



SSAT Journal 08

Spring 2017

ssat the schools, students
and teachers network

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Welcome

*Sue Williamson,
Chief Executive, SSAT*



I am writing this welcome on Budget day and am feeling angry and frustrated. I am also agonising over whether I should share these emotions with you or simply focus on highlighting the brilliant work that is going on in schools featured in the journal. I am angry that you and SSAT took the time to respond to the Green paper consultation, ‘Schools that Work for Everyone’, and yet, even before the consultation was complete, in an article in the Daily Telegraph on 7 March the Prime Minister made it clear that the government will plough ahead regardless with its plans to extend selection, either now or following a General Election.

At a time when every school is struggling to make ends meet, valuable resources are being set aside for new selective free schools and the expansion of existing grammar schools. As Tom Middlehurst writes:

“With three weeks to go before the end of the consultation period in December, the Chancellor confirmed that money would be put aside for grammars in the autumn statement. And now, despite the response to the consultation not yet published, we are told that a white paper is imminent and that this will pave the way for legislation removing the ban on new grammars.

I simply cannot believe that the public and profession’s responses to the green paper were favourable to the government’s proposed policy. Indeed Justine Greening remarked that the response was not ‘an overwhelming flood of negativity’. I think her words say rather a lot.

For an education secretary, ministerial team and civil service who claim to want to listen to the profession and work with them, this is an outrage. The hours that colleagues spent gathering evidence and writing their responses have been entirely wasted; their views dismissed.

For ministers to claim they want an evidence-informed profession and to have dialogues with teachers, this is not just laughable, but shocking. The green paper consultation has been shown to be a complete charade – and will undermine any future efforts to elicit opinion and expertise.”

The DfE constantly tells us that we are operating in a school-led system, and yet the views of the profession are totally ignored. Visit bit.ly/2mQ1du9 to read Tom’s blog in full.

School leaders are very worried about their finances

and many have to make serious cuts that impact on the curriculum, class sizes and the experiences of the young people in their care. The money set aside for the Prime Minister’s vanity project could be used to support existing schools, including existing grammar schools.

During my visits to schools, headteachers tell me that they are struggling not only with finance, but also with the recruitment of new staff. It’s not surprising that we are facing a leadership crisis.

SSAT’s immediate response is to set up the Leadership Legacy Project, through which we will work with 120+ teachers in their first four years of teaching. We want to expose them to the best leaders in education and other sectors. The launch is on 11 May, and we will give you regular updates on their progress.

This year’s National Conference is being held in Manchester between 30 November and 1 December 2017. The conference will explore how school leaders can be truly evidence-informed in making strategic decisions, how a culture of evidence and research can be embedded across a school or MAT, and the implications of some of the latest research on what we do in schools. I do hope you will join us – all member secondary schools have a place as part of their membership package. This edition of the Journal includes reports from last year’s main stage speakers.

We are very grateful to Arcadis for sponsoring the journal and providing so much thoughtful information on the use of space in schools. Our publication with Arcadis, *Triumph in Adversity*, is a very useful tool for schools, and their article in this journal extends their thinking further. A copy was sent to all member schools.

Despite the politicians, great things are happening in our schools; the case studies in this journal touch on just a few. I love my visits to schools, particularly talking to students – they always tell me the difference you make to their lives. Thank you for all that you do, and if we can help in any way, please contact us through your relationship manager.



HOW SCHOOL LEADERS CAN 'MAKE THE IMPOSSIBLE POSSIBLE'

SSAT CHIEF EXECUTIVE SUE WILLIAMSON

Sue Williamson opened the 2016 National Conference at ICC, Birmingham, with examples of “the tremendous work that goes on every day in schools”, much of which she sees in her many school visits during the year: “It is very rarely that I come away without having seen something or someone that is truly inspirational.”

As a judge for the lifetime achievement award for Pearson Teaching Awards, with fellow judge, former headteacher Sir Alan Steer, she visited four shortlisted candidates in England and one in Scotland. “Usually we hear from colleagues past and present, parents and students – you will not be surprised to hear that it is the evidence from the young people that has the most impact.

“At a school in Glasgow, we spoke to former student Jenny. Her story was very sad, but uplifting. Her home life was terrible; her parents did not want her. Her only adult support came from teacher Carol McManus and another pastoral lead. She had very little in life, and eventually at age 15 she was thrown out of the family home. She did not know what to do, so phoned Carol, who found her a place to stay.

Somehow Jenny got through her examinations – she often wanted to give up but Carol kept her going. I asked Jenny what was she doing now and she told us:

‘I’ve just graduated from Glasgow University with a 2:1 in English. The graduation ceremony is next week and Carol and another teacher will be my guests. They are taking me out for a celebratory lunch afterwards. I am going to become a teacher of English like Carol – she saved my life.’

Making the impossible possible

“These and so many other examples confirm that teachers make lives,” Sue Williamson commented. “They make the impossible possible, and we need to celebrate these wonderful stories.

“The title for this conference came from Sir Alex Ferguson’s

book *Leading*. In it he states: ‘My job was to make everyone understand that the impossible was possible. That’s the difference between leadership and management.’ It made me reflect on what leadership is needed in the school-led system and what lessons school leaders might learn from other sectors.

“I think we are a long way from a school-led system. There are still too many top-down initiatives, and we need a different accountability framework. However, we are on a journey and school leaders need to be leading. SSAT has always advocated ‘by schools, for schools’ and principled leadership.

“Sir Alex again sums it up for me: ‘I cannot imagine how anyone without firm convictions and beliefs can be an effective leader.’ I entered teaching with a passionate belief that every



child can succeed, and I took this into headship. As we move into a system of multi academy trusts with some free-standing schools and academies, we are seeing new leadership roles, with necessarily different approaches. In the recent pamphlet *SSAT on Leading*, I cited three of them: headteacher, executive headteacher and chief executive.

"These additional levels of leadership give added focus to the question: what lessons, if any, can we learn from business and adapt for a school or multi-academy trust (MAT)? Jim Collins has inspired many leaders, particularly with his book *Good to Great*. In the pamphlet, I take lessons from another of Collins' books, *How the Mighty Fall*, and today I would like to focus on two of his key arguments.

Collaboration, partnerships

"In education, we should be focusing on giving greater value to our shareholders – to the young people in our schools, parents, and the local community. By adding value in the development of young people, we do a great service to our country. It's not just about examination performance (though this is important), but enabling young people to develop the skills, knowledge and aptitudes they need to succeed in life. Collaboration and partnerships are crucial, and SSAT is working with a number of partners to help with the development of young people.

"For over 10 years we have partnered humanutopia in supporting schools to help young people to have hope, confidence and happiness, to

develop relationships and to be employable. humanutopia's theory of change is designed to help young people understand how they can bring about positive change in their own life. In developing our partnership with humanutopia we will be offering schools the opportunity to bring three or four challenging students to regional workshops. The

the young people and staff. An essential requirement for any MAT is a growth strategy. There is no model policy, each one has to be based on context.

"To that end, it's essential that everyone engages in talent management. We need the right people in key positions, whether in an individual school or a MAT. Sir David Carter rightly says that the best MATs provide career

Staff need to see practice beyond their school, MAT, and region – this is why national networks are so important

session will be the starting point for transforming the way they look at themselves. The first workshop is being held in the North East on 25 January 2017 with further events in the Midlands, London and the South West.

"We are also forging partnerships with the National Children's Bureau to provide resources on mental health; and only this week we met with the charity Community Save a Life Scheme, which aims to have a lifesaver on every street. We will be highlighting their work in SSAT's journal and helping members to book the training.

"All our partnerships will help member schools with providing an enriched curriculum – good results plus.

Grow your own way, but don't become insular

"Collins also speaks about growth. We have seen some MATs and chains grow too quickly, to the detriment of

progression for all their staff. In a time of teacher and school leader shortages, it is even more important for an organisation to grow its own.

"However, a MAT or a school has to take care that it does not become insular. Staff need to see practice beyond their school, MAT, and region – this is why national networks are so important. I am very proud that over the years SSAT has trained more than 12,000 school leaders and teachers. All SSAT programmes are designed and delivered by headteachers.

"Educational leadership requires creativity of approach and the courage of your convictions. We have seen lately how wildly different approaches can divide opinion – even when they are all rooted in achieving excellence for young people.

"Yes, we live in a period of immense change – but with that change comes opportunities to do things differently. The

DfE and Ofsted now agree with prominent school leaders: there is no one way to do anything. Pedagogy, curriculum, assessment and your day-to-day arrangements are entirely up to you, providing you can support your decisions with a strong narrative rooted in evidence.

"But this leads to one important message for all school leaders and governors: for too long, many of us have put pressure on staff and students because we've thought certain behaviours and practices were required. In reality, as a school leader, it really is your choice how

many of the external pressures you allow to go beyond your office door. We know that we are facing a teacher recruitment and retention crisis. Often we look for external factors to attribute to this – how often do we look at what negative behaviours are being driven by our own school policies?"

An appeal to school and system leaders

"So please make one commitment to yourself: that you will improve the lives of your staff or students. You might ban the phrase 'for Ofsted', making

sure you never do anything to please an outside agency. You might ban emails after 5.30pm and at weekends to help staff workloads. You might systematically make sure that every member of staff and every student receives one positive comment every week.

"We have these opportunities to do things differently, and we need to seize them in the interests of our students' futures. But doing this requires us to think differently about our leadership development. Today, we have innovative new programmes



STUDENT PERFORMANCE
Arden Academy



We must all commit to our beliefs, and do what's right for the individuals in our schools

such as our High Performance Leadership programme partnering with the Centre for High Performance at Oxford, NASA and Apple; and our Chief Executive programme, looking at this changing role.”

SSAT's franchised middle leadership award is now in its third cohort, making it one of the largest middle leadership programmes in the country. The franchise model is helping us to support the schools-led system in a real and meaningful way. “At this time of great change, I truly believe that SSAT is the hub of educational leadership development in England, and I urge you to join us in growing the next generation of leaders.

“*SSAT on Leading* identifies eight core principles that underpin our programmes, and I hope they ring true to you.

1 Know yourself is about being critically honest with yourself about what role you really want. This means being candid about your own strengths and weaknesses and holding your hands up when there's something you can't do.

2 Prepare to unlearn acknowledges that we need to work in new ways. As school leaders, we need to think differently about staff education and training at all levels – from ITT that reflects the reality of being a trainee teacher in 2016, to personalised CPD and leadership training that is robust and rigorous.

3 Blueprint your dreams is about turning a vision into reality. As a leader, I am proud of where we have taken SSAT since we became a private company in 2012. At the heart of all our networks and all our programmes are you – the executive heads, heads and senior leaders who contribute so much.

4 Learn from business: ever since we worked with David Hargreaves on personalising learning and system redesign some 10 years ago, it has been evident that we need to look at other sectors to inform our own educational practice.

5 Knowing the practical stuff backwards may sound pedestrian; but we have seen too many instances where MAT and school leaders have fallen from grace. True, sometimes this is down to the head's own hubris, but I think more often than not it's individuals not realising how different some of these roles and processes are.

6 Getting the right people on the bus: think carefully and critically about what the key roles in your organisation are. It may not always be the immediate senior leadership team. Middle leadership is often

referred to as the engine room of the school.

7 Your legacy as a leader really matters. To nurture the next generation of leaders we must have a strategic, cohesive and national approach to leadership development – and this needs to be led by you, the profession, not by government.

8 The final principle reaffirms Sir Alex's comment about the absolute necessity for leaders to have **firm convictions and beliefs**. We must all commit to our beliefs, and do what's right for the individuals in our schools.”

Personal challenge

Sue Williamson then made a personal request to delegates: “I would love you to engage and debate these principles with me – challenge me on them, suggest ones important to you. Let's take forward a new, more nuanced dialogue around educational leadership. Do share your views using the hashtag 'love to lead'.

“The final point that I wish to make is that SSAT is prepared to invest in the development of the next generation of school leaders. We are going to fund 100 young leaders for a year to engage with the best leaders nationally and internationally, and to examine leadership in other sectors. We are not suggesting that they leave school for the year, but it will require some days out in the course of the year.”

Find out more about the SSAT Leadership Legacy project at <http://bit.ly/2jFJat1>



The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never put it out

*Reverend Mike Haslam,
Taunton Academy*

Reverend Mike Haslam, chaplain of Taunton Academy, finds light in a discussion about Donald Trump

“What do you think of Donald Trump?” My question to students at The Taunton Academy prompted many, many answers, but only one theme.

“Do we have to be polite, sir?” many asked. “Well, you have to be quotable.” I responded. There was silence for a while. “I don’t know where to start... or where to stop,” some said. Others were brief and to the point: ‘racist’, ‘homophobic’, ‘sexist’, ‘bullying’, ‘orange’ were all oft repeated words. He was compared to a satsuma, but I objected to that, I like satsumas; the alternative description was “like a dead ginger cat”; which also felt a bit tough on ginger cats, even those that have died. One usually confident lad remained very quiet through a conversation. After a while I asked him he if wanted to defend Donald Trump. He looked up in horror as he said “Of course I don’t!”

On the night of the US Presidential election last November, I personally crossed the line of endurance at 4.30am and went out and ran far and fast under the light of the supermoon as it struggled to break through the cloud cover. Words from *The Lord of the Rings* came to mind. Sam and Frodo are journeying in great darkness though the chaos and evil of Mordor and: “There, peeping among the cloud-wrack above a dark tor high up in the mountains, Sam saw a white star twinkle for a while. The beauty of it smote his heart, as he looked up out of the forsaken land, and hope returned to him. For

like a shaft, clear and cold, the thought pierced him that in the end the Shadow was only a small and passing thing: there was light and high beauty for ever beyond its reach.”

The Bible expresses this more succinctly in John's Gospel when we read: “The light shines in the darkness and the darkness cannot overcome it.”

In an assembly the next day I asked whether we were going to be people who would allow the challenges of the darkness to overcome us, or whether we were going to be strong, courageous, resilient people who never give up on looking for and sharing light.

Since January 20 and the inauguration of President Trump, things have got ever darker. Yet the call to seek for and live by light is every bit as strong. The fact that I haven't been able to find a single student in school who would support Donald Trump's bullying, racism, sexism and homophobia is itself like 'a light that shines in the darkness' and a reminder that we must never, ever give up.

All political or religious views expressed in this article are personal.



Leadership that overcomes discord and creates united efforts towards excellence

*Patrick Ferguson,
Hope Academy*

Patrick Ferguson, principal of Hope Academy, St Helens, reflects on some of the factors behind the remarkable turnaround of an academy comprising two failing schools, which had been suffering drastic senior staff turnover levels and major disaffection among staff and students

Hope is about leadership

I think that there are a number of key attributes which characterise a good leader. Leadership requires humility, and it is very important to listen to what others are saying, as this gives one the opportunity to tap into collective wisdom. It is often helpful in making decisions to get a variety of perspectives, and a leader should be prepared to change his/her mind. But it is important that a leader has the last word in any decision. If it is possible, I always find it helpful to sleep on decisions.

It is important to demonstrate competence, and to be a credible leader from the outset. However, all leaders make mistakes, and one must accept that this is going to happen. What is crucial is to learn from mistakes, as how one responds to adversity is a strong element in improving leadership. Be flexible, but be strong.

It is crucial for others to believe in a leader's honesty and fairness, even when they disagree with his/her decisions. In this regard, emotional intelligence is another key attribute in leadership. I have also found that it is essential to resolve conflict as quickly as possible.

One of the enduring influences on me throughout my career has been my father, who always counselled honesty and decency in all aspects of life and work. I have met many individuals whose attributes and practices I have incorporated into my leadership style

to improve my practice. One of my strong formative experiences was my MSc in leadership, focusing on researching teamwork. I believe that this formal training significantly accelerated my development as a leader.

Two schools thrown together with little thought about the culture

Both the predecessor schools to Hope Academy, which I took over as principal in December 2014, were deemed to be requiring improvement, and results were falling, as were pupil numbers. Results in the (larger) faith school seemed good, but it had been identified by Ofsted as a 'coasting' school. Some feel that there was a sense of denial about this, and many staff at the faith school vigorously opposed the transition to a two-school academy.

For some time before academisation the two schools were federated, with the head of the faith school becoming executive head. The two schools were very different, however. The faith school had larger numbers, a 'better' perceived catchment area, a smarter building and a strong ethos and culture. The community school was smaller, had no sixth form, many 'naughty' children and a very dilapidated building. They sometimes felt like the 'poor relations'.

The staff at the community school initially welcomed the opportunities an academy would bring. Those at the faith school felt even more opposed to change when their head applied for the post of principal of Hope Academy, and was unsuccessful. She later declined the post of vice-principal.

Many who had not been cynical beforehand felt less enthusiastic when the competitive interviews

were staged as late as the July before the academy opened. There was a perceived lack of communication between the new leaders and the staff. Many thought that the jobs had already been decided, mostly to the detriment of the community school. This led to suspicion and hostility in some quarters, and bringing staff together was just as challenging as bringing pupils together. Some staff who did not want the challenge of change began to seek alternatives, and some became long-term absentees.

It is interesting that the number of staff remaining at the academy from the smaller school far exceeds the number from the larger school, especially in more senior positions.

Staff disillusioned and multiple changes of headteacher

Hope Academy opened in 2011 with a newly-appointed principal who did not come from either of the two predecessor schools. After successive disappointing Ofsted inspections, the academy was put into special measures in February 2014 and the principal and chair of governors resigned.

A new principal was appointed in May 2014, but was unable to start before January 2015. Two vice-principals were also appointed. None of these three appointments took up their positions, all withdrawing by October 2014. Hope Academy was being led by a retired principal from the Anglican Diocesan Education Service, who was focused on stopping the gap and healing wounds until a permanent appointment could be made.

