


LEP
LEADING EDGE
PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMME

LeadingChange

Issue 07 Autumn 13



I AM IMPELLED,
NOT TO SQUEAK
LIKE A GRATEFUL AND
APOLOGETIC MOUSE,
BUT TO ROAR
LIKE A LION
OUT OF PRIDE
IN MY PROFESSION.
JOHN STEINBECK

Welcome to a new school year and the 7th edition of **Leading Change!** We hope that you have had a good summer. As ever, thank you to all of the schools that have contributed an article for the **Leading Edge journal** – if your school hasn't yet been featured, please get in touch for the next edition.

We are looking forward to seeing you at the Leading Edge Leadership Conference on the 26th September. If you haven't already done so, please contact the Leading Edge team to confirm your place. A place at the conference is part of your Leading Edge package, so there is no additional charge to attend. If you would like to send a second delegate, we currently have a waiting list. If places are available, we will offer them to people on a first-come-first-served basis. Email us at leading.edge@ssatuk.co.uk.

Also, don't forget that the SSAT National Conference is rapidly approaching. A great line-up of speakers have been confirmed for this year, including a rare opportunity to hear Professors Michael Fullan and Andy Hargreaves. Further details, including how to book are in the advert opposite.

Wishing you and your team every success in the coming year.

Kind regards

The Leading Edge team

Leading Edge annual Leadership Conference 2013

26 September . Park Plaza Riverbank . London

Agenda

| | |
|---------------|--|
| 9.00 - 9.30 | Registration |
| 9.30 - 9.45 | Welcome and Leading Edge programme updates |
| 9.45 - 10.30 | Charlie Taylor, Chief Executive, The National College for Teaching and Leadership. |
| 10.30 - 11.15 | What are the challenges for headship in the next 5 years? Reflections from Leading Edge Headteachers |
| 11.15 - 11.45 | Coffee |
| 11.45 - 12.15 | What are the challenges for headship in the next 5 years? Whole room discussion. |
| 12.15 - 13.00 | Workshop sessions |
| 13.00 - 14.00 | Lunch |
| 14.00 - 14.45 | Workshop sessions |
| 14.45 - 15.30 | Stuart Lancaster, Head Coach, England Rugby team. |
| 15.45 | Conference close |

Workshops to include:

- Moving from Good to Outstanding through developing teaching and learning (Gordano School)
- Oversight, a tool for school improvement (The Cleeve School)
- A paperless universe – using Google apps to take your school into the 21st century (Dunraven School)
- Personalising the KS4 curriculum in a changed climate (Ringwood School)
- Teaching Schools – a discussion group for current and aspiring Teaching Schools
- Narrowing the Gap (Loxford School)
- All-through learning (Roundhay School)

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“ We are at a new crossroads in educational reform. The solutions can go either way – getting tougher on teachers, or figuring out how to realistically develop a profession that becomes more inspiring, tough and challenging in itself. ”

Michael Fullan and Andy Hargreaves
Professional Capital

We all want a world-class education system for our students. And we know that the only way to get there is by producing and developing outstanding teachers and school leaders. In a climate where the value of investing in teachers is being challenged, the profession needs to take the lead in defining what it means to be a professional.

As a Leading Edge school, we know that you have the vision and deep practice-based knowledge to design an education system that delivers for all its stakeholders.

Your profession needs you to be at the forefront of driving this agenda.

Join **Michael Fullan, Andy Hargreaves, Guy Claxton, Bill Lucas, Judy Halbert, Linda Kaser, Tim Oates, Christine Gilbert,** and teachers and school leaders at the forefront of innovative practice to explore and develop:

- the future of initial teacher training
- how to cultivate staff at all stages of their careers
- whole-school and classroom-based approaches to delivering outstanding teaching and learning
- teachers as curriculum designers
- models of teacher collaboration and research
- what intelligent accountability really means professional capital in the UK.

The SSAT National Conference 2013: the new professionalism

5-6 December . Manchester Central



Book now to get the SSAT members' early bird
£449 before 30 September | £549 after | day rates £299 (all prices exc VAT)

Leading Edge discounts on group bookings:

Quote LE01: Buy two full-conference packages and get 25% off the third.

Why not attend with your school business manager and one of your potential school leaders of the future?

Quote LE02: Get 10% off your total booking when you book five or more one- or two-day packages.

Please contact us to discuss larger discounts for bigger groups.

Book at ssatuk.co.uk/nationalconference2013

#SSATNC13

This is the dawn of the new professionalism. Make sure your school is part of it.



Congratulations

Many congratulations to the following Leading Edge schools who received SSAT Educational Outcomes Achievement Certificates* this summer.

Certificates were awarded in the following categories:

- Outstanding student progress
- Outstanding student attainment
- Outstanding continuous improvement

Particular congratulations to Sacred Heart High School, St Marylebone C of E School, Thornden School and Yavneh College who were amongst the 9 schools who were the overall winners of the award for student attainment and to Barnfield West Academy and Denbigh High School who were the overall winners of the award for student progress.

Achieving all 3 certificates:

Beckfoot School
Chellaston Academy

Achieving 2 certificates:

All Hallows Catholic College Arden
Barr Beacon School
Brampton Manor Academy
Canons High School
Colchester County High School for Girls
Comberton Village College
Finham Park School
Harris Academy Chafford Hundred
Haybridge High School and Sixth Form
Highbury Fields School
Holland Park School
Invicta Grammar School
JFS
King Edward VI Grammar School
Ousedale School
Plashtet School
Sacred Heart High School
Sandbach High School and Sixth Form College
Sandringham School
Slough and Eton CofE
Business & Enterprise College
St Angela's Ursuline School
St Catherine's Catholic School
St John Bosco Arts College
St John Plessington Catholic College
St Marylebone Church of England School

St Monica's RC High School
St Paul's Catholic College
St Richard's Catholic College
St Saviour's & St Olave's School
Swavesey Village College
Thornden School
Valentines High School
Waldegrave School
Waverley School
Woolwich Polytechnic School
Yavneh College

Achieving 1 certificate:

Alderbrook School
Amery Hill School
Aylsham High School
Barnfield West Academy
Beaumont School
Bentley Wood High School
Bethnal Green Academy
Biddulph High School
Bluecoat Academy
Castle Manor Academy
Castle View Enterprise Academy
Challney High School for Boys
Charters School
Clapton Girls' Academy
Codsall Community High School
Dartford Grammar School
Denbigh High School
Faringdon Community College
Featherstone High School
Feversham College
Friern Barnet School
Gable Hall School
Glyn School
Graveney School

Gumley House Convent School
Hagley Catholic High School
Harris Academy Bermondsey
Heartlands Academy
Heathfield Community School
Heckmondwike Grammar School
Hellesdon High School
Helsby High School
Highbury Grove School
Humberston Academy
Hurworth School
Ilford County High School
Ilkley Grammar School
Kingsford Community School
Langley Park School for Girls
Linton Village College
Lipson Co-operative Academy
Lordswood Girls' School and Sixth Form Centre
Loxford School of Science and Technology
Mayfield School
Meols Cop High School
Oakgrove School
Parkside Academy
Passmores Academy
Pate's Grammar School
Platanos College
Poynton High School
Redborne Upper School and Community College
Robert May's School
Saffron Walden County High School
Saint Gabriel's College
Sexey's School
Shenley Brook End School
Sidney Stringer Academy

Sir John Cass's Foundation & Red Coat CofE Secondary School
Sir William Borlase's Grammar School
Skipton Girls' High School
Small Heath School
Springwood High School
St Anne's Catholic School and Sixth Form College
St Anthony's Girls' Catholic Academy
St Augustine's Catholic College
St Bonaventure's School
St Mary's College
St Michael's Church of England High School
St Peter's RC High School
Swanshurst School
The Academy at Shotton Hall
The Broxbourne School
The Castle Secondary School
The Ecclesbourne School
The Hermitage Academy
The Hertfordshire & Essex High School
The Highcrest Academy
The Ockendon Academy
The Rochester Grammar School
The Sacred Heart Language College
The Stourport High School and Sixth Form Centre
Wade Deacon High School
Wakefield City Academy
Weydon School
Wildern School
Writhlington Academy

*Awards were made to schools and academies who were within the top 20% nationally in terms of the following measures:

- KS4 value-added scores
- GCSE average point scores
- Continuous improvement in the percentage of students achieving 5+ A*-C EM from 2009 - 2012

Please note that certificates were only issued to schools that were affiliated to the SSAT at that time.

Thank you.

It was great to see so many Leading Edge schools at the Achievement Show on 21 June at Twickenham Stadium.

