

The background of the entire page is a photograph of two young women. On the left, a woman with long, wavy brown hair is shown in profile, looking towards the right. On the right, a woman with a large, curly afro hairstyle is looking down at a photograph she is holding. The photograph she is holding shows a tall, modern skyscraper with a glass facade. The background of the photograph is a blurred city street with other buildings.

SSAT | inquire
inspire
innovate
impact

SSAT Journal 01

Winter 2014/15

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Welcome

from Sue Williamson, Chief Executive, SSAT

The English school system has never been more diverse. We have many visitors from overseas and it has become extremely complex trying to explain the different types of schools that we have in our system. My conclusion is always that they are all schools working with young people to give them the knowledge, skills and qualities that they need to be successful in an unknown future.

I am very fortunate that I get to visit a wide range of schools in different parts of the country with very different challenges. I have always taken away some nugget of good practice or outstanding work. The ingenuity of teachers and the creativity of young people produce some amazing work.

SSAT is committed to showcasing the work of all schools – whatever their Ofsted rating or their designation. It is essential that we publicise the very positive activities that go on in schools every day of the week. SSAT continues to work with schools in developing a culture of personalisation – the three essential strands being co-construction, innovation and distributed leadership.

At the National Conference in December we had numerous demonstrations of what could be achieved when young people are fully engaged in their learning. The poetry written and performed by the students from Evelyn Grace Academy will stay with me forever. Landau Forte College won our competition for the best film on learning – a very powerful piece and I encourage you to watch it at www.ssatuk.co.uk/nationalconference2014.

I think we have to celebrate the many success stories and achievements of schools. The SSAT Journal is one of the many ways that we do this. We always send copies to ministers and education leads in all the political parties. We want to hear about the work you are proud of - please contact membership@ssatuk.co.uk if you would like to contribute case studies or be put in touch with any of the contributors to explore their work in more detail.

I hope you find a nugget or two in this edition of the journal. If you want help to connect with other schools working on the same areas of development, do contact us. Let's make 2015 the year of good news stories about schools, teachers and students.

and from Bill Watkin, Operational Director, SSAT

This is the first issue of the newly-launched SSAT Journal, previously available as the Academies Update, which has been published every term for the last ten years. Its coverage and reach are being extended: it will not be solely about and for academies, it will identify, recognise and share case studies, strategies, resources, insights and experiences from all schools, whatever their status, that are members of SSAT. This change of emphasis reflects SSAT's continuing support for the development of networks of schools of all kinds and the integration of all schools in a self-improving system.

As we enter a year of general election, there continues to be a focus in some quarters on actual and

proposed changes to education structures, systems and services. In schools though, the overriding emphasis is on what works, what makes a difference and what will ensure that our young people get the very best from their years in education. Where there is increasingly common ground, and what SSAT has been pressing for almost 30 years, is the importance of schools working together to develop and share expertise, ideas and solutions. The SSAT Journal is just one forum for schools to come together in the interests of young people who deserve nothing less than the best.

We are very grateful to Veale Wasbrough Vizards LLP for their support in the production of this journal.



Becoming a growth mindset school

*Chris Hildrew, Deputy Headteacher (Curriculum),
Chew Valley School*

Chew Valley School in North East Somerset is on a mission to develop a growth mindset in all its staff and students. Here's how – and why – we've done it.

WHAT IS A GROWTH MINDSET?

Professor Carol Dweck, the Lewis and Virginia Eaton Professor of Psychology at Stanford University, has conducted a lifetime's research into mindsets and has established an opposition between a fixed mindset (the belief that intelligence is fixed) and a growth mindset (the belief that intelligence can grow). Her approach to mindset was sparked by her own experience of education. In her book, *Mindset: How You Can Fulfil Your Potential* (2006) she describes what happened in her sixth grade class:

'Even as a child, I was focused on being smart, but the fixed mindset was really stamped in by Mrs. Wilson, my sixth-grade teacher... she believed that people's IQ scores told the whole story of who they were. We were seated around the room in IQ order, and only the highest-IQ students could be trusted to carry the flag, clap the erasers, or take a note to the principal... she was creating a mindset in which everyone in the class had one consuming goal – look smart, don't look dumb. Who cared about or enjoyed learning when our whole being was at stake every time she gave us a test or called on us in class?'

In Dweck's research she observes that people with a growth mindset embrace challenges, persist in the face of setbacks, see effort as the path to mastery, learn from criticism and find inspiration in the success of others. As a result, they avoid the fixed mindset that can trap them into an early plateau and cause them to fall short of their unknowable potential. These were exactly the attitudes we wanted to build in our learners – and our staff!

WHY GROWTH MINDSET?

There is a sense that Dweck's work is 'flavour of the month' and that simply saying 'growth mindset' is supposed to wave a magic wand over your school. This is not the case, and Dweck herself is very clear about it! Having a growth mindset does not mean you will succeed at everything. In painting, simply having a growth mindset will not make me Picasso; in running it will not make me Usain Bolt. But having a growth mindset will make me better at painting and running than I am now, and that is why we were keen to adopt the approach.

We conduct annual surveys of our students' attitudes to school and self. In these nationally benchmarked tests, our school's scores come out green, well above the national norms. However, students' perceived learning capabilities – the extent to which they believed they were effective learners – were the lowest average scores across the school. Even more powerfully, as students moved from year 7 to year 8, while their self-esteem and attitudes to teachers improved, their perceived learning capability declined. We interpreted this to mean that while students were



increasingly positive about school and themselves as they progressed, they became less confident in their own ability to learn. We were concerned that this would lead to a slowdown of academic progress, often manifested as a lack of effort or a ‘can’t do’ attitude: ‘I can’t do maths.’ In other words, a classic fixed mindset. This had to change!

DEVELOPING A GROWTH MINDSET CULTURE

Following a successful pilot study run in science, we ran a training session for all staff – teaching and non-teaching – where we explained the principles of growth mindset and why we were keen to adopt it. The response was overwhelming! As a direct result of the day, we began the process of redeveloping the whole-school culture to reflect a growth mindset. Our school motto used to be ‘Developing Potential to the Full’ – a noble idea full of good intentions, but how do you know what anyone’s potential is, even your own? We rewrote our school aims and changed our motto to ‘Learn, Grow, Achieve’ to encapsulate our growth mindset ethos.

Over the summer, all the external signage in the school was changed to reflect the new identity, and inside we put up over ninety ‘inspiration signs’. These all feature quotations which encapsulate aspects of the growth mindset crowdsourced from the school staff (and a good trawl of Twitter and Google), made up into A3-sized plastic signs. In September we ran an ‘Inspiration Treasure Hunt’ where the students had to find all the different signs and research the sources

of the quotations. Four students in year 8 tracked down the whole lot in three days and were rewarded with book tokens. We felt that it was important that the students arrived in September to see something visibly different about the school, and we also felt it important to wear our hearts on our sleeves. We wanted the ethos to be visible from the front gate through every corridor and into every classroom in the school.

A GROWTH MINDSET FOR STUDENTS

Following an initial session with tutors, all students had an assembly launching the new ethos. The assembly focused on:

- » the difference between growth and fixed mindset
- » the basic neuroscience of how the brain learns
- » how this neuroscience can be used to understand the benefits of a growth mindset
- » how to use a growth mindset voice in learning situations.

The key part of the assembly was emphasising why the growth mindset attributes – embracing challenges, seeing effort as the path to mastery, learning from critique and the success of others – help develop intelligence by growing and developing neural pathways. Struggle is essential for learning. The students who were saying ‘I can’t do maths’ would have to add a simple growth mindset tag word... ‘yet’.





The assembly was followed up by a second tutorial session where students heard more about how the brain works and worked through activities to help embed a growth mindset. Finally, students began completing weekly learning reflection journals which encourage them to look back on the previous week and develop their approach for the next.

A GROWTH MINDSET FOR STAFF

We are big believers in Dylan William's declaration that 'Every teacher needs to improve; not because they are not good enough, but because they can be even better'. To this end we introduced teaching and learning teams led by practising teachers, working on six aspects of pedagogy throughout the year. We made sure the students knew that all teachers were working hard to develop a growth mindset to ensure that the quality of teaching young people receive continues to be excellent and improving. It's important that students understand that learning, growth and achievement are critical for every member of the school community.

A GROWTH MINDSET FOR ALL

The final piece of the jigsaw was explaining our approach to parents. We put on information evenings for families to outline Dweck's theories and explain how they could support our work at home through praising strategies and effort, and rewarding struggle and resilience. Again the response was overwhelmingly positive; everyone recognised that it is essential that families understand what we are trying to achieve in school so that they can reinforce the message and provide consistent feedback at home.

We are only just starting out on our growth mindset journey, and building the culture and ethos we want will take months of consistent effort. But that, after all, is what a growth mindset is about!



Evolution that leads to revolution

*Steve McMullen, Deputy Director
& Frank Norris, Director of the Trust,
The Co-operative Academies Trust*

In 1844, the Rochdale Pioneers Society started a revolution in commerce and education in order to improve living standards in their community. As a reaction against poor provisions, bought from their employers at inflated prices, these visionaries not only opened their own stores – battling the might of their employers on the way – but also gave women members an equal right to vote and saw the importance of education by opening reading rooms above their stores.

Their vision and revolutionary thinking continues to resonate today in commerce, particularly in developing countries, and in education, with co-operative values and principals underpinning many academies.

The Co-operative Academies Trust, which currently has three secondary and four primary academies, is sponsored by The Co-operative Group whose origins lie in the Rochdale Pioneers Society. The links to the Group are seen by the academies as both a unique feature and a significant strength. For the Group, the links to the academies bring a tangible bond to some of the most disadvantaged localities in the north of England and the possibilities of lifting aspirations and life chances through regeneration, just as the original pioneers had done.

BUSINESS SUPPORT

The link between The Co-operative Group and the academies continues to strengthen over time. From the extensive support offered to the secondary academies for work experience, marketing, business development and apprenticeships, to the chance for primary academies to work collaboratively under the guidance of a senior Group executive, the range of opportunities is continuing to grow.

In autumn 2014, prefects from The Co-operative Academy of Manchester visited The Co-operative Group's headquarters to receive leadership and management training provided by senior trainers in the business and senior staff from the academy. This new and exciting venture is to be replicated for all secondary academies during the course of the year.

GOOD GOVERNANCE

From an early stage, the Trust has seen one of its key objectives as enhancing the quality of the governance in each of its academies. Prior to becoming academies, they had all been seen as 'hard to shift' and the attraction and retention of governors was a challenge.

As part of the commitment by the sponsor, senior business colleagues from within The Co-operative Group were identified and placed onto the respective governing bodies. This brought to the academies not only a wealth of experience in business and from the board room, but also a ►



consistent message about what robust 'challenge' looks like.

Importantly, this has not taken place in the manner of a business takeover; on the contrary, there has been a very high degree of empathy and support for existing structures and personnel and the impact of governance has been highlighted in all the Ofsted inspection reports produced since the Trust became involved with the academies. Their contribution is voluntary and the governing bodies of most of the academies now have a senior manager from The Co-operative Group as chair.

BESPOKE TAILORING

Linked to this has been the decision to accept the unique nature of each academy and offer bespoke support from the small centrally-employed team. Rather than take a dogmatic or generic approach towards the development of the Trust, academies are supported as they require, with internal categorisation identifying the level of 'risk' associated with each. From this, the director and his deputy work with academy

leaders to identify issues and source the most appropriate external support quickly and effectively. This collaborative approach has been well received by senior leaders and has led to what were previously considered vulnerable schools achieving 'good' Ofsted outcomes.

After initial fears of being dictated to, academy leaders now feel empowered and are increasingly outward-facing following years of introspection and retreating into protective bunkers.

CUTTING YOUR CLOTH

The considered and reflective approach towards academy development and improvement extends to the vision for the future of the Trust. Since its inception, the Trust's support infrastructure has adapted significantly; commencing with a view that very little would be centralised. With its expansion two years ago into primaries, it became clear that there were certain functions that would have to operate centrally. This structure is developing gradually, shaped by the

knowledge and experience that steady and carefully considered expansion will be a continuing feature.

