



SSAT Journal 05

Spring 2016

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Welcome

*Sue Williamson,
Chief Executive, SSAT*



Welcome to edition 5 of SSAT's Journal, which highlights the work of schools in the network – it is always enjoyable to read about the innovative work that so many schools and teachers are undertaking.

One of the vital themes in this Journal is the role of arts and creativity in the curriculum. On a recent visit to Weston Favell Academy in Northampton, I met staff and students to discuss the creative curriculum. In the foyer is Joey, War Horse, evidence of the skills and ambitions of staff and students. Joey attended SSAT's National Conference in December, along with students and staff from Weston Favell. He has enabled students to participate in numerous community activities. It's an excellent example of how the creative curriculum has inspired both staff and students to tackle big issues, develop new skills and collaborate.

Students were keen to tell me that the cross-curricular projects had improved their literacy skills; given them the opportunity to sing and perform publicly and enabled them to work with other students outside their normal circle. The enthusiasm and commitment of the staff has led to the projects spreading across a wide range of curriculum areas, and becoming ever more ambitious.

A great story, illustrating why it is so important that we keep creativity in the curriculum.

The students confirmed for me Lord Puttnam's assertion that the arts help young people to develop resilience, when he was leading a discussion for SSAT on the arts in the curriculum. Not surprisingly, there was real concern about schools dropping arts subjects from the curriculum in order to deliver the EBacc.

SSAT has always advocated broad and balanced curricula to challenge and develop students of all abilities. As schools design their curriculum for the next academic year, I hope that they are creative in curriculum design and the use of time. Young people need to experience the arts as well as other disciplines. Teachers need to be curriculum designers – they will be better teachers for doing so, as I have seen at Weston Favell and in so many other schools that I have the privilege to visit.

I hope you find many nuggets of good practice and ideas in this edition of the Journal – if you have a story that you want to share, please email academies@ssatuk.co.uk



Introduction

*Bill Watkin,
Director, SSAT*

The period of calm and stability for which the Secretary of State called in her email to schools last May has not materialised.

- » This is partly because new developments continue to emerge, such as the decisions not to pursue with IT at GCSE and AS and A-level, and not to allow early entries in some subjects to count in performance measures if taken early in 2017.
- » It is partly because all those changes introduced in recent years must now be implemented, such as assessment without levels and the new national tests at KS2.
- » And it is partly because there are still some unknowns for which schools must prepare just in case, such as the Ebacc requirements and the resits of failed KS2 tests in year 7.

The most intractable challenges facing the system still to come include:

- » the search for a way of setting targets and measuring progress in the context of the new curriculum and assessments,
- » the demand for more and more specialist teachers in the context of the demographic bulge and the increased focus on some curriculum disciplines over others,
- » the emotional and mental wellbeing of young people in the context of the increasingly demanding and challenging subject content and tests (described by the Secretary of State as the Rigour Revolution), and the imperative for

schools to achieve more, but with more limited resources and higher costs, in the context of the spending review and the ongoing financial climate.

However, as always, schools are rising to the challenge with determination, creativity and optimism. They continue to do what is in the best interests of young people, deploying their professional expertise and their deep moral commitment to ensure that their pupils enjoy the best possible experience of learning and growth.

Schools work ever more effectively in collaborative clusters, shaping and improving the system from within.

- » They engage in exciting new research and they pilot successful innovations.
- » They work in the interests of all young people and of the wider communities they serve.
- » They embrace the drive for ever higher aspirations and standards.
- » And they offer ever broader support for young people as the roles and capacities of local authorities and social services change.

There is so much to celebrate and this latest edition of SSAT's termly Journal illustrates just that.

I am grateful to Arcadis for their support with the print and production of this publication.



Performing and visual arts can boost academic attainment too

*Kathryn Pugh,
The St Marylebone CE School*

Being an arts college asks us all to take our performance (in all its educational meanings) seriously, yet with joy.

In the last decades of the 20th century, St Marylebone School was ordinary. An inner London state school, it had evolved over 200 years to become a 'problem' school in the 1970s, when it became a girls' school in order to fit into a patchwork of small buildings behind the Marylebone Paris Church. In 1987, St Marylebone was described as 'a poly-ethnic, multi-racial, multi-dimensional microcosm of 1980s Inner London society'. It served its community somewhat, but results were poor. It was not the school of choice. In 1993, Ofsted identified St Marylebone's academic performance, with only 34% of students gaining five A-C GCSE grades, as a major cause for concern.

In the same year, new headteacher Elizabeth Phillips 'feared they would come and close us down'. Tenaciously, she focused all effort on developing the 'whole child' and used the performing and visual arts to make this possible. In 1998, the School achieved Specialist Arts College status – the first London school to do so – based on its strengths in music, drama and visual arts and the impact of these on learning, achievement and the school's whole culture. By 2000, the school was over-subscribed and 89% of students were gaining five A*-C grades. Interviewed in 2010 as part of the Serpentine Edgware Road Project, a London arts festival, Elizabeth explained how and why this happened:



'In the days of yore, many moons ago, nearly all secondary schools were bog-standard sepia-coloured comprehensives. In the north of Westminster there was one such school: St Marylebone. It was populated by a disparate group of mixed-ability youngsters, speaking at least 60 different languages, 45% of whom were on free school meals. What magic was needed to weld such an uninspired bunch into confident, achieving, effective citizens, well-grounded and ready for the world of work? When St Marylebone became a performing arts specialist school, the dull sepia of the bog-standard comprehensive evaporated into a burst of colour, with song and dance, full of inspirational learning and joy.





‘Courageously defying the then Secretary of State’s call for a focus on the three Rs, St Marylebone took curriculum time from English, maths and science, and allocated it to the performing and visual arts: music, dance, drama, art and textiles. All were taught robustly, with academic rigour. That is what is important. These subjects are as rigorously academic as any of the other subjects. The three Rs can be taught through them. Transformation was almost immediate. Teaching improved as teachers, whatever their discipline, used the techniques and processes of the arts to make lessons livelier, interactive, more inspirational, less routine, and less mundane.’

In practice, this success depended first on having strong, dynamic arts teachers who generated respect for their subject from their students and colleagues – and instilled pride in the profession. Excellence in drama meant Brecht, Beckett and Miller came into KS3 along with revenge tragedy. Drama and dance theory, its words, applications and exotically named proponents added high-level exploration, experimentation and academic pride to the study of these subjects as disciplines in their own right. As such, they also instilled self-control, the ability to evaluate, re-work, re-do, refine and deliver. Staff and students watching performances in which students demonstrated professionalism

and stamina were inspired to apply this to their own teaching and learning. Insets delivered by performing arts staff showed how other subject teaching could be improved, not simply by the clichéd ‘make up a song about the periodic table’ but by the use of rhythm, metaphor, colour, gesture, movement or even choric chant ...

Science teachers played music in class

The message to teachers was clear: observe how learning and achievement in the arts invests in process, application, invention, mistake and re-invention, and apply this to all learning in order to raise it out of the textbook and into students’ hearts and minds. And use the arts to stimulate ideas, make connections, and give cultural and artistic context to learning. So:

- » Science teachers played Holst’s Themes from the Planets to introduce topics on gravity.
- » In French, costumes and props were used in speaking assessments: asked to act a part rather than be their inexperienced selves, inhibitions were lost and accents (albeit with a deal of fromage) were much, well, Frencher.
- » The now annual and adored Maths Factor was launched, in which students battle in front of a live audience to deliver the most effective maths tuition using music and dance.



- » Readings in church were enacted symbolically in mime or dance.
- » The business and economics department led an assembly in which the banking crisis was explained (and solved, sort of) by a flurry of business students quoting *The Power of Yes* by David Hare.
- » Concerts and productions were inclusive; students in the chorus learned that they could not allow themselves to be a weak link any more than the lead part could.

Participation, pride, professionalism.

And these are just some of the visible and audible examples. More implicit was the growth of a can-do culture, in which teachers linked their own love of the arts to their subjects. The staff choir comprised as many mathematicians and scientists as musicians. As the history department borrowed ideas from the drama department, collaborations for Remembrance and Holocaust Memorial Day happened – because they could. Out of the English department grew a classics department because they found they could offer an A-Level paper on Greek tragedy, tapping straight into the literary and theatrical loves of so many of our staff. From the EAL department evolved an entire ‘international evening’, a celebration of the school’s great diversity of language, culture, food, dance and song.

Arts improved academic achievement

And academic achievement? It rose because of, not in spite of the arts. St Marylebone has for several years maintained its place as one of the top performing non-selective, comprehensive state schools in the country, ranking seventh in 2015. The school has no hierarchy of subject-value; we

achieve highly in EBacc subjects, without slimming the number of dance, drama or art lessons nor compromising the excellent achievement there too. The arts, both in the timetable and in the extra-curricular programme, are as vibrant as ever. English, maths and science results do not suffer – they do better. We hope we are set up well for Progress and Attainment 8 because achievement in all subjects has always been encouraged. The senior leadership team comprises teachers from the arts, maths, sciences, English, humanities and social sciences. Being an arts college does not require everyone to be an actor or singer; it asks us all to take our performance (in all its educational meanings) seriously yet with joy: a professional process driven by a love of learning.

The reality of daily school life still has its gruelling and grey moments; people get tired, overwhelmed, upset. But the point is that even then, the arts teaches us: you’re allowed to go to pieces without falling apart, you can make an artwork out of spilled paint, the tripped-up dancer limps to an asymmetrical and original finale.

Like all state schools, we are facing very trying times: the uncertainty of how new performance measures will reflect our endeavour, the painful financial constraints, the bombardment of directive and re-directive, the shifting goalposts. Regardless, what the arts bring to our students and staff is immeasurably colourful, songful, joyful and pedagogically invaluable. The show must – and will – go on.



Building in quality is not about a knowledge curriculum, nor simply reinforcing traditional values

*Catherine Owen,
King Alfred School*

In recent years there has been a move towards a 'knowledge-led' curriculum. Will reinstating traditional values calm fears about what the future holds?

Giddens (1999) describes a future which is 'not settled or secure, but fraught with anxieties, as well as scarred by deep divisions. Many of us feel in the grip of forces over which we have no control'. A knowledge curriculum brings easily measurable outcomes, making target setting and performance management a clearer process.

The move towards a knowledge curriculum has coincided with the marketisation of education. Armstrong (2002) argues that education has always had a role in connecting the curriculum and the requirements of the economy, but 'what has changed is that competition and choice, monetary pressures and incentives have moved into the central nerve centre of the organisation of the education system in England and have come increasingly to inform the values on which it is based' (p. 242). Market forces

mean schools must prove their productivity through visible, measurable means if they are to reap rewards such as an 'outstanding' judgement.

Education as a business

As marketisation has flourished, business practices have become embedded in the education system. Holt (2000) considers this temporal aspect of management, tracing it from its origin in the US following the work of Frederick Taylor in the 1870's. Taylor claimed that his scientific 'time and motion' studies dramatically improved productivity as managers told workers exactly how to do their jobs. Holt calls this approach the 'command and control model' of management; making this model work involves separating work into distinct elements, each of which is optimised by measuring the outcome. Echoes of this model can be seen in the government's call for teachers to make greater use of 'high quality text books', a standardisation process that could cut down time teachers spend planning and preparing.

Building in quality

Whilst education has been implementing Taylor's ideas, businesses have been exploring alternatives. Holt (2000) illustrates this using the Ford Motor Company which, facing a decline in profits in the 1980s due to competition from the Japanese, called in W Edwards Deeming. Deeming identified the poor quality of Ford's cars as the main problem and reversed the Taylor model, insisting that quality should be something built in during the process, not inspected out at the end. Workers should be valued for their unique understanding of the process and given opportunities for further education and professional development.

As a middle leader in a coastal secondary school I have focussed on building quality into processes in my department. Our schemes of learning (SoL) lie at the core of this; teachers work collaboratively to produce carefully considered and well-resourced lessons. Recently we developed a SoL for 'River Landscapes' in this way;



I created a grid outlining the knowledge and skills to be covered across the scheme, then each teacher developed three lessons and associated resources. We used INSET time to consolidate the SoL, with two teachers reviewing it to check for consistency, another putting together a homework booklet, one developing a rivers word mat and one putting the outline onto our department website.

Quality of learning is also enhanced by involvement in real projects at a local, national and international scale. Locally, we have worked with the Highbridge Neighbourhood Planning group to come up with ideas for regenerating the town as part of our urbanisation topic. A national project tackled by all of our year 8 students is the Royal Geographical Society Young Geographer of the Year competition. Our international links have been strengthened by a visit by Benedict Ssaazi, a Ugandan teacher, and lessons involving skype conversations between our students and street children in Kampala. Projects such as these make geography real for our students, keeping them motivated and keen to learn more.

Our department has been awarded 'Centre of Excellence' status by the Geographical Association and we have found that the process of applying for the Secondary Geography Quality Mark every three years keeps us on our toes, always looking for new opportunities for developing our geography curriculum.

As every department must, we regularly test our students to check their knowledge and

skills; the purpose of this testing is to monitor the quality of our processes as well as the standards achieved by our students.

Taking joy in our work

Deeming believes that 'management's job is to create an environment where everybody may take joy in his work' (Neave, 1990, in Holt, 2000). As many businesses reject the 'command and control' it has become increasingly dominant in education. Holt finds this ironic because:

... to make the model work in education, power is removed from teachers and the only learning that counts must be testable by performance, a convergent and procedural view that ill suits students who as citizens in a complex society, need the capacity to solve new problems by thinking divergently. Talented teachers will find the model immensely inhibiting...

Holt, 2000, p.218

Striving to improve the quality of learning in our geography department motivates us as teachers in a way that crunching numbers never will. Teaching as a profession attracts people with a strong value set; planning, teaching and evaluating quality lessons enables us to develop a vision true to our values. Specialist teachers who are valued and encouraged to teach high quality, inspiring lessons become increasingly fulfilled. Encouraging teachers to aspire to greatness in their own practice positions them as role models for students, developing a culture of challenge and growth.

It is inevitable that teachers have to spend time on mundane tasks, but it is vital to find time to take joy in aspects of our work, despite our heavy workloads. The Uganda link being developed by my department is a source of regular joy for me; Benedict's visit was truly inspirational and the link has so much potential for the future.





We are currently developing a joint fieldwork activity for our school to complete with Benedict's school, contributing to the 'Year of Fieldwork' initiative. Benedict is supporting us in writing a SoL about Kampala to share with other schools and we are applying for a grant which may enable us to

visit Kampala and record footage to produce a virtual fieldtrip to the city. Whilst these projects will enhance the learning of our students, they are also great fun to develop!

It is easy for teachers to become overwhelmed with the demands of the job, but school communities must make the

current education system work for the sake of everybody's well-being. We must work with other learning communities to provide mutual support and to move education forward, providing quality learning opportunities for our students and finding the time to take joy in our work.

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How one teacher learning community is embedding formative assessment

Jenny Hopper,
Sir William Borlase School

One key factor in formative assessment is to allow pupils more time to reflect on their learning and take appropriate action.

Sir William Borlase's Grammar School is one of 70 active participants in SSAT's Embedding Formative Assessment (EFA) project. Following the national launch where Dylan Wiliam presented the project's aim and objectives, my task was to establish and run the two-year project here.

Thinking back to our school's launch of EFA at the beginning of October 2015, my initial fears of staff resentment at yet another 'initiative overload' turned out to be unfounded. True, there were initially a few questions from unconvinced colleagues who felt they'd seen it all before and didn't have anything to gain from the project. Some were concerned at losing valuable time in the nine monthly after-school meetings of teacher learning communities (TLCs) - the project's vehicle for enhancing and embedding new practice via small groups focused purely on practising

	Where the learner is going	Where the learner is	How to get there
Teacher	Clarifying, sharing and understanding learning intentions	Engineering effective discussions, tasks, and activities that elicit evidence of learning	Providing feedback that moves learners forward
Peer		Activating students as learning resources for one another	
Learner		Activating students as owners of their own learning	

Figure 1: The five key strategies of the Embedding Formative Assessment Project (Source - Dylan Wiliam - EFA launch project)

and embedding core formative assessment techniques.

But concerns were countered by other colleagues, both experienced and new, who were excited at the prospect of 'acting their way into a new way of thinking, rather than thinking their way into a new way of acting'. This has become something of a slogan at school, and the feedback from each session so far has borne this out.

How we set up the project

Given our commitment to 100% involvement for all full-time teachers and as many part-time teachers as could attend sessions, we wanted to ensure

that all colleagues felt they could contribute on an equal footing. So we encouraged some newer colleagues to volunteer as TLC leaders, and we allocated colleagues across TLCs to make sure we had a good mix of HoDs, levels of experience and cross-departmental representation. Our TLC leaders' initial anxiety at leading groups with more experienced colleagues has given way to enthusiasm all round. It's great to see a senior HoD learning from observing an NQT in a different department, and pairings for observations and best practice being set up not just within TLCs but also across them.



Our TLCs are thriving to such an extent that we're using the model as the basis for all our Inset training from next year onwards. There's no doubt that the value of quality time to focus on what we're here for - to improve teaching and learning - has developed new ways of working at school. Teachers are more willing to take risks with new techniques. Feedback from colleagues shows some honest assessments on what worked and what didn't, as well as a willingness to persevere and improve.

What we've done so far

We've seen plenty of examples of techniques being tried, tested, refined and observed. No hands up, entrance and exit passes, learning logs and triangles of learning have been popular, along with no comments marking and peer assessment. Teachers' feedback on their personal progress has been insightful, and it's really rewarding to see how much the students have risen to the challenge of taking more responsibility for their own

learning. Some colleagues have tried out different techniques each month; others have focused on practising a particular technique that they want to get better at; and yet others have 'mixed and matched'. All these approaches are valid, and appear from colleague feedback to be working.

What we've learned

Evidence of progress is seen via peer-to-peer observation and regular learning walks by SMT and TLC members. But perhaps more memorable and insightful are colleagues' personal reflections on what they've learned when using the techniques. Here are just a few examples:

On 'no hands up':

- » 'This boosts the confidence of less able pupils, even if it was daunting at the outset.'
- » 'It was harder than I thought – needs teacher willpower and rigid discipline! But the pupils were patient, and although their progress felt slower, it felt surer.'

- » 'There is more knowledge and potential in the class than I had let thrive before.'

On peer marking and assessment:

- » 'It's viable – and can be more effective than teacher assessment for certain kinds of work.'
- » 'Some pupils struggle to self-critique constructively, but they need to be encouraged and to persevere.'
- » 'Once they've tried it, they like sharing ideas on how to progress.'

On learning logs/ triangle of learning:

- » 'Well worth doing.'
- » 'Better use of learning time – but leave enough time for it!'
- » 'Greater number of pupils now reflecting on their achievement and how to improve.'
- » 'Greater engagement now – pupils are learning to think for themselves.'

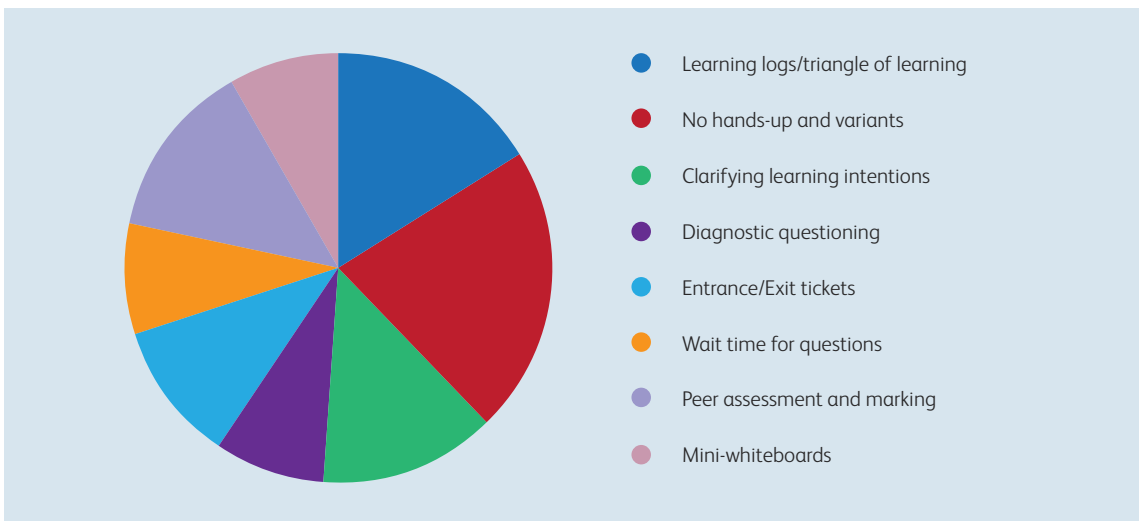


Figure 2: the top 8 EFA techniques used in a 3-month snapshot at SWBGS. The techniques cover all 5 project strategies



What we're doing less of

The project rightly recognises that in focusing on improving core teaching and learning, something has to give. A snapshot of colleague feedback suggests we're doing less of:

- » teacher talk – to fill a quiet space
- » answering your pupils' questions – you're getting them to work it out for themselves or 'phone a friend'
- » marking tests
- » teacher-led lessons
- » marking with grades
- » rushing through the material

- » quick finishes to lesson (achieved through better planning to enable an effective learning review).

