



SSAT Journal 17

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ssat the schools, students
and teachers network

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Welcome

*Sue Williamson,
Chief Executive, SSAT*



When I wrote the first draft of this introduction, SSAT had begun our contingency planning for operating during the Coronavirus pandemic.

We held a trial day where we all worked from home and were planning for another two-day trial when events overtook us, and we started operating remotely from 17 March. When the government introduced the job retention scheme, we knew that we needed to utilise the scheme, but still wanted to provide a service to our members. So we divided into three teams – with each team operating one month on and two months off. We have had to learn to work differently, but we are fully functional. I was delighted that we were able to influence policymakers regarding teacher assessment for GCSE and A-level examinations, and championing for years 10 and 9 taking GCSE examinations to be treated in the same way as year 11s.

We would like to thank everyone who works in a school for the work they are doing. School leaders and staff have had an intolerable burden placed on them. I would have liked to have seen more decisive leadership about closure rather than individual schools struggling to stay open until Easter. The DfE should have listened to school leaders about the logistics of fully opening with social distancing measures still in place. Schools want to look after all students, but particularly disadvantaged and vulnerable young people. If there is clear guidance from the DfE, schools can get on with individual situations, and putting in arrangements for the different year groups.

When you have time, I know you will enjoy the articles in this edition of the journal, many of which were written before the pandemic affected us all – schools are doing amazing things for young people.

We will shortly begin planning for our National Conference, which I expect will be very different this year. At the conference, we will have deep dives into topics such as exclusions, transition and formative assessment. We will also be looking at the issues raised by the Coronavirus shutdown; how might schools change following this unprecedented event? I hope that the leadership shown by headteachers and CEOs over the last few months will be recognised and that there be true recognition of the role schools play in the heart of their community. Teaching is an incredible profession – it is a giving profession – everyone has seen this.

As the well-deserved summer break approaches, once again, I would like to express my thanks for all that you continue to do and wish you – and everyone in your school community – a relaxing break. You are an incredible profession – you make lives. I know that parents and students truly value your work. So do we.

Stay safe and well, and please remember that we are here if you want a chat or need support – get in touch by emailing your Relationship Manager on rmteam@ssatuk.co.uk or calling **020 7802 0955**.



How Bobby Kennedy's *Ripples of Hope* speech is transforming our school

Janice Allen,
Falinge Park High School

Janice Allen, headteacher, Falinge Park High School, presents her candid admission of the mistakes they made in trying to deal with violence in the school population – and the approach that worked

Between July 2018 and March 2019 our school just wasn't 'right'. It hit us like a sledgehammer. As a visitor you might not notice, but the underlying feeling was one of simmering tension, mistrust and enmity. The language being used by children in their conversations with us was one of 'soldiers', 'guvnors', 'my boys', 'elders' and 'territory'. The attitude towards the police and authority figures outside school was broken; planned fights outside school by 'elders' were becoming a common occurrence and the negative impact was finding its way into school. As a leadership team, we reacted, but often not in a good way. It was understandable but it was getting worse. In December 2018 I began to think I wasn't the right person to lead a large, multicultural school in an area of high deprivation: it was just too hard, a rabbit warren of problems with no escape.

I don't write this for sympathy, to glamorise or to present us as inspirational leaders tackling society's systemic issues. I write instead to show that there is a way out of the difficulties, but it requires a different way of thinking than we have become accustomed to. I hope in this article to share the mistakes we made and offer some ideas about what might work for all of us leading schools in these difficult times. It can't capture everything we have

done to get our school back but the Robert F Kennedy educational programme has played a key part.

There is always a danger when you share your experiences that the nuances and the context of the situation is missed and you become known as the school with the problems. This can silence us as heads, as the backlash from the community can have serious consequences for us and our school. I am grateful therefore to Gerry Robinson at Woodside Academy who shared with me their approach via a telephone call and gave me the courage to speak out and to do something: to make violence not the norm. This led us to research extensively Home Office reports on youth violence and European reports on gang violence. It made us realise that some of the things we were doing were known not to have any discernible positive impact and in fact were sometimes making things worse. For example:

- We had put in place a 'Militarycation' programme for some pupils which was recommended by the LA – but this raised these pupils' profile, and through peer contagion was having a negative impact.
- We had used deterrence programmes where pupils were scared by being confronted with the reality of prisons – without looking at the research that shows these can increase some youths' offending.
- We had sought to address violence – but were taking each issue on a case-by-case approach and so were neglecting the impact that witnessing violence can have on others.



Most of all, I think we were seeing violence as inevitable, not preventable.

The context of violence and dehumanising language in our schools is different to all of us across the country; but areas with chronic poverty are most severely affected. So when confronted with all the problems we face, who can blame us as heads for shutting the doors and doubling down? For me, however, there's no joy in the job if I were to do that and there's enough difficulties without actively seeking out kindness and extraordinary hope. This is where Bobby Kennedy's speech in South Africa in 1966 resonates so strongly with us at our school: "Each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope, and crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring those ripples build a current which can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance."

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Bobby Kennedy

We became a pilot school with the Robert F Kennedy UK Foundation to deliver their #SpeakTruth-toPower educational programme (rfkhumanrights.uk). We worked with the team at RFK UK to look at their material and shape it so that it would become embedded across our school. We spent considerable time in the summer term preparing the programme, which would be delivered in tutor time three times a week. This means that for three



25-minute sessions a week, 1300 pupils would be learning about human rights and how their small actions could make a difference to our school and the wider community.

We began in September 2019 by talking through the importance of a safe space for ideas, how dialogue is our approach rather than debate; we explored relevant laws in the UK such as the Equalities Act 2010; we practised dialogue. We built this approach, with teaching and pastoral staff all being trained as part of our professional learning programme. We took it slow, which is our preferred way at Falinge; listening to teachers' concerns (of which there were many) and providing support in delivery.

We moved onto the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; then, after spending a full half term on building a safe space, onto movements for change. This has been key; we:

- Began with the 1953 Bristol Bus Boycott and how the achievements of the 'ordinary' person can make a difference
- Moved on to looking at everyday activism in tackling youth violence and environmental issues
- Explored wider global issues such as the detention centres in China
- Explored derogatory language and the impact on individuals
- Looked at individual case studies of people who have made a small change in the context of the articles of human rights.

Vocabulary to communicate controversial topics

At the same time, we have been teaching relevant vocabulary. This has been at the forefront of our practice since 2015, supporting the children in their dialogue with the vocabulary to be able to engage in controversial topics and the confidence to have their voice heard. Without these, they are doubly disadvantaged. Again, our staff have been supported in delivering the vocabulary and all our material for tutor time has been prepared centrally. There is the scope for staff to expand and develop the material, but we felt that in our first year we needed to ensure that all children across the school were getting the same high-quality experience.

So what has been the impact? Well the troubles we faced in 2018-19 meant our P8 took a significant dip and we can absolutely demonstrate the impact of youth violence on these pupils' academic attainment. We have, however, resisted the urge to change our approach. Consequently, we have seen a 50% reduction in youth violence and fighting, both in and out of school, and a 25% reduction in mental health issues in our children. We are being used as a case study by the Social Mobility Commission. The youngest Deputy Member of Youth Parliament, age 12, comes from our school.

We have seen a 50% reduction in youth violence and fighting, both in and out of school, and a 25% reduction in mental health issues in our children

It's not just the Bobby Kennedy programme that has helped us make this change. We paused, we looked at our strengths as a school. Our wraparound universal care for pupils and for staff has played a significant part, as has our sense of trust and connectedness as an organisation, in my view. But we are keen to learn from others and keen to give.

What Bobby Kennedy and the concept of *Ripples of Hope* has done has given us a vehicle for addressing the issues we face in school and in our community. We've always encouraged pupil voice – but this is on a level I've never experienced before. The difference now is the language the pupils are using, the research they have undertaken before they meet me, and the complexity of their thought. For example, a year 7 pupil talked about having been motivated to lead an assembly on mental health issues and how it 'wasn't possible to change the world if you're not feeling emotionally healthy and secure'.

And a teacher commented to me: 'During Falinge Reads, I was really impressed at how mature they were during the conversations about prison and solitary confinement. They were discussing how they knew human rights were being violated and prisoners were being dehumanised, but they were unsure about the right answer because they need to be punished. The children were really thinking

about the issue and were very engaged, which was really impressive and lovely to see.'

While another pupil stated: 'I want to educate people on equality such as racism and gender discrimination... because people like me witness injustice and unlawful issues.... We can discuss it together and find a way to solve all these problems happening at school and make the voiceless speak and act to stop inequality and then we as a community can respect one another and make the school a better place.'

It puts us in a strong place to meet our ambitions in our community cohesion plan which will shape the next five years.

I will finish with another famous Bobby Kennedy quote: "Our answer is the world's hope; it is to rely on youth. The cruelties and the obstacles of this swiftly changing planet will not yield to obsolete dogmas and outworn slogans. It cannot be moved by those who cling to a present which is already dying, who prefer the illusion of security to the excitement and danger which comes with even the most peaceful progress. This world demands the qualities of youth: not a time of life but a state of mind, a temper of the will, a quality of imagination, a predominance of courage over timidity, of the appetite for adventure over the life of ease... it is the young people who must take the lead. Thus you, and your young compatriots everywhere, have had thrust upon you a greater burden of responsibility than any generation that has ever lived."

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Bobby Kennedy





From Vision 2020 to Vision 2040

Three articles look back at visions for the future of our education system, how they have progressed, the extent to which they are being achieved; and then look forward to the considerable work still to be done

The following three articles are from participants in the Vision 2020 project which started in the late 1990s, looking from their different perspectives at:

- the extent to which the expectations, predictions and hopes of V2020 were fulfilled, and what challenges remain or have emerged in the last 20 years
- how the work of the group subsequently impacted on their own practice and leadership
- some indications of how they believe education will look in the next 20 years or so.

Contributors of these three articles are:

- Eve Gillmon and Pam Kemp, both former SSAT deputy chief executives and now education consultants
- Chris Gerry, former head, Hugh Christie Technology College and now director, The Skills Lab
- Frank Green, former chief executive of Leigh Academies Trust, subsequently National Schools Commissioner, and now chairman of The Challenger Multi Academy Trust.

A vision realised in part

Eve Gillmon & Pam Kemp

Twenty-five years ago, a small group of entrepreneurial headteachers and senior educationalists met for the day in London. What brought them together was a shared focus on using technology to bring about a cultural shift in how schools operated. All 12 City Technology Colleges (CTCs, the forerunners of specialist schools and academies) were represented, as were the early adopters of the Specialist School movement launched in 1990. Technology then was at the stage where training days were needed to teach people how to use email! By today's standards, the event was amateurish and very low-tech. The most exciting piece of equipment used was an overhead projector with acetate slides.

This early meeting was followed in 1998 by an international conference, during which video-conferencing was a feature and the Vision 2020 project was formalised. It immediately became evident that the project had tapped into the prevailing zeitgeist as links were established with similar think-tanks and movements in English-speaking countries worldwide.

Reviewing the past 20 years and looking at the world of education today, it is hard to avoid a sense of disappointment at the extent to which the vision of those Vision 2020 enthusiasts has been achieved.

Not all was lost. Some aspects of the vision outlined in 1994, 1996 and 1998 have been realised, not universally or wholly, but in part. An interesting conference paper - *Our Vision*, produced in 1999 – reflected much of what had been achieved, but more of what yet might be. For example:

- **Formative assessment** – much used and highly respected, but still struggling to gain universal acceptance.
- **Global collaboration** – extensive networking of the profession worldwide, but considerable scope for more and richer collaboration.
- **Teachers skilled in the use of ICT and supporting technologies** – one area where reality has done better than expected: the claim that we have “... ICT literate students led by ICT illiterate teachers” is largely untrue in 2020.

Somewhat less visible has been evidence of a widespread autonomous learning processes within a lifelong learning culture, or the predicted shift from teachers and schools being custodians of knowledge and learning to a network of more flexible learning centres and personalised curricula.

Today's schools are awash with technology and have (or have had) eye-watering budgets directed at sustaining it. But we did not foresee how quickly it would develop to the point where every child would come to school with a mobile phone capable of providing outreach via the internet to information previously the domain of paper-based libraries and teachers.

We underestimated the pace of change. Who could have predicted the knock-on effect on the mental health and wellbeing of a whole generation? The rise of the robots? The paranoia about the availability and use of data? – all of which have impinged on educational establishments and processes.

Factors working against fulfilment

We believe that three separate and interconnected factors in the last two decades have militated against the realisation of the vision: Ofsted, NPQH cloning, and fear – fear of litigation, fear of career impact, fear of cultural and racial bullying... one could go on. An obsession with data recording and statistical comparisons, driven by corporate targets, altered the role and image of the teacher and certainly contributed to difficulties in recruitment and retention. In our view, this has been analogous

with the rise of managers within the health service, eroding what had been a clinician-led profession. While laudable efforts resulted in the provision of systematic professional development for headteachers and senior leaders, the flipside of this coin has been a generation of leaders reliant on a tick-box mentality.

Vision 2020 was a springboard underpinning many other successful initiatives. Many of the original members later became leading figures in education, instrumental in realising some of the original ideas developed by the group

What lessons can be drawn from this?

- To start with, an acceptance that having a vision is not the same as implementing strategic development. Visionaries are needed to stimulate the planners and leaders, but as David Hargreaves pointed out in 1998, “headteachers and senior leaders must be calculated risk takers.”
- Secondly, successful leadership cannot and should not be strait-jacketed by formulaic training such as NPQH. We need our maverick leaders (Katharine Birbalsingh comes to mind). Not many in our Ofsted- and NPQH-dominated generation of teachers are prepared to stick their heads over the parapet.
- Thirdly, teachers need to take adult ownership of their profession in order to drive change forward rather than cowering before unions and civil servants.

Are we disappointed that what was envisaged was not achieved, or only partly achieved? Undoubtedly, yes! But Vision 2020 was a springboard, and it underpinned many other successful initiatives. A significant number of those original Headnet/Vision 2020 members have gone on to become leading figures in education; and many have been instrumental in realising some of the original ideas developed by the group.





Now, in 2020, schools are facing a number of serious challenges, some of which the Vision 2020 group of the 1990s could not have imagined. Political, social and economic events of the last two decades have undoubtedly had adverse impacts on education. Reduced funding in real terms, an ever-increasing focus on standards and the challenge of ensuring that schools are fully inclusive have often refocused or constrained school leaders and innovators.

However, a number of ideas and initiatives that came out of their work are evident – to a greater or lesser extent and with mixed success – 25 years on. For example:

- **School leadership:**
 - Heads become chief executives.
 - The CEO is now often the leader of five or more schools.
- **School networks:**
 - Regular links with other groups of heads locally and nationally are established.
- **Curriculum:**
 - The carry-forward of the primary model into teaching in years 7 and 8.
- **Pedagogy:**
 - The use of technology in teaching and learning.
 - Development of 'thinking skills' and 'learning to learn' courses.
 - ICT no longer 'taught' as a discrete subject but a ubiquitous pedagogical and management tool.