The Trust is not in a hurry to expand its portfolio but there is a feeling that with experience has come increased credibility both internally and externally. With its roots in the north of England and its history steeped in improving the life chances for those who possess the least in society, there is an understanding that any future academies may be likely to bring significant challenges with them. Consequently, the Trust will continue to offer a degree of flexibility in its approach and operational capacity, particularly if it wishes to maintain its personalised approach to its academies.

EVOLUTIONARY FERVOUR

From a starting point where there was nothing – no prior educational experience, no educationalists and a germ of an idea which linked social responsibility to a hard government line on poor school performance, the Trust has



now established an effective way of working which is supporting academies in raising children's achievement and aspiration.

This success has not been rooted in revolutionary fervour but in considered evolutionary development and there is every intention to continue in this manner. The Trust supports academies in the most challenging of circumstances and understands that regenerating communities takes time and commitment. It is impatient for success but understands that to achieve and embed success can take time.

It's not an approach that will meet with the approval of everyone, but the commitment to dealing with each academy as an individual entity and catering for its particular needs is a strategy that is certainly paying dividends.

It's evolution all the way for the values and principles which were revolutionary in their day.

PORTRAIT - DIRECTOR OF THE TRUST – FRANK NORRIS

Interestingly, this was not a position in which Frank had seen himself when he moved from his role as divisional manager for education and care with Ofsted two years ago.

‘This role wasn’t on my radar a couple of years ago, but the chance to develop and mould the future of education opportunity in some of the most economically challenging communities was irresistible.’

A believer in evolution rather than revolution, Frank considers it essential that academy chains grow at a measured and manageable rate.

‘Like all new multi-academy trusts, we have had to learn many new things including how to translate between the languages of the educationalist, the accountant and the business executive. Only now, after four years, do we feel that we understand each other more fully with the benefits and synergies beginning to emerge.’

Now we feel in a position to consider adding further academies to our Trust but will maintain our approach of looking at the location and needs of each school and its community before taking the plunge. We will also consider carefully whether there is a willingness to embrace co-operative values and principles.’

Recently, Frank entered the debate on whether multi-academy trusts should undergo their own inspections, in the same way as local authorities. While such a move may concern some providers, Frank feels strongly that trusts should be fully accountable from the centre, outward.



Determined to make a difference

*Tracey Hemmings, Principal,
Clacton Coastal Academy*

Clacton Coastal Academy (CCA) is an Academies Enterprise Trust (AET) academy that was created from the merger of two schools five years ago. The predecessor schools had histories of very low 5 A*-C EM percentages, low attendance, poor behaviour standards – but most importantly, low aspirations. The area of Clacton and in particular Jaywick, which forms 40% of the academy's intake, has the lowest score on the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) scale nationally. The academy has 52% pupil premium; a significantly low average point score on entry and an average of only 10% of students who fulfil the high prior ability (HPA) criteria in each year group.

As part of the merger a new executive leadership was formed – including talented staff from the two schools – and in the first year results jumped from a baseline of 16% A*-C with English and maths to 38%, making it one of the most improved academies nationally in 2010. It was at this point in 2011 that, as part of the AET's commitment to succession planning and developing leaders, I was brought in as principal from an 'outstanding' school – initially alongside the executive principal Stephen Chamberlain – before taking full responsibility for the academy and building on the platform of success created.

Despite all the challenges of bringing two schools together onto a single site, a budget deficit and the complexities of initially managing two private finance initiative (PFI) buildings over a mile apart, CCA is now well on the way to becoming a success story for AET and the Clacton community. Visitors comment that it is a vibrant, purposeful and confident place of education, achievement is improving year on year, despite the exceptionally low starting points which remain stagnant. Aspiration is clearly evident from the smartly dressed students who will undoubtedly hold a door open for you as you walk through the buildings, and you will notice the prefects working to maintain the calm atmosphere of the academy at lunchtime and breaks. How has this transformation occurred?

Tangible measures of success are:

- » pupil premium students in English making 'more than expected progress' for non-pupil premium students nationally, a significant narrowing of the gap in both English and maths
- » an increase of 15% in attainment over the last two years to 51%
- » 54% of year 13 students going on to the university of their choice (85% of these first generation university students)
- » attendance up to 95% from 88% and behaviour well under control with no permanent exclusions for three years
- » a robust 'good', with 'outstanding' senior leadership and management, from Ofsted
- » an Inclusion Quality Mark Flagship School.



OUR VISION: THE CCA WAY

'Don't join CCA if you are anything other than determined to make a difference.'

This is made very clear at interviews: this is no easy ride but the rewards of being part of a team turning a school round are immeasurable. We have, and continue to recruit, a group of talented and committed people who have bought into the academy's ideals that every student can overcome their barriers to learning and 'make their best better'. We call our moral purpose and passion the 'CCA Way' and it powerfully encapsulates what we are trying to achieve.

GCSE results day 2014

For our students it takes courage to commit to achieving grades which they know will be challenging and prior to becoming an academy would have been unheard of. Similarly our staff have to be brave – low start points mean that personalised programmes beyond classroom hours are needed to ensure students not only catch up but make progress beyond expected grades. In one example, every night for year 11 pupils there is a full programme of revision classes with target master classes for our HPA students. Another is the 'mathemagical' pre-exam residential camp at Danbury Outdoor Centre. Our A* grades increased tenfold this year alone.

Raising achievement

A real sign of success for the academy has been the progressive introduction, acceptance and



The Principal has provided inspirational leadership that has raised both aspirations and achievement at the academy. The drive and commitment of the Principal and her senior leadership team have united the staff and created a 'can do' ethos that has given students a belief in their own abilities. The academy has an inclusive and supportive culture for both students and staff which promotes equality of opportunity for all and encourages every teacher and student to be the best they can be.

The Principal and her senior leadership team have skilfully steered the academy's development with ambition and drive so that teaching and achievement have improved rapidly and are good.

The academy has an inclusive and supportive culture for both students and staff which promotes equality of opportunity for all and encourages every teacher and student to be the best they can be.

Ofsted report, November 2014

achievement

of ever more challenging targets

for students. A simple plan to create amber (3 levels) and green (4 levels) targets has marked a watershed for the academy. Students now 'Go for green' and are increasingly achieving these. This is driven by our progress cycle where regularly updated student data is forensically analysed and then closely 'action-pointed' from the perspective of the student and their barriers to learning, both academic and pastoral, every half-term.

Academy sponsorship

The support of our sponsor AET has been pivotal. There is a high level of accountability and drive to raise standards, alongside strong mechanisms for school-to-school support as well as central subject-specific expertise to tap into. In the eastern region we have an excellence register where we exchange SLEs and share best practice. The opportunities within the network of AET academies also helps with retention, recruitment and career development. As part of the sponsor's 'Talent Management' programme an assistant vice principal from CCA was recruited to take up the headship of another AET primary academy where the predecessor school had been in special measures. The school came out of special measures in just 18 months and he was recently awarded Primary Headteacher of the Year at the 2014 Pearson Teaching Awards.

Student leadership

At CCA the vehicles for student voice and leadership are many and varied – we want students to feel it is their academy in a real way.

The Young Leaders' Group (YLG) is an impressive cross-year group with over 90 members, responsible for rewriting the curriculum and the creation of our spiritual, moral, social, cultural programme (SMSC) – one of our most popular subjects and praised during our last Ofsted. It addresses issues



such as sex education and has begun a programme of cultural exchanges, with a Spanish school last week and with trips to Auschwitz planned for the spring.

We also have peer mentors, 'Behaviour for Learning Champions', and the success story that is our prefects. There is no greater litmus test for a school where there have been historic aspirational or behaviour issues than getting students to aspire to be prefects. They are our best ambassadors, with real responsibilities including a 'Prefect Panel' where they hold to account students who have not stuck to the academy's behaviour codes.

Pupil premium to raise all aspects of achievement

With such a high percentage of disadvantaged students, pupil premium funding is central to our improvement plans and a significant pillar in our drive to raise aspiration and develop students. The funding strands – cultural, academic, behaviour and attendance – are linked into the CCA Way passport recognising personal growth and improvement.

One successful innovation has been to employ a team of 'Raising Attainment' coaches. These are enthusiastic graduates who work with very small groups of students in core subjects to drill down into gaps in skills and knowledge. Eight in 10 have committed to teaching full time to date, helping to resolve another of the issues facing the area, that of recruitment. The pupil premium bus for persistent

absentees is another innovation which has had a real impact upon not only the attendance of students, but also their academic performance and self-esteem.

There are many other innovations at CCA – in fact when our Inclusion Quality Mark (IQM) assessor Kenny Fredericks was at the academy she made the

comment that 'You just do so much!' However, for those of you who have worked in challenging schools, you'll know that if you want to make a real difference, not just apply a sticking plaster, then that's

exactly what you have to do. The challenges come daily, you make two steps forward and one back quite regularly, but gradually you notice that you've moved on – and the type of challenge you face has changed. We have to make sure that the 'thirst for knowledge' our top set students now exhibit is matched by our provision for achieving A*s – a very nice problem to have when in the predecessor schools they were very happy for students to get Cs.

Among our most successful practices has been the introduction of Chromebooks and the extensive use of Google classroom. We have recently now been approached to become the first Google-accredited academy in the country. The adoption of Class of Your Own (COYO) – the industry standard software-based engineering and construction course – has given our students the opportunity to present their work at the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) and led to RICS' sponsorship and support for the academy. Essex County Cricket Club also have strong links with our students and together we are designing a programme of academic excellence linked with sport. Another strong example of success is the progress we are making with literacy through a variety of routes including the outstanding Thinking Reading programme, all highly commended by Ofsted.

We are experiencing success. It has been an exciting and rewarding journey and I welcome visitors to the academy to see what the very determined Team CCA do to make the difference!

Library lessons: response to reading

*Sarah Masters, Multimedia Research Centre Manager,
Thomas Deacon Academy*

When it comes to developing children, students and people as readers – or even inspiring them to start that journey – there is no magic wand, nor a one-size-fits-all ‘fix’. Thankfully we, and our students, are all different. If our reading habits and interests were identical then there would be multiple copies of just one book on our library shelves – and wouldn’t that be dull.

We should celebrate our differences! And these differences should not only be reflected in the books and resources with which we fill our libraries – as was highlighted by the recent Twitter campaign, [#weneedmorediversebooksUK](#) – but also in the variety of book promotions and reading initiatives that we offer, and in the reading

responses we expect from our students.

A school librarian’s contact with Ofsted inspectors is usually brief at best, but in recent years Ofsted’s interest in developing students as readers, demonstrated in *Moving English forward* (Ofsted, 2012) and *Reading, writing and communication (literacy)* (Ofsted, 2011) and the Reading for Pleasure project led by the National Institute for Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) have at last given school librarians a bandwagon on to which they can jump. School librarians are best placed to steer this bandwagon, and we need to demonstrate clearly, and succinctly, how our school libraries support and promote reading as well as the impact these initiatives have on our students.

The starting point for me is always the students. At Thomas Deacon Academy (TDA) we have 2300 students over four key stages (2-5), and there is our first difference to consider – age. What motivates an 8-year-old to engage with

books and reading is vastly different from the motivation for an 18-year-old. Add in factors of different levels of maturity, speed of development and you have more ‘distinct’ groups. Other differences to consider are gender; social background; pupil premium and free school meal students; cultural; faith-based; gifted and talented; special needs; reading ages; barriers to reading (from dyslexia, to bad reading experiences); a student’s own attitude to reading... the list goes on. Indeed your school may choose to focus on a different ‘group’ of students – perhaps underachievers or those targeted to achieve grade D at GCSE. ➡





There are numerous ways we can group our students, but they will rarely fall neatly into one category, more often falling into several.

By offering a wide range of strategies and initiatives throughout the academic year, and in the longer term, we can maximise the chance of motivating individual students to develop their reading over their school life.

I have recently received some external feedback that I organise too many initiatives for my students. This highlighted the challenge of providing for so many students – not even the twins

amongst them have identical reading needs and interests.

The Multimedia Research Centre (MRC) at TDA offers a plethora of strategies and reading experiences each year – from the well-known initiatives such as D.E.A.R. (Drop Everything And Read) from Harper Collins, the CILIP Carnegie and Kate Greenaway Shadowing Scheme from the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP), Booker Prize Shadowing from the Man Booker Prize Foundation and Bookbuzz from Booktrust, to the tailored pod/vodcasts and the KS3 Reading for Pleasure/Information Literacy programme I have created. In my experience you can never know what might be the spark for an individual student that switches them on to the love of reading, or starts their reading journey.

