

Autumn Term 2012 • Issue 75

# Prep School

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75

*Issues*

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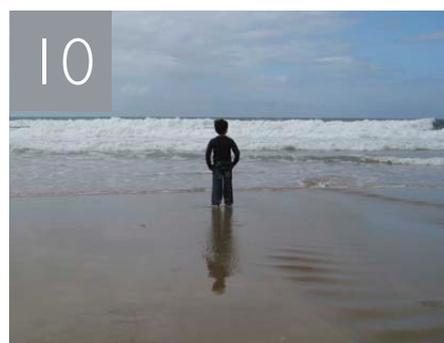
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We are delighted to use several entries into the *Prep School Photographer of the Year* competition to help illustrate articles in this issue: Morgan Clarke, Lambrooke (p9); Arthur Margetson, Maidwell Hall (p43); and Charlotte Leaver, Godstowe (p51);

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support and training in prep schools

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ISSN: 0963 8601 Printed by Micropress Printers Ltd, Fountain Way, Reydon Business Park, Reydon, Suffolk, IP18 6DH

## Publishers' Notice

*Prep School* is published three times a year, in January, May and September, by John Catt Educational Ltd. £25 for a two-year subscription, post paid; discounts for bulk orders are available.

Opinions expressed in *Prep School* are not necessarily endorsed by *satips*; likewise advertisements and advertising features are printed in good faith. Their inclusion does not imply endorsement by *satips*.

## Subscription Details:

The Business Managers are John Catt Educational Ltd, 12 Deben Mill Business Centre, Old Maltings Approach, Melton, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP12 1BL.  
Tel: (01394) 389850 Fax: (01394) 386893, to whom enquiries regarding advertising, subscription order forms and correspondence about subscriptions should be sent.

Contributions to *Prep School* should be sent to the Editor, Michèle Kitto, editor@prepschoolmag.co.uk. News items for the Spring edition should arrive no later than 16th November 2012.

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# From the editor



This is the 75th issue of *Prep School* magazine and I am delighted to be presenting it to you. Over the last quarter of a century, when the educational winds of change have blown in unpredictable ways, many schools in our sector have stuck firmly to their founding principles. This constancy has helped them survive the bad times and flourish in the good. While it is unwise to be caught up by political fashions, I am delighted that the teaching practices promoted by so many in our sector are amongst those that Secretary of State for Education Michael Gove is most vigorously promoting.

Of course, as the state school curriculum looks as though it might revert to more traditional practices, we are also experiencing a time of great structural change with free schools and academies springing up throughout the country. And we must never think that we have an inalienable right to our place in the educational landscape. As these changes occur, the best in our sector will move to capitalise on opportunities, either through competition with or support for the new schools. Competition keeps things healthy and we should look forward with confidence in our values.

This issue focuses on curriculum review and will help your school reflect on the features you want at the heart of your educational offering. What will your school look like at the end of the next 25 years? It is a reasonable assumption that strong teaching and learning will continue to be at the core of any successful school. Think carefully. If you get these wrong you could find yourself working your way out of a rather risky educational experiment. I always argue that the early years are the most important part of any child's educational journey. We sow the seeds for the future and, if we fail, we are risking our pupils' future life outcomes.

Entrance (or exit) exams often place the most significant restriction to our curricula. In this issue we look at a variety of exciting alternative models and we hope the experiences of other schools will help you reflect on your own practices and guide you towards 'picking and mixing' a truly flexible bespoke curriculum that fully covers the Common Entrance examination curriculum, whilst leaving time to 'go off-piste' in the interests of enrichment.

In this issue we also hear from schools that have moved away from CE to create their own baccalaureate. Or what about the Independent Curriculum, which promises to foster independent thinking, creativity and self-motivation within a curriculum that is compatible with CE? Or perhaps the International Primary Curriculum, another alternative model that is the gold standard in the international world of education. And if you really don't like the Common Entrance exam, why not help reshape it? The examiners always canvas opinions, so if you think you could do better why not get involved?

*Michèle Kitto*

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

## A thought for the term



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

It is often said by modern lifestyle coaches that we should *strive to be the best that we can be*. A Biblical alternative might be to strive to become what we already are.

According to Genesis chapter 1 verse 26, each of us is created in the image and likeness of God. Over the centuries, Bible commentators have tried to interpret this phrase, but its meaning has remained elusive. Some have suggested that it means that humans are self-conscious, rational and morally-responsible beings. Others have maintained that it is what differentiates us from the rest of the animal kingdom. The 16th century Reformers argued that it was what was lost at the Fall, when Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit. The 20th century German pastor, theologian and martyr, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, asserted that "Man is like the Creator, in that he is free".

Poetry can be richer and more nuanced than prose in prompting theological understanding. In religious language, lack of precision can actually be advantageous. So, it may be preferable to think of the image and likeness of God as being "the divine stamp" or as "thinking God's thoughts after him".

We all possess 'resources of Godness' in our very nature. We have all been given gifts and skills, abilities and talents with which to flourish and to make a difference in the world. We are designed to be in spiritual accord with God's will. We are children of God, created to be in relationship with him. He wants us to live our lives abundantly, and not to be like a Ferrari which never gets out of second gear. Inside each of us lies "the very spark of divinity". We should not merely settle for the animal side of our human nature, but aim to fulfil our spiritual potential.

So, fan the God-given spark into a flame. In your own soul, allow the ideal you to make peace with the real you. Become what you are.

# 75 issues and still going strong

Jonathan Evans, managing director of John Catt Educational, on the past, present and future of *Prep School* magazine

For all the sophistication of modern electronic communication, printed magazines remain the most successful way to plant impressions and ideas into the mind of a reader. Good, clear writing is simply presented, not camouflaged with over-elaborate design or smothered with advertorials. And the best ones are propaganda-free zones.

To promote their activities, professional associations have effective channels of communication through websites, blogs, Twitter, and emails. But it doesn't work to put head office propaganda into magazines. As one editorial board member so memorably said when such a move was proposed: "Nobody ever reads this stuff."

The magazine is, instead, a place for comment, for members to let off steam, for best practice and new ideas to be presented: a mine of information for members, a radiant mirror of the association to those who aren't. A prime example is *Prep School*, a showcase for all in the prep school world, not just members of the association branded on the front cover.

*Prep School* has stood the test of time; in its 75 issues it has had three well-informed editors, supported and guided by leading educationalists who are members of the Editorial Steering Group. When *Prep School* was first published in 1988 it was sponsored by a Joint Editorial Board (JEB),

with equal representation from IAPS and *satips*. United in its policy of ensuring that content was not separated into sections catering for the two different organisations, *Prep School* would simply address itself to the interests of all those who live and work in preparatory schools.\*

Little has changed since 1988. IAPS left the Editorial Board in 2009 but, in line with its founding policy, the magazine's steering group now has representatives from the junior schools of GSA, HMC, ISA and SoH. Anne Kidgell, the first editor, was succeeded by David Tytler in 2001. Michèle Kitto took the reins in 2010. Over the years, John Catt has provided a safe pair of hands to manage the magazine: managing editor Alex Sharratt ensures that it continues to fulfil its role in this modern world. As well as managing the Editorial Steering Group, Alex has been developing the electronic version of the magazine and ensuring that the archives are available online.

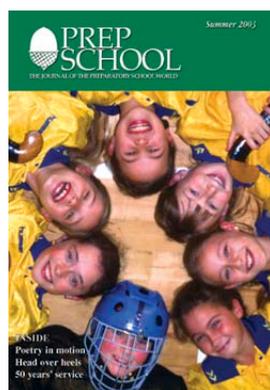
Underpinned financially by advertising revenues, much of the success of the magazine is due to loyal suppliers who advertise regularly and support schools in many different ways. A list of these supporters can be viewed on [prepschoolmag.co.uk](http://prepschoolmag.co.uk)

Special mention must be made of Donald Sewell's support. He was there at the start of the magazine and was a long-standing member of the JEB. More recently, until his sad death last year,

and together with Christopher Bromley Martin, he was a Reader, casting a watchful eye over the content. (*Prep School* was once applauded by the *Times Educational Supplement* for having at least two readers!)

There are very few in prep schools today who do not enjoy reading the magazine for reasons that are too many and varied to record. Suffice it to say it is a magazine written, read and produced by people who understand primary education and hold it in the highest esteem.

\**Prep School Review* 1987.



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Winter Term 2007 Issue 52

Prep School Photographer of the Year 2007, Edmund Smith of Castle Court Preparatory School

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Spring Term 2008 Issue 51

Inside: New IAPS chief executive • Do heads have to be teachers?  
• Latest from heads' survey • Tackling cybercrime

THE MAGAZINE OF THE PREPARATORY SCHOOL WORLD

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Winter Term 2008 Issue 63

Prep School Photographer of the Year 2008, Alex Brindley, of Birchfield School

Winter Term 2009 - Issue 66

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Prep School Photographer of the year 2009, Jaimee Harris, of The Banda School

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Inside: Farewell to John Morris • Take a winning photograph • The curriculum beyond the classroom  
• How good is your history?

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Inside: Climbing your own Everest  
Tackling the credit crunch  
Learning on the high seas  
Umpires take sides

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Celebrating prep school singing  
The future of boarding

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The magic of maths  
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Prep School art, photography & handwriting

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Orchestras: the power of high quality provision  
Wild storytelling

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The sexualisation of our youth  
Montaigne and the prep school world

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Dyslexia: advice on identifying and coping  
Social networking safety  
The joys of gardening  
Teaching living, breathing poetry

Summer Term 2011 - Issue 74

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Going the extra mile  
The 's' word - sustainability  
SEN focus: colour blindness

Summer Term 2012 - Issue 74

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A focus on IT  
The 'flipped classroom' model  
Using tablets to transform learning

# What do senior schools really want?

Jonathan Whybrow, Headmaster at Beachborough, asks the million-dollar question

A while ago I wrote a short article which was published in *Conference and Common Room*, the magazine of the Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference, entitled 'What do you want?' This question was aimed at senior schools and was designed to provoke a debate about entrance procedures into senior schools from prep schools. Unfortunately a proper debate, with a motion, speakers for and against and a vote, has yet to take place but plenty of discussion has, not least at the IAPS conference and meetings held at senior schools, most recently at Westminster and Cheltenham. From the perspective of a prep school Head, it feels that some progress is being made but for the entrance procedures to be made more user-friendly for all parties (children, staff at prep and senior school and parents), the first crucial step is to remove entrance requirements from the development of the 11-14 curriculum. Whilst the two remain entangled and Common Entrance, the Independent Curriculum, the Prep School Baccalaureate and individual schools' own examinations vie for supremacy, movement towards improving the academic provision for 11-14 year-olds in independent schools will remain stymied.

I was kindly allowed the floor at the most recent discussion event at Cheltenham and conducted a very informal straw poll. To the question 'who believes that the Head's report is an integral part of the entrance procedure?', I would suggest that 75% raised their hands. To the following question, 'who believes that an interview is an essential part of the entrance procedure?', a similar number agreed. Whether standardised scores should be integral to the entrance procedure was more of a moot point and the response was less positive. However, probably the most telling response, unless of course the audience had lost interest and were just willing me to finish, was to whether the importance of the Common Entrance examination should outweigh everything else. Nobody seemed to think that this was the way forward. This was unfair on Common Entrance because the same set of questions was not posed to the audience as regards to the Prep School Baccalaureate or the Independent Curriculum or any other examination for that matter.

So, can I suggest that to really-kick start the debate on the 11-14 curriculum, senior schools need to answer the question 'what do you *really* want?' with the following; CAT scores, or an equivalent, to give a basic indication of a

child's innate ability; an interview during which the search for the real child can be launched; and an honest report on the child, which will not only underpin the entrance procedure, but also be the basis of a relationship of trust between the senior and prep school.

At present, even though it is never referred to, the market dominates the debate. What is appropriate in the cities and their suburbs is often irrelevant to rural schools. Supply and demand fluctuates with geography and with the economy and so to suggest that one entrance procedure fits all is flawed. To have any chance of success and of consistency within the sector, the starting point must be kept simple. Hence, CATS, interview and report. Agreement having been reached with this, the discussion of how and what children aged between 11-14 are taught can begin in earnest, unencumbered by worried prep school Heads who aren't drift away from the status quo for fear of having a child failed and released from the concerns of senior Heads, worried that by adopting a different approach this might in some way present their school as less academic.

I would like to think that Beachborough, where I am Headmaster, and the schools that we feed are pretty representative of the majority of independent schools; thriving children and well run as a sound business, but never overrun with prospective parents to such an extent that one feels one can be bold enough to ditch the tried and tested. One can imagine the competitors. "Oh yes, Beachborough. A fine school but I hear that they don't prepare for senior schools in the normal way. Some exam which they set and mark themselves. More coffee?" And talking of exams which they set and mark themselves, surely we have noticed that all senior schools, even those who swear by Common Entrance, just happen to have their own entrance examination at 13+ (usually maths, English, verbal and non-verbal reasoning) so that they don't penalise those late entry candidates who haven't covered the Common Entrance syllabus. Logic says that if this simplified means of gaining entry is good enough for them, why is it not good enough for the rest?

I am sure that opinions have polarised and will continue to do so as meetings are set up in different parts of the country by schools with different interests and challenges to face. It is a fine old world when two of the most influential bodies involved in this debate, HMC and IAPS, manage to hold their conferences at the same time, in the

same location, London, and stay in hotels next door to each other by chance. And then they compound the error by not seizing the opportunity to meet to debate the issue when 80% of the schools affected are represented.

So, a plea! Can either HMC or IAPS work towards a joint conference to debate this issue? And then, can the

senior schools accept that the Head's report, an in-depth interview and CAT scores are a strong basis for deciding whether a child is suitable for their school, and can we all agree to develop a curriculum for children aged 11-14 which is academically rigorous and focuses on the skills that our children will need in the future?



"The first crucial step is to remove entrance requirements from the development of the 11-14 curriculum."

# “What shall I be when I’m older, dad?”

Andrew Hammond’s son prompts the new Head of Daneshill Prep School, Hampshire, to think long and hard about education and curriculums

It was a fair question from my 11-year-old son, Henry, and it made me pause. I could have said, ‘Well, son, what with the depletion of the world’s natural resources, the deeply concerning projections for world population, the pace of technological advancement, the ever-shrinking global market place and the extraordinary growth of global communications, who knows what jobs will be available in ten years’ time, eh? I mean, after all, the top ten most in-demand jobs this year had not even been invented when you started school.’

But I didn’t. Instead, I sidestepped the question and said, “Happy, son. I think you’ll be happy when you’re older.”

“How will I know when I’m happy?” came the reply.

Another good question, worthy of a Socratic dialogue. I said, “What makes you happy now, son?”

He said, “Chocolate.”

“Anything else?”

“Playing on my Xbox.”

“Anything else?”

“Doing stuff.”

“Ah,” I said, “What kind of stuff?”

He said, “Oh, I dunno. Adventures and things.”

At last I was gripped. I said, “That sounds interesting, Henry. I suppose school is an adventure isn’t it. Perhaps we should rename all schools Adventure Centres?”

“No.”

“Why not?”

“Because schools are where you have to learn stuff.”

“Yes, and learning is an adventure, isn’t it?”

“No.”

“Why not?”

“Because it’s boring and I can’t remember it all.”

“I know, son,” I said soothingly.