The Achievement Show celebrates the exceptional work that goes on in schools across the country and provides an opportunity for delegates to hear first hand about best and next practice in a wide range of areas. Thank you to the following schools who presented at this year's Achievement Show:



Alderman Peel High School
Sarah Saunders
Barnfield West Academy
Brendan McGowan
Sonia Turner
Beckfoot School
Deborah Anness
Bidston Avenue Primary School
Matt Brooks
Bodmin College
Bruce Douglass
Byrchall High School
Jennifer Hornby
Craig Slater
Canons High School
Keven Bartle
Joe Freeman
Leah McCormick
Athena Pitsillis
Aarti Sharma
Comberton Village College
Jamie Freeman
Cotham School
Geraldine Hill-Male
Devonport Girls' School
Harriet Morgan
Downlands School
Alan Frame
Dunraven School
David Boyle
Cath Boyle
Farlingaye High School
Sue Hargadon
Feversham College
Dianne Excell
Fir Vale School Academy
Kate Simpson
Gamesley Community Primary School
Rachael Vincent
George Spencer Academy
Paul Hynes
Glyn School
Guy Carter
Tim Starke
Graveney School
Shahneila Saeed
Greenbank High School
Sharon Naughton
Greenford High School
Tommy Ittu

Gumley House Convent School FCJ
Stephen Byrne
Harbour Primary School
Christine Terrey
Harris Academy Chafford Hundred
Nicola Graham
King Richard School
James Webb
Linton Village College
Vivien Corrie-Wing
Tim Darby
Mulberry School for Girls
Penny Constantinou
Sarah Dickson
Sabina Khan
Orleans Park School
Janet Livesey
Glennis Pye
Pate's Grammar School
Andrew Jones
Peters Hill Primary School
Neil Hopkin
Rainhill High School
Jane Marshall
Reigate School
Kelly Sutton
Robert Mays School
Jenny Robinson
Sacred Heart Primary School
Jason Blinikewycz
Martin Johnson
Sandringham School
Ceddy de-le-Croix
South Dartmoor Community College
Mark Gale
South Hunsley School and Sixth Form College
Sian Derry
South Wirral High School
Simon Goodwin
St Anthony's Girls' Catholic Academy
Jude Wallis
St John Plessington Catholic College
Brian Lally
St John's Primary School
Jane Ratcliffe

St Joseph's RC VA Comprehensive
Ryan Gibson
Denis Heaney
St Laurence Academy
Mitch Moore
St Silas Catholic College
Matt Duffield
Simon Adams
St Silas Primary School
Gina Donaldson
Swavesey Village College
Cecilia Freer
The Academy at Shotton Hall
Lindsay Maughan
Lesley Powell
The Cooper School
Alistair Surrall
The Ecclesbourne School
Moya Weighill
The Stourport High School and Sixth Form Centre
Saskia Van-de-Bilt
The Streetly Academy
Adam Hughes
The Swayne Park School
Andy Jenkins
Maria Shangolis
University of Cumbria
Marian Carty
Wakefield City Academy
Alan Yellup
William Gilbert Endowed CofE VA Primary School
Lisa Tipping
Wilmington Grammar School for Girls
Natalie Argile
Richard Lord
Wood Green School
David Askew
Richard Meadows



Quotes from this year's delegates...

'It was inspiring, informative and I have that "September" feeling in July for the first time in 15 years of teaching!!!'

'I have been twice now and it is the best CPD that I have experienced in 12 years...the quick fire nature of the Achievement Show means you can gain lots in just one day.'

'School to school. These sessions are being run by people who do the job, not just theorise about it.'

Using a flexible year 9 to personalise KS4 learning

Ben Rule
Deputy Headteacher
Ringwood School



Year 9 students at Ringwood School working on their Project Qualification

Like most schools we've worked hard personalising the curriculum to meet the needs of our learners. We have diversified the courses we offer with applied and vocational qualifications and taken advantage of the modular structure of GCSEs to provide an expanded, three year KS4 based on stage not age. With changes to the educational landscape, we're having to rethink this and grapple with some tough questions. Is it possible to square the circle of personalising the curriculum while delivering an expanded core of compulsory subjects? How can we offer a diverse range of courses when the credibility of many of them has been challenged? Do we alter our focus on skills and learning processes, as national policy emphasises subject knowledge?

We are retaining a three year KS4. Students will still make provisional option choices in year 8, but they will now experience a curriculum in year 9 that is tailored to their interests, before reviewing their option choices at the end of the year, to then start GCSEs in year 10. The year 9 curriculum provides GCSE and BTEC style work and assessment which prepares students for the start of their actual courses in year 10, ensuring they begin from a starting point which is significantly further forward than previous students.

The year 9 curriculum is made up of eight learning areas: English, maths, science, ICT, languages, PE, creativity and humanities. In order to ensure that all students continue to experience a broad curriculum, all students study all eight

learning areas. However, in order to personalise their experience, they choose the courses they do in four of these areas. This allows them to have a GCSE foundation year in the subjects they have chosen for their provisional options, as well as in some additional subjects too. So, for example students choose two humanities subjects (history, geography, psychology and business), and spend two periods a week on each for the year. All students must do either history or geography (or both) in year 9 so they do not rule out the EBacc at the end of year 8. They choose four creative or technology subjects and spend a double period each week on two of them for six months before rotating onto the other two.

| English (4) | Mathematics (4) | Science (5) | ICT (2) | MFL (3) | Humanities | | EP (1) | Creative | | PE (3) |
|----------------|--------------------|----------------|------------|---|---|---------------|--|---|--|-----------|
| | | | | | Hums A (2) | Hums B (2) | | Creative A (2) | Creative B (2) | |
| | | | | Choose either: French Spanish German | Choose either: Geography & History Geography & Business History & Business Geography & Psychology History & Psychology | | Choose 2 – Spend half year on each: Art Food Product Design Music Textiles Project | Choose 2 – Spend half year on each: Art Cad Cam Drama Media Res Mat Music Tech Project | Choose either: 3 periods of PE or 2 periods of PE plus 1 period of Dance | |

Our year 9 curriculum means that students can:

- drop some of the subjects they are certain they do not want to do a qualification in when they get to years 10 and 11. This means that they can...
- spend more time on the subjects they are thinking about doing qualifications in when they get to years 10 and 11 and experience GCSE style units and assessments in them.
- continue to experience a broad range of subjects, which keep their options open about what they will continue to study in years 10 and 11. Their year 9 curriculum is not narrowed down just to those subjects that they have opted for in year 8 but enables them to experience a wider choice, leaving open the option of changing their minds.

As a result of the year 9 curriculum, students are asked to finalise their option choices in year 9, in the light of the GCSE foundation units they have experienced. They are given a list of all 30 option subjects (including seven BTECs) without the constraints of pre-set

option blocks and we then take in their choices and create the timetable blocks from these. Students can therefore combine academic, vocational and applied courses if they wish and not be set off on a pathway that pre-determines the types of course and mix of courses they can access. Students can also opt into the EBacc by choosing history or geography (or both) or opt out of it by not choosing either. Our core and compulsory curriculum in years 10 and 11 consists of English, maths, science, MFL and core PE only and we have made the decision not to force the EBacc on all.

In order to further personalise their curriculum, year 9 students also study the Level 2 Project Qualification, which teaches them the skills they need to be successful as independent learners at GCSE whilst allowing them to produce a piece of extended coursework in a topic of their choice. This course further enables students to specialise in one of the subjects they are keen to study in years 10 and 11. We are developing a Learning Skills Passport that encourages and rewards students for independently applying the skills they have learnt on

the Project course in their other lessons. Although the Project Qualification does not count in the league tables, we believe it accredits essential skills that students need and which we would want to teach anyway. The move away from modular to linear courses increases the need for students to have the skills to review their work regularly over KS4 and to undertake longer, more meaningful research. It also sets a foundation for students completing the level 3 EPQ that under the government's A-Bacc proposals will be compulsory for A-Level students.

We believe that our year 9 curriculum enables us to maintain a three year personalised KS4. It fulfils the principle of all students doing the Arts, ICT and D&T at KS4 which are guiding principles in the government's review of the National Curriculum, but this happens in year 9 without taking up valuable option time in years 10 and 11 (these, like RE and PSHE have no lesson time in years 10 and 11 at Ringwood). At the same time we have been able to preserve a high level of curriculum choice for the students, enabling personalisation.

Independent learning – don't let it get lost in transition

Jeanne Fairs
Head of Sixth Form
Gordano School

It's caused me to look closely at my current Sixth Formers. As educators we have to coach our young people to become independent; we must engineer opportunities and then stand back and allow students freedom to practise – and to fail. 16 year olds can become lost in transition when teachers and tutors forget that they are a work in progress and forget to explicitly teach skills such as note taking, file organisation, time management and meeting deadlines. We can easily forget how scaffolded Key Stage 4 study can be and how tempting a 'study period' (not a 'free') can be to a Year 12 student who was used to a fully structured timetable.

Here we actively look for opportunities to facilitate independent study – twilight talks and demonstrations in lecture theatres, presentations in seminar rooms, bookable study spaces, different independent study spaces (silent, quiet and social study options). We offer study skills sessions (our iLearn programme) and make no assumptions that folder organisation, meeting deadlines or wider and extended reading will happen by osmosis – we make these skills explicit and we link them to our effort agenda to promote an open and resilient mind set rather than a closed one. Our student voice is strong and we have students reviewing best practice and presenting their findings to students and staff. Most importantly we constantly remind the students how well they are doing, particularly when they cope with setbacks!

I was given permission by a Year 12 student to share the email he sent to his exasperated teacher:

'For the past years I have found school really rather easy and have never had to work hard to achieve the grades I want/ deserve. The past six months have been incredibly hard for me as there are times when I have found it really hard to understand concepts out of context, organise my time efficiently, concentrate in class, and to focus and study. I coasted through GCSE and now I find it increasingly harder to ask for help or admit to myself that I don't understand the course material. I think I owe it to myself, and in extension, my parents and the school to knuckle down and work harder and I would very much appreciate some help when it comes to revising or learning new concepts.'

I share his thoughts because it reminded me that we also need to be mindful and responsive to good intentions, otherwise they too will get lost in transition.



I can't be the only parent who spent their son's time in the Sixth Form bemoaning his lack of independent work ethic and inability to handle the washing machine. Fast forward one university term and I struggle to recognise the same young adult who has negotiated a lease on student accommodation, navigated the vagaries of university timetabling and has forged a role as sports editor of the university newspaper. He didn't even bring dirty laundry last time he visited.

Building 'AfL for teachers' – targeted and bespoke professional development

Mike Humphreys
Vice Principal
The Stourport High School
& V1th Form Centre

reducing whole school, whole issue training and replacing it with more tightly targeted bespoke training and collaborative development.