But we're also finding that in trying out the new techniques we need more time to allow pupils to reflect on their learning and take appropriate action. We all recognise that it takes quality time to experiment, refine and adapt current techniques and adopt new ones. The project's central aim and its two-year timeframe allow us to do just that.

What we're doing next

After the first quarterly review, we're looking forward to the remaining sessions this year. Progress is being fed into our

revised teaching and learning policy. A key role for the TLCs is to give their recommendations as to which of the EFA techniques that they have used should be embedded in departmental and whole school formative assessment policies.

We're also focusing on bringing our parents fully on board with the aims of the project. Parents will see less traditional marking and more teacher/student learning dialogue, as students become more skilled owners of their own learning. Parental communication at parents' evenings and in report writing is being adapted to become even more relevant to the learning behaviours we want the students to adopt.



Tackling barriers: an alternative curriculum

*John Watkin,
Tower Hamlets Pupil Referral Unit*

Three key strands in an alternative curriculum: qualifications, personal development and CIAG.

'I was as proud of the student from a troubled family who started his own plumbing business as I was of the former pupil who ended up as the first black president of the Oxford Union.' So said Sir Michael Wilshaw in a recent speech¹, in which he urged schools not to apply a one-size-fits-all curriculum. A great comprehensive school, he argues, will ensure that all children with the potential to do so will achieve in academic subjects. But, he goes on, 'what of the quarter to a third of youngsters who cannot achieve those challenging targets? What is to become of them?' To him, the sad answer is that most of them will go 'to a local FE college, usually a large, impersonal and amorphous institution, and [do] badly.'

For me, as one with many years' experience in pupil referral units and as the inclusion lead in a large comprehensive school, Sir Michael's words are



very welcome. Expectations on children and schools have indeed become too one-dimensional. In raising standards – as undoubtedly we have – by having growing numbers of children achieve academic success, how much regard have we had for those who simply cannot hope to 'achieve those challenging targets'? And is a Progress 8 curriculum really going to be relevant to them? Many of these children will already be disadvantaged by having special needs, mental health conditions, troubled families or complex combinations of these; but surely they need not

be disadvantaged educationally as well.

One of the great things about being in a PRU or other alternative provision is that the sector has greater freedom to design a relevant curriculum, one that addresses the needs of these children. A relevant curriculum is not one without challenge. It will challenge in alternative ways and, perhaps one day, it will enjoy equal status with its Ebacc counterpart. 'Learning by doing is as valuable, challenging and aspirational as academic learning.'²



One of the great things about being in a PRU is that we have greater freedom to design a curriculum that is relevant and challenging, but addresses the needs of these children

So, what would such a curriculum look like? First, it should not need saying that literacy and numeracy must be a very high priority in any curriculum, however alternative it seeks to be. These are essential and non-negotiable. The vast majority of children referred to our PRU have very low literacy levels; standardised scores of less than 85 are typical. Our curriculum therefore places great emphasis on literacy in all subject areas and targeted intervention is applied. Mathematics and English occupy a typically large part of the timetable. But what of the rest?

Our approach was to question why it is that so many of our year 11 leavers (consistently between 20% and 25%) were NEET before

the end of their first year in the post-16 world. The PRU had always done very well in gaining qualifications for its year 11 students. And yet one in four of them was proving unable to take these forward and succeed in FE or other post-16 destinations.

After a great deal of thought and discussion, the senior team at our PRU concluded that a relevant key stage 4 curriculum, if it is to succeed, requires three strands of equal importance:

- » qualifications
- » personal development
- » careers information, advice and guidance.

Qualifications

While not enough on their own, qualifications are obviously essential and every effort should be made to ensure that accreditations in numeracy and literacy are included. For qualifications to have real benefit, they have to be relevant; suited to the students' abilities, needs and interests; and, as far as possible, matched to the local job market. Apart from anything else, if a learner is

doing a course which feels relevant and accessible, then that young person is more likely to experience success and grow in confidence. This is unlikely to be the case where the subject being studied is from the Ebacc or even one of the new GCSE-like BTECs.

In alternative provision and PRUs, students should be able to do courses that have largely disappeared from schools. While they no longer contribute to institutional performance measures, practical courses with qualifications that are recognised by industry are still out there.

Practical courses with qualifications recognised by industry, while they no longer contribute to institutional performance measures, are still out there

Such courses bear a direct relationship to the realities of working life, and for a young person to leave statutory education with accreditation in one or more of them has to be an advantage.

Personal development

Year 11 leavers in alternative provision or PRUs and those at the low-achieving end of mainstream schools will have a number of attributes that will put them at a disadvantage in the post-16 world. They are more likely to lack resilience, be low in confidence and self-esteem. Many will have challenging behaviour, poor presentational and communication skills and unhelpful habits like lateness.



A curriculum which aims to reduce the likelihood of their being NEET must address these disadvantages directly.

Many of our Y11 leavers will have challenging behaviour, poor presentational and communication skills, and unhelpful habits like lateness

First we need intensive pastoral care, close partnership work with parents and other agencies, and personalisation in the curriculum. A number of accredited courses, like ASDAN, are designed with this in mind. A favourite of mine is the Prince's Trust's Personal Development and Employability Skills qualification (available from entry level to level 2) which is delivered through their xl Club format. (The Prince's Trust is an Ofqual-recognised awarding body.) For a very reasonable registration fee, they provide high quality training for school staff and excellent support from their advisers. Other post-16 progression routes and NEET prevention services are also available from the Prince's Trust, which is exceptionally well connected and often provides really impressive experiences for students.

Young people with severely disadvantaged backgrounds have had very limited life experiences. Many teenagers in London, for instance, have never been out of the borough in which they live. In our PRU, students repeatedly tell me that they were never allowed on school trips.

In our PRU, students repeatedly tell me that they were never allowed on school trips

We now give a large part of our learning week to an enrichment programme designed to broaden their experiences and accelerate their personal development. In its first year it has already included independent travel, work experience on a city farm, self-defence for girls, vocal lessons, rugby and other sports, zumba, song writing, photography, street dance, track cycling and (hugely popular) driving test theory.

Signposting – CIAG

For low ability students careers information, advice and guidance (CIAG) is of even greater importance than it is for others. And it is a far greater challenge for the adult advisers. In Tower Hamlets last year, the local authority conducted an audit of its post-16 learning offer. The outcome was stark. In the mainstream schools there is almost no entry level or level 1 offer at all, and the two that have any provide it only for their own leavers. At level 2, a handful of schools are offering new generation BTECs only. Even vocational level 3 courses are quite thin on the ground, while the column headed 'A-levels' is dense with text.

It is well known that there is a shortage of apprenticeships and that, of those that can be found, most have entry requirements that are beyond the reach of this cohort.

Low-achieving year 11 leavers, then, have very little choice when trying to pick a destination, while their more able peers have an abundance of options. Their most likely destination is the local FE college which, underfunded as it is, is likely to be very large and unable to commit much resource to pastoral care. It is small wonder that the lower achieving cohort is so much more likely to drop out.

The challenge, and some hope

Given this bleak reality, schools, PRUs and AP providers must make sure they have very detailed knowledge of the local offer and of agencies that can support young people at risk of NEET. And they must use this knowledge to identify the best possible destinations for their leavers.

This year, for the first time, we are investing a significant amount of time into tracking and supporting our former students. With regular phone calls, meetings and referrals we are finding that we can keep the cohort's NEET figure down; it currently stands at 12% with a further 18% in receipt of support back into education or training. The national average figure for PRUs is reported to be 50%.

With regular phone calls, meetings and referrals we are finding that we can keep the cohort's NEET figure down



A curriculum to provide quality of experience, before quantity of qualifications

*Louise Major,
Ridgewood High School*

This innovative curriculum helped the school progress from 'RI' to 'good'.

If you visit Ridgewood High School on a Wednesday, you will find our year 11 (final year) students undertaking a wide range of activities. If you return a few weeks later, you may find the same students following a different timetable. This is because we operate a flexible timetable for year 11 on Wednesdays, one which can be reviewed and adjusted during the school year to suit a student's individual needs.

In September 2008 Ridgewood introduced a condensed key stage 3, which led to the introduction of an extended key stage 4 in 2010. Our primary aim was not to gain increasing numbers of GCSEs for each child; we were more interested in the quality of experience rather than the quantity of qualifications.

In our key stage 4, maths, English, science, computing/ICT and two options are assessed and examined at the end of year 11; PSHCE and two options are taken at the end of year 10. These timings do not disadvantage the subjects taken in year 10, as students have roughly the same number of guided learning hours, whether a subject is taken in year 10 or 11. We think very carefully about whether subjects are delivered over three or two years. Three-year subjects tend to be those that require students to build skills over a longer period and have a larger element of controlled assessment, such as food technology and French. Subjects studied over two years tend to be subjects that have a heavy examination component, with



a larger knowledge and content requirement. The completion of two option subjects in year 10 for all students results in six hours per week freed up in year 11. One hour per week is given to ICT, leaving five hours for the other flexible activities, which we call Block 5.

Year 11 Block 5

Our extended three-year KS4 curriculum provides the increased time and flexibility to help ensure that all students can secure the range, number and quality of qualifications and experiences that suit their individual needs, interests and aspirations. ▶▶

Guided pathways

We closely monitor students' progress and achievements in order to inform decisions on the most appropriate individual pathways in year 11. Block 5 will provide all students with additional time in year 11, which can be used to support three possible objectives:

Additional core study	Ensuring all students gain the best grades possible for them, particularly in the key subjects of English and maths along with science and computing/ICT.
Extension	Taking a new qualification or supported study for existing qualifications
Enrichment	Providing enrichment opportunities, either in school or beyond, to broaden and develop wider skills and experiences to support next steps.

By carefully tracking the progress of students in year 9 and 10, we determine their individual curriculum for year 11. The degree of choice a student has in Block 5 depends upon how much additional core study they need; some students may have no choice, whereas those who are on target in their core subjects are free to choose what their Wednesdays will look like. One-to-one interviews with the deputy headteacher are arranged to discuss their choices.

Additional core study

All triple science students have an additional hour each week to ensure that they fully cover the extra curriculum content. If this is the only additional core study required, they can then opt for how to spend the rest of Block 5. Any student who is not on target in English, maths, science or computing/ICT will receive one hour additional study in whichever subject(s) they need. We review the process throughout the year, and where necessary students move into core subject study, so the approach is very responsive to students' individual needs. Students really value this extra time, with 92%-98% rating their experience as good or excellent in these subjects. It has been surprising how many students who have not been identified as requiring extra support, request it!

Extension

All students will have at least one study lesson per week, some will have two, an excellent grounding for post-16 study. These lessons are supervised by senior members of staff (their study tutor), and students decide which subjects they want to work on during the lesson. The students must log the work that they do. In addition all students have a review file, for which they prepare revision notes for all of their subjects. During study lessons, study tutors also meet with students individually to review their progress, and support them in their studies and future plans.

Some students opt to do AS level film studies, this is our second year and results so far have been good.

We offer the higher level project qualification, to enable students to develop their independent learning skills in readiness for post-16 study. It also enables students to study an area of interest to them, so encouraging the joy of learning. The higher level project qualification is popular with our local post-16 providers; indeed, one of them guarantees an interview to students who are following this course.

One local post-16 provider guarantees an interview to any student undertaking the higher level project qualification

Enrichment

We run a Maths Ambassadors programme with our local 6th form college and MAT partner. Fifteen high ability maths students visit the college each week, where they are paired with high ability A-level maths students who volunteer to work with our students on challenging maths activities. The atmosphere is fun and relaxed. Activities include competitive maths relays, 'choose the hotness' – where students choose which worksheets they are brave enough to have a go at - and past papers. This programme has led to a tremendous improvement in the aspirations of our more able mathematicians, with many more now wanting to choose maths at A-level at King Edward's Sixth Form College.

Students who are on target with all of their studies can opt to complete the Duke of Edinburgh Silver Award. We run a Bronze Award for year 10 students after school and this enables students to progress to Silver during Block 5 time. On Wednesdays DoE

students can be found developing their own skills, working on their fitness, volunteering or out on a practice expedition. Many DofE students volunteer to support Project Gambia, a charity established in 2007 by the school, which provides first-hand experience of life in a developing country. DofE volunteers support the project, changing lives including their own by fundraising and developing resources for use in schools and villages on our annual visits.

*Project Gambia volunteers
fundraise and develop resources
for use in schools and villages
on our annual visits*

High quality work experience is another option for students who are on target. Placements, matched to students' career aspirations, include primary schools, scientific companies, engineering, journalism, accountancy and veterinary surgeries. This has led to some students taking apprenticeships with the companies where they were placed when they leave Ridgewood aged 16, which can lead to professional qualifications in accountancy and engineering.

Some students spend an hour a week doing peer tutoring, where they work with younger students in a subject in which they have a strength. This cements their own subject knowledge as well as helping support younger students.

Flexibility

Block 5 is timetabled all day on a Wednesday, which gives us a great deal of flexibility to make changes without affecting the normal timetable. In the autumn term we invite colleges in to help students with their college applications and to explore post-16 alternatives. This is particularly important in an 11-16 school.

Targeted groups of students also visit colleges for taster days. Those targeted range from students in danger of disengaging with education, who find out about what colleges have to offer; to gifted and talented students, who attend A-level taster lessons.

Where a subject has been affected by staffing changes or long-term absence, we have been able to provide additional lessons with subject specialist staff in Block 5. Where this has happened students



have been very positive about the support given and rated it highly in their evaluation.

*Where a subject is short-staffed,
Block 5 flexibility has facilitated
additional lessons...*

*Students have been very positive
about the support given and rated
it highly in their evaluation*

When the government suddenly changed the ruling on legacy GCSEs in June 2015, our timetable had been written and year 8 students were due to start two-year courses in several subjects which would have resulted in them taking legacy GCSEs. We seemed to be faced with a difficult decision: do we do what we think is best for students and let them carry on as planned? Or do we rewrite the timetable and change students' options so that they count in the performance tables? In fact, Block 5 flexibility has enabled us to extend our two-year option block so that students will now take the new GCSE exams at the end of year 11.

The innovative curriculum model has had a positive impact on results and earned praise from Ofsted. The first cohort to complete in 2013 increased the number of 5A*-CEM from 52% to 60%. In March 2014 the school was inspected as 'good' having previously been 'RI.' In 2014, when many schools saw a drop in results due to changes in assessment, qualifications and performance tables, Ridgewood's results rose again, to 62%. Feedback and responses to our questionnaires from both parents and students have been overwhelmingly positive.



Creative curriculum expands learning, develops interests and discovers new ones

*Peter Williams,
Weston Favell Academy*

The story behind the school that built a War Horse.

Weston Favell academy is an 11-18 school in Northampton where the curriculum team weaves together the different subject disciplines, linking learning to secure progress.

The school's vision is for a creative curriculum to develop KS3 students' creativity and independent learning so that students are better prepared for KS4 and beyond

- » to enhance knowledge, understanding and skills for life
- » to develop staff pedagogy and embrace new teaching approaches
- » to connect different subject disciplines, focusing on a big question or theme
- » to continue to showcase our work to the local community and primary schools
- » to use philosophy as a starting point, asking the 'big questions' and making the learning relevant.



War horse project

The school's war horse project was chosen as the theme to promote cross-curricular learning. It was inspired by the Michael Morpurgo novel and subsequent National Theatre production. The aim of this project was to recognise the suffering and sacrifice of war and to provide an emotional and moving commemoration of WW1.

The students also got to share what heritage means to them, what they value and how these values have shaped their opinions and lives to date. The project promoted British values, in line with our obligations under the Prevent Duty. It considered 'how do we respond to war?',

crystallising the suffering and sacrifice. The depth of learning that took place was evident, alongside the enjoyment and pride of everyone involved. Last summer, the organisers of the Northampton Carnival invited our students and staff to play a part in the town's celebrations.

As the academy's principal, Rachel Steele, stated, the project's result was 'a creative and moving experience for all involved...The project required dedication, commitment and a vast array of design and other skills.'

Legacy project

Our next cross-curricular project aimed to address how we can learn from the past to shape the future. Art, history, performing



arts and English were the first departments to sign up, with the project then being extended to science, and to KS4 and KS5 students.

Students explored cultural heritage and tradition through cross-curricular learning: sharing what heritage means to them, the traditions that they value and how these have shaped their opinions and lives to date. Students also shared their thoughts on 'How their past has made them who they are today'. They developed the concept to include a time-travel experience, showing their own vision of the future. The project celebrated and promoted the cultural heritage of all, in an environment of mutual understanding and respect. It culminated in a live exhibition, with over 150 pupils from local primary schools attending the morning rehearsals, in addition to travelling inside the 360-degree planetarium, which showed the importance our ancestors placed in the stars, while educating on the solar

system. Throughout the day, over 300 academy students got to experience the planetarium; and in the evening, so did more than 200 visitors.

Art and DT students, inspired by the reign of the Egyptian pharaohs of 1300 BC, created 3D products and set pieces from this fascinating era. Visitors could then travel forward to the 14 July 1789, the period of the French Revolution, and into the world of French novelist Victor Hugo. Art students designed and decorated the detailed backdrop scenes. History students examined the social and political upheaval through the eyes of the people living at the time, represented by our GCSE performing arts students, who created their own physical theatre piece inspired by the musical production 'Les Miserables.'

The history department had also organised legacy leaders, to guide visitors through ancestry.co.uk in a bid to find their families' past. Staff dressed for the event in costumes inspired by the project, while students

became STEM ambassadors, educating and exploring visitors. One of the legacy leaders commented:

'The legacy project was an opportunity to expand our learning, to develop our passions and interests, while discovering new ones. It is important to remember the past, which is the message of Legacy. The project pulled the whole school together. I am so glad to be part of something that was massive and special.'

And Weston Favell's head of art added: 'The legacy project this year has significantly, if not overwhelmingly contributed to increased student enthusiasm and engagement in lessons. The impact of this has been a large increase in students meeting, or working beyond their target grades in Art.'

The legacy project allowed us to consider the past, when designing our futuristic product. It brought subjects together in a creative and forward thinking way that we had never experienced before.



Promoting and instilling effective learner habits

*Donna Butcher,
Freebrough Academy*

How the Learner Effectiveness Enhancement Programme (LEEP) gives students the resources to develop resilience, grit, and the language of learning and brain behaviour.

Freebrough Academy, opened in 2010, is an 11-18 school in the North East with 676 students on roll. It serves a large catchment area (some 40 miles across) of small rural and coastal villages as well as towns. Many of these are in the top 20% of the most deprived areas in the UK (50% of students at Freebrough academy are eligible for pupil premium funding.)

Over the last five years, the academy has undergone a transformation. When it opened, it faced significant challenges, from low aspirations of pupils and their parents to numerous staff vacancies, many of which were subject leader posts. The quality of teaching and learning across the academy was inconsistent. There were pockets of outstanding practice, but there were larger pockets of practice that was anything but.

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Within a year of opening, every member of staff, including the headteacher, had been trained in TEEP (the Teacher Effectiveness Enhancement Programme). This programme, with teacher buy-in and the commitment and determination of the whole academy team, led to fundamental and rapid improvements in the quality of teaching and learning.

TEEP to LEEP

Five years on, with TEEP firmly embedded, the quality of teaching was consistently judged as at least good across the board. The emphasis now is very much on the learners taking responsibility for ensuring that they work with their teachers to maximise progress. The structure and framework of TEEP had worked with teachers, what was now needed was a similar model that would complement TEEP and prove as successful with learners.

Like TEEP, the learner model had to be rooted in educational research and enquiry; it had to provide underpinning elements for learners that they could understand, digest and instil to develop their own learning habits. Thus, LEEP (Learner Effectiveness Enhancement Programme) leapt (sorry) into action.

Like TEEP, the learner model had to be rooted in educational research and enquiry, and to enable learners to develop their own learning habits

Lessons from how TEEP was driven and embedded were used to plan the implementation of LEEP. The first step was in summer term 2015 when every teacher, through CPD, had the opportunity to identify and discuss the learner habits of the groups they taught: those they considered would empower students as well as those that were holding them back. It was of no great surprise that the general consensus was that students needed to develop their resilience. Using Carol Dweck's books on mindset as a starting point, a

large group of volunteers from across the school used the principles of growth and fixed mindsets to lay the foundations for the LEEP programme. The ball was rolling.

By September 2015, every teacher had read Dweck and been part of a PD day devoted to mindsets led by Steve Ingle from Osiris Educational. The positive response from staff was overwhelming. Buy-in achieved, the LEEP team began further research with support from Andy Williams of SSAT, to build the underpinning elements of LEEP. If growth mindset were the foundation then it was a natural progression that resilience, grit, the language of LEEP and 'Brainology' would form the underpinning elements.