School is a place where you are introduced to the great mysteries and wonders of the world – and then tested on what you can remember of them. It’s like the memory game with a tray of objects covered by a tea towel. The towel is rolled back for a short period of time (usually the space between exams, which we call a ‘term’), and you are told to remember as much as you can before the objects are covered up again and you’re examined on what you can remember. Questions like: ‘Why did you choose those objects, Miss?’ or ‘Who designed them, Sir?’ or ‘How were they made?’ or ‘Can I place some of my own objects under the tea towel too please Miss?’ are entirely unwelcome.

I was at Wellington College recently for the annual Festival of Education. I’d gone specifically to hear two thinkers I admire, A.C. Grayling and Guy Claxton. They didn’t disappoint. Among many other pearls of wisdom, Grayling offered: “Education is not just about the acquisition of knowledge, it’s about the acquisition of understanding.” Well said, professor. He went on to say: “The only obsolescence-proof thing teachers can ever give students is to teach them how to think.” Everything

else becomes obsolete eventually.

But the traditional model of school is not predicated on learning how to think; rather it’s built on acquiring and recalling knowledge – and that’s not the same thing. It’s about the three Rs: Reading, Remembering and Regurgitating for the purposes of passing an exam.

The number of objects you can recall when the tea towel is replaced will determine the number assigned to you at the end of the exam, be it 65%, 37% or an IQ of 120. These numbers are totalled and standardized and put through all sorts of whizzy calculations that take into account your birth date and eventually a fixed measure of your intelligence is found.

But is intelligence really fixed?

One of my favourite quotes is: ‘Intelligence, like love or beauty, is immeasurable.’ It both heartens and disheartens me to learn that this was said by Alfred Binet, father of the IQ tests, who called on us all to rid ourselves of the notion that intelligence is a fixed pot.

It’s not.

As Ken Robinson says, intelligence is diverse, dynamic and distinct.

But perhaps it’s convenient to be able to say to fee-paying parents that ‘Given your son Johnny’s intelligence quota of 94, we believe we are helping the little fellow to punch far above his weight and go beyond his potential’.

Good spin. Good value for money.

Or is it? Is Johnny really punching above his intellectual weight? Is his potential really limited to 94?



“School is a place where you are introduced to the great mysteries and wonders of the world – and then tested on what you can remember of them.”

Scientists have tried to estimate the size of a human intellect – our computational capacity, if you like. It’s larger than 94. With their 100 billion brain cells (fitted as standard with every child when you take them out of the box at birth) any average child is capable of performing the following number of information signals (or thoughts) across the millions of synapses inside their brain. The number is approximately 1 followed by 10.5 million kilometers of type-written zeros. If you wanted to write this number down, it would stretch to the moon and back 14 times.

That’s bigger than 94. ‘So, Mr and Mrs Phipps-Norton, we don’t think Johnny is punching above his weight yet, because we believe that none of us have yet reached our full potential, which is incalculably large. Johnny has extraordinary capacities and rest assured we’re on our way to realising them’.

Surely we are distinguishable as humans not only by our ability to retain factual knowledge and to think logically, but by our capacity for imaginative thought. Our intelligence cannot be summed up in a verbal reasoning score, however convenient.

Gardner suggests: ‘Intelligence is knowing what to do when you don’t know what to do.’ It’s about scratching your head, thinking creatively, laterally, practically and philosophically, it’s about reasoning, persevering and problem-solving whenever you hit a snag.

We’ve all heard the heart-warming phrase, ‘Life shouldn’t be measured in the number of breaths we take but in the number of moments that take our breath away’. I’d like to add another: The quality of our children’s education shouldn’t be measured in how much they know but in the



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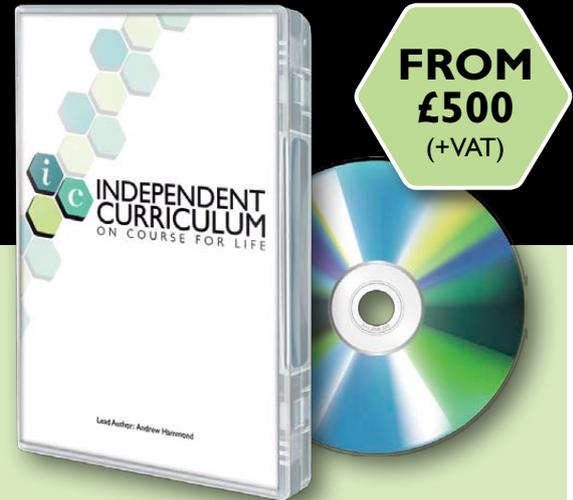
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**John Brett, Headmaster,  
Old Buckenham Hall**

“We bought the IC because we felt it was academically challenging, and we really like the three-stage ‘discover, apply and communicate’ process which we believe will help our children leave Donhead with the a more confident grasp of the transferrable skills they will ultimately need in the 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace.”

**G C McGrath, Headmaster,  
Donhead School**

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number of exhilarating moments when they realise how much more there is in the world for them still to discover.

Of course, the problem is whenever an educationalist calls for a greater balance between factual recall and creative thinking, it's interpreted as a soft, romantic view of childhood in which children 'mustn't suffer failure' or 'mustn't do anything too hard that might upset their happiness levels'.

This is a convenient misinterpretation. It needn't be an either/or dilemma; factual recall and creative learning need not be mutually exclusive. It is not a choice between either academic rigour learned by rote or a spot of creative thinking. If you want to embed understanding of knowledge more deeply – as Professor Grayling suggests we should – an effective way of doing this is to involve the children in their learning, in ways that extend beyond the three Rs. Pupils need the opportunity to discover new knowledge, apply it within their own creative endeavours, and then communicate what they have learned to others.

Calling for more independent thinking, more creativity, more problem-solving and more scrutinising of established knowledge through discussion and debate does not mean dumbing down or going soft. Quite the reverse; it reclaims the great potential we have as thinkers. And it recognises that these life skills matter – now more than ever.

At Wellington, Guy Claxton likened the traditional model of schooling to an apprenticeship to become a 19th century clerk: learning how to sit properly, how to produce neat, cursive handwriting and how to avoid mistakes at all costs.

But as Claxton says, rarely does one see a job advertisement in the Situations Vacant asking for someone who can 'Sit up straight, face the front, listen quietly and write neatly'.

It's about life skills – adaptable, problem-solving life skills that are applicable in all sorts of scenarios and situations. That famous quote

## What has always interested me is how we can prepare for Common Entrance in ways that enrich and stimulate children's natural curiosity

of Einstein's seems apt: 'We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them.' We need some fresh thinking.

I studied for an MA in Creativity in Education a few years back. My final thesis was 'The perceived tension between teaching for creativity and teaching for Common Entrance'. I interviewed a great many children, teachers, Headteachers and parents and the overwhelming conclusion I reached was that real understanding comes when the children are allowed to bring some of their own creativity into their learning. You raise academic standards through creative teaching and learning strategies, not reduce them. It's not either/or. There is nothing wrong with Common Entrance as a system of assessment and school transfer; what has always interested me is how we can prepare for it in ways that enrich and stimulate children's natural curiosity and creativity. The syllabus for Common Entrance helps us to plan our teaching effectively, but it does not seek to dictate the learning experiences we provide for our pupils – this falls to us as creative practitioners; there is plenty of scope for how we prepare our CE candidates.

The idea that you can deliver knowledge to children at the same time as unlocking their own creativity and communication skills is what drove me to come up with the Independent Curriculum in the first place. The IC is built on a model for good teaching, namely: allowing the children to discover new knowledge, giving them the opportunity to apply what they have learned in order to create something new, and then

providing opportunities for them to communicate what they have learned with, and to, others. It's an active, rather than passive, experience. And it's not incompatible with CE at all; rather it embeds understanding of the knowledge prescribed on the ISEB syllabus more deeply because the children are actively involved in their learning.

Knowledge is still vitally important, and the knowledge you would expect from a good education (and required for CE) is mapped against the IC cross-curricular learning skills of discovering, applying and communicating in every subject in the curriculum, in every year group. By mapping knowledge strands against learning skills we have, in effect, created more than a syllabus, we have built a scheme of optional teaching and learning activities – each one taking a knowledge strand, then demonstrating how pupils may discover it, apply it and then communicate it – in a myriad of different, creative ways.

Will the IC help my son, Henry, find a job when he's older? Yes, I genuinely believe so, because it will equip him with a range of adaptable skills that will be useful in whatever field of occupation he chooses to enter. But more than that it will, I hope, have two other desirable outcomes: Henry will learn how to think, and he will learn how to learn.

Andrew Hammond is a teacher, author and regular conference speaker. He takes up his first Headship at Daneshill Prep School, Hampshire in September 2012.

Andrew is Lead Author of the Independent Curriculum

# A thoroughly global curriculum

Anne Keeling explains how the International Primary Curriculum is meeting the needs of 21st century learning

It is essential, in the challenging, global, interdependent world of the 21st century, for children to receive a good education. But it's also more difficult too. In the same way that far fewer children play football because there are so many other competing things for them to do, so it's far harder to help young children learn in school when other parts of their lives can seem so much more attractive, and when so many children are in homes – professional and non-professional – where time for parents to be attentive to their children is at a premium.

Getting a primary curriculum right is more difficult today than it's ever been because it has to meet so many crucial goals. Of all those goals, the most essential ones are:

- Rigorous learning: ensuring a blend of knowledge, skills and understanding across a broad range of subjects.
- High levels of children's engagement: so that children enjoy their learning and stick to it.
- International, global and intercultural awareness: many opportunities open to our current generation of children will be in countries and cultures different from the one in which they are growing up. So many problems, both global and local will be solved through cooperation.
- The development of personal dispositions: qualities such as adaptability, morality, respect, resilience, enquiry, cooperation, communication and thoughtfulness, which will help children on their journey through life.
- Supporting teachers and schools: Providing teachers and schools with everything they might need to make the curriculum work to its very best for every single child.

A curriculum that thoroughly meets each one of these priority areas is not an easy trick to pull off, but Kevin Hannah, Head of Junior School at All Hallows Preparatory School in Somerset thinks it might have well found the answer through learning with the International Primary Curriculum (IPC).

"It's a curriculum that has generated huge engagement across the board," he says. "The IPC makes learning very relevant for every child. It's a motivating thing. The children now go home wanting to talk about their learning which gets the parents more involved. As a result, we'll have a child bringing in his fossil collection from home because he's doing the dinosaur theme. Or we'll have a parent come in to talk to a class because her work relates to their unit. The IPC has changed the whole sense of learning within our school community."

The IPC is a comprehensive, creative, thematic, curriculum for children aged three to 12 and is designed to give schools a clear process of learning supported by very specific learning goals for every subject as well as for personal learning and for international mindedness. It was introduced in 2000 and is now the curriculum choice of international and national schools in over 1400 schools in 77 countries around the world.





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### Rigorous learning

It is the thematic approach of the IPC that, says Kevin, is ensuring the best possible learning is taking place: “Instead of learning subjects in isolation and with no connection to each other, all subjects follow a theme so everywhere, the children are making connections with their learning,” he explains. “Everything makes sense to them now.”

Each IPC thematic unit incorporates most of the core subjects including science, history, geography, ICT, art and PE and provides many opportunities to link literacy and numeracy. Each subject has a number of learning tasks to help teachers to help their children meet a range of learning goals set out in the curriculum. Take, for example,

the IPC chocolate unit. In history, children explore the discovery of chocolate, the period it was discovered, the motivation for discovery and the changing attitude to chocolate through the ages. In geography they look at the countries that grow cacao and how particular localities have been affected by its production and by slash and burn. They look at the links between countries that grow cacao and countries that produce chocolate. In art children look at how chocolate is sold and how packaging is designed. In science, children use the chocolate unit to look at the energy values in foodstuff and to explore the effects of heating and cooling, and so on. All combined, the unit – as with all IPC units - provides a vital blend of knowledge, skills and understanding.

# The IPC has become core to our school. It really helps us to focus on the individual; finding everyone's strengths and ensuring that every child can develop in their own way

## Developing personal dispositions

But it's not just the approach to academic learning that has impacted the children at All Hallows. "What's so great about the IPC is its focus on personal skills too, says Kevin. "By building upon skills such as perseverance and resilience within their learning, it's helping our children to develop an incredibly healthy growth mindset, enabling them to demonstrate independence and initiative on new tasks," he says.

Personal dispositions, IPC believes, are established over time with constant use. So instead of 'add-on' lessons about such elusive personal skills as morality or respect, opportunities to experience and practise very specific personal dispositions are built into the learning tasks within each thematic unit. In addition, many of these tasks are group activities which encourage children to consider each other's ideas and opinions, share responsibilities and communicate effectively.

## Intercultural awareness

In addition, each IPC unit helps young children to start developing a global awareness and gain an increasing sense of the 'other'. This is what the IPC calls 'international mindedness' and is addressed in every theme by looking at the learning through a local, a national and an international perspective.

With IPC member schools in over 70 countries including such schools as Harrow International in Bangkok, opportunities abound for the children at All Hallows to share their learning with children from other cultures and in dramatically different environments. Take, for example, the children at St Maur International School in Japan

who shared their first-hand experiences of the last year's Japanese earthquake and tsunami with their global friends during their learning with the IPC active planet unit. These children have listened to, communicated with and learned from each other in a real-world, real-time context.

## Measuring Success

So what about feedback from teachers and parents at All Hallows? "They absolutely love it. We all do! We're massive, massive fans of the IPC," says Kevin Hannah. "It's been a bit of a revolution in fact because the children are so engaged in their learning; at school and at home. That's been exciting for both teachers and parents. Even for inspectors; a colleague with training as an ISI inspector and as an education psychologist observed some lessons recently as part of our self-evaluation process and he was blown away with the level of learning going on with the IPC. The IPC has become core to our school. It really helps us to focus on the individual; finding everyone's strengths and ensuring that every child can develop in their own way. What we now have is a fantastic, cutting-edge curriculum that is helping us to produce resilient, adaptable, cooperative and confident learners, well prepared for secondary school and ready to hit the world."

## The next step

Taking children one step further to Secondary is the International Middle Years Curriculum (IMYC). This was launched last year as a result of requests from numerous IPC member schools around the world that wanted to extend the learning approach of the IPC beyond primary to students aged 11 to 14.

The IMYC is a curriculum that aims to respond to all the learning needs of an adolescent. It provides independence and interdependence in students' learning through discrete subject learning and themes. It encourages learning that helps teenagers to make connections between the subjects they study and to their own lives. It also involves active skills-based learning, and promotes self-reflection and the opportunity for students to make sense of their learning through current media platforms. "The characteristics of the IPC and the IMYC are very much the same; particularly the structured learning process" says Richard Mast, Headmaster of Leman International School. "One of the biggest differences is that instead of focusing on a theme as they do in the IPC, students focus on a big idea. This gives the subject learning a context at a level that my students had not experienced before. However, for our students, there was no 'what's this all about?' I think they were absolutely ready for the higher order thinking that comes with the IMYC. There is no doubt that the IMYC is a successful next step from the primary years."

For more information about the International Primary Curriculum or the International Middle Years Curriculum contact Fieldwork Education at 0207-7531-9696 or visit [www.greatlearning.com](http://www.greatlearning.com)

# Graham Greene's *Old School* research

Dr Matthew Jenkinson, director of studies at New College School, Oxford reflects on how looking back educationally can actually be enlightening and thought provoking

Graham Greene had a complex relationship with the educational establishment. On the surface he was of the system: he was the son of a Headmaster and he was educated at Berkhamsted and Balliol College, Oxford. Under that surface, however, lurked boredom, depression, and profound dissatisfaction with the 'education' he experienced. In 1934, at about the age of 30, Greene edited 17 essays, each by a distinguished author, in which they encapsulated their schooldays.