Some teachers and librarians can have an almost obsessive insistence that, for reading to have had value, students need to constantly review what they have read. This seems to me to create another artificial barrier

to the pleasure of reading. Think about your reading for a moment. When you kick off your shoes at the end of the day, or lie back in bed, or chill out on holiday with a book – do you ‘reflect’ on what you have read? Would you want to write an A4 page review on plot or character development? And do this for every book you read? The chances are that unless you are a professional book reviewer, your reflection will be as simple as thinking about recommending the book to someone you know. So why do we think that our students are different? Why can't they simply enjoy reading a book and then... nothing?

The problem with this ‘nil-response’ is that it does not



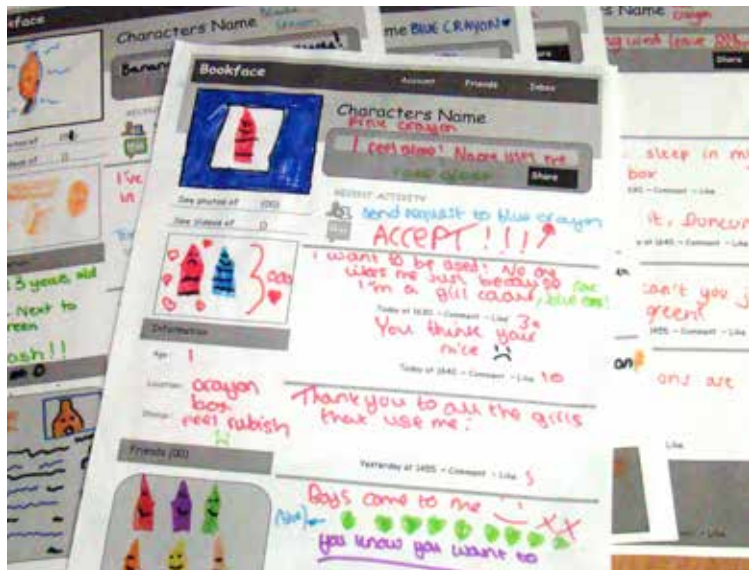
provide any 'evidence', and evidence of engagement, impact and progress is often heavily sought in schools.

So I give my students different ways to respond and reflect on their reading. Sometimes they are directed to a task, sometimes there is free choice, sometimes there is nothing at all!

These responses could be a tweet or a blog – yes, so these fall into the written response category, but I have kept the actual writing to a minimum and leant towards more creative responses.

Here are some tools that I have used with students:

- » creating a book block
- » Bookface (from Teaching Tools, digitaldisruption.co.uk/bookface/)
- » Fakebook characters (from ClassTools.net)
- » book bags
- » book marks
- » Twitter reviews
- » Instagram review, where the picture tells the story (instagram.com)



- » book maps
- » book Top Trumps
- » videos – Microsoft Photo Story (from Softonic.microsoft-photo-story.en.softonic.com) and Animoto (from animoto.com)
- » mini books
- » Movie Poster (from bighugelabs.com/poster.php)
- » cast lists and music scores
- » I am also trialling 'book pumpkins' where students are challenged to turn a pumpkin into a book character for Halloween.

Students still need to reflect on what they have read, consider characters and plot, for example, but by making these reading responses varied, creative and sometimes even a little 'wacky' the task becomes fun, and tactile. I am able to engage more students in their process of reflecting about their own reading and in sharing that response with others. So then I have interesting evidence, rather than a ream of standard written book reviews.

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Building better business relationships

*Naomi Palmer, Principal,
Ormiston Victory Academy*

Many educators have for a long time made the assumption that if careers guidance has been successful in a school or academy, the recipients a) know without doubt their chosen career path, b) understand the skill set and qualifications required to reach the goal and c) have consulted the panel of ‘judges’, their ‘teachers’, to confirm that it is both aspirational and appropriate. We now accept that these are no longer necessarily the desired outcomes of ‘careers guidance’.

In the September 2014 Ofsted framework, there is frequent reference to the importance of careers guidance. Section 154 asks inspectors to explore:

- » the extent to which the school has developed and implemented a strategy for ensuring that all pupils in Years 8 to 13 receive effective careers guidance
- » the impact of this guidance in helping young people to make informed choices about their next steps
- » how well the school meets the needs of all vulnerable groups of pupils, including reducing the numbers who do not continue to education, employment or training
- » how well the school works with families to support them in overcoming the cultural

obstacles that often stand in the way of the most able pupils from deprived backgrounds attending university.

Section 155 asks inspectors to take account of:

- » how effectively the school works in partnership with other schools, early years providers, external agencies and the community (including business) to improve the school, extend the curriculum and increase the range and quality of learning opportunities for pupils

and consider how well leaders and managers:

- » ensure that all students are provided with high-quality impartial careers education, information, advice and guidance prior to starting post-16 courses, and about choices following completion of their post-16 study programme
- » use information about the destinations of those leaving the sixth form to check the extent to which provision meets the needs of all groups of students.

At Ormiston Victory, we quickly realised that, like everything else which works well with young people, we had to personalise the support we offered. We began by acknowledging that students could only come to a decision about what they want to do through a rigorous process of elimination. We know there are more and more jobs being created, we know we are training students for ‘jobs which do not yet exist’, so in addition to the inevitable one-to-one interview, we set out to create a menu of careers-

based activities which take students through a structured process of elimination, even if they reach the end of year 13 undecided.

The first phase involved a planned series of working lunches whereby students from years 11, 12 and 13 were invited to join a practising professional for an overview of their job role and company, with simple steps about how to progress. This worked as we found that individuals from businesses were able to commit around the lunch break for 30 mins and so did not need to plan a time-consuming lesson.

At their least effective, the sessions highlighted an available career path. At their best, they included a follow-up visit to the workplace, a work experience day, a commitment to supporting the academy's newly formed Victory Business Forum, sponsorship, and offers of support to help students with practice job applications or interviews.

Because the working lunches are so wide-ranging and frequent, they have not failed to engage students. The only possible jeopardising factor is our responsibility to relentlessly advertise them to students – and we

only fail to do that if we don't employ staff who are passionate about the welfare and aspirations of their students.

Secondly, we are committed to ensuring that form time sessions are used as micro-lessons which enrich the students' learning and

well-being. We designed a series of sessions for year 7 to year 13 to support students in making formative choices about what they may choose to do. Inevitably, the success of these sessions relies heavily on the staff delivering them being trained to understand their value in the curriculum. They too need to be robustly monitored in terms of effectiveness.

The relationships we build with local universities can also be invaluable. They offer so much in terms of supporting the application process, allaying fears about finances and enhancing students' understanding of the range of jargon associated with



further study. Thank goodness these days we are not afraid to tell students if we were the first one to attend university in the family.

Business breakfasts, forums, summits etc rarely result in measurable outcomes. We've attended too many which involve meeting up biannually for some of the finest bacon and sausages in the area to protest about how educators and employers fail to work together effectively. We decided to promise ourselves that each one of these sessions should result in at least three outcomes which directly affect the students. We've had one meeting so far and a second planned for next month, but we've already secured the following tangible actions: a session to use businesses to provide practice interview workshops, a work experience placement for a student interested in a career in law, and several sign-ups for working lunches, including a project management post for sixth-formers to lead community clinics at the academy.

Local apprenticeship providers can also help students to get to grips with how the 21st century apprenticeship process operates. In fact, to enhance ►





our own succession planning for support staff roles, we have employed four apprentices for the first time this year in roles from sixth form support to raising achievement. Even if we are unable to offer them permanent positions, we will have given young people in our area enough experience to support their applications for similar posts offered by other schools and academies.

We've teamed up with innovative social enterprise Swarm Apprenticeships to make our posts work for us. Each apprentice supports student progress, as well as gaining a business qualification. Swarm provide training on-site, support and lots of encouragement to set and achieve measurable goals. Ormiston Victory is fortunate to have Chris Perry, new director at Swarm, as a governor. Governors can often provide the valuable and challenging links between business and students.

Two of the four positions are to support Victory's Intervention Programme which supports GCSE students in managing revision and examination preparation – they will be trained to support students in and out of lessons and maintain contact with

families. The idea originally came from Rikki Cole who leads the VIP (Victory Intervention Programme) package at Victory. He said:

‘The concept of the apprenticeship scheme arose from my desire to give something back and pass on the knowledge I have gained while working in education. Other people believed in my skills and personal ambitions. With this apprenticeship programme, I will be able to do the same for the aspiring youth of the next generation, and at the same time give our students at Victory the additional support when they need it. It's simply about helping young people succeed in life, and working hard to ensure their dreams become reality.’

Two further positions offer training roles in supporting sixth form students and staff and general administration.

What's crucial is balance – that we give our young people as much opportunity as possible to understand what's possible. Careers guidance makes what we do in the classroom every day more meaningful. We need to use it as a tool to tackle disengagement where we find it and it prevents the perception from students that we are running examination results factories.

We know it's about more than conversations about jobs. It's about giving them the chance to mix with people from other social backgrounds, other cultures. We have to give them the confidence and curiosity to be the ‘first person in the family to...’ and the bravery to take on something difficult.



Debate Mate

*Dan Plant, Deputy Educational Development Director,
Debate Mate*



The removal of the controlled assessment of speaking and listening from the national curriculum has recently renewed discussion around the place of spoken word in schools. Most teachers and schools intuitively appreciate the importance of speaking and listening skills as part of a wide range of other objectives – from literacy to leadership.

The government, however, has seemingly renewed its commitment to speaking and listening, citing debating as one example of its focus on ‘character building’ activities. The question has arisen, therefore, of how best to foster these activities in schools. Newham has long excelled as a model of commitment to the art of debating and public speaking, with a critical mass of schools with vibrant debating cultures ►►



in the area and students from both secondary schools and primary schools winning national competitions.

Debate Mate's popular Newham Debate Programme is one example of the growth of these initiatives. Last term 37 debate clubs launched across Newham for the second year running with some of the capital's top university students descending on the borough to begin teaching over 500 students key public speaking and debating skills. The programme opened with training for teachers on how to integrate debating into their curriculum, but with the start of the clubs, the students will be taking the lead on sparking debate in their schools.

The curriculum is focused on interactive exercises designed to encourage every student to stand up and speak and, over the course

of the next few weeks, students will be debating everything from school uniform to development aid. Perhaps most excitingly, the vast majority of these students will come from the borough's primary schools, many of whom have very little exposure to public speaking but fast become experts, delivering five minute speeches by the end of the programme.

Debate Mate has been sending mentors into schools in Newham for the last seven years, but this programme heralds a much wider engagement with the borough as a whole – culminating in the Newham Debate League and Newham Debate Cup. These competitions are unique for bringing together so many schools across the borough, giving the students the chance to engage with and learn from others in their community.



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Best practice in education



Special schools Code of Practice

Jessica Nash, Head of Special Schools Network and SEN, SSAT
& Donna Billington, SENDCo, Parliament Hill School

The Children and Families Act 2014 set out the new legal duties for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities which came into force in September 2014. Embedded in Part III of the Act is the revised SEND Code of Practice; although the final version was only ratified in June, schools had sight of the initial draft in autumn 2013.

The SEND Code has really sharpened the guidance on how to shape effective provision by schools and settings, as well as changing the expectations of wider stakeholders including local authorities and health. A consistent theme is that the views, wishes and aspirations of children, parents and young people are at the centre of all work at an individual and local level.

Schools and settings will recognise the coherence between the current Ofsted inspection handbook and the 2014 SEND Code, which in practice strengthens the mandate for SENCos to lead on the changes. The revised Code anticipates that SENCos will be supported by senior leaders to ensure that SEN arrangements contribute directly to:

- » improving the progress and attainment of pupils with SEN
- » evidencing the impact of SEN interventions
- » developing staff knowledge and understanding of SEN teaching strategies.

Clearly these aspirations for SEN pupils reflect the entitlement and ambition for the wider pupil population – indeed this is the significant shift in the revised SEND Code 6.15: ‘Making higher quality teaching normally available to the whole class is likely to mean that fewer pupils will require additional support. Such improvements in whole-class provision tend to be more cost effective and sustainable.’