LEEP into action

The plan now was to provide a drip-drip approach to LEEP throughout the autumn term before a LEEP launch to staff during two PD days at the start of November and a launch for students in the spring term. A quick fix was always out of the question; a commitment to developing a growth mindset would need to be nurtured over time. The LEEP team provided activities and resources for teachers to use with students in tutorial sessions and in assemblies to introduce the fundamentals of mindsets. Meanwhile, working closely with The Skills Lab, we began to measure students' grit using Angela Duckworth's grit questionnaire as a baseline. This would provide a means to measure the impact of LEEP on students' grit in lessons over time, and target support for particular groups and individuals.

As part of the PD days, teachers were given time to get to grips with the underpinning elements of LEEP. Collaboratively, they worked on what each of these elements would mean for learners and how they could and would become a reality in the classroom.

The response was remarkable. By the end of the first day, teachers had begun to gather ideas on how the key areas of focus for each of the underpinning elements would translate into classroom resources and activities.

By the end of the second day, staff had designed and created a pool of activities and resources to share with one another in the classroom to develop learners' growth mindsets. As with TEEP, staff were generous with their ideas, their enthusiasm

and their time. They have continued to contribute to the LEEP bank, sharing what has been effective and providing constructive criticism about what could work better. From the onset, teachers were well aware that this programme was home grown; the answers were not at the back of the book. In Duckworth's words, 'we have to be willing to fail, to be wrong, to start over again with lessons learned.'

Reviewing implementation

In December, staff gathered to review the implementation of LEEP so far. Their enthusiasm had not waned. They agreed on three key areas of consistency that could immediately be shared in every classroom with every student:

- » Focus logo to complement the TEEP learning cycle
- » Display in every classroom of the language of LEEP
- » Effort checklists to help students review their learning and resilience.

Next LEEP forward

This term, the LEEP team are very much looking forward to launching LEEP to students. In a similar vein to the way in which TEEP was delivered to staff, students will be trained in LEEP. (It was not hard to resist making the connection between 2016 being a leap year and Freebrough Academy having their first LEEP year.) If students are to develop their own growth mindset and positive learner habits, they need, just as teachers do, a framework from which to learn.

From there, student support in developing and embedding LEEP is crucial to its success. Having a student LEEP team will provide a means for students to work with one another, with teachers and with parents on sharing, promoting and developing effective learner habits. LEEP is a platform for all to thrive by empowering the learner.

LEEP - underpinning elements:

Resilience – celebrating mistakes & challenge

Grit – self-management & effort

Language of LEEP – feedback & praise

Brainology – brain behaviour & brain building.



Students show their design skills and enthusiasm in ‘Smarter Spaces’ project

*Joanna Hall,
Wellacre Academy*

This action research project is empowering students to take an active role in the design and application of innovative learning spaces.

Wellacre Academy is part of ‘Smarter Spaces’, an action research project to empower learners to take an active role in the design and application of innovative learning spaces. Based on Salford University’s research on ‘clever classrooms’ this project focuses on changes in the learning environment that affect pedagogical practice, engagement and learner achievement.

As part of the project, led by SSAT’s Lead Practitioner programme in partnership with Dulux, we are redeveloping an old electronics classroom (T1.) It was underutilised, as it had a fixed furniture layout which did not lend itself well to teaching other subjects. Once redeveloped, T1 will become a cross-curricular hub for Wellacre’s STEM activities.

From fixed layout to highly versatile

A key feature of the new STEM hub will be for delivery of

practical, hands-on maths lessons, designed to meet the kinaesthetic needs of many of our learners. Embedding cross-curricular maths is a key focus of the school’s improvement plan. The new space will encourage collaborative planning and delivery of lessons, including members of the maths department working together with staff from all faculties, particularly other STEM faculties. As well as achieving a successful design idea through a live project, this process is aimed at giving pupils ownership - hopefully encouraging a commitment to STEM activities through early participation in the T1 redevelopment process.

Key goals:

- » An interactive teaching and meeting space
- » A well resourced cross-curricular STEM classroom
- » A space which encourages learning in maths through practical applications.

A cohort of ten year 9 students, identified as underachieving or disengaged with maths, form our design team, led by a

year 12 construction student with interior design career aspirations. After attending an introductory session where they were presented with the design brief and project goals, the design team were excited to get to work on the project. The students consulted with key stakeholders including leadership and staff members, and pupils from years 5 to 13. They discussed and articulated their preferences for room layout, furniture style and resources that would genuinely improve their learning experience. They have conducted considerable research into different materials, products and resources that could be incorporated into the new STEM room.

As part of the action research, these students have also completed individual reflections about their progress and engagement in maths. It is hoped that this group will be the first cohort to benefit directly from the new STEM room, by helping to develop ideas for practical maths lessons as well as attending these lessons in the future.

Researching our ideas

'We love learning in' spaces: as soon as the project began, the design team students were eager to share their ideas about the rooms in school that they prefer to learn in. There were clear ideas from all students about which types of layout encourage learning and which do not work. Interestingly, many students approved of a traditional furniture layout with rows of desks, stating that they 'like how everyone can face the front and see easily.' The favourite layout of desks in classrooms was a horseshoe. However, it was generally agreed that having moveable, modular furniture would give learners and teachers the most flexibility in room layout. Students also photographed the library because of the 'cool but comfortable furniture' and individual computer stations.

Industrial 3D modelling software: two year 9s and our year 12 project lead are proficient users of Autodesk Revit. This is 3D modelling software used by architects in industry and currently used in several of our key stage 4 and 5 courses. These students completed a detailed survey of T1 and created a 3D model of the room in Revit. Use of this technology enabled the students to print out accurate, to-scale floor plans on which to sketch their ideas for redevelopment of the room.

Whole student body questionnaire: at an early stage the design team agreed that the students who will use the room in the future are the most important stakeholders. Therefore, it would be necessary



to gauge the opinions of many current students. A discussion ensued on how best to reach these students and two members of the design team set to work creating an online questionnaire using Google Forms. The questionnaire was then sent to all students. Questions included student opinions on their current maths lessons and achievement, what type of learner they consider themselves to be, and suggestions on how maths lessons could be more practical. Some 20% of the student group responded, and graphs were quickly produced to show the findings. We are hoping to produce a comparable set of results once the room has been completed.

Interviews with key staff: two of the design team were given the daunting job of interviewing one of our most influential stakeholders, Miss Wicks the principal. They created a list of questions aimed at finding out her opinions on our design and ideas so far. The feedback received from this interview was

very positive. She emphasised that 'it has to be themed around STEM and you have to know it is a STEM room when you walk in.' Students also interviewed key staff from the maths, IT, science and technology faculties and sent a letter to the school governors.

Product research: perhaps the most exciting activity was the research carried out into new products that could be included as part of the T1 renovation. Interesting wall coverings became a particular focus for some of the design team. Extensive discussions about whole walls of whiteboard or chalkboard paint in varying colours prompted interesting insights into students' understanding of 'collaborative learning'. The collaborative theme ran through to researching whiteboard furniture and different furniture layouts. Seating styles also became a huge talking point, where opinions differed markedly: while students liked the flexible potential of chairs





with wheels, many teachers understandably found them a difficult product to love.

Room zoning and spatial planning: at this stage, the main functions of the room were well defined. It was important to have:

- » a main teaching space with a flexible layout
- » an ICT zone
- » a STEM library
- » a 'makerspace'
- » a storage area for STEM resources.

After consulting with staff, particularly Miss Wicks, the design team were keen to use zoning and colours to reflect the four main STEM subjects: science, technology, engineering and maths. This zoning developed into complex spatial planning when the team came to bring their ideas together. It was left to our aspiring year 12 student to review the design team's ideas and consolidate

them into one coherent design which could be presented to our assigned Dulux designer on their visit to Wellacre.

Designer visit

Early in December, the design team welcomed the Dulux designer to Wellacre. The students introduced the designer to T1, the chosen room, and didn't hold back in describing their issues with it. They were impressive in their ability to link all of their concerns with the current room to impact on their personal learning. They had clearly considered many design flaws with T1 - from the large, south facing windows which would cause glare on screens, to the redundant roller shutter which housed the first computers ever to arrive at Wellacre. The team presented the project brief, goals, research and final design idea with great professionalism and were articulate in their design conclusions, with a clear view to improving learning in the new STEM hub. They were

eager to discuss their ideas and research with the designer and were very receptive to feedback from a professional design point of view.

Next steps

The design team are excitedly looking forward to receiving the design proposal drawings from Dulux in the coming weeks. Subject to stakeholder approval, Dulux contractors will be moving into the implementation phase and completing the T1 renovation.

This is, however, only the start of the journey for the SSAT action research project team in their aim of supporting clever classrooms. Their findings indicate that differences in physical characteristics of classrooms, such as air quality, colour and light can increase the learning progress of pupils by as much as 16% in a single year. The outcome very much relies on the impact of our smarter space, as well as those of the nine other participating schools.



Coding from Canning Town to No. 10 Downing Street

*Stephen Richards & Chinye Jibunoh,
Eastlea Community School*

The wide range of benefits from children learning coding, and how one school is working towards it.

'In the future, the only languages that will be spoken will be English, Mandarin and code'. That was BBC director general Lord Hall in his optimistic presentation at the launch of the BBC Micro:bit Coding event which took place at our school in November 2015, *writes principal Chinye Jibunoh*. It has been almost two years since the government mandated that all primary schools should teach children as young as five years old how to code, yet of the 20 or so year 7 Eastlea students who took part in this event, only four had any real experience of coding at primary.

Indeed, coding is a complete mystery to many teachers, including some of those tasked with teaching computing at KS1 and 2.

For many, the only knowledge or experience of coding will be those Barclays Bank adverts on the subject. It is a safe assumption that most primary schools will not have the capacity to deliver such a programme. Even most secondaries' experience of computing was ICT and involved a curriculum which was application focused. At Eastlea we were excellent at delivering an ICT curriculum which, at the time, was fit for purpose. We even taught some of our most able students network engineering.

However, a qualification in computing and computer science was not introduced until three years ago even though we were in the enviable position of having an actual computer scientist



at the school, Steve Richards, who has been the driving force behind our BBC Micro:bit journey. His work led to Eastlea becoming a lead school in the CAS (Computing At School) network of excellence and subsequent involvement with the BBC and Micro:bits, Microsoft, and the Hour of Code launch with David Cameron and Nicky Morgan.

It was in 2012 that we agreed to prepare the school for the subject of computing as soon as possible, *writes Steve Richards*.

Restrictions on the school network meant the best way to enable coding to take place was to build our own separate network of Raspberry Pi computers. We then developed teaching resources with a special focus on physical computing, which we now adapt and use for regular CPD with colleagues from other schools as well as student teachers from the University of East London.

Last November the regional coordinator for our CAS group invited us to do some work with BBC





Micro:bits. Some prototypes were made available to us for two weeks.

We launched the BBC Micro:bits in school with year 7s who had little or no prior experience of coding and introduced fundamentals of programming in a way that took advantage of the unique sensors and display.

Our students then embarked on a range of projects. Each project was based on simple concepts of sequence, selection, iteration – but outside the usual context of a computer as a box with a keyboard and screen. This approach led to opportunities for students to be more creative. One group created a blimp that would adjust its course so that it would always fly north; others invented a ‘microwatch’, a robotic arm and a number of educational games.

During the visit by Satya Nadella, Lord Hall, and their colleagues, Microsoft UK Vice President Michel Van der Bel commented on the pupil creativity unleashed by the Micro:bit project.

Our students subsequently took part in the launch of Code Week from 10 Downing Street with David Cameron, and we spent an afternoon teaching MPs how to code at the Houses of Parliament.

Our students are now starting a business producing affordable ‘motor inventing kits’ that are compatible with BBC Micro:bits and Raspberry Pis. We are planning to reach out to other primary and secondary schools, delivering both the kit and the skills to use it. We are also planning a number of transition events with local primary schools, to be run by our year 7s. At these events our students will not only teach the younger children about computing, at the end of the events the children who have taken part will be able to take their inventions home with them. We will be extending the offer, with the support of Microsoft, to other secondary schools (Eastlea is now an Associate Microsoft School).



See BBC School report page for the perspective from a student’s viewpoint:
<http://www.eastlea.newham.sch.uk/BBC>

Eastlea has also set up **Eastlea Digital Design Club**, to stimulate interest among young people and adults in key sector of digital design. Visit:
<http://www.eddc.listercentral.co.uk/>



Evaluating teaching, not teachers

Jennie Giovanelli,
The Duston School

‘Productive tinkering’ with good practice can transform evaluation and quality of teaching.

As a school, we have never sought to make excuses or have less than the very highest aspirations and expectations for teachers and students. We have also never thought that these aspirations and expectations are realised by measurements.

Over the last six years we have transformed the way we both evaluate and develop the quality of teaching in our classrooms.

2010: triangulating evidence bases

In 2010, we developed a cycle within school that did not base the evaluation of the quality of teaching on lesson observations alone. At the time, this was a significant shift from previous school policy. We recognised that it was inherently flawed to evaluate teaching based on one-off lesson observations; it didn’t promote a developmental or rigorous approach to improving the quality of teaching. Nor did it improve outcomes or the learning experience for our students. Instead, we moved to a system of using a range of evidence to come to a decision about how teachers were graded.

2013 – Driving the quality of teaching from where it matters most

Another significant shift came in 2013. Three years on, we had removed lesson observation grades and the underpinning principles of coaching and collaboration still existed, but it was clear that the whole school coaching approach was not having the impact it could. We knew that to really drive change, we needed to involve the most important layer in the school – the middle leaders.

CORE PRINCIPLES



- We believe it is through coaching, continuous learning and a collective responsibility that we will promote the very best standards of teaching and learning within our school.
- Quality teaching for learning takes into consideration all aspects which affect the outcomes for our students.

Over the year we worked together, meeting each week for a TLR breakfast to discuss, share, trial, collaborate, refine and adapt the way we both monitored and developed the quality of teaching.

During the next two years we made this consistent approach and shared set of values and beliefs underpin our faculty work on learning and teaching. In reality, this approach embedded the coaching cycle in a way that never happened with the whole school approach. And the expectation that the fundamental role of our TLR holders was to develop teaching in an individualised and collaborative way is just part of how our faculties operate now.



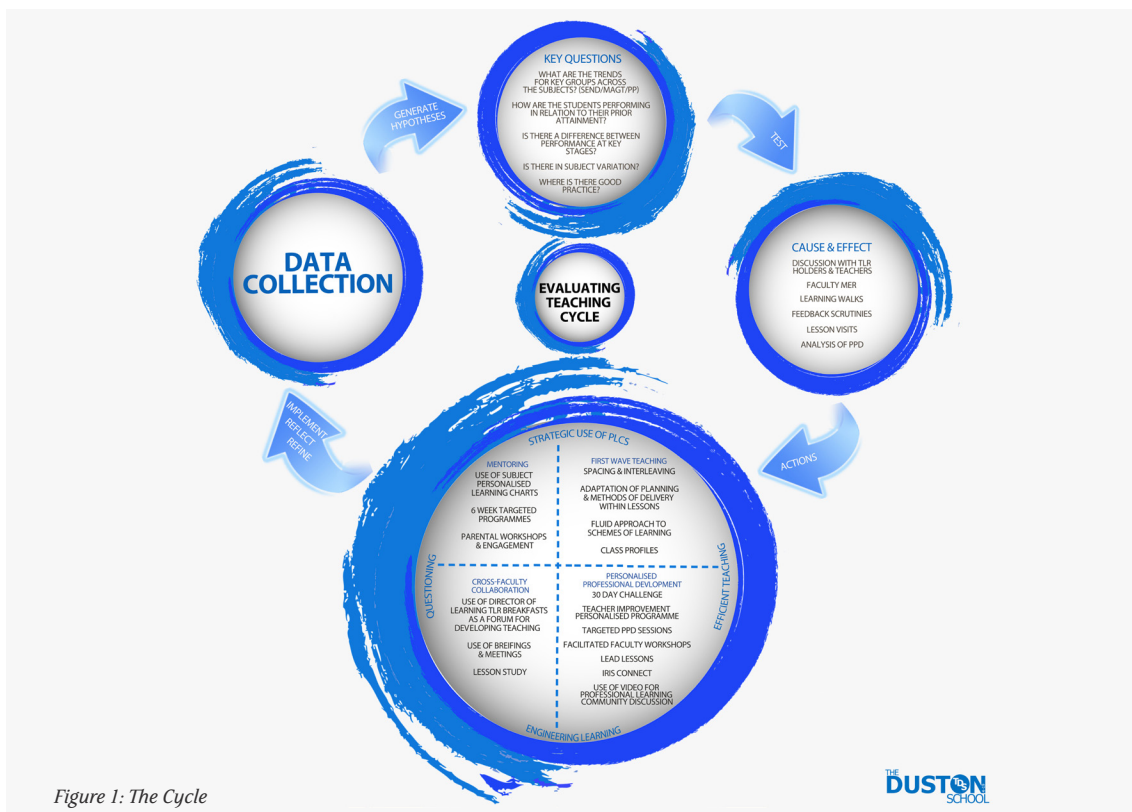


Figure 1: The Cycle

But a problem remained. In 2013, we still reported and attached notional teaching grades to teachers although we had become much more refined at the evidence bases we used to arrive at these judgements. This meant that there was a discord between the whole school evaluation of the quality of teaching and our actual day-to-day practices in developing it. We used a forensic approach to explore the quality of teaching based on our agreed common language and this enabled us to share good practice and create directories of expertise, but it still ‘felt’ inauthentic.

2015 – Squaring the circle

In 2015 a resolution was finally achieved and we believe we have an authentic model that puts into practice the following set of principles:

1. All students deserve access to teaching which enables them to make at least good progress.
2. Development is more important than measurement.
3. Teaching expertise doesn’t emerge from simply being evaluated.
4. Exemplary teaching looks and sounds different across different classrooms but builds on common elements that enable effective learning to occur.
5. Teachers, like students, learn best when there is ownership, engagement and the opportunity to reflect, implement and reflect again.

Principles of the model

The principles behind our evaluating teaching cycle are straightforward:

- » We are evaluating the quality of teaching, not teachers. There is a subtle but important difference.
- » It is a flawed methodology to judge the quality of teachers through lesson observations.
- » The best schools promote a collaborative and shared commitment to improving outcomes for students.
- » There is no prescriptive approach to quality teaching – what’s good is what works.
- » Data is merely the starting point – it gives no answers, just enables hypotheses to be generated.
- » The most important aspect of any evaluation cycle is the input – the quality and personalisation of research, actions, and strategies which recognise that different approaches work differently for different teachers, departments and students.

The cycle

Key questions

The data collection forms the basis for directors of learning and line managers to draw hypotheses. We ask them to consider:

- » What are the trends for key groups across the subjects?
- » How are the students performing in relation to their prior attainment?
- » Is there a difference between performance at key stages?
- » Is there in-subject variation?
- » Where is there good practice?

Cause and effect

Our directors of learning are constantly evaluating the quality of their departments' work. In addition, following the generation of hypotheses from the data collection, we devote a week to a consistent cross-school review for quality assurance; joint work between middle and senior leaders tests these hypotheses. If the data is suggesting, for example, that in year 8 maths the high prior attainment disadvantaged students are underperforming in comparison to the advantaged students, we will make this a focus for further investigation on top of our everyday evaluation. We visit lessons, look at schemes of learning, look at books, talk to the students, look at parental engagement, compare attainment of these students in maths with other subjects, and so on.

Once we have interrogated the data and our initial hypotheses, we discuss as a department team, and as a team of middle leaders, what our priorities are as a whole school, as well as highlighting any in-school variation.

Making the difference

Once these have been identified, we move to the most important part of our cycle – how we use what we know to 'productively tinker' with our practice. We tackle this from both teacher and student perspectives. Some of the strategies we have found effective for us can be seen in Figure 2.

The work now really begins as students, teachers, middle leaders and senior leaders work together to implement the actions, with an emphasis on shared ownership and collaboration.



Figure 2

Our data scrutiny meetings have completely changed the emphasis. Rather than focusing on the numbers, they are driven by a discussion and commitment to the changes that will take place in the classroom in schemes of learning, teaching approaches, assessment approaches and department work.

Data collection then enables us to 'temperature check' the impact of the work we have been undertaking. And so the cycle begins again – in all likelihood, we will need to continue with what we are already doing as sustainable improvements don't happen overnight, but 'checking in' allows us to track progress against priorities and alert us to anything else which may need investigating.

We no longer report faculty percentages of the quality of teaching. Instead, we use the teacher standards to identify where each of us has strengths and areas for development in our teaching practice. This is used to inform PPD (personalised professional development) and cross-faculty collaboration. It allows us to articulate strengths and areas for development across the school, and gives us all the evidence we would ever need to show any external scrutiny that we have a real handle on the quality of teaching in our school.

For me, the real beauty of evaluating teaching not teachers is that I can finally see a process which is fit for purpose for leaders, teachers and students.

It was worth the wait.



How international learning can enrich the curriculum

*Sylvie Beuzit,
Upton-by-Chester High School*

A partnership with a school in the Yemen has had dramatic, positive effects on students in this Cheshire school.