Two new vice-principals were appointed to begin in April 2015, and I was appointed as principal in December 2014. One of the two vice-principals chose not to continue in post. This paved the way for the current team to be appointed in the summer of 2015, and they have been together since then.

Staff members were dispirited and demoralised; not only had their academy been branded as inadequate, but multiple potential leaders had apparently abandoned their posts. The high level of discontent was reflected in staff absence rates, especially long-term absence. This particularly affected the science faculty.

The academy was fully staffed; in fact it was over-staffed due to the TUPE transfers from predecessor schools and three years of falling pupil numbers. However, many of these staff did not want to be at Hope Academy and had not been seen by the then leadership team as part of any renaissance.

The consequences of this were a downward trend in attainment, increasing pupil absence and deterioration in standards of behaviour. The *Weltschmerz* (melancholy, anxiety) of many of the teachers was rubbing off on the pupils.

People-focused approach has brought the staff together

After my appointment there were a number of issues to address in the first weeks. I spoke to staff, pupils and parents, and was careful not to talk about what was wrong with Hope Academy, but to focus on what was positive. It was also an early imperative to identify a potential leadership team. I thought it crucial for staff to revisit the core values of the academy, and so I brought in corporate culture experts Sycol, through whose consultancy the staff took ownership of a new set of core values, vision and mission statement. I also extended the ambit of an existing training programme for teaching and learning.

I brought in on a part-time basis two people whom I had previously worked with, one to advise with financial issues and one to help with planning and documentation. This led to the introduction of budget-planning software (HCSS) and the production of a rigorous development plan which would be used to drive improvement and remove the academy from special measures. I used governors' meetings to realign the academy.

The next steps in the first term were to introduce the Frog data platform to facilitate teaching and learning, and to ensure that professional development and performance management were closely linked to teaching and learning. Data management systems and the target-setting process were strengthened to enhance teaching and learning.

Before the end of the first term, it was crucial to carry out an analysis of staffing structure and staffing needs, and to rationalise the staffing in line with the projected budget. There were a number of staff on long-term absence, and it was desirable that they be allowed to leave with dignity by means of voluntary redundancy. The timing of this was important, as the professional associations needed to be given the statutory period of notice so that the changes could be in place in September 2015.

The academy's curriculum was redesigned to promote a growth mindset approach, and the collective leadership decision was to move to mixed ability classes.



Responding to change

The leadership team in general responded well to these changes, and their growth as leaders was visible. They wanted to be involved, showed flexibility, and were open to new ideas and to learning about leadership. Above all, they showed a strong work ethic. However, two individuals who felt unhappy in their roles moved on from the academy.

Staff not affected by the restructuring process responded positively to what was happening, and took charge of their roles in the improvement process. By the end of my second term we were ready to face the scrutiny of HMI, with growing confidence in the quality of education at Hope Academy. That inspection resulted in a judgement of 'good'.

Restructuring the SLT

In some respects the leadership team had been restructured before I took up the post in January 2015. Two vice-principals had been appointed to start in April 2015, though one of these was seconded to us for two days per week from January. I identified two assistant principals who had the necessary vision, flexibility and diligence to move the academy forward, and gave them clearly defined roles within the leadership team. When one of the vice-principals de-

cided not to continue at the academy, these assistant principals were promoted, giving the leadership team three vice-principals, each with key responsibilities.

We now have a dynamic leadership team, and a change in culture within the academy. Results, attendance and behaviour have all improved greatly, pupils are satisfied with the education they receive, and staff work purposefully and feel part of the success. Relationships with our local primary schools are excellent, and the academy roll is rising. We now have a new website, and a new academy uniform which we sell from a shop within the academy. The leadership team is proactive and energetic in continuing to improve our key outcomes. [The academy was shortlisted for Educate Awards' 'Most Inspirational school' in November 2016; the award was won by Winstanley College.]

Persuading governors to keep the sixth form

An example of how opinions and beliefs can be changed by persuasion based on a challenging but realistic ambition for the academy is the fate of its sixth form.





A previously-appointed principal who did not actually take up the post was nevertheless doing preparatory work for the academy between May and October 2014. His response to his budget analysis, as I understand it, was that the sixth form was being subsidised by the rest of the academy, and that given the problems facing the academy, focus needed to be on years 7-11. Ofsted had also identified the sixth form as an area of weakness. He therefore wanted to discontinue the sixth form provision. He conveyed these views to the governing body, who were eager to back his judgement.

My view was that we should hold on to our sixth form regardless of cost, as sixth forms give pupils something to aspire to, and we should remain committed to an 11-18 offer within the community. I felt that we would not grow the academy by surrendering sixth form provision.

The governing body accepted this, and no governors were lost as a result of this decision. The sixth form is growing, and results have improved. It will be a long-term project to have an outstanding sixth form, but this is our aim, and the development is being closely monitored by one of our vice-principals.

The main challenges now

The main challenge is to become an outstanding school. This incorporates sustaining our improvements in attainment, attendance and behaviour. It requires attracting and recruiting staff of the highest calibre, while retaining and developing those staff who have the skills to push us higher.

We need to continue to increase pupil numbers until we are fully subscribed.

To become an outstanding school also requires an outward-looking approach, networking with a range of other schools and academies so that we can learn from others, and also help others to improve. We must continue to offer an engaging and diverse curriculum to our pupils, and strive to maintain and extend our improvements at KS5. Prospective future funding changes are another challenge that has to be addressed.

Having previously led a school to 'outstanding' status, for me it would be a major milestone to take a second institution to an outstanding category. I know that my leadership team will work with an energy bordering on zeal to move Hope Academy towards this standard, and I am confident that they will carry colleagues with them.



FROM GOOD TO OUTSTANDING – MESSAGES FROM SPORT AND OTHER SECTORS

BARONESS SUE CAMPBELL

Baroness Sue Campbell, former chair of UK Sport, chief executive of the National Coaching Federation, and chair of Youth Sport Trust, was instrumental in Team GB and Paralympic GB achieving their greatest Olympic successes for over a century.

In line with her passion about education, Sue Campbell's speech focused on "the journey we went on with UK Sport... and some of the lessons we can draw out of that about how we really drive system management.

"You [in education] work in a complex and difficult landscape. As leaders it's in these challenging times that real leadership shines," she said. "It's easy to lead when things are good, but it's so much tougher when you're constantly challenged, as you are. You do one of the most important jobs that there is in this country.

"I went into education because I wanted to change lives. The tool I use is physical education and sport." In 1996, she said, UK Sport, which manages the teams for the Olympics, was "in special measures. One gold medal, 36th in the medal table and dropping like a stone.

"The interesting journey was from 2003 to 2012. And obviously, on into Rio [where Team GB scored its highest number of gold medals for over 100 years]. The interesting part of that journey was it had very little to do with money. It had everything to do with culture."

not doable.' But it is doable. In whatever circumstances, however challenging your school is, it is possible if you can get hold of people and galvanise them to want to go on that journey with you. That's what leadership is about.

"It's not about management. It's about getting people to join

Leadership is about your ability to galvanise everybody to go on the same journey

It's all about culture

"Culture is not about a building or an environment or money; it's about people, a belief that together you can change things. When I started in 2003, I believed that we could become the most successful Olympic and Paralympic nation in the world for our population size. I'd have been very rich if I had taken a pound every time anybody ever said to me, 'You can't do that, that's

you on a journey. To sell them a vision that they want to buy into, a set of beliefs, going together on one team, one mission, to be the very best that you can be, not worrying about what anybody else is doing.

"So how did we do that?

"Leaders really value every single individual. Now, I know, I'm a realist. I've managed organisations where there were many people I would like to



have strangled, never mind lead! And I'm sure there are people in your school that are difficult, stubborn, stuck in their ways."

She cited the example of Nelson Mandela, who "showed us that you can turn even these people if you work at it long enough and hard enough. During Mandela's 20 years on Robben Island, he won over his warders – the very people who were containing him, who imprisoned him, who saw him as the enemy, a terrorist." He didn't try to impose himself on them, but he learned to be good friends with them, to understand them so they would come on the journey with him.

"And I think that is a tremendous lesson that Mandela taught all of us.

"Leadership is about your ability to galvanise everybody to go on the same journey. I occasionally do in-service days for schools. And I'll always say to people when I'm coming, 'Is

everybody here?' And they'll say, 'yes.' And after five minutes, I hear the clanging and the banging of the people in the kitchen."

Everybody needs to be there

"Everybody needs to be there. You know, when UK Sport decided to go on this journey, it wasn't just about the athletes or the coaches or the sports scientists or the nutritionists. It was about the technicians, the people who organised the kit, the clothing, it was everything. If you want to go from good to great, or good to outstanding, then you've got to tackle the 'impossible' with everybody. And that includes the people who work in your kitchens, on your grounds.... Everyone has to get the mission. Because it's that daily contact with people, that daily aspiration, that daily concern and caring that starts to move the system on. And it's not done easily. But it is

about everybody in your school, regardless of the role they take.

"The other big thing for me was defining very clearly what was our moral purpose at UK Sport. I, like you, had enormous pressure from government. But I constantly had to ask myself, am I really about medals? What is it I'm about? One day, I was walking with the dog across Bradgate Park in Leicestershire, and realised I'm not about medals. If a young person has a desire, a dream, I don't care whether it's in woodwork or maths or sport or English or science, I want to make that dream possible. That's my moral purpose. And if I take care of that moral purpose, those medals will take care of themselves."

So to the school leaders in her audience, she exhorted: "focus on the children, what is right for them. Create an environment of success for them



STUDENT PERFORMANCE

Blythe Bridge High School and Sixth Form

to achieve. The more you stress about it, the more pressure you create, the more your athlete doesn't perform.

"If I had stood in front of Jess Ennis just before she went out to do the heptathlon and said, 'For God's sake, Jess, will you win me that gold medal!' she'd have probably bopped me one for a start, but she would have been stressed out of her brains. 'Go out there, Jess, and do the best you can. You've trained, you've put the work in, you've got amazing commitment. Do what you can do.' There is such a different pressure there."

The children must understand moral purpose too

"And I do believe passionately that education must help our children understand their moral purpose too. It isn't just about achievement in examinations. It's about achievement in life.

"The next big challenge for me, when I was clear what we were about, was trying to describe to my colleagues at UK Sport what great would look like.

"We know what it means in results, and what Ofsted will say, and about teaching and learning and all the things that you know very much better than I. But how do you explain what it means to reception? How do you explain what it means to a teacher? How do you explain what it means to a teaching assistant and the person who does the grounds? Well, what do you mean, you want them to be world class? What does that look like? You mean they mow faster, they make more puddings? What are you asking them to do, what does great look like?

"I tried everything. I tried taking them to the ballet. I tried

taking them to Sandhurst to see that particular wonderful kind of excellence. But it was only when I went to Formula One that I realised I could explain in really simple, ordinary language what great, outstanding looked like."

She cited three lessons she gleaned from following the team around then world champion Michael Schumacher: the man who cleaned his garage floor wanted to be the best floor cleaner in the world (and went into great detail about it); those changing the tyres worked together to shave 0.01 of a second off the time it took (and coached each other, accepting each other's advice); and in one instance the correct decision made under extreme pressure (staying out for 1-2 more laps despite running perilously low on fuel) won the race.

"So if you want greatness, those are simple strategies. Everyone in your school has to feel valued, has to belong, has

today? Is your son better?' Those things matter. That's leadership. Managing? That's a science. Leadership, it's an art form. It's about you expressing who you are in the most positive way.

Leaders' greatest gift: asking the right questions

"Your greatest gift as a leader is to know what questions to ask, and of whom. You can raise people's aspirations, lift them to be different, unlock creativity by the questions you ask. Not by telling. Ask questions. Enable people. Encourage people. Support them to take those risks. Because for some of our young people, that creative, innovative approach will just click.

"So, don't be inflexible about how you use your colleagues as leaders. Sometimes they have hidden talents. Don't write anybody off. Don't park anybody in place and leave them there. Think about how you want to use your talents. Just think about what

Create an environment of success. The more you stress about it, the more pressure you create, the more your athlete doesn't perform

to be part of your mission, has to want to be the best that they can be every day. Everybody has to strive to be 0.01 better day after day after day. And you as leaders have to have the courage to take big decisions. The ones you get wrong are the ones you'll learn the most from. You have to reach out if you want to be world-leading.

"Leadership is the way you walk around, the way you say, 'good morning, and how are you

their talents really are and use them to help you drive success.

"And finally I think great leadership means that you create a genuine belief that better never stops. My greatest satisfaction, having finished at UK Sport in 2013, was watching Rio in 2016. It told me that the system understood. Don't let people rest. Keep striving. Keep searching. Keep looking – because you affect the whole of society through the next generation that you create."



Why it's crucial to engage all adult stakeholders in the school community

*Julian Grant,
Sackville School*

Julian Grant, Headteacher, Sackville School, argues that any successful community can only thrive with the open hearts and minds of its stakeholders, sharing enthusiastically in its ethos and underlying values

The most vital ingredients of successful learning are the positive engagement of all stakeholders. Even important factors such as creative initiatives, careful and robust monitoring, timely intervention and high quality continuing professional development have little effect if the community does not genuinely buy into what the school stands for. Stakeholders need to feel properly valued for their role in contributing towards the school's success.

Leadership plays an essential role in this. Whether we like it or not, it is our clarity, our enthusiasm, our demeanour, our body language and our care that dictates everything else. The need for real consistency here is one of the greatest pressures of the role; a 'bad day' must be concealed by resolute cheerfulness.

Everyone wants to be valued in the workplace. This isn't achieved by occasional thanks; its essential to have an embedded culture of all staff really believing that they have a valuable part to play. Teaching staff and their delivery in the classroom day in, day out are of course at the heart of everything. Recognising this above and beyond appraisal, promotion and pay means continually showing appreciation in less formal ways. An open-door approach, replying promptly to emails, serving at breakfast on Inset days and at staff teas and handwriting cards to show interest in both professional and personal achievements –

all these help to engender a positive culture. Being involved in the more routine aspects of a teacher's day, for example by being on a regular duty slot, not only shows stakeholders you will do all that you ask them to do, but it is also a great chance to catch up with other teachers on duty at the same time and share their experiences of the day.

Support staff

Support staff play a hugely significant part in a school's success, whatever their post may be and whatever it might involve. How often do headteachers hold a meeting for all support staff in the school – and make sure that they are all able to attend? I've found that such termly meetings have made a great difference to how support staff feel they are perceived. Rather than often believing they are the last to know about decisions and developments, why shouldn't they be the first? The input given in these meetings, together with those of the support staff focus group, are invaluable.

In most schools, a far greater proportion of support staff than teaching staff live in the local community

And they have a key strength. In most schools, a far greater proportion of support staff than teaching staff live in the local community; this should never be underestimated. The message goes out to the community far more swiftly through support staff than teachers; if they feel valued, comfortable and motivated by their working environment, then the

local community is likely to feel the same about the school as a whole.

Straightforward but important gestures such as teaching staff raising a glass to support staff at the end of each term makes quite an impact. Involving support staff in interviews and selection processes is also beneficial. Ensuring that teachers respect the work that they do really matters.

Speak to every staff member

Few would not argue that the presence and visibility of the headteacher and senior staff around a school makes a difference. Planning this with some thought, to ensure that all staff are spoken with personally over a period of time is important. Remembering their children's names, their family events, asking how they are feeling; this all counts for a lot. If people believe you are interested in them as an individual and that you care, they will give so much more in their roles. This all sounds fairly obvious but in the fast treadmill of school life it can so easily be overlooked. Furthermore, it is a case of remembering everybody – absolutely everybody. The 6pm chat with a member of the cleaning staff is arguably as important as the morning briefing with the deputy head.

There are opportunities to celebrate the work of staff that are worth seizing. For example, Unison encourages us to celebrate 'Stars in our schools' on the last Friday in November and this is aimed specifically at support staff. At Sackville, we give each member of the support staff a thank you card personally signed by the headteacher with a chocolate treat; and a group photo session is held. It is very often at the busy time of mock examinations and much else, but it is prioritised nevertheless and it is appreciated.

Parents' role

The role of parents can never be underestimated, and communication with them via newsletters and the website counts for a lot. The website front page needs updating very regularly, so parents know what is going on and feel a real part of the school. Simplicity with clear links is vital. This has to be led and managed from the SLT, as they will know all that is happening and all that there is to celebrate, and will be in the best position to share news promptly. Publicity managers, while highly skilled, are often not in a position to do this as effectively.

Parents like to see updated photos of school life and want to know the latest thoughts of the head and senior team. The newsletter is therefore also crucial

as a vehicle by which the head can share her/his thoughts and vision; and other staff in the school can share progress in areas for which they have responsibility. Of course, no one wants a boring read, so being succinct with a real focus on the students is important. A dull newsletter will not be read, no matter whether senior staff think they are successfully sharing their message.

All of this can be reinforced well by an active parents' focus group, which can serve as a great think tank for ideas and direction. Classroom workshops for new intake parents, enabling them to directly experience their child's learning experiences, are invaluable.

Parents' evenings are also a wonderful time for a headteacher to communicate with large numbers of parents face to face. I have never understood the value or the point of headteachers/senior teams sitting in an office during a parents' evening, 'available if needed'. Walking around and taking an interest in the people upon whom the students depend most is a high priority for me. It's not about walking about with a clipboard taking notes either; it's about listening on a face-to-face basis. It is also a fine opportunity to catch up with teaching staff individually between appointments; not only can any difficulties be shared but also an interest is taken in their work – and yes, the headteacher should leave last!

Governors: at the heart of what we do

Finally, the governors give their time voluntarily to be critical friends of the school; they bear huge responsibility for its safety and all that is achieved. I find it important to plan carefully how they can best interact with the school community in a meaningful way that does not make unreasonable demands on their time.