Our teachers identified three main points for focus:

- 1 Outstanding marking and assessment
- 2 Outstanding relationships and climate for learning
- 3 Outstanding progress in lessons and examinations

Teachers then selected from a number of alternative ways of developing their skills in the areas they identified, by using personal activity plans to outline what they were going to focus on and embed as practice in every lesson. Once embedded, they then move to another strategy, thus building up their professional portfolio over time, their 'toolkit' so to speak. The sort of activities involved include time set aside for collaborative planning, 'breakfast boosters' and 'teatime tasters' which are voluntary opportunities for staff to share what works or to explore a teaching and learning issue in order to hone their practice. More formal, in depth development opportunities are available through the calendar of professional elective professional studies for all staff – www.schoolportal.co.uk/GroupDownloadFile.asp?GroupID=1096137&ResourceID=4785742

In essence the model is very simple and straightforward. What makes it work is peoples' commitment to it. People are placed firmly at the centre of their professional development and are encouraged to take the initiative in

developing themselves and their teams. Ideas that improve learning and teaching are not allowed to escape. As one colleague described it:

'It's a bit like 'total football'. It doesn't matter whether you're a full back or a midfielder, if you've got the ball and it's 'on' go for it and take your people with you.'

Formal offsite INSET has its place but the school prefers more supportive, facilitated and targeted forms of CPD and a good example of this is the number of facilitated coaching groups to build professional capacity. These include groups for initial teacher training, NQTs, middle leaders and collaborative planning to produce a common bank of outstanding lessons that work time and time again. The strength of this approach lies in the way that every teacher can and does contribute to jointly produced plans so that everyone benefits and, most importantly the students themselves get a really good deal, lesson after lesson. As a Teaching School, it's also excellent practice for embedding really good professional practice that will sustain trainees throughout their whole careers. More and more we are learning that deep improvements in learning don't come from top down models of delivery, but from giving teachers time to work together to develop lessons and techniques which they know work well.

Innovative ideas for transition

Deborah Loveridge
Assistant Headteacher
Crispin School



French for beginners 'Anyone for ice-cream?'

Mrs Fran Eavis

Despite the fact that French is not statutory in primary schools, Somerset schools have opted to ensure that some French is taught on the curriculum on a regular basis. Our colleagues can help in many ways with the organisation of materials and suggestions of how to teach a topic that may be unfamiliar to the teacher, as well as with hands-on activities.

Students from Cossington Primary School had the opportunity to sell ice creams, and of course, buy them too, all in French! The stall was one of many at the Cossington School Christmas Fayre and students, under the guidance of Mme. Eavis, dressed up as French ice cream vendors to work a shift on the stall. Everyone who wanted to buy an ice cream, including parents and governors, had to ask in French! The pupils had been learning the words for lots of different ice-cream flavours, and practising role-plays with Mrs Eavis, as part of her Primary Language Outreach work. It was great to put all that rehearsing into practice and 50 delicious scoops of ice cream were sold within an hour!

Links between Crispin School and its feeder primary schools have always been strong. A body of staff meet regularly through the year to ensure transition for our pupils is as smooth as can be. Five years ago transition was the traditional 'Induction Day' and the sharing of a project across the schools in mathematics and English but now it encompasses a wide variety of activities throughout the year so that Year 6 pupils can visit Crispin and become familiar with what will be their new surroundings early on in the process.



Spectacular science 'Are we burning anything today Miss?'

Mrs Sarah Richards

Contrary to popular belief, burning (or combustion) is not something that we do every science lesson, but it is great fun when we do, and most students really enjoy it.

Year 6 pupils from Catcott Primary School together with their teachers had the opportunity to investigate a range of chemical reactions, including combustion. The morning's activities centred on learning about chemical reactions. The group were shown some colourful and awe-inspiring demonstrations and then had the opportunity to carry out some of their own chemical reactions. All the children enjoyed their experience of secondary science and are looking forward to joining the school in September.

Have you seen SSAT's Moving up to year 7?

Written by and for Year 6 and 7 students. For more details contact leading.edge@ssatuk.co.uk



'The most exciting experiment was the fire bubbles. It was really cool watching them just catch fire.'

Julia

'I found burning the magnesium so much fun. I can't wait to go to Crispin next year and attend your Science lessons.'

Emily

'I really enjoyed experimenting with the Bunsen burners. My favourite experiment was testing for hydrogen gas.'

Hannah

'I really enjoyed experimenting with the Bunsen burners. My favourite experiment was testing for hydrogen gas.'

Hannah



Design and Technology for a purpose

Mrs Amy Isted

There are many areas of D&T and because it is not statutory to teach them all at primary school, it is often a subject that students do not get the opportunity to experience, due to lack of resources and equipment.

We have created projects across multiple areas of D&T. We offer primary schools the opportunity to work with Crispin on two particular projects (among other things). Charlie and the Chocolate Factory is particularly popular! Pupils visiting Crispin firstly make chocolate moulds using the vacuum former and then cast the chocolates. They experience working in a workshop, using a range of tools and equipment and then have the opportunity to work in one of our fully equipped Food Technology rooms creating different flavoured chocolate. The project is completed by designing and packaging the product.

For the second project we use 2D design computer software to design and make a LED key ring. The pupils experience CAD and CAM and gain an understanding of how we can manufacture products using computers, as well as learning how to produce a simple circuit.



The pupils thoroughly enjoy both of these days and create a fully functioning product. It gives the pupils a real insight into Design and Technology at Crispin School and they have a thoroughly productive day of good experiences.

'I enjoyed working with all the Crispin equipment and I can't wait to come up to Crispin next year!'

Ellen

'Fantastic I've always wanted to make my own product.'

Aleah

'The two workshops we had with Amy last term were fantastic! The children enjoyed the exciting activities and were very proud of their key ring and chocolates, which they were able to take home. It has also helped them to be more confident about coming to Crispin in September and they are really looking forward to transition now.'

Year 6 teacher

Ensuring a smooth learning transition in year 7

Martyn Parker
Co-Headteacher
Rachel Roberts
Year 7 Transition Co-ordinator
Charters School

Like most secondary schools, we have a well-established transition programme that has, over the years, ensured a smooth start for our Year 7s and is sensitive to the pastoral issues that could affect them as they move to 'big' school. Extended schools and specialism funding had also given increased impetus to the links with primary schools. As the only large secondary in the area, we formed a mutually beneficial partnership with our feeders – the Ascot Partnership 'Six schools, one community' – and built on our established transition programme with sports and arts student leaders running sessions in the primaries or at Charters. Typical of many activities was a primary school instrumental day run by our Music Student Leaders, culminating in a concert at the magnificent Rose Theatre, hired out free of charge by St Mary's School, a private school in Ascot with whom we also have an excellent partnership.

What we lacked, however, was an equally smooth learning transition. Year 7 book checks, undertaken annually by the pupils' year 6 teachers a few weeks into the academic year, regularly revealed that many pupils were producing work below the standards achieved at the end of primary school. Our progress data supported these conclusions, but this was rather lost in our focus on progress from KS2 to KS4, which was on the increase. Deeper analysis showed that, despite a tranche of intervention strategies,

our lower ability students were not making progress in line with the wider cohort. Therefore, in discussion with the Ascot Partnership, we agreed to focus our efforts on the part of our cohort (about 15%), who were struggling; and that meant we had to pay more attention to avoiding disruption in these pupils' learning as they moved schools.

Finding common teaching and learning strands was key to our work with the primaries. One of our 'leading teachers' was given the task of drawing these strands together as the pupils moved to Charters. Central to this was the fact that the primaries had begun to use a theatre education company called Thrift to inject creativity and excitement into the learning process at their schools by an approach called Experiencology. It seemed only logical, therefore, to build this approach into our transition arrangements.

Consequently, Thrift led our two day induction visit for the Year 6s in July by working closely with the tutors; we are frequently asked by our Parent Council to give tutors a more central role in the lives of their children at transition, linking them more to the role of the Year 6 teachers. The tutors in turn worked for the first two days of the new term with their Year 7 tutor groups, not just on administrative issues, but developing L2L principles, running leadership activities and practising Experiencology.

Our work with the Thrift Theatre Company (www.thriftmusictheatre.co.uk) began in March 2012, after having seen them in action in one of our feeder schools. A Year 4 class were observed trying to create a machine that could capture the 'sound of a black hole'. The excitement, enthusiasm and curiosity that this experience generated in the children was incredible, and we saw how this energy would be perfect for re-invigorating the transition for our own pupils.

Thrift use music, drama and props to create educational experiences for learners (and teachers) of all ages. Their educational philosophy is simple, yet exciting: 'We seek to facilitate experiences that are hands on, deeply immersive and allow the participant time to figure things out for themselves.' Working in collaboration with our 'leading teacher'. Thrift developed a package that met the specific needs of our partnership. There were three elements to this package: a film of 'experiences' of what it is like to be a pupil at our school; activities that were delivered in beautifully made 'Experiencology' boxes to the feeder schools and two days of induction activities at our school in July.

The Film

This began with the making of a film of 'experiences' of what it is like to be a pupil at our school; 6th form students were interviewed to determine a set of specific 'experiences' that they felt comprised their life at Charters. The focus was on the minutia, rather than the 'big' experiences like school trips or exams, and they were framed as moments of wonder, for example 'you wonder where a door leads' and 'you know what something does, but you wonder if you'll ever get to use it', these statements, narrated by the 6th form students, were coupled with footage taken of the school and pupils to illustrate. This was not a promotional film of the school, rather a subjective account of the pupils' experiences of their time here. The film was played at the beginning of the first of the two 'transition days' that the Year 6 pupils attended in July.

Thrift also filmed the Year 6 pupils as they entered the school for the first time and some of their activities over the two days and re-edited the film to include this new footage, which was played at the end of the induction day assembly – the year

6 pupils could actually see how their experiences were just beginning at secondary school and how they were connected to the students currently at the school.