The partnership with Al Khansa School started in March 2008 during a British Council Connecting Classrooms contact seminar in Sana'a, the capital of Yemen. Old Sana'a is an amazingly beautiful walled city situated in a mountain valley at an altitude of 2,200 meters and its tower-houses, all built before the 11th century, are stunning. This is where our partner school is situated and sadly, this is where the current conflict is taking place.

Our Connecting Classrooms partnership with Al Khansa has opened up opportunities for students and staff and promoted intercultural dialogue. Over the past eight years, staff and students from both schools have worked together on global citizenship projects across the age range, and jointly produced a film in Istanbul around the theme of friendship. In addition, students took part in a textiles

project using photographs of Chester and Sana'a. Half the work produced in each school was exchanged and students were able to enjoy their counterparts' work while appreciating each other's culture. In each school, the spectacular displays serve as a reminder of our link and strong friendship.

Profound impact of Yemeni teacher's visit

Jamila Rajeh's third visit to our school in June 2014 had a profound impact on the whole school community and enabled us to plan exciting new projects in the curriculum. In the last academic year, year 9 students worked on an environmental project developing an Eco code and discussing environmental issues affecting their country and the world; while year 7s produced a family factfile for students at Al Khansa. These activities encourage students to pay particular attention to their writing skills as they are communicating with pupils for whom English is not a first language. This in turn develops their literacy skills as they draft and redraft for a real purpose.

During her last visit, she took part in religious studies lessons with year 7 students studying Islam, and spoke very warmly of her country and educational system with year 10 English students. Religious studies teacher Hannah Clarkson said: 'It was amazing to see students' reaction to Jamila's first-hand experience.'

'It was amazing to see students' reaction to Jamila's first-hand experience'

'Her visit provided a superb enrichment to our curriculum. It was wonderful to have the opportunity to view education through a global lens, to see how we can link students to another school community in Yemen and the impact it has on the way students think and respond. This enabled them to compare and contrast religious customs and practices. It broke down barriers and helped in the understanding of cultural differences.'

Students' evaluations gathered after each project to measure the impact of international learning



on teaching and learning show extremely positive outcomes on students' development as global citizens:

- » 'I gained an insight into education in the Yemen and I enjoyed learning about similarities and differences.'
- » 'I like learning about the world outside of the UK. I have created a PowerPoint for the pupils at Al Khansa. I like the idea of people miles away seeing my work.'
- » 'I enjoyed writing about my house and area...I learnt what their country and houses were like. Before I didn't know anything about the Yemen. We also got taught how to say hello in Arabic.'
- » 'I think the project has taught me about cultural understanding. It has really opened our minds towards the people of the Yemen. Our assemblies and displays have had a big impact on our education!'

Over the years, educational projects with the Yemen have become more ambitious and technology has enabled us to stay in touch. The projects have provided us with the opportunity to explore differences and similarities while enabling students to find out about each other's countries and cultures. The quality of work has been excellent as pupils have embraced the projects with enthusiasm.

This is a highly successful partnership because we have managed to embed the project plans in the curriculum. In addition, the Connecting Classrooms project is written into the school evaluation form and the whole school development plan. As a school, our aim is 'to maintain, refine and further develop international learning' to uphold the school's international accreditations (British Council, Fairtrade, Eco-School, Oxfam Youth, SSAT Cultural Diversity Quality Standard). These have given us the guidance and framework

around which to develop and embed international learning across the curriculum and across our partnerships with schools around the world. Gaining international accreditations and recognition has enabled us to maintain and develop best practice over time. In turn, this is now feeding into the TEEP model adopted by Upton.

Even the conflict in Yemen has not stopped us working together

The conflict in Yemen has thrown the whole country in turmoil but this has not stopped us working together. When the internet works and Jamila gets a connection, we are delighted to hear from her. Recently, we were astonished to see that she managed to take part in an online global environmental survey designed by our students to include partners in the Yemen, Russia and Sri Lanka. Her dedication to our partnership, at all times and despite worsening circumstances, is inspiring.



Where pupil premium initiatives are whole-school initiatives

*Laura Paterson & Clive Zimmerman,
Lydiard Park School*

Not just closing the gap: this approach helps everyone do better, inside and outside the school.

Swindon has never had much of a tradition when it comes to education. It's not a university town and, with an employment base more in skilled and semi-skilled manual work than professional occupations, many families place a relatively low value on education.

As with many similar areas up and down the country, the main issue facing our school at the point of academy conversion was the underperformance of white British pupils, many of whom qualified for pupil premium. Yet three years later, Lydiard Park Academy (LPA) has made huge strides and, according to the DfE, is one of the 90 most improved secondary schools in the country. 'All pupils', 'White British' and 'FSM' groups now have green 'Sig+' indicators in our Raiseonline report; the school has the highest GCSE results in the area and has opened a sixth form; and, in 2015, our GCSE pupil premium pupils made more progress than their 'non-disadvantaged' peers nationally.



Our experience mirrors a recent NFER research paper conclusion that many of the most effective approaches you can take for disadvantaged pupils are actually whole-school initiatives. 'Build a better school for everyone and disadvantaged pupils' results will improve on a rising tide of achievement and higher expectations' is the essence of what we have done. In this article, we describe the steps we have taken towards each of the seven key building blocks NFER identified:

- » Ethos of attainment for all
- » Behaviour and attendance
- » High-quality teaching for all
- » Meeting individual learning needs
- » Deploying staff effectively
- » Data-driven and responding to evidence
- » Clear, responsive leadership.

Whole-school ethos of attainment for all – the community notices

Academy conversion was a key point in the history of the school, as it raised the question 'What will we do differently as an academy?' Our answer was to take a clean sheet of paper and leave behind every practice we thought could be better. A chequered reputation was one of the things that had to go and, in re-launching under our new name, we also laid out a new ethos that was overtly ambitious about enabling all pupils to fulfil their potential through having higher expectations of the whole school community. A new name, a more traditional uniform, a reorganised school day, new signage

and new school colours were all outward signs that our game was being raised. Parents were extremely encouraging and most of our pupils responded instantly, beginning to live up to their new, smart uniform. Our pupils' new smartness also brought positive feedback from people who weren't even connected to the school.

These, of course, were the outward signs of change. But much more was happening within the school.

Addressing behaviour and attendance – and parent communication

Before conversion, we had been pushing for better consistency from staff over behaviour management, and it's true to say that it was already a battle that was being won. However, to push harder we decided to target low level disruption by introducing a new scheme based on 'behaviour for learning' principles, with pupils earning (and sometimes losing) points towards their own individual rewards.

The rules of the scheme are displayed in every teaching area, and electronic records have allowed us to identify individual and group behaviours for further intervention. Initially our new-found consistency led to a rise in sanctions but this fell away as pupils realised that 'the rules are the rules'.

Three years later we have made large gains on reducing low-level disruption (down 50%) improved the rate of completion of homework (related detentions down 50%) and have virtually eradicated incidences of smoking (down 90%; just four incidences last year). As a school we invest heavily in our pastoral structures, with traditional heads of year, each supported by a non-teaching assistant. This has allowed communication with home to be prompt, persistent and effective.

Communication with home is prompt, persistent and effective

Alongside the government initiatives on termtime holidays this has enabled attendance to rise and persistent absence to fall, with the latter having previously been a significant feature among pupil premium pupils.

High-quality teaching for all: a learning community

Three years ago most pupils were experiencing a fairly formulaic diet of lessons. In getting to a consistent 'good' from Ofsted, we'd driven out some

of the innovation and fun. The SSAT's Teacher Effectiveness Enhancement Programme (TEEP) provided an exciting opportunity to reinvigorate staff, put lessons back onto a more pupil-centred footing and give staff and pupils a common language for learning that would allow us to develop more rapidly as a learning community.

All staff completed the level 1 training in the summer of 2013 and since then our TEEP journey has continued (with cross-faculty TEEP teams), fresh approaches to teaching and learning, a greater staff sharing of good practice, and lessons that are now more engaging and varied for pupils. As a TEEP ambassador school we continually push to move our practice to the next level; our teaching and learning communities meet twice a term to debate and consider a key teaching strategy, from marking and feedback to independent learning.

Yes, these are topics that will have been discussed many times before, but the beauty of TEEP is that it reminds you of the best practice that you've possibly met but forgotten. And then challenges you to bring it into your teaching as your new standard.

The beauty of TEEP: it reminds you of the best practice that you've possibly met but forgotten – and then challenges you to make it your new standard

Within our teaching model we also launched our 'Session 6' programme. With a shorter lunch break and formal lessons ending at 3pm, students are encouraged to stay for session 6 to take part in enrichment, revision and specific intervention sessions, all tailored to a student's educational needs. Along with all of this we have also embraced technology – working with 'itslearning' to develop an interactive learning platform for students to use in and out of the classroom as they complete tasks, homework and extra research, and prepare for their final exams.

Meeting individual learning needs – including regular 1-1s with SLT members

The biggest individual learning need that our pupils have on entry is probably for greater motivation and resilience. When government-funded IAG fell away, we decided to do the important stuff ourselves – the one-to-one discussions that seek



to encourage and motivate pupils to aim high, and establish a pathway through to at least 19 for each child. In addition to careers input through PSHE, each pupil at LPA is interviewed individually by a member of the senior leadership team at least four times during years 10 and 11. Every year 11 pupil also has a staff mentor who they meet every few weeks to oversee their academic progress, manage sixth form or college applications and provide motivation and encouragement.

We call these staff assertive mentors because if they discover a pupil is behind with their work or not reaching their target grade, their job is to broker a solution, be it extra homework or attendance at a catch-up session. Our mentors become very important people in our pupils' lives and, on results days, they're probably the most thanked people by pupil and parents alike.

Assertive mentors' job is to broker a solution, be it extra homework or attendance at a catch-up session

One thing we decided to leave alone on academy conversion was our curriculum, which was based on mainly traditional GCSE courses in each area of the curriculum. Previously it could have been said that this curriculum wasn't one that best suited the characteristics of many of our pupils (and many local schools had gone much more heavily down the BTech route than we had). However, we decided to stick with the courses that we felt were better known by employers and, instead of changing the curriculum, focus on improving

our pupils' motivation and work ethic so they became more successful. Thus Mr Gove's changes have undoubtedly helped us in climbing school performance tables. But the bigger factor by far is the improvement in the quality of teaching, the support and intervention pupils receive and, quite simply, gains in their effort, behaviour and aspirations.

Deploying staff effectively – keeping and developing them

Results have risen sharply at LPA in the last five years; yet the majority of staff remain the same. So developing staff has been a significant success. Our learning communities meet to discuss TEEP-based strategies, government initiatives and Ofsted updates, making sure all staff are kept involved and informed. We have a rigorous quality assurance programme (linked to performance management) which includes a mentoring and coaching system that kicks in whenever practice is uncovered that 'requires improvement'.

In the same way that we work with students, we work with staff to allow them to reflect, improve and trial new ideas to be more effective in the classroom. Each department has a TEEP leader who supports this process, with additional input from the assistant principal (teaching and learning) who is trained to TEEP level 3 and oversees the staff coaching programme.

Data-driven and responding to evidence – tracking students throughout their time with us

Data continues to be a key indicator throughout the year for checking and analysing student progress



and achievement. We have moved to a banding assessment system with years 7-11, which is an adaptation of a model promoted by PiXL. This has allowed rigorous assessment, with all students being able to see a projected flight path based on current performance. It also identifies individual learning needs, which are then supported by personal learning checklists for effective target setting at parents' evenings and consultation days (where students and parents attend a detailed one-to-one consultation to discuss and track academic achievement). At key data entry points we identify intervention groups and plan for the next term.

Students and parents attend a detailed consultation to discuss and track academic achievement

Specific staff are employed to teach intervention sessions in numeracy and literacy; emotional and social support is also discussed where needed. These steps and the strong pastoral provision described earlier have allowed us to track and identify the specific needs of our students throughout their academic life at LPA.

Clear, responsive leadership, with a desire to see where the journey goes next

Throughout this period of change, LPA has benefited from a consistent leadership team who all enjoy what they do. Of course, success is a great motivator and gives you the freedom to be bolder in deciding what to change and, just as importantly, what to stop doing. With the exception of our business manager, all of the senior team have a

teaching timetable that helps us stay rooted in what's practical, and stops us from living in ivory towers. We also share a relentless approach to wanting every piece of LPA to be as good as it can be, accompanied by a desire to keep developing as leaders and, hence, to see where the journey goes next.

The senior team have a teaching timetable that helps us stay rooted in what's practical, and stops us from living in ivory towers

So where next in terms of closing gaps and doing our bit for social mobility? Although our pupil premium pupils are doing well in national terms, their progress score is still some 13 points behind the 1028 value added score notched up by our 'non-disadvantaged' pupils. So, about two improved GCSE grades, which probably points to where this could be made up – by identifying and intervening earlier in individual subjects.

What would be our advice to schools looking to make inroads into their pupil premium gap? Well, probably not to focus just on the disadvantaged pupils, especially if their shortcomings are symptomatic of the wider school population. Start with the big stuff and go 'whole school': the teaching, the behaviour. As at LPA, you might not close the gap between the disadvantaged and the others quickly – but that will be because everyone's doing better.



I-College: an original approach to personalising learning

*Chris Foreman,
Homewood School*

Not just about computers, this imaginative personalisation of learning also makes great use of collaborative learning, and even giving students control over when they see their teachers.

I-College is the result of over a decade of planning and experimentation. Many of the components that make the college successful began as small-scale trials in my classroom.

Trained as a primary school teacher, I had an early introduction to the importance of personalised learning experiences for pupils. However, my first teaching post was actually in a comprehensive secondary school and I soon witnessed the mass market, delivery-focused approach to learning of the 1980s.

Almost 30 years later I found myself presented with a once in a career opportunity. At Homewood School and Sixth Form Centre, we were restructuring our school into colleges, identified by the



learning pathways that students elected to follow in key stage 4 (years 9-11). For example, if students were following languages or humanities options subjects they would belong to World College. If they selected graphics, textiles, photography, dance, drama they would join Arts College.

I-College was designed to appeal to students who wanted to follow a learning pathway that was more personalised and student-centric.

Designing the process

We created a small writing team that met once a week and invited

an external consultant from Edison Learning to work with this team. Our first significant development was to identify four different modes of learning:

Foundational learning: this learning does not depend on an input from a teacher and can be supported through online resources. For example, students might be expected to name, locate and describe the function of organs in the digestive system.

Conceptual learning: in this mode of learning students work with a subject specialist to develop a deeper understanding of key concepts. In I-College

the ratio of subject specialist to student rarely exceeds 1:5. This enables the teacher to focus closely on the development of each learner.

For example, a science subject specialist might develop the concept of digestion as the breakdown of large insoluble molecules to small soluble molecules that can be absorbed by the blood. At this stage the teacher would access prior foundational learning. Students would be expected to demonstrate technical accuracy at this stage and show robust knowledge of the topics, which have been studied independently.

Collaborative learning: there is a misconception that I-College is simply students learning from a computer screen. In reality, there are more occasions when students are working collaboratively, for example when conceptual learning is structured with interactions between the subject specialists and students. There are also many opportunities for students to work collaboratively. For example: practising as they learn a foreign language such as Mandarin; reading a text together as they follow their English Literature course; or peer-to-peer coaching problem solving in mathematics.

Personalised learning: one of the key components of I-College is the ability to set individual learning pathways for students. All students must follow a core curriculum of English, maths, science, business studies, a foreign language and geography. This core curriculum is studied within the learning environment



of I-College. In addition each student can choose up to two electives, such as GCSE Physical Education or Ceramics which they can study in classrooms beyond I-College.

Students have freedom to construct their own timetable at the start of each week. The only fixed points are the times at which they leave I-College to study their electives. Even when a subject specialist arrives in the college, students are not expected necessarily to study that subject. However, they are aware in advance of the availability of the subject specialist and might make a request for time with the teacher to support their progress that week.

It is a common feature of many secondary schools that the final terms of year 11 are engaged in intervention strategies. We hope to minimise the need for

this in I-College as we develop the idea of mastery learning (cf Bloom) and weekly diagnostic assessments followed by personalised remedial work.

Implementation

We launched I-College in August 2014 and were successful in attracting 14 students. Working in a 'pilot' space we provided each student with their own workstation including a Mac Mini, which could serve as both a Mac OS and a Windows device. Each student also had access to an iPad and their own mobile phone device. At the end of the first year we expanded to 45 students and moved to a larger space.

We are tracking student progress using GCSE assessments, mark schemes and grade boundaries. This data is analysed using SISRA Analytics and progress so far looks very positive for all students.





We will need to start planning for a post-16 pathway and have already started to look at matching level 3 qualifications with our I-College learning model. We think we have an exciting opportunity to make use of the ALPs tracking system, personalised pupil checklists and the foundational mode of learning.

We foresee students having a 'base' in I-College during their post-16 studies, in which they will engage in foundational, collaborative and personalised learning. However, students are more likely to need to access their conceptual learning in specialist rooms and will therefore spend some time working beyond the I-College facilities.

We need to find a bigger building, as our next cohort will take

I-College beyond the capacity of our current accommodation. There are several interesting ideas to explore. For example, creating a learning environment with fewer workstations than students. Perhaps students can 'hot desk' and plan their access to the resources at the same time that they plan their weekly timetables.

It would be very difficult to create I-College as a completely stand-alone college, geographically removed from a main school. This is due to the need to provide electives. Currently, students can select from the full menu of courses offered at Homewood School. They can simply walk from one building to the next to access subject specialists and resources.

We are also thinking of ways to create generic key stage 4 teachers who can act as subject specialists in more than one subject. For example, using the Teacher Subject Specialism Training programme (TSST) we have been able to train an existing science specialist as a maths specialist and vice versa. We hope to extend this to developing generic EBacc specialists.

In a relatively short period, I-College has achieved some great learning. Students are highly engaged, making rapid progress and enjoying their learning. We have yet to issue any behavioural sanction beyond a hard stare, and feel incredibly proud of our students.



I know what you read last summer

Terry Crawshaw,
St George's Academy

Book reviews get students more involved in assemblies – and enjoying their reading.

Literacy levels provide our main challenge. This is in large part because St George's Academy is in Lincolnshire, where the grammar school system still operates and the 11+ test seems to be far more effective in pre-selecting on a child's ability in literacy than in numeracy.

The effects of low literacy levels not only on English outcomes but also on the children's ability to access other key areas of the curriculum underline the need to take all available steps to improve our students' ability to read and write fluently. The school uses several approaches to improve literacy, such as: the Accelerated Reader programme for the whole of year 7 and low ability sets in years 8-9; Read Write Inc Fresh Start programme for students in Y7 who struggle with the pronunciation of phonics and blending; TRUGS cards, which are being introduced throughout the school to increase the level of vocabulary used; and a weekly word focus looking at specific command words during form time.

Leading by example

A couple of years ago I saw an inspirational presentation by Graham Tyrer, then head of Chenderit School near Banbury, on his quest to raise standards of literacy in his own school. He led by example, maintaining that assembly is the first lesson of the day: he was determined that the students would learn something in each assembly, whether it was the importance of the semi-colon or another literacy themed learning outcome.



I left convinced that I was not making the most of the learning opportunities in my assemblies. What I needed was a big idea. It came from a discussion with my daughter who, as a newly trained teacher of English, was filming student responses and playing them back in her lessons. I thought that I could scale that up for my assemblies to 600 year 7 and 8 students on a Friday morning. I also thought the message would be made more powerful because it would be coming from someone who is male, and a maths teacher, rather than an English teacher.

He was determined that the students would learn something (about literacy) in each assembly

Students interview others about books they have read

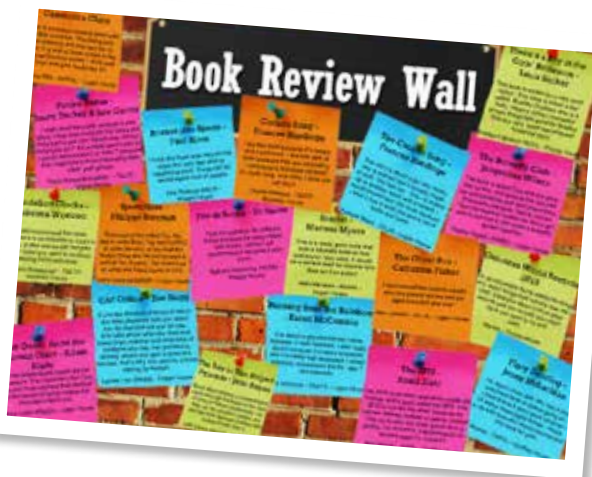
I would film them being interviewed about a book they have just read, and then show the resulting film in assembly, basing the assembly's learning objectives on literacy points chosen according to the book being reviewed.



It was launched in the autumn term under the working title, 'I know what you read last summer'. I started in a limited fashion, leading the way myself by reviewing a book I had read that summer. I then asked for three volunteers from Y8. Hannah, Izzy and Melek were the first to come forward and I booked the TV studio and our excellent IT technician, Karl, to do the first recordings. Hannah would interview me, then it was Hannah's turn in the hot seat, interviewed by Izzy and then Izzy would review her book, interviewed by Melek. That's how we set up our chain which, during the course of the year, led to the filming of 16 book reviews, each of which was the focus of an assembly.