Department links work well in this respect, as does having roles at school events, both informal and formal, when they are seen to be at the heart of what we do. Governors in schools will often sit in the front row at events and give much appreciated support; a less formal role of, for example, creating and serving refreshments at a school carol service is less common in the secondary sector but a very good way of parents and staff talking with them and getting to know who they are.

Any successful community can only thrive with the open hearts and minds of its stakeholders sharing enthusiastically in its ethos and underlying values. There lies the greatest challenge of any leader, but if successful, one of the greatest rewards.

Making homework relevant, and giving choice

*Jo Corrigan,
SSAT*

Jo Corrigan, head of primary networks at SSAT, has been talking to Hilton Primary Academy about how the introduction of 'homework menus' has enabled them to increase engagement, enjoyment and completion rates of homework.

The purpose of homework should be to reinforce the learning that takes place in school and give parents an opportunity to engage in their child's learning process. However, the debate surrounding the amount – and type – of homework set for primary school children is ongoing.

A number of years ago, guidelines for primary schools suggested that children in years 1 and 2 should do 10 minutes of homework a night, stretching to 30 minutes a day for pupils in years 5 and 6. However, this guidance was removed, following claims that headteachers should be given the final say on work outside school hours.

Most parents are keen to support their child's learning in school, ideally through the completion of fun learning activities. Unfortunately, the reality for many families is that homework is a time for tears, tantrums and arguments.

Formal school work on the kitchen table

Prof Sue Hallam, of the Institute of Education at London University, has researched the subject of homework extensively. She believes much of the friction for families is down to increased amounts of formal written school work making its way onto the family kitchen table.

Although the government no longer issues guidelines on homework, primary schools are under pressure to ensure children reach the 'expected standard' by the end of key stage 2, to prepare them for secondary school and improve their life chances. Therefore, homework for primary aged children is likely to continue.

Hilton Primary Academy, Newcastle Upon Tyne, is an outstanding school with some 500 pupils on roll. The school has a high number of children eligible for pupil premium funding and serves an increasingly diverse community, with a large increase in pupils with EAL over the past three years.

In the past, homework was considered to be uninspiring for both children and their parents. It consisted of worksheets which often had no direct links to the learning taking place in class.



The introduction of 'homework menus' throughout the school provided opportunities for:

- » Children to have a choice in relation to homework activities completed
- » Explicit links to be made between school and home learning
- » Increased parental engagement with homework
- » Children to receive support with completion of homework from school staff, through attendance at a weekly club.



Staff at Hilton Academy had worked hard to create an inspiring curriculum linked to current topics and themes. Homework was the missing part of the jigsaw. Their ultimate aim was to create a climate where children loved to learn and wanted to continue their learning at home. Their research showed that homework was only catering for children with specific learning styles, ie those who enjoyed worksheets and pages of calculations – which possibly explained why uptake was so low.

Variety of homework challenges

The new Hilton homework menu offers five or six 'homework challenges' that link to what has been explored in class. Each challenge caters for a different learning style (eg writing, mathematical, art, practical model making, sporting activity, the use of tablets, Minecraft, etc). Staff provided a workshop for parents to launch the new homework regime, and all children were issued with a brand new homework journal.

The school's social media platforms share high quality examples of homework. This has received many positive responses from parents.

The homework menus have had a positive impact:

- » 'Choice' worked: children feel in control, empowered, and are therefore more likely to complete their homework.
- » Homework completion has increased from an average of 40% per week to 85% plus.
- » Parents are actively encouraged to get involved and help out with their child's homework. This has meant more children are discussing their learning from school at home with an adult, and in many ways extending it.

- » The weekly homework club, led by a highly skilled lead practitioner, is well attended and enables children to receive support and a range of resources to help them complete their homework.
- » Children are being inspired to continue their learning at home and developing a real love of learning.

Workshops for parents

Hilton Academy will continue to adapt and evolve their homework menus to maintain engagement levels. They also plan to provide further support workshops for parents to help them to support their children with homework.

Vice principal Craig Heeley offers the following tips for good homework habits, for children and parents:

- » Recommend that families identify a quiet place at home to use as a homework area; and offer an alternative dedicated space in school where homework can be completed.
- » Provide a choice of activities which motivate children with a range of learning styles.
- » Share modern teaching methods used by the school, eg in long division.
- » Explain how homework tasks connect with learning in school.
- » Provide a bank of resources that children can access in school to help them complete their chosen task – coloured paper, glue sticks, sticky tape, etc.
- » Encourage parents to take an active role in the completion of homework.
- » Keep homework fun so that children look forward to it.



LEADING FROM THE MIDDLE: WHY WE NEED IT

PROFESSOR ANDY HARGREAVES

Professor Andy Hargreaves, Thomas Moore Brennan chair in education, Boston College, USA, put a persuasive case for leading from the middle, with powerful examples from within and outside education, of its benefits and how it works

In the current age of academic achievement and effort, the questions that schools, systems, and countries have been asking themselves include: how are we doing? How do we know? How can we improve and get better over time?

Referring to the triennial PISA results, of which the latest was imminent, professor Hargreaves said: “The evidence is pretty compelling: the way to achieve excellence is by concentrating on equity. Pretty much every country you look at that has an inclusive public system. Take Finland: what you do is you focus on equity first and then as the range of results gets smaller, and the severity of behaviour problems reduces, you can move everybody up. Equity is the way to excellence. We should talk about equity and excellence, not about excellence and equity.

“These are the driving questions in the age of achievement and effort. They

will stay with us, and so they should. It is important that every child has opportunity, that social mobility is there for everybody, including an opportunity to go to school and to move on to higher education afterwards.”

Wellbeing

French economist Thomas Piketty recently wrote a bestselling book with data showing that since the 1980s worldwide, but particularly in English-speaking countries, wealth has become increasingly concentrated among smaller proportions of the population. “And as Wilkinson and Pickett have shown, the greater the gaps

between wealth and poverty, the more problems societies face in terms of wellbeing. Whether you’re looking at educational achievement, obesity, alcoholism, teenage pregnancy, or incarceration: where the inequalities are greatest is where also you find the worst problems in terms of wellbeing.

“The greatest global refugee crisis for 70 years is bringing different people to our shores and different people into our schools. The world out there is the world inside your schools. And when your children arrive and they’re finding it difficult to achieve, it’s not because you’re not trying hard enough or you’re



Focus on equity first. Then, as the range of results gets smaller, and the severity of behaviour problems reduces, you can move everybody up. Equity is the way to excellence

not driving up standards with sufficient focus on a three-part lesson. It's because some of your children may have experienced around seven incidences of post-traumatic stress.

"Imagine if you've seen your house burned down, or one of your parents shot in front of you, or been uprooted unwillingly from your country, or have never been to school for the entire period of your life; and then you show up in school and you have to do a standardised achievement test.

"These are the children that we see before us, and it's one of the biggest challenges posed for them and for everybody else about issues of identity, engagement and wellbeing.

"According to a report last year from the Department of Public Health, the average class of 15-year-olds looks something like this: six may be self-harming; seven are likely to have been bullied; ten are likely to have witnessed their parents separate. These are the children you have to educate, that you care for as well as teach." But, he stated, the classroom can be a great source of children's wellbeing. "It's in what you do with the students, so they become totally involved in what they are learning, how they are learning and why they are learning it."

Negative effects of technology

Young people's mental health and wellbeing can also be harmed by the effects of the internet. OECD has found that the countries implementing technology most quickly are the ones making least progress in terms of achievement. "Some of that is bad

implementation but some of that is also because of the negative effects of technology.

"Five years ago when I went into schools and asked people, 'how's technology showing up in your school?', they mainly listed positive reasons. They talked about other schools they can connect with across the world, how they could access information independently, how students could have more voice.



**The classroom can
be a great source of
children's wellbeing...
when they become
totally involved in what
they are learning**

"Now, the first thing teachers talk about is cyber bullying in adolescent girls. For example, the two feminists who advocated for Jane Austen's image to go on the back of the £10 note in England have, every day since, been subject to torrents of violent abuse threatening death, rape, all kinds of other ignominy.

"What we're seeing is a sense of the world of no limits. You can say anything, you can do anything – because you don't have to deal with people face-to-face. This is the world of Donald Trump, giving the impression that to be a leader today is to be somehow, somebody, something on Reality TV.

"We live in an age of what Barbara Kellerman calls bad leadership, which has two forms. Malicious or malevolent leadership, and incompetent and ineffective leadership. And with the worst leaders, you don't know whether they're being malevolent or incompetent or a combination of the two.

Why lead from the middle?

"So why is this an argument for leading from the middle? Because we cannot and should not try to invest all our leadership hopes in one person who could save us, who could move us forward. What matters is who we are together as a community – straight and gay, women and men, people of all cultures, countries and fates. It's how we are together that should define us. Not investing all the hopes in a black man or a white woman, or any other identity who will somehow represent all of us.

"There's another reason we shouldn't invest all our hopes in a single individual: a few years ago the historian Gary McCulloch wrote about 'how often policymakers base their educational policies on their own particular biographies and their own experiences of being at school.' Our biographies are not always relevant to other people. We cannot base the teaching of today for everyone on the teaching we personally experienced yesterday as children.

"And we cannot base the policies of today on the individual experiences we had of schools when we were children. We must base them on evidence, on inclusion, on opportunity, on the leaders who come around the table and

figure out what is best for most of us. You bring to it something of you are, but you listen to who everyone else is as well.

“And that is leading from the middle. It is leading through all of us.”

Drawing a comparison with the human body, he said, “when you’re leading from the middle, it’s not just your head and your feet that matter – keeping your head, having your feet on the ground, thinking a way forward – it’s all the other bits that matter.

“Instead of being lily-livered in the face of obstacles, do you have the heart for a challenge? Do you have the stomach for what will face you, including all the opposition? Do you have the gall to carry things forward despite being called ridiculous or stupid or crazy because you’re daring to do something different? The head and the feet are important but the heart, the stomach and the gall of leadership are what will really mark out your character and the character of all those around you, all the time.

In schools

“If you’re in a school, your middle is your teachers, your bus driver, your secretary, your caretaker, and to some

extent, your kids as well. It’s the critical mass of people who are driving the school forward.” He described work he and colleagues are undertaking in Ontario, Canada with 10 school districts, “including a school in the far north in an aboriginal community in which they have a lot of kids with foetal alcohol syndrome. And when kids have foetal alcohol syndrome, they seemingly can’t concentrate, they can’t sit still.

“So at first, when we saw the school seven years ago, these kids who misbehaved used to get sent to see the deputy head. Now they don’t, the teachers keep them in the class, but try to create a more active classroom. They put kitchen cupboards in so the kids could make things, could get actively involved. But then they found the kids started climbing the kitchen cupboards, physically climbing the walls. So what did the teachers do then? They put a climbing wall in the classroom. Now, when the kids need to climb, they climb. They get it out of their system for three or four minutes, then they can sit down for another 20 minutes. Now they can concentrate. Now they can focus.

“Another thing the teachers have found is that indigenous kids who show no leadership or learning within the classroom have in an experimental programme shown remarkable learning on the ice-hockey rink, and in the changing rooms. So the PE department is working with regular classroom teachers to develop cross-curricular skills that are transferable from the hockey rink into the regular classroom.”

A key factor in these innovations is that “the teachers are driving it, not the principal. But the principal creates the platform and the framework within which that leadership can take place. This is where the middle is in your school. For the school leaders, sometimes it just means getting out of the way, at other times creating a platform for this leadership to come forward. This way, you get breakthroughs in teaching and learning that you might not otherwise. And sometimes the school leaders are learning as much from their staff as the staff are from them.”

Among schools

What does leading from the middle look like among schools? Professor Hargreaves pointed to SSAT’s Raising Achievement Transforming Learning project involving 300 schools, which Boston College had evaluated. All these schools had been struggling, yet within three years 200 of them had improved at double the national average rate. This was achieved, he said, “by putting all the struggling schools together. Because then you discover it’s not just you, and by pairing them at their choosing, with higher performing schools that could help them (and some funding), they were able to compare and benefit from what others are doing. These were the beginning of federations.

“In Hackney, inner London, all the secondary schools are academies, but it’s in their contract that they must spend part of their time helping other Hackney schools that are struggling. The result is, all the schools in the borough improve. And as all these schools improve,



We cannot and
should not try to invest
all our leadership
hopes in one person





the parents keep their kids in Hackney, and the community gets stronger. The social capital gets stronger. You focus on equity and it gives everybody a lift. You then get excellence.

“You (schools in England) have a lot further to go, but it’s clear that you’re ahead of a lot of other countries in this, you really are. I talk about English education to audiences in the rest of the world as the paradigm case of positive collaboration, whereby you think about other people, and not just yourself. Sometimes with the government, but sometimes despite the government. It’s a great strength of the system.”

Among countries

Andy Hargreaves is now involved in an ambitious plan to apply the same ‘leading from the middle’ thinking to countries. “It took us two years to get a group of eight countries/administrations and their ministers to meet in Reykjavik, Iceland and to decide

The teachers are driving it, not the principal. But the principal creates the platform and the framework within which that leadership can take place

how they can lead each other and lead the world in terms of these values:

- excellence broadly defined
- equity of all kinds
- inclusion of all students, whatever their identity or disability
- democracy and human rights (which means some countries can’t join this... yet)."

These countries’ advisors, including Ken Robinson, Pasi Sahlberg from Finland, and “Vicky Colbert who’s built 20,000 schools with active pedagogies in Columbia”, are all donating their time for free. There is no budget, no foundation, no investment. “It is, in a way, completely impossible. Yet so

far we have Ireland, Iceland, Scotland, Finland, the 43 million people state of California, Vermont, Aruba and Ontario together in the same place to examine these issues.

The impossible dream

“Having the impossible dream, together, is absolutely critical. But you also need relentless perseverance, determination and hard work. It’s essential for you as an individual, but in these very dark times that we are in globally, which could become significantly darker unless we all act together, it’s important to close with the words of Helen Keller from *The Crucible* who said, ‘Walking with a friend in the dark is better than walking alone in the light’.



From 'levels' to independent learning

*Nigel Sheppard,
Horndean Technology College*

Nigel Sheppard, Deputy Headteacher, Horndean Technology College, describes how they are tweaking SIMS assessment to involve students and parents in developing independent learning.

There are more than 150 ways, to my knowledge, by which various schools have attempted to address the notion of assessment, monitoring progress and reporting since the abolition of levels and the advent of programmes of study in September 2014. I am sure there are way more than this too.

Nevertheless we continue to grapple with methods of assessment and recording and I suppose here I am sharing another –but perhaps with one or two significant differences. Perhaps most important, I genuinely believe this approach facilitates independent learning and reporting to parents; and it can be 'bespoked' to individual schools but at the same time be transferable and meaningful.

SIMS Programmes of Study trackers

The SIMS Programmes of Study, part of SIMS Assessment, enables teachers to track progress against the entire national curriculum. Schools can adapt the programmes of study (PoSs) to support the specific needs of their school and align with the focus of their own assessment policy. We gradually introduced the PoS tracker to subject leaders in workshops, and set up permissions so that they could write their own PoSs. Every department has their own assessment policy, giving them flexibility. As long as the departments implemented their own policy, we feel that they had ownership of it. This was important, because we needed to find a meaningful way of assessing their curriculum.

We emphasised to staff the importance of getting the balance right when it comes to assessment. It's not about using hundreds of statements that you'll never be able to assess on a daily basis, but giving enough information and rigour to the assessment so that it's meaningful. This allows you to change your practice and get a good idea of where the students are.

The whole picture

Having all this information in SIMS gives a clear insight into how students and departments are performing, providing valuable insight for senior leaders. The beauty of it being in SIMS is that it's built into our monitoring system. We have a monitoring calendar and once a half term we go through a checklist with a subject leader. This means that at senior leadership level we will have a good idea of all the departments that are using the tracker and SIMS Assessment properly. It aids accountability, ensures we are using the system and improves the overall assessment.

SIMS Assessment also helps to give an insight into staff performance. Subject leaders were thrilled that they could see each of their teachers' strengths and weaknesses. They can easily identify the strength of any particular skills or concepts, across either a cohort or a class, and can then tailor that curriculum and respond accordingly. This is something I'm really excited about; that analysis side of it is really helpful.

SIMS for students

We are now beginning to use the strands and statements in SIMS Assessment to help students take ownership of their own learning. Personal learning



checklists are not an unfamiliar term to many schools. SIMS PoS facilitates this without any extra work for teachers. In addition we have each strand and statement in their VLE; these are linked with different resources to help students understand if they're emerging, developing, secure or mastered. These resources include Word documents, Excel problems, YouTube videos and those made by the staff and students themselves. Mirroring what's in SIMS with resources to help children learn those skills independently is quite exciting. The staff have done some really brilliant things with the links and some have made their own videos: this allows them to be really creative, promotes flipped learning and aids independence. These screenshots are examples from different departments:

Programme of study

Please find below a list of topics studied by year 7. For each topic are resources for students to use to help them to develop and progress based on whether they are emerging, developing, securing or mastering that aspect of the programme of study.

The Battle of Hastings			
Emerging	Developing	Securing	Mastering
BBC Bitesize page	Battle of Hastings game	Dan Snow documentary	Battle of Hastings, full documentary
Horrible Histories William the Conqueror	Battlefield Britain video		
How did William keep control?			
Emerging	Developing	Securing	Mastering
Horrible histories video	Feudal system explanation	BBC Bitesize Feudal system and Domesday	Online Domesday book
Basic explanation of the Domesday book	Lego Feudal system	Feudal System worksheet	Feudal system table for research
Castles			
Emerging	Developing	Securing	Mastering
Interactive castle diagram	Key features of a castle	Features of a castle (in depth)	Castles documentary
Types of castle (Basic examples)	Type of castle/castle feature worksheet	Types of castle	Castles and Siege warfare documentary

Need some help with the unit? Use the links below to help you master the skills and concepts.

