visitors and were sad to see them leave.

*'It has been a tremendous experience having James and Joyce at Abingdon Prep. There are enormous differences between the schools in terms of resources, culture and class size but the 'education is the key for life' ethos is the same for both.'* Crispin Hyde-Dunn, Headmaster.

The pupils and staff at the prep school said goodbye to their visitors with a special celebration Kenyan meal. James and Joyce were made to feel extremely welcome and they return to Kenya with first-hand experience of our school and many new ideas to enable the link to flourish. The link goes from strength to strength.

James and Joyce's visit has really made both the boys and teachers sit up and think about how lucky we are. It's the simple things that we take for granted, such as sitting down for a meal at lunchtime. Some children at Jimba Gede will go for a whole school day without food. Also Joyce has to walk 4km to school each day to teach and her classes often have more than 90 children of mixed ages. Our link is based on friendship and this visit has strengthened the relationships between our schools despite the distance between us.



# Enduring excellence: celebrating a centenary year

Northwood Prep, Hertfordshire, celebrated its centenary during the 2010/2011 academic year. Dr Trevor Lee, the school's Headmaster, outlines the benefits – and stresses – of being at the heart of this anniversary year

During this centenary year, all the school's 340 boys (including the nursery school) were actively involved in a wide range of celebratory activities. Planning an exciting series of events to celebrate a centenary was no mean feat, a challenge that was both exhilarating and taxing in equal measure. In 2006, we established a special steering committee of staff, parents and governors to oversee the year's events; yet with a blink of an eye, the centenary was upon us, with everything to look forward to.

From a teaching perspective, the full and varied programme of events provided a rich framework for teaching and learning, particularly on the vital, hidden elements of the curriculum. The first impact that this

brought was an enhanced sense of community, generating a real sense of belonging and attachment to the school and its ethos. Schools not only have to be happy places (education as happiness) but also have a role to play in teaching new and enjoyable skills (education for happiness).

This was epitomised on one of our most enjoyable and successful days, when the circus came to town! In addition to a very enjoyable performance in the evening, the troupe trained every one of the boys in circus arts, such as balancing, spinning plates and trapeze skills. To see the children grow in confidence as they hung upside down and with no hands was a pure delight. It demonstrated the best elements of education,

namely a child being extended to achieve skills never imagined before, actively supported by caring adults and having a hugely enjoyable time doing it. This type of controlled risk taking is vital for a child's development, particularly at a time when we are dominated by regulatory requirement and risk assessment.

Secondly, our 'Back to the Past' day imaginatively presented a series of activities that allowed boys to experience a glimpse of life at an Edwardian counterpart establishment. Boys were enchanted by a magic lantern display, with original slides, depicting Edwardian life. Lessons in the big school room comprised traditional writing activities, whilst they were entertained by two rustic performers who taught songs from the



era. For many, the most intriguing and exciting experience was the demonstration of authentic, Edwardian bicycles including a doctor's tricycle and a penny farthing. This whole experience enabled the pupils to develop a sense of empathy for primary sources and artefacts that is, in itself, a key historical skill.

The third learning point of the centenary year was a focus on charitable giving. Part of our school's aims and ethos is reminding the boys to appreciate the good things in their lives and the need to serve others. So, it was

natural that our centenary included a series of charitable activities such as sponsored sporting events. During the year, we raised more than £11,500, which will help our programmes in Jinga, Uganda, where we actively support two AIDS orphanages and a number of primary schools, with a view to establishing a secondary school very soon.

One of the year's highlights was the carol service held at St Albans Cathedral: transporting the whole school to the Cathedral for a rehearsal and for the service was a significant planning exercise! It was quite a disruption to the last week of term but the benefits, as in all these things, far outweighed the difficulties. The whole community came together for what was a deeply spiritual experience, made all the more poignant as we remembered a key member of the planning committee and former governor who had sadly passed away unexpectedly just a few days before.

Fourthly, from a more traditional evaluation of curricular support, Northwood is very privileged to have a royal palace buried (dating back to the ninth century) in the school grounds. As a result, we were perfectly placed to use the centenary celebrations to expand horizons and



develop public awareness of our historical heritage. In 1955, some school boys from nearby Merchant Taylors' School at Northwood, took on the remarkable challenge of undertaking an archaeological survey at the school. Investigating this ahead of the centenary year, we discovered that the leader of the 1955 dig was Martin Biddle, who is now Emeritus Professor of Archaeology at Oxford University.

We contacted Martin, who immediately agreed to come back to school and has been a fantastic help in moving the project forward. Over the course of the centenary year, Martin's involvement has seen the site being mapped using the earliest records, ahead of a full geophysical survey of the site of the palace. The boys have found this whole process fascinating; it certainly has helped them understand the part that their school grounds have played in English history, particularly as the Treaty of the More between England and France was signed, in 1525, on the site where they now play rugby and cricket.

It was a huge honour that the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester agreed to open our Royal Centenary Trail and

Gardens on 18th May 2011. As a qualified architect, the Duke was most interested in the work that has been going on this year. The Duke and Duchess were gracious visitors and left a lasting impression on all the boys, staff and visitors that day.

In conclusion, this has been the most significant year in Northwood Prep's history and important for a whole variety of reasons. The community ethos has been reinforced by a sequence of enjoyable and entertaining activities that have galvanized the whole school. It was fantastic to see so many of Northwood Prep's former pupils in January when they visited and discovered just how much the school has developed over recent years. It was a remarkable occasion, with former pupils coming from as far afield as the USA, many of whom were reacquainted with friends that they had not seen for more than 60 years.

Our current boys will not forget the fun that they enjoyed over this momentous year: we can now look forward to the next century, knowing that firm foundations are in place and that the school has never before enjoyed such a period of strength.

# Does the Independent Curriculum pass the test?

Since its inception, the Common Entrance Examination has become a recognised standard of measuring academic excellence and a lynchpin in the relationship between preparatory and senior schools. But it is not, and was never intended to be, a curriculum. As another school year opens, Nicholas Oulton, Managing Director of Galore Park Publishing, celebrates a great institution while outlining the thinking behind the new Independent Curriculum

Common Entrance is rightly regarded as the 'gold standard' measurement of prep school pupil excellence. Established in 1904, itself a time of great expectation and change across the developed world, it has since remained well-regarded – even cherished – by most teachers and parents, if not by the pupils who have to sit it. However, many prep schools consider that preparation for CE, and indeed any exam, can lead to a culture of 'teaching to the test', which runs counter to all that is inspiring and creative in these golden years of prep school education.

Our own online polling of Heads and directors of studies conducted in the spring of 2011 tested this. We found continuing respect for CE from the 270 who took part, alongside a desire to explore alternative means of *preparing* for it. Heads, directors of studies, department heads and teachers all argued for increasing the emphasis placed in their schools on creativity, independent thinking, discernment, communication, emotional intelligence and technological literacy, while not losing sight of the high academic standards for which they were already famous.

Are these two things, creativity and academic excellence, incompatible, one wonders? After all, maybe exam results are a good enough measure of a child's education. I would strongly



'Maths Challenge', Old Buckenham Hall School.

argue that they are not incompatible, and that, furthermore, creative teaching leads to better performance in exams; so it is a win-win situation.

But there is a bigger issue to address. Like our 1904 forebears, we now live in an era of great change. The rapid pace of technological and scientific developments, together with environmental challenges and economic, political and social upheavals, are changing how people live, how they work, how they interact with each other, what they believe and

how they express themselves. It's also affecting how they learn, discover and share information.

The sheer speed of this change challenges everyone in education to adapt – at all levels and age ranges across the world. Some of the graduate employment options of the past 20 years may no longer exist in the future. Many of the primary career options ten years from now probably don't even exist today. There really are known and 'unknown' unknowns!

For today's children to succeed in the world ten to 15 years from now requires a style of curricular preparation that enables young people to flourish and take advantage of these major structural changes. They will still need to take and pass exams, and I passionately believe that there is a corpus of knowledge to which all educated humans are entitled. In an ever more competitive world, the need for high quality education for our boys and girls remains as strong as ever. However, the focus and approach to how that is achieved is very much on the agenda of all the best schools, now more than ever.

Some schools are seeking to instigate a possible prep school 'baccalaureate' to certify the achievements of the child across the wider curriculum – sporting, musical and moral/spiritual attributes – as well as academic success in the classroom. This builds on the model

piloted at the Beacon School a few years ago by Michael Spinney who introduced their 'Certificate of Achievement'. A working party led by Paul Brewster, the current Headmaster, is planning to expand its approach to other schools in a pilot scheme from September 2012.

Another way forward that has already been adopted by a growing number of schools from this September is the Independent Curriculum (IC), which we commissioned in 2010 under the direction of former deputy head and director of studies, Andrew Hammond. It is guided by a steering group of Heads, deputy heads and directors of studies chaired by John Brett, Headmaster of Old Buckenham Hall, and has been successfully piloted in a range of schools.

Andrew Hammond, the lead author, argues that for education to remain relevant and effective for our children, it demands a curriculum that not only imparts knowledge, but affords learners the opportunity to discover it for themselves, to scrutinise it, to apply it within creative, problem-solving situations and then debate, discuss and communicate it to others. At the heart of the IC is therefore what Hammond calls 'preparation for life'.

Its purpose is to promote good teaching that matches academic knowledge strands with creative and cross-curricular learning skills, thereby involving children more in the learning process and bestowing on them ten 'qualities for life' that bring happiness and fulfilment into adulthood; qualities such as confidence, empathy and global awareness.

All this is measured through a comprehensive assessment programme that assesses a child's capabilities and skills in all CE subjects but also non-CE subjects such as music, drama and ICT.

Written for Year 3 to Year 9 and now being extended into the pre-prep years, it should also help ensure that the educational path from prep school to the first year of senior school is a

smooth one and that pupils arrive ready to meet the challenge and change of their chosen senior school.

"Where the Independent Curriculum scores highly," says John Brett, "is that it not only fulfils the knowledge strands that pupils need to follow for their Common Entrance or scholarship exams but it goes a lot further in terms of developing life skills such as problem-solving and independent thinking as well as research and communication.

"The IC's rigorous approach to assessment and the tracking of pupils' progress will, I am sure, underpin its success in terms of a school's teaching and learning processes and outcomes. It is about developing confidence and self-esteem in all our pupils, not just the academically more able."

Chris Jones, Headmaster of Cophorne Preparatory School in West Sussex, another 'early adopter', told the *Times Educational Supplement* last term that his school has adopted the IC because: 'It is about pupils becoming independent and creative so that they

can apply, investigate and talk about their learning.'