The questions were pre-set so that the students could prepare for their interview. Karl sorted the green screen, managed the filming and even sorted autocue for those who came prepared with a script. He edited the films, superimposing pictures of the books as well as a few other quirky extras including some extra sounds and visuals. The editing was taking too long so he came up with a template into which he could 'drop' the scenes. At that point we removed the interviewer from the review, which was sad but I don't think Karl could have kept up with the extra editing on top of all the other jobs he has to do.

The Friday assemblies were fun. Students felt they were taking the lead. It was them projected onto the big screen. It was them doing the talking. All I had to do was bring it all together at the end with a bit of humour thrown in, read a passage from the book which had been reviewed and talk to them about the literacy learning point which was exemplified in the passage.



Mr Crawshaw's Literacy Learning Point

"I'm a grenade and at some point I'm going to blow up and I would like to minimise the casualties, okay?"

The person speaking is clearly not a grenade. However, we understand exactly what is meant.

This is an example of a

metaphor

No restrictions were made on the books that the students could review. My heart sank a little when one of the books was filled with sketchy drawings and was written in a very informal style. That assembly on *Dork Diaries – Holiday Heartbreak* by Rachel Renee Russell was one of the best, though. I was able to get across the importance of reading; reading for enjoyment encourages you to read more. Read anything... just read. It also gave me the chance to set myself up humorously as someone 'out of his time', who does not really understand what writing like this is all about.

On the other hand there were classics chosen, like *Of Mice and Men*, which gave me the chance to explain that books that have stood the test of time, and have been read by generation after generation of children, are probably worth checking out.

After the assembly the videos of the reviews were posted on the academy website. Some of them came with a PowerPoint presentation of 'Mr Crawshaw's literacy learning point'.

Feedback from the students was tremendous. I would regularly have Y7 and Y8 students come up to me to tell me how much they enjoy the assemblies. I still do, despite the fact that this year (year 2 of the book review initiative) we have not yet filmed or shown any more book reviews.

Students' reviews displayed in library

Why not? Well, we will, but I wanted to extend the involvement from 16 assemblies last year to mass participation this year. Inspired by the short recommendations written on little cards in bookshops like Waterstones, I decided to invite students to get involved by writing a short review of a book they have read onto a card, which we would display in one of the libraries.

In addition, the cards would be colour-coded by 'house' so that the rewards they were earning by submitting a book review (2 house points



per review) would count towards the house competition. Further still, if their review is selected by the librarians to be used in a display, they gain two additional house points.

I have not even mentioned the Book Review Wall on the website. All reviews are typed up onto virtual Post-it notes and 'pinned' to a virtual wall in the book review section of the website. This work is done by another IT technician, Emily, who has designed and maintains the website 'window' to the reviews. We have two walls on the go at any one time. The current wall is being filled by the most recent reviews. There is another wall full of slightly older reviews. We hope that the time-limited presentation of the reviews

will resonate with the Snapchat/Instagram-savvy 11-13 year olds at whom this is primarily aimed. Already, just a few weeks in, over 30 students have written and submitted a review. Several are on display in the library.

Many more students have reviewed books this year, which means not only that I have more to choose from when planning my literacy assemblies, but also that more students are getting involved. I look forward to reviewing the impact at the end of this year and getting students involved in deciding how we can make it better.



Developing a mindfulness curriculum in the primary phase

David Wylde,
Ysgol Pen-Y-Bryn Foundation School

A mindfulness programme that started in a North Wales primary school is now having impact around the world.

Ysgol Pen-Y-Bryn Foundation School, above the coastal resort of Colwyn Bay in Conwy, has 466 pupils on roll. Some 94% of pupils come from English-speaking homes, and 2% speak Welsh at home.

In a desire to develop thinking skills and metacognition, the school decided to introduce the children to mindfulness: how it can be helpful in their lives for improved concentration, mood regulation and appropriate choices. The curriculum should offer the opportunity for children to experience mindfulness practices at a primary age, explore metacognition and how their brain works.

Mindfulness can be helpful in children's lives for improved concentration, mood regulation and appropriate choices

Having made contact with the Bangor University Mindfulness



Institute, Ysgol Pen Y Bryn has created a primary mindfulness curriculum. This has been a collaboration between experienced primary teachers at Ysgol Pen Y Bryn, an experienced mindfulness teacher (Sarah Silverton), a neuroscientist (Dusana Dorjee) and the Mindfulness in Schools Project (MISP). The curriculum, called Paws b, is taught in PSE lessons and then allows mindfulness to be embedded in the school life. There are now 300 people trained in Paws b involved in the project and its extensions.

Six years ago the teachers were trained in mindfulness. They completed an intensive eight-week course and developed their own mindfulness practice. This inspired them to introduce mindfulness to the children, as they could see the many benefits mindfulness can provide. A key stage 2 curriculum was created, trialled and developed – to a large degree, by the children themselves. Their overwhelmingly positive response has really shaped the curriculum.

A KS2 mindfulness curriculum was created, trialled and developed – to a large degree, by the children themselves

The children now report that they use mindfulness for self-regulation and concentration in and out of school, to settle into the next lesson so they are ready to learn, before tests and performances, to calm themselves during playground incidents and sibling rivalry. In addition to the lessons, the children can request practices and attend lunchtime sessions before their afternoon lessons.

Impact on teaching and learning

The school's experience confirms that mindfulness promotes attitudes of kindness, patience, curiosity and enquiry. These attitudes have a positive impact on the children's learning. For example, exploring the 'amazing brain' in lessons has improved their understanding of how they learn and provided a positive 'growth mindset' culture.

Impact on academic results

One teacher has carried out action research for a Masters dissertation comparing children that were receiving mindfulness lessons in the school with ones that didn't. The results clearly showed that the children exposed to mindfulness had higher value-added test results by the end of the year and a more positive attitude to their learning.

Currently there is a PhD research project at Bangor University examining the impact of the school's curriculum in local

schools that have been trained by Ysgol Pen y Bryn. The research measures the children's brain activity before and after the delivery of our curriculum. Although the results are not published yet, initial indications are extremely positive.

Impact on the community

The school has kept the whole school community informed during this development of the curriculum. After seeing a difference in their children's behaviour and learning, several parents have started to learn mindfulness practices themselves. Other teachers have also asked to be trained in mindfulness.

Impact on other schools – at home...

Creating a high quality training package has enabled teachers to feel supported in delivering mindfulness in a purposeful and authentic way to primary children. The school has trained teachers in other local schools in the Paws b curriculum, and offered support as they begin to teach it. The schools are also involved in the Bangor University research project. Ysgol Pen-Y-Bryn is to be involved in training at county level in the coming academic year. Interested counties are Cornwall, Devon, Pembrokeshire and Cumbria.

... and abroad

The curriculum has now been published with the Mindfulness in Schools Project and the school has trained 230 people across the world in the curriculum (Australia, USA, South Korea, Singapore, Hong Kong, and a variety of European countries).

Our curriculum is being translated into Chinese and is due to be translated into German and Finnish. We are proud that our curriculum is now touching the lives of children across the world, as it has our own children.

The school has trained 230 people across the world in the mindfulness curriculum

All feedback has been exceptionally positive, with reports of the children having improved concentration levels and self-regulation across the many cultures that now teach this curriculum.

An All-Party Parliamentary group has been set up to look at introducing mindfulness in public policy. Representatives from Ysgol Pen-Y-Bryn have attended the two meetings that have taken place so far and our children spoke to 60 MPs and members of the Lords about why they think mindfulness should be in primary schools.

Our children spoke to 60 MPs and Lords about why they think mindfulness should be in primary schools

Next steps for us

A year 6 curriculum will be finalised to show how mindfulness can be helpful in this crucial year when so many changes take place for young people: transition, puberty and the impacts of social media. This will be then included in our training programme. A foundation phase curriculum will also be finalised, in the following year.

Bridging the transition gap: the focus starts in year 5

*John Stanier,
Great Torrington School*

This rural comprehensive involves children from primary schools in sporting competitions, science workshops, literacy programmes – and even having lessons delivered at their school by a teacher from the secondary.

The ‘transition slump’ between primary and secondary schools continues to be one of those apparently intractable problems in education. At Great Torrington School we knew that if we were to achieve ever better outcomes for our pupils, we needed to ensure they learned at the same rapid rate at key stage 3 as they did in other key stages. We did realise that it would take a lot of work on many fronts to achieve this.

As Great Torrington is a very rural comprehensive secondary school, our challenge seemed even harder. Many of our 12 feeder primary schools are on the very edges of our catchment area, so some children have to spend a great deal of time getting to school and back. And of course not all of the primaries were achieving consistently high outcomes for their pupils. How could we ensure a smooth academic and emotional journey from primary to secondary school with such a scattered group of children?

We started by ensuring that all primary school pupils had the opportunity to acquaint themselves with the school, our pupils and our staff.

- » Each year, our PE staff organise sporting competitions for primary schools.
- » Primary classes are invited to the school to attend workshops run by our science staff; and



are frequently a willing audience for a variety of performances that our pupils stage.

- » Our ‘literacy leaders’ (in year 7) visit many primary schools to read with pupils there.
- » At least once in the year, every department delivers a lesson to a primary school class.

With all of these opportunities, by the time pupils start with us in year 7 they know the buildings and are on familiar terms with a significant number of pupils and staff.

Tracking progress from Y5 to Y8

This process is also about us getting to know the pupils before they arrive at our school. One member of our senior leadership team, Helen, has the specific role of tracking pupils’ progress from year 5 (two years before they reach us) to year 8 (at the end of which they begin their GCSE courses). Traditionally, high impact tracking



and intervention tends to be reserved for GCSE pupils and few resources are available to have this intensity lower down the school. Yet, to us this seems irrational. The earlier we can offer interventions for underachievement, the greater long-term impact this action will have. We all know that by year 10 or 11 it is often too late to change pupils' learning behaviours or significantly boost their literacy or numeracy, so by then we can only make marginal gains to their outcomes. The earlier we can intervene, the greater the chance we have of moulding positive templates for learning.

Helen spends a significant proportion of her time visiting primary schools, getting to know the pupils and the teachers. She liaises with the schools so that we have the most useful information about the pupils who plan to come to Great Torrington. We can work alongside primaries and give additional support or intervention for a pupil who needs it. Thanks to Helen's work, we have a good knowledge of the real strengths and weaknesses of each pupil and are able to provide appropriate support from the child's first day at school. Helen continues to monitor pupils' progress throughout years 7 and 8, and ensures they have access to whatever literacy or numeracy intervention they require.

We have good knowledge of each pupil's strengths and weaknesses and can provide appropriate support from their first day at school

Helen also works closely with Andy, our pastoral member of the senior leadership team, to organise transition week for the year 6s in July. Pupils from all 12 feeder schools spend a week getting to know each other and the school. They spend three days camping together, challenging themselves on high ropes, Total Wipeout style assault courses, and climbing. School staff are given time to visit the camp and begin building those key relationships with our future pupils. For the second half of transition week, pupils spend two days in school, further familiarising themselves with expectations and the school routine, and getting to know the other children in their tutor group and staff. All of these activities are fully supported by our 'transition leaders' - year 7s who went through transition the year before. They are a friendly, guiding face for the primary school pupils. ▶





Friendly and recognisable faces among the 'big kids' look out for the Y7s and show them the ropes

Of course, our year 7s are nervous on their first day of school in September but they do not spend the summer fretting about who will be in their class, whether they will get lost or what their teachers will be like. Once pupils do start, we have a strong pastoral system to support them during this sensitive time. Tutor groups are vertical - pupils range from year 7 through to year 11. This means the year 7 child has a small, manageable group of three or four peers to share experiences with while also having a few friendly and recognisable faces among the 'big kids', who look out for them and show them the ropes.

Talking to the new year 7 pupils, they tell us they never feel intimidated by the older children in school. We also have a house system that we strive to make feel like an extended family. Siblings are always placed in the same house, as are staff whose children attend the school. Each house has a head of house and a non-teaching pupil coach, so there is always immediate support and guidance for pupils at any point in the day.

Project based learning

We have designed the year 7 curriculum to aid transition. For three years now we have removed most separate subjects from the timetable in order to deliver the curriculum through project-based learning. Pupils work through a carousel of five challenges that last seven weeks: building an aeroplane (yes, a real one that a governor will fly), preventing a pandemic, publishing a book on

leaders in our community, staging an exhibition about slavery in the local museum and putting Frankenstein's monster on trial. In these challenges, pupils only have three teachers. They learn in a cross-curricular way that is familiar from their primary school. Pupils spend more time with fewer staff than the traditional model so relationships can be stronger.

They learn in a cross-curricular way that is familiar from their primary school

Due to the time teachers spend with each class, they can really focus on issues such as low levels of literacy; while higher achieving pupils are given time and space to show what they are capable of.

Our pupil tracking suggests that all of these efforts to ensure a smooth transition for our pupils are having a positive impact. Our GCSE results show an exceptional amount of pupils' progress in the time they are with us. Our 'value added' score from Raiseonline is 1030 – placing us in the top 10% of schools nationally. Our monitoring of year 7 shows that pupils make an average of 1.1 levels of progress in just one year, higher than the 0.8 levels of progress that a high performing school would be expected to make. Visitors have commented on how impressed they are by our pupils' motivation to learn and how they are able to talk about their learning.

Data can only reveal so much but the faces of our key stage 3 pupils reveal so much more. They clearly feel happy, confident and safe in their school.



Working with the community: helping parents/carers to advance their children's learning – and their own

Jo Price,
Brompton Academy

Parents and carers seize the opportunities offered by this school's 30+ adult learning courses.

Community, noun (plural communities)

A group of people living in the same place or having a particular characteristic in common:

- » Montreal's Italian community
- » The gay community in London
- » The scientific community

Brompton Academy is in North Gillingham ward in Kent, one of the fifth most deprived areas in England. The area has been negatively affected since the closure of Chatham dockyard in 1984, leaving the community with low levels of aspiration and widespread disengagement from the local schools, and from learning.

Yet staff at Brompton have always believed that community regeneration is integral to the success of its students, staff, parents/carers and wider community. This led to a desire to embed systemic change in the local community. The school has developed a bespoke community programme that is rich, extensive and truly accessible for a wide variety of learners. The common characteristics are learning and creativity to engage learners of all ages and backgrounds.

In 2006 we tested the waters, under the name New Brompton College, with one of those classic, short, basic ICT courses for parents and carers. I remember the momentous feeling of real excitement and



delight when 12 people actually turned up to attend our very first course! It was a great moment in the history of adult education for the school – yes they will come through the doors of a secondary school that has such a difficult reputation in the local community.

University sponsor

In 2010 the University of Kent (UoK) became the lead sponsor for Brompton Academy. UoK's partnership programme, working with 44 schools across Kent and Medway, had a name for raising student aspiration and achievement, and supporting community regeneration. They were the right sponsor for us, and steered the academy to a position of strength and popularity in the community.





UoK were keen to build on our early adult educational successes, and to inject academic rigour into the programme. So Level 2 and level 3 courses emerged along with a very credible access programme.

Today we see 500 learners pass through our doors from 5pm till 10pm, Monday to Friday. At the weekend many different external organisations deliver arts, sports, healthy living initiatives, and club and society events. In many cases the courses are oversubscribed. We are now proud to offer GCSE maths and English or the opportunity to study psychology, science or English literature and enable people to take the first steps towards higher education.

Brompton Academy's family and adult learning programme

During 2014/2015 the academy offered 31 courses, ranging from one-off information sessions to five-week programmes, GCSEs and access programmes.

77% of the total cohort of family and adult learning programme learners were Brompton Academy parents/carers.

25% of learners who attended the access diploma course enrolled onto university courses.

Parents and carers

The programme offer for our parents and carers is now really different, targeted to have a positive impact on our students' learning. We have learnt through experience that many parents and carers want to help their children learn and it's our job to empower those families, to make it happen in the most accessible way possible. So, for example, we offer autism awareness, how to help your child use their iPad for learning, how to support your child with their homework tasks, how to help your child read. The courses are advertised, they recruit and they run with high levels of satisfaction and we know that we are now really making a difference. If we can offer programmes that develop the thinking and enquiry skills of our parents and carers, we know this will benefit our students' learning and longer term achievements.

At the academy we believe that a school should be at the heart of its community, pivotal to offering educational opportunities, key to making knowledge accessible, and committed to making possible what some in the community consider to be impossible. We help them to see that it's never too late to change, to learn, to grow and embark on ventures new. Learning has been the key to regenerating our local community.

We never envisaged such a stimulating and educationally academic programme offer. We never thought that we would be helping our local community, our parents and carers to consider and contemplate higher education for themselves. But we never considered failure as an option.



Pastoral care: four brief examples of schools' varied and imaginative approaches

Blurring the lines between pastoral and academic

Alice Ball, Senco and head of learning development, and Richard Jackson, assistant head of year 9, Canons High School

Canons High School is a multicultural teaching school in the London Borough of Harrow, with a reputation for exceptional pastoral care.

Over the past years, much of our attention has been on innovation in terms of teaching and learning, leading to an 'outstanding' Ofsted inspection in all categories in 2013 and our designation as a teaching school in 2014. However, the pastoral element of our work has not been forgotten: indeed, it has gone from strength to strength.

Behaviour mentors work with heads of year

Our headteacher describes our philosophy as 'setting tough challenges while holding caring expectations'. In practice this means a necessary blurring of the lines between the pastoral and the academic. This can be seen particularly in the creation of the role of assistant head of year, held by each of our non-



teaching behaviour mentors which sees them working alongside a teaching head of year, providing support for a particular year group from year 7 to 11.

In our experience of occupying these roles, this meant Richard, as assistant head of year, could respond to 'in the moment' issues arising in our year group, whereas Alice's focus, as head of year, could be on scrutinising data and reacting quickly to underachievement. The partnership allows for all aspects of the individual student to be taken into account. This focus on academic achievement, as well as the more traditional aspects of pastoral care, is also mirrored in the role of the tutors at Canons, who provide timely intervention

with tutees based on academic data by, for example, having regular learning conversations.

Handwritten postcards to parents

At Canons there is also a culture of open communication with staff, students and parents. This is manifested, for example, through the hand-written postcards we send home when a student has done something out of the ordinary (despite the ease in which electronic communications can be sent, we find that families appreciate receiving these). In addition, our behaviour policy is simple and consistent and there are many ways for our students to take on leadership roles, such as by becoming prefects or sitting on our student parliament.



The role of students as mentors is the fastest growing and developing aspect of our pastoral work and has had a substantial positive impact on both the mentees and the mentors themselves.

Applying gospel values in pastoral care

Danielle Mckenna, Convent of Jesus and Mary Language College

Behaviour at CJM is outstanding. As a school we can say this with confidence; in inspection after inspection, the conduct of our girls is commended. But it is not really the inspection results that warrant this confidence, it is our day-to-day experience of school where we endeavour to foster a safe and secure environment for our girls so they are empowered to live our mission statement: 'With God's grace, we excel and lead'.

Learning is effective at CJM because we have high expectations of our girls irrespective of what goes on beyond our school gates. Fundamentally, we have clear parameters that underpin our behaviour policy; a policy that we regularly review and evaluate with the girls themselves. This ensures that we can meet the needs young people living in an ever-changing society.

Five positives for each negative

The pastoral care of CJM is rooted in the gospel values: the individual's pursuit of excellence educationally, morally and spiritually. We use our behaviour policy primarily as a means for reward – students are praised for their personal achievements and academic endeavours as

well as their successes. Aligned to the rewards ladder, there is a sanctions ladder, to encourage and facilitate positive learning behaviour. Our expectation is that for every negative comment a student receives, they should have at least five positive comments. These are logged on a central system and we are proud that the ratio in some year groups is 1:20.

Transparency and clarity is paramount in the success of our policy. Expectations are shared with the girls through a number of media – planners, classroom posters, assemblies, modelling etc. The students are well aware of the statements that teachers can refer to when rewarding and sanctioning – indeed, they designed the posters. They are also, of course, fully aware of how and why sanctions can be escalated. The mantra for staff is to be consistent and persistent; we know we are only as strong as our weakest link.

Respect and reconciliation are central to the success of our behaviour policies. After all, we work with young people, who can make a lot of mistakes. Our duty is to help them recognise that when mistakes are made there are consequences – but that we will always move on, together.

Knowing our students as their families might

David Boyle, Dunraven School

Dunraven is becoming an all-through school, developing from its 11-18 origins to 4-18, one year at a time. Our primary phase is now up to year 2 and we reach capacity in 2020.

Our primary phase is organised traditionally pastorally – each class has a teacher, and some have an additional adult who gets to know each child really well. We work hard to develop a close relationship with families to extend our understanding by offering workshops (eg on growth mindset), short courses (eg developing numeracy) and weekly in-class reading sessions.