	Developing	Securing	Mastering
AO1: IDENTIFYING Demonstrate knowledge of locations, places, processes, environments and different scales	Place knowledge	World bank data	United nations and Development
- Identifying physical features of Africa - locate countries, identify climate zones			
- Identifying human physical features of Africa - Population and development			
AO2: UNDERSTANDING Demonstrate geographical understanding of: concepts and how they are used in relation to places, environments and processes; the interrelationships between places, environments and processes	Climate	Christian Aid	Interactions
- Investigate how the physical and human features of Africa are interconnected			
- Investigate impacts of tourism in Africa			
AO3: ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION Apply knowledge and understanding to interpret, analyse and evaluate geographical information and issues to make judgement	Popular destinations	Tourism ready?	Tourism Report
- Consider how tourism in Africa can be managed in a sustainable way			

Year 7 Autumn Term 2 - Fractions, Decimals and Percentages	Emerging	Developing	Secure
Recognise and use equivalent fractions and mixed numbers	Equivalent Fractions Lesson Mixed Numbers Lesson	Equivalent Fractions Video Mixed Number Video	Equivalent Fractions and Mixed Numbers
Add, subtract, multiply and divide fractions	+ and - fractions, Dividing Fractions and Multiplying Fractions	Addition and Subtraction Tutorial, Dividing Tutorial and Multiplying Tutorial	Addition and Subtraction, Division and Multiplication
Calculate a fraction of a quantity	Lesson	Tutorial	Questions
Express one quantity as a fraction of another	Overview	Tutorial	Questions
Express a simple fraction as a terminating decimal or vice versa, without a calculator	Fraction to Decimal Lesson Decimal to Fraction Lesson	Tutorial	Fraction to Decimal Decimal to Fraction
Add, subtract and multiply decimals without a calculator	Addition and Subtraction	Addition Tutorial, Subtraction Tutorial and Multiplying Tutorial	Addition and Subtraction, Multiplication
Convert between fractions, decimals and percentages	Lesson 1 and Lesson 2	Tutorial	Questions
Calculate a percentage of a quantity, and express one quantity as a percentage of another	Lesson	Percentage of a Quantity Tutorial	Percentage of a Quantity
Increase or decrease a quantity by a given percentage	Lesson	Increase/Decrease Tutorial	Questions
Calculate original price of an item after a discount has been applied	Lesson	Tutorial	Questions
Order integers, fractions, decimals and percentages	Lesson	Tutorial	Questions (Page 2)
Use place value in decimals	Lesson	Tutorial	Questions

From September 2017 we will also be reporting progress against the skills, concepts or knowledge by exporting the data directly out of SIMS to our reports. This will help address the challenge of parents evening when Parent X asks, "So ok, what does my child need to do to get to the next grade (or level/sub level or indeed whatever you have called it)?". At present a hyperlink will take students or parents to the appropriate page on our VLE where they will be able to access the work they can do to improve. But I am working with SIMS to hopefully evolve the system so it creates a hyperlink to the specific resource students/parents can access to help them independently. The screenshot below shows the current mock up, which has hyperlinks to our VLE. In future, we plan that the actual grades (be these E (Emerging), D (Developing), S (Secure) or M (Mastered) will be hyperlinked directly to the relevant extension task.

Subject Assessment Criteria and Ways to Improve Using Programme of Study Support on Firefly

All subjects that your child is studying are listed below with a breakdown of the curriculum they have studied between the last progress review and this progress review. They have been assessed in various skills, knowledge and concepts. They are assessed as:

E = Emerging... to improve select 'Developing' Tasks from the Programme of Study Support Page
D = Developing... to improve select 'Securing' Tasks from the Programme of Study Support Page
S = Secure... to improve select 'Mastering' Tasks from the Programme of Study Support Page
M = Mastered... the relevant sub/knowledge/concept/understanding and application at this stage have been assessed and are very strong. Revision would be required in preparation for any exam but of present the student is demonstrating a strong understanding and application as appropriate.

Students can go to the **Programme of Study Support** Page on Firefly and look at the support activities specifically related to their assessment to improve their work independently. Simply click on the link below or scan the QR code to go to the relevant page.

Subject	Link	QR Code	Self-Reflection	Self-Reflection	Self-Reflection	Self-Reflection	Self-Reflection	Self-Reflection	Self-Reflection
Engineering	https://www.firefly.co.uk/subjects/Engineering/Engineering%20of%20study		D	D	D	D	D	D	D
English	https://www.firefly.co.uk/subjects/English/English%20of%20study		D	D	D	D	D	D	D
English Language	https://www.firefly.co.uk/subjects/English%20Language/English%20Language%20of%20study		D	D	D	D	D	D	D
English Literature	https://www.firefly.co.uk/subjects/English%20Literature/English%20Literature%20of%20study		D	D	D	D	D	D	D
Information Communication Technology	https://www.firefly.co.uk/subjects/Information%20Communication%20Technology/Information%20Communication%20Technology%20of%20study		D	D	D	D	D	D	D
Mathematics	https://www.firefly.co.uk/subjects/Mathematics/Mathematics%20of%20study		D	D	D	D	D	D	D

Oh and for those of you who, like me, want to track students' progress using the 1–9 system SIMS can, essentially, tally up the skills achieved to give you a proportion of the curriculum achieved (secure or mastered). We use this in the following way:

Averaging grades using Programme of Study Tracker

If a student achieves SECURED or MASTERED on an assessment strand, this contributes to the % of school expectations achieved volume.

By Year 11 students will have been given opportunity to access 100% of the GCSE course and therefore achieve up to a grade 9.

Using this as a guide **as well as professional judgement** you can award a 1-9 score by using the % of school expectations achieved volume.

You can also use this to assign a +, = or - score by using the mid-way value of each band.

For example:

% of school expectations achieved	Grade awarded
0-10%	WT
10-20%	1
20-30%	2
30-40%	3
40-50%	4
50-60%	5
60-70%	6
70-80%	7
80-90%	8
90-100%	9

For example:

- A student achieving 10 - 13% of school expectations would be a 1
- A student achieving 14 - 16% of school expectations would be a 1+
- A student achieving 17 - 19% of school expectations would be a 2
- A student achieving 20 - 23% of school expectations would be a 2+
- A student achieving 24 - 26% of school expectations would be a 3
- A student achieving 27 - 29% of school expectations would be a 3+
- A student achieving 30 - 33% of school expectations would be a 4
- A student achieving 34 - 36% of school expectations would be a 4+
- A student achieving 37 - 39% of school expectations would be a 5

I should emphasise that the proportion of the curriculum achieved is just a signpost. As highlighted above, it is the teacher's professional judgement combined with this signpost that determines the grade awarded. We use new SISRA EAP (estimated attainment pathways) to track this holistic grade which, for us, works flawlessly.



Not just embedding, but also empowering, through formative assessment

*Claire Black,
Skipton Girls' High School*

Claire Black, Curriculum Leader, Biology with TLR3 for teaching and learning, Skipton Girls' High School, shows how formative assessment can inspire staff and students alike.

I was excited when our assistant headteacher introduced me to the SSAT Embedding Formative Assessment (EFA) project, which I would lead on in school. The project sounded closely aligned with our approach to CPDL. This has a real focus on developing teachers' knowledge and skills through collaboration, is closely linked to teaching and learning, and comprises ideas and strategies that can be translated to the classroom. Moreover, I remembered learning about Dylan Wiliam's 'black box' while studying for my PGCE some eight years earlier. Assessment for Learning (AfL) was one aspect of pedagogy that really resonated with me.

After an initial meeting with our SSAT lead practitioner, we planned the schedule for our Inset sessions. These would give staff the opportunity to engage with materials and resources underpinned by Wiliam's many years of world-renowned educational research. Then, they would work with colleagues to plan, implement, evaluate and refine approaches to AfL in their own classrooms.

Staff were very receptive towards the project, recognising that formative assessment is critical in the current climate of curriculum reform and linear assessment, with students' memory skills and application of prior learning being of increased importance.

Volunteers lead workshops

Following a suggestion by our lead practitioner,

while I led an overview of the project and planned (using the resources in the pack) and delivered the launch session, I sought volunteers to lead subsequent workshops. This gave staff wishing to further develop their own leadership skills the opportunity to become something of a specialist on one aspect of AfL, as well as using all the strategies to improve students' learning experiences. We asked staff to select, in order of preference, the formative assessment strategies they would like to focus on initially, with a hinge-point halfway through the first year to allow teachers to switch their attention to a second strategy and enhance their repertoire of techniques.

All staff wanted to focus on 'providing feedback that moves learners forward' and 'activating students as owners of their own learning' (self-assessment), so the teacher learning communities (TLCs) that were established grouped them according to how they had ranked these two strategies. While there were, inevitably, some staff from the same subject area working together, there was also a demonstrable keenness towards establishing cross-curricular pairings, driven by teachers' own professional goals and the learning needs they perceived in their students. Staff shaping their own professional learning according to their interests, aspirations and students is a real advantage offered by the SSAT project. It is structured enough to allow for standardised methodology yet flexible enough to be personalised for a school's, department's, or staff member's development priorities.

A key part of the process is teachers jointly observing each other's teaching, to reflect on the effectiveness of the different techniques used



in lessons and inform the subsequent evaluation and refinement of these approaches. Staff found it really beneficial to work with colleagues from outside their own curriculum areas, which enabled them to consider how the techniques affected students' learning, unconstrained by subject-specific ideas about what traditionally does and doesn't 'work'.

Exploring the effect

As well as peer learning walks, staff were keen to engage in paired work scrutiny to explore how the strategies translated into students' written work and were demonstrated, for example, in students' responses to their teachers' comments. Again, the project was, I was reassured by our lead practitioner, adaptable to allow for this additional layer of collaboration. And it's true. Teachers openly and actively seek feedback and share good practice through work scrutiny. This emphasises how encouraging and non-judgemental the whole project is and how completely our teachers engaged with it. They value its potential to further improve their own lessons through refinements of teaching and learning methods that are manageable but have impact.

Our enthusiastic TLC leaders seized the opportunity to add to the workshop materials with outcomes from their own further in-depth research

around the strategies. From the start, the TLCs had a lively atmosphere engendered by on-task discussion. They led to an inspiring showcase event in which groups of teachers presented their work and findings to those with whom they had not yet collaborated. As a result, the positive outcomes of the strategies, and suggestions for how they are best used with our students, could be more widely disseminated and adopted.

The project is structured to allow for standardised methodology, yet flexible enough to be personalised for school, department, or staff member priorities

Following the first year of the project, staff feedback showed that teachers valued the activities they'd used with students, which improved their abilities to accurately assess whole-class understanding and to more quickly identify students needing extra support. Even a very experienced teacher with a leadership role was inspired and reinvigorated:

"The workshops got me excited about AfL again. Each meet-up encouraged me to set myself a challenge; to come up with an innovative AfL strategy,

to trial it out, and to assess its effectiveness. It was fun to try new approaches, and it was interesting to evaluate their success and then tweak them for reevaluation. It was motivating to add new strategies to my belt, and also to see just how effective a particular strategy could become if tweaked enough”.

Staff also reported that the project:

- » has helped students to focus on how to make specific small-scale improvements to access additional marks or aspects of assessment
- » has shifted the responsibility for improving work from the teacher more to the student
- » has helped to aid discussion among students so that learning could happen at a much faster pace.

We believe the strategies are having a huge impact on student achievement and progress: students can clearly identify the mistakes they have made and respond well to the feedback given in particular ways as a result of the project. The techniques used have also helped examination classes to improve their revision strategies and engage in metacognitive approaches to their learning. Staff credited the ‘activating students as owners of their own learning’ element with making lessons more interactive and increasing enjoyment of learning.

Year 2: specific learning challenges

Keen to refresh the project for its second year, we decided to give staff the opportunity to review

and build on their work by extending their application of formative assessment techniques to a specific learning challenge in one of their own classes. Working in pairs or triads to a lesson study model, each teacher has identified a class to focus on and has jointly planned and delivered a diagnostic lesson to confirm the presence of the perceived challenge.

Teachers suggested additional aspects of formative assessment they wished to learn more about, informing the planning of the workshop I delivered using materials designed for year 2 of the project, such as those around hinge-point questioning and ways of using success criteria. Some also wanted to revisit ideas which had been explored by staff to varying degrees, depending on their own interests and priorities, in the previous year.

Project outcomes

The EFA project has provided an invaluable opportunity to engage with materials written by Dylan Wiliam and those published by SSAT. It has inspired experienced and new teachers, including ITE students completing placements at our school, to place AfL at the centre of their practice and to share ideas throughout the school. The project gave a clear focus to one strand of our teachers’ CPDL, and further stimulated staff’s eagerness to engage in lesson study.





LET'S WORK TOGETHER TO ACHIEVE SYSTEM LEADERSHIP

SIR DAVID CARTER

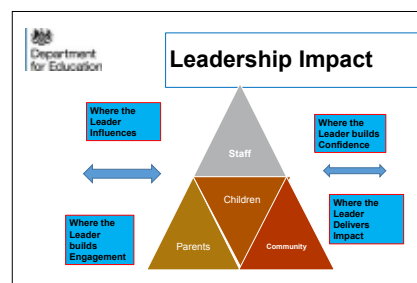
National Schools Commissioner Sir David Carter addressed the issues of system leadership, and offered delegates a sense of where they fit within this rapidly changing world of education.

Sir David said he sees the role of national schools commissioner through the lens of headship. "I try to remember the kind of decisions and the thought processes that I went through when I was running a single school, when I was running a MAT, when I came into the Southwest role as regional schools commissioner. Because if I ever lose sight of that, some of the messages I communicate to you may become disconnected from the reality of your day-to-day work."

He started teaching in 1983, with a music degree, and taught music and PE for a number of years. "I've had the opportunity to work for some fantastic heads, and seen middle leadership at its very best, particularly when trying to set up and run the Cabot Learning Federation in Bristol from 2007. All that informs my thinking about leadership."

From the classroom up

He believes it is important to see "the role of system leadership from the perspective of the classroom up, not the leadership down. Because a school's culture starts in the classrooms with teachers,



Sir David noted that his messages to school leaders may become disconnected from reality "if I ever lose sight of the decisions and thought processes I went through when I was a head"

with teaching assistants, with everybody who is employed to work with young people. Their job as leaders is to grow, to think about the development opportunities, and to get the best from the coaching work that takes place."

He described 'the leadership triangle', which has children at its centre, amid the three

points of staff, parents, and carers and the community. "When they are really joined up around a core understanding of the educational challenges for the child, the school and the community, this enhances the chances of the child's education being successful."

It's also about engagement, he added: "looking over your

shoulder to ensure that people are coming with you, understanding their role and the commitment you want them to make to a really big difference in the system.” This applies just as much to a single school, a multi-academy trust or a teaching school alliance.

Educators need to build their communities’ confidence in education as the solution – not another problem to overcome. “Because for many of you, working in quite challenging areas, parents won’t believe that. Their own education experience in the 1970-90s wasn’t as good as it is today. We have to convince them to be genuine partners in the journey that we’re taking. And then, and only then, do you see the impact. But if we try to go from problem, to solution, to impact too quickly, we don’t build a culture that sustains it.”

Returning to his theme of leadership starting in the classroom, Sir David said: “in our schools this morning teachers up and down the country will be making leadership decisions about how they want learning to happen in their classroom – without even realising it’s a leadership decision. And one of the challenges, I think, for us is to start the thread of leadership development in that first year in teaching.

“Then, when a teacher becomes a middle leader, their challenge is to hone their own practice, and develop the quality of the teaching around them.” But sometimes it’s hard to make the school’s vision real for the people in their teams, because the vision can be so ethereal. A teacher might well ask, ‘how am I contributing to this vision, last lesson on a wet Wednesday, when I’m doing everything

I can to get my classroom management techniques really working?’ But the best middle leaders do enable that to take place, he believed.

He added that he sees more and more heads of individual schools “taking a step back from the operational expectations to become expert quality assurers – pursuing that quest for truth about the challenge and what we need to do next.”



He sees more heads
“taking a step back
from the operational
expectations to become
expert quality assurers”

Over 1000 MATs are enabling system leadership

The 1025 MATs across the country all have an executive head or a CEO, Sir David pointed out. “I see this role as being the glue that binds our system leadership together. Over 90% have come into those roles from the classroom, through headship.

“But we cannot assume that the great heads of single schools will automatically become great executive leaders – because the job is different. How do you quality assure, how do you develop and transmit effective practice at distance?” In a MAT of 20 schools you might only bring your leaders together once a term, he noted. How do you make the most of that

time? How do you performance-manage at distance?

“But here’s a challenge and an opportunity. We have 1.3 million children in England who are not being taught this morning in a good school. And the only people who will improve the system, improve those life chances, are us. We are absolutely on track to having a schools-led, improving system, and that’s the right thing to do. We have to trust our best leaders and our best teachers to have the impact beyond their own classrooms and beyond their own schools.”

This government, he added, is still on a journey that every school in this country will become an academy. “But not by 2022, and not by compulsion. So it enables schools to think about the right partnerships, the organisations and the groupings that will make a difference to them.”

On the improving system, he maintained that the school that’s gone from special measures to good arguably knows more about school improvement than the school that’s been outstanding for 10 years. He believed the new £140 million strategic school improvement fund signals “a shift from mass conversion to mass improvement, which has to be the right thing.”

What the best collaborations do

The best collaborations between schools and MATs, he said, focus on getting teachers better resourced, better prepared, to teach better across the year. “And that’s not done in mass training. It’s bespoke, it’s one-to-one, it’s triads, it’s coaching, it’s mentoring. It’s showing people what good looks like. It’s about building leadership capacity at every level.”