So curriculum development is now being actively embraced by schools and for positive reasons. Common Entrance rightly remains a highly regarded measure of pupil attainment and the Independent Curriculum will continue to work closely with subject specialists from ISEB, IAPS and other prep school stake-holders to ensure that the high academic standards and expectations of the prep school sector are built on. But while celebrating the gold standard exam, we are also keen to help children who are preparing for it to meet the needs of a still-young but fast-evolving century.

Nicholas Oulton, Managing Director, Galore Park Publishing, is a former classics teacher. He set up Galore Park Publishing in 1998 from his garage and it has since grown to become the leading publisher of school textbooks and revision guides for independent schools. For more information about the Independent Curriculum, visit: [www.i-curriculum.com](http://www.i-curriculum.com)



Vinehall School in East Sussex.  
Photo: Mark Robinson.

# The National satips Art Exhibition

Loren Fenwick, head of art at Aldro School, offers a teacher's perspective on this exhibition.



Every year I get at least five invitations to submit work for one exhibition or another, but the one invitation that my pupils and I have made a firm fixture in our annual diary is the National *satips* Art Exhibition. This exhibition is a celebration of all the wonderful art that is happening in prep schools across the country and, because there is no set theme or any selection criteria, it is a truly inclusive event with teachers and schools free to submit absolutely anything they wish to.

Whatever your particular art curriculum produces is suitable and welcomed, so it does not require any extra work or juggling of topics to produce anything specific. The exhibition encourages work from across the age range, not

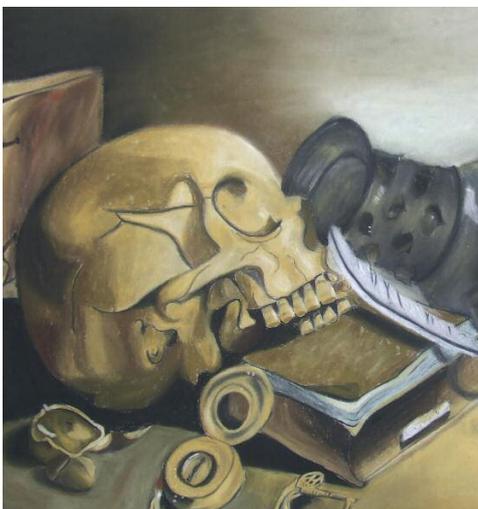
just the scholars or seniors, and work may be individual or group pieces, 2D or 3D, in any media and any size. In fact the most difficult thing about submitting work is deciding which pieces to submit. The only restriction is that schools are limited to eight pieces and with all the stunning work that is produced by our young artists in any given year, this can be quite a challenge.

From a pupil's point of view, it is very satisfying to have art selected for submission and even more satisfying to be invited to the private viewing. One of my pupils, in their annual self-evaluation wrote: *'My best thing this year was having my picture in the satips exhibition. It made me feel a little*

*bit famous. I liked going to the exhibition to see my painting and the whole exhibition was full of work done by children just like me.'*

From a teacher's point of view it is a fantastic opportunity to share with the prep school art community at large what is happening in your school. Coming to the opening of the exhibition is also an excellent opportunity to meet other art teachers and compare notes and ideas, and to be inspired by the work submitted by other teachers. (I think it's called stealing with one's eyes...)

The event is hosted by the same school for two years in a row, before moving to the next venue. For the past two



years it has been hosted by Hordle Walhampton School in Lymington and the head of art there, Kevin Nicholls, has been a superb host. The catering department at his school also deserves a pat on the back for the delicious lunch that was provided.

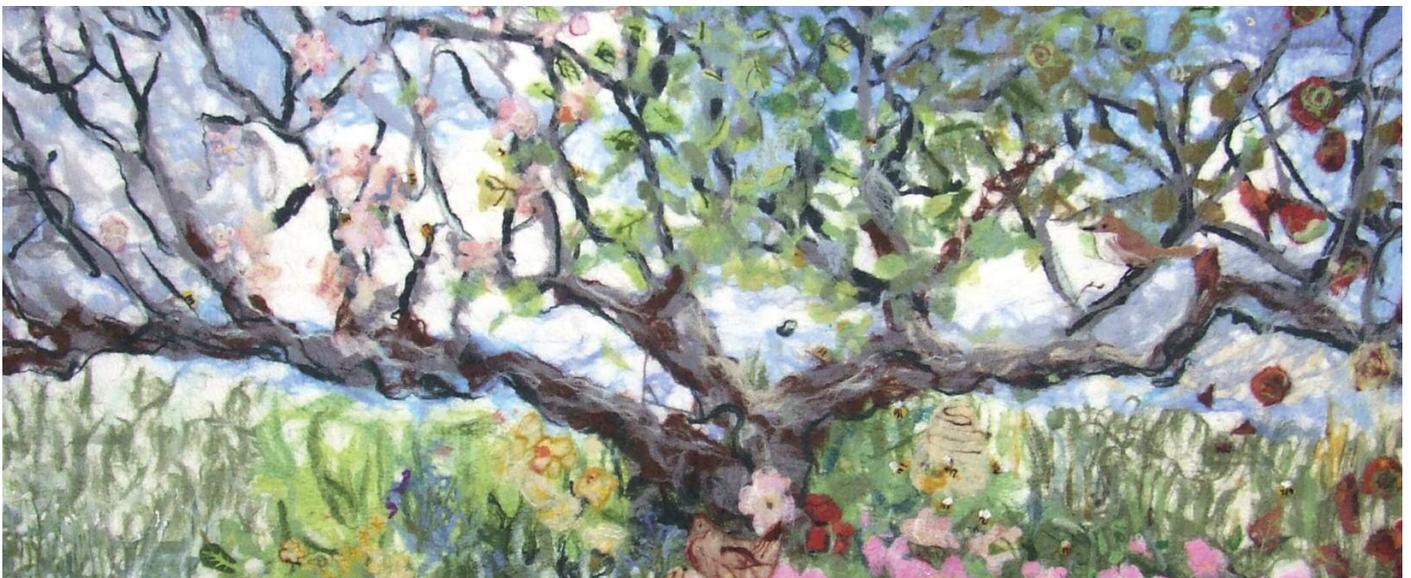
The teachers' event on Saturday, 14th May was very well attended and it was an excellent chance to catch up with old friends and make new ones within the art teaching community. It is so easy for art teachers to become wrapped up in their own departments and feel isolated from their peers but this event is the perfect opportunity to reach out and become more involved in the wider art community on a personal as well as a professional level.

Particularly inspired was the idea of having the pupils' event on a Sunday afternoon instead of a weekday evening, especially since Hordle Walhampton is in the New Forest, as it allowed schools that may be some distance away to become more involved. This event is a wonderful opportunity for pupils to visit the exhibition to see their work displayed as well as showing off their talents by bringing parents and guests to see their art. The exhibition continued for the rest of the week and schools were invited to bring groups of pupils to enjoy the exhibition and be inspired.

If your school has exhibited at the *satips* National Prep Schools Art



Exhibition, then you will already know what an uplifting experience it is, on every level. If your school has not yet taken the plunge, I cannot recommend it highly enough. It really does not require much extra work and the benefits are enormous. Details can be found in the *satips* Broadsheet and while it is lovely to see the regulars, (you know who you are!) it is also exciting to see fresh ideas and welcome new teachers, so don't delay; register your school now. You will not regret it!





### Next year

The exhibition is to be held in the Memorial Hall from Sat 5th May – Sat 12th May 2012 at The Downs, Malvern. Contact: Simon Mellor (art coordinator at The Downs, Malvern) [sdm@thedowns.malcol.org](mailto:sdm@thedowns.malcol.org)

January, 2012. Schools to register through *satips* their interest in exhibiting. Sending/receiving artwork: from Monday 25th March but no later than Monday 16th April, 2012.

Saturday 5th May 2012: 12.00 pm until 2.00 pm – Private View and Luncheon for Heads, teachers and invited guests.

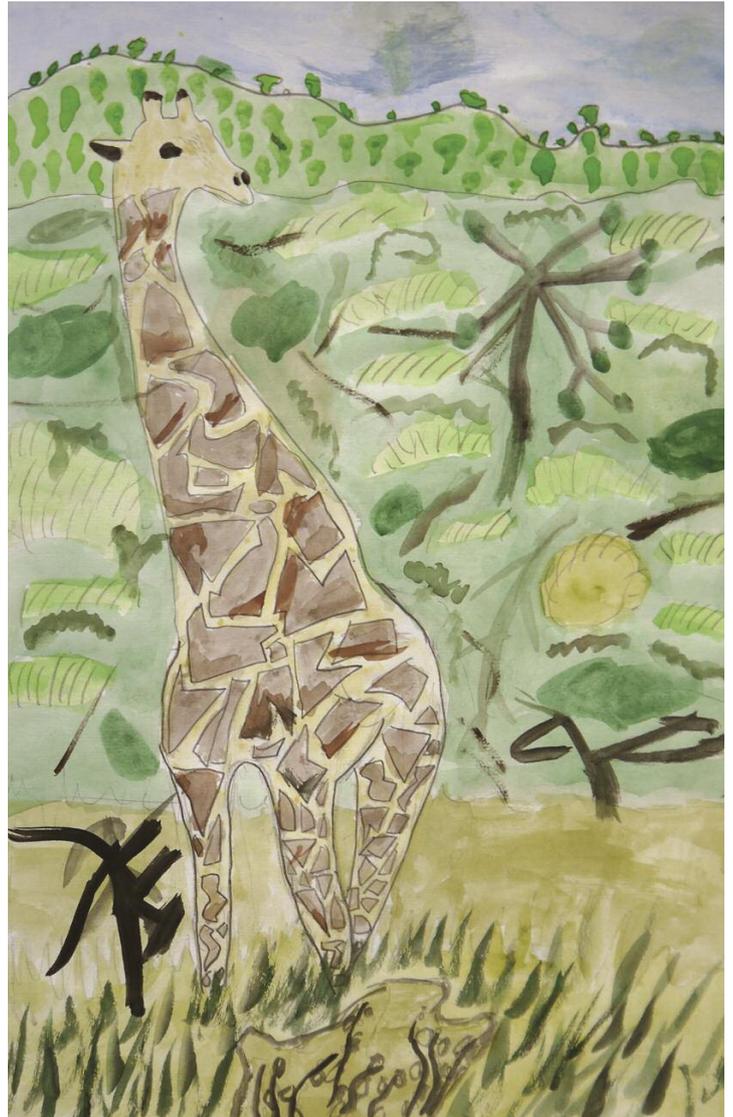
From 10.30/11.00 am – coffee and tea for art teachers/Heads in the Memorial Hall.