The Experiencology Wonder Boxes

We were keen for the Year 6 pupils to feel safe and connected to our school before they had even set foot in it. Each Year 7 pupil was assigned a pupil in Year 6 and given a postcard to write a positive note of encouragement to their Year 6 counterpart.



Once these were collated, they were put into the Wonder Boxes along with a set of fun tasks that required the pupils to think about their experience of Primary school and create a memento that represented this experience. The tasks themselves did not have a subject-specific focus and were quite open to being adapted as our Primary school colleagues saw fit to suit their classes. They were also not time-consuming and could be completed as and when they could fit into the school's curriculum post-Key Stage 2 tests.

Once completed, the mementos were collected and returned to us to be presented to their tutors during the induction days. We were careful not to leave out any pupil who would be coming to us in September but was not attending a feeder school and they were sent an individual version of the same task to complete at home.

Staff from the core subjects have always visited the feeder schools for one-off taster lessons, and these continued independently of the Wonder Boxes exercise. However, the activities completed in the lessons were re-vamped and the focus was now on allowing the secondary

staff getting to know some of the Year 6 pupils and vice versa.

The core subjects' Key Stage 3 Co-ordinators ensured that their sessions complemented each other and carried forward the idea that part of the transition process was exploring and knowing themselves. For example, in science the pupils looked at how chromatography works by splitting up the colours of ink in a pen. This was then used in the English lesson, in which pupils were asked to connect each colour that they had created to an aspect of their personality and create a poem that described them.

The Induction Days

Having laid the foundations, and hopefully piqued their interest, all Year 6 pupils who would be moving to us were invited to the two day induction in July. Once they were all seated in the main hall, Charters Experience Film played and the start of their journey had begun. Pupils were sorted into their Tutor Groups and assigned their tutor. They then began a carousel of workshops run by a mixture of Thrift, our staff and Year 10 prefects and leaders.

There were eight key experiences that we wanted the pupils to have a 'taster' of during the induction days, and which we felt represented the most exciting aspects of coming to Secondary school:

- Technology and 'new'
- Trips
- Extra curricular
- Academic
- Community Partnership
- Learning to learn
- Friendship and identity
- Independence

Each workshop lasted 50 minutes and was designed to allow the pupils to experience what it would be like to be part of our school and at the same time bond with their tutor and tutor group. For example, the 'Friendship and Identity' workshop took place in an art room and the pupils had to create a piece of art work that represented the whole group – this was kept and displayed by their tutors when they returned in the autumn. The 'Independence' workshop took place in Food Technology, where small groups were given maps of the local area and a description of a building (with key details deliberately missing); they were challenged

with building a version of the building out of biscuits and icing. Each workshop completed earned the tutor group a badge that represented an aspect of their experience.

In the afternoon of the second of the induction days, there was a final assembly where everything was brought together, led by Tim Godwin and his staff. This consisted of tying the school motto ('Unity, Respect, Excellence') to the workshops and the creation of a school song. The Charters Experience film was played again, this time including footage of the New Year 7s – they could see their part in the story. It brought together two hundred and fifty pupils, their tutors and some of their new teachers, together in the most extraordinary and effective way.

At the start of our academic year, the school now has two days' INSET, to cover start of term procedures, but also to focus on teaching and learning issues from our SDP right at the start of a new school year; and this year we brought in Thrift to lead an afternoon of training for all our staff and teachers from the rest of the Ascot Partnership to develop a shared understanding and discussion of how to build on the pupils' Experiencology methods.

We are aware that many schools have developed exciting integrated skills-based curriculums for Year 7 and all across KS3, but we looked at this a few years ago and decided it was not for us. However, for the first term a 'coalition of the willing' subjects worked together around the theme of 'Myself/Identity', culminating in a celebration of the pupils' work and performances that parents were invited in to enjoy.

We won't know about the impact on academic progress until later in Year 7, but we have recorded fewer behaviour points than normal at this stage for Year 7, we have had a high average 'Attitude to Learning' score in the first two progress reports and there have been few personal traumas. This may have happened anyway because of established practice, but it does feel that we have given the pupils a good chance to avoid the academic dip.

A Thinking School

Maria Shangolis
English AST/Training Team
The Sweyne Park School

When the school first embarked on this learning journey in 2007, the school had made good progress in improving the quality of teaching and learning, but it was also in a potential state of plateau. With his fascination with the complex working of the brain, our Headteacher had a vision of the exciting potential a Thinking School might have for our learning community. Coincidentally, it was during this time that two experienced and dedicated members of staff went to the Headteacher to discuss why pupils' outcomes in their lessons were not improving, despite their reflections and willingness to learn. This dialogue seemed to encapsulate the stumbling block faced by many staff at our school. It seemed right and appropriate to the Headteacher that this was the time to engage the school community on a much deeper level.

The challenge was to share this common goal with all staff and to ensure that the strategies we employed were not gimmicks, but tools for life-long learning.

Having established a strong ethos of continued staff development, whereby many staff had engaged with ITT training and mentoring, the context for this journey had been set.

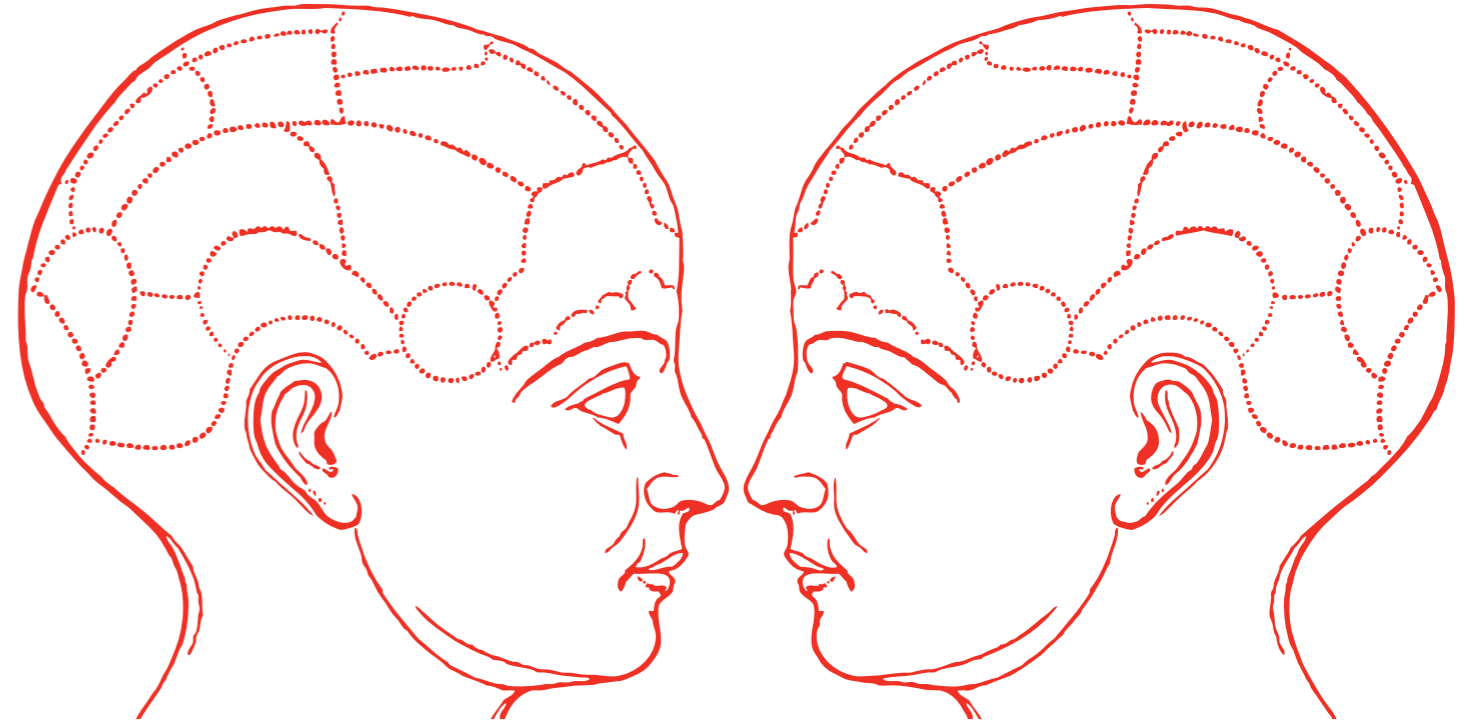
During whole school INSET, senior leaders in the school asked staff to consider what a potential Thinking School might look like. What might we see as we walked into classrooms and around the corridors? What type of conversations might we hear between all members of our community? Finally, what might be the atmosphere around the school? It was during these discussions that staff became enthused by the vision.

Through various mediums, such as Research and Development groups (which all staff are invited to attend) and staff engaging with action research, we were able to introduce thinking tools

which could enable a shift in teaching and learning to occur. For example, by using Bloom's Taxonomy, learning objectives for lessons were more challenging. Rather than lessons being driven by task outcome, pupils were focusing on the quality of their thinking. Pupils were encouraged to persevere and take responsible risks, especially as the pastoral team adapted tutor activities to promote these important Habits of Mind. Instead of rewarding pupils for completing a task, we engaged in dialogue about their thinking process and how they managed their stumbling blocks, praising pupils' self-evaluation and commitment.

A powerful moment during this journey occurred when staff were shown a video clip of two pupils attempting to solve a puzzle. By viewing the thinking process of the pupils in this way and listening to their dialogue, we were able to reflect on how pupils think and how they formulate solutions to challenges. It inspired departments to re-assess their own subjects and to reconnect with their own passion for learning. How could we justify our subject's place on the curriculum? What are our subjects really about? By creating mission statements, we were able to distinguish between the types of thinking our subjects required and the skills that needed to be demonstrated by our pupils. Then we could really consider engaging learners at a much deeper level.