The school that's gone from special measures to good arguably knows more about school improvement than the school that's been outstanding for 10 years

Such collaborations also have an element of moral purpose. "How you respond when a school down the road has just gone into a category? At one level, it's as simple as picking up the phone to that head and checking that they're OK. Because if you've had that experience, it's devastating and you feel very isolated and very lonely.

"At the other level, it's saying, 'What do you need from me? What can we do to help you?' We're not talking about getting them to join our MATs, though that might come later, but 'Today, what do you need? How can we help you?'

"That system leadership capacity, not just to empathise, but to move quickly to help others is in your hands, in your local communities.

"I think the best system leaders have to see the MAT fundamentally as a school improvement vehicle. They are really good at holding people to account at distance, and they welcome that feedback themselves: the best MAT boards do 360 reviews of each other."

In trusts that have an executive leader and a group of principals, each of the principals must have a trust performance objective as well as local ones for their own schools. "Or even, in some cases, ask them for a day a week to work across the trust on a particular theme. Because the danger is, particularly where trusts have grown from five or six people who were equal, and one of them has become the executive leader, a gap begins to open up. How do you find a way to tie in all of the leaders, and to recognise their contribution to the whole trust?"

Sustainable trusts to have 1000 children

He believed that sustainable trusts, which will can build capacity to improve schools, need an initial target of some 1000 children, and can build from there. "You don't have to do it overnight, I don't think you need to do it in one go. But you need to have a view that that's where you're trying to get to."

Before a small MAT grows, "I want them to be really sure that the commitment they're making to the children that they already educate will not be damaged by taking on more schools"

Currently, however, 82% of MATs have no more than five schools. But before they grow, "I want them to go through a health check. I want to be really sure that the commitment they're making to the children that they already educate will not be damaged by taking on more schools."

Collaboration must be

between MATS as well as within them, he added. "If MATs don't collaborate with each other, we will have a problem."

Sir David saw three ways to ensure that does not happen. First, he envisaged 'mentor MATs': experienced trusts that have been around for five or six years, have built their capacity, have built their systems, are effective school improvers, will support, as a mentor, a new multi-academy trust for 2-3 years.

Another solution, especially in rural communities, is MAT mergers, typically involving both primary and secondary academies.

Thirdly, he valued where local authority maintained good and outstanding schools are supporting academies, or MATs are supporting maintained schools. "Whether it's through a service level agreement, a partnership or some kind of an associate relationship, this enables children who are in schools that are RI, serious weaknesses or special measures, to get the

support that they need far quicker than we've been able to do it."

He ended with the stark figure of the 1.3 million children who are not yet in a great school. "That, colleagues, is going to be our biggest challenge. But I've never felt more confident that we've got the right people in the system, and I want to work closely with you to achieve this."



Careers as an integral part of the curriculum, for all ages

Therese Quincey,
Red House Academy

Therese Quincey, Principal, explains the remarkable range and impact of Red House Academy's work on CEIAG

Red House Academy is an 11-16 school in the top 20% of most challenging schools nationally, and was rated as 'requires improvement' by Ofsted in April 2016. So raising aspirations is a vital concern, and it is communicated through our trust (Northern Education Trust), thanks in no small part to our Chair, a visionary local businessman who is ambitious for students and the economic and cultural development of Sunderland. This drive ensures the aspiration agenda maintains high profile throughout the trust.

The symbiotic relationship between a deep dive into careers provision 2014-15 and the publication of *Careers Guidance Provision for Young People in Schools* (2015) started the academy on a successful journey. In 2014 a member of Red House's senior leadership team, Amanda Searle, took over the responsibility for CEIAG, aiming to ensure that the careers curriculum prepares students for life beyond the academy.

Quality award

Small beginnings involving a working party to review, reflect and plan led very quickly to external accreditation. In November 2014 the academy became committed to the Inspiring IAG Quality Award, leading to Amanda's accreditation in three units from the OCR Level 6 diploma in careers guidance and development.

The approach was very much in line with government guidance: "all schools should work towards a quality award for career education, information,

advice and guidance as an effective means of carrying out a self-review and evaluation of the school's programme" (*Careers Guidance provision for young people in schools*, point 67, p16).

This was followed in November 2015 by the Stage 2 (Silver) award and in November 2016 Stage 3 (Gold). Amanda and her team have developed high quality CEIAG for students, and she has achieved the Certificate in Careers Leadership and been celebrated as 'Careers Champion' by Sunderland Connexions. Her determination, and leadership support, have led to an integrated approach to raising aspirations and developing student understanding of the world of work. This development was even acknowledged by Ofsted in 2016: "Pupils are clear about what they want to do when they leave the academy as a result of good advice and guidance."

*We keep up to date with
Sunderland's economic plans,
and the needs of local businesses*

Linking learning and work

The academy's strategy is designed to link the world of learning to the world of work and to bring about more rapid transformation in our young people's skills, qualifications and employability. In Sunderland and its localities we are aware of the local labour market and future employment opportunities. We keep up to date with Sunderland's 'economic masterplan', and the needs of local businesses in terms of qualifications and skill sets.

We aim to ensure that students enter Red House Academy focused on their future:

- » They learn through experience that securing a position in employment, training or further education is competitive.
- » From an early stage, they are taught to furnish their CV and given opportunities to do so from academy student vacancies.
- » Student posts within the academy have to be applied for, with references and a CV.
- » Governors are involved in the appointment process for posts such as those on the student leadership team.

A big adventure

Annually, the academy hosts a 'Big Adventure', for about 12 students to visit a part of the world they

would otherwise be unlikely to experience. The cost is heavily subsidised. Applications are competitive and are followed by governor interviews and selection.

The subject of careers is embedded in the curriculum:

- » Employability skills are taught across the curriculum throughout the year.
- » Nominated employability skills weeks consolidate skill development.
- » A dedicated enterprise project and 'enterprise drop-down days' develop entrepreneurial and problem-solving skills.
- » All students in the academy have an entitlement to CEIAG, which goes well beyond statutory obligations.

Impartial and independent advice and guidance is provided by Connexions, which has supported us consistently throughout our journey.



Engaging with external partners

Relationships and engagement with a variety of external partners has been proactive and productive. Our board consistently emphasises its high expectations of effective engagement. Sunderland's local employers actively support its 'work discovery programme', which attracts local students to 'sector days', covering all areas of employment, and guest speaker days culminating in an annual 'work discovery week'.

This week gives students exposure to the world of work and provides updates for headteachers to learn about future employment opportunities, and to deepen knowledge of local economic development and job creation.

This year, in partnerships with Work Discovery Sunderland, 27 students gained either silver or bronze awards from the Industrial Cadets Programme. Work with Sunderland University, Sunderland College and other local colleges and trainers develops knowledge and understanding of a number of opportunities at post-16 and beyond. Our own Most Able co-ordinator provides opportunities for students to experience a variety of universities. Visits to Oxford University are an annual event.

All year groups involved

The academy has developed a breadth and depth of opportunities to engage each year group. All have dedicated careers teaching. All have skill development and engagement in 'Employability Weeks'. We also engage with the Enterprise Initiative Programme, partnered locally with Liebherr Group (one of the world's largest manufacturers of construction machinery) through the North East LEP. Liebherr work with the academy on 'engineering days' in years 7 and 8 and support the bridge into work in years 10 and 11.

All year groups encounter employers and enterprise. Year 7 is involved in an enterprise project called 'Stepping into Business', year 8 gains accreditation in enterprise and business. Internal careers fairs for year 9 and year 11 involve 15 different businesses and post-16 providers. Externally, year 10 has Work Discovery Week careers fair, and year 11 has STR8UP with Connexions. Students find out about apprenticeships and college taster days, and have extended work experience opportunities. Year 10s are involved in the construction company Esh Group's 'Building My Skills' programme, which involves five business

contact sessions and five checkpoint tasks, followed by student interviews.

Challenge of time commitment

Within three years we have achieved high quality provision, but the journey has not been without its challenges. It has required commitment to accreditation and training – and a time commitment to maintain partnerships with external providers and keep up to date with changing opportunities for employment locally and nationally.

Evidence of impact can be seen in destination data. In 2016, every year 11 student left with an intended destination. The number of students going into further education is on an upward trajectory. NEET figures have reduced dramatically, from 7% in 2013 to 3% in 2015 and 2016 (in 2016, one was pregnant, one a carer and only one unaccounted for).

The academy is highly inclusive. Students in our alternative education base (we have had no permanent exclusions since 2010) have intense intervention to support their journey into college, training or employment, which involves additional support from Connexions.

Harness ambition earlier

Our current focus is to harness ambition at a younger age. We are now working with some primary headteachers to audit CEIAG practice and devise a bespoke programme for individual schools, helping them work towards the Primary Inspiring IAG award. Amanda is working across the trust to guide all schools to outstanding CEIAG provision.

In November 2016 Red House Academy was inspected for the CEIAG stage 3, Gold award. The assessor's report included:

"It is clear from my discussions that the careers leader, Amanda Searle, is driven and focused, wanting the best for students; and this vision and dedication has led to the careers provision being where it is now. Students and parents were very positive about the CEIAG programme and support provided and felt well prepared for their next steps. It is also clear from my discussions that the programme will continue to evolve and we welcome that. I have no hesitation in recommending that Red House Academy is awarded the Inspiring IAG Gold Award."

What character education means to us

Nick Lowry,
The Co-operative Academy of Stoke-on-Trent

The co-operative movement is built on a history of working class people trying to make their communities better places to be. We looked at the cultural capital gap within our school community, and aimed to give students opportunities to experience a diverse and deep extended curriculum. This is called many different things in different institutions, but the government have given it the umbrella title of character education.

The Co-operative Academy of Stoke-on-Trent is sponsored by the Co-op Group and is part of the Co-operative Academies Trust. Most of our students

are disadvantaged, we have 36 languages spoken and key stage two ability on entry of our Y11 leavers was in the bottom 1% nationally. Our focus is building character based on the cooperative values:

- » self-help
- » self-responsibility
- » democracy
- » equality
- » equity
- » solidarity.





This really was the key moment in our planning: linking character education clearly to our own values. It is part of a deeply engrained moral purpose running through the academy, aimed at genuinely altering the life chances of our young people.

In June it was announced that we were the regional winners of the DfE's Character Awards, and the only secondary winner from an urban complex environment. When we put ourselves forward we felt we were not pushing any new initiative or altering the way we did things, we simply showcased what we had been building over a number of years.

Character education

Our approach is to promote the moral, intellectual, performance and civic virtues of our students through a wide variety of experiences, which take place in the academy every week. Each student in key stage 3 receives an hour of taught character education each week, through six modules taught on a carousel.

Examples of character modules include:

- » random acts of kindness
- » art therapy
- » current affairs
- » humility and courage through public speaking.

The students greatly enjoy the lessons, and the 'attitude to learning' scores for these lessons are the highest of any subject in the academy. We have noticed real changes in our students' confidence

levels in communicating with others. In January 2017 we became the Stoke-on-Trent public speaking champions, something which we have never thought possible before.

All year 7 students are taught leadership skills through character education, which has enthused more students to attend Co-operative Young Leaders training and planning nights after school. Most of these lessons draw on character qualities from moral and performance virtues, but the final lessons promote civic virtues.

The character education is underpinned by a strong focus on democracy. Student voice is extremely strong in the academy. Over 25% of students are engaged in the student council, co-operative young leaders or student mentors schemes. The number of SEND and disadvantaged students represented closely mirrors that of the whole academy population. Student council initiatives such as the mobile phone charter, and the eco-committee's litter picking, are highly visible parts of academy life, demonstrating students' active understanding of civic virtues.

Giving our students 'the edge'

When I became principal in 2014, one of my priorities was a vehicle to give our students greater cultural capital. They were making strong academic progress but there were not enough opportunities for volunteering; participation in the arts and sport; and support for general interests which you find at the more successful schools.

The in-house initiative we launched, called 'The Edge', is designed to give our students the edge in all areas of their life. Running every Wednesday afternoon, it offers enrichment activities, leadership opportunities, competitive sport, and academic support and intervention. The idea is that activities will enhance all the virtues of character education. Part of the power of The Edge is that many elements of it are delivered by our non-teaching staff, who have a wide range of skills and interests. This has had the added effect of empowering and engaging this key group of staff. The rest of the delivery is by our own performance faculty staff and specialist external staff.

One example of Edge is the biking programme, which focuses on the performance and moral virtues. This has been introduced and developed through after-school clubs, transition cycle days and KS3 cycle event days. The academy has worked with Sustrans, The Move Project Cycle Programme, and external agencies on many levels. The academy is one of just a handful of schools in the country to be awarded the MOVE Project Silver Cycle certificate for students aged 11-16. This is designed to help develop the confidence and skills to travel actively and independently by walking, scooting and cycling to from and within school. The children are definitely benefiting from this healthier lifestyle. They are also learning much about the importance of keeping safe on the roads.

Performance virtues are enhanced by opportunities to play sport such as football, basketball (we are Stoke-on-Trent champions) and boxing. Creativity is promoted through art, jewellery making and photography. There is also access to quite unique experiences for inner city students, such as horse riding and gardening. The overall programme enables students to enjoy a wide variety of enriching character focused activities to shape the students into rounded individuals.

Co-operative Young Leaders Programme

A key factor in developing civic virtue is the Co-operative Young Leaders programme established in 2010, which aims to make a difference to our academy, our feeder primaries and the wider community through volunteering. Students can gain bronze, silver or gold awards for the number of hours of volunteering they complete (similar to the Duke of Edinburgh's Award).

The programme includes leadership opportunities both in and outside the academy. Opportunities to be trained



are identified in the Edge programme and student leadership is then developed in a variety of contexts including volunteering, peer mentoring and supporting transition work. The young leaders and student councillors act as ambassadors for the academy both locally and nationally, through the Co-operative Academies Trust, and are clearly identified as such. For example, student council members, who have training at Co-op headquarters by executive level trainers, have their own uniform for visiting other schools, etc, to show they are the face of our academy in the community.

The Co-operative Young Leaders programme and transition go hand in hand at the academy. Primary pupils in year 6 who are apprehensive about the move to secondary are invited into the academy for additional transition days led by young leaders. Leaders are chosen specifically to work with students from their former primary schools, this provides a friendly face to put students at ease immediately. In addition in the summer term the young leaders run an afterschool club at a local primary school for any students who still feel worried or concerned. The leaders plan and run team games, teambuilding, self-esteem and confidence games. It is a great opportunity for the primary pupils to chat with our students and create friends and links; they are then buddied with the leaders, which is a great opportunity for peer-to-peer support.

Since we won the character award, I have been contacted by many people who wanted to come and see us. Each one has sought some kind of toolkit to take away in order to make a similar impact. Unfortunately my response often disappoints them: you cannot simply replicate another school's values and ethos; you have to make some significant decisions about how you will design and implement the changes you want to see in your own context, and then ensure that this will be a whole-school priority. This will inevitably involve structural changes specific to your own school.



HOW TO MOTIVATE YOUNG PEOPLE TO PASS THEIR EXAMS

MARCUS ORLOVSKY

With a background in finance, real estate, HR and technology, Marcus Orlovsky now applies his knowledge and skills to education, including global speaking engagements and TED talks. He has also set up a fascinating programme designed to give young people powerful reasons to pursue their education.

Much of his work stems from the conviction that “it’s not so much teaching which gets in the way, it’s sometimes kids just don’t know why they need to learn this stuff. And if they don’t know why they need to learn it, guess what happens?”

“While in education we’re talking about learning and great futures, I wonder how many kids are going home to be surrounded by people who are naysayers and tell them it’s all rubbish. And, of course, there are more of them than there are of us.”

What young people are capable of

He showed an image of a young man called Jordan Casey: “I talked to him at a TEDx in Klagenfurt [Austria]. At the age of 14 he is now really making his mark as a developer. His

message is that age does not need to hold you back.”

With this and other examples including Mark Zuckerberg, Bill Gates and Steve Jobs, he made the point that “we have no idea what people are capable of.”



Sometimes kids just don't know why they need to learn this stuff

But making the best use of what young people are capable of will become ever more important.

“Sixty percent of the global population doesn’t have access to the internet, and is expected to come on board in the next five years. And that’s going to change everything! Because if you are sitting in Somalia and you don’t have free water, you don’t even

have any clean water, it’s a bit rich, isn’t it, when you see that a chief executive of a company in France earns 2 million a year. And I think that’s part of the challenge which our young people are going to have to face.”

For an example of an effective response to such challenges, he pointed to Cristina Balan, who designed the electric motors for the Tesla and nearly all electric hybrid cars: “She has been working with Bill Gates to create drones which fly 100km, carrying a 10kg payload, to take medical supplies into areas where you can’t get





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North Birmingham Academy

trucks, such as when you've had earthquakes or natural pestilence. Her message was that she really had to work hard to overcome prejudices about women in the motor industry.

"It's not about what you know anymore – it's also who you know, and even more importantly, how you know them." Sometimes, however, those in society, and education

in particular, fall well short of this. He showed a sign from a school that stated, 'Don't knock on this door unless it is an emergency! Staff room.' "That really says we are integrating with people, doesn't it?," he commented sardonically.

Orlovsky set up Bryanston Square Holdings, a social enterprise, "to see if we can help kids fathom...work their ways out

of all this. And we just do three things. We develop students, we try to improve the teaching and learning environment, we try to inspire towards education. It's not about teaching, it's just about showing the way."

Teaching and learning environment

The organisation's work on the teaching and learning

environment includes designing some schools 30% cheaper than the Education Funding Agency's target but which included many original features to enhance learning opportunities, such as "little cave spaces....Our expectations are always wrong: we never know what's possible until somebody achieves it." In another example, he showed a video clip of a small chair which, when sat on, tells a story. "You get off, it stops: it's just an iPod shuffle and a couple of speakers, costing a couple of hundred quid. So, anybody can do this stuff."