Sunday 6th May 2012: Art Exhibition open for viewing in The Memorial Hall: 2-5pm (afternoon tea available – artists, friends, families all very welcome). Monday 7th May 2012: The Downs, Malvern, ‘Open Day’ – 9.30 am-4.30 pm. Art Exhibition open for viewing in The Memorial Hall – please notify school office of any personal or school visits. Tuesday 8th May- Saturday 12th May: Art Exhibition remains open for viewing throughout

the week (9.30 am-4.30 pm), in The Memorial Hall – please notify school office of any personal or school visits.

Visiting the school is easy; The Downs, Malvern, is situated on the western slopes of the Malvern Hills, an area of outstanding natural beauty, next to the village of Colwall. By rail: the school is within easy walking distance (1/2 mile) of Colwall Railway Station (direct rail link to London Paddington). By road: approximately 20 minutes drive from Junction 7 of the M5 Motorway or Junction 2 of the M50 Motorway.





### Reflections from Kevin Nicholls, Head of Art, Hordle Walhampton

I had anticipated that hosting the *satips* National Prep Schools Art Exhibition for the second year would be considerably easier and certainly less work than last year and to some extent this was the case. In this rather self-confident state I pushed back my exhibition deadlines and stored away the parcel and packages that arrived in the weeks before the exhibition. It was only when I started to open up the boxes that I noticed how much of the artwork arriving was three dimensional that I began to get a little concerned; did I have enough display areas, tables *etc*? An email arrived from the opening speaker to say how sorry he was but he would not be able to be there. The newly painted display boards drying outside in the sun got caught in a torrential shower and had warped and stained. Maybe I shouldn't have left everything quite so late to sort out. After a very hectic last 48 hours we finally had the show up and ready – nearly, only a four foot orange dog and bone that needed to hang from the ceiling of the theatre and could I find a ladder at 9pm? Despite the hiccups the show looked great and for the first time I was able to have my own private viewing and marvelled at the children's artwork. I have discovered with an event like this, no matter how organised and efficient you are, there will always be the last minute crisis or complication and it's vital to keep your staple gun and Blu-Tack handy at all times. I was extremely lucky to be supported by my colleagues and staff and without them this sort of event would be impossible to host and it certainly would not be as enjoyable to produce. Over the week of viewings nearly 1000 people visited the exhibition and left with photographs of favourite pieces and many of us with ideas for next term's Schemes of Work. I have thoroughly enjoyed being involved in this exhibition and wish Simon Mellor at The Downs School, Malvern, every success next year.

# Working smarter not harder

Matthew Mockridge, deputy head at Cumnor House School, talks about the benefits and challenges of encouraging better use of a management information system in his school

There is little doubt that technology has found its way into almost every area of life and education is no exception. Like any successful business, schools need to find ways of working more efficiently and effectively to deliver the highest standard of education to their pupils and IT can play a major role in supporting this.

Many schools are increasingly moving away from pen and paper record keeping and relying more heavily on their management information systems (MIS) for recording and storing their data. But what difference can this technology really make to the day to day running of a school?



## Our story

Cumnor House School in West Sussex is a medium-sized prep school for 4-13 year-old day and boarding pupils. Although we had a few home-grown databases that we used to store information, such as pupils' contact details and exam results, we were still very much a paper-based school four years ago. Pupil information was held in different places and teachers took attendance twice a day using paper registers. This made it incredibly difficult for us to maintain accurate records and our own systems were not really doing what we wanted.

We knew there must be a better way of doing things and in 2007 we started using an MIS, from Capita. We now had a single place for storing school and pupil information and there were some major advantages to this.

## Saving time for staff – and pupils

One of the downsides of using hand-written registers for taking attendance is the high risk of mistakes being made. It can be difficult to see who is in class and who isn't when registration marks have been crossed out or amended. We knew this could create problems for us in providing accurate attendance figures in a school inspection.

Another issue that can be overlooked is the time it takes for attendance information to be transferred to the school office. Once a

teacher has taken the register, the common practice is for a child to take the book to the office staff, who then transfer the attendance marks on to a main record for attendance across the school. Although it may only take the child a few minutes to do this, if it is happening twice a day, in every class, missed learning time adds up. It can also take a considerable amount of time for data from each class to be compiled in the office.

Using an MIS, teachers can take registration with just a few clicks of the mouse from a computer in the classroom. This reduces the risk of errors and the data is easily accessible on the system for those that need to see it. This means that there is no need for any child to miss time in class and office staff don't have to spend time transferring it onto a central record, so they are free to concentrate on other tasks.

Introducing electronic registration is a good place to start if you want to improve efficiency in a school. It saves at least five hours of administration time and nearly three hours of pupils' learning time every day in our school.

## One stop information

Electronic registration is just one area where an MIS can help schools to work smarter. We also use the financial management tools available in our system, which, frankly, we couldn't do without. Many schools are reluctant to move away from the accounting systems they have been using for years but it is well worth having a look at what is available – suppliers have come a long way in recent years.

We have found that having all our financial information in one system makes balancing the books a much simpler task. Managing fees billing and planning budgets can be incredibly time consuming. With an MIS, many of these processes are automated, saving both time and money. Some systems also offer sophisticated tools for arranging teacher cover or managing timetables, both of which can eliminate real headaches.

### Things to think about

Challenging old ways of doing things can be a difficult business and so you have to be able to demonstrate the real benefits of introducing a new system to the senior leadership team and any staff that will be affected by the change. Having a good working relationship with your supplier is critical to achieving this. Make the most of their expertise and don't be afraid to hold them to account if things aren't quite right.

The journey towards greater efficiency can throw up a few difficulties along the way but in my experience the benefits of using an MIS, for staff and pupils, more than outweigh the challenges.



"Teachers are free to concentrate on other tasks..."



# Montaigne and the prep school world

Dr Matthew Jenkinson, Director of Studies at New College School, Oxford, shares his passion and inquisitive mind as he reflects on Montaigne and what he could teach us now

For good or ill, educational philosophy is unavoidable in modern teaching and teacher-training. Whether Plato, Dewey, Oakeshott, or any of the other legion of thinkers who have turned their minds to education, teachers need to be able to name-drop or footnote their ideas. But a frequent complaint is that ivory-tower educational philosophy (or 'theory') is too removed from the day-to-day life of the classroom to be of any use. It is also seen as intellectually daunting, another unwelcome addition to the demands of a busy teaching life. Michel de Montaigne, the 16th century French essayist, agreed that many considered philosophy to have a 'frightening mask' and 'gloomy' demeanour. But of all those 'philosophers' who have turned their minds to the educational craft, it is Montaigne who challenges the idea that educational philosophy is all inaccessible, irrelevant and demanding. He shows us how it should be straightforward and have immediate, down-to-earth and intelligible uses.

Montaigne might be a curious choice as an educational philosopher with a lot to tell us about 21st century education. After all, he lived and wrote over 400 years ago, and did so in a tower, surrounded by books, in rural France. Montaigne's own education was one to which very few would sign up today. His first tutor was a German who spoke no French and taught Montaigne in

Latin. No one in his household was to speak anything but Latin in front of him. He was thus a 'native' Latin speaker until the age of six, when he enrolled at the Collège de Guyenne. Even then, his preferred reading was Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, which he devoured between the ages of seven and eight.

Montaigne wrote about educating boys, though he was not a teacher in the conventional sense and he had no sons of his own. By his own admission, he felt 'too badly taught to

teach others'. But Montaigne was being disingenuous. He learnt a huge amount, not just from those books lining his study, but by closely observing the world around him and carefully distilling his thoughts. His essays are a brilliant series of musings on everything from smells to idleness, liars to physiognomy. It is no wonder that when Diane de Foix wanted advice on bringing up future sons, it was to Montaigne that she turned, prompting his essay on education. And it is to Montaigne that we should turn, hundreds of years later, for

plenty of educational words of wisdom that can apply to our modern approach to teaching.

Montaigne appreciated that the bringing up and education of children was and is 'the most important difficulty known to human learning'. It should be carried out, he argues, by people of good character and intelligence rather than those who simply know a lot. Once these educators have been appointed, they should decide which form of education a child should follow, because if we 'force a child's natural bent', we 'waste years training children for occupations in which they never achieve anything'. But Montaigne has little time for those who consider that their 'natural bent' leans towards education for the pursuit of money – the early modern equivalent of those who study law or



Montaigne's home in rural France

economics for the sole purpose of making fortunes in the City. 'So abject an end' he considers to be 'unworthy of the grace and favour of the Muses'. In contrast, children should be educated to be 'inwardly enrich[ed] and adorn[ed]', not cynically to engineer future professional or economic advancement. But how would this enrichment come about?

It should not happen, for Montaigne, through teachers telling their pupils a collection of facts, before the pupil repeats them exactly as they have been told. There are occasions when it is appropriate for the teacher to direct the learning from the front, but there are also times when the pupil should 'do it all on his own', or the tutor should 'listen to his pupil talking'. Importantly, the tutor should also adapt their pedagogical approach and the level of difficulty of the work to suit the pupil(s) in front of them. There is no point in a learned mathematician or philosopher holding forth in front of a group, if only one or two of them have a clue what they are talking about. Today we would call this 'differentiation' or 'personalisation'. Montaigne is also enlightened in his view of violence perpetrated by teachers. He sees that 'violence and force ... stultifies and bastardizes a well-born nature'; it merely makes pupils 'depraved'. In its place, Montaigne advocates what he calls a 'severe gentleness' – a will of steel cloaked in a gentle demeanour – and a learning experience that is 'enjoyable'. This reflects the upbringing that Montaigne enjoyed from his own father who did not believe in forcing his charge's will, but educated him 'through gentleness and freedom'. That is *how* Montaigne thinks people should be taught, but *what* does he think they should be learning? We can summarise his educational philosophy in eight maxims:

### 1. Do not regurgitate undigested food

For Montaigne, proper education comes not from the indiscriminate learning of facts that are passed down



"Be like a bee..."

from on high. A good memory is of no particular use, if pupils do not assimilate their new knowledge and apply it to their everyday lives. Pupils are to apply their knowledge to different situations and subjects. If all they can do is regurgitate facts, it is 'evidence of a failure to digest and assimilate'. By being exposed to a diversity of opinions and 'drinking their humours' rather than just 'learning their precepts', pupils are enabled to apply their learning to unfamiliar situations. They also recognise that there is not just one answer, that it is perfectly okay to doubt and to question: 'Only fools



have made up their minds and are certain.'

### 2. Be like a bee

Once pupils have encountered a variety of thoughts and opinions, they are to come up with their own ideas. They should not hide behind the views and maxims of their tutors, but instead put their own 'achievements on display'. Montaigne likens pupils to bees who 'ransack flowers here and flowers there: but they make their own honey, which is entirely theirs and no longer thyme and marjoram'.