- **Learning spaces:**

- Reconfigured to allow for flexible groupings and the seamless utilisation of technology in teaching and learning.

- **Governance:**

- Development of ways for schools to join together with like-minded schools.

It would be fascinating to hear from the original Vision 2020 group members if or how the work of the group subsequently impacted on their own practice and leadership. Similarly, it would be really interesting to hear from subsequent and current leaders and practitioners on how they believe education will look in 2030/40/50!

A technology-transformed school system still to be fulfilled

Chris Gerry

Chris Gerry, director of The Skills Lab, former head of one of the original technology colleges and member of the Vision 2020 group, considers the extent to which the ideals and ambitions for education of the late 1990s have been realised

Over 25 years ago, in 1994, the first batch of 40 technology colleges was announced. The aims were simple: to maximise the use of IT to enhance education; break up the monolith of secondary school culture; and generate a new ambition to raise ac-



ademic attainment in the process. Becoming a 'technology college' required securing sponsorship of £100,000 in cash. This proved quite a hurdle, so it was not surprising that the first technology colleges were led by individuals who liked a challenge and wanted to see much more for their schools. Only 'grant maintained' schools could apply, meaning those schools that had chosen to become independent of local authorities. We were, then, a self-made awkward squad of school leaders.

At that time I had just become headteacher at Hugh Christie School in Tonbridge, Kent. It was a non-selective mixed 11-18 school with about 1000 pupils. Looking around, I remember thinking that the school had not changed much since being built in 1957. The specialist school agenda was just what it needed; and it provided a pathway for investing in modern technology and upgrading both the curriculum and wider aspirations.

Out of that first phase, a group of us began to discuss and write about what education might be like in 2020. So was born Vision 2020. But first things first: we all faced the challenge back in the nineties of changing staff culture to accept and be able to use technology. Hence my thinking in 'One School's Approach to Innovation', one of the articles in the *Vision 2020 Journal* for the then Technology Colleges Trust (forerunner of SSAT) in 1998. Back then the focus was how to train teachers but also how to change attitudes, so as to enable teachers to think positively about using new technologies.

The specialist school agenda provided a pathway for investing in modern technology and upgrading both the curriculum and wider aspirations

It was a long slog, but in the end the world changed and with it both teachers and students. By that I mean that we quite quickly became immersed in the ubiquitous world of technology, driven by the invention of the Apple iPhone in January 2007.

One battle of tech acceptance won, but what of the wider ambitions for 2020? Many of us believed that technology opened the prospect of operating schools in very different ways. We could have 'intelligent' schools guided by multiple inputs of data concerning students' academic progress and social and psychological wellbeing. This would help us understand small subgroups of students and respond rapidly to their differing needs. Within this environment, teacher research would reveal ever more effective paths for learning.

Investment in schools fallen behind

We live in a different era now of course. The Labour agenda, including 'education, education, education', is long since dead, along with the bank-rolling of successive waves of ideas about how to improve schools and fight against the impact of poverty on attainment.



Instead of major innovation (fewer, more highly paid teachers, greater use of technology including tracking software) schools have shrunk their operations as their budgets shrank

Technology investment in schools has fallen behind as school budgets have been cut. The curriculum has become a more orthodox device taught in conventional ways, following the Gove reforms. Interestingly, schools have not chosen the path of major innovation (fewer, more highly paid teachers, greater use of technology including tracking software), but instead simply shrunk their operations as their budgets shrank.

Twenty five years ago our ambition was to shift the model of the teacher as a 'lonely artisan' to one that was more rooted in team membership to divide workload more efficiently. This was to be underpinned by a new approach to the use of technology and the ability to track both student attitudes and capacities. (This is happening, but not yet on a large scale.) Situated in large spaces, students' learning could be more effectively managed and developed with small specialist teams of teachers.

But in the end, the traditional model of teachers working in isolation has largely prevailed. Remaining unchanged for centuries, it might be described as a 'tradition-directed' approach. 'How do you teach children?' Answer: 'The way we always have.' Where we have seen structural change, it has been shortlived and has seldom outlived the beliefs of its founders.

Governance models remain weak as innovations introduced by one generation can quickly be reversed when new leaders arrive on the scene.

Despite our best efforts, our ambition a quarter of a century ago of a transformed school system characterised by intelligent systems using sophisticated technology has not been met. Yet.

How should we assess those 'domains of innovation' now?

Frank Green

Frank Green, former chief executive of Leigh Academies Trust, subsequently National Schools Commissioner, and now chairman of Challenger Multi Academy Trust, outlines some of the key thinking that inspired Vision 2020

Looking back at the work of the Vision 2020 group in the late 1990s/early 2000s, it seemed technology had the power to help make the changes we wanted to implement, especially for those young people who did not have so many silver spoons about the palace.

But it now appears that we were somewhat naïve.

One World, One School (OWOS), published in 2000, was in my view the major work of the Vision 2020 group (see appendix). In late 1999 we circulated a vision document in preparation for an international conference in May 2000 that set out where we thought technology could remove barriers to goals to make the system more equitable: we would be able to level things up.

Our mantra, as I recall, was: 'lead, or get out of the way'.

- There was a lot of naivety but also a lot of passion about the how technology was changing the world – including the work of Peter Drucker, among many others.
- We felt that we could use this power to change education ('Dickens would still recognise Dotheboys Hall in many schools of 1999', was a phrase frequently used.) It was time to bring those schools up to date.
- We were able to rapidly and effectively communicate with colleagues around the world.
- New working and collaboration groups were established online which are now the norm for anyone, although we didn't have the social media of today.

How different the world was then. Email and electronic communications generally were in their infancy; very few schools were networked; and no-one had heard of wifi.



Most importantly, groups of heads around the country who thought similarly came together and kept in touch, both about the work that SSAT (then TCT) did and that of the Vision 2020 group. We all gained confidence to do our day job with greater certainty and clarity, especially when it came to decision-making and keeping to our vision.

Did we help to lead and/or enhance many changes that have made a difference, or did we get in the way? We created nine areas for innovation and in each we set out a number of ideas for implementation; but we also set out things to be abandoned in each area. (The concept of abandonment was introduced to us by Melbourne University Professor Brian Caldwell.)

The executive summary of the final OWOS document, published in July 2000, states: “The underpinning factors running through our work include a belief that if we are to build a world-class schools system for a knowledge society then it is not sufficient merely to tinker with existing structures. A paradigm shift is required which puts the responsibility for driving schools forward firmly in the hands of school leaders and their communities and the responsibility for learning firmly in the hands of our students. It also involves radical rethinking of what a school is, where it is located and what it

does. Hence our discussions on school leadership, governance, pedagogy and creativity.”

We have certainly shifted the responsibility for driving schools forward into the hands of school leaders to some extent. But in retrospect it seems that we, and the education system, have made the heads and the CEOs accountable for the examination success of their students, as if this were the only criterion for school success that matters. We have certainly not put the responsibility for learning in the hands of the students yet. This has meant that we have driven students’ learning, not led them to it. I still don’t think we give teenagers the tools to be properly independent, ie the ability to make mistakes, take risks, fail and work out solutions for themselves.

Looking at OWOS’ nine domains of innovation, here is how I would summarise some of our impacts.

Curriculum:

- We still have not got rid of GCSEs, but the school leaving age is now 18, so the groundwork for their abolition has been laid.
- Unfortunately Ebacc has squeezed creativity, although some of the work around character and alternative activities is starting to have





some effect. Much more needs to be done to build creativity especially through music and the arts.

- There are a number of thinking skills programmes in operation, and I am delighted that there is a Thinking Schools MAT, strongly supported by Exeter University, doing great work in Medway, Kent and Portsmouth.
- I have not come across any courses or schools focusing on neurosciences, but will be delighted to be proved wrong.
- However the national curriculum has been reduced quite substantially compared to 20 years ago.

Pedagogy:

- The quality of teaching in the classroom has certainly continued to improve, but alternatives to the 30 children in a class for about 60 minutes at a time has not been challenged. The relentless focus on examination results at both KS2 and KS4 has squeezed creative use of classrooms and teaching approaches.

- There was a desire to change the teaching group size, but where that has happened in any significant way it has been because of financial constraints rather than seeking better ways of delivering learning.

Design:

- Experiments with fixed terms, 5 term years seemed to have stopped and, in some cases, regressed. Few schools have flexible or different terms from the norm.
- There are still too many schools with timetables punctuated by bells.

Funding:

- We finally have a national funding formula, and at least a clear pathway as to how it travels to the school budget from central government.
- We had considerable increases in funding from 2000 to 2015, but I am not sure we used that increase wisely to make some of the structural and system changes needed, nor, more importantly, the impact on pedagogy that was sought.

Leadership, management, governance:

- This area has changed most, especially for secondary schools, with over 70% now as academies and perhaps half in MATs.

Boundary spanning:

- Some had the view that schools, medical services and social services could all be housed under one roof. There are very few examples of learning villages. However local authorities now often have a Head of Children's services, with one person overseeing both education and social services for that area.

Future thinking

The Vision 2020 conference paper *Our Vision*, published in November 1999, described scenarios based on a wishlist of education futures. Updating that: some of the statements about school that have been culled from various sources would suggest that, if we get the development right, learning for young people growing up might have some of the following characteristics and facets:

- Schools will be part of learning networks or communities.
- The boundaries between types and age ranges of schools will merge.
- Between 5-20 present day schools will form a learning community or network.
- The best learning networks will be part of a global group of world class 'schools'.
- The home will be an extension of the learning network to which the family will choose to belong.
- All students will have individual education plans and, from age 14, considerable control of their own learning.
- Universities will remain core institutions in the development of knowledge, and all learning communities will be linked directly to at least one.
- The learning community will be the main provider of training to the business community and will have an active entrepreneurial section that sells services to the local, national and international community.

- The learning network will manage the learning needs of all in its community and provide access to the worldwide links necessary for a world class community.
 - The adults who work in the community will be teachers, para-teaching professionals, business people working part-time and other adults.
 - The best teachers will be able to sell their services to many learning communities around the globe either directly or digitally.
- Students will attend school by negotiation, from age 14, to fit in with the other demands society will place on young people. The culture of the 'teenager' will diminish.
- Teacher training will involve the study of neuroscience, cognitive psychology, emotional intelligence and creativity, as well as individual learning and teaching styles.
- The concept of the school day and term will disappear.
- The use of technology as both a management tool for the teacher and a delivery mechanism for learning will be ubiquitous, fuelled by developments such as the electronic book and wireless technologies allowing constant networking, regardless of location.

Priorities for the next 20 years

So to finish, perhaps the most important result of that time was to create a way of thinking and solving problems. It enabled heads and other school leaders to build relationships and collaborative groups that were no longer geographically constrained. Leaders who challenged, then looked for and found solutions. But we also developed an intrinsic way of thinking about the things we should abandon in order to make room for new and better things. I still think that today. And finally: I rather suspect in many areas technology has got in the way rather than enabling the vision. We still have a long way to go to achieve that vision.



Appendix

In 2000, One World, One School listed nine domains (areas) for innovation, with strategic aims in each area as indicated below. Sadly, it's clear we haven't achieved many of these sought-for innovations: can we – should we – be doing so in the next 20 years?

Domain	Innovation	Abandonment
Curriculum	- First major examinations at 18 - New creativity and design courses - Neuroscience courses - Thinking skills courses	- Abolition of GCSEs - Significant reduction in national curriculum
Pedagogy	- Teaching takes place in groups of 100 students - Tutorials take place in groups of 3 or 4 - Numbers of para-teachers equal teachers - All lessons available online - All assessment available online	Traditional classroom teaching in groups of 30
Design	- New year and day structures - New groupings of students in schools	- Traditional day and year structures no longer exist - Tutor groups of 30 no longer exist
Professionalism	- GTC sets and maintains professional standards - A new professional passion exists in some schools	'Traditional' union approach disappears
Funding	- Revenue funding for schools comes direct from central government 20% of schools' revenue generated from business activity - Schools operate asset accounting processes	LEAs cease to provide funding for schools
Leadership	- Heads become chief executives - Qualifications for headship mandatory - The head often the leader of 5+ schools	Groups of heads (CEOs) meet regularly to consider changes and what structures and activities can be abandoned
Management	- School structures built around knowledge management - Network management structures in place	- Departmental structures in secondary schools disappear - Year group pastoral structures disappear
Governance	- Schools able to amalgamate into large learning networks - Learning networks more easily established - New local government links to learning networks	- Current relationship of local government to schools disappears - Many LEA functions no longer exist as many services are now at the discretion of heads
Boundary spanning	Many schools contain local health and social services functions	Duplication of effort and resources reduced in these communities



Approaches to learning that focus successfully on middle attainers

Jodie Danziger Collier,
Westminster Academy

Jodie Danziger Collier, head of history, Westminster Academy, summarises her SSAT Leadership Legacy Project on ‘stretch for all’

Westminster Academy (WA) opened in 2006 and has seen results significantly improve, from 17% A*-C at GCSE (Maths and English) to 73% of students achieving 9-4 in English and Maths GCSE in 2018. The academy has been consistently ranked among the top schools nationally for Progress 8, with a score of +0.63 in 2018. When I arrived at WA in 2015, the history pass rate was 55%; by 2019 our results had increased to 80%.

Investigation findings

The new 9-1 History GCSE that was introduced in 2018 is far more challenging. Our 2019 results show that our students were above the national average, at 80% grade 9-4, compared to the national average of 65%. However, on analysing the data I realised how, while our low-attaining and high-attaining students had done well, our middle attainers had achieved but had not exceeded expectations. Our students were able to write model answers using structures and sentence starters that they had memorised, yet they were not encouraged to actually think like a historian.

Looking at the sixth form, students study the History IB (International Baccalaureate). In 2018 all students gained a ‘high-level’ pass (grade 5 or above), but it was clear that many had not been stretched enough to attain the top grades. History IB was taught through enquiry and source work, which en-

gaged students with the course content. However, students missed important coursework deadlines, relied too heavily on basic internet sites (such as Wikipedia) for their research and could not work collectively together on a project. I knew there needed to be a focus on ‘real life’ skills, such as research, time management and collaboration, in order to stretch students and prepare them for post-school life.

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Overall, I was finding that students were focused solely on their grade and the end result, rather than the learning process or the skills they were gaining. So my primary focus was ‘stretch for all’ and making learning more holistic, especially focusing on the department’s middle ability students. The aim was to give all students depth to their learning and to focus on making students into 21st century learners, by improving learning performance across the board, in all subjects, and through their skills and disposition.

This links with the IB, which states that all teachers in IB schools are responsible for integrating and explicitly teaching approaches to learning (ATL)





skills. The IB suggests that these five skills (communication, social, self-management, research and thinking) build the foundation for more independent learning, which in turn prepares students for meaningful learning and assessment.