In inspiring towards education, typically, the programme starts with selection of "some kids who are disadvantaged or disengaged, or who could achieve a lot more, and we run a 'hot seat', where the head sits at the table and the kids can ask any question, to be answered fairly, honestly and completely. And that becomes super-powerful because some of these kids have never had a proper conversation with the headteacher. The only conversation they've ever had is when they are in the s**t."

Meeting interesting people

The programme then takes the kids off to meet 'interesting people', such as "a guy who runs

Google"; a doctor responsible for dealing with the Zika virus; the person who set up Charles Tyrwhitt, the shirt company; an actor; and staff at Al Jazeera.

They visit about five places in the same day, spending an hour and being able to ask any question. "And it's very, very, very powerful when kids have got up close and dirty to people doing amazing things."

A couple of weeks later, these young people give a presentation to the rest of their year group. "And that makes a hell of a difference to them."

About a month later, "we bring in four or five local decision-makers, who work with the kids on how they can develop their own 'lift message' – you know, elevator pitches and all that sort of stuff – and then they each spend two minutes, one-to-one, with each of those decision-makers."

"And in those two minutes, quite a lot of these kids have organised work experience for themselves. There was one boy who talked his way into Lots Road Art Gallery, got himself trained to be an auctioneer, and ran ten lots auctioning off 30,000 quid's worth of antiques. He's 14...and is in care. What do you think that does for his self-esteem? And what do you think that does about giving him a repertoire of stuff to talk about?"

Another element of the programme is helping the students to work out what can be done to improve their school: they develop ideas and pitch them to SLT, or even run programmes for other kids in their school.

A reason to get "these pesky exams"

"What then takes place in that



In 1-1 discussions, local decision-makers work with the kids on how they can develop their own 'lift message'

is amazing change happens. They realise that 'the difference between me and the world I'd like to be, the place I'd like to be, is these pesky exams. I might as well get them.' And funnily enough, they do."

In a video, a number of young people reviewed their experiences of this programme. Comments included: "I'm going to try to concentrate more on life and stop being on my phone all the time. Stop lounging about, not doing stuff, and actually try to make a difference;" and "I would recommend this for everyone that is not too sure about what they want to do, because this will actually help you. So, yeah, you should definitely do this."

Marcus Orlovsky concluded by pointing out that, although this programme is a long way from the current focus on maths, science, etc, "90% of the kids we've worked with have achieved five A to Cs. And funnily enough, pupil premium kids outperform non-pupil premium kids in the number of A*s."

The programme has now enrolled some 400 people who "are prepared to share everything for about an hour with kids."



It's not about what you know anymore – it's also who you know, and how you know them



What worked for the Olympic cycling team may work in our school

*Andrew Hare,
High Tunstall College of Science*

Andrew Hare, Teacher of discovery, High Tunstall College of Science, explains the rationale, actions and early outcomes of their Chimp Paradox Project with students displaying challenging behaviour

The core values of High Tunstall College of Science are supporting and inspiring students, to allow them to achieve their potential. The Chimp Paradox model (used to such success with the British Olympic cycling team by psychiatrist and author Steve Peters) was piloted with a view to giving extra support to a small cohort of students who display challenging behaviours at school.

The project had two main aims. The first was to challenge students' emotional and unhelpful thinking processes. Then, to teach students about the order in which information is processed within the brain, so they could avoid reacting emotionally and disproportionately to events in their daily lives (www.chimpmanagement.com).

Pilot, 2015-2016

The house learning coaches completed a six-hour training course developed within the college so that they were comfortable using the principles. Five students were then chosen from KS3, based on the high number of behaviour points that they accumulated within the first term. This test group then had two 30-minute meetings each week with learning coaches trained in the chimp principles, in which their behaviours and suitable methods for tackling similar incidents in the future were discussed, and goals set.

Five 'control' students with similar behaviour points were also chosen, to provide a comparison. These

students had four mentoring sessions annually with no chimp principles, instead discussing their academic performance. A third group had a learning coach meeting once a fortnight, which was not based on chimp principles. This group was included to look at how regularity of intervention affected challenging students' behaviour. Baseline data collected before the sessions included attendance, behaviour points, happiness, anxiety, depression and self-confidence questionnaires along with teacher ratings of behaviours and progress against targets.

Context of the analysis

The conclusions relate to year 8 and 9 students with poor behaviour. Despite the best attempts to control every variable, the chimp group had a higher number of behaviour points before intervention (Chimp: 93.3, Fortnightly : 78.3, Control: 76.50). The findings are also based on a small sample (N=16) with the outliers having a significant impact on data. Finally, the delivery of chimp principles by the learning coaches is still at a novice level.

Pilot study conclusions

The chimp group had a 1.32% increase in attendance with the fortnightly group having a decrease of 2.77% and the control group had a decrease of 1.41%. This indicates that the chimp intervention has a positive impact on attendance with challenging KS3 pupils.

In terms of behaviour the chimp group had a 17.6% decrease in the number of (challenging) behaviour points with the fortnightly group having a 23.35% reduction and the control group having a 37.5% increase. This indicates that an increased frequency of mentoring leads to a reduction in behaviour points. The chimp group also had a reduced number of behaviour points



despite an increase in attendance and being a group with a higher starting number of behaviour points.

The teacher judgements indicated that the chimp group's behaviour in lessons decreased by 2.6%, the fortnightly group rating increased by 0.75% and the control group increased by 2.05 %. However, the accuracy of these figures is open to debate as they have no correlation with behaviour points, as the control group's behaviour points had the most dramatic increases, this could be potentially due to teacher bias.

On the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire the chimp group's score decreased by 5.16%, the fortnightly group had an increase of 2.74% and the control group had an increase of 2.6%. This may indicate that the constant challenge of the chimp sessions has a negative impact on students' happiness in the short term, and that, leaving aside the content, a fortnightly intervention period may be more effective.

Scores on the Thorndike self-confidence scales for the chimp group increased by 7.08%, the fortnightly group increased by 0.84% and the control group increased by 3.54%. This reasonably large increase in self confidence indicates a positive impact of the chimp sessions in comparison to the fortnightly and control groups.

In terms of depression and anxiety, the WEBWMS showed no reduction in scores for the chimp group. The fortnightly group had a 5 points reduction (positive) in depression score and no change in anxiety ratings. The control group had an increase in depression score of 2.14 points (negative) and a 1 point increase in anxiety ratings. In conclusion there was no reduction in depression or anxiety score on average for the chimp group.

The final parameter is the attainment of end-of-year targets. The chimp group on average hit their targets

in three additional subjects, the fortnightly and control groups achieved their targets in four additional subjects. This indicates no significant difference in target attainment and that the frequency of chimp intervention may be causing a decrease in target attainment as two lessons per week are disrupted.

Based on the findings of the pilot study High Tunstall's senior leadership team agreed that the Chimp project showed several potentially positive benefits, but needed to be investigated further with a larger sample size.

Main project, 2016-2017

Several of the issues raised from the analysis of the pilot study results have been integrated into the main Chimp project. The first was that the frequencies of chimp sessions have been reduced to once a week to increase the number that can access the programme and limit impact on lessons. The sample size has increased to 48 students from years 7 and 8; these 48 students have been split into a control group and chimp test group. The control group will continue to have four academic mentoring sessions per year, with a focus on academic attainment.

As with the pilot study, students have been selected based on the number of behaviour points they have accrued over the first term. The selection also took into account the severity of the behaviour; the likelihood of the students being able to access the provision for the remainder of the academic year; and their ability to attend sessions (eg. reduced due to poor attendance).

Each student in the chimp test group has been matched with a student from the control group on a range of parameters, including average attendance, gender, age, PP status, FSM status and SEN status. The only variable that significantly differs is the number of behaviour points each student had prior to the start of the main project; these pairings will be used as part of a comparative analysis. As with the pilot, students' baseline data were collated, including attendance, number of behaviour points, happiness, anxiety, depression and confidence questionnaires, teacher ratings of behaviours and progress against targets.

The interim review of the project's outcomes will be the end of the Easter term to assess any short-term impacts. The final analysis of the project will be at the end of the academic year.

If you would like an update of the results, please contact ahare@hightunstall.hartlepool.sch.uk.



Emergency first aid education in your curriculum could boost students' self-esteem as well as saving lives

Cheryle Berry,
Community Save a Life Scheme

Could we have someone on every street who knew how to respond in the event of an accident?, asks Cheryle Berry, Community Save a Life Scheme

Every year thousands die unnecessarily because someone did not know a few simple skills. The Community Save a Life Scheme (CSALS) is working with schools and local communities to promote and increase the teaching of emergency first aid skills.¹

Every year 150,000 people die whose lives could have been saved by emergency first aid. Among these, 30,000 have a cardiac arrest outside a hospital environment; fewer than 10% of them survive.

These simple skills could make such a difference:

- » CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation)
- » putting an unconscious casualty in the recovery position
- » treating serious bleeding
- » dealing with choking
- » helping in the event of a heart attack.

Currently emergency first aid education (EFAE) is not part of the national curriculum in England but is included in non-statutory programmes of study for PSHE published by the PSHE Association.² There are no official statistics but a survey in 2015 by The Red Cross, British Heart Foundation and St John Ambulance implied that only 24% of schools currently teach first aid.

In comparison a 2006 survey conducted by The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies reported that 19% of European countries, including

France, Denmark and Norway, had compulsory first aid training in schools.³ In Norway, where all children learn CPR in schools, up to 25% of people survive a cardiac arrest compared to less than 10% in the UK.

It is very interesting that many young people realise and appreciate the importance of EFAE and wish it was taught in all schools.

British Youth Council's manifesto for the 2015 general election stated that it wanted parliament to "ensure that quality first aid is a compulsory subject for all children in schools".... which "would equip children and young people with a knowledge of life-saving procedures, potentially saving thousands of lives."⁴

In Norway, where all children learn CPR in schools, up to 25% of people survive a cardiac arrest, compared to less than 10% in the UK

Where CSALS started

In Derbyshire during 2010 a small group of volunteers came together from different backgrounds but with a shared passion and commitment to teach lifesaving skills. The group included headteachers, GPs, paramedics and local community workers. Thus was formed CSALS. We had excellent support from BHF (British Heart Foundation), and became affiliated as a BHF Heartstart Group, called Community Save a Life Scheme. All our work is insured and quality assured.

As part of our ultimate goal, a lifesaver on every street, one of our aims is to work towards EFAE being taught in all schools.



During the last six years we have given free education and training to 37,000 people of all ages – from year 6 pupils in primary schools to the over 80s. Groups and individuals have been taught in schools, youth groups, sports groups, FE, HE, voluntary and community organisations.

The support from other organisations has been excellent. In particular Bolsover District Council: two of their district councillors and officers have worked with us for four years; also Rotary International District 1220 and Inner Wheel District 22 have provided stewards and trainers for our events and promoted our work. Support has come from the local police force, and local MPs have promoted and encouraged our efforts.

Wider benefits of lifesaving skills

To raise the awareness of our aims we set out to achieve the Guinness World Record for the largest first aid lesson. This we eventually did on May 20th 2016 at The Proact Football Stadium in Chesterfield, where we taught 1795 Young People.

More than 20 schools were involved, along with the local FE college; and trainers and stewards from the police, Rotary, Inner Wheel and Sheffield Hallam University. All the young people involved received certificates and medals; it was a great occasion for them.

CSALS have seen many young people grow in confidence and self-esteem through learning lifesaving skills. We believe it gives excellent leadership and team building opportunities.

One boy we taught went on to save his father's life, and a group of college students gave invaluable help at a

road traffic accident. We want to encourage as many schools as possible to include EF AE in their curriculum.

First aid education resources are available from a number of organisations including BHF, St John Ambulance and British Red Cross. As part of its support to schools, BHF offers free CPR training packs, called the Call Push Rescue Training Kit, to all secondary schools in the UK.⁵ The kit contains an educational DVD and inflatable mannequins. There is also a welcome pack with posters, assembly film and lesson frameworks.

You could enable your young people to acquire life-saving skills while increasing their confidence and self-esteem.

If interested in working with other schools to promote EF AE, contact cheryle.berry@btinternet.com; www.communitysavealife.co.uk.

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PRACTICAL APPROACHES FROM DIFFERENT SOURCES

SOUND TRAINING & ACKLAM GRANGE SCHOOL

The session led by Claire Preston, chief executive of Sound Training, focused on applying proven methods from education and elsewhere to leadership and teacher development, and included strong evidence from teachers of their effectiveness.

Claire Preston started her presentation with an admission: “I have never been a school leader, but I have been a teacher and a leader in a number of sectors. I find it fascinating when visiting schools that it’s often clear how well that school is doing simply from the reception you get when you arrive in the school. As a leader, what you’re projecting – your leadership – is actually contagious. It affects every part of your organisation, often in a very obvious way.”

So, she said, “how we package things as a leader is incredibly important. We need to be able to adjust our style. It might be the same message, it might be the same end goal, but we do need to adjust what we are doing” to suit each group and individual.

“We talk about personalised learning all the time, and nobody here is new to that at all.

But are you leading by offering personalised management? Are you offering personalised leadership? How are we actually imparting that message to our managers and getting the best out of them?”

She showed a video clip in which fleas were placed inside a glass jar and the lid sealed. After three days, when the jar was opened, the fleas would not jump out. In fact, the fleas would never jump higher than the level set by the lid. Their behaviour was now set for the rest of their lives. And when these fleas reproduced, their offspring would automatically follow their example, the clip explained.

You’ll only jump as high as you think you can

“I think we can all relate to that message and we can all think of students that that applies to,” she commented. But it has implications for managers and

leaders: “think about what we expect of our managers and teachers, and how we really can get the most out of the day, out of the service that we provide, for the people that really need it.”

This thinking has helped Sound Training in developing training programmes that have been used by some 900 teachers and 35,000 students. Katy Parkinson, the founder director of Sound Training, wasn’t prepared to accept the low standards that students were achieving in Middlesbrough, where she was based. She began to devise programmes that would stretch and challenge students and give them the strategies they needed to achieve more. Now, some years on, “I’m really proud of the fact that we work with some amazing schools throughout the country and now further afield in the United States,” Claire Preston said.





Teachers from one of those schools, Acklam Grange in Middlesbrough, then explained to the conference how they implement some of these programmes, and how they work in practice.

Acklam Grange's story

Assistant head Sarah Ledger is responsible for teaching and learning and middle leadership development. She introduced their story with: "we were an RI school for what seemed like forever. The town has a very bad reputation, with Middlesbrough being deemed the worst town in the worst region in the country. We went on a very rough and rocky journey in order to get stamped with a 'good' in February 2016, with leadership at all levels being deemed outstanding. And then in the August our results were superb. We have bucked a trend. Our results, including top 2% in the country for whole-school Progress 8, are something that we are very proud of.

"I do believe that one of the big shifts was because of how we altered the way we

were investing our time and our focus on middle leadership development."

Developing her theme, she explored 'derivative' leadership and how the quality assurance cycle and voluntary 'flipped' professional development responds to identified issues. The focus is now on how to make the solution bespoke, innovative; and how it involves everybody who needs to be involved.

Trusted and equipped

Transition teacher Jonathan Lowes, who works with students coming from KS2 to KS3, took up the story. "The question we have to address is 'how healthy is that engine room (of middle leaders) in our school?' And as a teacher and middle leader, of course I get stressed. Everyone is under a lot of pressure. But at the same time, I feel healthy within my school.

"I had the privilege of going to New York with Sound Training to develop a transatlantic link for our school (and to run the marathon over there). But within my school, I



feel happy because of the things that are put in place for me as a middle leader to feel trusted, to feel equipped and to work with my team so I can really get the best out of them and pass on the message that's coming from SLT.

"I can be told about everything that's coming through and how it works, but it's me that's got to make it happen with my team. And ultimately, get the very best out of those students who are in front of us every day.

"For me, the concept of time is important. We're time bereft as teachers: we have to battle with our timetable and all the other jobs that need doing. So how do we make sure that time, which is so precious to our staff, is used at its absolute best when everyone is together in professional development activities?"

No passive listening

Acklam Grange has applied the concept of flipped learning to teacher development. "Do we want our precious teachers, the most valuable resource in any school, to be sat listening to somebody?", Sarah Ledger



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asked. “No. We want them to be applying, analysing, synthesising and evaluating together. So we provide all the training materials before each session, using flip videos via Microsoft Mix for example.” The training sessions are then far more productive, focused on informed discussion on the major issues.

“That flipping of training sessions has made a huge

difference to the middle leaders’ productivity, and a huge difference to their feeling that they can own it.

“The tools, everything that we do within our staff training, can instantly be lifted into our lessons the next day. So a staff member can say, ‘look, I’m unsure on this’. Together we can look, they can pick via Eventbrite which sessions they want to go to. It’s constantly righting any wrongs or just developing people to make them even better within the classroom.

“And the trust, that’s the most important thing. For me to be able to stand here as a middle leader and be able to talk to you, it’s a trust that I get from my SLT to be able to do things.”

Avoiding learned helplessness

Referring back to the fleas in the jar, Claire Preston noted that leaders must overcome

tendencies towards ‘learned helplessness’, which is all too common. She suggested school leaders ask themselves: would your middle managers know what to do in every school-based situation they are likely to encounter? Are you empowering them, like Acklam Grange are, to have the skills and strategies that they need to achieve, feel empowered, and feel proud of their work?

“On a management course about 25 years ago I heard a case study about a large company that was underperforming and had brought in some consultants. All the senior management arrived on the Monday morning – and were sent home! The middle managers then managed their teams and departments over the next two weeks without any contact from their senior managers. And they were very successful.”

What had been happening before was constant contact and referral on decision-making between middle and senior managers, resulting in a dependency. As a result, there was a lack of empowerment and missed opportunities for training and investing time in middle management.