### 3. Ignore Signora Livia's knickers

Exposure to a diversity of ideas is crucial in Montaigne's view of education, and so is exposure to a diversity of people. Pupils should mix with others and learn from them, both at home and abroad. But the school trips Montaigne envisages are not just jollies with the added bonus of accruing arcane information about exotic locations. It is no use, he says, knowing 'how many yards long the Pantheon is', or the details of 'the rich embroidery of Signora Livia's knickers'. It is much more important to learn about other peoples' customs, manners, values and behaviour. There is more sense in learning about and judging the behaviour of figures like Scipio or Hannibal than in just knowing the date of the fall of

Carthage. The accumulation of facts just to parrot them back means nothing unless pupils take those facts to adorn the development of their critical and analytical skills. In addition, taking young pupils abroad has two added advantages. First, it exposes them to foreign languages more easily picked up by impressionable young minds. Secondly, it takes pupils away from parents who are 'too soft, too indulgent' and whose adult presence erodes the authority of the tutor. Parents' presence, Montaigne argues, inhibits pupils' ability to pursue activities he sees as beneficial to their

development into young adults, but which parents view as too dangerous.

#### 4. Buy rather than sell

When conversing with others, whether it be among familiar company or friends from new cultures, Montaigne is adamant about the direction in which conversation should go. It is important for pupils to listen and learn about others, rather than talk all the time and tell the world all about *them*. That is, they should not 'sell' their 'own wares' but 'purchase new ones'. They should not boast about what, if anything, they have achieved and they should suffer

in dignified, polite silence when others foist upon them boasts or tall tales. They should also admit when they discover they are wrong, whether it be through their own private meditation or through the intervention of others.

#### 5. Do not sit in the front row

Private meditation, for Montaigne, comes in large part through acute observation. His essays are, after all, a series of observations. To observe well, pupils should be encouraged to forgo sitting in the front row, watching instead from further back. The front seats, Montaigne thinks, are 'normally taken as a right by the less able men', while those who sit at the top end of the table discuss issues as superficial as 'the beauty of a tapestry or the bouquet of the malmsey'. By eschewing the front row or the top table, pupils are able to discern the background of each member of their diverse company and they are exposed to a variety of qualities of behaviours. In turn, they can ape that which is desirable and shun that which is not.

#### 6. Cross the stream before it dries up

All of this is useless if pupils are reticent. They should be encouraged to jump in. Pupils who sit and wait, putting off the start of their lives, act like 'the bumpkin who would cross but who waits for the stream to dry up'. Similarly, teachers should seize the day and educate their pupils – especially in the concerns of philosophy, how to live – because while their charges are young, the clay is 'soft and malleable'. Focusing on this concept of 'how to live' makes the pupil 'wiser' and 'better'; only then can they appreciate the rudiments of other subjects – in Montaigne's day 'Logic, Physics, Geometry and Rhetoric'.

#### 7. Do not mind the smell of apples

A large part of learning how to live, for Montaigne, is learning how to live among others. He is deeply sceptical about over-bookishness, solitary over-intellectualising. He also sees it is



"The accumulation of facts just to parrot them back means nothing"

important to avoid peculiar behaviour that impairs one's ability to live harmoniously among others. The point at which peculiar wrinkles in behaviour should be ironed out, he argued, is in childhood, during education. Montaigne recounts tales of grown men whom he had known to 'fly from the smell of apples', or were 'terrified of a mouse', or had vomited 'at the sight of cream or when a feather mattress [was] shaken up'. It is the duty of the teacher, then, to discourage their pupils from faddishness or quirks and quiddities that might alienate them in future company. This might be in the back of our mind today when we encourage our pupils to eat properly with a knife and fork, partly to make sure they are not viewed with suspicion or contempt during future important meals: first dates, dinners with the boss, and the like.

### 8. Do not be a donkey

There is no point, Montaigne says, in producing pupils who just carry vast quantities of knowledge around. It is more important to encourage pupils to study and to enjoy their study, 'otherwise you simply produce donkeys laden with books'. Knowledge is different from memorisation. Facts deduced from books should not be the basis of education, but embellishments. It is counter-productive to 'imprison' pupils, to 'torture' them by making them sit hunched over their books for 14 or 15 hours a day. Not only does it alienate them from society, it turns them off the joys of learning, gives the wrong impression of what true learning really is, and it makes them miserable.

The point of education, for Montaigne, is to learn what 'knowing' actually means. It is to learn how to think, thereby how to live. Pupils learn how to live by learning about courage, justice, self-control, worthwhile aspirations, freedom, virtue, and how to achieve real happiness. This will come from the study of, say, history – but not just so pupils can tell you who reigned during which dates, but what



those monarchs did that teaches us about courage, justice, self-control, and so on. By looking at others around them, both in the past and present, pupils get a clearer understanding of themselves: 'This great world of ours ... is the looking-glass in which we must gaze to come to know ourselves from the right slant.' Pupils should then demonstrate their learning through their deeds, not just their words. Montaigne is suspicious of those who long-windedly tell you what they know. He tells the story of King Cleomenes of Sparta who received ambassadors from Samos. The ambassadors arrived with a lengthy rhetorical speech to persuade him to go to war against Polycrates. Cleomenes was unimpressed and his response was brief: 'As for your preamble and preface, I no longer remember it; nor of course your middle bit. As for your conclusion, I will do none of it' (190-1).

We, too, want our pupils to do the right thing, rather than disguise bad intentions with gilded words. We want them to demonstrate what they learn by living happily and well, instead of just regurgitating a bunch of facts. We

want them to enjoy learning, instead of being miserably buried under a pile of books. We want them to function well in society, instead of impairing their futures by alienating others. We want them to approach learning with enthusiasm, instead of putting it off until tomorrow. We want them to learn by subtly observing those around them, instead of brashly and tediously talking about themselves the whole time. We want them to accumulate factual knowledge, but in the process to hone their thinking skills. We want them to think for themselves and to know that there is not always an easy right answer, not just to be reliant on teachers crow-barring information into their heads. And we, as teachers, have a duty to do this with sensitivity to differing abilities, with gentleness, but with a clear and strong sense that we are the guides. For all of these reasons, Montaigne has a lot to say to us about the fundamental principles of modern education, even if he never stood in front of a class, and even if he said it half a millenium ago in an ivory tower in the French countryside.

# Photographer of the Year



Winner: Andrea Gurr, St Michael's School

## Winner 2011

We had another fantastic response to this year's competition, attracting over 150 entries from dozens of schools around the UK including a number of schools who entered for the first time. After a long deliberation, we settled on the entry of Andrea Gurr, a Year 7 pupil from St Michael's School, Tawstock, who photographed her friends struggling their way up a hill during a PE lesson. The runner-up prizes go to Hakan Ozoran of University College School, London and Nicole Harvey of Holme Grange. All three winners will receive digital cameras, by courtesy of John Catt Educational.



Amelia Cornish, Marlborough House



Dominic Lee, Brentwood Prep



## Runner-up

Nicole Harvey, Holme Grange

## Runner-up

Hakan Ozoran, University College School, London



Phoebe Price, Leweston Prep



Max Salmon, Orchard House

# Photographer of the Year 2012

Now is your chance to prepare your entries for the 2012 competition. Entries must be received by May 31st, 2012 and the winning photographs will be published in the September 2012 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 prep or junior schools may enter; no more than two photographs per entrant; files should be a minimum size of 15cms x 20cms and 300dpi/ppi. Photographs are only accepted in an electronic format either by posting a CD Rom to Michèle Kitto, c/o John Catt Educational, 12 Deben

Mill, Business Centre, Melton, Woodbridge, Suffolk, IP12 1BL or by email to: [photcomp@prepschoolmag.co.uk](mailto:photcomp@prepschoolmag.co.uk). Label the entries clearly with your name and school address. And please enclose an entry form from the magazine (printed below) to certify the work is yours. If you would like your photographs to be returned, please enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope of a suitable size.

## ENTRY FORM

### Prep School Photographer of the Year Competition 2012

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 2012, John Catt Educational Ltd, 12 Deben Mill Business Centre,

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

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

# IAPS National Chess Championships 2011

David Archer, IAPS chess co-ordinator and teacher at Aldro School, reports on a successful IAPS chess championship

## Day 1

Players arrived at Aldro in Shackleford from as far as Birmingham, Glastonbury and Bakewell, as well as a great number of players from schools in the south east. The tournament started after a brief meeting and it was soon evident that the championship section with 42 players was going to be closely contested again this year. The top seed Aloysius Lip (grade 144), from Hallfield, started well, winning both his opening games along with Edward Critchley (Great Walstead), Ashwin Kalyana (Hallfield), Daniel Muir (Reigate St Mary's), Gwilym Price (Aldro), Otto Pyper (Windlesham), Isaac Stables (S. Anselm's) and Aaron Vitarana (Hallfield).

The Preliminary groups with nearly 80 less experienced players produced a record four winners with five wins out of five. They were: Group 1 Hugo Fowler (Hawthorns), Group 2 Hugo Riley (S. Anselm's), Group 3 Hannah Sutton (Great Walstead), Group 4 Oliver Harvey-Piper (Twickenham). The evening activities were organised by David Tuddenham and the players all enjoyed various indoor activities such as air hockey, table football and table tennis.

## Day 2

The top seed in the championship continued to prosper with two more wins and he was on his own with 5\5 at the end of the day. Only Isaac Stables



managed to keep within half a point of him on 4.5, but there were plenty of other strong players challenging. Sections A, B, C and D played three games in the morning and there was also some coaching provided for the lower groups. In the afternoon most of the players had an exciting trip to Chessington World of Adventure. This was followed by a 5-a-side football competition organised by Chris Rose. The teachers and parents enjoyed an excellent meal without the children.

## Day 3

It was crunch time in the championship and the Hallfield players continued to impress. In the end Aloysius was beaten in an excellent game by his team mate Ashwin Kalyana (grade 112) and they shared the IAPS title. Five players were equal third: Ethan Horsfall and Daniel Muir (Reigate St Mary's), Gwilym Price, Otto Pyper and Isaac Stables. Gwilym was awarded the best game prize chosen by Grand Master Matthew Turner from Millfield School. The Girls' Champion was Liza Griaznov, also from Millfield. The section winners were: A, Paddy

Dudgeon (S. Anselm's) 5.5\6; B, Lydia Malam (ex Twickenham) 5\6; C, Harvey Brooks (Aldro) 6\6; D, Angus Edwards (S. Anselm's) and Nicholas Powell (Twickenham) 5.5\6. We finished with a prize-giving and were pleased to welcome back Wil Ransome, who ran the IAPS chess for many years, to give out the prizes.