The essays were predominantly concerned with independent secondary education, though the odd nod was made to the state system, and even more nods were made to prep schools. This was not meant to be a prospectus for the glories of the public school system. Greene wanted to provide a resource for the social historian who, he was convinced, would soon chronicle the demise of 'so odd a system of education'. It was 'doomed', he wrote. 'Too few people today can afford the fees of a public school. The state-aided pupils are within the gates, but the geese doze under their B.A. hoods around the Capitol'.

One of the most significant characteristics of *The Old School*, published by Jonathan Cape (now part of Random House), was its recourse to literary luminaries rather than sociologists or educational theorists. This was natural. The literary world was the world in which Greene existed. But, crucially, Greene's essayists were masters of the art of communicating salient observations in a concise and pleasing way. Arnot Robertson managed to summarize her view of Sherborne in four sentences: 'Run about, girls, like boys, and then you won't think of them'; 'run, girls, run: this is the first function of English womanhood, and never mind the later ones'; 'Oh-goody-goody-we-ought-to-do-well-in-lacrosse-this-term'; and 'Hurrah-hurrah-for-the-house-and-I'm-so-glad-I'm-not-pretty'.

Much of this retrospective 'evidence' was clearly subjective and anecdotal. It was therefore subject to the dangers

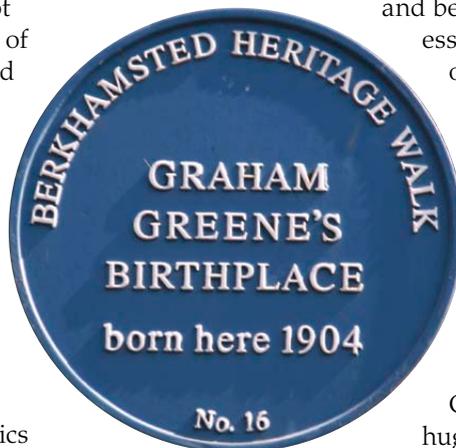
of navel-gazing self-congratulation, reinterpretation of schooldays through rose-tinted spectacles, or the mistaken assignment of adult ills to corrupted formative years. But education is not an exact science. The soul of education – therefore how it should be practised – cannot be judged just by literacy and numeracy statistics.

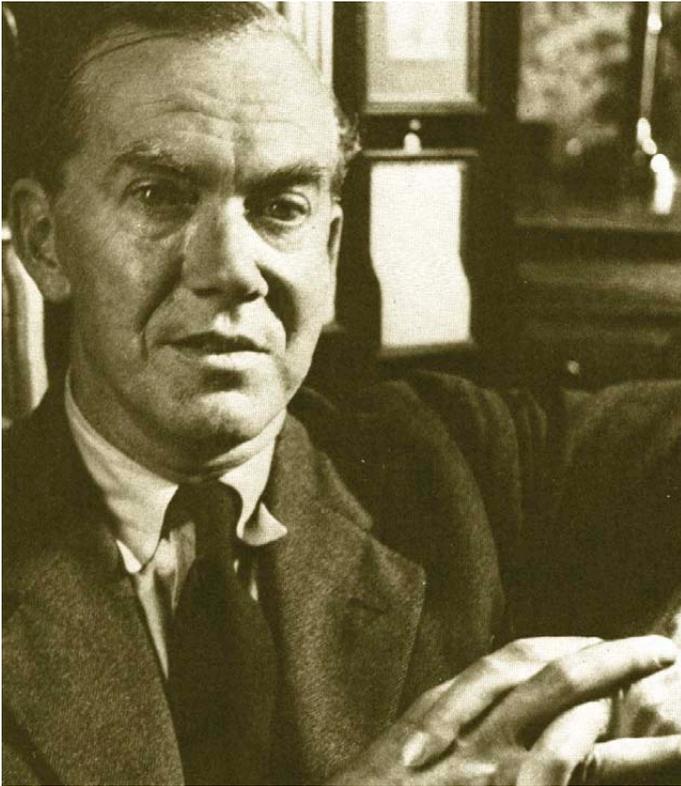
Greene's authors addressed immutable, core values that are as relevant today as they were in the early 20th century. Their attractive prose enticed those who would not normally think about education to do so; this is itself a lesson to contemporary educational theorists who face the danger of removing the educational debate above and beyond those whom it concerns. Greene's essayists addressed a variety of features of their schooldays, from architecture to prefects, teenage crushes to school dinners. Yet two themes stand out clearly to permeate almost all 17 essays: teachers and values.

**Teachers: repressed, terrified, masculine, horsy, disillusioned, bored, and underpaid?**

The generation of teachers about which Greene's essayists wrote was unusual. A huge proportion of the country's energetic youth was spent on the battlefields of the First World War. Those individuals who staffed classrooms in their stead were often unready, untrained, or unwilling to become excellent educators. Harold Nicolson wrote with pity about those Wellington teachers whose sociability was hampered by the 'quadruple barriers of flatulence, affability, good taste, and bowling averages'. William Plomer's *Rugby* was allegedly full of teachers who were 'often either dotards or weaklings', possessing no 'warmth, imagination, modesty and culture'.

H.E. Bates's *Kettering* was replete with 'the repressed and terrified', 'the masculine and horsy', the 'disillusioned and bored' and the 'underpaid'. As a result, the whole atmosphere was 'strained and abnormal'; pupils were 'not educated but repressed'. That was, until a young infantryman returned from France and taught Bates





Greene could not understand why someone 'should feel more loyal to a school which is paid to teach them than to a butcher who is paid to feed them'.

English 'with extreme detachment but with extreme kindness'. This teacher's arrival happened to coincide with Bates's realization that he wanted to become an author rather than a professional footballer.

We should not paint a wholly gloomy portrait of the essayists' teachers, then. Theodora Benson, at Cheltenham Ladies' College, enjoyed teaching that was 'stimulating', leading pupils to 'read quite a lot of good stuff we needn't have read at all'. The Principal was, Benson wrote, 'among the most interesting, intelligent and delightful women' she ever met. L.P. Hartley's Harrow was populated with masters who 'displayed a strong sense of responsibility in the bestowal of praise and blame'. He was surprised that his teachers still had 'the gift of appreciation', 'after all they have gone through'. E.L. Grant Watson described his literature and history lessons at Bedales as 'pure happiness'. He would 'watch the clock, envious lest the minutes should go too fast'.

Of all the essayists, W.H. Auden provided the wittiest, wisest, and most perceptive portrait of what teachers were, and what they should be. Their black clothes, he noted, 'made them look like unsuccessful insurance agents'. Too many of them were 'silted-up old maids, earnest young scoutmasters, or just generally dim'. Yet he wrote with real warmth and enthusiasm about those teachers who made a difference to him. From his Classics and English master, he 'learnt more about poetry and the humanities than from any course of university lectures'.

Auden, of course, himself belonged to the teaching profession, so he could combine his experiences of being

in a class and in front of a class. He succinctly provided a portrait of the ideal teacher: they should give 'the comfort and stimulus of a personal relation', but crucially they should never, in return, make 'any demands' for themselves. It was not enough 'just to be efficient at teaching', as, say, one could be an efficient bank clerk; one had to be 'a remarkable person'. Teachers should maintain outside interests, so as to avoid becoming 'lifeless prunes or else spiritual vampires, sucking their vitality from their children'. Overall, a teacher should be 'a mature and above all a happy person, giving the young the feeling that adult life is infinitely more exciting and interesting than their own'.

### Values: foolish rules and conventions?

Auden remained concerned that the Gresham's of his adolescence had transmitted an inappropriate and corrosive set of values. He was taught about 'vague ideals of service', rather than 'the problems of the world, or how to attack them'. The school's disciplinary system was based on a potentially toxic combination of notions of loyalty, honour and fear. The result was, Auden claimed, a community in which pupils were 'furtive and dishonest'. More dangerously, Gresham's system of peer regulation caused problems for pupils in later life. Once the pressure of the community was removed, Auden claimed, the pupils were 'left defenceless': 'Either the print has taken so deeply that they remain frozen and undeveloped, or else, their infantilized instinct suddenly released, they plunge into foolish and damaging dissipation'.

Auden's solution was a simple but potentially radical one: 'leave well alone'. The 'ideals' that his Headmaster and teachers attempted to instil in him and his peers were artificial and too much for those who were still growing up. They did not have the experiences necessary to contextualize these abstract ideals. Teachers should, Auden concluded, give advice when it was asked for, while the accrual and appreciation of values would come as pupils worked and thought, sometimes alone, sometimes among their peers.

Derek Verschoyle, writing about Malvern, came to some 21st century educational opinions while looking back at early-20th century Malvern. He wrote with suspicion of the 'prescribed formula' by which Malvern cultivated 'physique, intellect and religion'. 'Actions, thoughts and beliefs' were depersonalized, the school allegedly celebrated 'a model of impersonal orthodoxy'; so Malvern's products were 'standardized to the requirements of the market'. A more appropriate system, Verschoyle argued, was one in which the curriculum was 'related to the developments of civilization and changes in society'; in which the school allowed a multiplicity of political beliefs; and in which a 'civic sense' was inculcated, so long as this was not taken as an excuse for 'reactionary and conservative prejudice'.

H.E. Bates communicated a similar, though more vociferous, view of values at Kettering. He felt 'almost furious' looking back at its 'unnecessary attempts at

conformation with public school standards, the constant talk of tradition and the honour and good name of the school'. The whole system, Bates argued, enslaved pupils and teachers 'by its insidiously foolish rules and conventions'. Antonia White's convent school apparently went even further in stamping out 'any tendency towards a dangerous independence of mind'. She was not even allowed to possess a Douay Bible, because it contained 'many passages quite unsuitable for the eyes of any girl under eighteen'.

This was less the case at Elizabeth Bowen's Downe House, where there was 'nothing particular to conform to ... no one dragooned us'. That said, the school was infused with the values of 'competitive sociability and team spirit', while the headmistress did articulate one particularly unpleasant maxim: 'it did not matter if we were happy so long as we were good'. Hartley's Harrow, or at least his house within it, appears to have navigated a middle way: 'transgression against tradition was a very serious matter', but there was sufficient 'decentralization' to increase the happiness in the pupils' private lives. Harrow's 'privilege system' was clearly traditional, but it incorporated laudable values from tradition. It was 'a democratic ordinance', in which the 'humble and obscure' could benefit from a 'dignity and influence and prestige' to which their reticent personalities would not necessarily have led.

**Conclusions: insomnia, nervous apprehension, indigestion, malnutrition, arrested growth?**

The essays in *The Old School* present, to a large extent, an educational world that is lost. There are many elements whose demise we should celebrate. Yet there are still some central immutable educational truths by which we should be inspired – either because we can see what to react against, or we can ape those practices that have had such an enduring positive impact. Many of the essayists were at pains to point out that their schools had clearly changed between their time there and the time at which they were writing.

We have to be sensitive to the fact that the essays are subjective and singular personal views, and they address a subject on which pretty much everyone has an opinion. There is no uniform portrait that can be painted of the school system as presented in the essays, just as there would not be today. Some essayists suffered from terrible influences; some flourished from good ones. Some essayists would have perceived some influences as terrible, that other essayists would have perceived as good.

Some essayists saw the shadow of their schooldays looming large over their adult lives; some viewed school as just one influence in a welter of stimuli that affect our adulthood. For example, L.P. Hartley initially wished to blame on his schooldays his adult 'insomnia, nervous apprehension, indigestion, malnutrition, arrested growth, and an ingrained habit of unpunctuality'; he soon realized that he could not. Theodora Benson argued that 'people don't grow up warped or embittered or the victims of complexes because they had a few good cries in the cloakroom or somebody once snubbed them'. Some do, some don't.

One of the many positives derived from reading 17 talented authors writing about their schooldays is that a diverse picture is created; rigid uniformity is shunned. This, indeed, is one of the lessons that many of the authors are at pains to advance. There is space for tradition, but

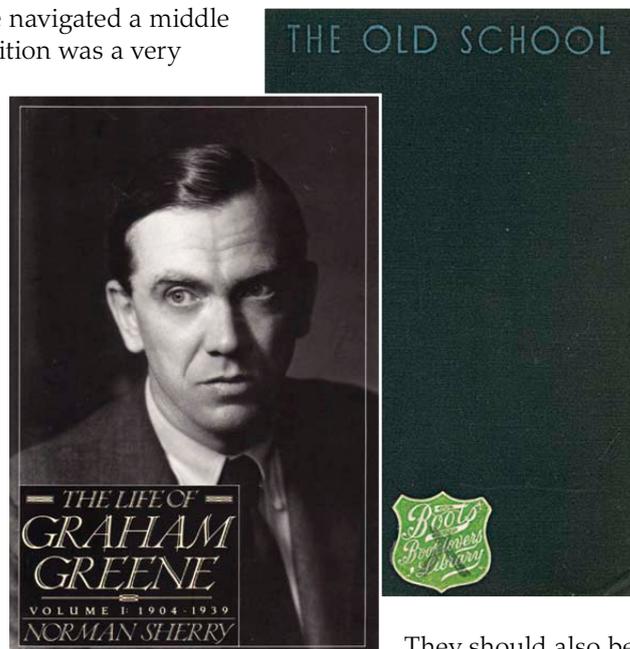
not when that tradition is suffocating and corrosive to pupils' development. There is space for civic education, but not when that is taken as an excuse for the perpetuation of reactionary 'ideals'. There is space for discipline and regulation, but only when systems are enlightened and work for the positive benefit of all, rather than the sadistic pleasures of the few.

The teachers imparting this discipline should be – or at least give the impression of being – kind yet detached when necessary, appreciative, remarkable, interested in life beyond school, and happy.

They should also be genuine, as a story by Stephen Spender about his prep school illustrates. He

returned to school one summer term to find that a tennis court had appeared, the pupils had been given gardens, and the Headmaster had given up his drawing room so it could be used as a boys' study. The following term, all of this was reversed. But a nice prospectus had appeared, with attractive photos showing, say, 'boys playing tennis'.

Greene's authors were not educational theorists or philosophers. They were just interested parties who could convey their educational experiences in a beautifully readable manner. If such an approach seduced more people into engagement with educational debate, then it is one that should be celebrated. Graham Greene, it seems, was little the wiser once he had compiled the essays. He still could not understand why someone 'should feel more loyal to a school which is paid to teach them than to a butcher who is paid to feed them'. Yet his readers would have had a clearer idea of the educational practices to be nurtured, and those that were to be left behind. Therein lies the value of retrospection.



# Broadening horizons and preparing for the future – a baccalaureate model

Headmaster of Yateley Manor Rob Williams shares the benefits of joining a pilot for the Prep School Baccalaureate (PSB) and inspires us all to examine how we ‘add value’ in a pupils’ educational journey

During my time as a prep school practitioner I have embraced and supported the breadth of educational experience that, I believe, has always been such a fundamental characteristic of all leading preparatory schools. The focus on the individual and providing each child with a secure platform upon which they can build successful lives has been one of our most recognised accomplishments as a sector. We say farewell each summer to our Year 8 pupils, celebrating their achievements and, together with their parents, feeling such pride and joy when reflecting upon the journey we have all shared. Our older pupils are often seen as our guiding lights. At

Yateley Manor they play a pivotal role so clearly visible on our open days. What better way to show a prospective parent the power of the Yateley Manor experience? But how did we give them this global awareness, maturity, confidence, humility and poise? It has never been purely by chance, however, it is often hard to identify the key moments or elements of programmes of study that are geared to nurturing each characteristic. Was it planned? Have they absorbed our ethos simply through osmosis? Does everyone really get the same opportunity? Has every pupil received good quality feedback as to how they are progressing in the skills that underpin their learning and improve their prospects of achieving their goals in life?