IB Approaches to Learning skills (ATL):

Communication skills: The ability to produce and interpret messages effectively

Social skills: The ability to participate and collaborate with others whilst showing awareness and respect for other cultures, varying points of view and individual differences

Self-management skills: The ability to set goals, manage time and tasks effectively, and manage your state of mind, self-motivation, resilience and mindfulness

Research skills: The ability to determine the extent of information needed, locate and access information, organise and evaluate information, and use and share information effectively, efficiently and ethically

Thinking skills: The ability to creatively and critically analyse, apply, evaluate, synthesise, conceptualise, contextualise, reason and solve problems

Through integrating and explicitly teaching students ATL skills I hoped to develop students in 21st century thinking and learning skills and give them an opportunity to apply those skills to all their school subjects and through other areas of their lives.

I tried to achieve this through three interventions:

- Design one detailed and comprehensive framework of ATL/21st century learning skills to be applicable from year 7 to year 13
- Integrate ATL meaningfully into the curriculum
- Implement a wider range of assessment to test all ATL skills.

Introducing the framework

When I first told the history department that 21st century learning would be our priority this year, it was met with enthusiasm. We all began to implement collaborative, research and group presentations into our lessons. However, after a few months it soon became apparent to me that staff and students did not fully understand what each ATL meant. Although we were all implicitly teaching these skills, we were not using the same common language and success criteria in order to get results from students.

Students were also unsure about what was being tested of them and were still solely focused on the end result, rather than the learning process. Fur-

ATL Skill	Success criteria
Thinking	Gather and organise relevant information to formulate an argument
	Analyse information in order to create a hypothesis
	Interpret data
	Question ideas and assumptions
	Test generalisations
	Draw reasonable conclusions
	Identify obstacles and challenges
	Consider ideas from multiple perspectives
	Apply skills and knowledge in unfamiliar situations
	Transfer knowledge and concepts to new disciplines
	Develop contrary or opposing arguments
	Make links between ideas
	Reflect on the justification of their own assumptions, beliefs and values

Example of the framework

thermore, I found that we were all teaching slightly different variations of the same skill or practice. Students were then being taught the same skill in different ways, leading to a lack of consistency, and confusion.

After reading the IB's guidance on ATL, I decided to come up with my own success criteria that would fit WA, using prompt questions. For instance, for 'communication':

- How can students communicate effectively?
- How can students demonstrate communication through language?
- How can students communicate through interaction?

Together the team and I came up with success criteria that we could easily implement into our lessons, mark schemes, tasks and assessments. I compiled this into a framework (some examples above) for teachers to use when planning so that we could teach the skillset consistently through our subjects. This was then used to meaningfully integrate ATL into our curriculum.

Integrating ATL meaningfully into the curriculum

Implementing the skills in the framework meant changing existing unit plans, lessons, curriculum booklets and tasks. After researching different ways of teaching ATL skills, I decided that it was

important to both implicitly and explicitly teach these. My team would teach ATL directly and as comprehensively as if it was a subject in itself, with whole tasks and lessons dedicated to solely focus on methods and strategies for students.

However, it was also important to implicitly integrate the skills into all tasks and lessons, without necessarily pointing it out to students. So I created a bank of symbols/images that teachers could easily reuse and would signpost the skill to the students:

Brain: thinking skills (creative, critical, acquisition of knowledge)

Mouth: social skills (collaboration)

Ear: communication skills (listening, oral)

Hand: self-management skills (organisation, reflection)

Eye: research skills (computing, numeracy).

For instance, when year 7s were planning group presentations, the class focused on what made effective self-management, research and collaboration skills:

- What does collaboration mean to you?
- What are some characteristics of good collaboration?
- What are some examples of when you have worked well together in a team?
- How can you tell this was effective?





I created a group checklist and reflection sheet to encourage self-management skills (See Appendix).

A wider range of assessment

Traditionally KS3 humanities classes were tested through a mid-term quiz and an end of term written assessment, while KS4 assessments were based on GCSE exam questions. However, this was not a true reflection of the students' knowledge, skills or ability. Therefore, I knew it was integral to design assessments that required the use of ATL skills to generate the answers.

My priority was to place thinking over recall, especially in KS3 humanities, where we could be more creative. 'Open book' exams included questions that allowed students to research, interpret, collaborate and stay organised, thus testing a whole range of ATL skills. For instance, after a term of learning about the human impact on the environment, instead of a formal written exam, year 7 students wrote letters to Nestlé regarding their use of

palm oil and deforestation. This allowed students to collaborate, research and manage their own time. Students became invested in their letter assessment and wanted to review and improve their work many times until they were proud enough for the final version to be sent off to Nestlé.

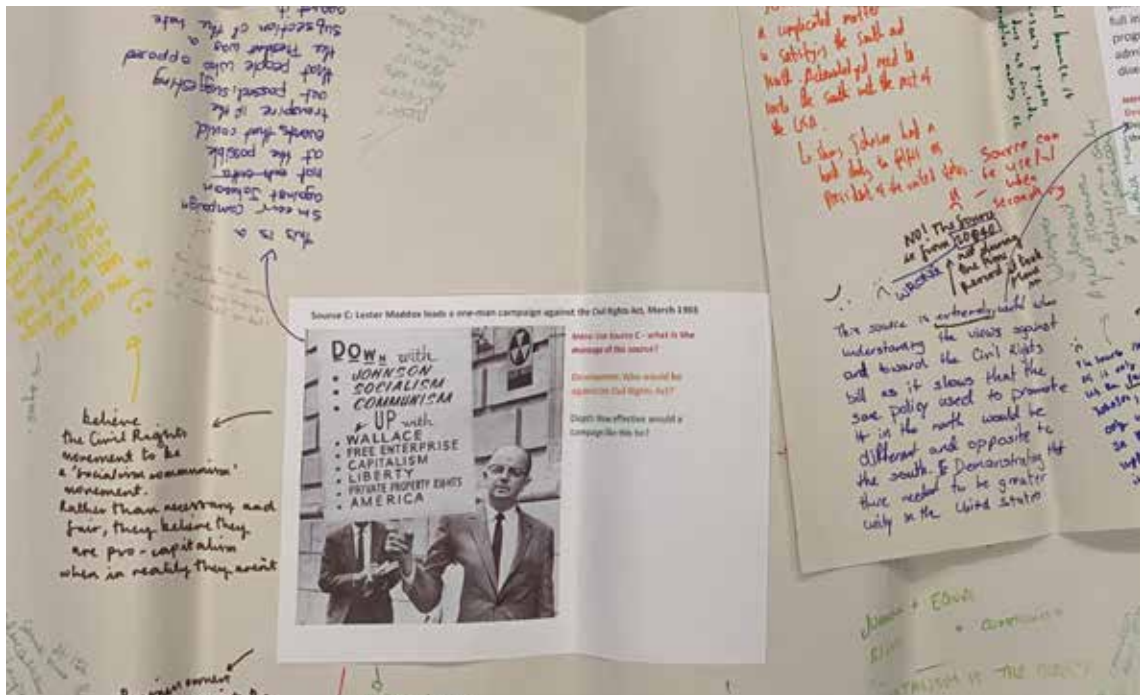
To test ATL skills in KS4 history, year 10 were tasked to recall knowledge from the previous year by writing their own quiz questions about the content. Students would then peer mark their quizzes and spend time going through the incorrect answers with each other. This increased understanding, and allowed students to practise explanation skills. This quiz-making assessment method also was effective in other tasks, for instance giving students a difficult piece of text and getting them to read and create their own questions for their partner. This would increase comprehension and give students ownership over progress and work, rather than relying on the teacher to test them.

There were plenty of opportunities to test ATL skills in KS5, for example research tasks, group presentations and debates. I found that with my year 12 class, silent debates worked particularly well as they encourage all students to voice their opinion and contribute ideas through interpreting data, questioning each other's perspective, evaluating different arguments and formulating their own debate questions (opposite).

Finally, integrating ATL into success criteria and mark schemes allowed progression to be measured, and students became more confident in their abilities. We began to use ATL language in modelling success criteria, which allowed students to be assessed holistically. This meant that for presentations, students received feedback for their preparation, giving and receiving peer feedback, peer questioning, and sharing the range of sources used.

Reflection and next steps

Although the framework has improved clarity for teachers to create success criteria and lesson tasks, my plan is to differentiate it for different key stages, so it shows a natural progression of skills students should gain and develop throughout their time at school. I would also like to rewrite it in student-friendly language, so that students can easily refer back to what they were excelling in and what



they need to improve. Next term I will be leading a KS5 coordinator meeting to gain ideas and feedback from teachers in different disciplines, in a move towards introducing this framework across the school.

My next step is to create a bank of generic tasks and exercises in ATL skills, ideally made by teachers from all disciplines. These tasks would be stored in an ATL toolkit, so that any teacher can then access them to use as a starter/plenary/reflection task. This would ensure all teachers are teaching the ATL skill in a similar manner and would also hopefully prompt discussion among staff.

Overall, students have become more engaged in their learning experience and less focused on their final grade. Through ingraining ATL skills and strategies, they have taken control of their learning and acquired and developed both hard and soft skills. I noticed that once ATL skills were introduced into lesson activities, students were more inclined to try out new cognitive approaches in new learning situations, as well as starting to develop control and ownership over their learning and achievements. I am excited to continue to promote the teaching of ATL skills and share my research and findings with other staff members.

Moderator's comments

"This is a very well-articulated, researched and planned thinkpiece which demonstrates commitment to developing 21st century learners at each key stage," noted SSAT director of school improvement Angelina Idun. "You are clearly a solution-focused leader and have set about using your expertise, skillset and determination to ensure that every learner is equipped with transferable skills that will stretch, engage and serve them in the future. The importance that you place on teamwork and collaboration are very evident in this piece and you harness this to address the inconsistencies that surface through your review, pulling your team together, agreeing a common language and collectively creating success criteria, mark schemes etc.

"The framework will be invaluable to colleagues. It's great to see that as part of the project you have given students a voice... I can see from your students' work that what you have put in place this year is already having impact."



Appendix

Year 7 group presentations self-management log-book and reflections

Stages	Prompt questions	Notes and reflections
1) Planning	Collaboration: ☐ How will we divide up the topic to ensure we all have an equal role? Research: ☐ What are our individual strengths and interests within the topic and how can we best use them? Self management: ☐ Who will be responsible for keeping us on task and on track?	
2) Preparing	Self management: ☐ Who will prepare the PowerPoint and/or other materials? ☐ Who will be responsible for organising the information? ☐ Who will be responsible for dividing up our speech?	
3) Practising	Social: ☐ Where will we stand? ☐ Who will play the PowerPoint? ☐ Which order will we present? ☐ How will we ensure we are all speaking for the same amount of time?	
4) Presenting	Communication: ☐ Who will answer questions from the audience? ☐ How will we transition from one speaker to another? ☐ How will we monitor the volume and clarity of our speech?	

Work experience: how teachers can help students gain most benefit

Peter Chambers, SSAT

What's good about work experience and how is it best approached and managed? SSAT editor Peter Chambers confesses to some of his own experiences and trawls for useful advice and resources

Work experience can be very valuable in giving students opportunities to discover or refine their career ambitions, and in helping them to develop the skills and attitudes that are valuable in any job. If the placement is suitable for their needs and managed well, it gives them an insight into the world of work and employability skills. And it can enable them to gain skills and experience to access higher education.

Research shows students who did work experience are less likely to end up not in education, employment or training (NEET). For example, those aged 14-19 are 44-45% less likely to be NEET than peers who did not do the activity, according to the charity Education and Employers.

Another of its reports shows 58% of teachers found work experience improves student attainment. A literature review showed improvements in young people's understanding of jobs and careers; broadening and raising career aspirations (and the realism thereof); providing knowledge and skills demanded by the labour market; and enriching education and underpinning pupil attainment.

Finding satisfaction in working to help people in need

Genevieve Marchant, retired special needs teacher did "general domestic work in a hospital, serving meals, light cleaning etc.... Sometimes I was sad if people were really poorly, but at least you could help them in some small ways... I knew I wanted to work with people, I didn't mind hard work and I liked being busy. That led to me becoming a special needs teacher."



Basic skills, useful in any job

Ejike Agubor, senior relationship manager, SSAT: “My first job was, age 16-17, as an assistant in a dry cleaners. I had always been shy, and working there brought me out of my shell a bit. I enjoyed speaking to customers. Though the job involved simple processes, it did sometimes require problem-solving, negotiation and resilience, such as when customers were annoyed because their clothes couldn’t be cleaned by the time they needed them, or (rarely) clothes went astray. While this job didn’t influence my career, many of the skills I learnt can be applied to any job.”

Employer engagement activities and academic achievement

The Education and Employers research above also showed:

- 93.2% of teachers believed that employer engagement activities have an impact on pupils’ academic achievement
- Teachers from disadvantaged schools (in terms of FSM eligibility) and underperforming schools (Ofsted rankings) were most likely to agree that these activities had impact
- Girls, those uncertain about their future, higher and borderline achievers are especially likely to improve their academic achievement.

Looking at it from the students’ point of view is also largely positive. Young people report that

they return from work experience more motivated to do well at school. AllAboutSchool-Leavers’ research [see Resources at the end of this article] shows that 47% of students say it is the factor most likely to persuade them to do an apprenticeship or take on a role within a company.

Companies too: more than 85% of employers think work experience “is a way for us to find future employees”, and 73% of employers think work experience provides “better access” to their particular profession. And 66% of recruiting employers rated work experience as a significant factor looked for in candidates (UKCES Employer Perspectives Survey, 2014)¹.

Small examples can be edifying

I am a great believer in the value of ‘vac jobs’. From the ages of 15 – washing up in a hotel – to 23 – motorcycle messenger for the BBC – I had 24. Most had no specific relevance to my career ambitions then or realities since: rather, they did enable understanding the basics of what it means to be employed, and the behaviours and aptitudes that are useful.

Some memorable moments: as van driver for a TV shop, having the wearied, intellectual shop manager (surely in the wrong job) describe TV as “massively contributing to the ignorance of the masses.” And, working in a brewery, being impressed by the dexterity of a colleague who could roll a barrel containing 72 pints of beer with one push, through a complex curve to stop exactly where he wanted it.



As a barman at the nearby pub, I got used to customers claiming the price I asked for their round of drinks was too high (even though my not-so-recent GCE maths assured me I was right). They would object to the landlord, who always took their side. Later he explained to me, kindly, that “the customer is always right, even when he’s wrong!”

What did I learn from this varied hotchpotch of jobs? Be willing, do what is required, be adaptable. And accept that sometimes you fail. But it’s an opportunity to learn, to recognise the things you are not good at, to get better. It can teach you to be able to communicate openly with people of all sorts, not to be put off (usually) by unexpected behaviour, and to remember what you are there for, what the aimed-for end product should be. And if my boss was peremptory, judgemental or overly demanding, well those were things I had experienced before.

Two of my vac jobs did have some more specific relevance to my later career.