Our secondary phase is premised on the same idea – every child has a strong relationship with a particular adult who gets to know the student as their family might. In the secondary phase, each tutor team is led by a director of learning – year (DOLY) supported by an associate DOLY as well as by a named member of our senior team; this is also true of our sixth form provision.

We are developing a house system to help further integrate the all-through concept and, for the first time, year 7 have been placed into mixed ability house tutor groups (as opposed to their 'setted' teaching groups). We will review the impact of this but expect to 'roll out' house tutor groups for each successive cohort. Early indicators suggest that this approach has enhanced an already effective transition process (positive behaviour logs are up, negative ones are down) and encouraged students to make friends across a wider peer group than has traditionally been the case.

Our inclusion team works closely with our pastoral team to provide additional and expert support and intervention as required. The inclusion team encompasses a range of expertise including

SEN, EAL, more able, student engagement, attendance, student counsellor and family worker. We also have a speech and language communication centre. At our weekly interim review meetings, DOLYs refer students for additional support in line with need. The team also provides the link to a range of external agencies including CAMHS. We take advantage of other support on offer and thus act as a placement for trainee social workers and counsellors who benefit from our team's expertise while offering an additional, in-house resource to support students.

We encourage and promote social development as part of our pastoral commitment in a number of ways. Students work as peer mentors (in KS1 as well as KS4) to support and resolve issues that students might be having at break and lunchtime. Our sixth form students act as literacy and numeracy buddies to Y7 and Y8 students; KS3 students have worked with primary phase children on a range of projects including dance, animation in ICT and design technology.

Our aim of excellence for all is underpinned by supporting students' social and emotional needs in order to ensure that such issues cannot act as barriers to their learning.

Six-weekly assessments

*Paul Halliwell,
St Bonaventure's School*

A team from Michigan State University visited St Bonaventure's in December 2014 to look at how we support

ethnic minorities in education. Nearing Christmas 2015, a different group from MSU returned to see for themselves the work of the pastoral team.

St Bonaventure's is a larger than average boys comprehensive school in the London Borough of Newham. Newham is the second most deprived borough in England and all indices place it in the bottom quintile in the London boroughs for everything, except education outcomes which put it in the upper quintile. It's a high performing school and the results exceed national averages. There is no difference between boys' results and high performing girls' nationally and locally. English results are significantly higher than the average for boys - in excess of 30% higher. As a Catholic school with Gospel values we reinforce the message of peace, love and service and the school motto of 'In Sanctitatis et Doctrina' (in holiness and learning) is understood by all. Our main role is to produce young men who will do great good in the world.

The pastoral team consists of the deputy head, three assistant heads – one in each key stage, seven heads of year, five assistant heads of year, three full-time learning mentors, a full-time chaplain, three councillors, an attendance manager and an inclusion manager. All other staff understand that they also have a pastoral role in our school. 'St Bon's' follows a team approach of consistency and persistence to enforce basic rules such as uniform policy. As early intervention is best,

in order not to allow a small problem to develop into a huge one. However, the consequences of poor behaviour are inevitable, rather than severe.

Close parental involvement is vital, as are our excellent working relationships with external agencies such as family counselling, mental health services, behaviour and attendance services, parish priests and the Metropolitan Police.

Monitoring is supplemented by academic assessments every six weeks, and we post reports home to parents. Intervention meetings with the heads of year and curriculum leaders involve parents very early on with underachievement concerns.

We constantly reward our students and shout their achievements from the rooftops, giving out certificates and badges, taking photographs and posting their achievements on social media. Merits are given out in achievement assemblies. Our students love to be praised.

Our anti-bullying strategies empower the well-behaved children and give opportunities for bullies to be reported online by email. We carry out bullying surveys every six weeks. My mobile number is given to all parents as a point of out-of-hours contact. St Bon's promotes respect for all and treats every student the same. We care for our students and their wellbeing is at the centre of all that we do.



A successful approach to flipped learning and AFL

*Natalie Sketchley,
Franklin College*

Flipped learning fits so well with assessment for learning.

There has been a lot in the media about flipped learning and with so many waves in teaching practices it is hard not to be cynical and to embrace every new approach with the same gusto (or lack of it). So it was at Franklin College, Grimsby, where topic based learning through traditional teacher-led approaches (namely lectures, interspersed with Q&A sessions and endless activities to check the students had digested what they had 'learnt') had not resulted in good outcomes on our humanities courses.

Teachers' hours and hours of marking; nights spent perfecting endless PowerPoints and the making, laminating, photocopying, sticking, cutting, colour coding of resources; had not developed students' analytical and evaluation skills, nor their ability to perform well in A-level exams.

The simple premise of the flipped approach – to transfer all content delivery outside of the classroom and to move the more complex work inside – made sense to me. So after another year of average results (despite increasing the number of assessments, providing even more extensive feedback and re-planning of schemes of work) I decided four years ago to trial flipped learning with my A-level history classes. As outcomes sharply improved, we decided as a department to adopt the flipped approach for all courses. What follows is an overview of a successful flipped approach.



Principles of the flipped approach

For a successful flipped classroom, there are three main principles that need to be instilled to ensure that teachers and students are both equally committed to the flipped approach.

- » Consistency. The flipped classroom cannot be dipped in and out of. To work, it needs to underpin the whole course. In a flipped classroom the students know that there is a requirement for them to come to lessons prepared, ready to discuss, debate and formulate responses to key topics and questions. From the start of the course they are directed to a central access point, in our case a VLE that holds the flipped material and clear instructions for each task.
- » High expectations of completion and strategies for non-completion. When I've delivered training on flipped learning the question posed by most teachers is 'what do you do when students don't complete the



flipped work? There are always a couple of teething problems at the start of any course, and teachers need to consider approaches for non-completion. However, once students realise they need to have completed the work in order to participate in the lesson, they quickly adapt. By moving the more straightforward tasks out of the classroom, students are more likely to complete their homework. They feel more confident, they need less help and they often engage with the tasks more. From my experience, they are more likely to watch a lecture or documentary and answer questions than they are to complete an essay or assessment.

- » Relevant, engaging and interesting for the students. Interesting and challenging flipped work stimulates student engagement. They arrive at lessons keen to debate the issues raised in the films, lectures and documentaries they watched, or the articles, reviews and journals they read.

How we flipped

For most of the subjects we use the app padlet as our central VLE. Following each lesson, flipped work is uploaded with clear instructions of what needs to be completed. This might be a lecture from Harvard, a journal article, a feature length film, a newspaper article, a PowerPoint, a scan of a relevant chapter and so on. Some courses purchase products and enrol students onto online established courses - for example the dynamic learning service from Hodder, or the Pre-chewed Politics site. Staff have also used screencasts, whereby they record their voice over the PowerPoints they may previously have used in class.

Lesson time

A query teachers sometimes raise about flipped learning is 'what do you do during lessons?' I respond by citing Bloom's taxonomy and pose the question: why are we getting the students to do the difficult and more challenging work - the analysis, evaluation, synthesis and critical thinking - outside the classroom? And the simpler tasks - the knowledge and the basic understanding of key content - within the classroom? The way we do it now, lessons within the humanities department are focused on the development of skills.

Organisation of the classroom is essential. We changed our classrooms from the 'horseshoe', previously the most common layout, removed the central teacher's desk and moved into groups of tables. We adopted a 'hot-seating' policy, whereby the seating of students may alter a few times over the course of a lesson. This fluid approach has enabled greater differentiation: particular students will be paired up in order to collaborate with others with similar targets, some students will be working on different tasks, some students will be repairing past work and some students may be supporting others on a topic they have mastered. Students are now allowed to master a topic before moving onto the next - this was not possible in traditional full class teaching.

'Hot-seating', in which students may alter their locations a few times over the course of a lesson, enables greater differentiation

There is less focus on activities within the flipped classroom and more focus on working with students on a 1-1 basis. Previously teachers sometimes used



‘wacky’ approaches, embracing washing lines, dice, stop clocks, paper hats, and so on. But none seemed to have much impact on the progress of students’ skills.

Now the planning of lessons centres on a focus question, which normally comes from past examination questions or key debates.

Using the knowledge acquired from the flipped work, students collaborate to produce graphic organisers (eg living graphs, mandalas) to categorise and rank, or problem solve, and create bodies of evidence to support key arguments.

For example for a history lesson on USA’s civil rights, students’ flipped learning was watching a documentary on the 1970s Wounded knee event and reading Supreme Court transcripts. Then in the lesson they drew on their prior knowledge to debate the star question, ‘can you ever compensate for past injustices?’

Assessment for learning

Another benefit to the flipped classroom is the freeing up of time to focus on assessment. Assessments link directly to the exam and use the same format as the exam. It is unrealistic and unfair to the students to allow them one or two weeks to complete an assignment if they have 45 minutes in the exam. I’ve initiated ‘plan and complete’ and ‘share and repair’ lessons in the humanities subjects. Students deconstruct essay titles and group or pair-plan responses. They practice writing lines of arguments, use diamond 9s to consider relative importance of factors and play ‘ping pong evidence’ with their arguments. All this is fundamental preparation for the development of skills. All assessment is timed, and begins with the students recording their previous targets.

Students have ownership of their progress and all assessed work within their personalised assessment for learning (AFL) file, which is kept separately from their notes, class work and flipped work. All students have a colour-coded grade-tracking sheet, on which they track their grades in relation to their target and aspirational grades.

Peer and self-assessment is regular and is taken as seriously as teacher feedback. We reviewed how we conducted peer assessment and concluded there was little worth in students applying mark schemes

to their peers’ work. Instead they complete peer assessment by answering questions and improving their peers’ work.

In peer assessment, students answer questions and improve their peers’ work

For example when peer-assessing essays, students might be asked to ‘write their line of argument in 20 words’, ‘find an example of synthesis’ or ‘provide an example of continuity and change’, and so on. Students are therefore able to identify successful components and amend or add where their peer’s work is lacking.

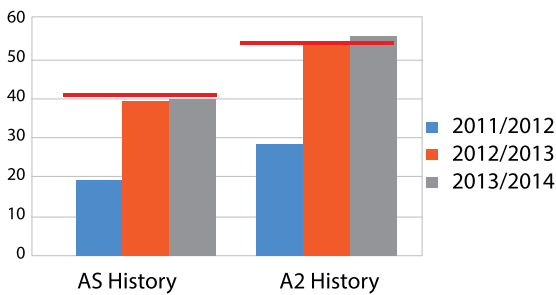
Impact

- » Homework completion: flipped work is no longer seen as a bolt-on to the ‘main’ lesson, as homework was. For the student it is not additional to their studies, but essential.
- » Independent skills: students are more independent and have a greater ownership of their progress.
- » Time: the sourcing of articles, films, making podcasts or screencasts is time consuming. However I was amazed how many excellent resources are readily available. One of the most noticeable benefits of the flipped classroom is the amount of time it frees up for teachers to assess and check on student progress.
- » Differentiated student support and student progress: by removing content delivery from the classroom, teachers are now able to support learners more effectively, and offer increased personalised feedback.
- » Improved student and teacher dialogue: it is now less didactic, more personalized; and students are more involved in the evaluation not only of their own learning – equally important, also that of their peers.
- » Sharing resources: a flipped classroom means there is less use of subject-specific resources. Teachers now share lesson planning and resources more than in the past.
- » Exam preparation: exam skills are central to the schemes of work, so there is less summative and more formative assessment.

Outcomes

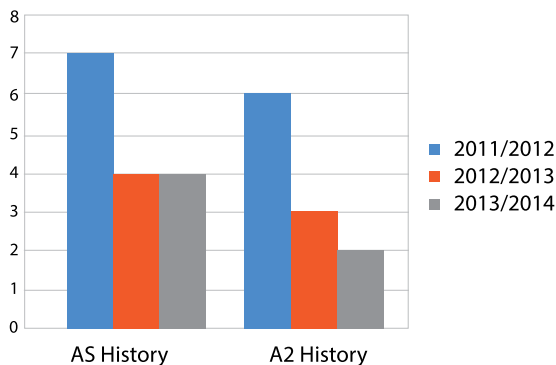
In my experience at Franklin College flipped classes and courses outperform non-flipped. The first year that I trialled the flipped approach was with AS and A2 history classes. Results of the flipped class far exceeded the non-flipped class. For example at AS level the flipped class completed all the assignments within the classroom, received immediate feedback and completed extensive self and peer assessment. The non-flipped class completed all the assignments as homework, and despite receiving excellent written feedback did not progress as well. Using ALPS value added as a measure, the non-flipped class scored 7, while the flipped class scored 1. Differences in high grades were also notable. The flipped class gained 68% high grades, while the non-flipped class gained 17% against a SFCBM of 42%.

HIGH GRADES: Flipped adopted 2012/13



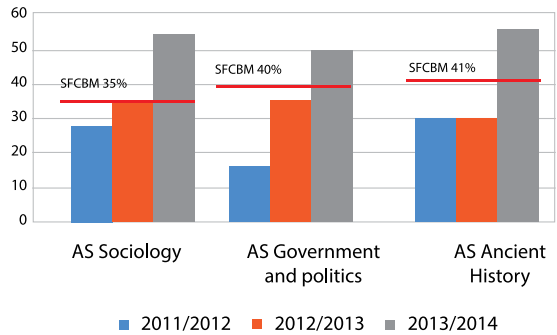
History at both AS and A2 level saw improvements. Over a two-year period, ALPS value added went from a 6, to a 3 to a 2, and high grades from 28% to 54% to 56%. At AS level ALPS value added (where 9 is the lowest and 1 the highest) went from a 7 to a 4 and was sustained at a 4, and high grades from 19% to 40% to 41%.

ALPS Value Added



Results improved across all courses that adopted the flipped approach, and this was sustained. The year the Government and Politics subject used the flipped website Pre-chewed politics, high grades increased at AS level from 26% to 50% and ALPS value added went from 4 to a 2. Likewise, the year that AS Sociology adopted flipped learning the percentage of high grades improved from 34% to 54%, and ALPS value added from 4 to a 2. Ancient History improved from 30% to 54% and value added also from a 4 to a 2.

2012/2013: Changes to AFL
2013/2014: AFL and flipped



What next?

Curriculum reform and a move to the linear A-levels presents opportunities to redesign courses. The globalisation of teaching practice means there are even more resources available for teachers to use. The growth of mobile technology provides greater opportunity for teachers to foster the independent learner and promote successful collaborative flipped learning. One of my A-level History students commented: ‘flipped learning has given me a greater sense of involvement in my learning. I’m able to access flipped resources on my mobile whenever and wherever I want and I no longer have to listen to teachers telling me information over and over again, which makes me switch off.’

The success of the flipped approach in the humanities department has inspired many others to successfully adopt the model at Franklin College, and this has fostered a culture of independent learning and challenging education. Personally, flipped learning has reignited my passion for teaching and learning. The high levels of interaction with my students has changed the dynamics of my classroom. My students are no longer passive participants provided with information, but creative and confident individuals who challenge and take control of their own education.



Are you a talking textbook? It won't make students want to come to your lessons

*Simon Tilmouth,
Shrewsbury Sixth Form College*

And if you are applying for a job in education: show them how you can relate to the students.

What always amazes me when recruiting new teachers for post-16 students is that so often the person we interview seems to think we want someone who can verbalise what students need to know – rather than actually teach them. Is there a perception in the teaching profession that suddenly at 16 students need something different, or indeed have developed a range of study skills and independence that frankly as a lifelong learner I still struggle with?

My experience suggests that in fact the need for excellent teaching and learning strategies becomes more important not less. The quantum leap from GCSE to A-level requires teachers to be highly skilled with a range of strategies to engage, enthuse and enable students to achieve. The move to linear specifications make this even more important. As a profession we are bombarded with initiatives that are going to make the difference

– the IWB, the tablet etc. But as Frank Coffield said, 'nobody ever put their success down to an interactive white board'. Indeed, BF Skinner said way back in the 1960s 'any teacher who can be replaced by a computer, should be.'

Recent research appears to confirm this.

As a profession we should be proud of, value and respect our body of knowledge and the skills that we have developed. However as professionals we also have a responsibility to be lifelong learners and to remain up to date with not only our subjects but also the latest research into teaching and learning. These responsibilities include an expectation to share good practice. The right of access to top quality CPD and support is vital.

As a mentor for NQTs and trainee teachers, I am often asked, what is the most important thing to get right? The answer is easy – your relationship with your students/class – hands down, no contest. The fact you know your subject and have some

knowledge of teaching and learning methodology is taken as read; but your ability to relate to students, empathise, show emotional intelligence is essential. Mutually respectful relationships are not built on listening to the talking textbook at the front of the class. As with deep learning, they are built on interaction: processing, questioning, feedback, discussion, evaluation.

As a mentor for NQTs and trainee teachers, I'm often asked, what is the most important thing to get right? The answer is easy – your relationship with your students/class

On a societal level, we have a responsibility to induct students into the social patterns of the adult world. Common courtesy and enquiry into their lives with a cheery 'good morning,' 'how are you?' 'did you have a nice weekend?' may well be greeted at first with at best a blank stare and at worst a look as if they



have been assaulted in some way. Nonetheless, it goes a long way to developing a positive social and working relationship with even some of the most challenging young people we meet.

So my plea to all is to use all of those skills that teachers have at their fingertips (often unrealised): engage and relate to your students – even in a 20-minute micro teach. (In my book whoever wins the micro teach gets the job). If it was about reading the text aloud, I would film you and thank you very much!

Which strategy to use? Flipped learning? Kagan techniques? Yes all of them and more - I used to think post-16 students weren't interested in plasticine and stickers – how wrong was I! Too easy? Try getting them to make a model of the ultrastructure of a muscle cell.

Asking students to construct a model of how memory works using only objects found in the household had my 16-year-old daughter discussing memory and how it works, talking through how it might be depicted and frankly engaging in something more than YouTube videos. Oh, and she also now knows more about memory than I have forgotten.

We need to engage and enthuse these young people by making them want to come to our lessons.

Interactive learning techniques such as Kagan allows students' relationships with their peers to blossom and their experience of school or college to become enriched. In one lesson early in my career, when I asked where David was today, half the group responded, 'Who's David?' Someone contributed, 'the one

down the front with the green jacket.' How sad. At my college I work with students from 40+ schools, and international students from several countries. What a great opportunity to meet new interesting people and expand our horizons (yes, ours as well). I am constantly learning from the diverse range of experiences they bring to each lesson. What a privilege.

So if you are applying for a job in post-16 education (or any job in education): show us what you can do, show us how you can relate to the students. And above all, show us your humanity and care of these young people.

Speaking personally: most of the young people I have taught at sixth form have been far more intelligent than me – if you can harness their energy and enthusiasm it will be all you can do to hang on and enjoy the ride!



Co-constructing a framework for exceptional education

*Claire Sheppard,
Woodrush High School*

SLT members from different schools work together to design and apply this whole-school improvement tool – and it's the co-construction that most inspires them.

Framework for Exceptional Education

SSAT has been working with a group of schools from the Leading Edge network to refine and develop a framework to support schools along their journey of self-improvement. The Framework for Exceptional Education evolved from a review of the evidence; and a teaching and learning audit developed by SSAT with senior leadership teams from a number of schools. It provides a rubric for the stages of development in three areas: professional knowledge of the classroom, professional disciplines and strategic leadership of learning. These are then divided into 10 strands, each with a progression from beginning to transforming.

The notion of the use of rubrics for school improvement is contested. Some argue that development is not linear, and that at different stages of a school's journey there is a need to focus on different sorts of things. While this might hold true at system level, we would argue that using a coherent structure allows all members of a school to think about all aspects of school development. This encourages more distributed leadership and gives an opportunity for all members of the school community to think about how they might develop their practice.

Underpinning the framework is the belief that to achieve a world-class education system we need world-class schools that transform the lives of their pupils, teachers and communities, and inspire each other to keep developing. We want the framework to be developmental, motivational and supportive. Vital to this has been the process of creating it and designing how we can support schools to use it. Specifically we wanted to collaborate with schools throughout. One of the development group describes how she has worked with us during the project.

Claire Sheppard, Assistant Headteacher, Learning and Teaching, at Woodrush High School writes:

In September 2015, I joined 15 other SLT representatives from secondary schools all over the UK in the SSAT's pilot group meeting for the proposed 'framework for exceptional education; journey to world class', which was to be launched at the National Conference in December. The framework has been in development for over a year already and the SSAT ideally want every school to be able to use it as an improvement tool to support their journey to world class. SSAT's 2000 Leading Edge schools are working to establish a benchmark starting point.

The framework is designed to be a formative, developmental, professional journey for schools. It shouldn't be viewed as an 'add on' to the daily work of good schools; it should underpin everything we already do. It shouldn't either be viewed as akin to some kind of Ofsted framework or criteria. This is something to be done 'by schools, for schools'. It was music to our ears to

realise that this framework has been designed to genuinely support schools' development and recognise success at the highest level.

As we worked to unpick the content of the framework, colleagues shared thoughts on how this could work in practice, and gave feedback on what evidence and progress through the framework might look like at various stages.