Furthermore, by considering the nuances of our subject areas, staff were able to ask questions regarding pupil engagement. How might we ensure that pupils truly commit to our subjects, rather than just committing to the A*-C economy that we live in? So much of what we teach can be based on abstract theory, far removed from the world our pupils experience on a day-to-day level. If we are to truly engage them, we have to facilitate methods to allow our pupils to make connections



and links between the two. By asking purposeful questions, which were a low threat but of high challenge, we allowed pupils to explore many possibilities. What if water froze at 10 degrees Celsius? What type of world might we be living in? What possible options did George have in 'Of Mice and Men'? The brain likes to engage with plurals and prefers non-threatening language like 'might' and 'possibly' – language which helps to engage the learner.

Seven years later, and we still feel like the journey has only really just begun. The purpose of this journey has never been to please Ofsted or any other external criteria. The decisions we have

made have always had the pupils' best interest at heart. We feel incredibly proud of our school: the vibrant atmosphere; the rich dialogue between all members of the school community; the excellent behaviour of our pupils. In addition, the number of pupils achieving the very top grades increases each year, with more pupils aspiring for further education. The feedback from colleagues and pupils is very positive – our pupils display excellent levels of self-motivation, their independence and ability to persevere are evident.

Whilst we are proud, we do not feel that the work is done. We have identified new challenges ahead, including the

possibility of securing a Sixth Form at our school. Even though education is facing some turbulent times, we feel a sense of calm in our school because our ethos of continuing self-evaluation and staff development has remained the same. Indeed, developing our Thinking School has given our learning community the opportunity to reinforce this ethos and drive the school forward even further.

The Sweyne Park School, in Rayleigh, Essex, was formed in September 1997, following the amalgamation of the Sweyne and the Park Schools. The school has strived to inspire higher aspirations within the local community, through its commitment to staff development and the Headteacher's passion for the brain. As a result, we were awarded an 'outstanding' judgement by Ofsted and have recently been accredited 'Thinking School' status by the University of Exeter.

VIP your peer assessment

David Jones
Deputy Headteacher
Meols Cop High School

‘Engaging in peer or self-assessment is much more than just checking for errors or weaknesses; it involves making explicit what is normally implicit, and thus requires students to be active in their own learning.’

Black and William



Even before the AfL drive, basic self and peer assessment was part of the forward thinking teacher's toolkit; albeit tending to be on the lines of likes, dislikes, improvements etc. without any real guidelines or use of criteria to support the articulation and development of a specific language of learning. It was great when your best mate read your work and likely to lead to squabbles or fisticuffs when the homework you had spent ages preparing was denounced by a peer assessor with the people skills of Mussolini. We can certainly hope to see the benefit of peer assessment in engaging the whole class in high level thinking and the impact on the individual of collaborative learning.

Teaching others is always at the top of the ‘best ways to learn pyramid’ and the talk involved supports the development of oracy and Claxton’s ‘learnish’ demands. Flipped learning, SOLO, co-construction of learning and the development of a ‘proper’ student voice [about their learning not toilet paper and non-chip days!] all inherently need quality analytical self and peer assessment to succeed and have an impact. Peer assessment develops Dweck’s mind-set resilient learners who take supportive criticism and learn to evaluate FISHily [Lisa Jane Ashes’ blog – Friendly Informatively Specifically and Honestly].

Best not to forget that Ofsted like it too:

- Systems are in place to involve all students in reading/responding to feedback and acting on them.

- Learners are confident and critical in assessing their own and other’s work, and to set meaningful targets for improvement.

Hattie too has emphasised the power of feedback, placing it in his top 10 of visible impacts on achievement. Sounds great, especially if we can develop the students’ skills in providing that feedback. But, how do we support the students as they become successful learners by ‘developing the language that will enable them to have a meaningful dialogue about learning?’ [Di Pardoe]

‘What the child can do in collaboration today, he can do alone tomorrow.’

Vygotsky

Most schools will have developed criteria to share when students peer assess, some will have scaffolds and sentence stems to support the writing or discussion of feedback and others will have agreed rules and formats to develop a learning environment conducive to sharing and reflecting. Some of our teachers have developed the FISH theme, others may favour Ron Berger’s 3 Public Critique, ‘Be kind, be specific, be helpful’. To help our students to be specific and helpful, colleagues have produced writing stems to encourage reflective questioning and constructive advice from our peer assessors. Kate Fleetwood, an English NQT has been trialling some PA techniques with her year 7 class-based on AF5:

Peer-assessment

AF5: To explain and comment on writers’ use of language

- 1 My comments begin to develop precise, perceptive analysis of how language is used.
 - 2 I have some appreciation of how the writer’s language choices contribute to the overall effect on the reader.
-
- 1 I can give some detailed explanation, with appropriate terminology, of how language is used.
 - 2 I sometimes draw together comments on how the writer’s language choices contribute to the overall effect on the reader.
-
- 1 I can identify various features of a writer’s use of language, with some explanation.
 - 2 My comments show some awareness of the effect of the writer’s language choices.

6 steps for thorough and structured peer-assessing

- 1 Level:** What level is your partner at?
- 2 Good at:** What have they done that you think is really good, relating to the mark scheme?
- 3 Target:** What have they done that you think needs to be improved, relating to the mark scheme?
- 4 Improve it:** Write a line in your red pen improving you partner’s work to show them what they must do to reach a higher level or be more secure at the level they are at.
- 5 Mini task/Q:** Create a mini-task or question for your partner to complete that, if answered, would allow them to improve their level.
- 6 Verify:** Pass your partner’s work to another student and ask them to check that what you have written is helpful. Verifiers must sign if they agree. If the verifier does not agree - they must say why.

Joe Ford, a science NQT, has developed key question stems to support the peer assessor’s feedback/feed-forward and to equip his scientists with a scientific language for learning. These and other ideas have been shared and trialled via our learning hubs and market place and have allowed many of our staff to receive our internally accredited Lead Learner award.

Identify what has been done well.
Explain why it has been done well.
Suggest ways to improve.

- I really like your idea about.....
- This shows you are really thinking about.....
- In explaining the ideas, you’ve included..... and.....
- You also included how... which helped me to understand that...
- You have included a lot of.....and.....
- You have explained..... by.....
- You met the target for..... because.....

Peer-assessment

- To reach the next level you must.....
- You need to include.....
- You still need to explain.....
- One suggestion is that..... because.....
- Make sure you include these keywords.....
- Answer the following question..... in your explanation

The developmental work is part of a wider school initiative to verify the peer assessor’s feedback. As accurate and specific feedback can be such a powerful support for learning, we decided that it was crucial that we tried to make sure that it was more accurate than it often had been and that a second opinion and ensuing discussion opened up opportunities to dig deeper into a learning discussion and to encourage the notion of compromise – a vital life skill notoriously missing not just from adolescents but people of all ages! The idea formed part of our overall book monitoring and dialogue development plan, which was launched just before we were Ofsted inspected and was re-visited and reviewed during autumn and summer book monitoring, two lots of peer observations, 2 FOCALS and our learning walks (which interview students rather than teachers to discuss learning).

Helen Rose, our subject leader for history developed our whole school peer verification grid idea to incorporate a discussion section and this has had a significant impact on the quality of historical answers (2 minds are better than one) but if we throw in discussion and compromise in form of a learning triad the results really do begin to be noticeable. Of course the stickers and stampers we have developed to reward good practice have an impact too and different departments have developed their own versions to respond in the most appropriate format for them.

| You support learning by: | Peer marker 1 Feed back things they have done well | Peer marker 1 Feed-forward specific suggestions as to how they can improve | Peer marker 2 Feed back things they have done well | Peer marker 2 Feed-forward specific suggestions as to how they can improve | Peer verification Our discussion: |
|---|---|---|---|---|--|
| Offering 1 great piece of feedback/ feed-forward Bronze | | | | | What do we agree on? What do we agree on and why? Can a decision be made? |
| Offering at least 2 great pieces of feedback/ feed-forward Silver | | | | | What level have we decided it should be placed in? Why? |
| Offering your own subject-specific examples to support your suggestions Gold | | | | | What mark have we agreed on? Why? |