As assistant caretaker in a ‘school for maladjusted and educationally subnormal’ children (nowadays called special needs and disabilities), I found the two main groups of kids at the school were different in very obvious ways. The ‘educationally subnormal’ tended to have Downs syndrome, and were amiable and willing. The ‘maladjusted’ tended to be bright, sharp and ready to respond to any challenge (as perceived by this callow youth, that is). In one lunch hour, two of them cut down two of the largest trees on the estate. I rather admired that feat. Even in those unenlightened days I became very aware of the different challenges they faced. What kids can do.... A more authoritative view, and the vital role of focusing on what young people with SEND *can* do rather than what they can’t, is comprehensively covered in Pauline Holbrook’s forthcoming pamphlet, *SSAT on SEND and Employability*.

My biggest adventure in this context was going to work on a volunteer camp in Alsace. It was run by Paris-based Jeunesse et Reconstruction (<https://volontariat.org/>), which is currently running some 2000 projects on five continents, according to the website. Our group included French and Italian volunteers as well as we Brits. We got on well and had some amusing discussions. My knowledge of

conversational French was much improved on the camp, not least by singing drinking songs. I later put this to good use as a journalist on an international management magazine, when interviewing people in France, Belgium and Switzerland.

Tutoring strengthened my own subject knowledge

Tom Middlehurst, head of policy and public affairs, SSAT: “As a sixth form student, I was asked by a friend’s parents to tutor her younger sister who was struggling with GCSE maths and English. This soon led to more tutoring work. Not only was tutoring a financially rewarding part-time job, it also helped strengthen my own subject knowledge, especially in maths which I found more challenging at A-level. This experience then led me to apply for a part-time job with the former Specialist Schools and Academies Trust, working in the personalising learning team. During those six months I was privileged to work closely with educational giants such as David Hargreaves and Dylan Wiliam. This in turn led to my current role at SSAT.”

Those who miss out on this vital opportunity really do feel it later on in life: 31% of young people starting their working lives do not feel they have the appropriate skills, citing a lack of work experience (71%) as being their main weakness (CBI/Pearson Education and Skills Survey, 2013)².

However, not everyone perceives work experience as an important part of education: SSAT’s membership development manager Zeynep Koch recalls: “I did not undertake any form of paid work until I was at university. My parents always encouraged me to focus on schoolwork and academic studies. This made sense for us, as my parents were first-generation immigrants to the UK, which meant there were huge barriers to my learning both in terms of language and support. As both parents had entered the world of work and labour at very young ages, they always encouraged me to focus on my formal education and work at closing the gaps of disadvantage I’d inherited, saying that I would have the rest of my life to work anyway!”



What makes good work experience?

Teachers should aim to help/enable students to gain work experience that helps with:

- Attitude to work
- Learning what they are good at
- Getting used to criticism, and how to react positively to it
- Versatility
- Confidence, getting on with strangers
- Developing particular skills
- Experience of different industries
- Experience of travel and different locations
- Deciding whether any thoughts about eventual career choices are reinforced or changed by the experiences.

Such help is all the more important these days, with the decline in many high-street outlets that used to be common providers of work experience for school students. In some cases, of course this has created opportunities for suitably skilled and motivated young people to develop their own digital businesses. But for most, working for established employers, voluntary organisations etc still has much value.

Coping with challenge

Ellen Renton Pearce, head of business development, SSAT: "I worked on a crew casting molten aluminium at an aluminium smelter for two months. It didn't influence my choice of career but it did influence my ability to take chances. The experience showed that with perseverance and hard work I could cope with much more challenging situations than I had realised."

The importance of teamwork

Kirsty Hewett, relationship manager, SSAT: "From the ages of 15 to 18, I worked in the village pub in the kitchen preparing food every Sunday, using the money to fund my school trips. I enjoyed the cooking, and learned the importance of teamwork and the satisfaction of a job well done."

Recognising the value of passing exams

Peter Marchant, a retired director of The Patent Office: "Doing assembly line jobs with other students, because of the supervisors' offhand manner as well as the boredom, some of the students deliberately did the job wrong – eg, packing boxes with the wrong weights. It made me realise it's important to get your staff on board to ensure a good quality product. It also concentrated my mind on gaining my qualification, so I wouldn't have to do a job like that for my career!"

Official guidance says school sixth forms should be flexible about the timing and length of placements. They could be (outside the holidays): once a week throughout a term, longer block placements, or a rotation of shorter placements at different employers so students can experience different aspects of the sector.

The type of placement – and the level of responsibility a student is given – will depend on their age and stage at school. Year 9/10: a general introduction to the world of work, where the student learns about self-management, communicating with adults, co-operating with others in a team and understanding how an organisation works. Year 11: testing out an area or industry they may be interested in, bringing a job to life, confirming interest or, equally useful, deciding it is not for them. Year 12/13: enabling students to check out career areas if applying for a vocational course, and show evidence of useful skills for coping with university study and life.

What kind of work experience opportunities are there?

Some businesses run work experience programmes in partnerships. Barclays, for example, encourages other businesses to offer placements via its LifeSkills platform and provides a wide range of resources for students, parents and teachers. In many areas, education business partnerships (EBPs) and/or careers companies provide placements, carrying out the necessary risk assessments, health and safety and insurance checks and charging schools a fee for each placement. Organisations such as the fire service and some large companies have their own work experience programmes.



Some schools rely on their students themselves finding placements, using family networks, or contacting businesses themselves.

Get students to research local companies in their chosen field – they should always write to a direct contact, which they should be able to find via the website or by calling them direct. For speculative enquiries to employers, students should send a brief CV and covering letter stating clearly when they are available and what they want, whether it is work experience, a part-time job, voluntary work or work shadowing.

From failed teaboy to TUC general secretary

Lord John Monks, former general secretary of the European TUC as well as the UK one: “aged 18, I worked for six weeks at a brake linings factory. My first job was to make a cup of tea for the foreman. I had never before used an electric kettle, so I checked there was a cupful of water in it and switched it on. A minute later, the element in the kettle burned out. I had not filled it enough. Seeking his tea, the foreman saw what had happened to his kettle. His language deteriorated. I survived... just.”

Get your students to think more widely about where they can find experience, directing them to volunteering, seasonal work and gap year websites.

From kayak coach to senior education lead

Corinne Settle, now senior education lead at SSAT, qualified as a kayak coach at age 16. “When I did my initial kayak instructor assessment, my coach told me I had a talent for breaking things down and saying them in a way that others understood. This is the moment I knew I was going to become a teacher.”

How do students gain most from their work experience?

Encourage students to think ‘around’ their chosen subject – especially if direct placements are highly competitive. For example, medical students can gain as much from a placement in a care home as in a hospital.

Setting up work experience

Barclays LifeSkills recommends a structured approach to help ensure that a work experience programme operates efficiently and each young person gains the most from their placement:

1. Preparation

- identifying students’ needs
- sourcing placements
- conducting pre-placement visits / contact with employers



- setting out objectives
- identifying and fulfilling legal requirements.

2. Briefing students and employers

- preparing students thoroughly
- highlighting objectives
- briefing the employer on the objectives of the work experience and providing information about the student.

3. Support during placement

- setting up and undertaking monitoring visits.

4. Debriefing

- providing opportunities for students to reflect on and apply their learning
- offering a range of follow-up activities
- encouraging students to write thank-you letters to employers.

5. Evaluation

- involving employers, students and school staff
- learning from successes and issues arising
- identifying employers who would be willing to participate in future years.

Using a work experience log, including a diary, can help students to prepare and get the most out of work experience. Many local authorities offer work experience logs and diaries.

If students in previous years have had successful placements, arrange an event where current students can talk to them to get an insight and share contacts.

References

- <http://bit.ly/2IijUd>
- Cited in <http://bit.ly/2VLDAag>

Resources

Benefits of work experience

- <http://bit.ly/38nnLJG>
- <http://bit.ly/2In4fSQ>

Work experience activities in schools

- <http://bit.ly/2TFcb7h>

Helping schools get work experience for students

- <http://bit.ly/2VLDAag>

Guide for teachers, students and parents arranging their own placements

- <http://bit.ly/2wsgB9N>

Guide to different types of holiday jobs

- <http://bit.ly/2TnRHks>

Specialist work experience websites offering placements and practical careers advice

- <https://successatschool.org/>;
- <https://StudentLadder.co.uk>;
- www.plotr.co.uk;
- <http://bit.ly/2POmyEu>

Advice on volunteering

- <http://bit.ly/2VI7Hzs>

Volunteering

- <https://do-it.org/>
- <https://www.ncvo.org.uk>
- <https://volunteermatters.org.uk>

Volunteering abroad

Jeunesse et Reconstruction

- <https://volontariat.org/>

Entrepreneurs workshops

- <http://bit.ly/39qJJN9>

Work experience logs for students

- barclayslifeskills@barclays.com

OECD 'I am the future of work' roadshows, late 2019, presentation of results spring 2020

- <http://bit.ly/3crbqHs>

Legal requirements

- <http://www.healthandsafety-worksn.gov.uk/hsg199-2.pdf>
- <http://bit.ly/3ax3KS6>

Risk assessments

- <http://bit.ly/2IkAF0a>

Safeguarding

- <http://bit.ly/2VMXdP6>

Deep Support for Social Justice

Practical information and advice on careers guidance. Download at ssatuk.co.uk/dsj.

Pathways to employment for SEND pupils

*Paul Silvester,
Newman Community Special School*

Paul Silvester, headteacher, Newman Community Special School, describes the comprehensive programme that can enable them to achieve success, which might be sitting with some pensioners in an old people's home once a week – or a 35-hour job

It doesn't shock me that the employment rate for special needs adults is as low as 6%, nor that many adults with a learning disability are socially withdrawn and have poor physical and mental health. It doesn't shock me that the NAO report out in September 2019 highlights the poor outcomes at every level for young people with a learning difficulty or special need. What shocks me is that we as an educational profession are not prioritising addressing this.

There are endless debates about uniform, behaviour, attendance and league tables and yet slowly we see pupils with special needs sink into the dark recesses of educational priorities. Our schools, special and mainstream, must build up skills, resilience and independence in students, and be acknowledged and rewarded when they do so. We must see the value of pupils in the workplace not simply in economic terms but in social impact. Educational provision is not measured solely by a GCSE roll call in the halls of a school in August, but also in celebrating employment of a young person with special needs.

About 18 years ago I heard of a scheme on Merseyside where the local authority had supported the setting up of a fish farm, including a wormery,



which used cardboard and access to fresh water. I won't go into the details but this scheme ended up employing ten people full-time and training each year a further eight. After the initial set-up costs, the scheme was self-sustaining and the trainees had an excellent track record of getting employment after the year-long work experience.

Stages on the route to employment

From that moment I have committed myself to trying to provide a route through to employment for special needs students, which looked at what they can do rather than what they can't and actually was sustainable and productive. That journey looked at guided learning hours, curriculum, primary experiences, risk-taking parents and carers. And it resulted in the biggest smiles of success possible from young people (and their families) who have gained employment in the real world.





The starting point is not special needs but models that encourage aspiration, support employment initiatives and are sustainable. When I was working in mainstream secondary, one of the government measures was to increase university take-up. Many families without a tradition of university progression did not lack the capacity for their young people to go to university, they lacked the knowledge, understanding and support. The same applies to young people with learning disability and their families. In my mainstream school the funding allocated to supporting a pathway to university started in Y9. In the North East they said this was too late, so invested funds in primary visits and resources, and from that grew an ambition among many to go to university and knowledge of the funding, the application process and the benefits of the experience.

The same is true for learning disability. The pathway for a post-19 employability programme has to start at age nine at the latest. When starting a Project SEARCH programme in Rotherham, we invited 40+ parents/young people to take part: only four said yes (1:10). Conclusion: it is too late to ask in upper secondary, the interest must be built up over many years.

Start with employment as the aim

If you have a culture which looks at employment as a real possibility, it is quite likely that part-time or voluntary routes become alternatives. This does not work the other way around, so a voluntary scheme will not, in my experience, produce a scheme which will lead to sustained employment. It is worth investing in a full-time supported internship scheme

as the gold standard, because the other routes will stem from that. At the same time as we started a post-19 offer, we developed an employment-ready primary programme to light the ambition fire. It will not be a 1:10 ratio of engagement in 10 years' time, I guarantee, and I can show you the take-up of university places in the North East to show you that it is possible to build ambition. Let us have a dialogue about ambition, not about disability, an approach more in common with the rest of the education sector.

Starting a Project SEARCH programme in my previous job taught me a lot about our curriculum and our engagement with employers. As an example: the young people on the internship programme lacked communication skills both in terms of work and in their social life. We reviewed the curriculum and adapted a Lego Therapy concept (a development programme for children with ASD or other social communication difficulties) and devised a Jenga Therapy for post-16 to enhance communication skills. We widened and extended the use of intensive interaction. We employed our own SaLT (speech and language therapy) to develop and support communication. We reviewed the use of Facebook to help develop skills to communicate with a range of adults.

We need to see employment as a challenge worth working towards. It will be a challenge for parents, for curriculum leads – and indeed for the system. A part-time voluntary position will be a success, regular involvement in the local community, a social life with friends, and confidence in social and work contexts will also be a success.

To meet the challenge, my school has wholeheartedly adopted the Duke of Edinburgh bronze, silver and gold schemes, including independent travel. More importantly, we ensure we work with mainstream colleagues, providing opportunities to engage with a broader range of pupils and adults through visits and social activities. All of these help develop employability skills, along with a curriculum that was more skill-focused and enjoyable. The DofE scheme in particular contributed to the success of the internship for the young adults. As important, it enabled their parents and carers to 'let go' a bit, to allow space and time for the young people to take risks and to think for themselves.

I have helped set up two 19-25 SEND colleges, to facilitate the pathway to employment. Many FE colleges and colleagues have had vital resources stripped from them and funding mechanisms have restricted what they can deliver. This means that for many a 3½-day offer is classed as a full-time course. The rules on guided learning hours for many SEND students means that they have much more time by themselves, and less support. This often resulted in less resilience and a retreat to the bedroom. After 15+ years in supported education, this is a travesty and a waste. In setting up a SEND college our aim was a 38-week year and a 9-3 skills focused day.

Neglected areas

In the route to employment for these young people there are two areas that often fail to get the attention they deserve: parents and employers.

The regular discourse in the media and in conversations on qualifications, internships, university applications etc, means most people have a knowledge of what is out there in this context. This is not the same for parents and carers of pupils with learning or physical disabilities, nor for employers. While there are problems with the benefits system there is support, for example in the government's Access to Work programme, and for employers there is the Disability Confident programme, but these need more priority.

For employers, we need to get the positive message about young people with disabilities and their commitment to jobs, which can be a real compensation for less productivity. What engagement are we giv-

ing employers to demonstrate the value, positivity and dedication many of our young people with special needs have in the workplace? As a sector, special schools look to safe, contained and simple workplace environments: we often have cafes, run cake stalls, have 'enterprise' events when we sell items co-produced with pupils. Sometimes our young people can rise to the challenge of a more varied working environment, particularly if we can give them good experiences of such environments while they are at school. Employers need to know this.

What engagement are we giving employers to demonstrate the value, positivity and dedication many of our young people with special needs have in the workplace?