## A baccalaureate model: why does it excite me?

For a long time I have followed with interest baccalaureate models that encompass breadth, in terms of curriculum content, and importantly models that openly and rigorously nurture and teach key life skills. Soon after taking over the reins at Yateley Manor, I was approached by Paul Brewster, Headmaster at The Beacon. Our meetings over recent years have shown that we share a great deal of common ground in terms of our vision for what prep school education can and should achieve. Paul presented me with a chance to participate in the pilot of the new Prep Schools Baccalaureate (PSB). Having formally joined the pilot in January 2012, I now find myself involved in the creation of what I feel is the most important initiative since I joined the profession over 20 years ago. It encapsulates and focuses upon the fundamental ethics that I see as being central to prep school education. It caters for a broad range of abilities and takes our core values to new levels and, in doing so, responds to the frequently discussed and publicised views of senior schools, universities and employers. How do we develop the characteristics that are now often found to be so lacking in many young adults? Can our pupils cope with change, learn and adapt their opinions when participating in group discussion whilst also being equally comfortable as a sole operator? Can they communicate effectively to a range of audiences?





I am very proud that Yateley Manor is playing a key role in piloting the PSB. It offers huge potential for individual pupils in Years 7 and 8 to display and build upon their core skills. The framework allows us to communicate to pupils, parents and senior schools, many all-round achievements we know are already visible in our school.

### **A brief background of the PSB**

In 2007 The Beacon, Amersham, under Michael Spinney's leadership, introduced the Beacon Certificate of Achievement (BCA) to replace Common Entrance courses in Year 7 and Year 8. In 2009 Moorlands School, led by John Davies, took the same decision, establishing their own distinctive course (the Moorlands Diploma) albeit to the same end. Both schools have enjoyed very considerable support from both parents and senior schools. They are now merging their courses to create a tried and tested basis for the PSB.

In January 2012 The Beacon and Moorlands were joined by Taunton Prep School and Yateley Manor to form the initial Pilot Group for PSB.

Preparatory work was done by a PSB working group that was formed in 2010 with representatives from the Independent Schools' Examinations Board (ISEB), St.

Edward's Oxford, Wellington College, Marlborough College, Charterhouse, Moorlands School (Leeds), Lambrook, The Hawthorns and Eagle House. During the 2010/11 academic year, the PSB project group framed the principles that underpin the plans outlined below.

Like Common Entrance, PSB follows a rigorous academic spine. PSB schools have the freedom to pick the best elements of recognised programmes of study, such as Common Entrance and the National Curriculum for example.

The academic spine is defined by having the Core Subjects (English, mathematics, the sciences and a modern foreign language) and Compulsory Additional Subjects (the humanities (history, geography and RS), creative and performing arts (art, design technology, music and drama) and sports and physical education). PHSCE is also a part of the curriculum but is not formally assessed. Optional Additional Subjects may include: classical languages and study (Latin, Greek, classical civilisation), a second modern foreign language, food technology or philosophy.

Underpinning every curriculum area are the Core Skills (communication, thinking and learning, review and improvement, independence, collaboration and leadership). A broad and imaginative prep school curriculum, where teachers have the freedom to show their initiative and

# Creating a model that allows each participating school to maintain its core features is, I believe, a great strength of the model. I truly hope and believe that our pilot phase will show those schools waiting in the wings that, having accepted its core values, the PSB can accommodate a broad range of prep school models

inspire pupils is an essential ingredient in providing the best opportunity for pupils to hone these skills.

## The initial response of senior schools?

Senior independent schools need to know the following in order to feel secure in offering places to pupils:

- the level of attainment in core subjects
- the skills and attitudes that a pupil exhibit
- a pupil's ability profile

PSB includes a mix of both formative and summative assessments, especially in the core subjects. PSB schools can draw from a bank of nationally accredited tests, such as PIPS, CAT tests and so on. Without exception, every response from senior schools that Yateley Manor pupils have entered at 13+ over the past ten years has been positive and supportive. They will continue to track our progress with interest.

## Holding on to our independence

It would be easy for the PSB model to focus on becoming an alternative form of assessment and simply be seen as yet another examination board. The pilot group has both discussed and created drafts of alternative forms of assessment in the core subject areas of maths, English, science and French. Finding any more common ground than is currently available through CE, National Curriculum and other sources has proved difficult and in sciences in particular, lead to a degree of compromise that has weakened the outcome. The four schools are very different in terms of their demographic, senior school requirements and parent expectations. Each also holds on dearly, and with great gusto, to some fundamental characteristics and structures that make their school what it is, unique. Some, for example, need Common Entrance, others do not. So we have agreed, for the time being, to carry on using the current mix of nationally

recognised assessment structures already at our disposal supplemented by our own tried and tested models, all of which we feel comfortable using. Creating a model that allows each participating school to maintain its core features is, I believe, a great strength of the model. I truly hope and believe that our pilot phase will show those schools waiting in the wings that, having accepted its core values, the PSB can accommodate a broad range of prep school models.

At Yateley Manor, the Common Entrance programme in the core subjects still allows us to teach in a manner that promotes and nurtures the core skills outlined in the PSB model such as critical thinking and independent and collaborative learning. The lower tier and higher tier papers currently allow us to cater for the breadth of ability in our pupil profiles. However, I have long been dissatisfied with the humanities models where I find the narrowness of topic base does not provide the pupils with a significant appreciation of modern and global issues that I believe a well-educated 12-13 year old should understand. History in particular allows little scope for the study of some key 20th and 21st century events that have shaped modern culture, behaviour and relationships. We will therefore follow our own programme, still covering many Common Entrance and National Curriculum topics, but importantly introducing some new topics, additional modern foreign languages and break down perceived barriers between subjects. The study of classics and Latin is something we wish to continue, but to a level that will be picked up by senior schools in Year 9. We have found it increasingly frustrating preparing children, primarily our scholars, to levels in both Latin and French well beyond that which they require for Year 9 in so many senior schools.

## So what do the pilot schools have in common?

What we all have in common is the understanding that by focussing on the teaching and provision of the core skills,

and by involving the pupils more actively in discussing and assessing themselves against a set of criteria in these core skills, that we will strengthen the all-round performance of the pupils participating in the model. We aim to produce even more robust, tenacious, self-aware, confident, yet empathetic pupils who are ready for the challenges of modern society.

We will track and nurture a student's performance in thinking and learning, communication and their ability to review and improve. We will analyse three further skills that we see as playing important roles but importantly feature as key components in each of the first three skills, these being independence, collaboration and leadership. There is a matrix providing clear descriptions of the skills that Year 7 and 8 pupils should aspire to acquire. Examples being:

"I choose the most appropriate medium to present my work to suit a particular audience or need" (communication/independence)

"Through discussion with my peers, I refine my ideas and in doing so come to an agreement" (review and improvement/collaboration)

"I take the initiative by identifying key issues, anticipating problems and devising a plan" (thinking and learning/ leadership)

Pupils have the responsibility to track their own skills and they are expected to support the frequency with which they achieve them with evidence from, for example,

exercise books, reports, project feedback and a general record book that allows feedback from sport, drama and music *etc.* Pupils then discuss and agree the level at which they perform with their tutor. The very fact that these skills are being discussed raises their profile both in terms of curriculum planning and pupil expectation.

All areas of performance in academic subjects, the creative and performing arts, physical education, the core skills and a cross-curricular project will be measured and moderated externally against an agreed PSB scale from 1-10, culminating in a final certificate of all-round achievement that covers the breadth of a typical preparatory school curriculum. Every child receives this declaration of their achievement, so it is not just those who are fortunate enough to receive a prize on speech day. Pupils, parents and senior schools have a clear, but succinct, snap-shot of relative ability and areas of exceptional talent.

So, at Yateley Manor we are entering a new era, whilst still making the most of the broad and inspirational preparatory school curriculum. Some very subtle tweaks to our programme will have significant and powerful effects upon the outcomes for our pupils, strengthening their foundation, improving their comparative advantage in terms of future employability and the chance to realise their potential.

For more details of the PSB programme, please contact me or Paul Brewster (The Beacon, Amersham).



# What, no Common Entrance?

Noel Neeson, Head of St Peter's Lypstone, Devon, shares how his school have recently embraced their own bespoke solution to Common Entrance or senior school entrance examinations – the 'St Peter's Baccalaureate'

Enlightened though we believed our teaching methods to be, St Peter's, like most preparatory schools, has increasingly been constrained by the demands of an examination system which is now decreed by an increasing number of senior schools as unfit for purpose.

Over recent years, the murmur of dissatisfaction has become louder on a national level. However, it is one thing to recognise a problem: it is quite another to find the co-ordination and collective will power to solve it. Two years ago, we sat down and considered what we could do help St Peter's evolve. Our aims were to best serve the children's interests in the short term; to look beyond 13 and, being conscious of our own traditionally excellent academic reputation, to be careful not to throw the baby out with the bathwater.

The senior management team wanted to find a new way of rewarding academic and non-academic achievement, a way of weighting all subjects equally, of empowering and inspiring teaching staff, and of creating a new curriculum framework which would prepare children for a seamless transition to their next schools.

Some of those schools require references for Year 8s moving on. Others do not. The marking system for Common Entrance (CE) was consistent from school to school only in its inconsistency. And yet the need prevailed: we must prepare children for a test that was becoming harder to justify. The time had come for us to grasp the nettle: to free staff and pupils of restrictions, to find a new system that would freshen up the teaching

process and then to implement it so that the senior schools received broad-minded 13-year-olds who are keener than ever to learn. Over a period of 18 months, we designed and built what we call the St Peter's Baccalaureate.

Our desire for change and for a fresh approach coincided, happily, with the sidelining of CE by some of the senior schools to which we have traditionally sent pupils. In the past few years, new, more informal modes of entrance criteria have appeared. This, together with the opportunities created by an increase in IT use across the curriculum, and the awareness that in today's marketplace a broader diversity of skills and abilities is required, prompted us to put our heads together and embark on a search for a new system.

Having decided that teaching to a formula was over, we set about having conversations with those who might be called stakeholders: children, staff and next stops. We visited senior schools to talk about alternative methods of fulfilling our academic role as a 'preparatory' establishment, clarified our need to concentrate on a skills-based curriculum, convinced doubters that what we had on paper was a gearing-up rather than a dumbing-down, began to talk about 'humanities' rather than history and geography, and, having spent many a week crafting our Baccalaureate assessment criteria, undertook a pilot scheme before putting parents clearly into the picture.

This latter process took place on six evenings during the latter part of April. There was a very significant turnout of parents, presentations from key members of staff, and a very receptive atmosphere throughout. Such opportunities for interaction, in my experience, are rather too rare. By the time the last meeting ended, our professional judgement felt endorsed, and within a further month, our St Peter's Baccalaureate had received official approval from IAPS.

Even when it is change for the better, change is tough to manage. We had to forge stronger inter-departmental links, and to convince ourselves that although this project was revolutionary and demanding in terms of time and energy, it was not overwhelming. When children became more independent-thinking, this would constitute a benefit; it would not signify loss of teacher power or control.

And then, while a busy school needed to carry on as normal while adapting in a gradual way to the Baccalaureate, new resources needed to be identified and ordered. And, like the bursar, we had to keep our nerve throughout.





Children are seeing school as a more exciting place to be.

We are at an early stage. It is already clear, however, that staff and children have been revitalised, and that parents, reacting as enthusiastically as they did at a series of recent meetings, are very much onside. Senior schools have declared themselves fully in favour of the St Peter's Baccalaureate and now, instead of posting off generally unhelpful CE paper answers, we are now able to send to more schools detailed statements of what their prospective pupils have covered, and how assiduously they have covered it. Meanwhile, the energy level and morale in the school is conspicuously higher, and we are satisfied that we have a dynamic blend of the old and the new.

No group of staff will share a single educational philosophy. It would be disingenuous to conceal the fact that some staff were happier than others with the ideas propounded. Now that the pilot scheme has been so successful, and those departmental links reinforced, we have a school to which the epithet 'holistic' genuinely fits. Yes, we believe that as a senior management team we could have communicated our thoughts with greater clarity and candour along of the way, but we are in no

doubt that the hardest part of this project is behind us. Children are seeing school as a more exciting place to be.

They are gaining distinctions for 'exemplary attitude and work effort' in core academic subjects, and for working with 'great independence and creativity' in the creative arts. 'Proactive participation in various groups and lessons' is noted in the performing arts, as is 'outstanding contribution to school council and/or the school house system'.

St Peter's is now better equipped to nourish and encourage all its children across the board. To acknowledge and reward progress according to a clear and clearly understood set of criteria.

One parental email, sent in the wake of a Baccalaureate meeting earlier this term, congratulated St Peter's on its forward-thinking and its planning of this project. She used the word 'holistic' and said she had no time for the production of 'exam robots'. To be fair to ourselves, we have never been in the business of building robots, but now, by creating a system that enriches the soul as well as it nourishes the brain, we are entering what we consider to be our own Brave New World.

# A consensus for modernisation...

Dr Alex Peterken, Headmaster of Cheltenham College, hosted a recent conference for prep, junior and senior schools reflecting on 'The future of the 11-14 Curriculum'. Looking back, he comments: lots of good ideas, but will anything come of it?

The inaugural Education Conference at Cheltenham College in January this year set out to bring together a hundred or so prominent leaders from the independent sector to get together and talk about what really matters in education; not preparing risk registers or remuneration reviews but what children are actually learning in the classroom between the ages of 11 and 14.

These learning years are full of potential as they are the last in our school system that are free from the clutches of the public examination system, and all the politically-motivated interference that accompanies it. The 11-14 age range is also the only area where the independent sector itself has total control of curriculum content and assessment methods and so, quite rightly, we wanted to kick off our annual education leaders' conference with this most promising of topics.

We have been in a position of stalemate in this area for some time. Common Entrance has endured despite many senior schools introducing pre-testing, which in turn creates accompanying difficulties for prep schools. Moreover, any attempt to run alternatives to CE runs the risk of senior schools not accepting the validity of their results.

I believe there is now a consensus for modernisation, and we can expect to see CE develop over the coming years. The exact nature of this will depend on the input the Independent Schools Examination Board (ISEB) receives from its consultation process. I hope we can see more skills-based assessment, focusing less on the regurgitation of factual knowledge and more on how pupils can adapt, analyse and utilise skills they have developed. It would also be good to see more encouragement for pupils to 'think on their feet' in exams and more opportunities for creative and independent thinking. Perhaps we can take something from some of the new ideas already out there in the Prep School Baccalaureate and the Independent Curriculum?

At the Cheltenham College Conference it was most obvious that there is clear consensus that, while many teachers may decry the CE exam syllabi as being restrictive, this is, in fact, in the nature of any syllabus.

The overriding feeling was that much of CE is still good, and there is plenty of teaching in prep schools which goes way beyond the test and is genuinely inspiring to pupils. "Show me a teacher who is restricted by the exam syllabus and I'll show you a boring teacher," said one Head. And that's a powerful point we should hold on to: exam content should not be the whole academic curriculum if we are serious about educating as well as teaching.