Even in advance of the draft 2013 SEND Code, successful schools were responding to the challenge of narrowing the gap by ensuring high-quality teaching for all pupils. They also recognised the imperative to make efficient use of their resources with the impact of the 2013 budget reforms.

Some have focused on speech, language and communication as part of their drive to more effectively address barriers to learning. Such SENCos realise the influence of improved literacy and oracy across all subjects, combined with tackling potential speech, language and communication needs (SLCN), and developmental delays which may manifest as challenging behaviour.

Across our network, there are a number of examples where SENCos have worked in close collaboration with the wider senior leadership team to lead whole-school performance improvements: by commissioning specialist speech and language support, their work has both impacted on the universal quality



of teaching as well as supporting pupils with higher levels of need via targeted interventions.

One such example is Parliament Hill School where work with speech and language therapists (SaLT) led to a whole-school communication project.

Jessica Nash

Speech, language and communication skills project,

*Donna Billington,
Parliament Hill School*

Parliament Hill School (PHS) is a maintained secondary school for girls from 11-18 years of age with over 1100 students attending. This includes our sixth form, La Swap, which is a consortium of four schools in Camden. Boys also attend our school in KS5.

The area of speech, language and communication is a priority for PHS due to the number of girls with identified SLCN. In 2013-14, 17% of girls on the SEND profile were identified as having SLCN as their prime need. In addition to these students, there are girls who are not on the SEND profile who experience difficulties with SLC. The range of SLC needs includes receptive and expressive language difficulties, autistic spectrum conditions and girls



with selective mutism. It is of note that over 67% of the girls on the SEND profile in 2013-14 were also PEPP.

The second reason SLC is a priority for the school is that we have previously had a focus on collaborative learning. This is now embedded in our practice and SLC is a key aspect of this type of learning and teaching.

Camden's Speech and Language Therapy Service delivers a project called Listen EAR – 'Enjoy, Achieve, Respect' – which started in Islington in 2009, and schools in Camden have bid for the project over a number of years and three waves of intervention.

PHS's first bid for Listen EAR came in 2011-12 and provided two terms' support from the SLT Service. This wave of intervention was around a whole-school approach to SLCN with a focus on vocabulary. The SaLT and deputy SENDCo led on the following interventions: whole staff training on SLCN, targeting a subject area to work on vocabulary and SLC strategies with specific teachers, and one day a week SaLT work in school. While in school, the SaLT liaised with a key member of staff as their main link and worked with the geography department. The SaLT also coached teachers who

self-elected for this intervention. As part of the project, we delivered a listening lesson to year 7s and in the second term had a 'Speak Week', with a focus for all learning and teaching on speech, language and communication. This included a 'No Pens Wednesday' where no pens were used during any lessons – a challenge for the art teachers!

In the academic year 2012-13, we decided to bid for the second wave of Listen EAR, with a focus on early identification of SLCN. Our decision to develop work around early identification was based on developments in the SEND code of practice, ensuring additional needs around SLC were identified and appropriate interventions in place as soon as possible. Although this work was directed at identifying SLCN/SEND, it did involve the science department and further work at a whole-school level.

We planned to develop an assessment process for year 7s, which included the listening lesson from the first wave of Listen EAR. The listening lessons were delivered by three members of staff: one adult leading the lesson, one supporting and the third observing and completing a class audit, identifying any students who may require further



assessment. Once again we had a SaLT in school one day a week for two terms, being part of the team delivering the lessons and working with the SENDCo to develop the project.

After the class audits, the staff involved in the listening lessons discussed any girls who had been identified as possibly having SLCN. We then used a SLCN round robin tick-box form with class teachers to identify which areas of SLCN this student may be having difficulties with. For example, do teachers report that a student has difficulties in explaining ideas, forgets words or uses short, incomplete sentences? This may indicate a difficulty with expressive language. Obviously this information is evaluated in context and in relation to other information about the young person. If a girl was identified as having a SLCN in a specific area, then we disseminated information to her teachers about her needs and strategies to help them address those needs.

In addition to the above, we have worked with Camden Speech and Language Therapy Service to ensure that a number of our staff are trained to deliver SLC interventions through completing the Elklan training, which we would recommend. This has meant that we have been able to run small group and one-to-one interventions for young people with SLCN within the school. The final step in this process was for any girls whose needs were not being successfully addressed by school-level interventions to



be referred to the speech and language therapy service for assessment.

As part of the second wave of the project we became involved in a pilot with Speech Link. Their secondary Language Link is an assessment, intervention and training package for supporting the language and communication needs of pupils aged 11-14. The pilot project gave us access to an online assessment which identifies students with receptive language difficulties who may previously have been unidentified as having this specific need. The follow-up intervention focuses on developing students' ability to understand spoken instructions and information. The intervention was intensive, with more than one session a week, and it was difficult to complete this in the busy summer term. However, it was useful to consider which students might benefit from SLC interventions and in becoming more aware of the types of activities students were asked to do to develop their language skills. The girls identified for the programme did enjoy the intervention and the feedback from them on the sessions they were able to attend was positive. PHS have not used the Speech Link resources since they have

been updated as a result of the pilot, however we would consider using them again.

Being involved in the Listen EAR project and process has developed PHS's capacity to identify and address the needs of girls with SLCN. We have a number of girls with significant needs around speech, language and communication and the school has developed expertise in supporting these needs. One of the main benefits of being part of this project has been something that may seem quite simple – our links to the SaLT Service are now much stronger.

We continue to monitor girls' progress as per our normal school process. Our next steps will be to further update the information we have on the girls we identified through the original process, beginning with teacher feedback.

SSAT's 2015 annual SENCo conference - Squaring the new SEN Code to be inspection ready - takes place in Birmingham on Friday 27 February.

For more details, visit www.ssatuk.co.uk/senco-conference.



College of Teaching: the profession-owned professional body

Fiona Aubrey-Smith, Head of Primary, SSAT

At the heart of the teaching profession is a shared moral purpose. We share an ambition for providing the very best start for the children that we work with. We share an ambition for being the best teachers that we can be. We share an ambition for earning, maintaining and deserving the professional respect afforded to other sectors, seen through their profession-owned professional bodies – for example, chartered accountants and chartered surveyors.

The Royal College of Surgeons has professional standards to structure and challenge members to progress continually throughout their career. Not just through promotions and roles, but extending knowledge, understanding, and skills of the profession itself. In the same way that a surgeon won't keep the techniques they developed 20 years ago, so too the best teachers continue to research, to learn, and to translate their learning into the very best practice.

This professional focus on our area of expertise – pedagogy and teaching – is vital as we move forwards into the next chapter in education, rising above the focus on accountability to government.

You may already be familiar with the Blueprint for the College of Teaching, published in February 2014 following extensive consultation and stakeholder groups. Since February, funding was sourced to enable detailed planning to identify exactly what might be required to take the blueprint forward to launch the College of Teaching itself. This planning is now nearly complete, and as part of the recent work, Nicky Morgan has committed the DfE to part fund the start-up of the College of Teaching in order to establish a professional body that is independent of government and wholly owned and led by the profession itself.



SSAT



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**Membership and fellowship
of a College of Teaching -
a proposed pathway**
Our profession. Our standards.

The College of Teaching will propose such professional standards that are developmental, peer assessed and recognised nationally and internationally as the benchmark of excellence. The College of Teaching framework will have entry points for trainees and for established teachers, and is about recognising and extending professional abilities. All those who





strive to improve their own teaching will welcome this profession-wide framework by which existing strengths are recognised and through which future development is structured. Drawing in research, pedagogy, knowledge and practice, this is a set of professional standards that is about the unique professional attributes and skills that make up the teacher that we all remember from our own childhood, or the leader that we now aspire to be.

As the pace increases in developing the College of Teaching, and working towards a launch in the next 18 months or so, the widely respected SSAT Lead Practitioner standards have been forward as part of the College of Teaching Membership and Fellowship framework. Established and embedded into national programmes and schools, and with over 8000 teachers having participated across the country over the last 12 years, the Lead Practitioner model is now being evolved to both recognise and signpost all specialisms, subjects, phases and stages. Detailed

discussions are underway with a huge range of partners who accredit teaching expertise – from the Royal Geographical Society who accredited Chartered Geography Teachers, through to early years and SEN partners.

It is absolutely vital for both teachers and partners that existing ways of recognising teaching expertise are supported by College of Teaching Membership and Fellowship.

So what can you do next?

- » Read the proposed pathway for Membership and Fellowship of the College of Teaching at www.ssatuk.co.uk/collegeofteaching
- » Look at the standards within the framework, how could professional development activity within your school support you and your colleagues to become Associates, Members and then Fellows?



How can we develop effective learners?

*Anne-Marie Duguid, Head of Teaching & Learning, SSAT
& Linda Halbert, Principal, Freebrough Academy*

To develop effective learners, we must first define what we mean by the term.

Effective learners gain understanding of the individual and social processes necessary to become effective – not only through the acquisition of particular strategies, but the monitoring and reviewing of learning to see whether strategies are effective. Underlying this is the belief that learning is an active process. Effective learners relate new experiences to existing meaning and in the process may accommodate and assimilate new ideas. Past, present and future are connected and often some unlearning and relearning may be needed. Effective learners are actively involved in metacognition; the processes of planning, monitoring and reflecting.

SSAT believes effective learners are:

1. critical thinkers and problem solvers
2. engaged (not passive) and enthusiastic, with purpose
3. resilient and persistent (showing grit), flexible and adaptable
4. creative and creating
5. curious and questioning
6. knowledgeable and confident
7. good communicators and team players
8. digitally literate
9. aspirational.

Effective learners can:

1. seek relevance and make links to beliefs and experiences
2. anticipate, reflect, analyse, justify and plan ahead
3. develop a toolkit of strategies for learning
4. have the attributes to be work

and world ready (content and learning process)

5. achieve.
6. Building on continually updated research and utilising elements from the Project for Enhancing Effective Learning (PEEL) (a collaborative action research project in Australia over the past 27 years), SSAT supports schools nationally to transform teaching and learning in order to develop effective learners.

And how do we do this? By avoiding quick fix strategies and doing it in a measured, informed way; based on deep learning, research and pedagogy.

Below, Linda Halbert, Principal of Freebrough Academy describes how she approached this in her inspirational story.

Anne-Marie Duguid





‘I have a dream’

*Linda Halbert, Principal,
Freebrough Academy*

In September 2010 I was given the fantastic opportunity to take up post as the principal at Freebrough Academy in Redcar & Cleveland. With Teesside University as sponsor, the academy had huge potential and a staff who were passionate about making a difference to the lives of the young people they served.

As the new principal at Freebrough I had a dream! One day staffroom conversations would focus on pedagogy (not student misbehaviour), best practice would be based on action research and teachers would be sharing the most effective ideas and resources across the academy to secure quality first teaching. We had a long way to go.

What became apparent very quickly was the need to develop a positive learning culture and focus both teachers and students

on what our core purpose is as a school. We had to tackle significant underperformance. Our first monitoring activities judged 32% of lessons good or better (7% of lessons outstanding) and 21% of lessons inadequate. Teachers wanted to improve but didn't know how. We were the worst performing school in Redcar and Cleveland. In 2010 only 24% of students made three levels of progress in English and 5 A*-C with English and maths was 30%. To secure the improvements needed the relentless focus had to be on teaching and learning.

Our students lacked confidence in themselves as learners and many staff lacked confidence in themselves as teachers and learners. Many lessons consisted of teachers actively working hard and students being passive recipients of that teaching. Many lessons lacked challenge and pace. Students weren't encouraged to be active participants or to collaborate as learners. Teachers needed to be confident to let go.

To improve the quality of teaching in all classrooms we needed to have a shared language for teaching and learning across the academy and a set of learning principles that were understood and agreed by all teachers. We found an opportunity to do this through the SSAT Teacher Effectiveness Enhancement Programme (TEEP). This gave us a vehicle to train all of our teachers to understand and to apply the principles of good and outstanding teaching. Cross faculty support and co-operation was a natural development from the training and teachers very quickly shared effective practice across subject boundaries.