The challenge

While the regulatory regime in recent years has made education seem more judgmental, in terms of employment for special needs pupils we need to work together. The figures tell us that only 6% of people with learning disability are in work, that is fairly well known. What is not well known is the damaging impact on physical and mental health of young adults who are isolated and cut off from their communities. A well-worked employment pathway is not about a gateway to a dead-end job. It is a life-changing opportunity for the young people, their families and the employers themselves. It is a pathway that starts in primary school and is about support tailored, and tapered, to need. It is about opportunity and equality. It is a pathway where success might be sitting with some pensioners in an old people's home once a week or it might be a 35-hour job. It is about being seen and heard, it is about being valued and valuable.

A well-worked employment pathway for young people with special needs is about being seen and heard, it is about being valued and valuable

Helping young people with SEND to find work

*Janet Wingate-Whyte,
Whitefield Academy Trust*

Janet Wingate-Whyte, Project SEARCH Manager, Whitefield Academy Trust, describes the process and benefits of these projects – to the young people, the schools and the employers involved

There can't be many teachers who haven't felt the slow but seemingly inexorable rise in the number of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) – now nearly 15% of the school population, according to the 2019 school census. There can't be many who haven't thought about what the future holds for these young people. What kind of life will they have? Will they have a happy, fulfilling future?



The evidence shows that finding and keeping a good job is a major factor in answering that question. The right job provides young people with independence, self-esteem and of course the money needed to pursue their dreams. However the sad fact is that nationally, only around 6% of people with special educational needs are in full-time paid employment.

But there is a way to improve on these numbers. Seven years ago, Whitefield Academy Trust, comprising two special needs schools in East London, drove the local implementation of a US-developed programme called Project SEARCH. Around 70% of the 16-24 year olds with special educational needs who have passed through the programme at Project SEARCH East London have found full-time paid employment. Over the last few years its intake has been expanded to include students with special needs from neighbouring mainstream schools.

The project has transformed the lives of the young people involved, their families, and the wider community. In case you are feeling cynical, that 70% success figure isn't due to the team cherry-picking the ablest students in the school population with a SEND label – remember, the intake is largely from students whose needs include some young people with autism, learning difficulties, complex needs, vision impairment and physical disability. The evidence from our programmes suggests that Project SEARCH is the most effective way to find employment for young people with SEND.

What is Project SEARCH and how do you set one up?

This is a supported internship programme, where students spend a year rotating through three job placements, with support from job coaches based in the host business. The coaches support not only the students with mentoring and training, but also the business, helping it make any necessary adjustments and keeping things moving smoothly.

There are four core elements that have to be found before a new Project SEARCH operation can be set up. We've covered two already – an educational establishment and supported employment coaches. The national office can help matchmake to find specialist coaches – Whitefield was matched with supported employment providers Kaleidoscope/Sabre.

Hospital departments have found that these interns are highly motivated, prioritise punctuality and often have a strong desire to go above and beyond

The third element is a large local employer who is willing to invest time and resources. Whitefield was fortunate in finding a staunch partner in Barts Health NHS Trust, who were extraordinarily supportive, giving the project its own office and teaching room in the centre of Whipps Cross University Hospital. A business liaison manager at Whipps Cross helped to find, promote and set up placements to take the interns.

Hospitals make for popular employment partners for projects in the UK. Not only are they large employers in their own right, but they also have many other companies working on-site in support services such as catering who can get involved. If this is done right, hospitals can act as a funnel, with interns moving to employment within the hospital and then moving out into jobs in the wider community.

The final formal element of the Project SEARCH model is a supportive local authority. In the case of Whitefield, London Borough of Waltham Forest was soon convinced of the value of finding sustain-

able employment for young people in the borough. The council provided seed funding necessary to help set the project up – a start-up licence needs to be paid for. The council continues to be active in the project by treating it as an integral part of its offer to young people.

There is one more element that is also likely to prove critical to any project's success – having a high-profile champion who will stick with it. Someone who consistently advocates for the project, makes it a priority and has enough clout to drive it on through any sticky problems. In the case of Whitefield, that person is Elaine Colquhoun OBE, CEO of Whitefield Academy Trust, who first found out about Project SEARCH by reading an article in the *SSAT Journal*. Elaine visited the first-ever project at the Cincinnati Children's Hospital, Ohio, in 2012 to see the programme in action and meet the founders. She returned inspired and determined that this was the way forward. She has been a driving force ever since.

The outcomes – beyond the figures

The message within the hospital became 'Transform your department, transform a life' and it turns out that this was more than just a marketing slogan.

Many of the interns turned employees have tales of how their lives have changed since starting the programme. People such as Aqib, who was painfully shy when he started – reluctant to talk or make eye contact – but who today often handles phone calls. He is also married and has recently become a father; the first Project SEARCH baby at Barts. Or there is Alex, who liked planes, but who had never been on one before finding a job through the project. Now he has the travel bug, has been to America and Hamburg and is planning his next trip to Moscow. He says the job has given him a sense of purpose in life, helped him build bridges and built his confidence.

And each experience like this has benefits that ripple out across the network of family, friends and community – a spreading ring of influence making peoples' lives a little better.

Perhaps less expected is the transformative influence with the hospital departments themselves.





The departments are diverse, ranging from clinical placements such as pathology and endoscopy to non-clinical placements such as porters and receptionists. Despite their varied nature, every department has similar stories of young interns bringing energy to their teams. Some interns have special skills that they have brought to the departments in terms of skills with numbers and organisation or empathy for patients – but in general, departments have found that interns are highly motivated, prioritise punctuality and often have a strong desire to go above and beyond. Several have been nominated and have won ‘Barts Heroes’ awards.

Something else has changed too: co-workers say there has been a subtle shift in the way that staff in the department relate. There’s a pride in being helpful and supportive to their new colleague, which rubs off on the way that the rest of the department communicates. There has also been a positive shift in the way that special needs is viewed.

Lessons learned

Of course, this serene swan-like picture is only achieved with some strenuous paddling under the surface. What lessons have we learned?

- As previously mentioned, success depends on having committed, high-status individuals in both school and employer who will consistently promote and support the project.
- Employer departments have to trust that they will be properly supported. Committing to taking on an intern in a busy department is initially a leap of faith. Departments have to be confident that the interns will have had good initial induction training before they get

to the department and that both interns and departments will be supported throughout the process. Having coaches who can build that trust is key.

- Nonetheless departments have to be open to making reasonable adjustments and putting accommodations in place to support learning and job outcomes.
- Finding suitable candidates to be interns means looking for young people who are ambitious to be independent – and, importantly, have supportive families who can help them meet those ambitions.
- The approach is undeniably successful, but that doesn’t mean that the disability magically goes away. Even when interns become much-valued employees, there is often a need for support. This means that as a project continues, there is likely to be an increasing support load. Barts Health Trust so values the more than 50 Project SEARCH alumni it currently employs that it is trialling a ‘follow-on’ job coach to support them.

Find out more

The charitable DFN Foundation has recently taken a lead role in running and coordinating Project SEARCH in the UK. They can help schools which are interested in the practicalities of setting up a new project, or would like to find an existing project. You can find details at www.dfnprojectsearch.org.

To find out more about the Whitefield/Barts initiative, see www.projectsearch.org.uk.



A methodical approach to 'creating unimagined futures'

*Kerrie Henton,
Stone Soup Academy*

Kerrie Henton, principal, Stone Soup Academy, describes how this alternative provision has attracted and developed business support to give high-value work experience for students no longer in mainstream education

I have always loved fireworks, the excitement of the big bang and the sky lighting up for a brief moment then dissipating as though the event had never been. Over my time in education I have seen many fireworks, both in mainstream and in the alternative provision sector where I now work. This type of firework can be less impressive: initiatives that everyone gets excited about, you find or are given the funding to run them, you pick your pilot group

of students and you run the event to lots of oohs and aahs... but as quickly as it started, the funding has ended, the project is no more, and no one is any the wiser.

This is what I try to avoid at all costs at Stone Soup Academy. We factor sustainability into all that we do wherever possible.

Stone Soup is an alternative provision free school, one of the first in the country, that has been judged outstanding by Ofsted. We meet the needs of 80 young people who have either been excluded or are at risk of exclusion from mainstream education. We reflect national statistics, with 70% of our



cohort being male. And 85% in years 10 and 11, so what comes next for them is a priority.

Ensuring that all our students go onto work, training or education is one of our key success indicators. Last year, 97% of our year 11 young people achieved this, only one did not. But in education you try never to give up, so even though that student has left the school, phone calls are still made and support is still offered. When compared to national figures this is very positive, but as with everything, you tend not to focus on the large white page but rather the black dot!

So what do we do to achieve this? We have pushed the importance of careers and work-related working. A member of our engagement team has this responsibility as his key role, with an office in which to meet students and business cards to spread the word outside the academy. If students can see that we value work and training as well as education, they will too.

When I arrived at the academy it was behind a big black door! No one really knew of us outside the education sector – and here we were in a city centre location. My first thought was how do we get the outside in, break down these barriers, make links, collaborate and develop opportunities. So we came up with a plan.

Step one: arrange an event and invite businesses

We created a pithy invitation card and I walked the streets visiting local companies to invite them to join us. They did come, not in the numbers that I would have liked but enough to start a network.

Step two: prompt responses foster links

Quickly, others wanted to join, to talk and to collaborate and very soon I had lots of plates spinning. It takes time and energy to keep them going, but by creating a pipeline we were able to start developing our links. Our location helped, and soon I had big names on board: Nottingham Forest FC, Trent Bridge, the home of cricket, and Crowne Plaza Hotels. We did this by quickly returning calls, showing these companies that to work with us was easy, and of course that by doing so we would get them positive publicity.

Step three: extending work experience

Now we had the connections, we needed to link the students to the companies. We did this by creating school-based apprenticeships. In reality this was an elongated work experience. I had long been wary of the short work experience placement, when we gave students what was available rather than what was appropriate. I had both seen it and organised it in mainstream, and basically it was just weeks when all staff took a breath and relaxed a little. Surely we could do better?

I met with head of HR at Crowne Plaza in Nottingham, and together we hatched a plan to create a termly work experience that would give a group of learners an opportunity to go every Monday and work in different departments to get a real, elongated experience. These young people were supported by a member of our support staff, and in the afternoons they would all go to a space provided by the hotel and work towards completing a qualification.

We chose the NCFE *Occupational Studies for the Workplace*, as it suited our learners' needs. By linking a qualification to the placement, we enabled the students to see relevance to completing the work experience.

We were also able to make the experience flexible: some students completed their placement after a term, while others stayed on for a further term as it fitted their needs.

What was in it for the company? Apart from fulfilling their social corporate responsibility, they were able to 'future pick' their staff – and indeed some of our 16-year-olds went on to gain part-time work, and two secured permanent posts after they left the academy.

Step four: build on initial success

With one robust company on board we made further links. We used the first example to show how well it worked and developed further opportunities. The beauty of the qualification we had chosen was that the setting didn't matter, just the experience. This meant that a single student could attend different experiences and add to their qualifications to increase it from an award to a certificate and a diploma.

Step five: let them know you care

All these growing links are beneficial for the students, but we also work hard to show the businesses that they matter, by sharing their collaboration on our website. We also talk about them in our newsletter, promoting what we and they do and how they help our academy whenever possible.

Thanks to the rich relationships developed with local companies, their support now includes student awards, business student mentors, interview workshops and site visits

Developing links with businesses has been remarkable for our academy. We now have companies supporting student awards annually, again linking awards to transitional skills for their next steps. We have also been able to access funding through these links which helps the academy to give our students the 'bells and whistles'. For example, through our links we have business student mentors, interview workshops and site visits for construction students. And by demonstrating that we are reliable and don't let people down, we find that we are invited to be part of projects to support our students that we had not even been aware of.

The head of careers holds it all together. He maps each student experience and holds those sometimes difficult daily conversations to keep the spotlight on what next for each young person. He maps, he tracks and he logs what is happening. The Gatsby benchmarks take pride of place on our website, showing that we are meeting all measures and the importance that we place on developing our young people and preparing them for the next steps in their lives.

Creating unimagined futures is a vision made possible for our young people in collaboration with our community and local businesses. We would recommend this approach to anyone.



With reference to military careers, a student tries out an outfit used for bomb disposal



From appraisal to performance development – creating a self-improving system

*Helen Marriott,
Little Ilford School*

Helen Marriott, co-headteacher, Little Ilford School, explains their comprehensive approach to development rather than management of leaders and teachers

Appraisal is a difficult tightrope to walk for senior and middle leaders. There is a delicate balance to be sought between accountability and development: the 'push and pull' factors which Hargreaves and Fullan refer to as "the yin and yang of change lead-

ership". They argue that "in dynamic times, change leaders are confident and humble, resolute and empathetic, collaborative and competitive." This presents a challenge for school leaders: how do we ensure that we have the right balance of accountability and support; how do we ensure our leaders have this paradoxical set of skills and attributes, using the appraisal process as a change mechanism which impacts on student learning?



Appraisal, or performance development, as we now call it, does not happen in isolation. At Little Ilford, we are constantly looking at how we continue to develop a culture of improvement in the school. Our teaching and learning team had already driven improvements in teaching and CPD. My deputy, Avani Higgins, had developed an effective system for department development plans, our MER, using a sharper focus on monitoring and self-evaluation. It was time to explore how we conducted our PD, ensuring that this supported and contributed to the same culture of improvement, building on the right balance of push and pull factors.

Development, not management

We began by making the vision for performance development clear to all staff:

- Improving outcomes for children
- Raising teachers' morale through a learning culture
- Motivating teachers to update their skills and improve their performance
- Nurturing staff performance and effectiveness through challenge and support.

If we were going to be serious about using the system to develop, motivate and nurture, as well as hold staff to account, the name appraisal or performance management did not seem appropriate, so we rebranded it as 'performance development', following the example of John Tomsett at Huntington School in York. He writes about this in his 2015 book, *This much I know about love over fear*: "The word 'development' signifies to all our staff the tone of our approach to appraisal." Tomsett talks about a "values-driven" system where "accountability and development can go hand in hand." This seemed to match what we were trying to achieve.

However, the change could not happen in name only; the system itself had to be supportive. Phil Barton, our head of science, was part of a staff focus group looking at ways we could achieve this. He says that the previous system "felt like something that was done to the teachers rather than a meaningful exchange of ideas", whereas now the system is "more participative... the teacher has much more ownership of their own PD process and hence 'buys in' more."

These changes were based on feedback from the focus group and staff surveys. They told us that our process needed to be more developmental, while still encouraging staff to challenge themselves. We achieved this through five key approaches:

- Clear communication to staff about the new vision and policy and how we had responded to staff feedback: 'You said... we did...'
- Building in self-evaluation and reflection at the start of the process so that the dialogue began with the person being developed.
- Dedicated training time for leaders so that they understood the rationale behind the changes and the practical application.
- Using SLT to model the process: first, we undertook SLT performance development and then PD for middle leaders, so that the school leaders experienced the way the coaching and development conversations should look, prior to conducting a PD conversation themselves.
- Providing time for the PD conversations to take place during an Inset day.