Paul Brewster, Headmaster of the Beacon School, spoke powerfully about the Prep School Baccalaureate (PSB) and its all-encompassing curriculum, including sport, music and drama. Paul argued that 10-13 year-olds need more freedom to develop a passion for learning rather simply acquiring facts to pass the test.

There were some interesting aspects of his PSB programme but, as it is still at the pilot stage, the small scale of the PSB means that credibility with some senior schools (even though they might applaud the principle) was seen as a potential obstacle. Perhaps the ISEB taking the PSB under its wing may be a fruitful way forward?

It was also very interesting to hear from some prep school Heads who reminded us that senior schools needed to maintain momentum in Year 9 and they too often heard from former pupils that the pace of academic progress had slowed in those first three terms in a new school. Introducing independent projects in the first year of senior school can be very helpful in this regard; new Cheltonians this year completed just such a project on 'The Elements', which stretched and inspired their thinking.

At the heart of all these curriculum debates, at least whilst a Common Entrance exam system remains in place, is the conflict between a school's ability to be independent and adopt its own 11-14 curriculum (which may well be based on the latest educational thinking), and the demand for pupils to proceed to senior schools other than the one to which it is directly connected. How much currency would such bespoke and independent curriculums have with other senior schools? How confident would parents feel that a prep school which did not teach towards CE could prepare their child for a wide range of senior schools?

Some suggest that senior schools want to have their cake and eat it!

Whilst senior schools often pre-test and only use CE for setting purposes, they are uncomfortable at this stage to commit to recognising entry via routes other than CE, even though they do so for international students every year. Thus, although we have a situation that is difficult to steer through, I hope in the future a modernised CE can create something really exciting which softens the disquiet that we have heard about for some time.

If your school is anything like mine (a 3-18 set-up with two schools under a unified executive structure) all of this creates much debate and discussion amongst both SMTs. It has been a real learning experience for both senior and prep school management teams. We've learned the importance of seeing each other's work first-hand, sharing ideas in an open and honest way, thinking about the good of the whole school from 3-18 rather than our particular sections and about the importance of allowing creativity and autonomy within a unified framework. You might say it's rather like a successful marriage.

So, looking forward to next year's Cheltenham College Education Conference (which will be on January 31st, 2013) we've chosen to explore the tension between the two great monoliths in our educational landscape – 'Academic excellence and all-round education: an impossible combination?' It's always struck me that some staff and, in particular, some parents often see considerable tension between the delivery of academic excellence on the one hand, and high quality sport, music, drama and alike on the other. There is a tendency by some to argue that you cannot do both of these things well and to see schools very much in terms of one or the other.

The 2013 Conference will enable us to hear from colleagues about how we can successfully deliver both aspects in our schools and how we should keep that delicate balance between the academic and extracurricular imperatives in the running of our schools, in how we recruit staff and how we spend our money.

If you would like to receive an invitation, please contact Marie-Claire Byrne by email ([byrne.marieclaire@cheltcoll.gloucs.sch.uk](mailto:byrne.marieclaire@cheltcoll.gloucs.sch.uk)).



# Around the world in a day

Alexander Mitchell, Head of Holmwood House Prep School, Colchester shares how to make a non-curriculum day a very meaningful and lasting learning legacy



The children performed the New Zealand Haka

We all know just how much work goes into non-curriculum days, don't we? It goes something like this: on the surface, the children have a wonderful day full of different experiences and lots of fun, whilst the staff are flagging and on their knees by the end of it. We all know that under the surface of such days, an enormous amount of preparation is crucial to the success of what could easily be seen as a bit of frippery.

As part of our London Olympic 2012 celebrations at Holmwood House we decided to go for it in our 'Around the World Day', the aim of which was to bring to the attention of the pupils the competing continents represented by the five Olympic rings (which we can't use for copyright reasons) and the many countries therein. So, in essence, we treated the pupils to an around the world trip all in the comfort of their own school.

The school was divided into five zones: Asia, Africa, Oceania, Europe and South America. The children moved round in their elements (houses), Air, Land and Water, (about 100 in each) and visited the first three continents in the morning sessions, with approximately an hour in each and 'flight times' (squash and biscuits) in between.

At the beginning of the day each pupil was given their own Holmwood House passport to be stamped by 'Passport Control' as they travelled through each continent

and they were also provided with a commemorative draw-string bag which were kindly sponsored by a supportive parent. These enabled the children to take their souvenirs with them along their travels.

Led by their head of element (our equivalent to head boy/girl) carrying their element Olympic torch (created earlier by the older pupils) the pupils travelled to Asia, Africa and Oceania where they received a short introduction to each continent and then participated in themed activities. Whilst the children dressed in their element colours (white, red and blue), the staff wore national dress of various countries within the different continents.

Whilst in Africa, the children made jewellery and musical instruments whilst the eldest pupils played a fact-finding treasure hunt leading to the creation of a giant map of Africa. In Asia, the children made Japanese lanterns and masks, the older ones learned how to write their names in Chinese and some heard Rudyard Kipling in native dress reading excerpts from *Jungle Book*. In Oceania, the children played Australian instruments including didgeridoos, learned about and performed a New Zealand Haka and listened to, and acted out, an Aboriginal story.

After a busy morning, the children visited Europe for lunch where they had a British BBQ, sadly indoors due to the typically British weather, and Italian ice cream from

the ice cream van which took pride of place in the yard.

Finally, in the afternoon, the children visited the Americas, South and Central mainly, where they were greeted by an energetic performance by the school's samba drummers before participating in an inter-element salsa dance-off. Having been treated the previous week to a demonstration by real Colombian dancers who taught us our basic steps, each element performed their salsa that they had earlier choreographed and rehearsed. The performances were judged in the style of *Strictly Come Dancing* by members of the SLT in costume and in role.

And all to what end? Well, hopefully the children took from the day a wealth of experiences, ideas and facts. When the Olympics came and went, we hope the children viewed the visiting countries with more interest and with a greater understanding of where they are geographically and culturally. From a curriculum perspective, there were so many boxes ticked and having staff from prep and pre-prep working so closely together, a rich source of cross-fertilisation was encouraged. Certainly, the success of the day beyond the initial concept was entirely down to the way in which the staff worked as a team to bring together something which would have a lasting effect on the children's learning, not to mention their enjoyment of school. It is also always great for our children to see their teachers in different roles, for example, seeing our head of Latin dressed as an Australian swamp crocodile teaching them how to use a Rolf Harris-style wobble board whilst singing them through the finer points of tying one's kangaroo down, sport!

At Holmwood, we're pretty good at one-off days, slightly off the wall at times, but always with the children's enjoyment and enrichment at the core of whatever we



do. Taking children, and staff, out of their comfort zones and into different situations and learning environments is always fruitful. As we embark upon more and more initiatives to develop our children's learning, as well as their own understanding of their learning, through Forest Schools, outdoor learning initiatives, collaborative and creative activities in and out of the classroom all within a high-calibre teaching and learning programme, we are reminded that in a busy prep school life, special days like our Around the World Day have an important part to play in the diet and developing palette of our young learners.



# Photographer of the Year



Sherali Sharifov of Duke of Kent School in Ewhurst, Surrey

Thank you to all the schools who took the time to enter the 2012 *Prep School* Photographer of the Year competition.

We had almost 250 entries from dozens of prep and junior schools up and down the country, including a number of first-time entrants.

The high quality of the photographs ensured that the judging process was a tough one and the editor and design team were impressed with the range of subjects and imagination demonstrated by entrants.

After several days of deliberation, we finally settled on an entry by Sherali Sharifov of Duke of Kent School in Ewhurst, Surrey. Sherali submitted two excellent photos, but we thought this image of a lively class reading session truly captured the essence of life in the classroom.

Our second-placed photo came from Molly D'Arcy Rice of Beaudesert Park School in Stroud, a nice example of a close-up portrait with a twist.

Evie Fanthom, from Piper's Corner in High Wycombe, was chosen in third-place, with the *Prep School* team impressed with the depth in her photograph of three friends resting in the school grounds.

All three will receive digital cameras courtesy of John Catt Educational, the publishers of *Prep School*.

Details of how to enter next year's competition will feature in the Spring and Summer issues. Once again, thank you to all the schools and pupils who sent in entries and helped contribute to another wonderful competition.



Molly D'Arcy Rice of Beaudesert Park School in Stroud



Evie Fanthom, from Piper's Corner in High Wycombe



# Developing a global ethos and international understanding

Dr Pamela Edmonds, Head of St Cedd's School in Chelmsford, reflects on the benefits of an international dimension to the curriculum in a national context

These are interesting times for those of us involved in curriculum planning and development. Educators and policy-makers increasingly grapple with the issue of how best to prepare future generations for life in a rapidly changing world. No-one is able to predict precisely what knowledge and skills will be essential, or even relevant, for the young people of tomorrow. Increasingly overlapping with debate relating to the national context is that relating to the global environment, which manifests itself in increasing awareness of concepts including global citizenship education, international education and world studies. Developments in technology have shown how little our past knowledge has enabled us to predict what might need to be known in the future, as life

within essentially national contexts becomes increasingly globalised. Even for those with no intention of travelling outside the UK, the international context of national life cannot be ignored as the internet and international media highlight the impact on our national lifestyles of events beyond our national boundaries. At the same time, the increasingly multicultural nature of society means that the links between notions of nationality and culture are more and more stretched.

Successful development of international understanding in schools is dependent on a range of factors but not least the skills, expertise and knowledge of staff. On becoming Head of St Cedd's School in Chelmsford in January 2011, I discovered international studies on the timetable led by



an inspirational teacher, Caroline Picking, who has the passion and energy to bring an international dimension to the curriculum successfully in a national context. With 22 languages spoken by children throughout the school and a thriving modern foreign languages department, Caroline introduced weekly lessons in international studies for all Year 5 and 6 to bring a global dimension to the curriculum. My own conceptual and professional interest in international education began in an international context overseas while teaching and implementing the International Baccalaureate in South East Asia, augmented by my doctoral research and publications (Edmonds, 2008). My aim was to meet the expectations and needs of a global community of pupils not in a national context but in an international context.

It is not coincidental that at St Cedd's School there is acknowledgement that, in a fast changing and interdependent world, education can help young people to meet the challenges they face now and in the future, giving them the opportunity to focus on complex global issues in the safe space of the classroom.

The rationale for developing a global dimension in schools arises from a number of perceived needs linked to global citizenship education, exemplified by the DfES document 'Putting the World into World Class Education' in its main goal of equipping young people 'for life in a global society and work in a global economy' (DfES, 2007). For whatever motives, and perhaps for a mixture of motives, it is clear that global education, or international education, is increasingly found and promoted through, for instance, the International School Award, which seeks to celebrate, develop, recognise and accredit outstanding practice in the international dimensions of teaching and learning. In 2010, St. Cedd's School was awarded the prestigious International School Award, managed by the British Council, in recognition of its work to bring the wider world into the classroom, and in fostering an international dimension so that our young people gain the cultural understanding and skills they need to live and work as global citizens.

The global education curriculum at St Cedd's School covers areas as diverse as climate change, human rights, migration, trade, water and disasters and has created partnerships between two schools: Chuo Elementary in Osaka, Japan, and Indraprastha World School, one of India's leading independent schools in Delhi. Exchange of teachers with Chuo Elementary has facilitated greater understanding of Japanese culture in all year groups. Children have enjoyed activities ranging from learning Japanese language to dancing and calligraphy. Various projects have been created between our schools which have attracted the attention of organizations, such as The British Council and Intel, who in turn created an opportunity for a member of our teaching staff to



address an educational conference at Tokyo University, the Tokyo Board of Education and the Japan Tourist Board. Our success in winning the biennial World Haiku Contest for Children in 2010 for the most outstanding school entries (Japan Society, 2010) is a reflection of this cooperation.

Our partnership with Indraprastha World School contributed to the awards of Global School Project Reciprocal Visit and Global Curriculum Project from the Department for International Development. During the past two years, staff from both schools have travelled between the UK and India to share ideas and best practice leading to the development of a joint project entitled *Whose World?*

*Whose World?* is a study of climate change and global warming with an emphasis on whom and what it affects and what we can do about it. Our 'Best out of waste' topic worked really well during the reciprocal visit with evaluation of similar events in different global contexts. For example, in 2010 the UK pupils missed school due to snow, Indian pupils due to cold weather (by their standards) and monsoon flooding, so the children had immediate understanding of climate problems affecting them and their communities. Cross-curricular activities have been successful, such as a school song about nature in our countries with lyrics and music written jointly and facilitated by internet access. Lesson plans have been shared and power points and worksheets co-written. Storybook swapping and subsequent books reviews have encouraged a love of reading and creative writing. The children exchanged factual information about how climate change has affected people locally, examined the impact on resources, the similarities and differences between the countries, and equality of opportunity fostering an understanding of inequalities in the world.

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# The whole of Year 5 wrote to President Barack Obama when we realised USA was one of only two countries which have not signed the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and received a reply

We remain committed to new projects. The children are currently co-writing a school song and a second storybook for younger children called *Jab We Met* using the two teddy bears we have exchanged who are cooperatively fighting global warming. The pupils forwarded a copy of the book to the Queen and were delighted to receive a reply stating how much she had enjoyed reading it.

The inclusion of international studies on our timetable has led to greater interest in what can be done to help tackle inequalities and injustices. A well-known local drinks manufacturer, who responded by visiting the school to discuss their Fair Trade policies with us has promised to try to make a partially Fair Trade drink. The local MP and Minister of State for Health, Simon Burns, came in to school to discuss the Government's policy on poverty at home and abroad with our Year 5 and 6 pupils. The whole of Year 5 wrote to President Barack Obama when we realised USA was one of only two countries which have not signed the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and received a reply.

At St Cedd's School we acknowledge that at a time of rapid advancements in technology and in an interdependent world, education can help young people to meet the challenges they face now and in the future, giving them the opportunity to focus on complex global issues in the security of the classroom supported by informed teaching. Our pupils and those within our exchange schools love



working together and learning from each other. As Louisa (age 10) wrote, "Every child deserves to be listened to. Together we can change the world."

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## Web Resources

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[http://www.oxfam.org.uk/education/teachersupport/the\\_big\\_picture/files/big\\_picture\\_summer\\_2011.pdf](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/education/teachersupport/the_big_picture/files/big_picture_summer_2011.pdf) (page 11)  
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# Experimentation, curiosity, and making science exciting – the benefits of hands-on

Elizabeth Lyle, head of science at Newton Prep, reveals all

The best way to learn something is to do it. You wouldn't expect the games department in a school to teach games without letting children play sport, and although it may have been different for earlier generations, you wouldn't now expect a modern languages department to teach without giving children the chance to speak. The same should go for science – it is absurd for children to be taught science without getting to do science. This is why hands-on, practical science is so important, especially in prep or junior school environment.

Science is made up of two strands – on one hand it is the facts that explain the world around us, but it is also a process for finding out what is a fact, and it is only through experimentation that we can establish what is actually true. Unfortunately, in some primary schools where resources are in short supply, or where teachers lack confidence or expertise, or where discipline is a problem, the amount of practical science included in the curriculum can be rather slim, with teachers leaving this vital subject to be covered in secondary school.