PA the MCHS way

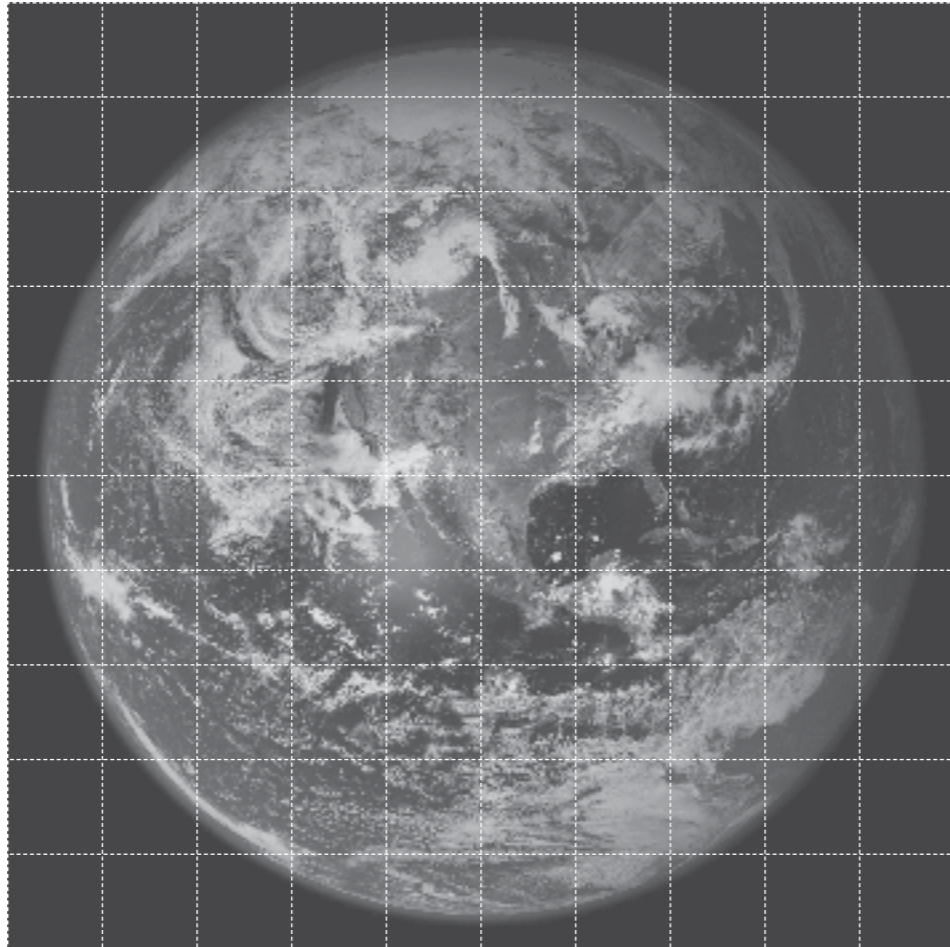
- 1 Give them enough time to reflect (Dedicated Improvement and Reflection Time – or DIRT) at least 15 minutes. I observed a science NQT devote a full lesson to peer assessment-brilliant-she talked for a couple of minutes, followed by an hour of science discussion!
- 2 Rules – Tough on content, soft on people. Be kind, be specific, be helpful – or you have upset students and punches thrown! Focus on the learning not the person.
- 3 Student-friendly criteria shared before the learning so they all know what is expected and when peer assessment occurs.
- 4 They must give feedback – a couple of good things they like (specific to the subject and task) and then a piece of feed forward. Reward them for specific comments and examples – they can't just say give more details or use connectives-make them write an example.
- 5 Get another student to peer assess the same piece and offer their feedback/feed forward – peer assessors often get it wrong. You may not have time to check all of the class, use verifiers and at the same time you are really allowing their learning and language of learning to fly.
- 6 Set up triads of the 2 peer assessors and the original writer to discuss whether or they all agree with the level/comment or need to change it after reflection.

- 7 You are asking a lot of the peer assessor-give them the respect of letting them check that their feed-forward has been met at an appropriate time in the future.
 - 8 Wander round whilst the students are discussing picking out great advice for you to mention during your progress checks and reward every bit of great feedback/conversations that you pick up on.
 - 9 For your low ability groups, work with your TA and move quickly around the room, writing their comments for them. They have valid points but become frustrated when they can't spell what they want to or the other person can't read it. Our classes are small so we can shift quickly around.
- As a general rule however, the 9 commandments of good practice for peer assessment and verification reflect the whole school good practice that has evolved. Verify It Please is now the expected norm for peer assessment and it has certainly helped our students to become VIP learners. Feedback can be written or oral, but as with teacher feedback, the peer assessor must be given the chance to check that their advice has been met. Giving them the opportunity to support another learner's progress is a massive and frightening responsibility – trust them to take the collaborative approach seriously and respect their ability to get it right and be successful leaders of learning.



For the love of geography

Tim Starke
Head of Geography
Guy Carter
AST Geography
Glyn School



Geography at Glyn has been popular for over ten years with at least 200 students at GCSE and currently over 100 at A level studying at any one time. Our results are consistently very good but they could certainly be better which begs the question; If it's not the results, then what else is driving the popularity of Geography at Glyn? This is possibly best answered by talking about what we do at each Key Stage and certainly to give you some of the best bits that we have, all of which seem to run from a simple foundation – the love of Geography!

Having passionate staff who are able to have choices in what and how they teach is essential. I cannot stand the idea of everyone teaching exactly the same lesson day after day out of a drawer in an office. Geography is such a vast, exciting and evolving subject that it enables you to set a creative and flexible curriculum. This has enabled us to create non-prescriptive schemes of work. Trust your staff and give them the freedom to teach to their strengths. For example, our year 7 cohort start their journey with a mock passport on a journey around the world, between September and Christmas. Now don't

get me wrong. If staff do want access to a lesson idea and some resources, then this is available, but ever since we introduced this topic, staff teach about where they have been. Why? They are passionate about where they have been and can tell some great anecdotal tales. Everybody likes a good story!

The department needs to look spectacular. Colourful, well organised displays that enhance learning, high quality pieces of student work and noticeboards that praise students are some examples of how to do this.

And don't forget, your mood is their mood. If you are not passionate when teaching, they are less likely to be passionate about learning. A sense of humour is never a bad thing either.

A small example here concerns respect. At the start of the year, I allow my students to come straight into the classroom without lining up, sit where they like, then allow them to leave in their own time at the end (All under close supervision of course!). That's me respecting them as developing young people. If they always have good uniform, behave well in lessons, do the work set and stop talking when I am talking, then these freedoms continue. If they do not, well then you start to take these benefits away. I even allow my sixth formers to send text messages during lessons so long as it's at a time when I'm not talking and they do the work set. The result of all this, very few behavioural problems and no secret texting, in fact hardly any texting anyway!

One thing I have learned over the last year is the power of networking. An independent department is not always as strong as the interdependent department. There is so much great stuff out there to tap into. For example, the Geographical Association and the Royal Geographical Society are well worth joining, a hugely beneficial step for us. They both provide great resources, support and CPD for staff and students. If you have training teachers, allow them to bring new ideas and resources into the department and ask them to test your systems to see if they truly work.

Value your students' feedback. For example, before a new topic, ask them what they would like to learn and how they would like to learn best. Do also ask if they can think of any barriers to their ideas. The result is students help to design your schemes of work and

lessons. We have also invited parents in for family learning events. Recently we taught a lesson to year 10 low achievers and their parents to show how to make those important small steps forward and advise parents on how to better support them.

Network with your local schools to promote some joined-up thinking. If a nearby school is doing fantastically with their geography teaching and learning, ask if you can go and find out why. Ask them to visit and give their opinion of you. What's going on in your feeder primary schools? Your KS3 schemes of work should be improved if you know what students have been learning about previously. Find out if you can do some outreach work with your local primary schools. For example, send staff to teach geography to Year 5 and 6 students. A department with a well-taught passionate KS3 cohort is very likely to end up with a healthy passionate KS4 and KS5 cohort. Local networking has been a huge advantage to us in these ways. By having good dialogue with these stakeholders, you are certainly going to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

Outdoor learning is unfortunately restricted due to time and cover issues, but it's so important. Many lessons can be taught within the school grounds, which still counts as outdoor learning. You don't have to take your students 50 miles to the coast each time. Recently one of my colleagues got her students into small groups ensuring at least one student in each had a phone, took them to the local park and got them to create a one-minute film showing how longshore drift works using natural products in the park. Throw in some slightly more amusing tasks such as to find a natural object that best represents a bear. But then even this can

help to learn command words at GCSE by asking them to describe, explain and justify their choice. They could even take a photo, then label and annotate! Instead of a poster in class, take them outside and create a human poster where they have to use themselves and anything they can get hold of to create a poster. Take a picture, give it back to them and set a follow up task such as to write a summary about their poster. My advice, to think and see like a geographer, take opportunities to get out of the classroom.

So of course we work very hard indeed on teaching and learning in the department with regular assessments, public grades given to our A level cohort, intense revision programmes, intervention and all the rest of those important things. But to get popular, lessons need to have a buzz, an air of excitement and students who are genuinely interested in whatever the topic and who are feeding off your passion. I guess this is the trick to our popularity and yet we are still discovering all the time new ideas from our ever-increasing networks. Sharing best practice is at the core of what we do. Put teaching and learning at the top of every agenda. I heard an outstanding teacher once say, 'It's not that I'm a particularly great teacher, I'm just a really great thief!'

Google Apps

Alistair Surrall
Head of Computer Science
& New Technologies
 The Cooper School



Before the move to Google Apps we had four traditional ICT suites all with network access and a shared area. Students and staff also had access to the email client provided by our county council. It's fair to say that most staff and students were unhappy with this system which provided stability but left little room for flexible, innovative teaching.

We wanted a solution that would enable staff and students to work collaboratively and independently with resources available anytime, anywhere.

After researching various solutions including Office 365 and Virtual Machines we settled on Google Apps. Google Apps is the collective name given to a range of free pieces of software created by Google. Below is a short summary of how we're using just some of these apps.

Google Mail: An excellent e-mail client that is easy to use and reliable. The Gmail app is available on Apple and Android so students and staff can access their emails on any device with an internet connection.

Because staff are familiar with using e-mail and have to use it everyday it's an excellent introduction to Google Apps. In addition, once you're logged on to Google Mail the rest of the tools are just one click away. We initially tried to use the other Google services without moving to Gmail and it didn't go well so I'd recommend this as the place to start.

Google Drive: Gives each user up to 30GB of space in which to create, edit and share documents. Students and staff can even work on the same document simultaneously. Before we had Google Drive students only had 100MB to store new documents. Now students can work collaboratively on loads of projects and easily store large video files.

As documents are stored online they can be shared online via websites, blogs and Twitter so students can access the learning materials they need whenever they want.

Google Calendar: Lets you create and share events. As well as using the calendar for day-to-day organisation many departments now use Google Calendar to share homeworks with students. You can even attach documents to events so students can access the resources they need to complete the homework. It's a great alternative to more expensive services like Show My Homework or traditional VLEs.