Standards and benchmarks

"Every teacher needs to improve, not because they are not good enough, but because they can be even better" Dylan Wiliam

We often use this Dylan Wiliam quotation to exemplify our approach to both performance development and CPD: that we are reaching for ever-higher standards in order to improve the life chances of our students and better serve our community. It is important that everyone understands this intention, rather than viewing standards and benchmarks as hoops through which to jump.

Most schools use the Teachers' Standards to measure the standard of teaching. At Little Ilford, we use a variety of standards as benchmarks against which we measure ourselves and those we line manage during each stage of the PD process: Teachers' Standards, SSAT Lead Practitioner Standards, Support Staff standards. Each set of standards is also a starting point for self-reflection.

You will notice that there are no leadership standards included in the list above. We decided that this



was a gap we had to address. My co-headteacher, Ian Wilson, visited Downlands School in Brighton on a Leading Edge visit, and was impressed by their use of leadership standards as a tool for both benchmarking and development. We adapted the Downlands leadership model and used their standards as part of the PD self-evaluation and coaching conversation. There are a range of competencies, such as vision, knowledge, planning for impact, but also humility, reflection and team-building. Our LIS Leadership Standards provide a clear set of expectations for leaders and help us to reinforce the balance discussed above, ensuring that leaders have the skills and attributes to achieve the ‘yin and yang’ of effective leadership.

We are continuing to develop our leadership competencies this term. Our staff wellbeing group has been exploring the impact of leadership on wellbeing, working with Mark Solomons and his company, *Wellbeing Accelerator*. They are keen to emphasise and codify the less tangible aspects of leadership which impact on staff wellbeing, such as ‘empathetic engagement, accessibility, managing emotions and consideration’. This aligns well with our recently articulated school values of ‘courage, commitment, compassion’ and is helping us to deconstruct together what it means to be a great leader in our school.

Accountability

The other key way in which we have improved accountability, with support, is in the use of robust targets and success criteria. Previously, this had been vague and some staff had struggled to articulate what success would look like. We created a bank of model targets, research questions and success criteria which staff could select from, made easier with a link in the electronic Google form. The success criteria always start with a clear evidence base, eg ‘Learning walks show... work scrutinies show... pupil voice shows...’ which exemplify what the final outcome should look like, thereby helping staff and leaders to hold themselves and each other to account. This has proved really popular with staff, as Amandip Kandola from our English department explains: “I feel that the new system has added clarity to what constitutes evidence... The appraisal statement bank has also been very effective in promoting the negotiation aspect of PD in nurturing staff performance through challenge and support.”

A self-improving system

This year, we made our performance development system more strategic by creating clearer links between PD, CPD and department or whole-school development plans. We had recently changed our CPD



so that all staff completed a case study: a piece of action research where they applied and evaluated theories and strategies explored during long-term courses and reflected on the impact on students. Many staff had already started to include this as part of their performance development targets through research questions; it made sense to incorporate a really important element of their work that they were already focusing on, which is why we decided to formalise this as one of the targets.

Similarly, all departments have teaching and learning priorities as part of their development plans. Didn't it make sense to make this one of the PD targets as, again, it was something that staff were already working towards?

The third target, which is only for leaders, is a leadership target, framed using the leadership competencies mentioned above.

Sarah Butcher, one of our assistant heads, puts this very well: "The old system was not strategic. It did not always link with other priorities so did not always have value. The new system is much more strategic, in line with departmental, whole school and personal priorities. It links to the competencies so development can be identified and measured by individuals. The new system allows for much more professional dialogue."

Continuing to grow

At our most recent middle leaders meeting, we focused on leadership development and I used the following quotation from Ruth Malloy of the Hay Group:

"Employees generally leave their organisation for one of two reasons:

- Their immediate line manager
- The lack of opportunity to develop and grow."

Our recruitment and retention rates have always been very good, largely because of our high quality CPD and development opportunities for staff. We now have a more joined up, strategic system, with built-in opportunities for development and growth, including for leaders. Co-headteacher Ian Wilson sums this up: "Our performance development system used to be a tick-box exercise that had no real impact on student outcomes. Our new

approach fits seamlessly with our suite of whole-school improvement strategies."

Our PD system is continuing to evolve – we are currently working on support staff PD and standards – because we believe that if we can develop all members of our staff community, it will create true sustainability.

What is different about our performance development system at Little Ilford?

- » The name emphasises the developmental aspect of the system.
- » We have developed the system with and for the staff: their views and ideas have been acted upon through surveys and focus groups.
- » PD is part of a self-improving system: staff have targets related to teaching and learning priorities in their areas, their CPD (action research) project and case study and a leadership target, where applicable.
- » We provide staff with time to have their PD conversations so that there is a meaningful dialogue and personal support for the individual.
- » We have extended our PD system to include support staff, along with their own sets of competencies.
- » A thorough checking process takes place to ensure consistency.

References:

- 1) Hargreaves and Fullan: *Professional Capital*, 2012
- 2) Fullan and Boyle: *Big-City School Reforms*, 2014
- 3) John Tomsett: *This much I know about love over fear: creating a culture for truly great teaching*, 2015
- 4) Ruth Malloy: Hay Group Leadership and Talent Practice

Making every teacher a leader of learning

Gary Seal, City of Norwich School

Gary Seal, assistant headteacher and director of teaching and learning, City of Norwich School, describes the programmes used to develop and embed collaborative learning at all levels

City of Norwich School is a large comprehensive secondary which has served the families and children of our city since 1910, and employs just over 100 teachers and 65 support staff. We have sought to build a community of staff who see professional learning as central both to their own development and to school improvement. Establishing and embedding this culture has taken a number of years and includes a number of strands, outlined below.

A culture needs the right conditions

A culture relies on shared language and discourse. We have sought to establish the language and professional dialogue of teaching and learning through weekly PD focused on discussion of pedagogy and improving practice. Each Monday begins with a T&L-focused whole-staff briefing, led by individual classroom teachers and co-ordinated by the director for T&L. A classroom teacher might outline their use of live modelling and visualisers to support MPA (middle prior attainment) boys; the next week a subject leader might explore how research into interleaving and threshold concepts informed long-term planning and curriculum design for their A-level course; the following week an NQT+1 might share their action research project on pedagogies for explicit teaching of tier two vocabulary in geography.



Every week the presentation will be different, but the purpose is the same: showcasing and sharing good practice leads into discussion in the staffroom along the lines of ‘How could you use this in your area?’ The briefings generate pedagogy-focused conversations through the week: “Do you remember what Jimmy from maths talked about on Monday? Well I tried it with my Y10s...” “Jimmy – could I come to see you next time you’re using your visualiser?” Monday briefing is a forum where all colleagues present on equal footing: this is not a ‘top down’ approach to CPD, but rather an approach that values all teachers as experts and leaders, and builds on the work of all teachers to shape the pedagogical discourse and development of the whole school.

Our regular T&L bulletin (issue 113 is out next week!) takes a similar approach, with themed contributions written by staff across the school to showcase and share good practice. Each issue seeks to summarise research on an area of pedagogy (eg homework), showcase practice from within the school, and signpost staff to interesting wider reading on the topic (an interesting blog or journal article).

The Monday briefings and T&L bulletins are critical to developing a culture of sharing and discussing practice, but also to establish a shared discourse and narrative of pedagogical priorities. Establishing themes and framing presentations leads to a shared language that helps to promote a collective culture of professional learning. MFL teachers and maths teachers speak the same language to drive improvements in pedagogy; and teacher development across the school is driven by professional dialogue rather than central diktats or policies.

Around 70% of our teachers and LSAs contributed to either Monday briefing or T&L bulletin last year.

Some 70% of our teachers and LSAs contributed to either Monday briefing or T&L bulletin last year

Teacher-led CPD and teacher agency

Our professional enquiry CPD programme, currently in its sixth year, dominates a significant chunk of our staff development days and twilight CPD. This programme requires staff to choose an area of pedagogy (usually identified centrally with faculty leaders and SLT), and to undertake an action research project on this area in their own subject. This year, the choices are: metacognition, modelling and explanation; responsivity and assessment; curriculum: critical knowledge and curriculum design; subject fluency and vocabulary. For instance, one question is: What impact does regular use of comparative and faded examples have on the progress of LPA (low prior attainment) year 8 students in end-of-unit maths assessments? Projects culminate in a 'document of recommendations' from each project and a sharing day of seminars and workshops. This year, 30-35 teachers and LSAs will present on their projects, with all teachers and LSAs involved in discussing how the findings and

recommendations might be applied in their own area and practice.

As with the Monday briefings and the T&L bulletin, this aspect of our school promotes sharing, showcasing, and framing of good practice and priorities. Most importantly, it places emphasis on teacher agency: by leading as a researcher and expert in their field, staff take greater ownership of their own CPD and development. This is critical for the success of the culture we are seeking to build.

Faculty leaders as leaders of pedagogy

Balancing whole-school pedagogy and priorities with subject-specific development has been critical to the sustainability and impact of PD and school improvement, and to developing middle leaders as leaders of pedagogy development. Weekly department meetings have been replaced by 'Faculty area development time'. The shift is not merely semantic – these sessions focus entirely on pedagogy: what's the best way to teach X? What are the misconceptions that appear and challenges in teaching Y? Faculty leaders take a leading role in the PD, research and pedagogy development of their staff, steering the professional enquiry to address faculty priorities.



Developing leaders and growing the culture

Central to staff development and retention is the PD that we offer at leadership level. Each year a rich variety of leadership PD opportunities are offered including NPQs, secondments and internships within and beyond the school. Examples include an NQT+I working with SSAT to develop oracy within humanities; a middle leader in science coaching new middle leaders in other faculties; a faculty leader developing leadership skills and knowledge through an NPQSL; an assistant head-teacher undertaking an internship with another school via our academy trust. While inevitably some of these colleagues will leave our school as they secure promotion in other schools, we see this development of leaders as part of our duty to wider improvement of the sector, and this ethos is central to our culture as a school committed to staff development and professional learning.

Leading CPD beyond our school

Staff are encouraged to join and lead networks for teaching, and to lead CPD for trainees, teachers and leaders beyond our school. This year over 20 colleagues will be involved in leading PD for external staff. This includes:

- leadership of NPQ programmes, regional and national subject networks for our academy trust
- CPD conferences for regional NQTs and mentors
- leading sessions and professional development opportunities with ITT partnerships
- the work of our six SLEs.

This work is hugely influential in developing wider networks and cultures of professional learning to shape the development of staff in the region, and is a direct result of the culture we've sought to develop.

Context and impact

The goals and impact of this culture of professional learning are just as multifaceted as the strategies and strands involved in developing the culture. The approach aims to ensure our school and staff are always improving and are ready for the demands and changes in education: at the leading edge of curriculum and qualification changes, adapting practice and pedagogy to ensure our students receive an excellent education.

At the same time, with regional and national concerns about teacher retention and recruitment, the PD culture leads to staff being committed to and finding reward in our own development and whole-school improvement. The focus on staff development helps retain great teachers through the professional reward and satisfaction of developing as an excellent classroom practitioner and leader, offering progression opportunities and supporting our succession planning. Our work in supporting ITT partnerships and our focus on professional learning enables us to attract excellent teachers and enable them to develop within a collaborative and supportive school.

Suggestions for your school's CPD

- » Identify staff who will embrace the culture of sharing and discussing T&L and will take others with them, and nurture this group to build the culture more rapidly. A web of staff across the school who are committed to professional development is more transformative than any top-down model, and they will grow the culture.
- » Focus on the principles, practices and pedagogies that will make the biggest difference in your school context, and on refining and doing these well within subject specialisms. Get a range of staff excited and trialling them to share and discuss.
- » Know what each of your teachers does well, get them to share what they're doing, and make sure staff know where to go for experts in specific areas of pedagogy.
- » Value teacher agency and showcase the widest range of voices. If you have a colleague whose voice is not being heard in these contexts, ask yourself: are you doing all you can to develop them so you can showcase and share what they do?
- » Adjust and adapt: if you're developing a culture of professional learning, you need to review your own practice constantly and be ready to learn yourself.



Why every school should have its particular approach to teaching

*Mark Patterson,
Coleridge Community College*

Mark Patterson, headteacher, Coleridge Community College, explains how he and his team came up with a teaching approach that has been willingly adopted by staff and students alike

The 2014 Ofsted inspection report for Coleridge Community College described teaching as requiring improvement and lacking consistency. The 2016 report, too, highlighted 'variable teaching' as a key

reason why teaching wasn't judged good. Fast forward to May 2019 and the Ofsted report identifies consistently good teaching. What changed between November 2016 and May 2019? We adopted and embedded our approach to teaching across the school.

The thinking behind Coleridge's teaching approach

We started by asking ourselves this basic question: do some ways of teaching, or teaching 'techniques',





work better than others? We all agreed that some things do work better than others. No teacher would reasonably argue that lecturing students lesson after lesson with the students silently writing down verbatim notes is a great teaching technique; and no-one in mainstream education would be likely to argue for a 100% 'discovery learning' approach to teaching, whereby learners are expected to discover all of their learning by themselves. On the other hand, asking questions of the whole class that oblige everyone to think, providing face-to-face feedback that students act on straight away, and quizzing students to see what they know and don't know yet, can be very effective. Some things do work better than others, on average, for the vast majority of learners. That's the easy bit.

The harder question then is: so what things work better? At Coleridge, a working group looked at a large body of research findings and recent literature, from well-known people such as John Hattie and Dylan Wiliam and organisations such as the Education Endowment Foundation. We found the work of Daniel Willingham and Barak Rosenshine particularly interesting. We enjoyed the Michaela school story, captured in the book *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Teachers*; we read other books like *Make it Stick* (Brown, Roediger and McDaniel) and David

Didau's *What if everything you knew about education was wrong?* We ploughed through a lot of stuff, with the aim of finding out what works best. We discussed it and tried it out and discussed it again and tried it out again and, in the course of one school year, we came up with the Coleridge teaching approach (CTA).

Setbacks along the way

Getting a group of extraordinarily busy people to give up quite a lot of their own time to engage with research, and to come to regular after-school meetings to discuss it, was a challenge. It was especially hard to sustain that kind of activity over the year that it took us to develop the first version of the teaching approach. Some people dropped out of the core group after a few months; we kept them involved afterwards as best we could.

Distilling a lot of research into something short enough to be useful to all teachers was a challenge, too, and the first version of the CTA was too long (about 15 pages) – the core group understood it very well because we had created it, but some other teachers struggled. We ran with the first version for a year, from about mid-2015 to mid-2016, struggling to make it work, before we changed it.

Even when we had the third, much shorter, version in place, getting it fully embedded into practice was hard – teaching habits, like all habits, are devilishly hard to change.

And now, with regular staff turnover, we are continuously having to induct new teachers into the CTA and we have to help them embed it. Likewise, all teachers need regular reminders, or things can slip.

Distilling a lot of research into something short enough to be useful to all teachers was a challenge

What went well

I am convinced that the key reason the approach is well embedded at the school is because it was not imposed on teachers – we created it together. And in doing so, we had complete buy-in from the core group.