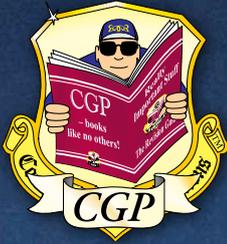
I think that it is never too early to start practical science. Teaching science through experimentation will instil in children a love of the subject and a real curiosity and enthusiasm for learning. The benefits of hands-on science are recognised by many independent prep schools. At Newton Prep, where we are fortunate to have excellent facilities, we feel that practical, engaging science is something that we do particularly well. I can confidently say that children love coming to science here. They are excited and engaged and they enjoy success in the subject, which, in turn, makes them more excited and motivated. It is a very positive cycle.

In addition to the fact that hands-on science is fun (when else are you encouraged to get really dirty and blow stuff up?) and a great motivator, there are plenty of arguments for why children need practical, scientific skills. At the most basic level, children need these skills to ensure that they will not be gullible consumers, that they will not be easily bamboozled when they read or hear something. We want them to think 'Is this actually true? Can I test that? What sort of test could I use to find out if what I am reading/hearing is true?' So much of what is in print, or circulates as fact, is simply not good science. Our young pupils will be voters some day, members of society who can make a difference. We want them to think scientifically.

Of course, for us, being able to do this practical science is made possible by having enthusiastic staff (two full-time specialist teachers, four part-time teachers, and a full-time, dedicated lab assistant/technician) and exceptional facilities. The three new science laboratories at Newton Prep were opened in 2009. Each laboratory is equipped with an area of tiered, lecture-hall style seating for demonstration and teaching, as well as modular benches for practical work. This design of lab is more conducive to how science is actually taught. Old style labs were very much for practical science but did not cater well for teaching. With our current set-up there is no moving from room to room. We can do our teaching with the children seated, providing a safe setting for teacher demonstrations, and then children can move down into the labs to do the experiments for themselves. The space and set-up

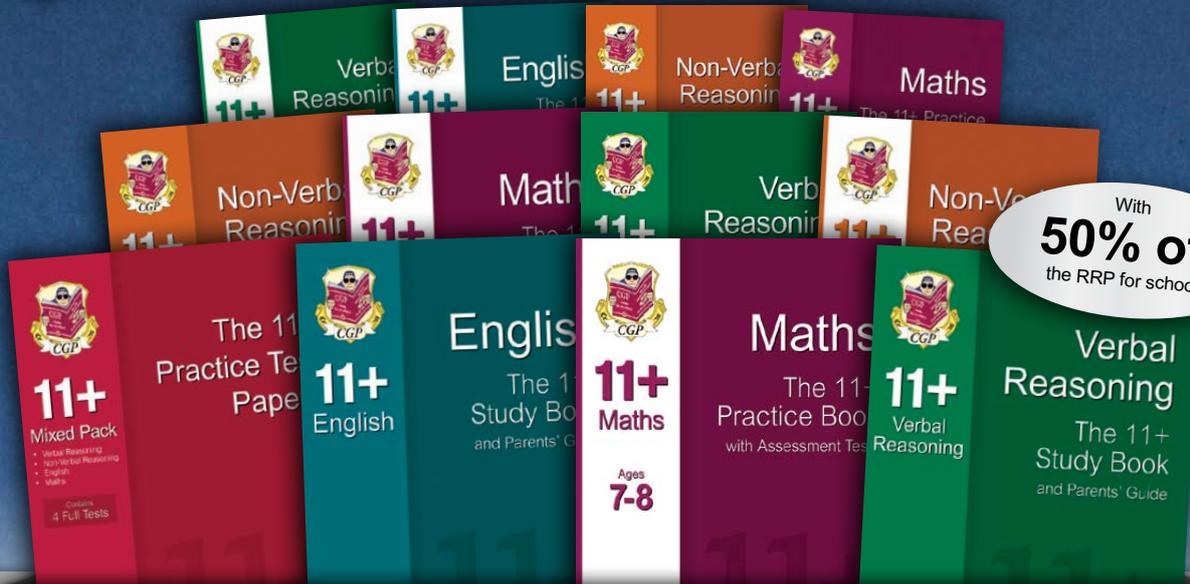
“Having purpose-built science facilities makes a huge difference.”





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flows beautifully, and the labs are child-friendly; things are pupil-sized and the use of colour and shape makes the space inviting to children. In some schools science is taught in standard classrooms, or a science trolley may be wheeled from room to room. Having purpose-built science facilities makes a huge difference. The pupils come to us, suit up, blow it up, mess it up, and then they leave to go on to their nice, tidy English or maths classroom. We can mess up the lab and clean it up again six times a day – it is bomb-proof (well, almost – except for the singed bit on the ceiling – but that burn was from a trial explosion and I promise that we scaled it down when the pupils came in!)

After 15 years as a science teacher, I have a pretty good repertoire of crowd-pleasing experiments. The chip pan fire is always popular – teaching children what not to do if a pan of oil catches fire in the kitchen (adding water produces an impressive fire ball!) Lighting people's hands on fire using soap bubbles filled with methane is

another favourite. And of course kids love making and using electromagnets, and the Van de Graaf generator (electrostatic generator that produces some eccentric hairstyles) is always fun. Personally, I'm quite partial to building mousetrap-powered cars and making pH indicators out red cabbage.

The parents are very supportive of the practical approach to science. The feedback is overwhelmingly positive, and it is not uncommon for parents to say that science is their child's favourite subject. We also do science open days for parents to come along and try their hand at practical science alongside their children. I think parents love the science department because we do the things they wish they could do at home, but don't have time for, or their kitchen is too expensive, or they don't want to burn down the shed.

I, on the other hand, am quite proud of the fact that I am on to my third shed at home!

**The pupils come to us, suit up, blow it up, mess it up, and then they leave to go on to their nice, tidy English or maths classroom**



# Play and exploration – getting the fundamentals of communication correct

Sue Gascoyne, early years researcher and author, reflects upon the value of exploration and play for developing basic skills like reading, writing and communication

Reading, writing and communication are essentials in a child's armour of success but in the drive to deliver these competencies, there is a danger of overlooking lesser celebrated but nevertheless crucial milestones. English is one of the most complex languages in the world to decode and grasp and yet many children in the UK start formalised learning when they are simply not ready to master these skills. In contrast, children are innately driven to learn and discover through exploration and play.

The Statutory Framework for the EYFS, due to be implemented in September 2012, identifies the three prime areas of personal, social and emotional development, communication and language, and physical development as linchpins in the development of 'well-rounded' children,

recognising that children's bodies are ill-prepared for an emphasis on literacy and the importance of core physical development strength and skills.

For three to five year-olds the three prime areas and four specific areas of literacy, mathematics, understanding the world and expressive arts and design apply, with effective teaching and learning characterised by playing and exploring, active learning and creating and thinking critically.

Advances in neuroscience appear to support the value of children wallowing in exploration and play. When

we watch a young child engaging with a treasure basket – a basket filled with sensory rich objects ripe for exploration (or any open-ended environment or collection of objects), we take for granted the magnitude of



learning taking place. We know the benefits to fine motor skills, hand-eye coordination, pincer control, tracking and manipulative skills, all prerequisites for reading and writing, but may not appreciate the 'behind the scenes' learning.

### The amazing brain

Research identifies a close link between the words we think and the parts of the brain activated by saying these words. Similarly just thinking about a walk in the forest or a trip to the seaside stimulates most of the visual processing parts of the brain that would be activated by actually seeing these sights. Both these findings suggest the importance of children accessing an environment rich in vocabulary and experiences and the role of pre-prep in plugging any gaps.

### Brain development

Our senses are the gateway to all learning so ideally children should enjoy as many experiences as possible for the best foundation for learning. Consider the word 'forest' and this hopefully conjures up a rich range of memories, feelings, sounds, sights and smells, each different yet interconnected. Rich interconnectivity within the brain helps us access and quickly retrieve information, aiding memory. Each new and repeated experience also shapes existing knowledge and understanding. For infants the world is without labels so it is only by interacting with the environment that they begin to differentiate a cat from a chair or person. (Children as young as three to four months can distinguish between animals and furniture.) As adults we rarely encounter something that we cannot easily categorise. For an infant trying to make sense of the world, every object and encounter needs to be understood and categorised. A necessary stepping stone in achieving this is to break learning into small chunks and develop a series of rules about each object and event. Although not necessarily accurate, these rules are constantly reshaped by understanding gained from new experiences, so access to a wealth of experiences enables children to make the transition to identifying similarities between different objects and events.

### Meaning making

When a young child explores the treasures in a treasure basket, or becomes absorbed by a muddy puddle or collection of shiny conkers, we know by their focus that it is supporting listening and concentration, but may not spot its value for language acquisition. Exploration gives meaning to words as it is only when a child has experienced soft, hard, cold and rough that these words make sense. It's a bit like trying to explain snow to a visitor from a hot country, no amount of pictures, excited stories and re-enactments will truly convey its essence without them experiencing it themselves.

### Communication and body language

When we think of language we tend to think of the spoken word rather than body language, but children are full-

bodied and in a world where everything requires de-coding, body language and gestures have greater currency. This can be seen in an infant's ability to interpret the meaning of others' hand positions and gestures based on their own actions and motives. Like noticing the extended hand and curled position of fingers and applying their own objectives for grasping to the action of others, it is milestones like this that underpin reading, writing and communication and are critical to making sense of the world.

### Physical development and writing

By manipulating objects, repeating fine motor skills and using objects as tools, children develop the muscle strength and control necessary for writing. Milestones like hand-eye coordination are the culmination of interplay between vision and touch. Only when infants have gained sufficient visual control to 'focus with binocular vision can they confidently master purposeful hand and finger movements necessary for using their hands as tools for extending learning' (Gascoyne, S 2012). Mark or pattern-making in gloop or squidgy mud, pouring and transferring sand from object to object or collecting and sorting gems or pebbles, offer infinite appeal to children as well as preparing them for the important business of writing. What's more, because they are not linked in a child's mind to writing and build upon what children naturally love doing, they typically appeal to boys and girls.

### Enabling environments

Sensory-rich environments with high levels of play affordance generate spontaneous and meaningful writing and mark-making, like the children who inspired by some old-fashioned glass bottles, created their own bottling 'business', developed labels, receipts and a company name – Bottletastic - for their concoctions. Their motive wasn't driven by the curriculum but born out of its relevance to their play theme. Reading, writing and speaking, not to mention creativity and problem solving, were welcome by-products of exploration and deeply engaged play in which objects provided both the inspiration and fuel for play.

Sue Gascoyne is a published author, early years researcher, educational consultant and trainer. She has run workshops and given presentations nationally and internationally to help practitioners introduce learning through play. In 2006 she launched multi-award-winning children's play resource company Play to Z Ltd. She has authored three books: *Sensory Play*, published in September 2011 (Practical Pre-School), Chapter 1 of *International Perspectives on Early Childhood* (Sage) January 2012 and *Treasure Baskets and Beyond – Realising the benefits of sensory rich play* (Open University), published in August 2012. [www.playtoz.co.uk](http://www.playtoz.co.uk)

# What's the point in teaching Latin?

Hilary Anson, head of classics at Hazelwood School, shares how being open minded, adaptable and creative will help the future of Latin in our sector

In secondary schools Latin teachers are forever fielding the question: 'What's the point of learning Latin?' Since moving from secondary to teaching in prep schools, I have never been asked that by any pupil. It could be that younger children are more accepting of anything thrown at them and question it less. It could be that the old arguments of learning Latin to help with modern languages or careers in medicine and law haven't yet entered their sphere of thinking. Or it could be that I have had to change my way of teaching so drastically in the last two years that they no longer have the same need for distraction techniques to avoid tackling the CLC translation passage they're supposed to be doing.

In fact I am not convinced that Latin in itself is a crucial subject at this level. Prep school Latin certainly doesn't 'open up the riches of the world of Classical literature' and the CE syllabus as it stands is so rigid and so biased towards grammar and vocabulary knowledge that there is precious little time to delve into Greek myths or the Roman way of life. Learning Latin doesn't work the same way as learning a modern language where younger children soak up the phrases like sponges as they listen and repeat. A child starting Latin in Year 5 won't have a significant advantage over a child starting in secondary school who will accumulate the language more quickly.

Another common argument in defence of Latin is that it will help to expand a child's vocabulary as they learn the roots of modern words. That is of course invaluable later but I am not convinced this happens much at prep school age. Trying to use 'pugnacious' to remind an 11 year old what the verb 'pugno' could mean just gets blank looks. And what 12-year-old is likely to come across the word 'uxorious' in their reading books? The ways they come up with themselves to remember vocabulary are endlessly fascinating to me and show incredible lateral thinking and a rich imagination but don't usually have much to do with any derivations.

Before I seem to be talking myself out of a job, however, I am convinced that the skills that Latin teaches are invaluable.

Very few subjects require such an ability to memorise. Memorising vocabulary and the endings of nouns and verbs is often very difficult for pupils at this age. They need to be taught ways to learn and they need to be helped in lessons through games, mindmaps, association techniques and endless repetition in a form that entertains at the same time.

Analysing and manipulating a fully inflected language is also a real challenge and not something they would be exposed to in other modern languages they might be taught at this level. As pupils learn to unravel a Latin sentence and apply the rules of the grammar they know, they are using analytical skills of a very high level. Translating from English into Latin is even more of a mental workout as children have to juggle several different alternatives simultaneously and be able to apply the endings they have memorised to the right bits of the sentence. Let alone alter the word order and remember other Latin oddities like no capital letters or adding letters to words to indicate a question. Such methods of thinking are of course very useful transferable skills for other subjects.

Described like this the skills sound dry and difficult. In fact Latin lends itself to endless hilarity and irreverence. I am fortunate enough to teach at a school with amazing grounds and in between the showers this term we have had some great outdoor lessons sorting out the uses of the cases and running between trees on an imperfect/perfect treasure hunt. Music is also very strong at the school and I have given up trying to stop them singing in lessons. I have ended up bowing to the inevitable and turning the songs into good memory boosters. Teaching boys as well as girls for the first time has meant that sitting still for a 45-minute lesson is no longer an option. Latin pictionary seems to work really well as one way to reinforce vocabulary and brings in the crucial elements of competition and running to engage the boys.

So the argument of 'Why teach Latin in prep schools?' is really a non-starter. Latin isn't particularly relevant to their daily lives at age 11. They might move on to a senior school which doesn't even offer Latin, or which starts all over again because their intake of pupils have such a mixed past exposure to the language. They are unlikely to be attempting *The Times* crossword or deciphering botanical plant names at this age and they probably won't remember much of the language in later life anyway. It is the skills fostered by Latin that are the important thing. What other subject can claim to add such breadth to the skill set children are exposed to in prep schools? I think it doesn't matter so much what is taught in prep schools but more how it is taught and as long as they are learning useful skills and enjoying the learning of them, Latin teachers are fulfilling an essential role.



What other subject can claim to add such breadth to the skill set children are exposed to in prep schools?

# satips Poetry Competition 2012

Gillian Clarke, National Poet of Wales, shares the highlights of this year's competition

For some time I have felt increasingly anxious about the way poetry is being taught in a great many British schools. As some of my own poems are set for GCSE, AS and A level by most of the British exam boards, and internationally by the IGCSE, many hundreds of students from Britain and the world contact me to ask for help. Many of their questions over the years have delighted me with their imaginative insight.

Recently, however, many students seem bewildered by what they are asked to do, reflecting a poor understanding of what poetry is. In some classrooms poetry is being abused. A few weeks ago a highly intelligent boy, the son of a friend, came to me in despair. He wanted help with the poetry he was studying for his AS exam. He brought with him three A4 sheets listing the poetic terms he must look for in a poem. He has been told he must learn them, watch out for them, and note their presence in the poems in order to pass his exam. 'We have to tick boxes', he said. It was three pages of useless,

pretentious nonsense. Many of the 'terms' were unknown to me, the definitions ugly and imprecise, and not one of them is ever in a poet's mind when the magic of language makes its mysterious connection with thought, and sets down the right words in the right order to make a poem.