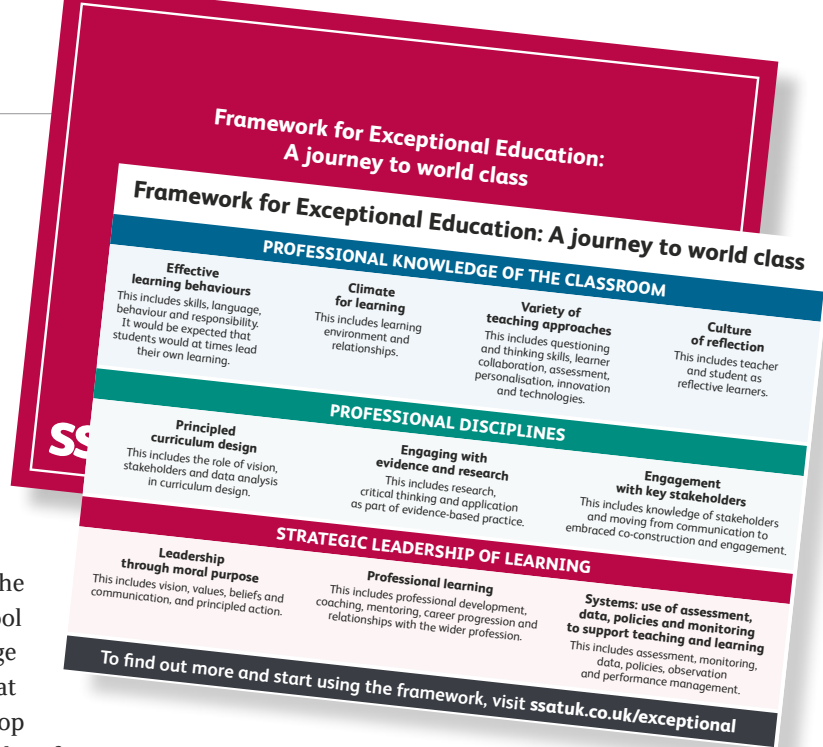
There was a great deal of discussion about accreditation. At the start of the process, the plan was to provide a framework for school improvement that any school could engage with, and accreditation would be gained at the end of the process, on achieving the top end of the criteria in most categories, therefore being labelled a 'Leading Edge: World Class School'. There was much debate around the 'process and the journey' as opposed to 'winning the badge at the end'. Is there a danger, when there's a 'badge/ title / shiny trophy' on offer, that principled, honest self-reflection goes out of the window?

After much debate, we decided that if accreditation came at the start, so that schools are recognised for participating in and engaging with the framework, they would be more likely to use it as a real development tool, and get more from the journey as opposed to just the end goal. Participating schools could get a Leading Edge visit to have a professional dialogue and facilitate self-assessment against the framework. Schools would also be allocated a peer mentor, who would be trained by SSAT.

However, it was also decided that schools working at the 'transforming' level in one or more categories could be awarded specific accreditation.

This debate and discussion led to genuine co-construction. The group's thoughts and feedback on all aspects of the project – the name, the framework itself, the process and accreditation – were taken into account in the final decisions.

Upon returning to school, I shared the framework and plans with my SLT colleagues; and we are using the framework and criteria, initially to self-audit as a leadership team. It provides great food for thought and could help structure reflection and drive improvement for teams at all levels. We see it as a valuable tool to evaluate successes and areas for further development with a range of



stakeholders including, in our case, governors.

The next stage for the pilot group is to work with SSAT on the finer details of the accreditation process. I am intrigued to see how 'Framework for Exceptional Education: Journey to World Class' develops and excited to be part of the pilot group helping to shape this pioneering project.

The process of co-construction is of course tricky and time-consuming. Curating a wide range of views involves careful balancing of what might be theoretically advantageous along with our experience of what is involved in practical implementation of an initiative. With many schools now contributing their varying and valued perspectives, we hope we are coming together to create something which is open and inclusive enough to inspire development in all sorts of schools and across all phases. And providing enough well-thought-through detail to support real, manageable change.

All SSAT member schools are able to use the Framework for Exceptional Education and it will be integrated into the Leading Edge programme from April 2016. We look forward to seeing how it evolves, and hearing how the framework is applied in different settings.



Structural autonomy and collaboration in multi-academy trusts

Professor David Hopkins

David Hopkins is Professor Emeritus at the Institute of Education, University College London and Bright Tribe Professor of Education at the University of Bolton. With the recent publication of *Exploding the Myths of School Reform* (Hopkins 2013), David has completed his trilogy of books on school and system improvement.

Turning schools into academies does not necessarily improve results; here are some approaches that work.

The dramatic expansion of the academies programme in England has been the major structural reform in education during the 21st century so far. Academies are, of course, self-governing non-profit charitable trusts directly funded by the Department for Education (DfE) and are independent of local authority control.

Reviews of student performance in academy chains are however ambivalent at best.

It is clear from the evidence that simply becoming an academy is not a panacea. We need strategies that not only continue to raise standards but also build capacity within the school and system (Hopkins 2013). One cannot just drive to raise standards in an instrumental way, by changing structures; one also needs to develop social, intellectual and organisational capital.

Building capacity demands that we replace numerous individual and idiosyncratic initiatives with a coherent and effective school improvement

strategy that not only reflects the moral purpose of the academy chain but also is controllable, in organisational and financial management terms. This is what we attempted to do in designing and establishing Bright Tribe and Adventure Learning Academy Schools Trust (ALAT).

We must replace numerous individual and idiosyncratic initiatives with a coherent and effective school improvement strategy

The Bright Tribe and ALAT family of schools is a new MAT, with an unrelenting moral purpose to ensure that the schools create learning conditions that enable every young person to reach their potential – wherever that may lead. Our first conversion was in January 2014 and we now have 12 schools in the North West, Cornwall and Suffolk. The remainder of this article describes the main features of our approach.

Personalised learning

At the core of the Bright Tribe mission is a commitment to treat every learner as an individual and with respect, recognising that they have a unique set of gifts that it is our privilege to nurture. We are confident that this aim can be achieved through the rigorous application of the personalised learning and school improvement strategies that underpin the Bright Tribe and Adventure Learning approach.

This moral purpose drives the approach that aims to deliver the following outcomes for all Bright Tribe learners as illustrated in figure 1.

- » Progress: all will make at least expected progress; with the aim that 70% of every cohort makes greater than expected progress.
- » Achievement: all will achieve in line with national norms; and the great majority will outstrip this.
- » Learning skills: all have a unique and personalised learner profile that will enable them to take control of their learning, understanding their areas of strength as well as areas to develop.
- » Curriculum entitlement: all have a curriculum guarantee that means alongside an unrelenting focus on the core academic and vocational subjects they will have access to a wide range of additional experiences. These will enrich their time at school and strengthen their view of themselves and their place in the world.

Whole school design

Bright Tribe is adopting a whole-school design that comprises six core elements (Bright Tribe 2014a). These six elements – leadership, personalised learning, curriculum frameworks, high quality teaching, partnerships and accountability – are the essential features of an outstanding school. Each is underpinned by a set of proven practices that will be consistently adopted across the family of schools.

School improvement pathway

As a result of our ongoing school improvement work (Hopkins 2013), we have gained specific knowledge about the combination of strategies needed to move a school and a system along the performance continuum towards excellence. Hence our adoption of a phased approach to school improvement; all of our schools are on an improvement journey that is intended to lead to excellence as shown in figure 2.

In our supporting materials, we outline the four phases of the performance continuum, describing what each aspect of the whole school design looks like at each phase of improvement. We identify the key issues that emerge at each step along the pathway, and suggest a series of questions to help

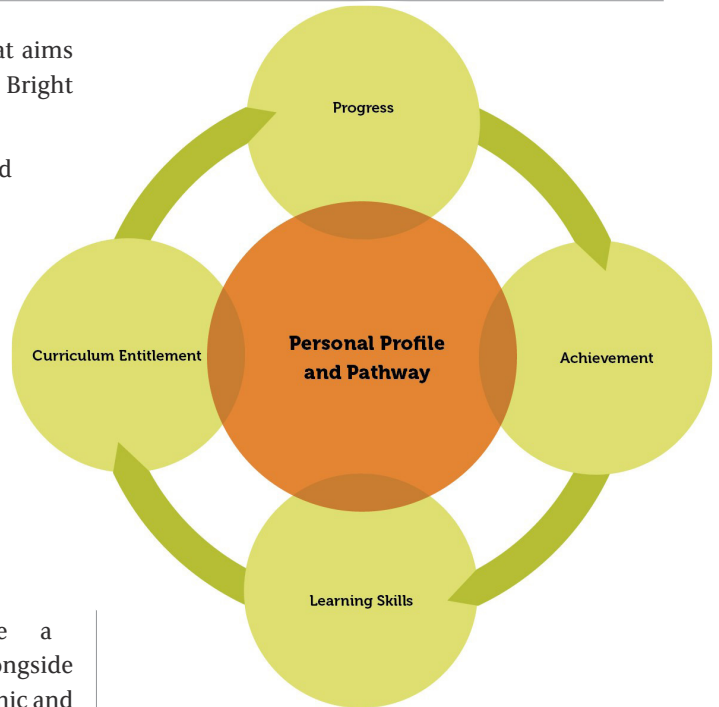


Figure 1: Personal profile and pathway

progress development. These questions help school leaders to:

- » complete an honest diagnosis of their school's current performance
- » prepare a plan for progress towards excellence.

The following provides a very brief summary of the appropriate intervention and support and the characteristics of each school type at each phase of development.

Getting on to the improvement pathway: these schools lack the capacity to improve. They need a high level of external support and direction in order to get the basics in place and to establish the preconditions for success.

Schools on the journey to good: these schools need to refine their developmental priorities, focus on specific teaching and learning issues, and build capacity within the school to support this work.

Getting to outstanding schools: in this phase of their journey schools need specific strategies that ensure the school remains a 'moving' school, continues to enhance pupil performance and engages in networking with Bright Tribe schools and others. The key issues here are about succession planning and developing staff at all levels.

Outstanding schools that sustain excellence: this is measured by the way in which they search for





Figure 2: School improvement pathway

excellence internally and support other schools in their own journeys of improvement externally.

The primacy of teacher development

If our aspiration of personalised learning is to be realised, then schools need to be places where teachers and leaders learn as much as students. This is why Bright Tribe places such a high premium on teacher and leader development based on the following principles (Bright Tribe 2014b):

- » All development is focused on the professional behaviours that reliably enhance the progress of students.
- » Teacher and leader development is best achieved through the extension of individual professional skill within a collaborative setting. It also depends on the school and trust regarding professional growth and development, and accountability, as opposite sides of the same coin.
- » Every teacher and leader within school is on a professional development pathway that leads to the extension of professional practice, is amenable to accreditation and can lead to the acquisition of a higher degree in conjunction with our partner HEI – The University of Bolton.

Building capacity

Capacity is built at the regional level to ensure that all those in the Trust’s family of schools progress as rapidly as possible towards excellence. Figure 3 illustrates how this works. In particular:

- » Central to regional capacity building is the regional director or executive principal who provides leadership, develops the narrative and acts as the Trust’s champion in that geographic area.

- » One of their key tasks is to build local capacity by training a group of lead practitioners in the Bright Tribe ways of working, materials and strategies.
- » The training design used to develop trainers is the Joyce and Showers (1995) coaching model.
- » These trainers then work with the school improvement teams in each school to build within-school capacity and consistency.
- » Inter-school networking allows for authentic innovation and the transfer of outstanding practice, thus building the capacity of the network as a whole.

The three key aspects to this strategy – school improvement teams, staff development processes and networking – provide the focus for much of the training for our executive principals, as they play a critical role in systemic improvement.

The benefits of coaching teachers

Joyce and Showers found that coaching appeared to contribute to the transfer of training in five ways.

Coached teachers:

- » practised new strategies more often and with greater skill
- » adapted the strategies more appropriately to their own goals and contexts
- » retained and increased their skill over time (uncoached teachers did not)
- » were more likely to explain the new models of teaching to their students
- » demonstrated a clearer understanding of the purposes and use of the new strategies.

From Joyce, B. R. & Showers, B. (2000) Designing Training and Peer Coaching: Our needs for learning, VA, USA, ASCD

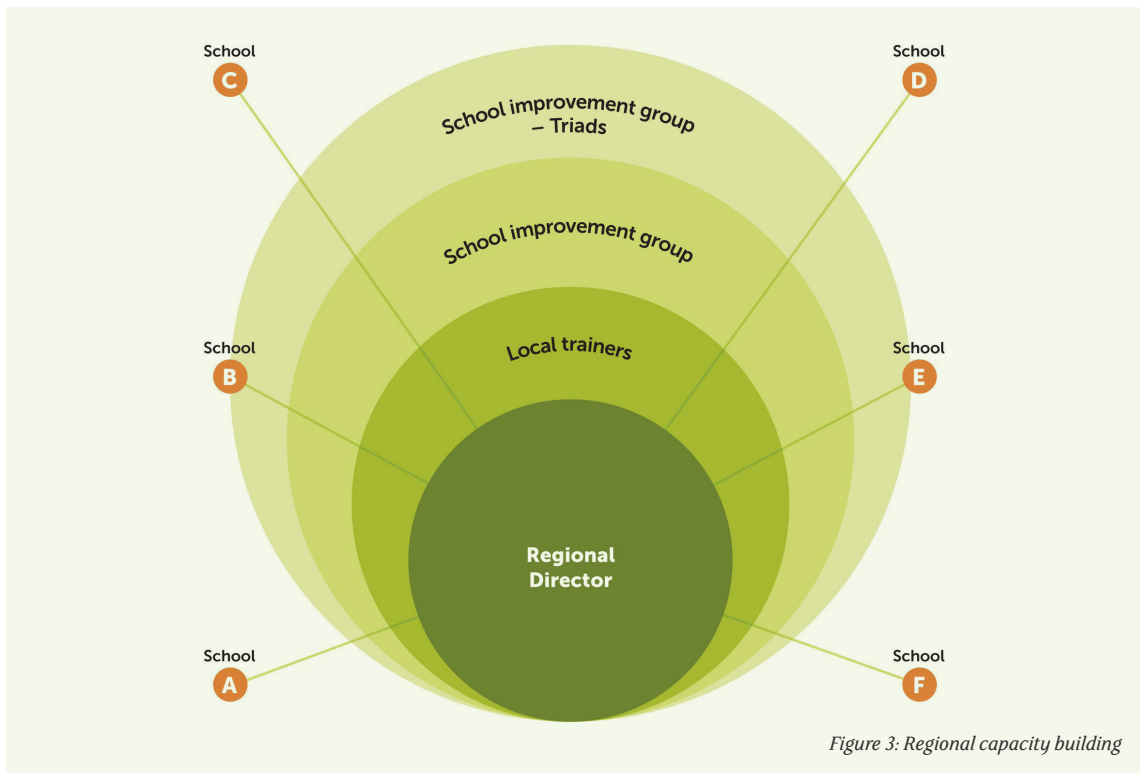


Figure 3: Regional capacity building

In concluding

It is clear from international benchmarking studies of school performance (Hopkins 2013) and our experience that:

- » Decentralisation by itself increases variation and can reduce overall system performance. There is a consequent need for some 'mediating level' within the system to connect the centre to schools and schools to each other – academy chains and MATs can provide this function.
- » Leadership is the crucial factor both in school transformation and system renewal, so investment particularly in principal and leadership training is essential – hence the use of frameworks such as the whole school design and improvement pathway to guide action.
- » The quality of teaching is the best determinant of student performance, so any reform framework must address the professional repertoires of teachers and other adults in the classroom – thus the focus in these trusts on the progress of learners and the development of teachers.
- » Outstanding educational systems find ways of learning from the best and use the system's diversity to good advantage – this is why capacity needs to be built not only within trusts, but also between them at the system level.

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¹ Given that the approaches to school improvement taken by both the Bright Tribe and Adventure Learning Academy Schools Trust are essentially similar, we sometimes refer to the names of the Trusts interchangeably in the text



How some academies have benefited from cloud computing

*Richard Sparks,
Academies Enterprise Trust*

Cloud computing can be used to help boost productivity, learning, engagement and access.

Founded in 2008, Academies Enterprise Trust (AET) is a non-profit making charitable trust, which believes that all young people deserve to become world-class learners. The Trust works with a national federation of primary, secondary and special schools to ensure that all learners achieve significant improvements in standards, and are provided with every opportunity to fulfil their potential. With over 5,500 staff and 42,000 students, AET has become the largest multi-academy sponsor in the UK and currently supports 68 schools.

In 2012 AET's Board took the decision to migrate all its academies to Google Apps, in order to provide secure email, document storage/management and web publishing. AET is

now one of the largest users of Google Apps in Europe and has built up a wealth of knowledge about how to use these and other cloud-based tools to support teaching and learning. In this article we will look at four areas where a 'cloudy' approach to computing has helped improve our academies' productivity, learning, engagement and access.

Productivity

As part of the rollout of Google Apps into every AET academy, administration staff were trained on the best use of the tools. Change management played a key part of this rollout - relating what they would do formerly with software-based tools locally to the benefits from doing the same activity using a cloudy solution.

A simple example would be in the automation of school consent forms. Previously, central office staff would spend a lot of time chasing parents for consent forms. Using Google Forms - online forms accessible through a browser - they have massively improved the efficiency of this process: parents receive a text

with a URL in it that links to the online form. What used to take days and result in a limited number of responses and many lost forms can now be achieved in less than an hour. Parents like it too, and typically 50% or more of the responses will be captured within 15-20 minutes of the text being sent out. This frees up valuable time.

The benefit of using this in our Maltings Academy in Essex academy was recognised in an Investors In People report which stated: 'Areas of particular strength and good practice are the use of technology including Google in order to open up communications and engagement. Extensive use continues to be made of Google survey and questionnaire type activities to elicit feedback from a range of stakeholders.'

Learning

Clacton Coastal Academy really embraced Google Apps, investing in hardware, training and CPD to embed it in the everyday work of staff and students. They were pioneers in our network in using Google Classroom. This is a powerful workflow tool



that allows teachers to package lesson content, assignments and homework, deliver it to a class, manage and monitor responses, mark and capture feedback. It is much easier to use and manage than the VLE – and it's free!

The academy created an innovation panel internally to share best practice. This involved 750 Chromebooks (low-cost browser-only computers), staff being trained and regular innovation newsletters being sent out to staff.

Google Classroom is now embedded in teaching and learning in this academy; teaching staff talk of how it has freed up time and allowed them to engage better with students. Its benefits were recognised in a recent Ofsted report, which stated: 'A new system of online learning is developing rapidly at the academy. This allows teachers to comment on what students are writing as they work in the classroom, or give

them feedback while they are actually working at home.

Teachers can comment on what students are writing while they are actually working in the classroom or at home

Students speak of the positive effect this is having on their learning as they get advice on how to improve more quickly.'

Across our academy network, we now have 1,400 teachers using Google Classroom, this has spread largely through word of mouth as they experience its ease of use.

Engagement

Google Plus is a communication tool that allows communities of interest to be developed online. Originally designed as Google's answer to Facebook, it has now matured and specialised in group collaboration and communication.

AET's central team created Trust-wide Google Plus communities that embraced different groups - a principals' group, a mathematics group, etc. Senior leaders were made 'owners' of these groups, which were initially seeded by central staff with articles and notes of interest, then promoted in regional and national conferences.

Usage rapidly spiralled as staff from all over our academy network started to share thoughts, news, ideas, lesson resources and tools. It also became the first place that people would go when asking questions such as How do I...? Does anyone know...? Has anyone tried...? As these are national fora, the questions and answers are visible to all the members. This has led to rich collaboration, with sharing of best practice and interaction taking place all the time. Ian Taylor, AET's leader of maths and numeracy, said: 'The





Google+ community is a critical tool for us to bring our teachers from all over the country together and to form a united AET maths team. Colleagues share lesson resources, ideas and tools that help to improve outcomes on a daily basis. It reminds them that they are not alone and that they are part of the wider family of AET maths teachers.'

Access

One of the greatest challenges we face in the use of ICT across the Trust is to ensure that we can continue to invest in it and give staff and students exposure to the latest and best technologies. With austerity measures pressuring schools budgets further, this is now a major challenge.

AET's Newlands Academy in southeast London wanted to explore the use of Chromebooks (low cost web-based laptops) as an alternative to more expensive, traditional technology. A number were bought and given to staff and every year 11

student. Staff were trained in the use of Chromebooks, Classroom and Google Drive. They then prepared lessons in Classroom and Drive and provided eSafety/home access settings.

Following successful pilot, Peter Stewart, Newlands' principal, said: 'Impact on learning has been very noticeable. Pupils submit homework and are completing coursework at home. In our SEMH (social, emotional and mental health) environment this always been a challenge, and for the moment we are succeeding. Another impact is the affordability of the Chromebooks compared to other types of laptops. As everything is 'in the cloud' we benefit from free updates and upgrades.'

We are always exploring how we can use cloud technologies even more to support teaching and learning and improve efficiency

AET now has over 1,850 Chromebooks in use across the academy network and has also developed Chromebooks - a free, open source tool that can be used on practically any PC to turn it, in effect, into a Chromebook. Chromebooks is not a long-term solution, but for academies with limited budgets and a wealth of older equipment (eg netbooks) which are collecting dust in ICT stores, this can squeeze more life out of existing investment and allow budgets to be invested more strategically.