She concluded with: “if you’re inspiring, if you’re encouraging someone to dream or learn, you’re a leader. The contagious culture we would all like to see is one of aspiration, innovation and sound leadership.”

Sound Training is SSAT’s Leading Literacy partner, and headline sponsor for the 2016 national conference

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Constant contact
and referral on
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led to dependency
and a lack of
empowerment



Ethical leadership programme enables school to rise above the data

*Jo Owens,
Lichfield Cathedral School*

Jo Owens, Director Ethical Leadership, Lichfield Cathedral School, explains their programme to make the best of the school's strengths, and gives examples of its early benefits

For all types of schools, it can seem like an impossible task to prioritise anything but academic progress when external judgements are being made based on this alone. But at Lichfield Cathedral School we believe teaching is a 'superpower', and we should wield it carefully and with integrity. The norms we establish and demonstrate to the children in our care have a massive impact in shaping their world view. We have a responsibility to hold ourselves and our youngsters to high ideals; to 'be the light', as our school chaplain reminded us during our recent Foundation Day service.

Some time ago, we began to recognise the need to lift our focus beyond academic progress and to look elsewhere for meaning in the education of our young people. The Ethical Leadership Programme (ELP) arose to formalise and make sense of what was already good about the school.

The key to rising above the data is in making the most of your school's strengths and becoming the best at it; make that your thing, your superpower.

You will all know that when you are looking for that USP for your school, much of what is great, much of what creates the 'magic' in school, is somewhat intangible. As a faith school we are used to grappling with concepts that are spiritual and not concrete; but quantifying these things in school terms is difficult. As an Anglican cathedral school we have at the fore-

front of our mission the desire to promote Christian values and ethos in a way that is meaningful and valuable to people from all faiths and none. Our desire, therefore, was to create a programme that would allow our young people to leave with an accredited qualification that had real currency outside our walls and hopefully to imbue these future leaders with firm ethical foundations.

Sixth formers support younger pupils in lessons and mentor those who need it outside of lessons

What is ethical leadership?

Our first challenge in creating this programme was to define what we meant by ethical leadership.

The leadership bit is fairly straightforward; it's fair to say there are a plethora of leadership courses for children. However, there was no leadership course which provided the ability to follow pupils from pre-reception to upper sixth. There was a clear gap in provision.

The definition of ethical was far harder. We felt we instinctively knew what it meant, but we needed a way to articulate it clearly. You can imagine that meetings discussing this, when a member of the clergy is on the team, tended to become wide-ranging and philosophical debates.

In the end we cut through all the whimsical detail and decided on our definition: ethical conduct is doing what is right because you know it to be so.

When we looked at pre-existing leadership programmes we realised that none of them provided exactly what we needed. We therefore spoke to SSAT who were very happy for us to combine their junior and senior leadership programmes and rewrite them with an ethical slant. Our ELP broadly follows the leadership model provided by SSAT, in order to maintain their accreditation.

The main difference is clearly the ethical aspect of the programme, and we begin a little earlier, with early years (age three), and build year-on-year until the end of the upper sixth. Obviously, we've adjusted the language to suit our youngest pupils, referring to 'ethical leadership' as 'being a good person'.

All pupils have portfolios

Each child has an ethical leadership portfolio to help them collect evidence of having achieved each criterion. Once the child and form tutor agree that all the criteria at a level have been achieved, the portfolio goes through a peer review process. When that is successfully completed and all agree that the level has been achieved, the award is made, and the child moves onto working towards the next level.

We also place a heavy emphasis on the concept of 'leading from the back': not all of our leadership recognition takes the form of specific roles or responsi-

bilities, and younger pupils can also show leadership. Our older pupils are expected to be ethical role models in their day to day conduct around school.

The house system and school council in particular create opportunities for older pupils to work with the younger ones, helping to demonstrate the behaviour and ethos we would like to perpetuate.

"As good leaders we must think about how our words and actions impact on other people."

Josh, year 10

For example, year 8 pupils themselves set up a reading mentoring programme for struggling year 5s. And beyond this, we encourage our sixth formers to spend part of their non-contact time supporting younger pupils in lessons and mentoring those who need it outside of lessons.

All of our ELP materials have been created in-house – we acknowledge that we are in a privileged position in having this expertise in school. We are also lucky enough to be able to hold a presentation assembly in the Lichfield Cathedral once a week for years 5 to 13, when we share in and celebrate pupils' achievements. ►►





Our Junior site holds a similar inter-year weekly celebration assembly for pre-reception to year 4.

Early benefits

After some months in development, we launched ELP for all pupils simultaneously in October 2016, and it is already showing a wide range of tangible benefits.

- » We had long suspected that some of our quieter pupils were involved in great things outside school; now they are far more likely to share these with us.
- » Engagement now includes whole families, not just the pupils themselves.
- » Parents regularly email to tell us about opportunities for community involvement and we are building links with Support Staffordshire, a volunteering organisation, to facilitate this further.
- » Our pupils' efforts to support our community in school and beyond are redoubled because they feel valued and can recognise for themselves the importance of ethical leadership.
- » Pupils have developed the ability to articulate their experience and leadership skills, and to link these to a shared ethical purpose.

Josh, one of our year 10 boys, recently told me: "For me, leadership is more than power or authority, because it is important to think about how we act as

leaders. A leader should be inspirational and able to motivate people. In order to be a good leader, you need to understand your own strengths and weaknesses.

"I am quite a shy person so acting in a position of authority does not necessarily come easy to me. However, I have skills I can use in leadership such as encouraging and empowering others."

He goes on to explain: "When I think of ethics or behaving ethically I think about doing the right thing. As good leaders we must think about how our words and actions impact on other people.

"I try to lead with the same principles as I act in every-day life – I am always kind to everyone, I always try to help out if I can and I always try my best."

As well as the clear benefits for personal development and self-confidence, Josh's ELP portfolio will be an excellent focus for his personal statement for university applications or a talking point during future job interviews, helping him to stand out and be remembered.

Josh's understanding of ethical leadership is precisely the attitude that our programme seeks to recognise and encourage.

The world needs ethical leaders and we don't want to keep this to ourselves.

CREATING SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

Regeneration: Over          

100,000

families will live in new homes we helped create

Growth: Over          

1,000,000ft²

of floor space commercialised through efficiency programmes we led

Education: Over                 

10,000,000

children being educated in schools we made affordable



STUDENT PERFORMANCE

Brockhill Park Performing Arts College

TALKING HEADS

JOY BALLARD, ANGELINA IDUN AND NICK WERGAN

The National Conference has always recognised the importance of the views and experience of our practising, serving heads and senior leaders. This year three took the main stage, the first being Joy Ballard, currently principal at Ryde Academy, Isle of Wight – perhaps best known for her work on Channel 4’s ‘Educating Cardiff’.



It's true – I am mostly known for participating in a Channel 4 documentary called 'Educating Cardiff' and I'm very proud of Willows High School and the young people in it who took part in that programme. But today I'm talking to you about

my journey into leadership, and what brought me to this particular point.

Last year I was privileged enough to win the Secondary Headteacher of the Year Award, mainly because the school where I worked had turned a massive

corner, and as Sue Williamson has said at this conference, when Pearson's are looking at people for the teaching awards, the biggest thing they do is listen to the kids. That meant everything to me: that the children at Willows wanted to nominate me for such a special award.

A degree was something to do with temperature

I came from a very tough, deprived background, not just what we'd now call pupil premium. My mum and dad were both alcoholics. I had no aspirations for a future. I thought a degree was something to do with the temperature, or indeed, someone that sang in a trio of three black women. I had no idea at all the sort of things that were available outside of the life that I'd had.

I did always go to school regularly, mainly because I





STUDENT PERFORMANCE

Wilmington Grammar School for Girls

liked the school dinners. But I left school with absolutely no qualifications and I'm apologising now to all those teachers when I was at school, for whom I was "a bit of an 'andful".

But I felt that I'd been written off by my school right from the start, really. I'd been brought up on a big council estate, same as all my friends. We turned up to school most days, sat in lessons, never really paid attention to what the teachers were saying, and nobody really minded. And I think my future was already set out for me, all I really wanted to do was to get married, have kids, and live my life.

So I started off with a variety of jobs, ranging from cleaning at the baccy factory up the road from us – used to be able to get 200 fags on the cheap, which was a big bonus for me in those days. But also up the local hospital. I'd learned to type somewhere along the line, I think I'd probably been in one of those classes where the French teacher didn't want you anymore so you were put into

something else. And for me that was typing. And I learnt to type really, really quickly and really accurately so I was able to get some jobs doing typing.

But I felt as if my life was unfulfilled and I realised something that I hadn't before when I was at school – I wasn't very good at reading and writing. In fact, sometimes some people in this profession can still speak to me and I haven't got a clue what they've said because their vocabulary is so extensive, they use words that are not part of my vocabulary. Later I also realised the difference that made to me at school because, unless you've got those basic skills as a kid, you can't access anything else. I guess that you've got a self-fulfilling prophecy, then, as to what you'll become.

At 22, no qualifications, three children

So, I was 22 years old, I had three kids and a husband that loved me (and I'm still married to the same fella now). But at that time I

changed my life: I started reading romantic fiction, Mills and Boon, thousands of them. You could see me regularly at the local jumble sale getting books for a penny and sometimes I could get through three or four in a day. I learnt an extended vocabulary through Mills and Boon so, actually, I'm quite an emotive speaker, but I'm holding that back for today.

But a woman called Sylvia Sark – you would not believe the things that she could write into her books – was my favourite writer. Sometimes I would read what she'd written and blush like mad because they were things I'd never heard of. And I think that the romantic, happy-ever-afters put a lot of pressure on my husband Colin! He's actually here today, so apologies to him.

But I read these books and it actually did something to me. I travelled the world through Mills and Boon, whether I was in a teepee in the middle of the desert or an igloo in the middle of the North Pole, with some romantic man that actually was going

to sweep me off my feet. Yes, I travelled the world with Mills and Boon. I'd never been anywhere else. I'd lived in Southampton all my life and never travelled, never been to a foreign country.

My life changed and I got bitten by the bug of education. Went to university, got a great degree, wasn't quite sure what I wanted to do, and then I realised what had changed me and changed my life were teachers.

And, in a nutshell, I qualified to be a teacher in 2007, did my NPQH the following year, and then two years after that I applied for a post as a headteacher. But I wasn't really ready at that point to share my background. I was pretending, you know, that I was one of these posh birds that had come through the education system the same as everybody else. And I guess I hadn't learned to be confident in my own skin for the professional that I'd become.

But I saw a job advertised at a school called Willows High School in a place called Splott, a tough area of Cardiff. I went for the interview and I fell in love with the school, and the area.

Appointed as headteacher

I couldn't believe I actually got the job. But, actually, I did realise afterwards that though there were six of us candidates, most of the others had just gone home thinking, "We don't quite fancy this" (laughter).

As we were walking around the school, some kids were sitting up on top of the roof watching us, making finger signs. But, actually, that didn't frighten me, I'd been used to battling in my life to get myself

somewhere, and I knew what it's like to live in poverty. I just felt totally inspired by the place and I wanted that job probably more than anybody else, which is why I think I got it.

Willows had become a kind of informal PRU. I can remember the EWO saying to me, "The best thing about this school you're going to, Joy, is they'll take any kids from the city." I'm thinking, "that doesn't sound so good."

Yes, there were some very challenging kids there. But actually some very challenging staff too, and it was more of a task, when I first went, for this Englishwoman who was seen as coming in to tell the Welsh what they were going to do with their school (and obviously couldn't speak a word of Welsh) to make a difference. But what changed was I was able to relate to those kids and work with them, get them to do what I wanted. And those kids started believing in themselves because what I always said was, if somebody like me could do it, anybody could do it. And I still live by that philosophy.

If you go to my school, if you're a parent of a child that goes to my school as a student, my absolute guarantee to you is: that no matter what, the staff that work for me will go the extra mile to make a difference to you and to your life.

Tough lives, but incredible resilience

'Educating Cardiff' showed the story of the school. But while it showed some kids with such tough lives, they actually had incredible resilience. If the right teachers and other staff were behind them, that would change their lives. And it did. Willows

became a massive success story. Its results just shot up every single year. Attendance went up. The kids started to say they loved the school. And actually, we really felt like one great big giant family.

I left Willows High School to work in a school in the Isle of Wight (which I loved when we used to go on holiday there), which also has its challenges. I was sick of reading that its education system was failing. Secondary-wise, there was only one good school on the island so all the really clever, good kids went there and everybody else was mopping up the rest.

And I decided I wanted to do something about that. I've been at Ryde Academy now for just over a year. It's part of the Academies Enterprise Trust. Can I just say they're fantastic people to work for, you don't feel as if they're taking away your style or your personal way of doing things. You've got the freedom to do that but actually if you need them and you want support, they're there when it's asked.

We celebrate every success at this school. And, actually, it's is on the up: the results jumped up by 20% in my first year.

I'll just finish by saying I am so privileged to do this job. I hear people say all the time, "we don't get thanked enough." And do you know what? I don't think we need to be thanked. Every single kid that we know we've made a difference to gives you something that you could experience in very few jobs. And for kids like I was, who seemingly had no hope at all, teachers change lives. I'm grateful for it and grateful to be in a profession where, actually, I can give some of that back.





Angelina Idun, senior Vice-Principal of Evelyn Grace Academy in South London, has also worked in a number of international and global programmes.

Making the impossible possible? No, it's not a typo: the question mark indicates how I, and other senior leader colleagues at my school, teachers, and staff feel about the work that we do every day.

Now, we're located in Brixton, South London, a place where some very ordinary people – and I'm talking about the adults in our school community – make extraordinary and unexpected things happen every single day for the 900 or more 11-18 year olds who come to our school. But those same people are really quite humble and modest about their achievements, because what we do comes with significant challenge. This forces us, as a school community, to constantly question whether individually and collectively we're doing enough to make sure that every single one of the children that comes to us is being equipped to lead a successful life.

Take a look at some numbers:

- 50% of our year 7 children arrive at school with level 1 to 3.
- 56% are EAL students; some come to us with no English at all, often in year 9, 10 or even year 11.
- 60% of our students are eligible for free school meals – it should be much higher, we're having a big drive with parents who are too proud, parents who just don't make the effort, to make sure our children get what they need.
- 73% of our students qualify for pupil premium.
- Our school is in the Coldharbour ward of Lambeth, in the top 10 most deprived wards in England and Wales.
- Finally, a survey has shown that Lambeth was rated the second least peaceful place to live in the UK.

Looking at those figures, anyone might say, "Leadership

looks like an impossible task there. Why on earth would anyone do it?" Well, that's because there's a real appetite for success in our community. While some of our children grow up in homes where people have perhaps chosen less legitimate ways to reach their dreams, they really are some of the most aspirational families that you could ever wish to meet.

And I'm not giving you that information to pave the way for making any excuses whatsoever for the achievement or the progress or the conduct of our students. On the contrary, actually, what's driven me as a school leader and what's steered me through the last 27 years, often leading in very vibrant, diverse communities where there's a lot of challenge, is the belief that the origin of a child, the background of a child, the postcode in which that child lives – those things should never, ever determine the boundaries for what a young person should achieve.

And I know this well myself because, educated in South London as well, I experienced some inequalities that would probably shock a lot of people now. But that didn't stop me and I was fortunate on the way to meet some teachers who really inspired me and, you know, I suppose I wouldn't be on this stage if it hadn't been because of them.

So, a quote attributed to Francis of Assisi is going to help me explain to you the journey that I've been on at the school I'm currently in, having arrived there in 2012 with the third principal to the school in that calendar year and about 25-30 new members of staff. "Start by doing what is necessary, then

what is possible, and suddenly you are doing the impossible.”

Now, my colleagues know me well for using the rule of three when I’m delivering CPD or leading on an initiative or taking an assembly. So I’m going to apply that rule to the three lines of Assisi’s quote.

Necessary: a cultural shift

What was necessary at Evelyn Grace Academy? A cultural shift in a school already reeling from a lot of change over a short period of time. A cultural shift where we had to get everybody on board. Everybody had to trust that with team EGA (Evelyn Grace Academy) working in the same direction, we could bring about positive change to benefit our children. Getting the staffing right was necessary. Some difficult conversations. Trying to get the right people on the bus in the right seats. But that also meant having to balance those difficult conversations with having the wisdom to actually build capacity and to build confidence. I suppose it’s reminiscent of the idea of ‘love the one you’re with’.

And making teaching and learning the focus was also necessary in that environment. Not just to satisfy Ofsted, but to break down some of those barriers for some of the most disadvantaged children. We had to be very practical in our outlook on that – consistent practice, underpinned by practical guidance, by support, by coaching.

Possible: widen horizons

What became possible at Evelyn Grace Academy as a result?

Well, you might think this is simple, but taking our children out and bringing a range of people from different walks of life to the Academy – that became possible. The purpose? To enrich, to widen horizons, and to expose our young people to what their own futures could

those inspectors walked out of the room they left me, the principal, and a couple of senior colleagues with our governors. We wept in front of those governors. And the reason for that was – we’d just received a judgement of ‘good’ in all categories. You know what that takes.

We wanted them to know that if they took full advantage of the opportunities to get good academic qualifications, great interpersonal skills, great personal qualities – they too could be successful

actually look like. We wanted to expose them to the fact that if they took full advantage of what was on offer to them – that’s the opportunity to get a good set of academic qualifications, great interpersonal skills, great personal qualities – they too could be successful.

Winning and inspiring everyone to win – that became possible. Now, you might think that a state-of-the-art school with a 100m running track would breed natural winners. That really wasn’t necessarily the case before 2012. They say success breeds success, so when a team of unlikely students went out and came back with a trophy, that caused a real ripple effect. By the way, that trophy was for a spelling bee. And subsequent wins included debating, poetry slams, STEM maths challenges... not just sport.