I had just a few hours with that boy. I read *Ozymandias* to him. Then I played a recording of the poem by the band, 'Little Machine'. He had never heard the poem before – it wasn't marked for attention in his school booklet, though there it was, waiting for him like treasure. After one reading out loud his face lit with the revelation: 'King of Kings!' he quoted, joyfully. It was enough. I hope it was not too late.

I was ten years old when an aunt, a railway clerk who educated herself through reading, took me to see *King Lear* in Stratford, and I came out chanting, 'Nothing will come of nothing, speak again'. You are never too young for the drama of word-music, word-magic. As the Poet Laureate, Carol Ann Duffy, has said, 'Poetry is the

**The winners** – though all are truly winners – are:

**Years 7 and 8:**

First: Anna Mullock for *Typewriter*. Year 7, St John's College School, Cambridge.

Second: Harry Yates for *Insignificance*. Year 8, Yateley Manor School.

Third: Lucy Howard for *Quiet*. Year 7, St John's College School.

**Years 5 and 6:**

First: Samuel Stuttle for *Stunned Silence*. Year 6, Nottingham High Junior School.

Second: Tabitha Goedkoop for *Rat Began*. Year 6, Barrow Hills School.

Third: Euan Bremner for *Sonnet*. Year 6, St Hugh's School.

**Years 3 and 4:**

First: William Simpson for *Owl in the Tree*. Year 3, Lanesborough Prep School.

Second: Florence Shorthouse for *Piercing Icicles*. Year 3, St Hugh's School.

Third: Dominic Tunks for *Magic Box*. Year 4 Chigwell School.

**Winning School:**

St John's College School, Cambridge. For wonderful work, range and quality, in all age groups. Evidence of sensitive work with poetry. There are real poems here. Congratulations.

music of being human'. Music. Human. A good poem communicates, human to human, in word-music. That, and the clear sound of the individual voice of the poet is what I am looking and listening for when I judge a poetry competition – and I think I have judged all the big ones in my time. As I write, covering the surfaces of a large dining table and a baby grand piano are many good poems.

Choosing winners has been difficult. Often up to six poems in a category were good enough to win, and in the end it came down to one phrase, or quite often a last line, that ruled this one out, left that one in. I want them all to win, because most heartening of all is that so many of these students have used a poem to say something significant to a reader. Like 'King of Kings', at least a phrase from many of these poems has stayed in my mind. Also, there is evidence here that in most of the schools which submitted work for the competition, poetry is being read, enjoyed, and used as inspiration for creative work. Good teachers know that creative work helps a student to appreciate and understand poetry.

Write a sonnet, and you understand sonnets better, marvel at the intricacy of the form, delight in the rhythm and the rhyme. There is evidence spread about me here

on the table that passionate, poetry-loving teachers are reading poetry out loud, are setting high targets, are waking the power of word-magic in their students, that there are excellent poetry workshops and class discussion happening before pen is put to paper.

Many schools have used poems as inspiration – Simon Armitage's *I am very bothered when I think of the bad things I have done*, Jenny Joseph's *When I am old*, poems by Ted Hughes, Wilfred Owen, and even one of mine.

The outcome of the exercise is most successful where the borrowed line or idea is not repeated, but subsumed into a new way of thinking. This was the case in a rich store of sonnets on war from Year 8 students from Yately Manor School. I can hear echoes of the War poets in the work, but made fresh and new. Why wait until you're 15 to study sonnets? I got a wonderful group sonnet from five-year-olds once. They chose the subject. I gave them a line, and I asked for another with the same tune. They picked up the beat of iambic pentameter at once. The result was neither Shakespearean nor Petrarchan, but made of seven rhyming couplets. As they called out the line, I wrote it down. I recommend it as a good starting point.

## Commendations

I would also like to mention some of those poems which almost made the final list:

### Years 7 and 8

Tower House School submitted interesting poems on darkness, light and death, and several based, I think, on Larkin's *Home is so sad*. Unfortunately, most forgot to add their Year, so I could not award one as a winner, but as some were marked Year 8, I include for special mention *But then you left* by Isaac Williams. I won't forget the image of the athlete's body falling 'like a shot partridge spiralling', in *The Last Second* by Beth MacMillan, or the image as the ball and the sun cross the line to touch down in *The Try* by Oscar Leach, both from Sherborne Prep School. I admire two sonnets, *Broken Boys* by George Marchant, and *From Tractors to Tanks* by Louis Reid, from Yateley Manor. I loved *Moonskating* by Isabella Greenwood of St John's. *It Wasn't Me* by William Forsythe of Aldwickbury School is a strong poem among a very good school collection. *World at War* by Ben Hart and *Subject to Pain* by Kieran Jordan are among several good poems from Crossfields School. I like the deceptively simple *My Old friend* by Isabella Fox of St Martin's Ampleforth.

### Years 5 and 6

The 'plié at the water-hole' delighted me in *Elephant Balle*' by Poppy Smith of Sherborne School. I was impressed by *Stranger* by Grace Gallagher-Hall of St Albans High School for Girls, *Clockwork* by Serena Johnson of St Hilary's, *Not Knowing* by Harvey Widdowson of Nottingham High School, *Polecat Began* by Elliot Sanderson of Barrow Hills School, *The Old Neighbour* by Will Hand of Chandlings School, *Silver* by Eloise Lipscombe and William Hogart's *The Eagle*, both of St John's. Of many good poems from Eaton House the Manor, I choose *The Safe Tree* by Kit Tyler. I admire the wit of *Bathroom Secrets* by Inigo Russell of St Hugh's School, Faringdon. Finally I salute Johnnie Martin of Port Regis School for submitting an impressive seven poems.

### Years 3 and 4

I was moved by *Without You* by Peter Heelis of Eaton House the Manor. From a playful collection of animal poems from Chandlings, *Cat* by Sofia Buckingham shines out as a skilfully rhymed riddle. Among a batch of odes and party poems from St Hugh's School, Faringdon, Tallulah Johnson's *Ode to a Cream Egg* sings out. In *A Poem of Laughter* by Freya Legg from St Alban's High School for Girls, I particularly enjoy 'the life-size loveliness' of lions. From a pile of good work from Lanesborough School, Guildford, I admire the 'w' sounds in *Wild Wind* by Theo Collins, the detailed observation of *Hamster in the Cage* by Fred Griffiths, and the sustained writing in *Snow* by Dominic Bench – all Year 3. Of a batch of Year 4 dream poems from St Hilary's School, Surrey, I like *Sports Dreams* by Grace Heath.

# satips National Annual Prep Schools' Art Exhibition

Simon Mellor, art coordinator at The Downs Malvern, who staged this year's *satips* National Annual Prep Schools' Art Exhibition, reflects on an impressive event for all involved

The Downs Malvern was the venue for the *satips* National Annual Prep Schools' Art Exhibition, an occasion eagerly anticipated by the many schools that contribute each year, as well as a good number exhibiting for the first time.

From Saturday 5th until Wednesday 16th May, near on a thousand visitors viewed yet another memorable exhibition showcasing artwork that had been submitted by over 50 independent prep and junior schools from across the country. A fabulous array of creative talent reflecting all the age ranges, pre-prep to Year 8, graced the walls, plinths and display cabinets at this year's event which was staged in the West Midlands for the first time.

The range of opportunity being provided by prep school departments was evident through the diversity of media and techniques on display; drawing, painting, collage, printmaking, sculpture, ceramics, textiles and photography.

Acclaimed portrait artist Michael Noakes was guest of honour at the private view. This took place on Saturday 5th May and was attended by Heads, art teachers and special guests from many of the participating schools. All sat down to a delicious luncheon after the opening ceremony and a full colour exhibition catalogue, with a page dedicated to each school, was produced to commemorate the event for guests to take away as a memento.

Mr Noakes was a wonderful guest speaker and gave a highly entertaining speech. He recounted fascinating stories about his career as an artist; his prestigious commissions painting portraits of The Queen, The Pope, Presidents and Prime Ministers, and also the encouragement he received in his youth. He recalled his student days at the Royal Academy and gave a personal view about continuity and the changing context of art. He cited that Rembrandt had painted a carcass of beef through his initial curiosity for its visual qualities, the work then taking on added significance and meaning. Now the contemporary artist has the freedom to present the carcass of beef as the artwork and idea itself. We had better watch out next year.

Sunday 6th May saw the arrival of the young artists, together with their family and friends. Many had travelled a great distance to be with us, from as far afield as Cambridge, London and York, emphasising the great importance that parents place on their children's achievement. Their welcome gift was a specially designed sketchbook and pencil set, which proved to be a real hit and provided a wonderful opportunity to make notes, record ideas and inspiration. There was a tremendous atmosphere and a real sense of occasion.

Families continued to visit throughout the week, as did many school groups, and all who came through the doors were able to vote for their favourite artworks. The exhibition has always been promoted as a celebration rather than a competition, but the voting slips did provide





a fun, yet critical focus for many of the parents and their children. Art prizes were sent to the young artists gaining the most votes and every pupil who had work selected by their teachers for the exhibition received a certificate.

All at The Downs Malvern were excited by the transformation of our assembly hall into a gallery space. English classes used artworks as inspiration for poetry, art lessons took the opportunity to reinforce subject-based language and make connections between those works on display that had been influenced by famous artists. Many children took the opportunity to revisit with their sketchbooks during their break times and after school.

Katya, a Year 8 pupil from Brambleside, gained the most votes for a highly accomplished oil painting on canvas depicting a 'Lake View with reflections', closely followed by a memorable group project by pupils from Kitebrook House, a large mixed media triptych titled 'A walk on the Beach'.

Creativity and inventiveness drew our attention to so many pieces this year: fabulous large-scale 3D junk bugs, seriously good spray painted paper pulp relief panels, the delightful jellybean mosaic portrait, awesome giant origami paper sculpture, an amazing quilted head using plastic and shredded paper, the fabulous 'Price

Tag' collage, exquisite paper shoes created from maps and decorative papers, inspiring brown paper and card models of retro-cameras. The maturity of acquired skills and techniques was also extremely impressive in many exhibits: the stunning bronze-cast eagle's head, superb wildlife studies in oils, highly skilled pencil self-portraits, magnificent magnified charcoal drawings of vegetables, and so much more.

But then, what was expressed with just four colours and a few brushstrokes in a small painting titled 'Our visit to the Fire Station' by four year old Sahil from St Martin's Northwood, for me, summed up the spirit of our very eclectic show. A lifetime of experience led to the creation of this picture and I enjoyed displaying it at the entrance to the exhibition.

From the host perspective, the National Prep Schools' Art Exhibition was a pleasure to stage and well worth the time and energy invested. It was a real privilege to be able to exhibit such a diverse range of work from so many schools and to be able to create the most relevant of art exhibitions to stimulate young and older minds alike. The Downs Malvern looks forward to hosting the event again next year in 2013, before handing over the baton to another school for 2014 and 2015. Thank you for your support, we hope to see you again next year!



**Some comments from the visitor's book:**

"The most wonderful, inspirational art I have visited recently. My son was thoroughly inspired and may it inspire more children to do their best and follow their dreams" – visitor from Birmingham

"Amazing work- hard to believe the standard achieved by such young artists!" – visitor from Oxford.

"An uplifting, inspirational exhibition" – visitor from Bromsgrove.

**Dates for your diary**

Sat 27th April – Wed 8th May 2013 at The Downs Malvern

Deadline for sending work Friday 19th April

(Schools encouraged to send up to eight pieces – 2D and 3D)

Saturday 27th April – private view and luncheon for Heads, teachers and guests

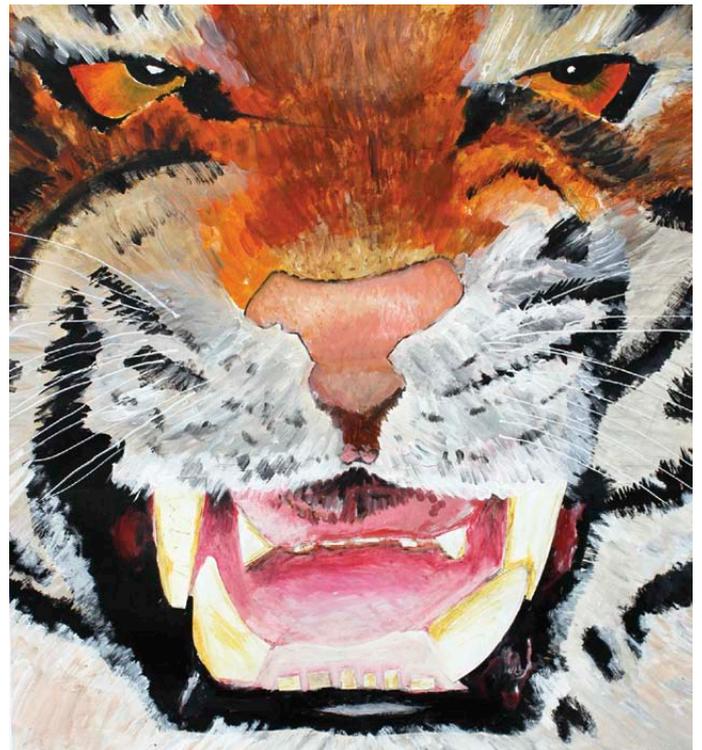
Sunday 28th – afternoon tea for exhibitors, family and friends

Exhibition open through to Wed 8th May, school visits welcome

All schools wishing to exhibit next year, please register by the end of January 2013 to receive all the further details, invites, posters etc.

Register with either Pat Harrison at **satips** (Email address: admin@satips.com) or Simon Mellor at The Downs Malvern (Email address: sdm@thedowns.malcol.org).

If you are interested in being a host school please contact the **satips** Art Exhibition co-ordinator Michèle Kitto michele@makeartwork.co.uk







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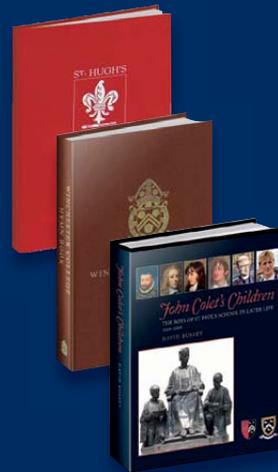
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# satips National Schools' Handwriting Competition 2012

Patricia Lovett and Pat Harrison give an overview of this year's competition, revealing why in an age of tablets, iPads and other devices, the art of handwriting is not lost

In an article in the BBC News Magazine recently, Steven Brocklehurst commented on the recent rise in sales of fountain pens. Amazon notes double the sales in 2012 over the same period in 2011, which is four times higher than in 2010. Pen manufacturers have noted a similar increase.

In the same article, the author Neil Gaiman writes about his use of fountain pens: 'It started in 1994 when I wrote the novel Stardust, in my head I wanted it to be written in the same way as it would have been in the 1920s, so I bought a big notepad and Waterman pen.

'It was the first time I'd used a fountain pen since I was about 13. I found myself enjoying writing more slowly and liked the way I had to think through sentences differently. I discovered I loved the fact that handwriting forces you to do a second draft, rather than just tidying up and deleting bits on a computer. I also discovered I enjoy the tactile buzz of the ritual involved in filling the pens with ink.