Further training and development allowed us to develop a team of staff who were passionate about coaching their peers to support them on their journey to good and outstanding. Success bred success. As staff realised how good they are their confidence and the quality of their practice improved. They are now confident to allow students to be more active and collaborative learners and have a greater understanding of effective teacher and learner behaviours.

As for the students – they have been transformed. They are far more willing to participate fully in lessons. We have spent time explaining the principles of learning to them and they speak knowledgeably about the different aspects of their lessons and how it impacts on their learning. Students speak passionately about the improvements in the quality of teaching and how it has transformed their confidence



and abilities as learners. They have very high expectations of their teachers and are confident enough to tell us if the quality of provision falls short of their expectations! They understand that they have an important part to play in the success of their lessons and take responsibility for their learning and progress.

They recognise how hard their teachers work to deliver lessons that are engaging and how they support them to be the best they can be. They are keen to articulate this to me, their parents, governors and visitors – including Ofsted and are very keen to play their part in securing improvements within the academy.

Anna in year 10 says: 'Teaching has improved dramatically in the three years I have been at Freebrough. The teachers make learning not only productive but enjoyable. My grades have just carried on improving.'

Lucy in year 10 thinks: 'Teaching has improved because of the structure that TEEP gives to the lessons.'

The latest development in our evolution is to task all students

to take a collective responsibility for learner behaviours across the academy. It is the same model we used for staff. We are developing a common language of learning for students and encouraging them to collaborate across the year groups and the ability range. We are currently training teams of student observers to go into lessons to judge learner behaviour and its impact on progress. They will then have the responsibility to feedback strengths and areas for development to their peers. They will continue to monitor and feedback on improvements. Students will be instrumental in getting the messages out to parents.

Staff have had the opportunity to work with teachers in other schools to deliver training and support them and their school on their teaching and learning journey. This has certainly had a positive impact on their practice and self-esteem, as well as the self-esteem of the academy. The next step is to look at how we give our learners the opportunity to do this.

There has been a significant improvement in the quality of provision and outcomes. Ninety three per cent of teaching was graded good or better in 2013/14. Many faculty areas have GCSE outcomes that are above national average. Outcomes in English in 2014 were outstanding. Eighty two per cent of students achieved A*-C grades and 85% achieved 3 levels of progress. Fifty nine per cent of students achieved 4 levels of progress. Our English results are the best in the local authority. The percentage achieving 5

A*-C grades plus English and maths was 50%. We have made improvements every year against a volatile picture of improvement both locally and nationally.

As for my 'dream'... on 3 and 4 November 2014 we had two training days. The focus was teaching and learning. New staff were being inducted into our approach to effective learning, a group of staff were focused on developing a common format for an interactive 'learning wall' in each classroom with associated training for staff, another group were focused on developing a staff training package on the 'construct and apply' section of the learning cycle, a third group were planning an action research project to look at the impact of peer tutoring on levels of progress for the higher attaining and disadvantaged students in maths. A fourth group were planning action research to look at the impact of technology on improving teaching from good to outstanding and developing an online training and development portfolio to support this. We are embedding the learning culture I dreamt of.

I couldn't be more proud of our hardworking, creative and innovative group of teachers and students who are determined to work as a team to realise our ambition of being an outstanding school. With their determination and commitment I am sure we will take every opportunity to achieve it.

Find out more:
www.ssatuk.co.uk/teep

Redesigning Schooling in action: Where is the intelligent professionalism to take our system forward?

Caroline Barlow,
Head of Innovation, SSAT

Since its launch in 2012, the Redesigning Schooling campaign has helped to shape discussions around the teaching profession's own vision for schooling. Across the country professionals seized opportunities to engage in lively debate with educationalists, stakeholders and academics, to examine much needed change in education from a variety of perspectives. It is a strategic movement that touches on and challenges all aspects of schooling.

Redesigning Schooling has come to stand for professional intelligence, integrity and courageous leadership; understanding the core educational principles underpinning the best research-informed practice; understanding how that applies to different contexts in our schools and the different needs of our students; understanding that these change over time as our world and our setting evolves. By applying this intelligent professionalism we take back control of the core business of learning in our schools, creating a world class education for our setting, our staff and our young people.

In 2014 'Redesigning Schooling in Action' starts from the conviction that much of this innovative practice is already happening in schools. We have seen it, it is exciting and inspiring. There is an imperative now to draw together common themes and examples from across the country, enable schools to learn from each other and collaborate, and work alongside them as they develop innovative approaches within the existing framework.

Teaching for learning

How and what we teach says a lot about our beliefs and values as individuals, organisations, and as an education system.

It is our responsibility to ensure we actively engage with our professional disciplines and current research enquiries. We need to understand and have expertise in the pedagogies that best suit the context and ambitions of our setting. Only then can we productively influence the curriculum choices that are made for the long-term benefit of each learner.

Principled curriculum design

The curriculum model of any school is a considered balance of factors, because in any setting these are in tension and often direct conflict with each other.

A prescribed national curriculum does not prevent us from exercising our autonomy to create an environment that is right for our students across the entirety of their experience, in and out of the classroom.

A core skill of teaching is being able to examine a curriculum to make considered choices about where the right balance lies in your own context.

Principled assessment design

Assessment is the bridge between teaching and learning. It is the way in which we establish whether what we taught resulted in the learning we intended.

The way in which a school chooses to assess, record and report says a great deal about what it values. When redesigning schooling, a fundamental part of our professional responsibility is to ensure that we use evidence to decide practice.

Courageous leadership for professional accountability

To redesign schooling, we need leaders and teachers who share a clear vision for their school and their community, based on a clear set of values and professional judgement that lead to exceptional outcomes for young people.

External accountability is a reality of our system. Courageous leaders will take greater ownership of accountability, looking beyond mere implementation of government policy towards a more collaborative future where the profession is willing and able to hold itself to account. External obligations must be balanced

The new professionalism

To achieve Redesigning Schooling's ambitions for our education to become world class we have to develop the 'new professionalism' – characterised by a relentless focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning, innovative practice, and engagement with research.

Doing so will support leaders and teachers in developing pedagogical expertise to deliver deep learning in a supportive and safe environment, through experiences that raise aspirations and deliver opportunity.

The Redesigning Schooling campaign advocates approaches to teaching and learning that lead to:

- **An ambitious climate for learning**, creative with the use of time and space to best suit the needs of students and reflecting high expectations and appropriate challenge
- **Relevant and authentic learning**, in which learners experience real-world examples and activities with relevance, supported by employer partnerships and links to local or global business and organisations

- **Digital literacy and pedagogy**, with technology supporting and enhancing learning in and out of the classroom, for example through bring your own device (BYOD), flipped learning, and the cloud
- **Effective learner behaviours**, where learners have a growth mindset and display resilience, self-regulation, curiosity, skills of communication and collaboration, moral and social awareness, emotional well-being and autonomy

- **An ability to enquire and research** through effective thinking, questioning and evidence-based practices
- **Expertise and subject knowledge**, becoming experts in their field, mastery
- **Students as leaders and co-constructors** of their learning and influential citizens of their school and wider community.
- **Parents and the wider community** being actively involved as partners in the learning process.

The Redesigning Schooling campaign advocates that schools develop curriculum models that deliver a considered balance of:

- **Subject discipline**, balancing the development of mastery and expertise alongside frequency and the length of time of study
- **Breadth and balance**, with traditional disciplines offered alongside creative arts, STEM, PE and other culturally relevant subjects
- **Personalisation**, enabling students to follow a pathway that builds on their strengths and maximises their future possibilities
- **Rigour**, so that in the context of each discipline

your curriculum is true to the disciplinary habits of mind and develops transferable competencies (communication, collaboration, critical thinking, problem solving, metacognition)

- **Coherence**, with interdisciplinary connections across the curriculum made explicit and enhanced by transdisciplinary project-based learning and whole-school approaches to literacy and numeracy
- **Vertical integration**, making clear the progression plan and sequencing of each subject; how material builds on what has gone before and what it looks like to progress and get better

- **Appropriateness**, grouping students to maximise their learning potential: stage vs age, key stage vs year-by-year sequencing
- **Focus**, knowing what the big ideas are through which to develop connections and the required depth and discipline
- **Relevance**, co-constructing with all stakeholders to ensure that the curriculum is engaging, motivating and connected to valued outcomes both during and after formal education
- **Wider experiences**, making explicit the learning desired through the interactions and all the experiences available in the school.

Whatever systems you use, the processes must be considered, mapped and interpreted to lead to maximum impact on students' achievement and future choices.

The Redesigning Schooling campaign advocates approaches to assessment that:

- **Correlate to the curriculum**, assessing the big ideas of each subject with intrinsic checkpoints along the journey that mark progression

- **Set aspirational targets**, based on known or agreed starting points, with clear purpose and audience
- **Lead to valid interpretations**, having taken into account the reliability of the assessment and margins for error in any assessment process
- **Measure progress of groups**, individuals and cohorts in a range of contexts
- **Inform teaching and planning**, through questioning and feedback, scaffolding next steps for delivery, and intervention

- **Reflect a broad range and breadth of learning**, with students given opportunity to demonstrate a range of thinking skills in an agreed taxonomy or environment
- **Motivate and encourage students to reflect on their work** of students on their work, helping them become self-managing in their progress planning
- **Encourage parental involvement** as critical partners in the support of learning and progress

with the moral imperative to do what is right for the students in our schools both now and into the long term. We need courageous leaders who will shape and lead a schools-led vision for education.

The Redesigning Schooling campaign requires courageous leaders who will redefine our approach to accountability by:

- **Leading with courage**, with a clear vision for your school and community
- **Valuing internal self-evaluation** as an ongoing continual process that promotes reflection and genuine school improvement

- **Creating a climate for innovation** because the challenge of redesigning schooling to put learners at the centre demands creative and innovative approaches. Doing things differently to do them better.
- **Approaching external accountability** with integrity, meeting it in a way that doesn't sacrifice values.
- **Taking greater ownership of professional accountability**: the growth of school-to-school partnerships, teaching school alliances, federations, trusts and clusters – all with forms

of inter-school review – points to a more collaborative future, with challenge and support from peers and stakeholders as a more powerful driver of school improvement

- **Developing leadership capacity** within the school and the system
- **Driving system leadership** by committing to work with all those with claims to be the system's leaders at a local, regional and national level. Committing to agree the purposes of the system, how it should be designed and operated, and how the success of that design can be evaluated

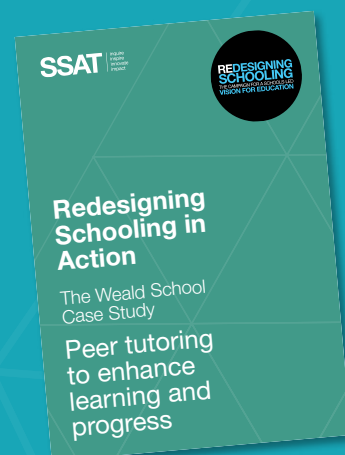
The Redesigning Schooling campaign advocates that school leaders and teachers adopt the new professionalism to help shape their commitment to:

- **Always be learning**, developing pedagogic, subject and leadership knowledge at all stages of your career
- **Embracing teaching** as a difficult but rewarding and intellectual job that requires us to work as professionals, not merely technicians delivering government policy
- **Committing to developing, in partnership with higher education** a fully qualified, high-

quality teaching profession that is capable of leading on pedagogy, curriculum design and assessment

- **Ensuring that all teachers' professional development includes research** that contributes to 'next practice' in teaching and learning
- **Engaging with all stakeholders**, including students, employers and parents, as well as higher and further education, to redefine relationships so that all roles are focused on achieving successful outcomes for all students

- **Fostering collaboration** within and across schools, and being expected to have a genuine commitment to working in focused collaborative cultures internally and in wider networks externally
- **Raise the esteem and prestige of the profession**, so it becomes valued by all stakeholders and more able to influence policy
- **Putting learners at the heart of all we do**



Redesigning Schooling in Action

The first wave of case studies will shortly be available through the new member-only area of the SSAT website: The Exchange. They will be available alongside a framework for evaluating the examples and considering the transformative potential of adopting and adapting them in your context. Could your school contribute to the Redesigning Schooling library of profession-led practice and evidence?

Get in touch at redesigningschooling@ssatuk.co.uk to discuss how you can support the campaign for a schools-led vision for education.