Another thing we did well was to make sure all of the teachers who weren't in the core group were kept well involved: every training day, we updated all teachers and sought their input; and most of our after-school teacher training sessions were given over to CTA, so it was constantly on the front-burner, achieving buy-in from everyone. We have weekly Tuesday after-school CPL (training) for all teachers as part of directed time, and much of it is given over to discussing how we teach.

From this short, well-accepted, version of the CTA we created a checklist, which is stuck to every teacher's desk in the school – to help them to keep in mind the key features. It seems to have been very popular.

The outcomes

Consistency of at least good teaching was essential to improving the school and the approach has delivered consistency of those things that are generic about teaching; much is. Here is the checklist that is stuck to teacher's desks at Coleridge:

- Tell students what they should be learning (learning intentions) and how they can check whether they have been successful (success criteria).

- Review learning: quiz students, at the start, during and end of the lesson on recent and previous learning.
- Explain things very clearly in small steps and use examples and Wagolls (what a good one looks like).
- Check 'smartly' that the students get it. Move on when 80% get it.
- Ask lots of questions of everyone (think pair share and no hands up).
- Set challenging work for everyone; support those that need it and extend those that finish the work early, or who need an extra challenge – and make sure they do it.
- Drill, drill, drill key information.
- 'Live mark' with red pen, while students are working; give feedback and correct gross errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPAG) using marking codes to generate DIRT.
- Move from guided to independent learning, removing scaffolding.
- Insist on high standards of work, engagement and behaviour, as well as periods of individual work in silence, to help all students engage well and concentrate during guided and independent learning.
- Promote literacy, through reading, for example.

The problem with formal lesson observation

I had always struggled with formal lesson observations, and even learning walks and drop-ins. Before we introduced our teaching approach, I'd never managed to get past the feeling that all an observer is doing through formal lesson observation is comparing how they would themselves teach with how the person they are observing is teaching – in other words, it is an extraordinarily subjective process.

Some schools, to minimise the subjectivity, try to apply the Ofsted handbook to lesson observation – but the 'quality of teaching' criteria in the handbook are not designed to be used in that way. I don't think that's a good model. I think the only way to do lesson observation, learning walks and drop-ins well – and the way we now do it at Coleridge – is to:

1. Decide what we expect to see teachers typically doing to teach well – it's typicality that counts, not what someone can do when they are being watched.



2. Then, make sure all teachers are clear about what we expect to see.
3. Base our judgement of good/outstanding teaching on teachers meeting those expectations – in our own case, this means teachers following the Coleridge Teaching Approach.

The big advantage of this model is that it minimises subjectivity – teachers are either following the approach or they aren't

The big advantage of this model is that it minimises subjectivity – teachers are either following the CTA or they aren't. The lesson begins with a quiz or it doesn't; there is drilling of key knowledge or there isn't; hands up are allowed or they aren't, etc... Our teachers like the approach because it is clear and they see that it works.

What we have learned so far

Adopting a common approach to teaching those things that are generic pays off. It leads to consistency of teaching and, if the school's approach is well constructed, it should lead to a typically high standard of teaching. It's also very engaging for teachers – they want to be involved in talking about that which matters most, how we should teach so that students learn really well. It's very engaging for students, too, as they appreciate the certainty around how they will be taught – and quizzing and drilling, in particular, consistently involve everyone.

How other schools might benefit

I believe there are significant benefits to having a common approach to teaching across the school – here are five key ones I can think of:

1. The process of everyone moving towards a common approach to teaching is great for teachers and school leaders, including governors – there is nothing more important in a school than talking about teaching and learning.
2. A common approach to teaching provides a high degree of consistency in teaching at the school – 'this is how we do things here'.
3. Provided the approach is sound, it works – students learn better. A common approach particularly supports new teachers, inexperienced teachers, and teachers who might otherwise struggle with their pedagogy.
4. Students buy-in; our experience is that they appreciate knowing how they are taught and why they are taught that way. At Coleridge, we take time to explain to students why we use, for example: look/say/cover/write/check as part of our homework policy; why every lesson begins with a quiz; and why drilling works.
5. It supports QA and appraisal processes such as lesson observations, drop-ins and learning walks. Everyone is clear about what is required.

Read the current version of the Coleridge Teaching Approach at <http://bit.ly/2VNZslw>.





Inspections under the new Ofsted framework: an exec head's experience

Sophie Powell,
Fairview Community Primary School

Sophie Powell, executive headteacher, Fairview Community Primary School and The Compass Partnership of schools, explains how knowing the key points in the relevant handbook enables you to put your case more effectively – and some key points she has learned from the new process

Working for a trust with seven schools in Greenwich and three others in Medway, I have experienced four inspections since December 2019; two of them were back-to-back. As executive head, I was fully involved in two of the four inspections, and welcomed to be a part of the process. Overall, it was a very positive experience (as much as inspections can be!).

The inspectors checked in regularly with leaders about staff and were actively seeking feedback on themselves as inspectors. This had not happened under the old system.

The inspectors were approachable and candid, which helped when I was anxious about how they would operate under the new framework. We were listened to and seen as part of the process. They checked in regularly with staff and were actively seeking feedback on themselves as inspectors. This had not happened before under the old system. And most of the time they were sensitive about the people they would be dealing with. For exam-

ple, one asked, “how are staff feeling in school? Is there someone we should not see because of their personal circumstances at this time?”

Unlike in the past, the inspectors gave little away about how they were forming their conclusions and opinions about the school involved. They had ‘keeping in touch’ meetings with us, and further meetings at the end of each day, but there were no comments like we used to get such as “the children in that class are learning particularly well.”

Take every opportunity to sow the seeds

Also different was the sense that the inspectors were happy to navigate their own way around the school, based on the initial map we had given them. It was almost a feeling that they wanted to see things through their own eyes, not ours: we might be avoiding certain classes or a certain child, for instance. We wanted to exploit every minute with the inspection team to tell our compelling narrative. One of the things you have to do is maximise every opportunity to sow seeds with the inspector about your curriculum, parents, relevant data, etc. My advice to school leaders would be: whenever possible, accompany the inspectors.

The process was very fast-paced when it came to reviewing the evidence the inspectors had gathered. Leaders and teachers had to be very concise in their communications. We had prepared well, but were not always given enough time to pass on the positive information we had available. It was all about the curriculum as a progressive model and its impact in the present, past and future.





Looking for fault

Inspectors are very well briefed on this framework (understandably). One walked around with a copy of the national curriculum under his arm and read the geography curriculum before talking to the children. They were constantly seeking connections between the subject leaders, teachers, children, documentary evidence, governors, parent view and the children survey. It felt like a great big jigsaw puzzle. If one detail was not aligned with the rest, it would become a key focus of the inspection trail. So if one child was less attentive on learning than the others in a class, the inspectors would focus on that child, asking why. And when at lunch a KS1 child mentioned bullying (in a flippant manner), the inspector followed through quite heavily.

They were looking for areas of difference, and it seemed had an obsession with every child, regardless of age, ability, culture or ethnicity. Inspections under the previous format had not shown obsession to that level. One nursery child, having been asked who their favourite author was, was unable to recall anyone. The inspector raised this at a KIT meeting as a potential area of concern and wanted to discuss this further with the leaders. I had an overriding sense that they were looking for fault in these minor things, linking them closely to the 'forensic analysis' of the deep dives. Another example: one of our schools has nurture provision, and the inspectors seemed very focused on this in their 90-minute phone call. But because of our rationale, analysis and paperwork, we were confident in putting our argument. As experienced leaders we were

able to have a very clear narrative about why the inspectors were seeking these (relatively rare) things. Other, less experienced leaders might be unable to tell a compelling story in this context and might find it difficult to cope with that level of challenge.

But I do understand where the inspectors are coming from on key issues like off-rolling, bullying, gaming and key aspects of the framework, though it puts us under a lot of pressure.

Nail your argument

The 90-minute conversation is new, and a key opportunity for school leaders. You have to nail your argument in those 90 minutes, which means being exceptionally well prepared. I had a copy of the section 8 framework in front of me, with highlights and post-its. Same with the school development plan, curriculum progression framework and our rationale for reading, phonics, and maths. We had our story ready!

You have to nail your argument in those 90 minutes, which means being exceptionally well prepared. I had a copy of the section 8 framework in front of me, with highlights and post-its

I'd prepared – as page 15 of the S8 handbook says, we should know what they will be judging us against – so I was able to pre-empt the questions the inspec-



tor was going to ask. There are easy and quick wins (relatively!) for leaders if you follow what's in there; as it says on page 23, "have it ready". We had ranked our subjects from best to most 'emerging', and we had a clear story in response to questions such as, is your school focus on the curriculum rich, broad, balanced, coherent, purposefully sequenced and precise for all children and stages? Can you show they have conceptual understanding alongside clear retention of knowledge? It's rigorous: the inspectors are seeking to find out what the children can articulate about their learning that day, and last week, and last year!

Is it fair? In general: yes, absolutely, though we mustn't let it detract from the day job, which is the quality of education and safeguarding in the school. And there are exceptions. An inspector was looking at a year 4 science session on the water cycle. He queried a Y4 and a Y6 pupil about structures in biology, and at the end asked the Y6 child to explain to the Y4 child what they should be looking forward to in their science curriculum: he was expecting them to remember what they had been doing two years ago! To me that was ridiculous, and I told the inspector it was not the fairest of questions, in my opinion.

What we do differently now as a result of these Ofsted visits

As a school leader, I've always been passionate about a broad and balanced curriculum for all learners. This focus in the inspections is right and proper, and it has made us in school more focused on the

connections between different subjects. We have always engaged in whole-school projects, but what we have not done before and are doing as a result of the new inspection framework is to grow experts in the different subjects. As I pointed out to an inspector: to a teacher in primary teaching 12 subjects, it's incredibly difficult to be that skilled across every subject in the curriculum. So now, through our trust, our subject experts are disseminating expertise to other staff who are less confident about teaching the level of granular detail required.

There was an overriding feeling of connectedness. All stakeholders were involved, and questioned. Teachers' workload and wellbeing was another focus throughout the inspections. Pupil voice surveys ask questions like, 'How do your teachers help you to learn effectively?' There is a constant focus throughout the inspection on SEND; it is not treated as a separate entity – and rightly so, in my opinion.

Inspection now is as rigorous as it has ever been. People say there is less pressure on the headteacher but more on teachers: true, but we all feel it, because we are all invested in the school. And we want to portray the school as well as we can. It's our job as SLT to be prepared for whatever the framework is focusing on this time: if not, we're doing our school and community a disservice.



Outward mindset, and the shared pursuit of staff wellbeing, helps tackle stress – especially in the pandemic

Seth Wilkins, Witton Park Academy

Seth Wilkins, teacher of humanities, Witton Park Academy, explains how introducing the concept of an outward mindset has led to a positive impact on staff wellbeing

Inward mindset: Seeing others as vehicles, obstacles or irrelevancies.

Outward mindset: Seeing others as people who matter like we matter.¹

For many, stress is a given of the teaching life. Education Support reported that in 2019, 78% of teachers experienced stress-related symptoms.² But its impact reaches beyond the workplace and follows us home, too often suppressing then depressing not just the climate of our classrooms, but also of our lives. This holds back the bringing of our best to both work and home. Stress creates negative spirals and inhibits creativity, risk-taking, openness, and trust. And with 78% of the profession affected – from trainees and NQTs to heads and Ofsted – we know solution seeking is urgent.³ In his celebrated call for compassion and kindness, Barry Carpenter advocates supporting each other as we map our way out of lockdown.⁴ In this case study, I will share what we have learned about a shared pursuit of wellbeing at Witton Park Academy.

I'm a historian. So I see my contribution to our school's cultural intent to embrace what The Arbinger Institute calls outward mindset as a series of moments, from encouraging action research in the spring of 2018, through to training as Witton Park

Academy's outward mindset facilitator in February 2019.

What does it mean to have an outward mindset?

The Arbinger Institute is a 45+ year old US-based organisation with operations in 26 countries based on work in the psychology of human behaviour and motivation, whose UK division is run by a team based in Buckinghamshire. One of Arbinger's descriptions of outward mindset is: "When we have an outward mindset – when others matter to us – we naturally want to be helpful to them. So we adjust our own efforts to make their work easier however we can. Rather than blaming others for our frustrations or feeling like victims of our circumstances, we begin to see new possibilities and solutions to our most vexing or long-standing problems."

In reality, my journey began earlier than 2018. Between 2014 and 2017, I often lay awake at night, sleepless from anxiety and fear, then struggling through each day blighted by too little sleep and the near constant tension of waiting to be 'found out', busted for masquerading as a qualified teacher. *Imposter syndrome* – the fear of public failure, of being 'discovered' a fraud, and the dread of impending isolation and disconnection – was my particular stress and is, ironically, a far more common experience than most people realise.

So a solution to stress became my research focus. Specifically, I asked: 'What happens to Imposter syndrome when I apply an outward mindset to my

professional practice and personal conduct?' This means addressing issues and new demands so as to help colleagues deal with them effectively and see this as part of their professional development.

As the project developed, leaders and I began to ask what its benefits might be for colleagues and pupils.

Conflict resolution crucial with Covid

Over the past couple of years, insights have included learning how to invite and sustain greater openness and capacity for conflict resolution; how to avoid battles of the ego and embrace creative collaboration and innovation. Our findings are beginning to facilitate solutions through greater connectedness and resilience, even in – maybe especially in – these socially distanced times with the pandemic.

For example, colleague Zaitoon Bukhari felt a sense of imposture, returning from maternity leave to a very challenging class and the responsibility to lead a whole-school EdTech change process. For her, outward mindset made it safe to admit to such feelings and see how perceptions and interpretations become constructed, thus replaceable, leading to more successful ways of connecting with pupils. Her work and role in EdTech also flourished, changing the way the school teaches, enabling meaningful responses to the adversity brought by the pandemic. As Dean Logan, CEO of the Achievement Through Collaboration MAT, observed:

“Allowing leaders to lead and design solutions, with the confidence that not everything will work, we won't get everything right. But knowing that we are trying to do the right thing has resulted in high levels of innovation, mutual support and success. Staff have been compassionate and agile in their solutions. The strategic approach to the next academic year is developing well, leaders have reinforced a strong culture for supporting each other.”⁵

Received wisdom dictates that when different results are wanted, different behaviours are needed. But beneath our behaviour is always the issue of how we see. And awareness of how mindset is created is the beginning of seeing and being different over time; of transcending the stress of Imposter



syndrome and building an environment of belonging and trust. We have learned that the positive gains of outward mindset begin with understanding self-deception: ‘the problem of not knowing, or resisting the possibility, that one is the problem or at least a part of the problem.’⁶

Understanding is vital

In the 1800s, Ignaz Semmelweis, a Hungarian obstetrician based in Austria, discovered to his horror that the terrible mortality rate of the mothers he looked after was a problem of the hospital's own making. Without an understanding of germ theory, disease was being carried on the hands of surgeons from one patient to another. In essence, without understanding their role in the cause and transmission of the problem, professionals were consigned to perpetuating it. Only as they became aware of and responsive to the possibility of being at least a part of the problem could they begin to address solutions.⁷

Counterintuitively, insight into self-deception has been liberating. Learning about mindset and how it's constructed has surprisingly built confidence in accepting shortcomings and seeing in them, not incriminating evidence of our incompetence, but useful roadmaps to greater shared success.