'Now when I write novels I have two fountain pens on the go, with two different colour inks. One is always my favourite, but I alternate between the two, so I can see what I have written each day. I also love the way people react when I sign books with fountain pens. I try to sign them in different colours such as brown, green or grey as it is really nice to show that it's obviously been done by a human being.'

Many agree with Neil Gaiman that writing with a fountain pen is a pleasurable experience. A fountain pen does slow down the pace a little and makes writers perhaps think more both about what they are writing as well as their letter-forms. It also promotes patience as fountain pens do often need a bit of encouragement to write. And many also enjoy, as Gaiman does, the ritual of pen cleaning and filling from a bottle of ink.

Some Head teachers insist on every child in their school using a fountain pen and treat it almost as a matter of pride.

The blanket use of fountain pens is not something which I would support. There are some children who only have to

get a fountain pen out of a pencil case to be covered with ink. Left-handers too, if their paper is not positioned properly with the left-hand corner of the paper higher than the right, cannot write with a conventional grip without their hand moving over wet writing and so smudging their work. In my opinion it is not fair that these children should never have the experience of finishing writing with a page of well-formed letters, clean paper and without ink smears and ink blots.

The insistence on fountain pens also almost negates the great strides that have been made in pen manufacture, with newer writing implements similar to fountain pens but with different nibs, and gel rather than ink, and these being generally easier to use.

A number of entries in the National Schools Handwriting Competition are written with a fountain pen, but not all, and no preference is given to the writing implement when judging. What we are looking at is the handwriting, letter formation, and rhythm and flow. It is more important that the letters are written correctly, with appropriate heights for ascenders, with good joins where they are used, and the text placed pleasingly on the page.

Some entries this year were rather overwhelmed by illustration, and although it is appreciated that this is a useful teaching device, to fill in time for quicker writers to allow for those who write at a slower pace, it should not overwhelm the writing. It is interesting and very encouraging to note that the standard of writing is being maintained over the years, and that entries for the older age groups were as strong as those of younger children this year.

As always, the own choice poems for the older children were a delight, and much enjoyed by this judge! So whatever the choice of writing implement, handwriting is an essential skill, and schools that encourage their pupils to enter for the National Schools' Handwriting Competition are to be applauded.

Patricia Lovett, judge. [www.patricialovett.com](http://www.patricialovett.com) Results >>>



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## satips National Schools' Handwriting Competition 2012 Results

### Class A

**Overall Winner** - Chloe Preston (Age 6), Kensington Prep

#### Age 3 years

##### Highly Commended

Olivia Pearce, Hallfield School, Edgbaston  
Nicholas Fairclough, Roch House Prep, Abbots Bromley

#### Age 4 years

**Winner** - Olivia Eddy, Old Vicarage School, Richmond upon Thames

**Runner up** - Aanika Gupte Hallfield School

**Highly Commended** - Simon Cheung Hallfield School

#### Age 5 years

**Winner** - Abdur-Kahmah Hameed, Hallfield School

**Runner up** - Nina Blakey, Kensington Prep

##### Highly Commended

Mahima Kerai, Swaminarayan School

#### Age 6 years

**Winner** - Sienna Piper, Farringtons School, Chislehurst

**Runner up** - Ruairi Massie, Ashfold School, Aylesbury

**Highly Commended** - Khushi Soni, Swaminarayan School

### Class B

**Overall Winner** - Jamie Fairbairn (Age 8), Newton Prep

#### Age 7 years

**Winner** - Samuel Acres, Kingshott School, Hitchin

**Runner up** - Lauren Erasmus, Seaton House School, Sutton

##### Highly Commended

Elfreda Hall, Newton Prep  
Archie Mathers, Beechwood Park School, Markyate

#### Age 8 years

**Winner** - Luca Hayes, Devonshire House Prep

**Runner up** - Rory Maddinson, Cheltenham College Junior School

##### Highly Commended

Eve McCallam, Ipswich Prep  
Navika Singh, St. Helen's College, Hillingdon

### Class C

**Overall Winner** - Julia Zagrajek (Age 10), Garden Suburb Junior School, London

#### Age 9 years

**Winner** - Alimorad Marandi, Eaton House

**Runner up** - India Jane Myerscough, Cargilfield School, Edinburgh

##### Highly Commended

Edward Bingham, Avenue House School  
Edward Reed

### Age 10 years

**Winner** - Zoya Kwatra, Ipswich Prep

**Runner up** - Cordelia Campbell, Chiswick & Bedford Park Prep

##### Highly Commended

Mariella Couthard, Cargilfield, Edinburgh  
Lulu Rehman, Old Vicarage School, Richmond upon Thames

### Class D

**Overall Winner** - Annabelle Irwin (Age 13), Cumnor House, Danehill

#### Age 11 years

**Winner** - Jaaziel Kajoba, Ipswich Prep

**Runner up** - Mandeep Kooner, Alexandra Junior School, Hounslow

##### Highly Commended

Alexander Lyons, St. Bernard's Prep, Slough  
Ambika Mehra, Seaton House School, Sutton

#### Age 12 years

**Winner** - Oliver Starling, Cargilfield School, Edinburgh

**Runner up** - Millie Anderson, Ashfold School, Aylesbury

##### Highly Commended

Laura Douglas-Hamilton, St. Hugh's School, Faringdon  
Lily Hill, Cargilfield School, Edinburgh

#### Age 13 years

**Winner** - Agrima Rohatgi, Red House School, Stockton on Tees

**Runner up** - George Greenacre, Ashfold School, Aylesbury

**Highly Commended** - Jeremy Samuel, Kingshott School, Hitchin,

#### Age 14 years

**Winner** - Sophie Hazel, Cumnor House, Danehill,

### Class E - Staff

**Winner** - Helen Beavis, Beechwood Park, Markyate,

**Runner up** - Nicola Borthwick, Eaton House Girls' School,  
Highly Commended  
Gill Linthwaite, Old Vicarage School,  
Richmond upon Thames

#### Footnote

The 2012 competition drew approximately 8000 entries from 81 schools, including primary schools.

Patricia Lovett, our judge of the final stage of the competition, uses a points system to select the winning school and runner-up school, based on the best COLLECTION of entries to reach this final judging stage.

This year the winning school is: HALLFIELD

And the runner-up is: BEECHWOOD PARK

Pat Harrison - Competition Organiser/satips Administrator



SAINT FELIX SCHOOL  
SOUTHWOLD

# OPEN MORNING

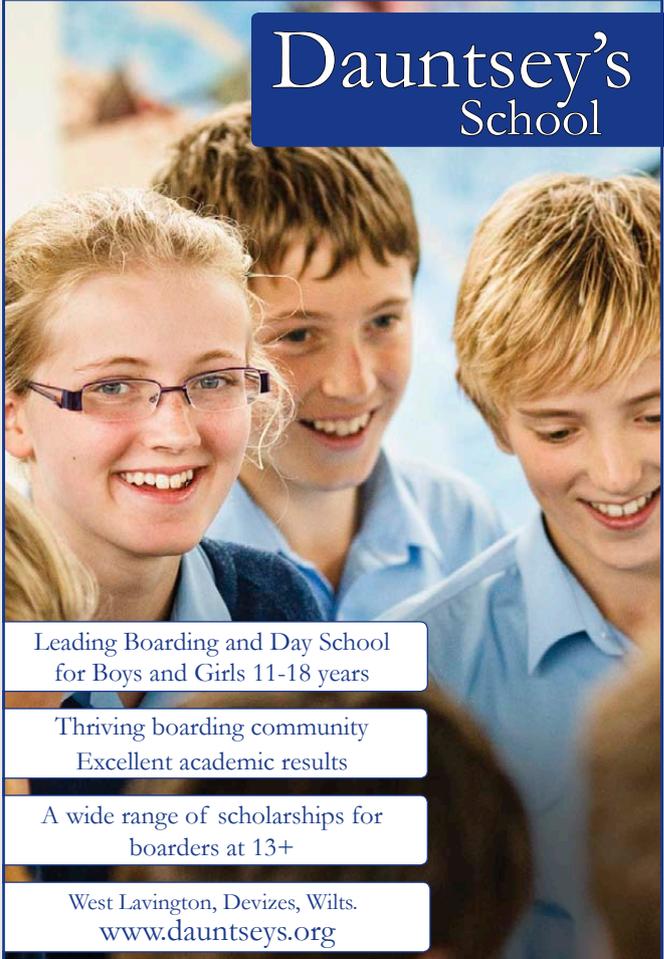
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# Satipski 2012

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 on to 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 – seven one-hundredths 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 2013 will take place in early May. If you are interested please contact me [Briangilyead@aol.com](mailto:Briangilyead@aol.com)



Photos courtesy of Paul Stevens

# Courses and events

## **satips CPD**

For more information on any of the *satips* courses below, please contact the administrator: [admin@satips.com](mailto:admin@satips.com)

### **Art and design**

29 Sep	Figurative sculpture	Abingdon Prep, Oxon
16 Oct	Sketchbooks	Dean Close, Cheltenham
07 Nov	KS2 clayworks - Years 3, 4 & 5	Ballard School, Hampshire
10 Nov	Art technicians conference	Abingdon Prep, Oxon
21 Nov	Animation in art	Sidcot School, Avon
05 Dec	Preparing for art scholarships and working with gifted and talented in art	Abingdon Prep, Oxon

### **Early Years**

13 Sep	Teaching phonics and spelling: Early Years, KS1 and KS2	Royal Masonic School
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### **English**

09 Nov	Creative Writing	The <i>satips</i> Bookshop, Sutton
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### **Geography**

09 Nov	Geography: Where are we going?	Eton College, Windsor
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### **Maths**

05 Oct	Problem solving at KS2	Bedford Prep, Beds
16 Nov	Maths for timid teachers and TAs: raise your confidence in mathematics	TBC

### **Modern Foreign Languages**

09 Oct	MFL: Books and beyond	The <i>satips</i> Bookshop, Sutton
02 Nov	The effective use of IT in MFL	Orwell Park, Suffolk

### **Pastoral care**

12 Nov	Pastoral care in independent schools	Dulwich Prep, London
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### **Professional development**

28 Sep	From good to outstanding: how to teach the outstanding lesson	The <i>satips</i> Bookshop, Sutton
23 Nov	How to get the best out of boys and their learning	Bedford Prep, Beds

### **Religious studies**

08 Nov	World religions and contemporary issues	Eton College, Windsor
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## **Other courses and events**

### **ISA**

For more information on any of the ISA courses below, please visit [www.isaschools.org.uk](http://www.isaschools.org.uk)

27 Sep	Heads' PA and school administrators course	Davies, Laing & Dick College
10 Oct	The new statutory framework for EYFS	Babington House, Chislehurst
20 Nov	Prep-prep conference	Haresfoot School, Berkhamstead
22 Nov	ICT in the junior curriculum	The King Alfred School, London

### **GSA**

06 Nov	Gifted girls: opportunities and challenges	St Francis College, Oxford
13 Nov	Professional review: how can we be most effective?	Bradford Girls' Grammar School

# Hit send and collect my P45?

What the Head really wanted to say, but decided better of it...

Dear Parents,

Firstly let me apologise for having a holiday and not replying to your emails within a nanosecond of them being sent. As you pay fees you have the God-given right to expect my time 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Although, you were very considerate in December, when I only received one parental email on Christmas Day. Many thanks for this thoughtfulness.

Clearly, when I was appointed to my current role my remit was to ruin the school, destroying its credibility and bankrupting it as quickly as possible. As a sideline, I was also asked to ensure that every child's education was halted and if possible, permanent damage done to their enthusiasm and love for learning. With this in mind I dared to look at an inspection report and then compare it to our school and wonder how on earth the commentary could possibly relate to what I saw. The practice in some areas of our school was quite frankly dire. The staff are out of the ark and appear to have had no professional development since they graduated (if they did at all) in the early 1920s.

But no, despite my glowing views, I decide that time stands still for no man. I did question my desire to change when I started to receive a steady trickle of complaints from my valued and much-loved parent body. I'm lying actually: it wasn't a trickle it was a tsunami. Children in the nursery were not allowed to dress up, run around, play tag, go outside, or have snack when they wanted it. Their immaturity was also commented upon regularly. An immature three-year-old! What is the world coming to? But they were allowed, in fact commanded, to watch television, every day. Clearly the quality of provision was exactly what parents wanted. I must be mad to challenge such an excellent approach.

So what next? I decided to improve ratios and add extra staff to the team to lead best practice and ensure that every child's needs were addressed. I improved the space available and invested in new furniture and resources to ensure that the layout of the bigger area reflected best practice, allowing each child to be inquisitive, creative, thoughtful, stimulated and, dare I say it, happy.

However, I clearly misjudged what you as parents want for your children. So now I have a decision to make. Do I try and please some of the parents (I certainly can't please everyone) or do I do what I trained to do and make sure that the needs of the children drive the way in which we develop the school? In the words of the Clash song: 'Should I stay or should I go now? If I go there will be trouble, an' if I stay it will be double.'

I have to say that at the moment resignation is looking good. I have never met a group of parents who are so apathetic in terms of attending meetings to explain change but are then so quick to condemn. I know, I know, many of you were in Biarritz or Mauritius or skiing in Whistler and only heard the news in Costa on your return.

It may surprise you to know that I actually know what I am talking about. I have the letters after my name, the inspector training, the reports about my practice in previous schools and the enthusiasm and love of the way in which young children's critical curiosity can be seized and exploited to make their school days hugely exciting and packed with rich learning opportunities. I have been to see the doctor many times but don't presume to know enough to do his or her job. I love the hairdressers but you will all be relieved that I am not cutting your hair. I had a filling this week but suspect you wouldn't want me to prod around in your mouth with a drill and a pot of amalgam.

Aaaah, but I forgot to mention that I am also human and tired of feeling as hounded as the Prime Minister. I don't get the travel perks and the after-dinner speaking fees won't be so great when I retire.

So shall I just give in and resign? I suspect if you try hard enough you will find another Head who will allow the school to remain the way it was in the beginning, is now, and shall be for evermore.

Please send any responses to Azkaban. I have decided that I would be happier living there: the dementors can't suck away my enthusiasm for life any more than you can.

Best wishes for a joyful Autumn

Miss. E. Doff

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approached the school's Bursar who assisted them in producing a 'Dragon's Den' style sales pitch which they could present to both the Headteacher and the Parents Association in a bid to secure vital funds.

After winning over the PA and securing a budget, the Dragon's Den team set about producing theme boards with images of the equipment to picture their planned new play area. A Play Consultant from Fawns was invited in to meet with the School Council to discuss their needs and involved them in a local site visit to help them visualise their new play area. The pupils of St Faith's have since embraced their new play areas with great enthusiasm and excitement and playtimes have become more invigorating and stimulating as a result! For the 7 to 8 year olds an adventure trail was installed which included Weaving Log Steps and a Balance Beam to encourage their physical development while the more challenging Cliffhanger Trail was integrated into the 9 to 13 year olds play area. The Cliffhanger Trail, which encourages children to think logically while increasing their strength, includes a Traversing Wall, Tightrope Crossing, a Parallel Rope Walk and Weaving Log Steps. Richard Brent, Bursar at St Faith's School, commented: *"After researching a number of providers, the School Council settled on Fawns equipment as this offered the flexibility and range of play apparatus which most appealed. We were impressed with their response to the children's correspondence; and how the Play Consultant came up with a series of exciting proposals which were competitive and certainly met our requirements. The installation of the equipment was professional, on time and without complication. We now have two wonderful play areas which the children love and which certainly enhance our school grounds."*

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