Teaching for learning

Creating an ambitious climate for learning

Sirius Academy, Hull
The UCL Academy, North London

Creating an ability to enquire and research

Greenfield Community College, County Durham

Students as leaders and co-constructors

The Weald School, West Sussex
Devonport High School for Boys, Plymouth
Ormiston Venture Academy, Norfolk

Principled curriculum design

Coherence

St Mary's Catholic Academy, Blackpool

Developing subject discipline

Wade Deacon High School, Cheshire
Huntington School, York
Westminster Academy, Central London

Breadth and balance

Bohunt School, Hampshire

Principled assessment design

Correlating assessment to the curriculum

Shenley Brook End School, Milton Keynes
Durrington High School, West Sussex
Grazebrook Primary School, North East London

Feedback to inform teaching and planning

Eggars School, Hampshire

Motivating students to reflect on their work

Bethnal Green Academy, East London
Kingsford Community College, East London

Courageous leadership for professional accountability

Taking ownership of accountability

Uplands Community College, East Sussex

Creating a climate for innovation

Landau Forte College, Derby

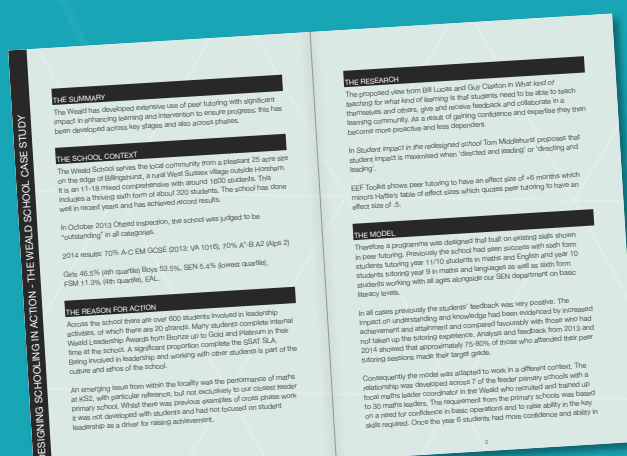
Developing leadership capacity

Canons High School, North West London

The new professionalism

Professional development, collaboration and research

Bay House School and Sixth Form, Hampshire
Cramlington Learning Village, Northumberland
Groby Community College, Leicestershire





System leadership and collaborative working in action

Tom Knott, Head of Leadership, SSAT
‡ Alan Yellup OBE, Executive Head ‡ CEO,
Wakefield City Academies Trust

System leaders are defined broadly as school leaders with responsibilities covering more than one school, working beyond their own school to support the wider system. They are becoming more common in our education system, with a growing number of heads taking a more formal responsibility for supporting other schools via academy sponsorship, or as the leader of an academy chain.

System leaders do far more than working across multiple schools. They are the leaders of school and academy groups who not only have ultimate accountability for other schools but also the ability to formally intervene where necessary.

Tom Knott

The origins of collaborative working in action - Wakefield City Academies Trust

Alan Yellup OBE, Wakefield City Academies Trust

The seeds of system leadership and its potential to drive school improvement were sown in the early days of my headship at Eastmoor High school in Wakefield. A school located in the centre of a large, tough and uncompromising estate a mile from the city centre, bearing all the hallmarks of social and educational deprivation. Students entered the school

at age 11 with very low levels of prior attainment, and even lower levels of aspiration, to be educated in a building barely fit for purpose by teachers who felt that performance levels in examinations simply reflected the poor quality intake and social anomie. With 12% 5 A-C GCSE passes staff believed they were doing as well as could be reasonably expected, especially as 25% of students spoke English as a second language. Those few parents who harboured aspirations for their child's education sent them elsewhere resulting in falling rolls with spare capacity hovering around 35%. We fared badly against almost all key performance indicators and would have been placed in special measures had it existed at that time.

Help, support and advice was sparse, usually provided by local authority advisers – long since removed from the classroom, who appeared with the same frequency as the equinox – twice yearly. Support from within the profession was rare with the inception of age-weighted pupil unit funding and published league tables. There was little incentive to support schools that might eventually attract students from your school and be in direct competition.

The interregnum

I set about changing the culture and ethos from 'can't do to can do' and introduced comparative data to highlight similar schools with far superior performance outcomes. The curriculum was overhauled, testing introduced, senior leaders became visible, classrooms were opened up to share good practice and student groupings and pastoral care systems ►

radically reshaped. Exorcising the past was further accomplished by improving the image through changing the school name and uniform.

Thus Wakefield City High School was born. At this stage it was a question of self-help founded on the following principles:

- » optimism and perseverance
- » determination to never settle for anything second best
- » calculated risk taking
- » ensuring everyone matters in a school EPM (every person matters) – not ECM
- » building self-confidence
- » removing fear and heavy-handed top down accountability
- » making learning enjoyable as well as stretching
- » having fun and treating each other with respect.

Not quite Winston Churchill's 'blood, sweat and tears', but not far removed.

The first two Ofsted inspections delivered judgements of giving very good value for money and of a rapidly improving school. Examination results improved from 12% to 38% 5 A-C (English and maths not yet KPIs). It would have been easy to sit back, become complacent and assume our task was complete. However the momentum proved unstoppable. Success really does breed success and with the introduction of value added we began to attract attention locally and nationally and became first a beacon school and subsequently a Leading Edge school.

Being a beacon school convinced me of the huge potential of system leadership, the value of collaborative practice, and the frailty of the espoused effective leadership style of the day. A visiting underperforming school, seeking out good practice, shared with us their science provision. This we adopted, with greatly enhanced results the following year. All schools irrespective of ranking or status have an exemplar worth sharing.

The journey to outstanding

Involvement with the SSAT as a consultant head fostered my belief in the 'by schools for schools'

philosophy, and crystallised my views on leadership for sustained improvement. From every challenging school we visited to share our experience of raising standards, we brought back something to enhance our own practice which sustained our trend of year on year improvement and led us to 'outstanding'.

The approach of:

- » working with and supporting
- » building confidence and self-esteem
- » using active practitioners to share best practice
- » developing strategies to improve teaching and learning
- » providing opportunities for networking

gave encouragement to hundreds of schools that felt beleaguered by Ofsted categories or by local authority labels of 'causing concern' – often by both simultaneously. Labels which demotivated students, staff and communities alike. Projects such as Raising Achievement, Transforming Learning (RATL) provided the perfect antidote to an approach of thinly veiled threat and coercion, and demonstrated an alternative framework in which standards were raised with dignity. Significant numbers of previously disillusioned staff remained in the profession and took their schools on journeys from the bottom to the top Ofsted judgement categories.

Wakefield City High School thrived in this environment of:

- » conferences led by nationally- and internationally-renowned educationalists delivering the very best of current research and practice
- » networking opportunities
- » skilled practitioners demonstrating practice from across the nation
- » developing cutting edge data analysis tools and databases to enable accurate tracking of students' progress and attainment and provide benchmarks against similar schools.

In 2005, Wakefield City High School gained the first of three consecutive outstanding Ofsted judgements, the latest of which was in March 2013 with grade 1s across all four judgement categories. The offer, as an outstanding school, to be fast-tracked to academy status was seized immediately, not as an act of



independence, but to continue to work with the local authority in equal partnership. Performance data was shared with the LA and we successfully bid for teaching school status on behalf of LA primary and secondary schools.

During this period school-to-school support proliferated with over 250 schools supported on short- and medium-term contracts. Work focused on support for the core subjects, MFL and leadership at middle and senior level.

System leadership: multi-academy trust and national teaching school development

Our contribution to system leadership therefore began from the moment we were granted beacon school status and was firmly embedded through invitations to be involved in a range of national school improvement initiatives. These have included initiatives by the government, such as SIP, the National Challenge programmes, national leader of education (NLE), local leader of education (LLE), national leader of governance (NLG), and the national support school, teaching school and multi-academy trust developments; by SSAT (RATL and Spectrum); by Tribal (the short-lived Inspirational Schools Programme), and currently Whole Education. I have worked as a consultant head for SSAT and Tribal, a school improvement partner, a National Challenge adviser and a NLE. Colleagues at senior and middle level worked in schools, demonstrated practice first-hand during visits to Wakefield City Academy, and presented at conferences. In so doing, they have gained invaluable professional development

themselves. Our chair of governors operates as a NLG.

The formation of Wakefield City Academies Trust (WCAT) and development of the teaching school alliance provided the opportunity to establish a new leadership structure in which two co-headteachers were appointed. I now operate as the executive head and CEO of WCAT, while Marie Hunter and Suzanne Austwick are responsible for leading the academy. Marie is also an NLE having steered the academy through the 2013 outstanding Ofsted inspection and Suzanne is in the process of becoming NLE accredited through day-to-day leadership of the Wakefield Regional Teaching School Alliance.

The MAT already comprises 14 primary and secondary schools while the teaching school alliance has a membership of over 40 schools and 40 specialist leaders of education (SLE) operating at primary and secondary level. Both these initiatives have allowed us to share our experiences of effecting significant school improvement and in the most challenging of circumstances. It has also enabled us to further develop our talented staff, and bring in new staff and introduce them to an alternative approach to school improvement.

SSAT's two-year leadership programme for new and prospective executive headteachers is designed and led by leading exec heads and CEOs and launches on 26-27 March.

For more details, visit www.ssatuk.co.uk/leadership.

Data-driven transformation – or data-informed?

Colin Logan, Head of Data and Self-evaluation, SSAT
‡ *Peter Atherton, Data Manager, Minsthorpe Community College*

Data plays a fundamental role in the life of our schools. To varying degrees, the lives and work of students, parents, teachers, school leaders, governors and Ofsted inspectors are punctuated by the collection, analysis and discussion of performance and other data.

Stakeholders have become much more data-savvy over the years. Professionals can generally talk with relative ease about value-added progress, estimates and targets and the key indicators highlighted in the annual performance tables.

All that might be about to change, however, as we move into a world without national curriculum levels, where there are new tests and examinations in both primary and secondary schools, and a new raft of accountability measures to go with them.

Raising student achievement has to be informed by the judicious use of appropriate data gathered and tracked across all year groups, not just at the end of a key stage. The school data manager has a key role to play in ensuring that data is the servant rather than the master of school improvement. This article describes the approach of Minsthorpe Community College in West Yorkshire and its data manager, Peter Atherton.

Colin Logan

Data at the heart of the classroom

*Peter Atherton (pictured below),
Minsthorpe Community College*



In 2012 the college embarked upon a fresh whole-school data strategy that put classroom practitioners at the forefront of data analysis. A consultation was initiated with teachers to find exactly what information they required to help them,

on a day-to-day basis and also over the course of a whole school year. The resounding messages that came back were that the college needed to help enable its staff at all levels to become less reactive and more proactive in terms of data use. A drive towards greater consistency was also desired, as was the ability for data analysis to be engaging, visually appealing and have a more intelligent application. The consultation outcomes were to review current practice and to move towards creating easy-to-use and effective data analysis at classroom level that was fair and equitable to all staff.

The college gave the newly appointed data manager the freedom to evaluate existing processes and where appropriate to create and embed new ideas. These ideas were then given the time to grow organically into a suite of analysis tools that all staff

in the college felt ownership over. There was a desire to make the solution no longer a case of 'here's a system, make your processes fit it', but instead, 'here are our processes, these are the outcomes we are looking for, how can the analysis best give us insight and be used to ask informed questions?' The college also improved and embedded the existing 'intelligent accountability' process into these new analysis tools by having a direct link between the data and where action points are recorded.

The data analysis cycle now seamlessly supports self-evaluation and the whole-school drive for improvement from the classroom up. The four main data analysis strands that have been produced contain similar characteristics; namely they are visually appealing to view, and this is supported by the fact that the full analysis of any particular item prints solely to a single A4 sheet of paper. They all in some way reference and benchmark against data from the national transition matrices and they are all driven by buttons and dropdown menus that are intuitive to use and navigate. New teaching staff and visitors to the college are frequently blown away by both the simplicity and the power of these tools and also the fact that they are so well used in the classroom and beyond.