Google Sites: Lets students and staff create their own websites. Each department now has its own Google site that is regularly updated by teaching staff rather than once a year by the ICT technician. The sites are used as an alternative to a costly VLE as staff can post links to documents saved in Google Drive.

YouTube: Not really part of the Google Apps suite but as it's a Google service you can log in and create videos using your Google Apps account. Staff and students use YouTube in conjunction with our Chroma Key to create instructional and revision videos. Great for AfL and Flipped classroom.

Google Chrome: Chrome is Google's web-browser (much like Microsoft's Internet Explorer). We initially tried Google Apps without it and the results were disappointing. Now it's installed access to Google Apps is much smoother. Students can even sign in with their Google Apps account and access their history and bookmarks from home. The ability to customise how Chrome looks has also meant students take more ownership of their online space.

It's not all been smooth sailing however. Trying to move to Google Apps without using Gmail or Chrome was a disaster, frustrating for staff and students.

The migration can be done without them but in the long run it's easier just to take the plunge. There are also on-going issues with cross platform compatibility. Drive struggles to convert some documents (particularly PowerPoint presentations) to the Google Drive format. This isn't as much of a problem as we thought it might be but it's worth knowing about. Finally, following the PRISM Edward Snowden leak there are growing concerns in the EU about storing data with American companies like Google. Currently there is no problem at all as Google subscribes to the EU-US Safe Harbour Agreement, but it's an area worth keeping an eye on.

Tips for a successful implementation:

- **Get your technicians to sign up for a free account (<http://www.google.com/enterprise/apps/education/>) and experiment with it.** If they're daunted there are plenty of third party vendors who will take care of the set-up and maintenance for you (for a fee).
- **Install Google Chrome.** It uses the same settings as Internet Explorer so technicians should find it easy to manage.
- **Begin with Gmail.** It's easy to use and acts as a great introduction to Google Apps. Once staff are familiar with it it's a much smaller step to using the other Apps.
- **Introduce Google Drive to staff and students.** Once students were using Google Drive in their ICT lessons they all but stopped using MS Office and their network areas in other lessons. Some staff took a little longer to catch on but the benefits of not needing to be at your desk to work make it almost irresistible.



Bring your own device

Paul Hynes
Vice Principal
George Spencer Academy



Why does George Spencer Academy currently operate a 'bring your own device' policy?

We feel the timing is difficult for technology in schools as we are at a tipping point between laptops/netbooks, with their established practice, and tablets, which have not yet proved themselves in an educational setting. An investment either way would not be sound at this point and this has been justified by the many failed 1:1 tablet schemes around. On the other hand, we do not want to rest on our laurels, so by operating a BYOD policy, staff and students can continue to explore the issues and uses ready for whatever the next stage may be. This model fits well with a personalised approach as it helps to make the technology 'invisible'.

There is of course a huge cost saving in terms of school budget. The students (or their parents in reality) pay for the technology, its insurance/replacement and provide their own technical support.

We have made an open wireless network available for free that provides filtered, high-speed internet access from any capable device without a password. This model removes the need for technician and administration time but also reduces the level of monitoring and control that is possible.

What about apps?

Our staff and students have found some apps useful but we prefer if we focus on websites as these are standard across any mobile device (and gaming consoles, laptops, desktop PCs and even smart TVs). There is usually a comparable website that offers the same (and often more functionality) as an app and to ensure the equality of the offering we prefer if staff focus on those. Occasionally we do find an app that complements a good website and this works really well.

An example would be StudyBlue online flash cards. The power is in the website

to create flash cards for revision. The free app just presents the same information in a convenient mobile format.

What about an acceptable use policy?

We have a new technologies policy which covers this but ultimately our policy is still really 'teacher discretion'. They control the learning in the classroom and as they build confidence this is essential. This allows the teacher to set the pace of embedding mobile device use in their subject.

In terms of sanctions, we aim to punish the behaviour and not the device. There will be occasions where a device is used inappropriately – this would be punished because a student has either disobeyed a member of staff's instructions or has not completed the work as expected.

Many schools find getting the AUP right a real challenge. We still feel it is easily solved in a school with solid discipline as the misuse sits within the standard sanctions. Overall, AUPs developed by students and agreed by parents and governors are usually the most successful. Students also tend to come up with far tougher sanctions than teachers as they understand the risks staff are taking and want students that disrupt the process to be punished.

What are our staff doing at the moment?

Two things. They are building confidence with the classroom management of student-owned devices and they are exploring ways in which the devices can support learning. This is a key step as each member of staff needs some concrete examples of how the device



can support learning in their subject before they will change their practice permanently. This is our challenge for this year – to find good learning uses of devices that are 'better' than the traditional methods already used. We are using Student Digital Leaders to support this process. This group is 25 students who can support staff in the use of web tools and also advise on potential uses to be explored. These students have delivered twilight CPD sessions on the use of web tools as well as led a whole-school INSET day where they operated as consultants to the different departments. It is together that staff will explore the different functions in different subjects whether it is the use as a camera in science, geography geocaching, languages audio recording or QR codes in maths.

How are student digital leaders helping?

We have 30 student digital leaders that do research and give feedback around mobile device use in their lessons. They are also the first line of technical support for any staff. Alongside this they also have a role in delivering training and best practice workshops for staff.

Achieving outstanding against the odds

Alan Yellup
Executive Headteacher
Wakefield City Academy

To fully appreciate these and other significant achievements it is worthwhile looking at the context in which the academy operates. Located a mile to the east of Wakefield city centre, the academy sits in the middle of a very large council housing estate in an area of significant social deprivation.

The majority of its buildings date from the middle of the twentieth century, with small teaching spaces, narrow corridors, barely adequate provision for dining and no space for student social areas.

Attainment of students on entry to the academy at age 11 is amongst the lowest 4% in England, Free School Meals entitlement is very high and over a third of students have English as a second language. Few students come from affluent backgrounds – 68% of the academy's families are described as living in conditions classified as hard pressed (described as struggling families, burdened singles, high rise hardship and inner city adversity) with only 2.4% living in comfortable means.

Despite these huge disadvantages student attainment on leaving the academy at age 16 is well above national average and progress made by students measured by 'Value Added' is described by Ofsted as exceptional. Already in 2013 83% of students have secured an A*-C pass in mathematics and last year students achieved the highest percentage of A /A* grades in the local authority. Free Schools Meals students achieved a value added score of 1032.2 against the national average of 981.9. This pattern is repeated by all student groups and across the majority of subject areas who consistently achieve significantly higher than students nationally.

Wakefield City Academy which is a designated National Teaching School and Approved Academy Sponsor with its Multi Academy Trust has just received a third consecutive outstanding Ofsted report (March 2013).

'Lessons are challenging, make the students think and allow them to make outstanding progress.'

'The students moral, social, spiritual and cultural education is promoted exceptionally well across the school, in lessons and during social times.'

'The progress the students make between years 7 and 11 is exceptional.'

'Very high expectations of both academic achievement and behaviour, from all staff, have led to a culture of achievement for all.'

'Students' behaviour is extremely positive. They self-manage their behaviour, and in some lessons, peer manage it. Attendance is high and punctuality excellent.'

'...there is equality for all regardless of background or academic ability'

Ofsted 2013



The key features enabling this level of achievement in the most challenging of circumstances all relate back to the style of leadership developed across the academy. From this has evolved a distinctive positive achievement culture and ethos.

The academy operates on genuine distributed leadership - an emphasis on Every Person Matters (EPM) not simply Every Child Matters (ECM). We emphasise the use of influence not power; setting out to win the respect of staff and students; dismantling negative power bases; establishing a no fear culture and taking calculated risks. We believe in the positive use of data, the elimination of pejorative RAG rating and putting the fun back into work and learning.

Emasculating the INSET terrorists and cynics and reminding staff how much easier it is to be critical than correct, that 'great minds don't think alike they think differently' has been key. Most importantly, if teachers believe then students achieve and if they are good enough then students are smart enough.

Confirmation that the redefining of our ethos, systems and processes was having a transformational impact on our stakeholders was acknowledged in the 2007 inspection in which the HMI, in his report and subsequent letter to parents, said 'the school creates 'a can do culture' and all the students need to do is 'take advantage of the excellent provision on offer.'

This shift in culture provided the catalyst for the academy's change in fortunes in which staff aspirations were raised and in so doing they raised the students' aspirations. As our ethos became known, successes accrued and our reputation grew so the ability to recruit and retain high quality professionals with innovative and cutting edge approaches dramatically improved. High quality CPD programmes combined with the academy's ethos has led to low staff turnover and stability. This, along with a commitment to identifying and honing the talents of younger, less experienced staff already in post, ensures our scope for building sustained success.

Teamwork – Respect – Enjoyment – Discipline – Sportsmanship

Paula Rowe
Nicola Marshall
RFU

‘I didn’t go to a traditional rugby playing school, but I was lucky that when a new teacher joined he was able to introduce me to the game. Rugby really is a game for everyone of all shapes and sizes, which is why initiatives such as the All Schools are so important, to give as many young people as possible the opportunity to enjoy the game and its strong values.’

Jason Leonard
England’s most capped player
and All Schools ambassador

Rugby Union is a game for All Schools - everyone can play it and every school can teach it.

The ‘All Schools’ programme has been developed by the RFU to increase the amount of rugby played in schools, and to encourage new players to join local clubs.

In partnership with the Rugby Football Foundation¹, from 2012 rugby will be taken to 750 state secondary schools with the aim of making school life happier and healthier, reducing anti-social behaviour, enhancing learning and increasing self-esteem for students.

Schools that are new to rugby are identified in regional clusters allowing them to play rugby against each other locally. Each school is supported over three years with a tailored programme to meet its individual needs, including links to a local club. By establishing relationships with rugby clubs, the aim is to help the school and club to develop and keep more players and so effectively ‘grow’ the game.