Overall, this has been a successful journey for AET and one we are set to continue, as we are always exploring how we can use cloud technologies even more to support teaching and learning and improve efficiency.

Google Apps is free for schools and academies and is available on <https://apps.google.com/>



A broader view of what makes for improvement

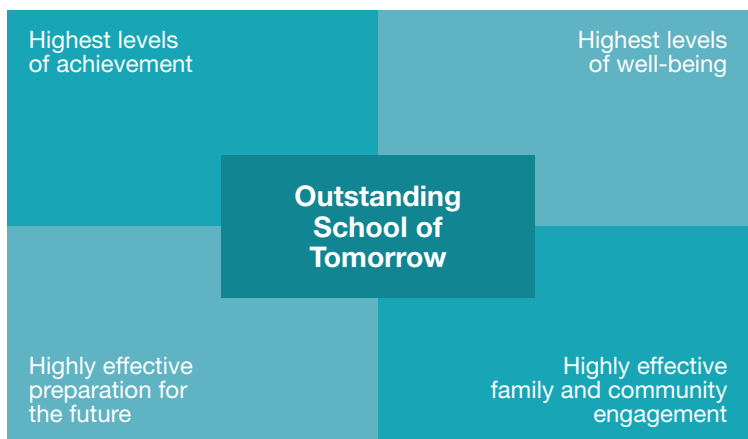
*Malcolm Groves,
Schools of Tomorrow*

Four factors – achievement, well-being, family/community engagement and preparation for the future – characterise this network of schools' approach

Community engagement works both ways: it can change schools for the better; and schools can help to change communities for the better. Schools and communities working together can radically transform the futures of young people.

With these three core beliefs, a group of school leaders around the country came together to establish Schools of Tomorrow (SoTo) as a research, development and support network for schools and school leaders wanting to look beyond the restricted confines of much of the current education agenda. Formally launched at the RSA in October 2013 as a community interest company (CIC) owned mutually by its members, SoTo has a membership open to any school sharing that vision.

The work of member schools, supported by input from leading thinkers, has crystallised around



a model of four interlocking quadrants for understanding the outstanding school of tomorrow (figure). SoTo's rationale is explained in free-download publications available at www.schoolsoftomorrow.org.

The next stage of development involves building a new understanding of sustainable change, and alternative models for school improvement and leadership. So, working closely with SSAT and ASCL, and with support from The Bulldog Trust, SoTo is launching the Schools of Tomorrow Fellowship, through which schools commit to an ongoing, distinctive and rigorous partnership, peer review, and stakeholder

evaluation of their progress in effecting change using the four quadrants. This builds on the work of 10 trailblazer schools, which are currently refining the underpinning processes and trialling them in practice.

Using the SoTo framework in school improvement

Thomas Deacon Academy (TDA) in Peterborough opened in 2007 as one of the first academies. It is currently the largest single sponsored academy in the country, offering a very modern learning environment for students aged 7-18 years.

Julie Taylor took over as CEO and principal in September 2013 just after the school was





put into an 'RI' category by Ofsted. Julie realised that using the four quadrants of the SoTo framework would enable her to drive through an agenda of school improvement in a way that did not create a narrow focus on GCSE outcomes. 'Although there was a clear task to improve GCSE results, I felt it was important to acknowledge that school isn't an end in itself, but a preparation for future life,' she says. The quadrants gave staff a language outside the Ofsted framework to explore what was important in equipping students to make a success of their future.

Stakeholders agree the values

Julie used the four quadrants in conjunction with Ofsted headings to allow staff, students, parents and governors to develop a much clearer vision of what they valued about TDA and what kind of education they wanted for their young people. It encouraged the range of stakeholders to agree a set of values on which to base decisions, developing a clear vision of what was wanted for themselves and the wider school community.

Improving performance through community engagement

While understandably focusing on 'highest levels of achievement', Julie wanted to develop what was, for her, a key missing component at TDA: highly effective family and community engagement. Her previous two headships had taught her the benefit of successful engagement with the wider community. As a graduate of SSAT's former Community Leadership Programme, she knew this aspect, crucially often overlooked by struggling schools, was a key component in school improvement.

So Julie tasked an SLT member with completely rethinking how TDA engaged with families and the wider community. This included such practical aspects as developing a successful parents' forum and working parties of parents, students and teachers, but also building and maintaining an international student programme and a 'STEM scholarship programme' to engage effectively with higher education and business.

Alongside benefits for students Julie has seen improvement

in TDA's reputation in the community. 'Before, local people didn't feel part of what was happening here. Since we've been working more openly with parents and the community, they understand better what we're trying to achieve for our young people. As a result, they criticise less and help more.'

Reorganisation to distinguish academic from pastoral

By the end of her first year, Julie was clear that if standards were to improve there needed to be a complete reorganisation of both the staffing structure and the student arrangements. Reflecting on the quadrants for wellbeing and preparation for the future, she decided there needed to be clearer systems for supporting both academic achievement and student wellbeing. She had inherited a system of six colleges, each with its own leader responsible for pastoral welfare as well as achievement and progress for specific groups of subjects. While the basic concept of a 'school within a school' was sound academically, the blurring of lines of accountability for standards and progress had seen TDA sitting below the standards deemed 'national average'.

Using the SoTo framework as the underpinning model, Julie redesigned the academy staffing structure (both teaching and non-teaching) to enable a distinct line to be drawn between accountability for curriculum and academic standards on the one hand and pastoral support on the other. At its heart, Julie placed commitment to the wellbeing of students and staff, creating a structure and



realignment of responsibilities to allow students to be supported well and to bring greater clarity to the roles and responsibilities of members of staff. 'There was an overwhelming sense of "thank goodness" from staff, students and parents – bringing greater clarity to the organisational structure has led to a real belief in wellbeing: if students are supported well, they'll be able to achieve the best they can.'

Insights from using the framework

One unforeseen outcome from using the SoTo framework is that, even at times of extreme pressure during the process of reorganisation, it gave senior leaders and staff a positive way to talk about school improvement. 'Being in an RI category meant, at times, staff felt forced to focus on a narrow set of data that neither told the

whole story of education at TDA nor allowed staff and students to develop what mattered to them'. Julie believes the SoTo framework enabled staff and students to keep sight of what was important. As a result, they had the resilience to face Ofsted's reinspection in July 2015, which resulted in a 'good' judgement. Julie believes this, coupled with improved examination results in August 2015, clearly shows the framework's success.

Spreading greater understanding

Julie recognises TDA's journey is just beginning. The SoTo framework will be critical not only in consolidating the work so far but also in developing a quality culture as the academy continues to progress. The next challenge is to achieve greater understanding of the interconnections between the

four quadrants, not only among governors, senior and middle leaders but also students, parents and the wider community.

This next stage promises to be challenging but exciting. Julie concludes: 'As teachers and adults working with young people, it's those great qualities of self-confidence, perseverance and openness to new ideas, a readiness to take initiative and to innovate, that will enable our students to achieve inside and outside the classroom. It's our responsibility as adults to model those qualities to our students'.

For more about SoTo membership or the new Fellowship, email Malcolm Groves at: malcolm@schoolsoftomorrow.org



You can manage your school's reputation

*Isabella Donnelly & Aimee Monteith,
Grebot Donnelly Associates*

Grebot Donnelly

This leading marketing consultancy for the education sector aims to empower schools, academy trusts, sponsors and local authorities to enhance their reputation and achieve their goals through bespoke marketing strategies, creative services, research and training.

Why schools need access to marketing and legal expertise more than ever.

Marketing has an important role to play in the education sector; indeed some would say it is becoming increasingly commercial. From distinguishing yourself from the competition to the recruitment of staff in a teachers' marketplace, effective marketing can deliver a series of objectives. It also offers a significant return on investment when implemented strategically.

Reputations – hard won, easily lost

A school's reputation is its biggest asset and plays a key factor in parental decision making. Reputations are not static. They evolve; they improve; they are damaged; so they need ongoing protection and management. Due to their very nature, school reputations are under continuous pressure and face many external threats. Schools need to be exceptional marketers and communicators in order to shield their reputations from the challenges they face, from a poor Ofsted judgement to a negative parent experience.

Nowadays every school is expected to undertake marketing in some form. Dependent on their varying objectives, this ranges from light touch PR and communications to a strategic annual strategy. It could include events, partnerships, recruitment and public profile raising campaigns, with clear targets defined. We would argue that the latter is where schools achieve a return on investment and their desired outcomes.

Here is a list of just some of the potential benefits of marketing your school:

1. A protected and managed brand reputation that can weather the storm through unexpected challenge.
2. Increased pupil recruitment with a direct impact on budget: for one of our schools this translated into £300,000 additional revenue in just three years.
3. Engaged stakeholders: from your support staff to prospective parents, a school with a well-managed reputation encourages internal and external engagement in the brand. For one school this was even identified by Ofsted inspectors, who noted pupils' clear pride in their school.
4. Competitive advantage: there is no question the education market is becoming increasingly savvy when it comes to adopting marketing techniques. Failure to address your school's marketing strategy could leave you behind the crowd.

5. Effective communications. Whether this relates to promoting your incentives scheme in a bid to attract new teachers or simply meeting statutory guidelines on your website, marketing ensures your school's communications are effective, timely, positive and appropriately addressed to your various audiences.

A legal and PR response to the Prevent duty: implications for schools

Grebot Donnelly's latest White Paper looks at how schools can manage their reputation in the most challenging of circumstances.

On 22 December 2015 the Department for Education launched a consultation on revisions to the statutory guidance on keeping children safe in education¹. A key focus of the consultation is online safety and the threat posed from extremist material. School leaders have become increasingly aware of the risks to pupils, staff and the wider community of radicalisation.

Our White Paper, jointly produced by Winckworth Sherwood and Grebot Donnelly, offers advice, observations and specific comments from a legal and PR perspective, based on our experiences, in the hope that this will help schools manage the challenges facing them.

Schools will be keenly aware of their duties to provide a good education to their pupils, to safeguard staff and pupils in their care and to support their communities. In fulfilling these duties, the threat posed by those with extremist views who are willing to resort to violence to promote those views is now at the forefront of the minds of school leaders.

The Department for Education is clear in its expectation that schools must have regard to the threat posed by those with extremist views. While the circumstances will be unique to every school and every community, there are lessons to be learnt from those with first-hand experience of the implications caused by radicalisation in a school environment. At the same time, these experiences will help us to determine how far these duties extend and what is reasonable precaution.

The paper draws on the experiences of Bethnal Green Academy. Principal, and CEO of Green Spring Education Trust, Mark Keary comments: 'This year

Reminder: schools failing to comply with the Prevent duty and their promotion of British values on their website face the possibility of an unfavourable outcome following an Ofsted inspection.

we have faced unprecedented challenges. The threat of extremism is not new to any of us. All too regularly we see first-hand the tragic consequences that extremist ideology and the lexicon of hate brings upon families and communities caught up in this international issue. Radicalisation via social media is a clear and evolving threat to our young people and one that cannot simply be addressed through increased safeguards.'

Governments struggle to comprehend and address the very public and devastating actions of those who use violence to promote extremist views. And schools have found themselves at the forefront of the debate about how society should respond to the growing threat from terrorism and extremism and the risks this presents to pupils, from themselves and from within their communities. From the so-called Trojan Horse concerns in Birmingham to reports about young people travelling to Syria, questions are being asked about what causes British youngsters to become radicalised and what can be done to stop this from happening.

Questions then arise about the extent to which schools have a responsibility and, more importantly, a duty to tackle these issues. In a world where young people can watch videos and communicate with people on the other side of the world by pressing a few buttons on their phones, or where they can be easily influenced by beliefs held by family members in the privacy of their own homes, how can and should schools intervene?

The threat posed by social media and the fact that many young people are more proficient at using this form of communication than many adults, including their parents, means that young people can be more easily influenced by extremist propaganda in a separate online world which is very difficult for adults to monitor. At the very least, schools need to have in place a robust social media policy that attempts to contain the potential consequences of inappropriate usage of these channels by staff and pupils alike.



In addition to covering the primary legal concerns facing schools in responding to the Prevent duty, we seek to provide schools with a series of recommendations from a legal and communications perspective.

Tips from the paper include:

- » communications strategy planning
- » crisis management techniques
- » dealing with the media
- » development of consistent messages
- » a 10-point plan for updating your safeguarding policy
- » British values and how to promote them
- » longer-term reputation management.

To receive a copy of the White Paper in full, please contact us by emailing hello@grebotdonna.com or by calling 0208 892 2242

The impact of dealing with radicalisation or extremism in schools cannot be overestimated, not least because of the introduction of the Prevent duty in February 2015. This requires schools to 'have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism' and the requirement on schools to 'actively promote British values'.

For more information about upcoming training opportunities, including work on social media and on marketing, please see the website: www.grebotdonna.com



Reputations: are you protecting yours?

In today's education landscape, reputations are more important than ever. Schools are under increased pressure to act commercially, and reputation management is central to this.

The diagram highlights the range of crises which may affect a school's reputation at any given point. A reputation protected is one that is well managed.

Do you know what your stakeholders are saying about your reputation? What is your online reputation?

By understanding your current reputation you can take steps to measure and protect it against future crises that can affect all schools.

If you would be interested in exploring cost-effective techniques to protect and maximise your reputation, why not attend our upcoming April Marketing Masterclass in London, visit www.grebotdonna.com



Making the most of your buildings

*Melanie Hilton & Tony Kinsella,
Arcadis*

How your buildings can be a source of funding and a driver for change, and even generate significant revenues.

Schools and academies strive to provide excellent educational experiences and successful outcomes for learners. But with ever-increasing legislative, management and financial pressures on leadership teams, providing the environment to achieve this is becoming more difficult than ever.

The changing provision of education in England places new responsibilities for their assets on schools and trusts, removing the support of local authorities and placing on trusts the duty of being a 'responsible body'. A more direct relationship is likely to form between the Department for Education (DfE) or Education Funding Agency (EFA) and trusts, which may lead to the DfE or EFA providing direct funding. But the price to pay is that they will challenge trusts to demonstrate good stewardship of the asset.

In these circumstances, a deep understanding of your assets and the creation of a clear asset management plan to support school development needs is essential. Often this can seem a huge burden on schools, and the question is, where do you start with it all?

Ensuring that your assets are safe, reliable and available to support teaching and learning on a day-to-day basis has to be the top priority, although sometimes establishing this can involve a minefield of technical terminologies and confusing requirements. However, the importance of determining a clear statement of current condition

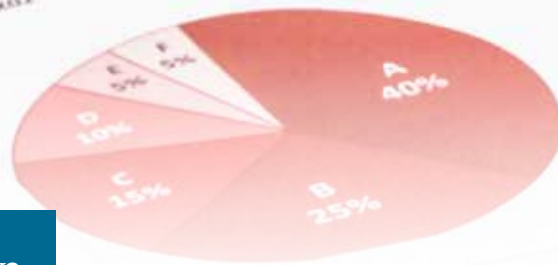
(and performance) of the assets cannot be over-emphasised. Firstly, it will be useful in developing a management strategy as it will drive decisions on the retention and maintenance of assets; and secondly, it will inform the development of future capital and revenue investment programmes.

Best practice asset management will maintain accurate and up to date information for all physical assets covering:

- » A general description of the asset – age, size, volume, value and outputs, etc
- » Physical condition – backlog maintenance, expected remaining life, risk assessment, etc
- » Compliance with statutory and non-statutory standards – fire, health and safety, Equality Act, etc.

A review of the organisation's strategies and the appraisal of current asset condition and performance will enable the development of strategic asset options. These options should aim to deliver the future needs of the school in terms of capacity, quality and performance. Get this right and, rather than being a burden, your buildings can be a source of funding and a driver for change, and in some cases can generate significant revenues.

Follow our step-by-step guide to help you navigate the complexities of managing your asset. 



**STEP 1:
WHERE ARE WE NOW?**

You need to be able to prioritise your specific needs, based on sound evidence, producing a plan that delivers a strategy aligned to your education vision, aspirations, needs and wider local objectives. And, importantly, is in line with your budget. But before you can do this, you need to be clear about your current situation.

Key questions

What assets does the school own and use?
A breakdown of assets by area (sq.m) including ownership and usage. Easily understood summary tables should be used.

What is the condition and performance of these assets?
Summarised results from the appraisal of condition and performance covering the physical condition, compliance with standards, functional suitability, utilisation, environmental management, quality etc.

Is there a backlog maintenance expenditure requirement?
A summary of expenditure required to make up any backlog in maintenance, categorised by risk – high, significant, moderate and low.

How much do we spend supporting our asset base?
A breakdown of asset ownership costs including capital charges, utilities, maintenance, rent and rates, cleaning, insurance etc.

**STEP 2:
WHERE DO WE WANT TO BE?**

Once you have determined your current situation, you need to work out where you want to get to so that you can identify the steps that you need to take to get you there.

Key questions

What impact will policies and strategies have on the school's need?
Policies that will influence the future needs of the school and help to shape the school development plan.

What were the main issues arising from the condition survey that will need to be addressed?
Summarised results from the appraisal of condition and performance covering the physical condition, compliance with standards, functional suitability, utilisation, environmental management, quality etc.

What do we already know is not working and needs to be addressed?
A statement of issues that may already be known to the school, maybe due to safeguarding, legislative, operational, and/or condition risks.

STEP 3: DEVELOPING THE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Key questions

What options does the school have for ensuring that its assets closely match its future needs?

A description of all the options that were developed and considered for each asset. This must include 'do nothing', 'do minimum' and 'radically different' options.

What key changes will take place as a result of the management plan?

A description of the major changes in assets. This should include changes in number of buildings, floor areas, number of vehicles, equipment etc.

How much will the management plan cost to implement?

A fully costed premises management plan showing in detail the capital and revenue implications for each year of implementing the strategy including the timing of all acquisitions, disposals, upgrading and refurbishments.

Can the organisation afford the management plan?

The premises management plan should show a 'year on year' cash flow profile that demonstrates how the investment is funded and the sources of funding.

What are the risks associated with implementing the management plan?

A risk analysis and risk management plan.

STEP 4: IMPLEMENTING THE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Key questions

Who is ultimately responsible for developing and delivering the management plan?

Roles and responsibilities defined to meet the expectations of the management plan.

What organisational structure is in place to deliver the management plan?

A clear description of the structure and resources available for delivering the strategy on a day-to-day basis, with roles and responsibilities clearly defined. The delegation of responsibilities for implementing the changes proposed in the strategy should also be very clearly defined.

How are governors involved in the implementation of the management plan?

Assurance that the decision-making processes for the future use and change in use of assets will include governors.

What processes are in place to ensure good governance for the implementation of the management plan?

A clear accountability framework for the management plan's implementation, including mechanisms for raising issues, monitoring and control arrangements.





Funding opportunities

There are a number of funding opportunities related to your buildings and infrastructure. For example, Sport England may invest in specific specialist sports facilities or, if you are an academy, the Condition Improvement Fund (CIF) aims to address issues that revenue or Devolved Formula Capital (DFC) funding cannot meet. These will generally be issues with poor condition, compliance, energy efficiency or health and safety. However, CIF also supports a small proportion of expansion projects for Ofsted-rated good or outstanding academies and sixth-form colleges that need to expand their existing facilities and/or floor space to either increase admissions numbers or address overcrowding.

You should also consider maximising revenue generation through alternative out-of-hours uses of your building. Examples include leasing multi-use games areas (MUGAs) to local groups for five-a-side football, and use of the school hall by community groups. Technology-based entry systems can be used to keep staffing costs to a minimum. Some schools have also installed energy generating equipment, such as PV panels, which generates revenue through sale of energy to the National Grid.

Sources of help

www.sportengland.org

<http://salixfinance.co.uk/>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/school-capital-expenditure-and-funding>

Tips

- » Gather baseline data on condition and sufficiency to allow you to make informed choices about your assets.
- » Prioritise your specific needs, to deliver an asset strategy aligned to your vision and budget.
- » Make savings across all areas of your spend.
- » Aim to unlock hidden value from your school through identifying potential revenue-generating opportunities.
- » Align the plan to the school's current and future needs.
- » Have the right structures in place to govern and shape your plan.
- » Be flexible with your plan; review and amend as situations change.



Melanie Hilton is the account leader responsible for schools and trusts at Arcadis. Her current role covers a wide range of areas, including strategic support to schools, academies and MATs. She has been responsible for supporting a wide range of education institutions, including LA schools, free schools, academies and international schools and has a wealth of expertise in leading high profile national and international work.



Tony Kinsella is a highly experienced senior building surveyor and a service leader within the Arcadis education team. He has been involved in a range of professional services, including condition surveys and feasibility studies, and has procured and managed numerous construction projects for education clients. Tony has extensive experience working with schools, academies, multi-academy trusts and the Education Funding Agency, and is particularly knowledgeable on condition improvement funding.

SSAT ACHIEVEMENT SHOW 2016



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