## Team Competitions

### Hodgson Cup (U13)

1st Hallfield (National Champions)  
2nd Twickenham  
3rd Aldro

### David Bull Cup (U11)

1st Hallfield (National Champions)  
2nd Twickenham  
3rd Aldro

### Girls Team Cup

1st Millfield (National Champions)  
2nd Copthorne  
3rd Great Walstead

Congratulations to all 117 players and many thanks to Aldro School for hosting the competition and to all the teachers and parents from all the schools who helped with the smooth running of the event.

### Michèle Kitto asks the National Champions, Hallfield, to share the impact chess has made on their school beyond championships and clubs and into the wider life of school, and how they have gone from strength to strength.

Chess has played a significant role in life at Hallfield for over 50 years. Headmaster Raymond Hackett was a fine player and a number of chess books always featured prominently on his bookshelves. Following his retirement, Anthony Button ran a lunchtime club and a well-contested school knockout championship so the appointment of Malcolm Hunt as school chess coach simply continued a well-established tradition.

From modest beginnings the school chess club now has three main constituents:

- a) A pre-prep class where children are taught to play the game, learn elementary strategies and take their first hesitant steps into competitions.
- b) A Year 3 club where large numbers meet to take part mostly in internal competitions and receive more strategic and tactical instruction.
- c) An older club where those identified as keener and more able players receive much more advanced instruction and are encouraged to play in school teams and take part in external competitions – including adult events.

Malcolm Hunt believes this is much more than providing an enjoyable pastime, since the game and the lessons provide an excellent framework for the children to develop many skills:

- 1) Numeracy – there are many opportunities to use mental

arithmetic on the 64 squares of a chessboard (including evaluating positions, counting paths between squares).

- 2) Logical planning – self-evident.
- 3) Discipline – both at the board and at the conclusion of each game.
- 4) Vision and imagination – as their chess improves they are keen on Malcolm's concept of the 'chessboard in the head' whereby they plan future sequences of moves. Obviously they cannot 'see' these sequences on the board they are playing on so they must be taking place on the chessboards in their minds.
- 5) Interpersonal skills – the art of winning and losing is difficult for small children and the action of shaking hands before and after a game is refreshing, even if the 'well-played' is sometimes muttered between gritted teeth by a disappointed loser.
- 6) Conflict resolution – chess is a difficult game with complex rules and mistakes are regularly made. Supervising staff cannot sort them all out, so the children often have to reach a mutually acceptable compromise on a mature basis.
- 7) Perception – Malcolm has played chess to a high standard all his life and many people assume that he is very intelligent. Children who play chess well are similarly regarded, which aids their confidence.

Finally, chess is a competitive game and children enjoy winning. There is no need for particular physical attributes to play chess, so many who never shine on the athletics field have the opportunity to compete well. There are many other benefits but the main advantage is that the children benefit without realising. They are gaining all this from a pleasurable activity that they approach with much more pleasure and excitement than some of their other subject lessons.

Chess has featured in the national media lately with Malcolm Pein, the

*Daily Telegraph* chess correspondent, appearing on BBC Television to promote Chess in Schools and Communities, a charity that has been established to promote chess in UK primary schools. He proposes that chess is made compulsory in schools and recommends that one class of chess be mandatory every week for children in Year 2 or 3. This may seem excessive but it is very modest compared with Russia where chess has been a mainstream subject on the curriculum since the 1920s.

Malcolm Hunt also works in another school where chess has been adopted as a PPA activity for the whole school. He recommends, based on his experience, that chess lessons be mandatory but for one term only. Those wishing to continue after this introduction should do so via an after-school club.

Malcolm said: "We have done no research on comparing the results of chess playing children with those who do not. However, I am also the chess coach at King Edward's School, which is the principal target destination school of many Hallfield children and I find that I tend to keep my star players."

The Hallfield Chess Club has been extremely successful in recent years and is the current IAPS National Champion (having shared the title last year) – this is a remarkable performance for a school that only takes children up to Year 6 competing against more traditional prep schools that finish at the end of Year 8. Aloysius Lip and Ashwin Kalyana shared the title of IAPS National Individual Champion and they might have been run close by Matthew Fergusson, but he was representing England in an international tournament in the Czech Republic! These three have all gained places in the English Junior International Squad, a tremendous achievement. Their chess success accompanies their academic success with all three children winning scholarships to their senior schools.

[www.chessinschools.co.uk](http://www.chessinschools.co.uk)

# The sexualisation of our youth: how do we guide and protect our children?

Dr Helen Wright, Head of St Mary's Calne and President of the Girls' Schools Association, shares advice on this important issue



The issue of the sexualisation of our society is more in the public eye than ever before, and quite rightly so. Parents are, with reason, increasingly worried about the prevalence and pervasiveness of images that present girls and women in particular in a sexualised, or apparently sexually provocative, way. From writhing dancers on music videos, to pouting models in magazine adverts for anything from shampoo to chocolate, it seems that we can hardly ever escape such images. What is this doing to young people?

The answer, of course, is that it is presenting our children with a view of the world that is distorted and lacking in reality. No one denies the importance of sex in the lives of human beings; most of us, however, would want to place sex in a wider context of the amazing attributes of humanity, and as parents and teachers we most certainly want to be able to guide our children ourselves through the sensitivities and challenges that it presents. With sexualised images around every corner, popping up at every juncture, and because we have

allowed them to enter – uncritically – the mainstream of society, with sex apparently the mainstay of performances on the *X Factor* and series like *So You Think You Can Dance*, this choice has been somewhat eroded.

Technology – and especially the speed and ubiquity of modern social networking – has had a huge role to play in this move. Phenomenal progress in technological advances has revolutionised our ability to communicate and even to build relationships, but the ease of access that our youngsters have to information, and the multiple ways in which they can go online – via phones, Playstations and even TVs – means that it is often very hard for parents and teachers to know what is going on, and what they are encountering. A network filter will only go so far – we need to work on our awareness, understanding and wisdom.

Firstly, we need to recognise that this is a real issue for our children, and that it is potentially extremely dangerous for their wellbeing. Imagine growing up in a world where what you are told in school and at home about how to be an adult – believe in yourself, be yourself; focus on who you are, not how you appear – seems to be completely at odds with the messages you are receiving from the external images with which you are bombarded. At best it is confusing, but at worst it is deeply undermining and

has the potential to lead to psychological disturbance.

Secondly, we need to decide to do something about it, and it is encouraging to see that more and more people are standing up and saying that this cannot be right. The number of complaints about last autumn's *X Factor* final performance by Christina Aguilera reached into the thousands, and the Bailey Report published in June, *Letting Children be Children*, was clear on this matter – public spaces should become more 'family-friendly', it says. As teachers, we have an obvious role to play in helping this to move forward, and we should seize the opportunity.

What, then, can we do? Begin with the following:

- Take a stand and don't be afraid to do so. Too often, we worry that we will be perceived as prudish, or not liberal enough, if we speak out on the issue of sexualisation; we do children a disservice, though, if we pretend that they do not need boundaries. Remember that education is as much about creating a space for growth and guided



"Education is about creating a space for growth and reflection"

reflection as it is about providing masses of information.

- Think critically about the images and messages you see around you, and encourage parents to do the same. An increasing awareness is probably the greatest tool for change in this respect.

- Encourage parents to trust their critical instincts; if images feel uncomfortable, there is probably something wrong with them, and they should act on this by removing them, and/or discussing the issue with their child, and/or by complaining about them.
- Plan part of your PSHE programme to ensure that you discuss, from an early age, the role of images in the media. One of the most important qualities we need to develop in our children and young people in this world of instant access to information is how to be media-savvy and to think critically about what they encounter. It is never too young to start...

Finally, if you have a spare moment, do read the Bailey Report:

[www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/Bailey%20Review.pdf](http://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/Bailey%20Review.pdf).

Its no-nonsense approach is immensely reassuring, and it will provide you with some of the evidence you might need to help others see sense. It is undeniably the case that together we are stronger, and we all need to speak out if we are to redress the balance in our society that we so desperately need.



# Sources of inspiration

Do you have a place, resource, museum, website or reflection that you would like to share?

## Ely Cathedral

Headmasters are rarely allowed to lead school trips, in my experience at least. Teachers are no doubt relieved that risk assessments will then be properly done, coaches will leave and return on time and nothing will be forgotten. All right, I get the message! On this rare occasion, this Headmaster had to step in at the last moment and escort a Year 7 trip to Ely Cathedral, the Ship of the Fens. What a rare pleasure it was!

The first half of the morning is a treat for the eyes and a thrill for anyone who loves history. The first sight of the Ship of the Fens appearing on the

horizon, the looming cathedral with its magnificent octagon tower, even more beautiful inside. And for the children? At this stage, the maze by the great west door, the misericords under the seats in the choir, and of course the gift shop. But this is only the start of the visit!

The second half of the day was quite fascinating – a day in the life of a medieval monk. From Matins at 6am (theoretically, of course, this being the middle of the afternoon), through Lauds, Little Hour, leading to the end of the day and Vespers, a frugal supper, Compline, and finally the *Summum*

*Silentium*. Oh joy, the Great Silence! It was not long before all children realised this was a routine (punctuated by the sound of bells) from which they could not deviate. Although a solemn experience, and a clear message about devotion, self-denial and discipline, the children were clearly gripped and thoroughly enjoyed living the life of a monk – in fantasy, at least. The subsequent brass rubbing or visit to the cathedral shop came as light relief.

For the experience of the monastic day alone, the visit to Ely Cathedral is a thoroughly worthwhile excursion. The Cathedral education officer, Jan



"The children enjoyed living the life of a monk - in fantasy at least"

## Sources of inspiration

Munt, offers, with her team, a fascinating choice of activities in addition to the Monastic Day: try, for instance, Animal Safari (hunting for animals in the Cathedral), Pilgrimage Day, Anglo-Saxon Day or a tour of the Octagon with its fantastic views of the Cathedral and of Ely.

The Cathedral centre has a comfortable place to eat packed lunches. On this occasion, thanks are due to the Headmaster of the junior school of the King's School, Ely, for providing his cricket pavilion for the purpose. How valuable Headmasters can be on these trips!

Rowland Constantine  
recently retired as Headmaster of  
Orwell Park School



# Meeting the challenge of our able, gifted and talented...

Fil Came is a tutor and teacher trainer for Learning Works® and here he reflects on his experience and expertise in meeting the needs of the more able or GT students

One of the many mementoes that I have saved from my teaching is this poem. In fact I have kept it in my wallet since 1988. It was given to me by Miranda, a First Year pupil at St John's Comprehensive School (Marlborough) where I was Head of Special Needs. It is a little creased and faded now but my memories of Miranda as an outstanding English pupil are not.