Teachers value solutions. And time. Despite the appeal of a programme focused on resolving our



problem-perpetuating thinking and behaviour, the nature of the material, and practical issues of scheduling time for all to engage, threw up barriers to wider rollout. In the end, we adopted a slow-burn approach over some five months: first, a pilot group, representing all angles of the school's staff; then an opt-in session; then commandeering Inset time whenever we could, at the same time contracting what had been a full day's workshop to an experience taking just over half a day.

We had begun the second phase of training a few weeks before Coronavirus hit, and had been due to complete an important cycle the week schools closed. But while this disruption has challenged the take-up of a shared language, in the end slower expansion has probably helped sustain longer-term impact.

Changes and innovations came by degrees. School leaders, having invested their own efforts first, became more able to model and influence by example. A regular weekly email focusing on key ideas evolved, with Zaitoon Bukhari's help, into a dedicated website and staff podcast.⁸

Roles for middle and senior leaders

If action research leaders focused inception and promotion of the original idea, then EdTech leaders accelerated its adaptability and sustainability. Whereas curriculum design leadership encouraged outward mindset into daily teaching practices, senior leaders began both embedding it into long-term strategic thinking and using it to guide decisions in the heat of the pandemic, keeping staff's various circumstances in mind.⁹

95% of colleagues agreed outward mindset had contributed positively to staff wellbeing over the past year

All of these incremental adjustments are adding to the total shared experience, showing our collective intent to support each other. In a recent impact survey, colleagues were asked whether outward mindset had contributed positively to staff wellbeing over the past year — 95% of respondents answered it had.

Of course the future remains uncertain. And Covid adds more challenge than we may have wanted. But our experience at Witton says a sustained shift in mindset is possible and can help us adapt, lean into our challenges, and find solutions together. It reassures us that there is a way to reduce the widespread problem of toxic stress. Understanding how and why mindset works the way it does — and what can be done about it — gives renewed faith in the sustained gains in wellbeing, and its many creative possibilities.

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FIGHTING FOR DEEP SOCIAL JUSTICE

**PASSION, PRINCIPLES AND
PRACTICALITIES**

**REPORT ON THE
SSAT NATIONAL CONFERENCE 2019**



Introducing SSAT's National Conference at Birmingham's ICC in December, chief executive Sue Williamson noted the recent report from the UN Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, Philip Alston, who concluded that despite the UK being the world's fifth-largest economy, its levels of child poverty are a social calamity and an economic disaster. Frighteningly, he predicted that child poverty would rise by 7% between 2015 and 2022.

Alston had visited towns and cities across the UK, and said that the problems were obvious to anyone: the immense growth in food banks and the queues waiting outside them, the people sleeping rough in the streets, the growth of homelessness, the sense of deep despair that even obliged the government to appoint a minister for suicide prevention. How to address these issues? Sue was very clear: "schools can't do everything. We can't cure poverty. But what we can do is to provide an education for all young people so that, whatever their ability or context, they should leave school fully prepared to lead fulfilled and purposeful lives.

"We recognise that schools cannot achieve deep social justice on their own, but we also recognise that education is critical for the future of all young people. We believe personalising learning is at the heart of social justice."

CAMPAIGNER FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

David Lammy, Labour MP for Tottenham, is the Patron of SSAT's campaign for deep social justice. One of five children raised by a single mother, he was called to the bar in 1994, and was the first black Briton to study a Master's in law at Harvard Law School. His work for social justice includes leading the campaign for the Windrush British citizens to be granted British citizenship and to be paid compensation by the government, and campaigning for Oxbridge to improve access for students from underrepresented and disadvantaged backgrounds.

He fondly recalled his own schooling in North London, along with many second-generation British Caribbean immigrants; and Asian, Pakistani and Indian, Jewish, and white working-class: "We had wonderful teachers, who had a vocation to serving in a city environment. And I have to say I am here because of their commitment. The reason why one of my main missions over the last 20 years in politics has been

social justice is because, representing Tottenham, I see working people up and down the country are still not getting enough breaks, partly as a result of the education they are receiving. Low expectation is still acute in many parts of the country – a lack of equality of opportunity, fair distribution of rewards, or indeed social justice. Every



school in this country needs to be in the business of deep social justice.”

LEADERSHIP FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

The panel discussion at the end of the conference’s first day examined the leadership needed to put social justice at the heart of education. In the chair was former schools minister David Laws, executive chairman of the Education Policy Institute. Other panel members were Caroline Barlow, headteacher of Heathfield Community School in East Sussex; Dave Whitaker, director of learning at Wellspring multi-academy trust of AP and special schools across the North of England; Christopher Pope, chief executive of the Prince’s Teaching Institute; and Stephen Munday, president of the Chartered College of Teaching.

Dave Whitaker began by pointing out the huge disparity in funding between special schools in different LAs, which means in some schools that the number of staff available to work with the children has to be reduced to balance the budgets. Caroline Barlow agreed, stating that we have to talk about equitable funding for educational experiences that mean something. Why, she asked, are we constrained by an examination system that has failure baked into it by design, which decrees that some must fail so that others can pass? And an accountability system that creates benchmarks to measure things that sometimes have little to do with the lives or ambitions of those who are being measured?

Education has to come out of the electoral cycle. At the very least, if we could get cross-party agreement on a 10-year plan for funding, accountability and recruitment, we would be able to plan properly. If we have focused collaboration, we should be able to ensure that our children have the chance

to grow up “as safe and brilliant as they possibly can be,” she declared. But it needs to come out of that electoral cycle.

ETHICAL LEADERSHIP

Stephen Munday began by noting the recent formation of an ethical leadership commission, which has added to the Nolan principles for all those in public life (selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership). In addition, the framework maintains, school leaders should seek to demonstrate:

- Trustworthiness and reliability
- Wisdom, based on experience, knowledge and insight
- Kindness and generosity of spirit
- Understanding, a good temper
- Justice, being fair and working for the good of all children
- Service, being conscientious and dutiful
- Courage in working in the best interests of children and young people
- Optimism, being positive and encouraging.

The Chartered College, which is now responsible for the ethics committee, is clear that it’s up to the teaching profession to do this, not the government or other outsiders. It’s for us to oversee ourselves,



and agree that this is the sort of leadership we want and indeed to hold each other accountable for that in appropriate ways.

Broadening the discussion, David Laws questioned what model of accountability would best support principled leadership for social justice. Dave Whitaker suggested: “we’ve got to make sure we look after our most vulnerable, so the accountability system must really, really get under the skin of what the most vulnerable children do, how they are and what they need to achieve.”

For Christopher Pope, “the heart of this problem comes back to the politicisation of education in this country. There’s far too much interference by secretaries of state and what-have-you.” He believed that the Chartered College, SSAT and the Prince’s Teaching Institute could all play an important role in “getting education out of the political cycle.”

NOT COMPLETE AUTONOMY, BUT AGENCY

Discussing the pros and cons of MATs, Steven Munday thought a subtle variation from the concept of complete autonomy is needed: “agency – not necessarily complete autonomy just to do our own thing regardless of any others. But genuinely to have agency to be able to make a difference in a good and a proper way. And it’s up to us as a profession to move forward with that and confirm that areas such as pedagogy, the ethical underpinnings of our profession, are for us to oversee.”

Sue Williamson concluded the discussion by pointing out that schools cannot solve the problem of poverty, but they do have to deal with the results. “Children that are hungry do not learn. Children that are tired because they are so-fa-surfing do not learn. Education is absolutely critical in achieving deep social justice. We need a school-led system in which there is collaboration, sensible accountability and a focus on personalisation – with, I would add, a national funding formula that is fair. I have been waiting for that for the whole of my life in education. We must achieve it.”

WHAT CAN BE DONE IN AND OUTSIDE SCHOOLS

Lee Elliot Major, professor of social mobility at Exeter University and former chief executive of the Sutton Trust, challenged a number of notions widely held even among aficionados of the much respected EEF research into what works in education.





Much of his work considers some of the underlying principles of what evidence suggests works best in the classroom, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. His book with Steve Higgins, *What Works*, summarises about 8,000 studies, to empower teachers through evidence. “But there is always that caveat, which is that the context of your classroom is unique. As a school, you need to think about trialling the evidence-approved strategies in your context before committing yourself to them.”

Education can be the great social leveller for some pupils, but a large percentage of variation in pupil outcomes is due to outside-school factors. “We’ve got to deal with some of those inequalities outside the school’s gates,” he maintained. Many schools are indeed trying to address the large variation due to factors outside the school gates, with things like free breakfast and sleep education classes. “It makes sense, doesn’t it? If children can eat well and can sleep, you will see gains in their attainment.”

And there are many other examples, as Carmel McConnell, creator of Magic Breakfast, pointed out in her presentation. What got her going was talking to five headteachers in Hackney about how they had to bring in food for their pupils because the parents were too poor to provide breakfast. “One teacher said, ‘the parents are hungry

themselves. Their costs have gone up, their wages haven’t gone up.’ I was so shocked. That got me to start, by going to a supermarket and wiping them out of cereals to take to these five schools. And we saw in those schools that there were 30% fewer fights in the first break – just because I was bringing some cereal and some bread.” There are now nearly 500 schools using Magic Breakfast, “and schools are telling us that free breakfasts have improved educational outcomes for the kids through tenderness, punctuality, concentration, behaviour.

“But, nationally, the situation is not getting better. Child poverty, which as a percentage of the population was 26% when I started, is now 29.6% and

still rising. So whatever your school setting, even if you’ve just got a few kids who are eating the wrong things, really make sure that nutrition is a core message. It is





social justice, fundamentally. The purpose, for all of us, is the same: to make a difference to the lives of these children.”

ESSENTIAL EXPERIENCES THE CURRICULUM SHOULD PROVIDE

Exploring what experiences young people should have during their time at school, and particularly what the curriculum should focus on to achieve social justice, this discussion was chaired by John Dickens, editor of *Schools Week*. The panel comprised Andy Roberts, headteacher of Riverside School, a new school in Barking and Dagenham; Tom Ravenscroft, founding chief executive of Enabling Enterprise; Stuart Kay, schools director at the Youth Sport Trust; and Priya Lakhani, founding chief executive of CENTURY Tech.

Tom Ravenscroft began with his belief in “the three big things that we want education to ensure for all young people: the knowledge and understanding to successfully navigate the world; knowing how people make choices (sometimes wrapped up in the

language of character or behaviours); and skills – what are they actually able to do as they go out into the wider world?”

Starting young is vital. “When you start working with children at the age of 3-4 on how to listen, how to build friendships, how to take turns with others, there’s a ripple effect which goes out from starting to build their skills to supporting learning all the way through their time in school.”

PROVIDING THE MISSING EXPERIENCES

Riverside School has among the highest 5% levels of deprivation in the UK, with half of its students receiving pupil premium. “And the truth,” headteacher Andy Roberts added, “is that the other half can be just as disadvantaged – for example, by their parents working 60+ hours a week as cleaners or taxi drivers, often on zero hour contracts; and by the lack of community, services and facilities.

“We believe the best way to activate social justice is to ensure all students study a rigorous academic curriculum, for this is the true leveller. For two years running, there have been no gaps between

the performance of our disadvantaged



and non-disadvantaged students nationally on all key measures.”

Riverside maintains that music and sport are also fundamental rights for their students. So in addition to timetabled music lessons, all students are offered free weekly one-to-one or small group tuition with free loan of an instrument.

Nina Jackson, associate director of Independent Thinking, also addressed this issue, revealing that after years of horrific abuse, she had been saved by a number of teachers, one of whom gave her a flute. “And the flute and I, we made magic: music changed my life. It gave me hope and a purpose.” After that she researched music and the mind and how sound waves can make brainwaves: “it can change the way that we feel and the way that we operate.”

As for sport: Stuart Kay, Youth Sport Trust’s director of education, pointed to research showing correlation between a healthy, active lifestyle and higher in outcomes; with a 4-5% improvement in attendance for those that are the most active. “So in short, PE and school sport support academic outcomes.”

Ofsted’s contribution: in response to a question about Ofsted’s new framework, Stuart Kay said “we are seeing in the 1500 or so schools that have been inspected under the new framework that there is a greater focus on personal development, through the deep dives, the arts – and PE and school sports.” To that extent, he thought the new approach should contribute to broader justice.

ENGAGING PARENTS SUPPORTS SOCIAL JUSTICE

The main value shared by the leadership team and staff at Manchester Communication Academy is to look after the most vulnerable in society, of which there are many in the school’s deprived catchment area, which includes a large number of homeless families. Principal John Rowlands

noted: “the focus of this conference, social justice, is right up our street. Many of these families have nothing, have been let down by the system, and often it’s up to us as a school to put mechanisms in place to support our families. If we can’t do that, what chance have they got? What chance has that child got in the classroom? We’ve got a moral mandate to support our families.”

Patsy Hodson, MCA’s corporate service director for social investment, added: “We can’t just let children fall through the gaps. We need detailed knowledge in all our dealings with all our children. The parents are the experts on that, so when something happens, we invite a member of the family to come in, and we put lots of time aside, and we make that clear. This is not tokenistic or patronising, it’s a meeting of experts: ‘You have something we need, and hopefully we have something you need.’”



PASSIONATE ADVOCATE FOR EDUCATION

Hugely respected educationist Tim Brighouse took a tentatively positive view: “now, I think, we are on the edge of possibly a new era in education. We need wholesale reform of the accountability system, so you’re not being held to account simply for the things that are easily measured, but for:

- Do you want all your kids to think for themselves and act for others?
- Do you want them to be trustworthy and live in a world in which they can trust others, be fulfilled and contribute to the fullest?

I think you do.

“We need major change to the accountability system – to exams, to tests, to mission arrangements, to governance. The climate, the context in which any school works, affects what they can do. The national climate is, post-Brex-



it, we’ll be healing the wounds. We’re now a hugely divided country.”

And schools’ role: directly addressing the audience, Brighouse said, “You have no idea how much difference you make by treating children, not as they infuriatingly are, but as they may become... run an audit, and make sure that every kid within your school

has a worthwhile relationship with at least one staff member in the school. If they haven’t, they may be physically there, but they’re not really there.”

Disagreeing with Macbeth, he concluded, “life is no brief candle, it’s a splendid torch. And what you do each day is you make it burn as brightly as possible. I can never thank you enough for the difference you make to all the areas of society where you work.”

Films and presentations from all of the main stage sessions are available to view at ssatuk.co.uk/nc19.

You can also sign-up for updates on the forthcoming National Conference at ssatuk.co.uk/nc20.



**SSAT IS
FIGHTING
FOR DEEP
SOCIAL
JUSTICE**

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