All Schools represents one of the RFU’s major development programmes arising from the opportunities presented by hosting the 2015 Rugby World Cup; it presents a once in a generation chance to deliver the greatest legacy in participation for the game.

The programme will cost £10 million to implement and this money will be raised through RFU investment, sponsorship and fundraising. The RFU have made an initial commitment of £2million and a fundraising campaign has been launched.

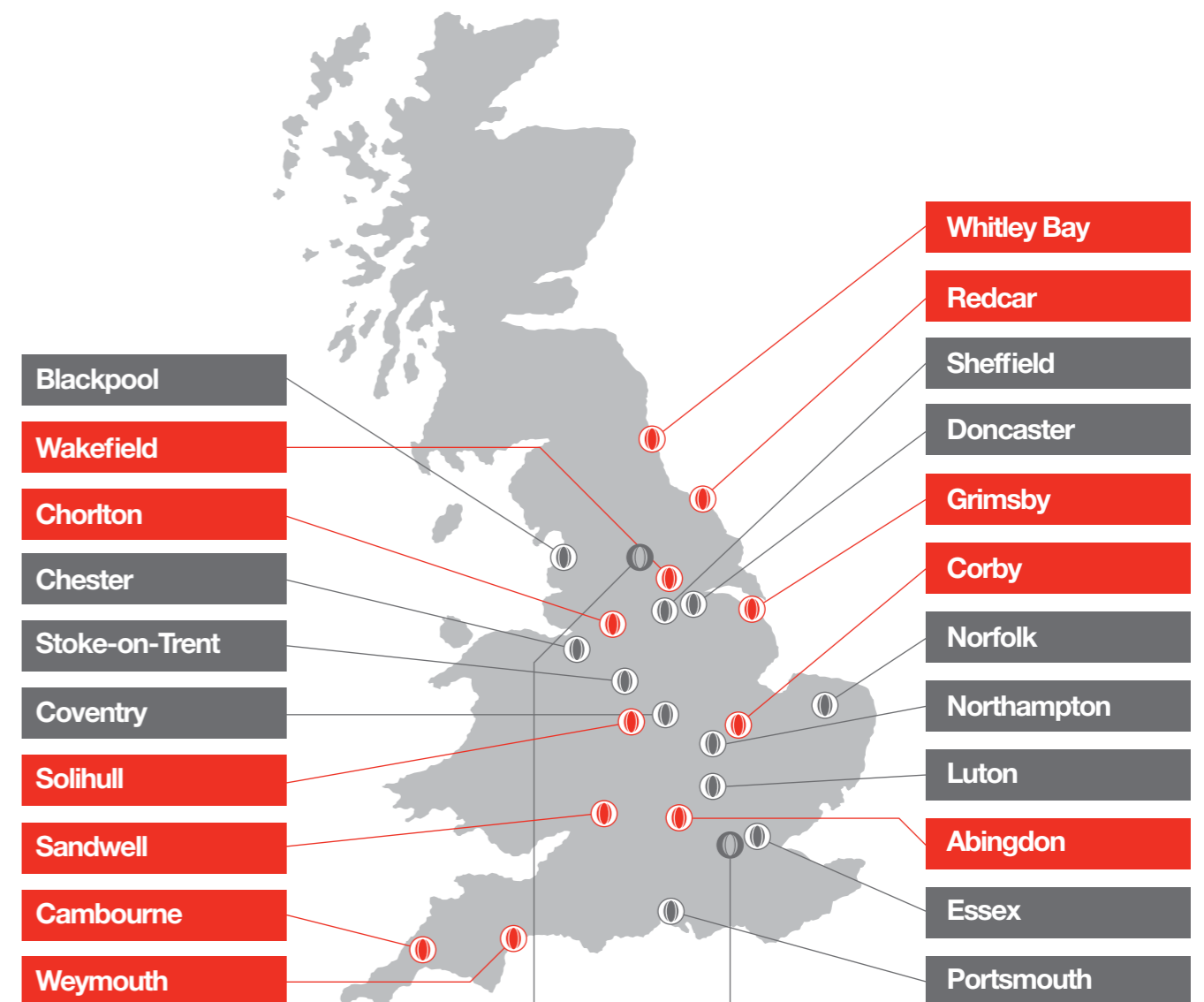
To deliver this step change in the number of young people taking up the game, each school is provided with a package of resource that helps it to start and sustain playing rugby, including kit and equipment, as well as coaching and young leaders’ training. The hands-on coaching support deployed in schools plays a major part in forming the foundations from which the school will

become a sustainable rugby playing school after three years.

Achievement highlights of the first season of All Schools include:

- 40,000 students participated
- 10,400 hours of coaching delivered
- 150 teachers trained
- All 104 schools engaged with local clubs
- Half of the schools included a girls’ programme
- 92 school teams provided with Canterbury rugby shirts of their own design

Prince Harry is the Patron of All Schools and Canterbury is the Official Partner; both share the RFU’s aims to encourage more young people to play rugby. From September this year, 100 new schools will join All Schools, giving the programme national representation with over 200 schools now taking part in total. These new schools will attend one of a number of Canterbury kit design workshops across the country, where they will learn about the pride associated with the shirt and the game’s core values – Teamwork, Respect, Enjoyment, Discipline, Sportsmanship. They will design their team’s rugby shirt and these individual designs will then be manufactured by Canterbury to be presented to the schools.



Titus Salt **West Yorkshire**

The emphasis has been on establishing rugby by empowering a number of young leaders, sixth form students, who can introduce new players to the game and stand as an example to the rest of the school. RFU Community Rugby Coach Dave Duxbury: ‘There are footballers, one martial artist and two lads who are not particularly sporty at all and they’ve bought into it. They’ve got kids active, smiling and laughing.’

Rokeby School **East London**

The school has fully embraced rugby’s core values, which have led to improved behaviour in other lessons, particularly amongst students with additional needs. Asked how rugby has helped with his behaviour, one student said: ‘For the first time at Rokeby School I’ve been a part of something. Instead of being in trouble and being excluded I’m part of something, and to be a part of that I now behave and respect others.’

Thank you to the RFU for their generous support of the Leading Edge programme.

The RFU provided a drinks reception, free tours of the World Rugby museum and prizes for delegates at the 2013 Achievement Show. We are delighted that Stuart Lancaster has agreed to speak at the Leading Edge conference on the 26th September.

I was never any good at maths

Jemma Sherwood
Maths AST
 Haybridge High School

It's de rigueur these days to claim woefully, I was never any good at maths at school. For some, mathematics lessons involved trembling and hoping that the sinister dictator at the front of the room wouldn't ask them a direct question. For others, the endless repetition of algebraic processes was enough to deter them forever, and for yet more the inordinate amount of time dedicated to something they neither enjoyed nor saw purpose in sent them on the slippery slope through apathy to a feeling of inability and dejection. It is a small handful of adults who ever relay a positive account of either their ability, or experience, in mathematics lessons. But I can tell you of students who say otherwise, and thank heavens for that!

Our school doesn't select its students; we teach all ages and abilities and get mathematics results of which we are very proud. As a group of teachers, we feel pretty confident that we help the great majority of our students to achieve the highest grades they possibly can. We know our students very well, personally and from the spreadsheets that tell us all about their progress thus far. We enter students for exams when we believe they are most ready, and most likely to get their best possible grade. For some, this

is the traditional June of year 11, despite the sheer volume of revision heaped upon them at that point. Some benefit more from a November or March entry, when they can concentrate their efforts properly on mathematics, and they haven't yet reached a point of disaffection or panic from constant obsession over a multitude of exams. Our high-flyers take the exam in year 10 (provided they are going to get an A*, otherwise what would be the point?) and can then do more advanced mathematics in year 11. Unfortunately, recent changes have removed all but June entries - what a shame to discard a system that can be used so effectively to improve young people's chances. Not everyone is ready to perform at the same arbitrarily-set stage in their academic career.

Assessment may be important, but our job as mathematics teachers is much more than getting students through an exam. Our job is to give students a certain body of knowledge, useful or not, which serves to make them more rounded. Our job is to enthuse students about the world around us, of which mathematics is a huge part. Our job is to give students confidence in their abilities and achievements, so that they leave us feeling positive about such a maligned subject. Feedback from the students tells us that they enjoy their mathematics lessons. They like the fact that they know where they stand, academically and behaviourally, and they know we won't let them get away with low aspirations. They understand that every single one of us is working our hardest for them, and they know we expect the same in return. We give them regular, achievable targets that boost their confidence and show them that mathematics is not something to fear. Take up for extra-curricular activities is always high, and we demonstrate through our passion that mathematics is

a fascinating and rewarding endeavour. Walking into our staff office, students often comment on the problems and puzzles we have scribbled for each other on the wall – doing mathematics ourselves keeps us inspired.

As teachers, we understand that learning never stops, and we have tried especially hard in recent years to show our students that they are not the only ones attempting to better themselves. Not long ago we conducted a year-long project, culminating in a national award, involving every member of the department, whereby we sought to raise the bar in our use of ICT in lessons. Working together to plan lessons, analysing how and why we used software and hardware, and teaching each other, we ventured to open our practice up, trying to redress any imbalance between different teachers' skills. This openness is extended to colleagues in other schools, who are always welcome to come and spend time in the department (which happens on a regular basis) and we have received many invitations to work with others in their schools - a privilege we understand and value.

We teachers can be quick to think that someone talking of their own success is subtly comparing themselves more favourably with, and hence undermining, the rest of us. I have seen so much excellent practice in so many schools, and am genuinely disappointed when teachers and students are often tarnished with the same you're-all-below-par brush. So I'll stop now, but finish by affirming that my colleagues and I consider our job not done should any of our students leave us happy to perpetuate the old adage, I was never any good at maths at school.





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