*Fleeced clouds hung in  
Raveled locks around the icy moon  
While Mars, red as dragons blood  
Had snow white venus,  
Fire and water mingled  
Played catch as catch can  
With the evening lights.*

*The Pleiades sung in high ethereal voices.  
They sung of the sun and Moon-  
The Lord who never meets his lady  
And the neverending dance of the heavens.*

It is significant for several reasons, not least because I was a team teacher in her class, the first of much collaboration with the English department, as we developed collaborative approaches to overcoming learning difficulties and raising achievement. But in the context of this article Miranda was, after 12 years of 'bottom set' pupils, the first very able pupil I had the opportunity to work with for any length of time.

In comparison, the difference in her capacity to work, engage and think independently was quite startling; and it had an immediate practical impact on my teaching; for instance, I didn't have to repeat instructions or check to

see if she had brought her English books or copied the homework correctly from the board. In other words, more time was spent focusing on English than other learning skills.

But the adjustments didn't stop there. Miranda enjoyed English lessons, she looked forward to increasing her knowledge about language, she was an avid reader and took particular pleasure in the increasing control and precision of her writing. She consciously aimed to develop her expertise, not to be first in the class but for her own satisfaction and pleasure. Miranda, in taking me out of my comfort zone, was a challenge and on reflection now, initially a threat.

In response, I personally had to raise my game, to raise my expectations, to be better prepared for the 'what if' and 'why' type questions, to understand and welcome the opportunities for

conversation and dialogue without feeling the lesson was going off track. And with my English teacher colleague, as we realised we had someone who was so clearly ahead of her age and peers, we found ways of meeting Miranda's challenges. Nothing too complicated or extravagant but, for instance, asking her to take the lead in a discussion or debate challenged Miranda because of her rather quiet nature, or on occasions we set a slightly different task by asking her to focus on an introduction, or ending, or character descriptions whilst the rest of the class were asked to produce the whole story or account.

It was from one of these occasions that Miranda produced her poem. It was around the time of our traditional Mop Fairs in October during the first term of her first year at St John's. We had been studying Greek mythology,





and linking with the drama department, the class were creating their own stories that would be used in their performances. Miranda asked if she could write a poem instead. After a little hesitation, and a bit of 'negotiating', we took the plunge and got a result.

Working closely with colleagues in this way opened so many doors to new experiences and learning. It helped to raise the status of learning support, especially in the eyes of the pupils, and in return we gained greater confidence and understanding about the range of ability and challenges our subject teachers faced. On a personal level, Miranda set me on a journey and commitment to promote the interests of those pupils with the potential to 'substantially achieve beyond the rest of their peer group' (DfES 2006).

At the time, in the '80s and early '90s, this was very much a Cinderella topic. The prevailing thought being that the more able could look after themselves. During the years 1994-96, as SEN

Adviser for Wiltshire, I co-led with Angela Jensen a county-wide initiative to raise the profile of more able children with all the primary and secondary maintained schools, which brought us into contact with existing national networks and organisations. In particular, the National Association for Able Children in Education (NACE) was a significant source of information and support and we worked closely with Deborah Eyre who was later to set up the government-sponsored National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth (NAGTY) at Warwick University. I became a member of NACE and worked on the national executive for several years.

There has been much progress since those early days. Meeting the needs of the more able, gifted and talented pupils is now on every maintained school agenda. Each school is expected to have a whole school policy, a named co-ordinator or lead teacher, a list or register of identified pupils, a flexible curriculum and additional learning opportunities and support for these pupils. Schools are monitored by Ofsted and LA officers, school development plans and results are evaluated in terms of the gifted and talented and there is self-evaluation available via the national Institutional Quality Standards or by participating in NACE's Challenge Award.

Much of the latter, I would suggest, has passed by the preparatory school sector because it has been driven by the national (raising) standards agenda. However, and somewhat anecdotally, over the past two years the most requested INSET topic we have received from prep schools has concerned 'gifted and talented' pupils. Clearly there is interest and a wide range of whole school initiatives underway but unfortunately there is precious little research based on the good practice and excellence of prep schools to support these developments. Neither does turning to the maintained sector always help, because the language and models of provision do

not readily translate or transfer to the world of the prep school. It is because there is such a void that we have launched a new conference in January 2012 that will focus solely on the needs, experience and developments within prep schools.

So what to do? First, there is so much to be gained at all levels, professional or organisational, from discussion around key questions such as: 'What is the difference between achievement and attainment?' or 'Does effort or intelligence matter more?' Such questions have the potential to challenge our views and values concerning individual performances. Something more practical, such as collecting and moderating examples of outstanding work can create points of discussion, help to clarify in real terms what counts when identifying more able pupils and may also serve as an audit of curriculum tasks.

Surveying pupils for their ideas and opinions will always produce insightful and useful points for discussion. This can be done in many different and imaginative ways. Lastly, a decision to look critically at a particular teaching technique such as the use of higher order questions or the use of independent study can be included in school or subject improvement plans and thereby ensure a more measured and managed examination of classroom provision.

Children like Miranda need intellectual challenge as a regular component of their daily experience at school. So in addition to the knowledge and skills they also need to learn to think for themselves and to develop strategies for the times when they get stuck. The learning behaviour associated with high performance take time and require nurturing and sensitivity, because we cannot assume that all of our more able pupils are either learning smart or resilient or brimming with self-confidence. You see... Miranda, aged 11, was a perfectionist and at times could not see just how good she was.

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# Outdoor education and risk taking...

## Oops! I meant risk assessment

Handling health and safety (H&S) in the framework of outdoor education at school is a daunting task that most teachers would not 'touch with a barge pole' if only they could. But, hey, here we are, all plunged in the same cold bath of acceptable risk versus appropriate challenge. Both school governance and its executive are for the right reasons extremely scrupulous and paperwork-oriented. This '*état de fait*' should not distract OED practitioners from enjoying a day out with the class.

The current public debate between the government, the teachers' unions and

the H&S authorities about getting the 'kids' out of the classroom is an interesting one, not only about the technical content of H&S processes and procedures at school, but in the light of its political context: people (understand 'pupils' in terms of long term strategy for a nation) have to be saved from nature-deficit disorder. Richard Louv in his superb book entitled *Last Child In The Woods* (ISBN-10: 1-56512-391-3) published six years ago, does not hesitate to link the lack of nature in the lives of today's wired generation to some of the most disturbing childhood trends, such as rises in obesity, attention deficit disorder (ADD), and depression.

In the UK, H&S legislation is drawn up and enforced by the Health and Safety Executive and the Local Authorities (the local council) under the Health and Safety at Work *etc.* Act 1974. Increasingly the regulatory trend is away from prescriptive rules, and towards risk assessment. It is therefore a chance for OED practitioners to sharpen up their risk assessment skills and share ideas in order to get the right formula and establish creative ways of working safely in the outdoors.

Peter Barnes and Bob Sharp in the book entitled *The RHP Companion to Outdoor Education* (ISBN 1-903855-36-5), published

in 1988, insist on the fact that progress in any field requires a combination of competence and enterprise. There is a need for vision and imagination, but also for down-to-earth attention to details; any successful entrepreneur has to anticipate the needs of the future whilst continuing to meet the practical needs of the present. This is true in most areas of human activity, including outdoor activities and more particularly expeditions in Year 8 that include elements of adventure, danger and risk. They write: 'Risk can be perceived or real and it is the Leader's responsibility to ensure that safe practices and the school procedures are followed. [...] The leader who has a 'duty of care' and is in a position of '*in loco parentis*' must also take into account that young pupils are just embarking on their adult lives and their experience, technical competence and judgement is far less advanced than that of the designated leader.'

Bob Sharp adds: 'Risk has both positive and negative dimensions. It has a subjective quality; it reflects the nature of environment hazards as well as the way people perceive those hazards. People actively seek through adventurous activities. Risk is thought to aid self-development and help people realise their potentials, limitations and interests. On the downside, high risk can have negative consequences resulting in injury or loss of life. Risk plays both roles in outdoor education. The key factor is balance.'

In *Effective Leadership in Adventure Programming*, an American didactic book written by Simon Priest and



"The key factor is balance..."



Michael Gass (ISBN 0-7360-5250-X), a risk management plan is mentioned that includes OED and H&S policies, practices and procedures used at school to address appropriately potential personal injury, financial losses, to protect your school from the economic cost of being sued, and to reduce your organisation's financial obligation if a suit is successful. Constructing such a plan is a critical step in offering quality OED programming. The following 20 items are offered as a beginning checklist for your consideration:

1. Do you have a written set of policies and procedures?
2. Do you have a written emergency action plan for all activities?
3. Does your OED programme have a designated and functioning Risk-Management Committee?
4. Does your programme prepare an annual risk-management report? Does it make changes based on this report's findings?
5. Does your programme engage in periodic internal and external risk-management reviews?
6. Does your programme send all staff and participants through an appropriate admissions and medical screening?
7. Does your programme ensure that additional participant health concerns, specific to each activity, are addressed if necessary?
8. Does your school inform participants of the nature and goals of the programme, its requirement for physical conditioning and behaviour, and the consequence of not meeting these requirements?
9. If your school allocates legal liability for injuries or losses suffered by participants, does it do so with appropriate agreements?
10. Does your programme maintain adequate insurance coverage?
11. Does your programme have a policy forbidding the use of alcohol or drugs (other than those prescribed by a doctor and used accordingly) during programme activities by participants and employees on duty?
12. Does your programme have an emergency medical protocol and an established system for calling emergency medical services in the event of a serious or life-threatening injury or illness? Is your staff skilled in carrying out these protocols?
13. Does your programme have a search-and-rescue protocol and an established system for calling rescue services, if needed, in the event of a lost or missing person?
14. Does your programme have an evacuation protocol? Is your staff skilled in carrying out this protocol?
15. Does your programme have a notification protocol to be used for an emergency or accident?
16. Is appropriate and adequate emergency and rescue equipment available at the site of each activity?
17. Are participants properly prepared for emergencies and taught emergency skills and procedures for each activity?
18. Does your programme use the staff-participants ratios designated for each activity?
19. Does your programme make reasonable efforts to conform to all applicable government laws and regulations?
20. Do appropriate forms and documents exist and are they properly located?