Prior to these developments, staff spent a large amount of time gathering information about the students in their classes so they could devise appropriate strategies for them. So this led to a creation of a Class Profile where staff could choose their class from a dropdown menu and the tool would automatically pull in a raft of contextual and prior attainment information about that class. Initially this was an important timesaver which allowed more time for planning. After a short time the Class Profile was significantly enhanced to include target information about not only student targets but also the proportions of students who would typically make 3 and 4+ levels of progress in a similar class nationally. After the first year, in time for September 2013, a seating planner was created and integrated into the Class Profile. This then enabled teachers to plan strategies for their groups and seat them appropriately at the same time.

While the Class Profile has revolutionised the planning process at the start of the school year, the other side

of the coin was to create systems that provided strong opportunities for review of data and accountability. Initially this was described as a mini-RAISE, but in reality it is no longer that. Assessment Point Analysis (APA) tools were created that put progress (transition) matrices at their heart, but also contained the ability to filter down to classes, pupil groups and interventions. This is done on a single page that all staff can access. The accountability process has been built-in to allow staff to make comments on their classes, which are then discussed with their line management up to SLT level.

The final piece of the jigsaw was to create physical folders called Student and Class Information Files (SCIF) which teachers populate with their Class Profiles, seating plans and other relevant information (pictured right). This enables both themselves and visitors to their classroom, i.e. supply teachers, to gain an idea of the class dynamics and can be used to identify targeted students easily and discreetly.

Ofsted inspectors have been impressed with the data analysis systems they saw at Minsthorpe Community College, stating that they were 'the best example of a data system with widespread classroom use we have ever seen'.



I believe that the most important hurdle to overcome was the initial shift in mindset towards staff becoming proactive at using data at all levels. The college underwent a transformation in its attitude towards data and this was brought about by making the analysis as user friendly as possible, without losing the ability of the data to enable the asking of informed questions. Because staff were no longer required to remember passwords and sets of instructions on how to actually get to the reports, the burden of researching information was greatly reduced and the benefits of using the data were much more evident. Finally there was a transparency and a consistency across all departments and a real sense of data ownership prevailed. In turn, this softened the barriers to data use that may have existed and enabled staff

to work proactively with the data, crucially by helping them assess how their professional judgements in the classroom and the starker quantitative view of data linked together. They are more able to ask their own questions with greater immediacy and impact.

We must remember that while the sands of education policy and the data used to measure it continue to shift, education itself will continue to conform to certain parameters and essentially – for a teacher, in a classroom, teaching – there will be little change. Students in the class will have some sort of starting point, they will probably have targets, either as a minimum, an aspiration, or both, and the teacher will be tasked with progressing them from the starting point towards and beyond the target.

I also think it is important for schools to ask how proactive they feel they are being with their data, how much (if any) unnecessary data practice exists, and whether schools feel they are effectively getting the data into the hands of the right people at the right time. In a time of relative curriculum and assessment freedom, I believe schools should evaluate and if appropriate develop their own in-house skills so that they can adequately measure in the way they want. They must not feel unable to follow their curriculum ideals because they do not have the means to quantify them. By building a platform of skill sets within their support staff, schools can future-proof themselves against shifting goalposts and take any direction of travel they wish.



Top tips and advice:

- » Evaluate your data strategy and facilitate the use of data at all levels.
- » Don't commit to any one strategy or system for too long. Stay flexible.
- » Reduce data analysis and reporting that you feel has minimal impact/use.
- » Invest further in the skills of your data and IT support staff.
- » Ask yourselves what you want to have, not what you can currently have.
- » Design analysis for impact in the classroom, not just the boardroom.

COMING SOON: EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES DATABASE 2014

Educational Outcomes is a unique, powerful database for analytics and comparison. It crunches three official DfE and Ofsted sources into one to provide the key 2013-14 contextual and performance data on every state funded school in the country. Benchmark your school's performance against all other schools using over 40 different metrics, and identify schools in similar circumstances to your own with which you can share practice and ideas.

Every year we use the database to identify and celebrate, through the Educational Outcomes Awards, the schools that have made outstanding progress, continuous improvement and high attainment. Dates for the 2015 celebration evenings will be announced soon - please do join us.



Finland and England: reflections on mathematics pedagogy

Bill Griffiths, Headteacher, Eastfield Primary School

The purpose of this study tour, which took place in October 2014, was to identify the main differences between our two countries in mathematics pedagogy and to learn lessons that could lead to improvements in mathematics teaching in English schools.

In PISA's 2012 Results: Creative Problem Solving - Students' Skills in Tackling Real-Life Problems (Volume V) identified 'interesting differences' in the performance of 15-year olds across different types of problem-solving tasks.

'These differences are likely a reflection of how well students learn, through the content of the various school subjects and the way in which it is taught, to handle unexpected obstacles and deal with novelty.

In some countries and economies, such as

Finland, Shanghai-China and Sweden, students master the skills needed to solve static, analytical problems similar to those that textbooks and exam sheets typically contain... But the same 15-year-olds are less successful when not all information that is needed to solve the problem is disclosed, and the information provided must be completed by interacting with the problem situation.'

FINLAND ON THE GROUND

Our group comprised colleagues from the STEP and Affinity teaching school alliances in Leicestershire and from SSAT. We arrived in Turku eager to find the holy grail of mathematics pedagogy – the silver bullet with which to return and implement in our schools. Exciting prospects lay ahead: we would be visiting a range of schools from kindergarten to high school, observing teaching, and speaking with headteachers and classroom teachers – a week to reflect and work with a network of like-minded professionals. We



were keen to explore the transition of students, as they move from learning through play with physical objects to using written calculation. How do division, multiplication, subtraction and addition operations move from expanded approaches to compact approaches, and at which specific milestones does this happen? What are the common blockages and how do they overcome them?

We were briefed by practising headteachers about the Finnish education system and their individual schools. We were welcomed into their schools and classrooms which was a privilege and an honour.



This is what we found.

In Finland, education is valued by all. Now this is a really important difference from our country. There, teachers are respected. It is a highly regarded profession where teacher training places are oversubscribed and all teachers must have a master's.

Finland believes in inclusion and equality and therefore pretty much everyone is treated the same. There is no competition, no identified gifted and talented, and a large emphasis on supporting those students with special needs. There were very flat staffing structures. The head of mathematics we spoke to in a secondary school did not observe lessons and was not considered, hierarchically, any different from any other teacher, she simply ordered the resources and textbooks. There are no private schools and all schools are treated the same. Finnish schools are not compared with other schools, there are no city or national lists, and no tests to compare.

As Pasi Sahlberg states in his SSAT blog (www.ssatuk.co.uk/blog, 2014, 17 October): 'Unlike many other school systems today, the Finnish system has not been infected by market-based education reforms that typically emphasise competition between schools and high-stakes standardised student-testing.'

And as one headmaster we visited said, 'We have the liberty to do it well'.

Teachers are trusted to be professionals. It is their choice



how they teach. They believe that, having studied for five years for a master's degree, they are professionals who know how to teach and should be allowed to do so.

Lack of accountability. Headteachers, teachers and students didn't seem to feel too much pressure. Lessons weren't observed, there was little analysis of data or need to have evidence in every book of feedback and progress. Headteachers write a report maybe once a year.

There is not change all the time. The national goals are set by the government and the last significant changes were in 2008. The next change will come in 2016 and teachers are already being prepared and consulted. How many changes have our schools seen since 2008?

Class sizes and additional teaching staff. The size of classes ranged from around 12 to 18, many would have additional special needs teachers and often an assistant as well. While some research suggests that class size has little impact, reducing to below 18 or even 15, combined with the teacher changing their practice to match the smaller class size, shows that benefits in attainment can be identified.

'There is some evidence that reducing class sizes are more likely to be effective when supported with professional development to learn and develop teaching skills and approaches.'

Education Endowment Foundation, The Teaching and Learning Toolkit

I can't help thinking that if we had this level of funding and additional special needs support with our strong teaching and learning approaches, then we would have something significant to support progress in mathematics.

What you see depends on the lenses you look through. We were not comparing like with like and therefore we brought our own baggage. Initially we kept comparing what we saw with what we expected, what we thought was right and in many cases, with a deficit model of accountability. In England, we constantly look to what we can improve. What could we as teachers or leaders do better? How could our students move onto the next stage of learning? How can our school become outstanding? How can our schools stay outstanding or be beyond outstanding?

And what do we mean by outstanding? I believe outstanding

should describe practice in every sense of the word. It is not just a key to the door or an Ofsted measurement, but should describe a desire to liberate our teachers to be the best they can be with our students firmly at the centre.

Benchmarking was not a concept even in the psyche of the Finnish system. However, their students seemed to want to learn for themselves, and their parents supported them.

‘So how would you know if there was a problem with one of your teachers?’, we asked the headteacher. ‘The students would tell me, or the parents’. Is that ok? Is that enough? What we saw however suggested that it was not ok, in some lessons students were actually asleep. The mathematical diet and approach to teaching was fairly bland and I am not sure, if I were a student there, whether I would know if there was a problem.

What we did see was a very textbook-heavy approach where the teacher would teach to the middle, the lower end would be brought up (eventually) but the top end were not stretched.

We saw **low clutter classrooms**, but very few displays (partly because you had to have permission to show pupils’ work on the wall). As a result of the visit, one of the participating English primary schools is trialling this, with two of his classrooms having displays only on the back wall and no clutter; clean lines.

Consolidation. Without a doubt the textbooks were quite good

and well structured. All students knew what was expected of them and they would spend quite a lot of time doing examples until they understood. Extra lessons would be provided if it became clear following a test they had misunderstood. Feedback via an online system could provide communication to a parent or student.

Pedagogy. In our view lessons missed opportunities and were crying out for AfL strategies. Pace, pace, pace. Differentiation, progress, and er... pedagogy.

I used to think how many examples do you have to do before they understand? Now I think about hours spent driving a car. The more you drive, the more proficient you become. It’s not always exciting but its functional, a necessary skill you just need to practise. Perhaps we are missing the consolidation stage in our quest to have pace and challenge?

But... every pedagogical bone in my body fights against that... we need to develop autonomous learners with resilience and grit, who can transfer the skills of what they are learning. Is it ok to be bored? Where are our future entrepreneurs?

Specifically in mathematics we observed:

- » some mastery
- » consolidation
- » confident grasp of number and algebra
- » work with small numbers until the concept is secure
- » clearly structured progression

- » more number, less shape and space
- » early introduction of algebra
- » an amount of mental mathematics
- » the importance of practice
- » some classes being taught mathematics in English – cognition in mental mathematics and translation.

It certainly raised a number of questions for us:

- » Do we overstimulate and over-entertain?
- » Do we over complicate things?
- » Do we move on far too quickly without consolidation, particularly in the quest to extend those at the top end?
- » Are our classrooms so full of pupils’ work, books, questions, hooks to learning, question walls, clutter that they are distracted?
- » Do we trust our school leaders? Teachers? Students?
- » Are we so driven by getting it wrong that we are forgetting the importance of getting it right?
- » By trying to meet the needs of all learners, are we meeting the needs of no one and killing our teachers in the process?

I look forward to hearing how my Leicestershire colleagues have translated this into practice over the coming year.

iNet (SSAT’s international arm) can organise bespoke study tours to suit your needs.

Find out more by emailing iNet@ssatuk.co.uk.