And here’s the other thing that became possible – we went through two full inspections in 18 months; the first was within two weeks of my arriving at the school. The second time, when

Impossible: 100% of A-level students to university

So, are we making the impossible possible for our young people? Well, increasingly, our young people confidently embrace challenge. They seize opportunities, which puts them well out of their comfort zones. For some it happens in the classroom, for some it happens in exams, but it also happens for them on Duke of Edinburgh expeditions, when they’re debating at Eton or Cambridge, when they’re horse riding at the Ebony Club, when they’re on the ski slopes in Austria, when they’re in Madrid, when they’re working with mentors from Goldman Sachs or from JP Morgan.

We’re so proud of our first cohort of A-level students who’ve achieved results to take 100% of them to university: 77% of them to the first or second university of their choice. There are students who wanted to come with me here today, to explain for you, themselves, how



the school is making a difference to their lives (I've captured them on a little video clip).

One quality, just one, that I want to mention, and it's a quality that I've had to draw on time and time again as a leader: resilience. Richly rewarding our job might be, but it's real and it's relentless. The fragile nature of the community in which we work, coupled with internal and external distractions, measures, monitoring, consistently test your resilience. They consistently test your commitment. And they challenge the very values that brought you to that role in the first place.

Draw on the qualities you didn't know you need, or had

Think about the most challenging situations in which you've found yourself as a leader. Isn't it the case that you often have to draw on qualities and skills that you didn't know you need and that you didn't know you had? Anyone who has taken an interest in our journey at Evelyn Grace Academy will tell you themselves – we've come a very long way. Parents, students, staff very quietly celebrate any achievements. It's a never-ending journey, so my colleagues and I will continue

to strive and to ask ourselves: what more, what different, can we do, individually and collectively, to set our children on the path to successful futures?

Those challenging numbers, they don't faze us. Those distractions, they don't faze us. Because we believe that what we do, it's urgent and it's important. That whole idea of making a difference and saving lives, that's not a cliché. But what we believe is – we are equipping our young people to make the impossible possible for themselves in the future. Thank you.





Nick Wergan, Headteacher, Steyning Grammar School, West Sussex, came to teaching after a successful career in investment banking.

Briefly, to put my ruminations on leadership into context: we're a large school – 2000 on roll, 11-18. Steyning is a non-selective grammar school and a 400-year-old comprehensive, which perhaps tells you something about its complexity. We're also part residential: 125 of our students live with us and we have a catchment that's semirural and coastal strip. We're a split site, moving in 2017 to become a three-site school. And we're four years into what we call our aspirational journey to excellence.

That mixture of complexity and aspiration means that leadership at every level is absolutely crucial for us to deliver the best outcomes for our students.

If you looked at any of the Belbin research¹, completer-

finishing is I think something that school leaders are not particularly good at. Certainly it's something I'm challenging our team to look at. That is: let's evaluate the impact of what we've done before we start the hamster wheel of the new school development plan.

Here are five quick reflections on leadership at Steyning Grammar School that I want to share with you.

1 Keep it simple

The first is that we need to ensure we have a core-business message that every stakeholder understands. Sometimes I wonder when I'm talking about the school development plan or our self-evaluation cycle, and I'm getting these glazed looks from colleagues, whether that actually is my fault for having a too-complex system.

So we've moved to a much simplified school development plan and self-improvement cycle that tie into each other really closely, really simply. We're now a long way from the doorstep development plans and SEFs for Ofsted: it's reduced to just three key messages that every faculty, every subject area, is going to deliver on.

I think leadership is at its strongest when the message is clearest; the foundations of excellent leadership are not particularly sexy. They're just about the development plan, the appraisal cycle, and the core message needs to be able to be put on one page. I challenged my leadership team to put everything we're prescriptive about in our school on one sheet. So, we have a mission statement that says everything is about learning, that we have the highest expectations, that we have an outstanding family that every stakeholder should want to come to everyday, built on an ethos of care, kindness, acceptance and celebration of diversity. We take every opportunity to tell our stakeholders that message.

That then converts into our development plan. These priorities apply to every subject, every faculty, every year team, our catering business, our premises teams – those are their key directives. And this is all I'm prescriptive about in the school. Everything should be about effective learning for every student.

2 Invest in leadership

We can only achieve that through a commitment to



¹ www.belbin.com/belbin-in-education

high-quality professional development. We have to invest in leadership to enable this to happen, and we added on that we have to have a moral imperative to improve outcomes for our disadvantaged and bursary students.

We need to continually remind colleagues, remind students, remind parents, remind governors, where we are on our journey as a school, from a very interventionist model three or four years ago, towards effective learning in the classroom for every single student.

So we must invest in leadership. Moving into schools from the banking industry, I've found schools have a far greater commitment to training at their core than business and industry.

But I think schools haven't had a strong enough investment in leadership. There's been an element of sink or swim: colleagues who are fantastic teachers are promoted into leadership positions which can sometimes set them up to fail. So schools should have an effective induction leadership training campaign that also identifies pathways for leadership at every single level. That's what we're putting in place.

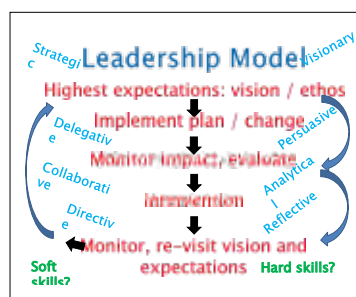
3 Drive leadership capacity throughout the school

We can have explicit leadership questions in our interviewing, explicit leadership panels if we're interviewing colleagues for a leadership position.

We're talking a lot at this SSAT conference about the engine room being middle leaders. I would stretch that metaphor to: anyone at any position of leadership, anywhere

in our school, is deserving and needing leadership support and training if we're going to have effective capacity to deliver on our core message.

A reflection of when I could see that was working: we had a residential leadership training weekend last term; 36 colleagues have been through it. I heard explicit discussions on leadership following their '360' meetings from a group that included: my PA, who heads our administration team; our head of English; our head of premises; our head of history; and our bursar. And the development of their leadership capacity is equally important for each of those people, if we are to deliver our whole-school message.



The model of leadership (above) was part of my best guess at our way of supporting every colleague. I think every leader in our school is interpreting that first page of our development plan to look at how those highest expectations, that vision, can be implemented as a plan for them. They're then monitoring the impact of that plan, evaluating its effectiveness, and then modifying it as necessary to meet its core purpose.

At every stage of that cycle, there's a different leadership skill that every colleague needs to be

able to employ:

- the visionary and strategic
- the persuasive and consultative
- the delegative
- the collaborative
- the analytical leadership
- the directive leadership
- the reflective leadership.

Everyone in a position of leadership in school needs explicit training support on those hard and soft skills. And then we start to get really effective leadership at every level.

4 Assumed or earned autonomy?

We've been looking this year at the idea of earned autonomy. Because if we have interviewed effectively for leadership, if we've supported colleagues in developing their leadership capacity, if we've changed the culture so that leaders are asking for support in areas that they find leadership more difficult, I then need to learn to let go.

And, as a control freak, I've found that hard!

An example: I remember several SSAT conferences ago we were talking about professional learning communities. And in the first professional learning community when I became head at Steyning Grammar, I said, "You can do whatever you like. In your professional learning, please do whatever you like, so long as it delivers that core vision." Three or four years on, the core drivers of our school development plan came out of that first year.

The second year, I thought, "That's fantastic. All that capacity, all that great work. I tell you what, I'm going to be

directive. Now I'm going to make them focus entirely on lesson objectives and assessment for learning within the lesson." But that year of professional learning communities was much less effective. Less interesting work came out, colleagues didn't enjoy it, and I learnt again that letting go, once I'd set that clear framework, produced by far the best results.

So we call it earned autonomy, letting leaders go. But I think we have to call it assumed earned autonomy. The earned autonomy message for me makes it feel like they've got to prove that they can do it before we're going to let them go. We actually have to assume that they have the skills because we've got that self-reflection on leadership embedded in the school ethos so they can lead in their own way, delivering on that school development plan.

Of course then, as heads, we're looking for where that's not working. Our own triangulation will guide us to where we need to step in and perhaps be more explicit with support.

5 Be brave and optimistic

My final reflections would be on being brave and being relentlessly optimistic. I can remember when I wasn't a head, I constantly thought about what I would want to do if I were headteacher. Being deputy is the hardest job in the world, because you're doing all the hard work of a headteacher but you're having to put in place somebody else's vision.

And that's what I continually try to remind myself about. Going back to the original pitch when I applied

to be head: what did I want to do? What was I going to do differently? All that boldness I had when I was a frustrated deputy, am I achieving that as head? I don't believe there is any such thing as a closed door. Anything we can't do, we find a way round.

I continually try and remember – what was it I wanted to do when I would be headteacher?



All we have to do to make that smile real is get out there into our schools, walk around and see what the students are doing

What have we done that's brave, then, at Steyning Grammar School? Yes, we celebrate diversity with an equalities programme that's exceptional. We link with employers for employability skills in a way that's really different. But learning characteristics is something where we have taken our own tangent. These are our eight:

- Grit: perseverance, resilience and passion for long-term goals.
- Growth mindset: understanding that intelligence can be developed through purposeful practice.
- Self-control with learning: not

getting distracted, following instruction and being organised with learning.

- Self control with others: behaving appropriately around others, taking criticism and not losing your temper.
- Social intelligence: understanding the feelings of others and using this to inform your actions.
- Gratitude: appreciating what others do for you and doing nice things in return.
- Curiosity: a strong desire to learn and to ask searching questions.
- Zest: an approach to life filled with excitement and energy; 'zest people' are enthusiastic about most things they try.

We report and assess on those eight learning characteristics, first; and academic progress only afterwards. Our mentoring and our pastoral assistance follow the same pattern. And we truly believe, as the broadest possible leadership team, that if we get this right we lead well according to these eight characteristics. Then, transformational academic outcomes will be there, but as a by-product of something far more exciting – long-term, students flourishing as happy and successful young adults.

And I guess that's my final reflection, about relentless optimism. We know how, when we're having a bad day, we cannot let it show on our face. And, like you, colleagues, I know that all we have to do to make that smile real is get out there into our schools, walk around and see what the students are doing.



Getting a head start: early years' provision improves education outcomes, enhances recruitment and retention, supports financial sustainability

*Lucia Glynn,
Arcadis*

Early years childcare is a growing market, with successive governments extending commitments to free provision from an increasingly young age. Changes in the social benefits structure, and increased financial pressures on young families through rising housing, utilities, and other costs, have led to an increasing number of parents returning to work or training. Thus, demand for good quality, flexible, and affordable childcare for under-fives is higher than ever.

Social mobility, and the impact that early education has on outcomes for disadvantaged children, is one of Justine Greening's foci as education secretary. DfE data shows that those eligible for free school meals remain 18 percentage points behind their peers at age 5, as measured by the proportion of those achieving a 'good' level of development. Facilitating high quality early years education is a current government priority to close this gap.

From September 2017, the government will introduce the '30 hour entitlement' – an additional 15 hours of free childcare for children of working parents. The DfE estimates that 42% of families with children in this age group will qualify. This will double free provision for three and four year olds - eligible families will be able to access up to a maximum of 30 hours per week/ 570 hours per year .

Schools to fill the gap?

Private sector nursery providers are not generally investing to provide the additional capacity, so schools will be encouraged to diversify their offer to meet local need and demands.

The Childcare Act 2016 places a legal duty on local

authorities to collate and publish information to help parents/ carers make informed choices about childcare and, critically, to make provision available to parents/ carers who wish to take up a place. With the introduction of the 30-hour entitlement, LAs will be looking to schools, many of whom will already be delivering full- or part-time nursery education, to broaden their offer, or to work in partnership with private, voluntary, or independent providers to create new early years provision.

What we see from our school clients

Our schools and trusts clients tell us that pupils entering reception classes have received a highly variable quality of early years' education, and this has negative effects on attainment in the foundation stage and KS1.

Suzanne Oakes-Smith, Executive Principal of Glebe Academy, Stoke-on Trent, with whom we are working to develop proposals for early years provision as part of a new primary school, states:

“Significant research evidences that the early years of a child's life are fundamental to shaping their future success, happiness, and longevity. Children learn more quickly during their early years than at any other time in their life, therefore offering early years education enables our teachers to grasp the opportunity to make a difference much earlier on in a child's life.”

Delivering nursery provision provides early years practitioners the opportunity to identify any special educational needs at an early stage, thereby ensuring that both children and their parents can access additional, targeted support long before reaching statutory school age. In the early years, practitioners are particularly well placed to create individualised learning opportunities for children and develop strong relationships with



How to open, or extend, early years provision at your school or in your MAT: a step-by-step guide

Identify the gap in provision for nursery places with the local authority through their latest childcare sufficiency assessment.

Review, develop and capture how any new provision will integrate into your current Foundation and KS1 curriculum model.

Prepare a robust business case using specialist financial expertise with experience of early years provision, to demonstrate viability.

Apply for, and secure, capital and start-up funding through your local authority early years team (funding comes from DfE)

Undertake site/ building feasibility study, including site surveys to determine the suitability of space for new build/ refurbishment.

Produce costed designs, making sure the spaces fit with pedagogical requirements, and also considering external lets for income regeneration, as appropriate.

Undertake pre-planning liaison with the local authority, and submit planning application, if required.

Procure a contractor, through a local procurement process or via an established framework, depending on contract value.

Conduct a marketing campaign, recruit staff, establish policies and procedures, complete registrations, contract catering and facilities management etc.

Build or refurbish the space and open your nursery.

parents; this is critical with disadvantaged families. The learning-rich EYFS environment delivers a breadth of creative learning opportunities that embed early literacy and numeracy, fine and gross motor skills. Further, children are motivated to take risks in their learning and develop independence, so that by the time they reach key stage 1 they have developed the learning tools necessary to succeed when following the more formal curriculum.

Our clients also tell us of the huge challenges they are facing in recruiting and retaining teachers, particularly in leadership posts, modern foreign languages, science, maths and English. In a recent ASCL survey, 51% of school leaders stated that the shortage was so severe that this has affected their GCSE performance, while 73% had used supply teachers to fill vacancies, rather than as short term cover.

Aiding teacher retention

In urban areas, where housing costs are high, teachers are commuting long distances from home to school, which limits their childcare options to more expensive providers that can offer the flexibility of early drop-offs and late collections. Many of our school clients, therefore, see on-site nursery provision as a key part of their retention package to encourage teachers back into the classroom after maternity/ paternity leave. In the increasingly competitive environment of teacher recruitment, offering on-site childcare which is flexible both in term time and during school holidays is, for many clients, a critical element of a benefits package.

Schools and trusts are becoming increasingly concerned about financial sustainability, with rising costs, decreasing real-term funding and changes to the funding formula. Diversifying to provide nursery provision can be a low-investment way to grow revenue without significantly increasing operating costs, and can support a school's long term financial sustainability.

In our experience, this process will typically take between 9 and 12 months, depending on: the specifics of your project, whether planning permission is required, and the funding and governance sign-offs.

Funding

At the time of going to press there is much discussion around the recurrent funding for nursery places. Each school or MAT will receive per-pupil funding for each place (up to 30 hours) which will be set by the local authority. Outside of the statutory

entitlement, there is also the opportunity for your school to secure additional income by extending your offer to children of 2 years and under, and/ or to provide wrap-around care to cover a working day from 7.30am to 6.30pm, and charging for this.

The benefits

By taking a pro-active approach to driving a nursery expansion, you will have full control over your project, including overview and input into the business case, design, procurement, marketing - from inception through to opening. This means consistency of approach, in terms of ensuring operational efficiencies with your existing school(s); staffing, facilities, catering, administration; and the curricular and pedagogical approach for your learning spaces. You will also be able to consider, in detail, the life-cycle costing and asset management planning, which can improve the efficiency of your estate.

Having control and oversight of your project allows you to engage more strategically with local authorities and community providers in order to gain additional funding opportunities for wider community provision.

Arcadis can offer a single-point service for the step-by-step approach, using multi-disciplinary skills to cover every aspect of the process.

Where we have done it before

- » With the Silver Birch Academy Trust, we have developed a full business case and outline designs for new modular buildings at three locations, and we are currently taking them through the planning approval process.
- » We are working with the Burnt Mill Academy Trust to undertake a childcare sufficiency assessment and business case development and to produce designs – both refurbishment and new-build accommodation - at three locations.
- » In South Oxfordshire, we have provided property consultancy to find suitable alternative locations and engagement with stakeholders to determine the design requirements, in connection with the relocation of an existing nursery to new purpose-built premises, on behalf of Oxford County Council.

For more information on how we can support you in opening, or extending, nursery provision, please contact me at:
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Follow me on Twitter: **[lucia_glynn](#)**



Join us at the annual **SSAT National Conference 2017**

This year's National Conference takes place between 30 November and 1 December in Manchester. We will be exploring how, as school leaders, you can ensure that your strategy and decisions are as strong as they possibly can be – informed by evidence, solution-focused, and with every students' interest at heart. How do you know that what you're doing in school is having the greatest impact possible? How can you lead in such a way to get the most out of your staff? How can we deconstruct our practices to really look at what's going on?

Remember, all full secondary members are entitled to one complimentary conference pass for both days of the conference, and discounts on additional passes. Other SSAT members all receive discounted rates.

Save the date in your team's diaries now and register your interest at **ssatuk.co.uk/nationalconference**.

We look forward to seeing you there!



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SSAT (The Schools Network) Ltd, a private company limited by shares.

Registered in England and Wales. Company number: 08073410. VAT number: GB 135 221 255.

Registered office: 5th Floor, Central House, 142 Central Street, London, EC1V 8AR. Printed on 100% recycled paper.