On a more personal note, at Northbourne Park School we use a practical model that suits us. It is based on a safe practice in physical education model. Basically, our outdoor education programme, called the Lord Northbourne Award Scheme, provides all year long for all our pupils from Year 2 to Year 8 (including our French bilingual section) with a set of activities, walks, camps and trips balancing appropriately challenges with acceptable risks for each year group. The LNAS is based upon the interaction of a triangular connection between **People, Context and Organisation:**

## People

School staff delivering outdoor education need to:

- Understand their obligations relating to their duty of care
- Be suitably experienced and competent to teach the activity being offered
- Use regular and proved practice
- Be aware of any child/pupil at risk
- Ensure acceptable pupil behaviour at all times
- Clarify the role and monitor the work of contracted volunteers

Pupils engaged in outdoor education should be:

- Given opportunities to think about safe practice in relation to themselves and their peers
- Guided to develop their knowledge and understanding relating to responsible participation and progress
- Sufficiently skilled and confident in the tasks set
- Appropriately supervised when undertaking a leadership role

## Context

Outdoor education facilities should provide:

- Minimal hazard playing surface
- Sufficient space for the activities

And be subject to:

- A regular and systematic maintenance programme
- Appropriate usage

Procedure should involve:

- Safety rules and regulations that are clearly understood by both pupils and staff
- Consistently maintained attendance and assessment records
- All accidents and near misses being comprehensively logged and reported to the appropriate body where required
- Communication with parents about school policies and practice

Outdoor education equipment should be:

- Regularly monitored for wear and tear
- Inspected annually
- Regularly maintained
- Checked before use
- Used appropriately and stored safely
- Disposed of when condemned

## Organisation

Preparation requires:

- Comprehensive schemes of work that are differentiated to meet the needs of all pupils
- A safety policy and guidelines
- Up-to-date risk assessment

Teaching style and class organisation should ensure that:

- Pupil capability is matched to task
- The methodology is appropriate to safety demands inherent within the activity
- Pupils are always appropriately prepared and confident through progressive practices

And last but not least, it is essential to conclude this rather hard and dry article about risk assessment by mentioning the pinnacle of outdoor education practice that is outdoor life the *friluftsliv* way. It is the Scandinavian approach to creating a special relationship with nature (known as *friluftsliv*, literally free air life). Bob Henderson and Nils Vikander in *Nature First* (ISBN 978-1-897045-21-3), recognise the significance of an ongoing connection between humans and the natural

environment. The way of *friluftsliv* is for nature to seep under one's skin, solidifying in our being and not for nature to be worshipped outside ourselves. Let us read the words of an Angagok shaman called Uvavnuk. She is transported in utter delight by the natural world:

The great sea stirs me.  
The great sea sets me adrift,  
It sways me,  
Like the weed on a river-stone.  
The sky's height stirs me.

The strong wind blows through my mind.  
It carries me with it,  
So I shake with joy.

According to the authorities in Canada, Australia and Scandinavia, it reveals the connections between land, health and identity. If adopted here, that would become the ultimate nightmare for the European authorities...

Patrick Papougnot, deputy head at Northbourne Park School

# Handwriting – getting the best out of your pupils

Patricia Lovett, judge of the National Schools' Handwriting Competition 2011, challenges us to re-visit handwriting practice in our schools – are we giving our pupils the best possible chances or are we making life more difficult for them?

When President Barack Obama visited Westminster Abbey in June this year, he used a fountain pen to sign the Guest Book. And although we were not privy to what went on at the wedding of Prince William and Miss Catherine Middleton when the two families linked by the marriage retreated for the signing of the register, I would hazard a guess that the signing was done with fountain pens.

So are fountain pens the best pens to use? And are they recommended to help to improve handwriting?

Fountain pens are really good for slowing down writing, and allowing us time to think about what we want to get down on paper. As well as this, they often help us to consider the letter-forms as we are writing, and enable us to take more time and care over their formation. There can be real joy also in using a fountain pen on good quality paper, with that magical feeling of a real match between writing surface and writing implement. There is also something rather satisfying, in some ways, about the rituals of washing out a fountain pen and refilling it with ink, even if it is just replacing the ink cartridge. And they are a gift to aunts and uncles, godparents and grandparents who want to mark special birthdays or occasions with something of value, which will last and usually be appreciated. However, and this is a big however, they are not suitable for

everyone, and I would certainly never recommend that fountain pens are a must for all.

First, there are those children who have only to take the top off a fountain pen to get covered in ink. That ink is then transferred to their hands, shirt, tie, blazer, trousers, legs,

Secondly, fountain pens are not always suitable for left-handers. Depending on their hand position, any writing they do with wet ink may be immediately smudged. Of course, they may adopt an 'over the top' hand position to overcome this, a hand position used by the left-handed

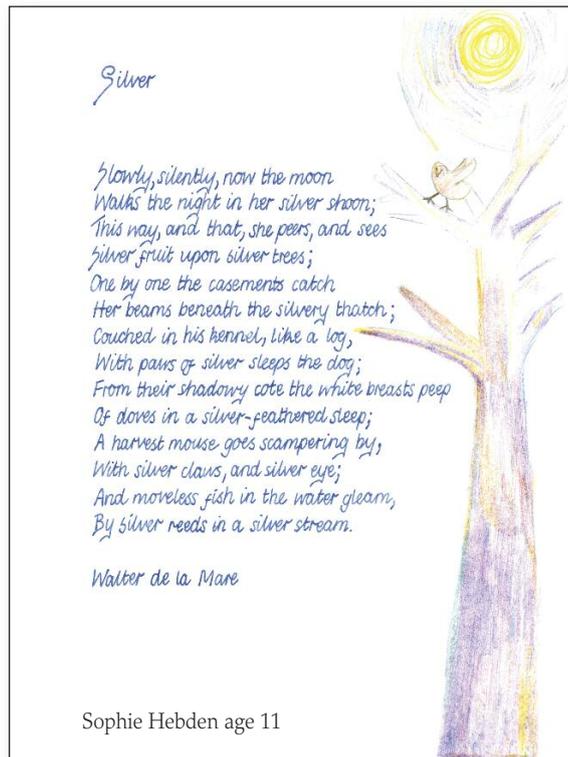
Prince William (was it because he used a fountain pen early on when writing?), but this can lead to pain as the strain on the bent wrist can be considerable.

And thirdly, life is so hectic and rushed now, that the advantage of slow writing (similar to slow food), and having to nurse a fountain pen into making marks is not always an advantage. Because the pens use liquid ink fed into the pen nib tip, which dries out when not in use, they need some working on to get the ink to flow if not used continuously.

So what pens would be recommended? Rather than blanket approval for this one type of pen invented in the 19th century, and thereby dismissing the many advances in writing implements since then, I would suggest that children are

encouraged to try a variety of pens to determine which suits them and their handwriting best.

There are very good 'handwriting' pens available now, which emulate fountain pens but use a gel-type ink, which is more manageable for those inky boys. Ball point pens, too, are very much better than they used to be, and the ink used now tends to be less smudgy.



Sophie Hebden age 11

and exercise books. (And I have chosen 'trousers' rather than 'trousers or skirts' because it is so often boys who get into this state.) I feel that it is unfair to insist on such pens for children who have this uncanny knack of ink transference, and I feel sad for them in that they can never look on their work with pleasure when it is covered with ink smudges.

*The moon*

*The moon has a face like the clock in the hall;  
She shines on thieves on the garden wall,  
On streets and yards and harbour quays,  
And birds asleep in the forks of the trees.  
The squalling cat and the squeaking mouse,  
The howling dog by the door of the house,  
The bat that lies in bed at noon,  
All love to be out by the light of the moon.  
But all of the things that belong to the day  
Cuddle to sleep to be out of her way;  
And flowers and children close their eyes  
Till up in the morning the sun shall rise.*

*Robert Louis Stevenson*

Lily Hill age 11

Fibre tips and even technical drawing pens may suit others – the latter being my pen of choice. The thickness of the barrel of the pen may make a difference for grip; not all children, with their small hands, like to write with a thick pen or pencil, some prefer a much narrower writing implement. It is also worth taking time over the selection of pen if there is a choice of nib or tip size. Some writers prefer pens that make quite a chunky mark, my own preference is for a very narrow pen tip, resulting in writing that some have called a ‘spider’s squiggle’.

While considering the physical aspects of writing, it is worth looking at paper position. Prince William may have adopted his ‘over the top’ hand position to avoid smudges from his fountain pen, or it may have been because sheets of paper were always put on his desk straight and upright. If you have not tried it before, and are not left-handed, just for a moment put a pen into your left-hand and adopt a normal right-handed grip, with a piece of paper placed with the top edge horizontal, and check whether you can see your writing as you would normally when you write with your right hand. Most people cannot, and so left-handers have to move their bodies, or their heads to allow for this. However, if you try this exercise again, and the sheet of paper is angled so

that the left-hand corner is higher than the right, you will note straightaway that you will be able to see your writing easily, and do not have to twist your hand or body. And the opposite paper position works for right-handers. It is very easy to remember – left corner higher for left-handers, and right corner higher for right-handers.

Serried ranks of neat tables and chairs in classrooms look wonderful for designers

and visitors, but they are not always good for children. It has gone too far in many schools to point out the back problems that can ensue by making children work all day on flat, rather than sloping, surfaces (although there may be a few schools that still use the old wooden desks with a sloping hinged lid – well done!). But it is worth emphasising that children in year groups are not identical sizes. Taller children may have to sit sideways as the space between chair and table is insufficient for their legs to fit under, with resultant pain as their bodies are in a twisted position all day.

Small children may feel as though they are in an *Alice in Wonderland* world before drinking the ‘growing’ potion, as they have to lift their shoulders to stretch to reach the writing surface, and, in so doing, of course, create all sorts of muscular aches and pains with the tension. In an ideal world, everyone should be able to sit comfortably on a chair, with their feet firmly flat on the floor, and the writing

surface just slightly above bent-elbow height.

Lighting, too, should be considered. As a calligrapher, I am very aware of this, as it is essential to have good lighting to see the letter-forms clearly. The light source needs to come from the right for left-handers and from the left for right-handers, so that the hand does not create a shadow. Now it may not be possible in schools to take in these last two aspects of the physical considerations of writing, but this could be looked at in the home. Parents could note whether their children are able to sit comfortably on the chair they use for their homework with feet flat on the ground, and are able to reach their table or desk easily. It is also not too difficult to provide a lamp, and position it on the appropriate side so that doing homework or writing for pleasure does not cause possible eyestrain.

Parents could, perhaps, also provide a selection of relatively inexpensive pens so that a choice can be made as to the one best suited. Handwriting, and certainly good handwriting as in that of the finalists for the National Schools’ Handwriting Competition, can be challenging enough to achieve. It is a good idea to try to ensure that the physical conditions do not add to that challenge.