Student leadership audit

Depth of student leadership

	Strategic intent	Principles	Resourcing	Ways of working
BEGINNING	The purpose of student leadership is not always clear to staff and students and the language that is used when trying to describe it is varied and vague.	Whilst staff and students have positive intentions no principles have been agreed on.	Student leadership group(s) can apply for school grants to fund their work. Student leadership group(s) have access to a room on an ad hoc basis. Student leadership group(s) are prepared for the roles they do.	Student leadership group(s) have discussed with staff how they wish to work. Generally students are only meaningfully informed or consulted on projects and are not always aware of the level of participation being asked of them before each project. Student leadership group(s) collaborate within their group(s) but not outside of this.
DEVELOPING	Both staff and students are clear of the purpose of student leadership across the school, but may not always be able to express this. Some key terms have been discussed and are understood by the majority of stakeholders.	Staff and students have openly discussed the principles behind what they do but the principles are primarily directed from above.	Student leadership group(s) have a centralised budget which they have access to. Student leadership group(s) have access to a room and equipment on an ad hoc basis. Student leadership group(s) receive specialist training decided upon by staff.	Student leadership group(s)' ways of working are articulated in a constitution(s) which is authored by students and staff. Generally students are only meaningfully informed or consulted on projects but may sometimes be asked to lead and are usually aware of the level of participation being asked of them before each project. Student leadership group(s) collaborate with students across the whole school.
EXTENDING	Both staff and students are clear, and can articulate the purpose of student leadership across the school and of particular projects. The majority of stakeholders use and understand a shared language.	The majority of student leadership activity is underpinned by certain shared values and principles.	Student leadership group(s) have their own annual budget(s) which they have access to. Student leadership group(s) have access to their own room with the equipment they need to operate. Student leadership group(s) receive specialist training and their views on their own training needs are taken into account.	Student leadership activities engage and have a positive effect on the majority of the student body. Indirectly, this may help to narrow the achievement gap. Student leadership plays a large part in the school's culture and on occasions facilitates its development.
TRANSFORMING & LEADING	Both staff and students are clear, and can articulate the purpose of student leadership across the school and of particular projects. A shared language is understood and used by all stakeholders. The rationale for using particular terms or phrases is understood.	All student leadership activity is underpinned by certain shared values and principles. Each cohort identifies the principles that are important to them.	Student leadership group(s) have their own annual budget(s) which they have access to and accountability for. All members of the group have a say in how the budget is spent. Student leadership group(s) have access to their own room with the equipment they need to operate and are trusted to manage its use. Student leadership group(s) identify their own training needs which are fulfilled before taking on any new project or role.	Student leadership group(s)' ways of working are articulated in a constitution(s) which is authored by students and easily accessible. Although students often lead their own projects, staff and students are clear that at times students will only be meaningfully informed, consulted or asked to lead. Students are aware of the level of participation being asked of them before each project. Students across the school demonstrate a visible commitment to collaborating with each other, students in their local area or international students.

This audit is designed to evaluate the impact of student voice and leadership activities across a school, and can be used by students and staff working together. The first section assesses the depth of student leadership, the second section assesses the breadth of student leadership, and the third section provides a framework for moving forward.

Our working understanding of student leadership is what happens ‘when students have a real impact on their own and others’ learning experiences through meaningful student voice and leadership.’

Communication with staff	Communication with students and parents	Measuring impact of student voice and leadership initiatives	Culture & access
There is some ad hoc communication with staff, but this is primarily limited to link members of staff.	Communication with students and parents is unplanned and infrequent.	Students work with staff to think about the impact they are having on learning or school experience. This is ad hoc and often based on anecdotal evidence.	Student leadership activities engage only those directly involved. Student leadership plays a minimal part in the school’s culture.
Student leadership group(s) have scheduled opportunities to share their work with members of staff outside of student leadership.	Student leadership group(s) plan opportunities to feedback their work to students and parents.	Gathering of feedback is systematic but mainly qualitative. Evidence is analysed in ad hoc fashion and used to indicate the impact of one-off projects.	Student leadership activities engage other members of the student body, not just those directly involved. Student leadership is a part of the school’s culture.
Student events are included in the school calendar. Student leadership groups have regular and scheduled opportunities to share their work with all staff, although not always SLT or governors. This is done through a number of appropriate channels.	Student leadership group(s) regularly feedback their work to the wider student body and parents, through a number of appropriate channels.	Both qualitative and quantitative evidence is systematically collected. Evidence is analysed to indicate current impact and informs some future planning.	Student leadership activities engage and have a positive effect on the majority of the student body. Indirectly, this may help to narrow the achievement gap. Student leadership plays a large part in the school’s culture and on occasions facilitates its development.
Student events are planned and included in the school calendar. Student leadership groups have regular and scheduled opportunities to share their work with all staff including SLT and governors, through a variety of appropriate channels. Communication is a two-way process resulting in a constructive dialogue.	Student leadership group(s) regularly feedback their work to the wider student body and parents, through a variety of appropriate channels. Communication is a two-way process resulting in a constructive dialogue.	Both qualitative and quantitative evidence is systematically collected, and built into project plans from the start. Evidence is analysed to indicate current impact and informs all future planning. This informs an annual evaluation of all student leadership projects which is shared with students, staff, governors and parents.	Student leadership activities both engage and have a positive effect on all members of the student body. Strategies are in place to help narrow the achievement gap either directly or indirectly. Student leadership plays a large part in developing the school culture of co-construction and collaboration.

Student leadership audit

Breadth of student leadership

Student leadership group	We don't do this yet	We do this
School council / leadership team		
Students as learning partners (or student observers)		
Student researchers		
Student curriculum designers		
Student media team		
Student ICT or web team / developers		
Peer listeners		
Peer mentors		
Peer mediators		
Student interviewers		
Associate governors		
Student trainers		
Department representatives		
House captains / prefects		
Sports captains		
Tour guides / student helpers		
Anti-bullying ambassadors		
Other:		

Moving forward

You can use your audits to help you develop student leadership even further in your school, by following these simple steps and then filling in the mini action plan below. You may wish to turn this into a more comprehensive action plan or combine this with your school improvement plan.

- 1. Use this assessment grid from the depth of student leadership audit, and select three areas that, as students and staff, you want to focus on.
- 2. Look at where you currently are and what you need to do to reach the next level. This will be the success criteria you are aiming to achieve.
- 3. Next think about how you are going to achieve it. To do this, you may wish to look at the breadth of student leadership audit, and choose a new group to set up which will help you to deepen your student leadership. Alternatively you may wish to deepen the activity you are already engaged in. Try to be as specific as possible here!

Overarching ethos to focus on	What we are aiming for	How we will achieve it

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Holiday pay - the latest case update and what it means for your school

A very warm welcome to the Veale Wasbrough Vizards' (VWV) legal advice section. As award-winning trusted legal advisers to schools for over 20 years, we are very proud to be associated with SSAT.

In each edition, we will feature some of the most topical legal developments to affect the management of your school and where applicable, our advice will be differentiated for all types of schools and multi-academy trusts.

Holiday pay case update - what are the implications for your school?

In an important judgment, the Employment Appeal Tribunal (EAT) has ruled that holiday pay should include recognition for overtime payments in certain situations. The decision in *Bear Scotland Ltd v Fulton & anor* has been widely publicised but what will be the real impact of the decision, and to what extent will schools need to change their existing arrangements?

This article sets out some of the background to the case, and provides some guidance on the options for schools going forward.

The background

All workers have a statutory right under the Working Time Regulations 1998 ('the Regulations') to a minimum paid holiday entitlement and may also have an enhanced contractual holiday entitlement.

The Regulations, which came into force on 1 October 1998, provide for a statutory minimum amount of paid holiday for workers. This was initially 3 weeks a year, but rose to 4 weeks in 1999, 4.8 weeks in 2007 and finally to 5.6 weeks in April 2009. This equates to a minimum of 28 days per annum for full time workers (which can include bank holidays). Many workers receive a more generous entitlement under the terms of their contract. Part time workers are entitled to a pro rata statutory entitlement under the Regulations. Workers are entitled to be paid during any period of statutory annual



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To discuss your topic, please contact VWV partner Yvonne Spencer, at yspencer@vww.co.uk or 0117 314 5202.



leave at the rate of a 'week's pay' for each week's holiday.

The law in relation to holiday pay has been continually developing, partly because key terms in both domestic and European legislation are not defined and are open to varying interpretation. Interpreting national legislation, the Court of Appeal held 10 years ago that compulsory, non-guaranteed overtime should not be included in holiday pay under the Regulations. However, the European Court of Justice (ECJ) held more recently that holiday pay should reflect 'normal pay' under the Working Time Directive 2003 (EU Directive), including elements of commission. The question of what is included as 'normal pay' and particularly whether this encompasses elements of overtime has subsequently been interpreted in a number of recent cases, the most recent of which is the Bear Scotland case.

The implications of the Bear Scotland decision

In Bear Scotland it was argued that overtime which workers are obliged to work if requested but which employers are not obliged to offer ('non-guaranteed overtime') should be included as 'normal pay' for the purpose of calculating holiday pay. The EAT agreed with this argument, finding that, for the purposes of calculating holiday pay, 'normal pay is pay which is normally received'.

What does this mean in practice?

For schools this is mainly going to affect support staff who receive overtime payments when they work over and above their core hours.

For example:

A school employs a catering manager who works term time only. Their pay is based on an hourly rate which is paid for their working weeks and for 5 weeks holiday.

This is then calculated as an annual salary and they are paid in 12 equal monthly instalments.

Overtime is regularly worked to cover for functions and other events. The employee submits time sheets for the hours worked and is paid double time. This is usually paid in the following month's pay roll.

Following the Bear Scotland decision the employee will need to allocate when they take their holiday (which can be during school holiday periods) and the statutory 4 weeks will then need to be paid based on their 'normal pay' which should be based on the average pay they have received during an 'agreed reference period' (for example the previous 12 weeks). This will include their basic pay and their average weekly overtime.





1. The EAT decision only considered 'non-guaranteed' overtime. This is not the same as ad hoc or voluntary overtime, and so some uncertainty still remains as to whether overtime which is not guaranteed and which is truly voluntary for the employee will fall within the scope of 'normal pay'. However, the 'direction of travel' and an earlier Employment Tribunal decision (which is indicative but not a binding precedent), does support that when overtime is normally worked this should be included in holiday pay. The principle is to effectively ensure that an individual receives the same pay when they are on holiday as they would if they were at work.
2. The entitlement only applies to the basic entitlement of 4 weeks' annual leave under EU law and does not apply to the additional 1.6 weeks' leave entitlement under national law or any enhanced contractual entitlement. This potentially serves to limit exposure to both back pay and payments going forward.
3. The EAT also held that travel time payments which exceed expenses incurred, and which amount to additional taxable remuneration, should also be included as 'normal pay' when calculating holiday pay.

Backdated holiday pay claims

There has been considerable concern over the impact of this ruling on employers, and particularly the possibility for claims to be backdated to 1998 when the Regulations were introduced. These claims are brought as unlawful deductions from wages. Previous case law had established that such claims could be claimed back to 1998 or the commencement of an individual's employment (whichever is later). Schools will be relieved to hear that the EAT in Bear Scotland included a limitation in this regard. Any break of three months during which there have not been any 'unlawful deductions' will break the chain. This will prevent employees claiming for arrears prior to that date. It seems this will greatly restrict the scope for workers to claim arrears in holiday pay. ➡

How far back can employees pursue claims for unpaid holiday?

In accordance with Bear Scotland claims will be out of time unless they are brought within 3 months of:

- the end of an employee's employment
- the last period of statutory holiday during which they did not receive 'normal pay'.

Accordingly it will be necessary to review the records of overtime worked, against holiday and pay records to assess how far back a claim could be pursued.

This is a new concept from the Bear Scotland case which does not accord with other decisions and may well be subject to appeal, and so there is still a prospect that claims could be backdated further. However it is important to note that if systems are changed so that there is no longer a 'series of deductions' then this will start the time running for the 3 month limitation period, after which employees will no longer be able to pursue a claim.

What should schools be doing?

It is important to note that leave to appeal to the Court of Appeal was granted. It is likely that both parties will appeal both in relation to the principle of inclusion of non-guaranteed overtime and in relation to the time limits on arrears.

What action should schools take?

There are a number of options going forward:

1. Do nothing until after the appeal process has been concluded on the basis that until this point the legal requirements are uncertain. This is likely to be the most popular option. However, it might cause accrued liabilities to increase and, in particular, there is risk that the appeal could lead to an increased exposure to backdated claims.
2. Change the approach to calculating holiday pay in accordance with the new decision for payments going forward. This deals with future liability but may prompt claims for arrears. However, after three months have passed schools will have the comfort that there will not be any further claims, as they will be out of time and cannot be reopened. The downside of this is that you may be committing to payments unnecessarily, if

the Bear Scotland decision is overturned on appeal.

3. Seek to settle any past underpayments. This would offer certainty, and avoids potential litigation. Any claims may also be smaller now than after appeal depending on the 'limitation period' point. Again, however there is a risk that the school could overpay, particularly if the legal position changes again in the future.
4. Schools may also wish to review more generally how overtime is offered and paid. It may be that it is more cost effective to use 'bank' or 'zero-hour' staff to undertake fluctuations in work rather than offer overtime particularly if this is on enhanced rates.



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