*Hurt No Living Thing  
Hurt no living thing;  
ladybird nor butterfly,  
Nor moth with dusty wing,  
Nor cricket chirping cheerily,  
Nor grasshopper so light of leap,  
Nor dancing gnat nor beetle fat,  
Nor harmless worms that creep.*

*Christina Rossetti*

Alessia Lowcock age 7



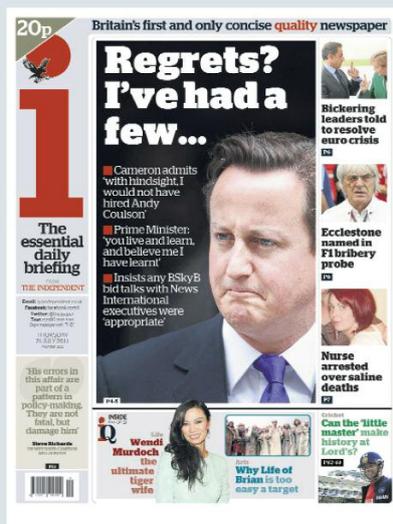
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# satips maths course – Key Stage 1 Problem Solving

As part of *satips'* growing range of CPD provision, we were very grateful to Edgeborough School who generously played host to the *satips* new 'Problem-Solving at Key Stage 1' course. Good maths courses at reasonable prices are hard to find, so it was no surprise that this course sold out and developed a waiting list very quickly.

Created and delivered by maths consultant and *satips* council member Andrew Jeffrey, who has 25 years experience in both the independent and state sectors, this problem-solving course came about after a

conversation between Andrew and Marion Scott-Baker from Cheam School. Marion and her staff kindly provided the vital administration for the course.

In the morning, delegates had the chance to talk about what makes an effective maths lesson, what an ideal one should look like, and think about the bigger ideas behind mathematical thinking. There were also lots of practical hands-on ideas shared, including a photocopiable booklet for every delegate with all the resources and instructions included.

One or two commercial products were demonstrated, along with some freely available web-based activities from such great websites as NRich (see [www.nrich.maths.org](http://www.nrich.maths.org)). There were also plenty of ideas for development and differentiation from Andrew himself.

Along the way delegates met Dippy Duck, Andrew's not-so-smart puppet, we learnt about deciding whether statements were 'Always, Sometimes or Never true', and even predicted how many matchsticks would be needed to build different numbers of triangles. This may well be the only



The chance to think about the bigger ideas behind mathematical thinking

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course that actually *encourages* people to play with matches...

But what made the course such a success (100% of delegates graded it to be good or outstanding)? Perhaps the range of the activities – everyone came away from the course with something to do the very next day, something to think about over the longer term, and lots of ideas to share with colleagues.

For all those who tried to get a place on the course but were told it was full, here is one of the activities. This, according to the delegates, was a much appreciated part of the day (perhaps because it gave them the chance to stretch their legs after their outstanding lunch!).

Like all good ideas, it's very simple. Give groups of children a digital camera, and send them outside to look for some specific maths to photograph. It might be shapes (how many triangles can you find, *etc*), parallel or perpendicular lines, angles, sequences, or you could just let more able children try to find mathematics in their environment. The children then return and share their images via an IWB or screen. Here are some of the pictures that delegates took – as you can see there is a huge range that should get the creative juices flowing – what maths can you spot?

Finally, some good news; due to the overwhelming demand, *satips* (and Andrew) will be repeating this course in this academic year, as well as a new

and exciting Key Stage 2 version, and would be very interested in hearing from any schools who would be interested in hosting such a day. Please contact Pat Harrison, our administrator, ([admin@satips.com](mailto:admin@satips.com)) if you might be able to help. (Payment is made to the school to cover costs.) You will need to provide a large enough room for 30-40

delegates, a projector and screen with sound, tea and coffee, and lunch.

Our thanks to Edgeborough, and to Bilton Grange, who are hosting this course on 20th September, and, excitingly, are also hosting a Key Stage 2 version on 28th September. Again, please get in touch with Pat Harrison if you would like to attend.



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# Satipski 2011

After 36 years of Satipski it is difficult to know what to write in an article about the event without boring those who may have read nearly all the previous articles.

Satipski is a competition for children in prep schools and is organised by prep school staff, thus it should reflect all that is best about our schools. The event should be competitive, the behaviour of the children should be

excellent, the skiers should have a lot of fun. All, children, parents and teachers, can make lasting friendships.

In addition to the above the children can learn a lot about themselves. The race is a team race. They may not be as good as they think or they may be better than they think. Three skiers out of a team of four must count on each run. As the last skier in the team, can you get down safely when an earlier skier has failed to finish? Some children are very good at handling that type of pressure – others are not. The courses set are simple enough for

all to race but some do crash out or go the wrong way and then the pressure comes onto the last skier in the team. You learn about yourself, or at least your parents and teachers do.

This year's race was very competitive and the final result in the Under 14 boys was probably the closest ever – 7/100 of a second separating old rivals Cranmore and Aldwickbury. Sandroyd, competing for the first time for many years, came third. Cranmore also won the Under 11 race with the fastest time of the day. Schools taking part for the first time had a good day. Danes Hill won the Girls and were second in the Under 11 Boys, and King's Hall gained fourth place in the Under 14 Boys

Michael Parsey of Aldwickbury was the fastest boy with Jo Davey of Cranmore the fastest Under 11. Olivia Mitchell, in her first term at Cheltenham College Junior School, was the best girl.

Satipski 2012 will take place on Monday 15th May 2012. If you are interested please contact me: [briangilyead@aol.com](mailto:briangilyead@aol.com)



Photos courtesy of DE Photo  
[www.dphoto.co.uk](http://www.dphoto.co.uk)

## Under 14 Boys

Cranmore	87.01
Aldwickbury	87.08
Sandroyd	91.85

## Under 11 Boys

Cranmore	86.26
Danes Hill	87.32
Aldwickbury	93.46

## Under 11 Girls

Danes Hill	105.15
Abbot's Hill JS	107.34
Cheltenham CJS	108.48

## Under 14 Boys

Michael Parsey – Aldwickbury	27.11
Oliver Fielding – Cranmore	27.73
Ben Anstis – Aldwickbury	28.02

## Under 11 Boys

Jo Davey – Cranmore	27.53
James Gillett – Danes Hill	28.63
Lucas Burton – Danes Hill	28.69

## Under 11 Girls

Olivia Mitchell – Cheltenham CJS	33.55
Olivia Foster – Danes Hill	34.15
Eleanor Scranage-Harrison – Abbot's Hill JS 2002	34.35

## Satipski 2011

The Snow Centre, Hemel Hempstead

## Under 14 Boys

Cranmore	87.01
Aldwickbury	87.08
Sandroyd	91.85
King's Hall	92.26
Cheltenham CJS	96.58
Millfield Prep.	97.71
Lockers Park	98.59
Fulham Prep.	98.77
Beechwood Park	99.29
St. Edmund's	100.86
Gayhurst	101.48
Northwood Prep.	101.61
Rokeby	102.95
Lochinver House	149.70

## Under 11 Boys

Cranmore	86.26
Danes Hill	87.32
Aldwickbury	93.46
Lambrook	94.11
Gayhurst	95.98
Rokeby	96.25

UCS JS	98.08
York House	99.04
Lochinver House	102.52
Grantham Prep.	105.31
UCS JS B	106.49
Manor Lodge	111.01
Northwood Prep.	116.07
Surbiton Prep.	DNF
Sandroyd	DNF
Surbiton Prep. B	DNF

## Under 11 Girls

Danes Hill	105.15
Abbot's Hill JS	107.34
Cheltenham CJS	108.48
Abbot's Hill JS B	110.19
Lambrook	112.81
The Abbey JS	115.71
Ipswich Prep.	123.10
Surbiton HS JS	123.27
Beechwood Park	124.56
The Abbey JS B	127.15
Manor Lodge	133.49
Surbiton HS JS B	142.92

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# Prep school courses and events

## *satips* courses and events

### Mathematics

20 Sept	Problem Solving at KS1	Bilton Grange, Dunchurch, Rugby
29 Sept	Problem Solving at KS2	Bilton Grange, Dunchurch, Rugby
Nov	Annual Maths Conference	

### PE and Games

April	(TBC) Over three days. The conference will include all aspects of the teaching of PE and games in preparatory school and will include information forums and an exhibition of resources	Rugby School
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### Modern Languages

13 Oct	Brilliant Lessons	The <i>satips</i> Bookshop, Sutton
28 Nov	Nursery & Pre-Prep: The EYFS meets KS1	Farringtons School, Chislehurst

### Art/DT

21 Sept	Health and Safety in DT – this is a DATA accredited course, which covers you for using machinery and H&S practice in prep schools. (DATA Exam/registration fee is extra)	Abingdon School, Oxfordshire
5 Oct	Using Sketchbooks – practical ideas on how to teach good sketchbook skills, use them creatively in the classroom – suitable for KS1-4	Aldro School
26 Nov	Early years art conference – sessions include using clay, leading your subject, textiles and drawing and painting	Abingdon Prep School
29 Nov	Planning an educational tour in Europe – lots of practical ideas, case studies and advice for getting this off the ground – also suitable for other subjects	Prior Park Prep School, Wiltshire
7 Dec	Preparing for scholarships and catering for the able, gifted and talented in art and design	Abingdon Prep School.

All art/DT courses cost £125 including materials and lunch.

### Music SongFest IX

17 Oct	St Paul's School, London
18 Oct	Bromsgrove School, Worcestershire
20 Oct	Felsted School, Essex

All *satips* events can be booked through Pat Harrison: [admin@satips.com](mailto:admin@satips.com)

## ISA

For further details about any ISA conference, please email Brenda Marshall: [bjm@portregis.com](mailto:bjm@portregis.com) or phone Port Regis office: 01747 857800.

### O-5 EYFS Development – How To Prepare For Change

6 Oct	Target audience: EYFS managers and staff, teachers and key workers	Babington House School, Chislehurst
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### ICT In The Junior Curriculum

1 Dec	Target audience: classroom practitioners, ICT teachers and coordinators, heads of subject or phase	King Alfred School, London
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Booking: [ghavini.mistry@isaschools.org.uk](mailto:ghavini.mistry@isaschools.org.uk)

### Other prep school events

26 Jan	Inaugural National Conference: Able, Gifted and Talented in Independent Prep Schools <a href="http://www.learning-works.org.uk/events-training">www.learning-works.org.uk/events-training</a>	Copthorne Hotel, Slough
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### Conferences at Port Regis

7 Nov	Texts, Titles and Tips for Common Entrance English at 13+ The conference is led by Andrew Hammond – cost £95	
12 Nov	Preparing Pupils for 13+ Common Entrance English – cost £95	
8 March	Teresa Cremin's Annual Key Stage 2 English Refresher Conference: English in the NC and the Novel – cost £139	
20 June	What Heads of Department in Preparatory Schools Should Do To Prepare For Inspection – cost £95	

## Others

29 Feb- 1 Mar	SIMS Independent Schools Annual Conference	Hinckley Island, Hotel, Leicestershire
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*The only management system specifically designed for independent schools*

# Tiger



# Timetabling

**Make the leap to the most flexible,  
adaptable and comprehensive timetabling software in the UK.**

- 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
- Drag and drop changes
- Alternating timetable by week, half term or any specified length
- Full integration with SchoolManager

**Find out why every school that's  
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